

J.C. Ryle:

There is one subject in religion, about which you can never know too much. That subject is Jesus Christ the Lord. This is the mighty subject which the text that heads this page unfolds,--Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ's intercession.

I have heard of a book entitled "The Story without an End." I know no story deserving that title so well as the everlasting Gospel: this is indeed and in truth the story without an end. There is an infinite "fulness" in Christ; there are in Him "unsearchable riches;" there is in Him a "love which passeth knowledge;" He is an "unspeakable gift." (Coloss. i. 19; Ephes. iii. 8; iii. 19; 2 Cor. ix. 15.) There is no end to all the riches that are treasured up in Him,--in His person, in His work, in His offices, in His words, in His deeds, in His life, in His death, in His resurrection. I take but one branch of the great subject this day. I am going to speak to you about the intercession and priestly office of our Lord Jesus Christ. May God the holy Ghost bless the consideration of this subject! May He, without whom ministers preach and write in vain, apply the subject with power to your soul! If His blessing goes with this tract, good will be done. If His blessing goes not with it, the words that I write will fall to the ground.

There are three points which I purpose to consider, in opening the text which heads this tract.

I--You have here a description of all true Christians: they are a people who come to God by Christ.

II.--You have the work that Jesus Christ is ever carrying on on behalf of true Christians: He ever lives to make intercession for them.

III.--You have the comfortable conclusion built by St. Paul upon Christ's work of intercession. He says: "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, because He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

I.--You have, first, a description of all true Christians. It is most simple, most beautiful, and most true. Great is the contrast between the description given by the Holy Ghost of a Christian and the description which is given by man. With man it is often enough to say that such a one "is a Churchman," or that such a one "belongs to this body of Christians or to that." It is not so when the Holy Ghost draws the picture. The Holy Ghost describes a Christian as a man "who comes unto God by Christ."

True Christians come unto God. They are not as many, who turn their backs upon Him; who "go into a far country," like the prodigal son; "who go out," like Cain, "from the presence of the Lord"; who are "alienated, strangers and enemies in their mind by wicked works." (Coloss. i. 21.) They are reconciled to God and friends of God. They are not as many, who dislike everything that belongs to God,--His Word, His day, His ordinances, His people, His house. They love all that belongs to their Master. The very footprints of His steps are dear unto them. His name is as ointment poured forth.--They are not as many, who are content with coming to church, or with coming to chapel, or with coming to the Lord's Table. They go further than that. They "come unto God," and in communion with God they live.

But, more than this, true Christians come unto God in a certain peculiar way. They come unto God by Christ; pleading no other plea, mentioning no other name, trusting in no other righteousness, resting on no other foundation than this,--that Jesus hath lived, Jesus hath died, Jesus hath risen again for their souls.

"I the chief of sinners am,

But Jesus died for me."

This is the way by which the true Christian draws near to God.

Reader, the way of which I have been speaking is an old way. It is well nigh 6,000 years old. All that have ever been saved have drawn near to God by this way. From Abel, the first saint that entered Paradise, down to the last infant that died this morning, they have all come to God only by Jesus Christ. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Christ." (John xiv. 6.)

It is a good way. It is easy for the worldly-wise to sneer at and ridicule it. But all the wit and wisdom of man has never devised a way more perfect, more complete, and that will bear more thoroughly all fair and reasonable

investigation. It has been to the Jew a stumbling-block; it has been to the Greek foolishness. But all who have known their hearts, and understood what God demands, have found the way made by Jesus Christ a good way, and a way that stands the fullest examination that can be made as to its wisdom. Therein they find justice and mercy met together, righteousness and peace kissing one another; God a holy God, yet loving, kind, and merciful; man knowing himself a poor, weak sinner, yet drawing near to God with boldness, having access with confidence, looking up into His face without fear, seeing Him in Christ his Father and his Friend.

Not least, it is a tried way. Thousands and tens of thousands have walked in it, and not one of all that number has ever missed heaven. Apostles, prophets, patriarchs, martyrs, early fathers, reformers, puritans, men of God in every age, and of every people and tongue: holy men of our own day,—men like Simeon, Bickersteth, Havelock,—have all walked in this way. They have had their battles to fight, and their enemies to contend with; they have had to carry the cross; they have found lions in their path; they have had to walk through the valley of the shadow of death; they have had to contend with Apollyon. They have had to cross at last the cold dark river; but they have walked safely through to the other side, and entered with joy into the celestial city. And now they are waiting for you and me to walk in their steps, to follow them, and to share in their glory.

Reader, this is the way I want you to walk in. I want you to come unto God by Jesus Christ. Let there be no mistake as to the object which true ministers of the Gospel have in view. We are not set apart merely to perform a certain round of ordinances; to read prayers, to Christen those that are Christened, to bury those that are buried, to marry those that are ruined. We are set apart for the grand purpose of proclaiming the one true living way, and inviting you to walk in it. We ought to labour day and night, until we can persuade you, by God's blessing, to walk in that way,—the tried way, the good way, the old way,—and to know the peace which passeth all under standing, which in that way alone is to be found.

II. I pass on now to the second point which I purpose to consider. The text which heads this tract speaks of the work which the Lord Jesus Christ is ever doing on behalf of true Christians. I ask your special attention to this point. It is one of deep importance to our peace, and to the establishment of our souls in the Christian faith.

There is one great work which the Lord Jesus Christ has done and finished completely. That work is the work of atonement, sacrifice, and substitution. It is the work which He did when He suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us unto God. He saw us ruined by the fall, a world of poor, lost, ship-wrecked sinners. He saw and He pitied us; and in compliance with the everlasting counsels of the Eternal Trinity, He came down to the world, to suffer in our stead, and to save us. He did not sit in heaven pitying us from a distance: He did not stand upon the shore and see the wreck, and behold poor drowning sinners struggling in vain to get to shore. He plunged into the waters Himself: He came off to the wreck and took part with us in our weakness and infirmity becoming a man to save our souls. As man, He bore our sins and carried our transgressions; as man, He endured all that men can endure, and went through everything in man's experience, sin only excepted; as man He lived; as man He went to the cross; as man He died. As man He shed His blood, in order that He might save us, poor shipwrecked sinners, and establish a communication between earth and heaven! As man He became a curse for us, in order that He might bridge the gulf, and make a way by which you and I might draw near to God with boldness, and have access to God without fear. In all this work of Christ, remember, there was infinite merit, because He who did it was not only man, but God. Let that never be forgotten. He who wrought out our redemption was perfect man; but He never ceased for a moment to be perfect God.

But there is another great work which the Lord Jesus Christ is yet doing. That work is the work of intercession.—The first work He did once for all: nothing can be added to it; nothing can be taken away from it. It was a finished, perfect work, when Christ offered up the sacrifice upon the cross: no other sacrifice need be offered beside the sacrifice once made by the Lamb of God, when He had His own blood at Calvary. But the second work He is ever carrying on at the right hand of God, where He makes intercession for His people.—The first work He did on earth when He died upon the cross: the second work He carries on in heaven, at the right hand of God the Father.—The first work He did for all mankind, and offer all benefit of it to all the world: the second work He carries on and accomplishes solely and entirely on behalf of His own elect, His people, His servants, and His children.

Reader, how does our Lord Jesus Christ carry on this work? How shall we comprehend and grasp what is the meaning of Christ's intercession? We must not pry rashly into things unseen. We must not "rush in where angels fear to tread." Yet some idea we can obtain of the nature of that continual intercession which Christ ever lives to make on behalf of His believing people.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is doing for His people the work which the Jewish high-priest of old did on behalf of the

Israelites. He is acting as the manager, the representative, the mediator in all things between His people and God.--He is ever presenting on their bed of His own perfect sacrifice, and His all sufficient merit, before God the Father.--He is ever obtaining daily supplies of fresh mercy and of fresh grace for His poor, weak servants, who need daily mercy for daily sins, and daily grace for daily necessities.--He ever prays for them. As He prayed for Simon Peter upon earth, so I believe He prays for His people now.--He presents their names before God the Father. He carries their names upon His heart, the place of love; and upon His shoulder, the place of power,--as the high-priest carried the names of all the tribes of Israel, from the least to the greatest, when he wore his robes of office. He presents their prayers before God. They go up before God the Father mingled with Christ's all-prevailing intercession, and so are so acceptable in God's sight. He lives, in one word, to be the friend, the advocate, the priest, the all-prevailing agent, of all who are His members here upon earth. As their elder brother He acts for them; and all that their souls require He, in the court of heaven, is ever carrying on.

Does any reader of this tract need a friend? In such a world as this, how many hearts there are which ought to respond to that appeal! How many there are who feel "I stand alone." How many have found one idol broken after another, one staff failing after another, one fountain dried after another, as they have travelled through the wilderness of this world. If there is one who wants a friend, let that one behold at the right hand of God an unfailing friend, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let that one repose his aching head and weary heart upon the bosom of that unfailing friend, Jesus Christ the Lord. There is one living at God's right hand of matchless tenderness. There is one who never dies. There is one who never fails, never disappoints, never forsakes, never changes His mind, never breaks off friendship. That One, the Lord Jesus, I commend to all who need a friend. No one in a world like this, a fallen world, a world which we find more and more barren, it may be, every year we live,--no one ever need be friendless while the Lord Jesus Christ lives to intercede at the right hand of God.

Does any reader of this tract need a priest? There can be no true religion without a priest, and no saving Christianity without a confessional. But who is the true priest? Where is the true confessional? There is only one true priest,--and that is Christ Jesus the Lord. There is only one real confessional,--and that is the throne of grace where the Lord Jesus waits to receive those who come to Him to unburden their hearts in His presence. We can find no better priest than Christ. We need no other priest. Why need we turn to any priest upon earth, while Jesus is sealed, anointed, appointed, ordained, and commissioned by God the Father, and has an ear ever ready to hear, and a heart ever ready to feel for the poor sinful sons of men? The priesthood is His lawful prerogative. He has deputed that office to none. Woe be to anyone upon earth who dares to rob Christ of His prerogative! Woe be to the man who takes upon himself the office which Christ holds in His own hands, and has never transferred to any one born of Adam, upon the face of the globe!

Reader, I charge you solemnly, never to lose sight of this mighty truth of the Gospel,--the intercession and priestly office of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I believe that a firm grasp of this truth is one great safeguard against the errors of the Church of Rome. I believe that losing sight of this great truth is one principal reason why so many have fallen away from the faith in some quarters, have forsaken the creed of their Protestant forefathers, and have gone back to the darkness of Rome. Once firmly established upon this holy truth,--that we have a Priest, an altar, and a Confessor; that we have an unfailing, never-dying, ever-living intercession, who has deputed His office to none,--and we shall see that we need turn aside nowhere else. We need not hew for ourselves broken cisterns that can hold no water, when we have in the Lord Jesus Christ a fountain of living water, ever flowing and free to all. We need not seek any human priest upon earth, when we have a Divine Priest living for us in heaven.

Reader, beware of regarding the Lord Jesus Christ only as one that is dead. Here, I believe, many greatly err. They think much of His death, and it is right that they should do so. But we ought not to stop short there. We ought to remember that He not only died and went to the grave, but that He rose again, and ascended up on high, leading captivity captive. We ought to remember that He is now sitting on the right hand of God, to do a work as real, as true, as important to our souls, as the work which He did when He shed His blood. Christ lives, and is not dead. He lives as truly as any one of ourselves. Christ sees us, hears us, knows us, and is acting as a Priest in heaven on behalf of His believing people. The thought of His life ought to have as great and important a place in our souls as the thought of His death upon the cross.

III. I will now speak, in the third place, of the comfortable conclusions that the Apostle builds upon the everlasting intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ. We need much comfort and consolation in a world like this. It is no easy matter for a man to carry the cross and reach heaven. There are many enemies to be encountered and overcome. We have often to stand alone. We have at the best times few with us and many against us. We need cordials and strong consolation to sustain and cheer us, and to preserve us from fainting on the way as we travel from Egypt into Canaan. The Apostle appears deeply conscious of all this in the words he uses. He says, "He is able to save to the uttermost,"--to save perfectly, to save completely, to save technically,--"all that

come unto God by Him, because He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Reader, I might say much on the glorious expression

which is before you. But I forbear. I will only point out a few of the thoughts which ought to arise in our minds when we hear of Christ's ability to save to the uttermost. I have not space to dwell on them at length. I rather throw them out as suggestions to supply matter for private meditation.

1. Think, for one thing, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, notwithstanding the old sins of any believer. Those old sins shall never rise again, not stand up to condemn the child of God. For what says the Scripture: "Christ has not entered into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself; to appear in the presence of God for us." (Heb. ix. 24.) Christ, to use a legal phrase, is ever making an appearance in the court of heaven on behalf of them that believe in Him. There is not a year, nor a month, nor a day, nor an hour, nor a minute, but there is One living in the presence of God, to make an appearance there on behalf of all the saints. Christ is ever appearing before God the Father on behalf of the men and women that believe in Him. His blood and His sacrifice are ever in God's sight. His work, His death, His intercession are always sounding in God the Father's ears.

I remember reading a story in ancient history which may help to illustrate the truth on which I am now dwelling. It is the story of one who was put upon trial for a capital charge, at Athens, shortly after the great battle of Marathon. In that famous battle the Athenians had preserved, by their valour, liberty for their little state, against the mighty hosts of the Persians; and among those who had distinguished themselves greatly, the brother of the prisoner was one; and had been sorely wounded in the fight. The man was put upon his trial. The evidence against him was strong and unanswerable; there seemed no chance of the prisoner escaping condemnation. Suddenly there came forward one who asked to be heard on his behalf. And who was this? It was his own brother. When he was asked what evidence he had to give, or what reason he had to show why the prisoner at the bar ought not to be found guilty, he simply lifted up his mutilated arms--nothing but stumps--the hands completely cut off; the wounded stumps alone remaining. He was recognised as a man who, at the battle of Marathon, had done prodigies of valour, and in the service of the State had lost his hands. By those wounds he had helped to win the victory which was then ringing in Athenian ears. Those wounds were the only evidence he brought forward. Those wounds were the only plea he advanced why his brother ought to be set free, and sentence ought not to be passed upon him. And the story states that for the sake of those wounds--for the sake of all his brother had suffered, the prisoner was acquitted. The case was dismissed at once, and the prisoner obtained his liberty. Reader, in like manner the wounds of the Lord Jesus Christ are ever before God the Father. The nail-prints in His hands and feet--the marks of the spear in His side--the thorn marks upon His forehead--the marks of all that he suffered as a lamb slain, are ever before God the Father in heaven. While Christ is in heaven, the believer's sins will never rise in judgment against him. Think not with fear upon those old sins of yours, my believing brother or sister. Christ lives, and those old sins will not condemn you. We have an ever-living, ever-interceding Priest. Christ is not dead, but alive.

2. Think again, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, notwithstanding all the present weakness of His believing people. How great that weakness is, time would fail me to show. There are many of God's children who know their hearts' bitterness, who bewail with strong crying and tears their shortcomings, their unprofitableness, and the scanty fruit they bring forth. But oh, my beloved reader, take comfort in the words of St. John: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father,--"ever present with the Father,"-- "Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins." (1 John ii. 1.) Those weaknesses may well humble thee. Those infirmities may well make thee walk softly before thy God. But while the Lord Jesus Christ lives, those infirmities need not make thee entirely despair. We have an ever-living, ever-interceding Priest. Christ is not dead, but alive.

3. Think again, that Jesus Christ is able to save to the uttermost, notwithstanding all the trials that believers have to go through. Hear what the Apostle Paul says to Timothy: "I suffer: nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." (2 Tim. i. 12.) So long as Jesus Christ lives, the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ may be assured that no affliction shall be allowed to break off the union between him and his risen Head. He may suffer greatly and be sorely tried. But while Christ lives he shall never be forsaken. Neither poverty, nor sickness, nor bereavements, nor separations, shall ever separate Jesus and His believing people. We have an ever-living, ever-interceding Priest. Christ is not dead, but alive.

4. Think again, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, notwithstanding all the persecutions that believers have to go through. See what is said of St. Paul, when he met with much opposition at Corinth. We are told that

the Lord stood by him in the night, and said, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city." (Acts xviii. 10.) Remember what He said to St. Paul at a former time, when He met him on the way to Damascus: "Saul, Saul, why persecute thou Me?" (Acts ix. 4.) Every injury done to the believer is an injury done to the living Head in heaven. And every persecution showered down upon the head of the poor child of God here is known, felt, and, I may add with all reverence, resented, by our Great Elder Brother, who is ever living to make intercession for us. Christ lives, and therefore believers, though persecuted, shall not be destroyed. "In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." (Rom. viii. 37.) We have an ever-living, ever-interceding Priest. Christ is not dead, but alive.

5. Think again, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, notwithstanding all the temptations of the devil. Remember that famous passage in the Gospel of St. Luke, where our Lord, speaking to St. Peter, says, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." (Luke xxii.32.) Prayer like that is still carried on. Those words were spoken as an emblem of what the Lord is ever doing on behalf of His believing people. Satan, the prince of this world, is ever going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. But Christ lives; and, blessed be God, while Christ lives Satan shall not be able to overcome the soul that believes on Him. We have an ever-living, ever-interceding Priest. Christ is not dead, but alive.

6. Think again, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, notwithstanding the sting of death, and all that death brings with it. When David remembered that, he said, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." (Ps. xxiii. 4) You and I may die, but Christ still lives. The hour may come when friends can do us no more good, when faithful servants can no longer minister to our wants, when all that love, and kindness, and affliction can do to alleviate pain and make the last journey pleasant, can no longer render any service to us. But then the thought that Christ lives--Christ interceding, Christ caring for us, Christ at the right hand of God for us,--ought to cheer us. The sting of death will be taken away from the man that leans upon a dying and also a living Saviour. Christ never dies. Through faith in that living Saviour we shall have a complete victory. We have an ever-living, ever-interceding Priest. Christ is not dead, but alive.

7. Think again, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost, notwithstanding the terrors of the judgment day. Mark how St. Paul rests upon that in the 8th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans,--in that wonderful conclusion to that wonderful chapter,--a chapter unrivalled in the Word of God for privilege, beginning with "no condemnation," and concluding with "no separation!" Observe how he dwells upon Christ's intercession in connection with the judgment of the last day. After saying, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth," he goes on: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." The thought of Christ's intercession, no less than His dying and rising again, was one ground of the Apostle Paul's confidence in looking forward to the great day. His strong consolation was the recollection of a living Christ. That consolation is for us as well as for St. Paul. We have an ever-living, ever-interceding Priest. Christ is not dead, but alive.

8. Think, lastly, and above all, that Christ is able to save to the uttermost throughout all eternity. "I am He," He says, "that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." (Rev. i. 18.) The root of the believer never dies, and the branches, therefore, shall never die. Christ being "raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him." (Rom. vi. 9.) He lives, that all who trust in Him may receive honour and glory to all eternity; and because He lives, His believing people shall never die. "Because I live," to use His own words, "ye shall live also." (John xiv. 19.) We have an ever-living, ever-interceding Priest. Christ is not dead, but alive.

Reader, would you know the security for the perseverance of God's own people? Would you know why it is that Christ's sheep shall never perish, and none shall ever pluck them out of His hand? It is a miraculous thing. When you look at the believer's heart, listen to the believer's prayers, mark the believer's confessions,--when you see how a just man may fall, sometimes seven times,--when you see, with all this, the believer's perseverance, it is a marvel indeed. To carry a candle upon a stormy night, when winds and gusty blasts are blowing from every quarter,--to carry it still burning, steadily burning, along the street,--this is a wonderful achievement. To go over a stormy sea in a little boat,--to mount billow after billow, and not see the waves breaking over the boat, and overturning it,--this is well-nigh a miracle. To see a little child tottering along the crowded street, a child some three or four years old --to see it tottering on and making its way in safety, from one end of a long street to the other,--this is a mighty marvel. But, after all, what is this, but the life, and history, and experience of every true Christian? Though he falls, he rises again; though he is cast down, he is not

destroyed. He goes on from one position to another, like the moon upon a stormy night, plunging from one cloud into another, yet by-and-by shining out again and walking in brightness. What is the secret of it all? It is the continual intercession of a mighty Friend at the right hand of God: a Friend that never slumbers and never sleeps: a Friend who cares for the believer morning, noon, and night. The intercession of Christ is the secret of the perseverance of the Christian.

Reader, you would do well to study the words of the Apostle in the 5th chapter of Romans: "Much more then," he says, "being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Mark the connection: "Being already justified by His death, we shall be saved,"--and saved by what? "By his life:" by His ever living to make intercession for us. Wise and beautiful is the comparison made by that master of allegory, John Bunyan, in the "Pilgrim's Progress." He tells us how Christian was taken into the Interpreter's house, and how the Interpreter showed him many things wonderful and instructive. In one place he took him into a room where there was a fire burning, and showed him one ever pouring water upon that fire, and yet the water did not quench the fire. However much water he poured on, still the fire went on burning steadily. Then said the Interpreter, "Knowest thou what this means?" When Christian did not know, he took him behind the fire, and showed him one pouring on oil out of a vessel. This oil fed the fire, and made it burn more fiercely, notwithstanding all the water that was poured upon it. Then the Interpreter told him that this was a picture of Jesus Christ's intercession. That fire was the fire of grace in the believer's heart. He that poured on the water was the enemy of souls, the devil. But He that poured on the oil, standing behind the fire, was the Lord Jesus Christ, who by continual intercession and the supply of His Spirit, secretly and unseen by man, kept alive His own work in the believer's heart, and did not allow Satan and all his agents to get a victory over Him.

Would you know the secret of the believer's boldness in prayer? It is a marvel how a man that feels his sins so deeply as the believer does, can speak with the confidence the believer frequently does. How one that acknowledges he is wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked, ruined, undone; who often does what he ought not to do, and leaves undone what he ought to do, and finds no health in him; how such a one as this can go before God with confidence, pour out his heart before Him freely, ask from Him what he requires day after day and not feel afraid,--this is wonderful indeed. What is the secret of it? It is the intercession of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whereby the true Christian knows his prayers are made acceptable, and received in the court of heaven. What is the believer's prayer in itself? A poor, weak thing, unfit to rise above the ground. I know nothing it is more like than a banknote without the signature in the corner. What is the value of that banknote without the signature? Nothing at all. Once get a few words, a very few letters, traced in ink upon the corner of that banknote, and that which was a piece of waste paper a few moments before becomes worth, it maybe, many hundred pounds, through the signature being attached to it. So it is with the intercession of Christ. He signs, endorses, and presents the believer's petitions, and through His all-prevailing intercession they are heard on high, and bring down blessings upon the Christian soul.

Would you know the secret of daily comfort in all the toil, and business, and distractions we have to go through? We all know that they who have to do work in any secular calling, find the work oftentimes a sore burden to their souls. Oftentimes in the morning they feel, "How can I get through this day without a defiled conscience, without being sorely troubled and tempted to forget my God?" How shall a man get through the day with comfort, fill his office in the world, do his duty in the position to which God has called him? Let him lay hold upon the intercession of Jesus Christ. Let him grasp the great thought, that Christ not merely died for him, but rose again, and still lives for him.

There is a story recorded of one who lived 200 hundred years ago; a man well known in his day and generation--a man who left behind a character as pure and unsullied as anyone who fell in the unhappy Commonwealth wars: I allude to the great Lord Falkland. It is recorded of Lord Falkland during the Commonwealth wars, when he was often engaged in duties from morning to night time that a common prayer of his before leaving his tent was something of this kind,-- "Lord, I am going this day to do the duty whereunto I am called. I may sometimes forget Thee. I cannot have my thoughts at all times as fully fixed upon Thee as I wish. But, Lord, if I this day I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me." This is the thought that every believer should lay hold upon who has much to do in the business of this world. Rising from his bed in the morning, going from his room every morning, leaving his house every morning, let him bear in mind, "There is One living in heaven who intercedes for me, while I am following my lawful calling. Although I may be absorbed in business, and obliged to give up all the powers of my poor weak mind to it, still there lives One who never forgets me." He may say, as Lord Falkland said, "Lord, if I this day forget Thee, do not Thou forget me."

Last of all, would you know the secret of comfort in looking forward to that heaven whereunto every believer

desires to go? I believe there are few children of God who do not sometimes feel anxious, troubled, and cast down, when they think quietly about the eternal habitation towards which they are travelling. The nature of it, the manner of it, the employments of it, their own apparent unfitness and uniqueness for it, will sometimes perplex their minds. These thoughts will sometimes come across the believer's mind, especially in times of sickness, filling him with heaviness, and making his heart sink. Now I know no remedy against these thoughts to be compared to the recollection of the continual intercession of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Christ is gone into heaven to be the forerunner of a people who are to follow after Him. He is gone to prepare a place for them, and the place whereto He goes is the place whereto His people are to go by and by. When they go there they will find all things made ready,--a place for every one, and a fitting and proper place too, through the intercession of their Lord and Saviour. There never will be a time when their company will not be liked in heaven. There never will be a time when their old sins,--the sins of their youth and their backslidings, their wickedness before conversion, their profligacy, it may be, before the grace of God came into their hearts,--there never will be a day when all these sins shall come up against them, and make them feel abashed and ashamed in heaven. Christ will be in the midst. Christ will ever stand interceding. Where Christ is, there His people will be. Where He lives, His perfect merit, His spotless righteousness, His

intercession, will make them perfect in the sight of God the Father. They will stand in heaven, seen in Christ, clothed in Christ, members of Christ, part of Christ; and so will possess a firm and solid and eternal title to the eternal joys which shall be hereafter.

I will now conclude this tract by a few words of application to all into whose hands it may fall. My hearts desire and prayer to God is that the words I have been writing may yet bear fruit in your soul. In order that they may do so, I offer a few words of faithful and affectionate counsel.

1. I would offer counsel, first, to all who are anxious and troubled respecting their soul's salvation, and yet know not what to do. Reader, if you are such a person, I charge you and entreat you, I beseech you and invite you, to come into the way of which I have been speaking in this tract. I beseech you to come to God by the old and tried way,--the way of faith in Jesus Christ. Draw near to God, pleading the name of Jesus. Begin this very day to cry mightily unto God, in the name of Jesus, on behalf of your soul. Say not you have anything to plead for yourself. You have nothing to plead. Your life, your thoughts, your ways, all alike condemn you. Say nothing about yourself but this,--that you are a sinner, a great sinner, a guilty sinner, a condemned sinner; but because you are a sinner, you turn to God. Come unto Him in the name of Jesus, saying, you have heard that through Jesus a sinner may come near Him. Tell Him that you are a sinner, a great sinner, and an unworthy one. But tell Him that you come in the faith of His promises, in the confidence of His own Bible invitation; and in the name of Jesus, and for the sake of Jesus, and on account of Jesus, you ask to be received, heard, pardoned, forgiven, and accepted. Tell Him that you wish to have your name--even that name of yours, connected hitherto with worldliness, thoughtlessness, carelessness, and sin added to the list of God's dear children.

Will you say that you are afraid to come to God? Your fear is needless. You shall not be cast out, if you will but come in the way of faith in Christ. Our God is not "austere man." Our Father in heaven is full of mercy, love, and grace. I yield to none in desire to exalt the love, mercy, and tenderness of God the Father. I will not concede, for one moment, that what is called an Evangelical ministry will not magnify the mercy, love, and compassion of God the Father as much as any ministry on earth. We know that God is holy. We know He is just. We believe that He can be angry with them that go on still in sin. But we also believe that to those who draw near to Him in Christ Jesus, He is most merciful, most loving, and most tender, most compassionate. We tell you that the cross of Jesus Christ was the result and consequence of that love. The cross was not the cause and reason of God's mercy, but the result and consequence of the everlasting love of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, towards a poor, lost, and bankrupt world. Draw near in faith, dear reader, by that living way, Christ Jesus, to the Father. Think not for a moment--the unworthy thought shall never prove true--that so drawing near to God the Father by Christ, God the Father will not receive you. He will receive you gladly. As the father did to the prodigal son when he ran to meet him,--fell on his neck and kissed him,--so will God the Father do to that soul that draws near to Him in the name of Christ.

2. In the next place, I would cheer those readers who have walked in the way of God, and yet are afraid of falling. Why should you be afraid? What should make you fear? What should make you suppose that you shall ever be allowed to fall away, while Jesus Christ lives at the right hand of God to make intercession for you? All the power of the Lord Jesus Christ is pledged upon your behalf. He has undertaken to care for all the flock that God the Father has committed into His hand. He will care for it. He has cared for it. He went to the cross for it. He died for it. He is ever at the right hand of God, and has not ceased to care for it. Every member of that flock--the weakest, the feeblest member of that flock--is equally dear to the Lord and Saviour, and none shall pluck the least of Christ's sheep out of God's hand. Can you stop the tides of the sea, and make them not rise at

your command? Can you make the waters stay when the tide begins to fall? Can you prevent the sun in heaven going down in the west, or prevent the same sun from rising tomorrow morning in the east? You cannot do it: the thing is impossible And all the power of devils, all the power of the world, and all the enemies of the Christian, shall not be able to pluck out of the hand of Jesus Christ one single soul who has been brought by the Spirit's teaching to true union with Christ, and for whom Jesus Christ intercedes. The days of Christ's weakness have passed away. He was "crucified through weakness," and was weak on our account when He went to the cross. The days of His weakness are over: the days of His power have begun. Pilate shall no more condemn Him: He shall come to condemn Pilate. All power is His in heaven and earth, and all that power is engaged on behalf of His believing people.

3. Finally, let me gladden all believers who read this tract, by reminding them that Christ is yet to come again. The Great High Priest is yet to come forth from the holy of holies, to bless all the people who have believed on Him. One part of His work He did when He died upon the cross; another part of His work He is still doing,--interceding for us at God's right hand. But the third part of the High Priest's office remains yet to be done. He has yet to come forth from the holy of holies, as the high priest did upon the day of atonement,-- to come forth from within the veil to bless the people. That part of Christ's work is yet to come. He is now gone into Heaven itself,--He is within the holy of holies: He is gone behind the veil. But our Great High Priest--a greater one than Aaron's--shall yet come forth one day. He shall come in power and great glory. He shall come as He left the world, when He went up in the clouds of heaven. He shall come to gather from the north and from the south, from the east and from the west, all who have loved His name and confessed Him before men,--all who have heard His voice and followed Him. He shall gather them together into one happy company. There shall be no more weakness, and no more sorrow,--no more parting, and no more separation,--no more sickness, and no more death,--no more disputing, and no more controversy,--no more fighting with the world, the flesh, and devil,--and, best of all, no more sin. That day shall be a happy day indeed, when the High Priest comes forth to do the third, last part of His work--to bless His believing people.

"He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. xxii.20)