



# **ENCOURAGEMENTS TO FAITH**

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SHALL COME TO ME; AND HIM THAT COMETH  
TO ME I WILL IN NO WISE CAST OUT.

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# Encouragements to Faith

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## ENCOURAGEMENTS TO FAITH

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.—JOHN 6:37, 38.

### A Preface

THERE are two persons whom faith hath to deal withal in seeking of forgiveness and laying hold of salvation, God the Father and God the Son; the Holy Ghost being that person that sets the heart a-work to

seek out for salvation, and reveals the love of them both. And therefore it is that grace and peace (which are the object of faith's inquest) are still wished from God the Father and God the Son; so generally in all epistles, excepting that of the Revelation, given immediately by word of mouth from Christ himself.

And accordingly when faith comes to treat with these two about the great business of salvation, the first and main thing that it is inquisitive after is, what their heart and mind is, and how they stand inclined towards the receiving and pardoning of sinners. It listens most to hear something of that; and when a man's heart, through faith, is fully and throughly persuaded of it, then he is fully won.

Hence, because the Scriptures were written for our comfort, and so fitted to and for the workings of faith, therefore they were so written, as especially to bring down and lay before us the heart of God and of Christ; and so the main thing they hold forth is, the full intent and purpose both of God and of Christ to pardon and receive sinners. 'This is a faithful saying,' says Paul with open mouth, 'that Christ came into the world to save sinners;' and this Christ himself everywhere indigitates; and to hold forth this is the scope of these words uttered by Christ himself. And such speeches do contain the very heart, marrow, and pith of the gospel.

And though the heart of a sinner will never be fully satisfied till a persuasion be wrought that God and Christ are purposed and willing to save a man's own self in particular, which persuasion is that which we call assurance, yet when once there is a thorough persuasion settled upon the heart, but of so much indefinitely and in general, that God and Christ are willing and fully resolved to save some sinners, so that the heart does truly believe that God is in earnest, this draws on the heart to come to Christ, and is enough to work faith of adherence, such as upon which Christ 'will never cast us out,' as the text hath it.

The great business then for the working faith in men, is to persuade them of God's good will and gracious inclination unto sinners, to beget in them good opinions of God and Christ this way, men naturally having hard and suspicious thoughts of both, as that speech of Christ implies, 'God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved,' John 3:17. Christ would never have hinted such a jealousy, nor suggested such thoughts to men's minds, had they not been in them before, and this to prevent and take off such jealousies. Men are apt to think that God had a design upon them as upon enemies, and laid but an ambushment for their further condemnation, in his treaty of peace tendered to them by his Son. An example of which we have in Luther, who fell into such suspicions as these, for he, misunderstanding some words he met with in the epistle to the Romans, as they were rendered by the vulgar translation then in use, namely, these, that 'God sent his Son to declare his righteousness' (as they are by us translated), he thought the meaning of them to have been this, 'to declare and set forth his judgment' on the world (so he interpreted *ad justitiam suam*, &c.). The truth is, the jealousies of men's thoughts herein were those that have put God to his oath, 'As I live, I will not the death of a sinner,' &c. So also Heb. 6:17. Men do not so usually question the power of God, he is able enough to save them they think; he is 'able to engraft them in,' as the apostle speaks to the Jews, Rom. 11:23; but all their doubts are about his will. God's will was the fountain and spring of our salvation, in the contriving of which he 'wrought all things according to the counsel of his own will,' as the apostle to the Ephesians speaks; and in another place it is said, 'He will have mercy on whom he will,' &c. And therefore the great queries in our hearts concerning the will of God towards us.

## **The Words of the Text Opened**

Now, these words of my text do hold forth the full willingness of both these two persons, both of God and of Christ.

1. Of Christ, he here professeth himself willing to entertain all that will come to him, 'He that will come to me, I will in no wise cast out.' Which words are not to be understood as if spoken only of casting out them that are already come unto him, as if they were only a promise against being cast off after being received, and so intending against fears of falling away; but they are chiefly intended as an invitement to all that are not yet come that they would come to him; and so, to express how ready and willing he is to entertain all comers, as one who sets his doors open, keeps open house, and beats back none that would come in, 'Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.' And though it may seem to be but a slender and sparing expression of his readiness to entertain such, to say only, 'I will not cast them out,' yet though he speaks with the least, yet he will do with the most, he being 'abundant in goodness and truth,' and one that is better than his word in the performance. As when he says, he will not despise a broken heart, is that all the esteem he will manifest to such a heart? Oh, no! it is the most welcome thing, and endeared frame of spirit that can be in any creature. His meaning is to shew what he elsewhere says of a meek spirit (which is all one with a broken heart), that with God it is 'of great price,' for so in Isaiah he expresseth himself. 'I that inhabit eternity, with whom will I dwell? with a spirit that is broken and contrite.' He useth also this expression of not casting them out, in relation, and for a more direct answer unto the fear which he knew usually possesseth the hearts of poor sinners when they are about to come to him; they fear he may reject them, they know not their entertainment, their welcome. To meet with this scruple, he says, 'I will not cast such out;' choosing rather thus to remove the doubt that is in their hearts, than to express the fulness of his own; the Scriptures speaking *potius ad cor nostrum quam cor suum*, rather unto our hearts, than fully what is in his own, which can never be done.

And yet, even in the diminutive expression, there is that inserted, which argues not only a willingness and readiness, but a resolvedness joined with the greatest care and faithfulness that can be, *ὅυ μὴ*, I will in no wise cast out. We may see his heart through

this little crevice; he doth herein as a faithful man, who, to give the more full assurance, puts in some binding word into his promise, as, I will at no hand, or in no wise, fail you. Thus does God also in that known promise, Heb. 13:5 (to the horns of which sanctuary many a soul hath fled for refuge), 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,' where there are no less than five negatives to bind and assure it, 'I will not,' 'in no wise' (&c.), leave thee.

Now this willingness of his, on his part, Christ shews by two things.

First, By that great journey he took from heaven to earth, and that to no other purpose but to save sinners. For this (says he) did I come down from heaven. Great actions of one who is wise, must answerably have great ends; now this was the greatest thing that ever was done, that the Son of God should come from heaven. And when there can be but one end of an action so great, that end must needs be accomplished, or else the action is wholly in vain. Now, in coming down from heaven, he could have no other end but the saving of sinners, he could have no other business to do that he did here, therefore the Scriptures put his coming into the world wholly upon this, to seek and to save that which was lost, and do attribute his taking upon him 'the likeness of sinful flesh' to have been 'for sin;' so Rom. 8:3. Though other ends might be supposed, and were accomplished by the assuming man's nature, yet he had no other end of taking frail flesh, especially there could be no other end of his dying, but merely and only for sin. John 12:24, he says, If he had not fallen to the ground and died, he had then remained in heaven alone, and no sinners had come thither; that therefore they might ascend to heaven, he descends from heaven, 'I came down from heaven,' &c.

Secondly, He demonstrates his willingness by this, that his Father had sent him on purpose to receive and to save sinners: 'I come,' says he 'to do the will of him who sent me;' and, John 8, he says, 'I come not of myself, but my Father he sent me.' And if he were sent by his Father to this end (as he affirms he was, and as by the coherence appears, for he makes it the reason why he will cast none out), then



certainly he will faithfully do the work he was sent for. In Heb. 3:1, he is called the 'apostle of our profession,' apostle, that is, one sent, so the word signifies; and what follows? 'who was faithful to him that appointed him.' Now, upon these considerations, Christ tells you that you may build upon him, that you shall certainly find him willing.

2. For his Father's willingness, he tells us we may be much more confident of it, for he puts his own willingness and all upon that: 'Him' (says he) 'that the Father gives me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me: and this is the Father's will, that he hath sent me;' &c. In which words you may observe both wherein he declares his Father to be engaged, and how much.

First, Wherein, and that by two things:

(1.) That he sent him to that end, and so it is his Father's business more than his own. So also, Luke 2:49, he expreseth himself, 'Shall I not do my Father's business?' as elsewhere in Isaiah he is called his Father's servant in it; and John 5:36, he makes it his Father's work.

(2.) Secondly, that he in a solemn manner gave unto him them whom he would have to be saved, with charge to lose none: 'All that the Father hath given me shall come unto me.' And this is his will, that I should lose none, but give him an account of every soul of them at the last day. They are given him as jewels, and as his Benjamins, to look to, and see to bring back and keep from destruction. Now whom he so solemnly gave to Christ to save, he will never cast away, when they shall come unto Christ.

Then, 2, he shews how much, and how deeply, his Father was engaged, and makes it his Father's will rather than his own: 'I come not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.' The meaning whereof is, not to shew that he came unwillingly, or receives sinners unwillingly, but that his Father's will was first in it (as I shall shew

anon), and so much in it, that, if you will resolve it into its first principles, Christ's coming was principally to please his Father. It is such a speech as that in John 5:22, 'The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son,' &c. Not that God is not a judge as well as Christ, for, Heb. 12:23, he is termed the 'judge of all men,' but because all judgment is visibly committed unto Christ; therefore the Father is said to judge no man. So here, because the Father's will is chief and first in it, Christ therefore says, he came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him.

And so you have the meaning of the words.

## **The Main Observation Out of the Words**

—Demonstrations of God's heart herein, from his engagements from everlasting.—How his heart stood to sinners afore the world was.

The observation which I single out of these words to insist upon, is this, that

Both God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son are fully willing and resolved to save sinners.

1. For God the Father. There are many demonstrations of his will herein, that may be taken ab extra from his oath, word, promise, &c., which I shall handle in another method; but those which I shall first hold forth are more intimate and intrinsical, and homogeneal to the argument which Christ useth here in the text; which we have seen to be these, that it was God's will first, and Christ's but because it was his—'I come not to do mine own will;' and that it was he that dealt with Christ about it, and wrought him off to it, and made it his business—'but the will of him that sent me.' So that the demonstrations which I shall pitch upon shall be drawn from God's engagements, both from his transactions with Christ from everlasting, before he came into the world, and those that now lie

upon him from Christ's having fully performed what he sent him into the world for. And from either may be fetched strong consolations and confirmations to our faith, that God's will must needs continue most serious and hearty to save sinners.

Many other sorts of demonstrations of this point might be fetched and drawn from the riches of his mercy, lying by him to bestow on some great purchase; and on what greater purchase could they be bestowed, to shew forth the glory thereof, than upon the salvation and pardon of sinners? But these also I shall at the present let lie by untold, having elsewhere counted them up and set them forth, such demonstrations being only proper to this text as argue an engagement of his will; whereas all those riches of mercy that are in him (although the moving cause of all) might have for ever remained in him as his nature, without any determination of his will to save any man. When therefore a poor sinner shall hear, besides the merciful disposition of God's nature, that acts and resolutions of his will have passed from him about the pardoning of sinners, so as his will hath engaged all the mercies of his nature to effect it, this brings in strong consolation.

Now the deepness of these engagements of his will to pardon sinners may be demonstrated,

(1.) From such transactions of his as were held by him with Christ from everlasting; which hath both put strong obligations upon him, and also argue him fully and firmly resolved to save sinners. Now all the particular passages of those treaties of his with Christ, about the reconciliation of sinners from everlasting, I have elsewhere also at large handled; and therefore it is not my scope now to enumerate them. I shall now only draw demonstrations from some few of them, by way of corollary, to help our faith in this point in hand, namely, God's resolvedness to pardon sinners.

The first is drawn from this, That God the Father had the first and chief hand in this matter of saving sinners, as I then shewed; the

project was his, and the first motion his.

[1.] The project; he laid the plot of it, and contrived all about it, for the effecting of it. Therefore, John 5:19, Christ says, 'The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do.'

[2.] The first motion was his. 'I came not to do mine own will,' says Christ, 'but the will of him that sent me.' Both which (project and first motion) are shut up in that one sentence, Eph. 1:11, 'He worketh all things by the counsel of his own will.' Now, for God thus to have the first hand in it, did put a great and deep engagement upon his will in it. We see among men, the projector and first motioner of a business is always most forward in it; because then it is most peculiarly his own, and the greater will be his honour in the compassing of it. How many great affairs have been spoiled, because some men have not been the chief and first in them, that affect the pre-eminence? Now this honour God the Father may challenge, that he was the first in reconciling and saving sinners. It is therefore called God's wisdom, Eph. 3:10, and his purpose, Eph. 1:9, God's righteousness, Rom. 1:17, and the pleasure of the Lord, Isa. 53:10.

Secondly, this project and motion did rise up in him unto a strong resolution and purpose, and to an unalterable decree to save sinners by Christ; so Eph. 1:9.

And [1.] for his purposes, they are immutable. Would not Paul lightly alter purposes taken up by him, 'When I therefore was thus minded (says he, 2 Cor. 1:17), did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea, yea, and nay, nay?' Would not Paul, I say, alter his purpose because he preached the gospel, and will God (think you) alter them, who gave the gospel? No; it is the 'eternal gospel,' Rev. 14:6, and God is of the same mind still, so it follows in that place to the Corinthians, 'But as God is true' (or varies not), 'so was our word to you,' which yet is his more than Paul's, &c.

[2.] For God's decrees, whereof this was one, they are also immutable. The great monarchs of the earth, the Persians, took to themselves that infallibility, that they would not alter the decrees which they made: therefore when a thing was unalterable, it was said to be 'as the laws of the Medes and Persians;' which was to shew their greatness and their wisdom, that they could so resolve as no person or power whatever should be strong enough to cause them to change their resolutions; and yet they were forced, though not to alter a former decree, yet to give countermands unto it, as Ahasuerus did; and men do alter, because they cannot foresee all events, and so cannot make unalterable decrees without prejudice. Therefore the pope, who takes on him the style of infallible, and so assumes to himself the highest prerogative that ever man did, yet of him it is said, *Papa nunquam ligat sibi manus*, that he never binds his own hands by any decree he makes, because he cannot foresee all inconveniences, notwithstanding whatever he assumes. But with God it is not thus, 'He is not a man that he should' have cause to 'repent,' for he knows and foresees all that can or will follow.

Now this immutability of his counsel he shews by two oaths; the first made to Christ, the second to us.

[1.] To Christ, Heb. 7:21, 'This priest (Christ) was made with an oath, by him that said unto him, The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, &c.' And this was from everlasting; for then it was that Christ was first made priest. Now then God foresaw that he could never have a relenting thought at the pardoning of sinners through him, this his Son would so satisfy and please him; and thereupon he sware.

[2.] To us, Heb. 6:17, 18, 'God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation,' &c. The thing I allege this place for, and which I would have observed, is, that this oath is not mentioned as that now which makes God so immutable, though

that be a truth; but God's oath is here made that whereby God did declare unto us the immutability of his purpose, formerly and from everlasting taken up, and so that immutability of his counsel was the cause of his oath, and that was to pardon sinners; for it is the promise made to Abraham and his seed that is there specified.

Yea [3.] God set his seal unto all further to confirm it. He both 'sealed Christ to the work,' John 6:27, and likewise sealed up in his decrees the persons of those sinners that shall be saved. 2 Tim. 2:19, 'The foundation of the Lord remains sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his.' And if it were but a king's seal, it could not be reversed; but this is God's. Yea, he hath sealed up their sins also by and through Christ, Dan. 9:24, never to be remembered or looked upon more.

Thirdly, God rested not in a decree only, but entered into covenant with Christ to save sinners by him if he would die. This covenant you have dialogue-wise set out, Isa. 49. First, Christ begins at the first and second verses, and shews his commission, telling God how he had called him, and fitted him for the work of redemption, and he would know what reward he should receive of him for so great an undertaking. God answers him, ver. 3, and at first offers low, only the elect of Israel. Christ who stood now a-making his bargain with him, thought these too few, and not worth so great a labour and work, because few of the Jews would come in, but would refuse him, therefore, ver. 4, he says, he should 'labour in vain,' if this were all his recompence; and yet withal he tells God, that seeing his heart was so much in saving sinners to satisfy him, he would do it however for those few, comforting himself with this, that his 'work was with the Lord.' Upon this God comes off more freely, and openeth his heart more largely to him, as meaning more amply to content him for his pains in dying. 'It is a light thing,' says God to him, 'that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob;' that is not worth the dying for, I value thy sufferings more than so, 'I will give thee for a salvation unto the ends of the earth.' Upon this he made a promise to Christ, Titus 1:2, and a promise is more than a purpose. A

purpose may be in one's self, as Eph. 1:9, but a promise is made to another. Now God cannot lie in himself, but most of all, not to his Son.

A second sort of demonstrations.—The engagements of God's heart to sinners, from and upon Christ's having died at his request.

A second sort of demonstrations are drawn from Christ's having already come and performed all this: for,

1. Christ is now to be satisfied for that his dying, as well as he by his death had satisfied God; he is now to have his reward. God never set any on work but he gave them wages. Thus unto Nebuchadnezzar he gave Egypt as his hire for his service at Tyre, and to Cyrus he gave hidden treasure. Now it is not Christ's own glory that will satisfy him; for that he could have had, and never have died; there remains therefore nothing that can or will satisfy him but to have the end of his death, 'to see his seed and be satisfied, and to see of the travail of his soul; and to justify many,' as it is, Isa. 53:11. He died, as himself speaks, John 12:24, that he might not be alone in heaven; his desire is, that those whom he died for might see his glory.

2. If we consider the act itself, of delivering Christ unto death, there was not, nor could there ever be, anything more abhorrent unto God; no act ever went so much against his heart; for if he be 'afflicted in all our afflictions,' and doth 'not willingly punish the sons of men,' neither 'wills the death of a sinner' that deserves it, much less would he will the death of his own Son. Now what was there to sweeten the death and sufferings of his Son unto him, except his end in it? for it is the end that sweetens and facilitates the means tending unto it. Now the end of Christ's death could be no other but to take sins away, and to procure the pardon of sinners; and so it must needs be infinitely delightful unto him, and his heart strongly set upon it, seeing it did sweeten unto him an act otherwise so abhorrent; and of this end therefore it is impossible he should ever repent. Now, Eph. 5:2, the very offering of Christ is called a 'sacrifice of a sweet smelling

savour;' and what was it that made it so, but even the end for which it was done, and which is there put upon it, that it was out of love unto us, and out of a mind to have sinners pardoned? For else in itself it must needs have been abominable unto him.

Again, 3. If at any time he would have repented him of his purpose, it would have been at the time of Christ's being crucified, when he came to bruise him: then his heart would have recoiled, and especially when Christ poured out his soul with such strong cries and tears as he did. At other times, in punishing but his children, we find, that when he comes to do it, his heart as it were fails him, as Hos. 11:8. 'How shall I give thee up?' The rod falls out of his hand, and his bowels yearn within him; yet he relented not when he saw the soul of his Joseph in bitterness, but still made an impossibility of it for him to avoid suffering, because his purpose was thereby to take sins away. Therefore Christ's request was, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass.' The necessity lay only in God's will in reference to this end, to forgive sins. If God would ever have relented or repented him of this purpose, it would have been then. We read of his repenting him of other of his works, but his mind is so fully carried to take away sins, that he did not then, or can ever repent of putting his own Son to death for the effecting of it. To pardon sinners is more natural to him than to kill his Son was unnatural. Now his end and purpose being thus fully set to pardon and save sinners, if he should be frustrated of this his end, he would then indeed repent him of using his Son as he had done. Nay, it is not only said that he repented not, but that 'it pleased him to bruise' Christ, in respect to that his end, which was so pleasant to him: so you have it, Isa. 53:10. And, therefore, surely it pleaseth him much more to pardon sinners, now he hath thus bruised him; and so indeed it follows there, 'The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.' It is spoken of his saving and justifying of sinners. It troubled God to hear a soul bemoan itself for its sin, Jer. 31:20, but we read not that it did so when Christ bemoaned himself in his sufferings; and the reason was, because the work that Christ was about to do was a sweet sacrifice to



him; and it would trouble God more to condemn a sinner that Christ died for, than it did to sacrifice Christ for him.

4. Upon that ancient agreement between God and Christ, God pardoned millions of men under the Old Testament upon the bare word of Christ, before he came into the world, or had paid one penny of the debt; he must needs therefore be supposed to be much more willing now to do it, when Christ has done all that was required, and failed not, and that at the due time, as it is said, Rom. 5. If Christ had failed to come short but of a little of what he was to do, God might have denied to let the world go upon trust any longer; but now Jesus Christ hath performed all, and is aforehand with him, and hath put in stock enough to pardon sinners to the end of the world.

Yet, 5. Now even justice itself will call upon him to discharge sinners, will not let him rest in quiet till he has pardoned and shewed mercy unto poor sinners that come to Christ, and hath given in their bond, and this, though we had no promise to shew for it, yea, though Christ himself had nothing to shew for it: God's very justice would trouble him (I may so speak with reverence, for he himself says, that he was 'troubled for Ephraim,' Jer. 31:20), till he had given out an acquittance, because he knows the debt is paid, and also, that Christ's and his own intent was, that when Christ had once died, sinners should thereby be justified. Even as if an honest man had a bond for a debt that is discharged lying still in his hands, of which payment he whose debt it is knows nothing, although he or they that paid this debt were dead, so that there were no one left that were able to challenge an acquittance from him, and a cancelling of that bond, yet mere honesty would cause him to give it in. Now Jesus Christ died, and God himself put him to death, merely to pay our debts; and, says Christ at his death, Let sinners require my blood, and the merits of it at thy hands, and have it out in pardon.

That was Christ's will that he made at his death, as you have it, Heb. 9:16, 17, where the apostle calls it 'a testament confirmed by the death of the testator.' Now there is nothing so sacred as the

performance of the will of the dead. And now Christ himself is alive again, and is ordained by God to be his own executor, and so lives to claim an acquittance; therefore certainly God will never withhold it. In justice he cannot, he will not, have a bond lie by him that is discharged. Hence it is said, that God is 'just to forgive our sins,' 1 John 1:9.

There are three things which do cry for justice, and all do meet in this.

(1.) The wages of a hireling (if detained) are said to cry. So in James 5:4, it is said, 'The wages of hirelings detained do cry in the ears of the Lord of Hosts.' They cry, wages being due in justice, and because God's justice is thereby provoked, and cannot be quiet till God hath avenged it. And so would Christ's satisfaction having been made for us; it would restlessly cry to God, and not suffer his justice to be quiet, unless we were pardoned. For he was truly and indeed God's hired servant in this work; and God covenanted to give him the salvation of those he died for as his wages and reward, as Isaiah often represents it, chap. 53, and elsewhere. So that if God be just, he must give forth salvation, otherwise Christ's obedience would cry as the work of an hireling doth for wages.

(2.) A second thing that cries for justice, is the will of one that is dead unperformed, who hath bequeathed legacies, and left wherewith to pay and discharge them. And this is yet a louder cry than the former. Now Christ, before he died, did thus make his will, and bequeathed pardon of sin and justification, and that eternal inheritance in heaven, as legacies to those for whom he died, and to be given out by God after his death, as I observed even now out of Heb. 9:15, 16, 17, where it is said that Christ was 'The Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death they who are called might receive the promise (or bequeathed legacy) of eternal life.' And thereupon, ver. 16, 17, the apostle calls this 'a testament confirmed by his death,' and which at his death 'began to be in force,' so ver. 17. And of all things in justice

that are held due, the performance of the will of the dead hath ever been held most sacred.

(3.) There is yet a third thing which cries for justice, and that is innocent blood spilt. And this cries louder than the rest. So Gen. 4:10. And the apostle, Heb. 12:24, sets forth the cry of Christ's blood for us, by Abel's blood crying against Cain.

It may be notwithstanding this, that God may put the bond in suit against a sinner, to make him come to acknowledge the debt, as the apostle there speaks, 'If we confess our sins.' But if any soul doth say, 'I have sinned and it profited me not;' God then cannot withhold from throwing down his bond cancelled, saying, 'Deliver him, I have found a ransom,' Job 33:24, God will not have innocent blood, such as his Son's is, to lie upon him. If he should not pardon sinners, Christ's blood would be upon him, for it was for them only that Christ died, being in himself innocent.

6. God mends not himself by damning those for whom Christ died. Now there were not only an injustice to Christ and us in it, but God himself also would prove a loser. For the end of Christ's death was not simply to satisfy justice, so as without it justice could not have permitted a pardon, that might have been dispensed with, but it was chiefly to declare the glory of God's justice, which required such a satisfaction, as the apostle says, Rom. 3:25, 'To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through God's forbearance.' It was, we see, the manifestation or declaration of the glory of his justice that he aimed at in it. So as if any one man's sin satisfied for by Christ should be left unforgiven, God's justice should lose so much glory. And if justice should think to get a greater glory out of the sinners, that could never be; for the sinner is unable ever to satisfy, and so to glorify God's justice by suffering, as Christ hath done. Yea, and besides, God would be a further and a greater loser in the glory of his mercy also, which by his pardoning sin is advanced.

## **The second part of the observation**

### **Demonstration of Christ's willingness to receive sinners that come to him.**

First, how his heart stood from everlasting.

And so now I come to Christ's willingness, which was the second thing propounded in the doctrine to be demonstrated. Now, though his will was not first in it (as was said), yet we shall find him to have been no less willing than his Father. As Christ in subsisting is the second person, and hath his personal subsistence from his Father, so he is second also in order of working, and consequently of willing too, yet he is not second to him in heartiness of willing; but as his Father and he are equal, so in all that his Father willeth, his will is equal with his Father, and so, is as much in this business as his.

In the demonstrating of this, I will take the same course that I did in the former:

First, I will shew how hearty he was in this, to have sinners saved, before he came into the world.

And secondly, how willing he was since he came into the world, and since his death and going out of the world.

And as a general introduction to either, I shall premise this, which shall be as the corner-stone in this building, joining both parts of this discourse together, and is a consequent of what hath formerly been delivered.

The thing to be premised is this: That if God the Father be willing, then Jesus Christ must needs be willing also, and look how much the will of the one is in it, so much the will of the other must be in it also, for 'the Father and he are all one.' And this will serve for our further

assurance of the wills of either; and we make use of it both ways, either to argue to our faith, that if the Father be willing, Christ must needs be so also; and that if Christ be willing, the Father is so also. That whereas some men's thoughts have been more taken up about, and so more taken with, the consideration of how much the Father's heart was in it, and how active and plotting he was about it; and again, other men's apprehensions have been carried more unto Christ's heart in the work; this demonstration which I have in hand shall be a help to the faith of either of these: so that if your hearts have a 'door of faith,' (as the apostle speaks) 'set open,' or a window to see either into God's heart or Christ's, you may raise a confidence of the one from the other, and so come to be sure of both.

And this also I do first mention, because it is the most intrinsical bottom demonstration that can be made of Christ's willingness, and is the utmost reason of it.

This demonstration I found upon John 10:30, 'I and my Father are one.' That whereas in this my text he shews how his Father's will and his agree in one, he there gives the reason of it, for (says he) we are one; and the words there, as they stand in their coherence, are proper to the purpose in hand. For Christ there allegeth them as the reason why his heart, and power, and all in him is so engaged for the salvation of his own, that if he have any power in him, and be able to do anything, 'not one of them shall perish,' because 'his Father and he are one.' For, mark the occasion upon which he speaks this, it is the same that here in my text. He had been speaking of saving his sheep, and of his power and will to save them; and concludes, that 'they shall never perish.' And he says not only that he will never cast them out (as here), but that 'neither shall any man pluck them out of his hand.' And in that speech he shews and utters the strength of his will as much as of his power. For otherwise, although his hand of power had been never so potent to have held them against all opposition, yet if his will had not as strongly resolved to hold them in his hand, and so, if they were not as deep in his heart as they are fast in his hands, this speech of his had not been made good, that 'they

shall never perish.' And then he gives the reason both of this resoluteness of his will and this prevalency of his power from his Father's both will and power, engaged as much as his own, in this fulness.\* 'My Father,' says he, 'that gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hands.' He pleads here, first, his Father's will—'He gave them me;' and then, secondly, his power, whom these Jews he spake to acknowledged greater than all, though him they did not. 'He is greater than all; none can pluck them out of his hands;' and then argues to himself, 'My Father and I are one.' One in nature, therefore much more in will. Two persons that have distinct essence may yet be one in will, as the ten kings are said to be of one mind when they agreed in one thing, Rev. 17:13, 17; so Acts 4:32, it is said that they that believed were of 'one heart and of one soul,' that is, in judgment and consent of mind. But Christ and God the Father are one yet nearer, one in nature, and therefore much more entire in will, for by nature they have but one will between them. And that place speaks at once in relation to both their willingness to save, as to both their powers to save sinners. And this is not only an argument that they did both agree, and were like to agree, in it, but that they can never disagree. Two that essentially have two wills, though for the present agreeing in one, yet it may be supposed that they may come to disagree, and not will the same thing; but if they essentially have but one will, it is impossible then but that they must ever agree. This great security, therefore, doth Christ give for the salvation of sinners. You have not only two persons engaged, persons greater than all, but all that is in them engaged, both their power and will; and what more can be desired? And if the one holds his purpose, the other must also, for they are one. You have the oneness of God and Christ given you for security; so that if they can never be made two, and wrought asunder, then sinners must needs be saved. Till these two persons do disagree, you are sure enough; and they must cease to be ere they can cease to agree, for they are one, and one in being.

We have another testimony as full as this, 1 John 5:7: 'There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy

Ghost' (we are yet surer, here is a third person that comes in), 'and these three are one.' Now, what is the thing that these do witness unto? Ver. 11 it follows, 'This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.' Here their truth is pawned, as in that other place their power was, for the apostle allegeth this as such a truth as they all agree and stand in to make good. And to prove this, he says (as in that other place, John 10) that 'these three are one,' that is, one in nature, therefore one in will, and so also one in witness to this truth. He says not only they agree in one, for you shall observe that whereas there are three other witnesses mentioned to be on earth, there is this difference put between their concurrency in their testimonies and that of these, that 'they agree in one' (so ver. 8), but there is more said of these, namely, that they are one, that is, in nature, and so in will and purpose, and so must needs much more agree in one. Now, that thing which their wills and testimonies and all agree in is, as hath been said, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son, to all that shall come for it. So that for demonstrations of this I need go no further. If there be any will, power, or truth in these persons, sinners shall be saved.

This being premised, as the most bottom ground of Christ's being at first, and his continuing to be for ever, willing to pardon sinners, let us more particularly see, first, how his heart stood to the salvation of them before to come into the world; and then, secondly, how it stood inclined unto it after he was come; and what confirmations our faith may have from both. So that the thing I am herein to speak to is not so much his willingness to the work of redemption itself (that I have elsewhere handled apart), but his willingness and readiness to save sinners.

1. Let us see how his heart stood to this before the world was, and before he came into it. And for this we find that his delights were set upon it; so Prov. 8:31, 'Rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men:' which words are more properly spoken of Christ than of God the Father, and therefore I produce them under this head. For they are said to be spoken by

Wisdom, that is, Christ himself, he therein shewing how his mind stood towards us before the world began; for he speaks what he and his Father did 'before the mountains were,' &c. 'I was set up from everlasting,' ver. 22. 'Then I was by him,' &c., ver. 30. And how did they pass away that long ævum, as the apostle calls it? In nothing but rejoicing and delights. He there speaks of nothing else that they did. And what was the matter of delight unto them?

(1.) He and his Father delighted one in another, ver. 30.

(2.) In the salvation of men, 'My delights were with the sons of men,' so ver. 31. And he speaks of men as fallen, for it is said in the beginning of the same verse that he 'rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth,' which is spoken not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles too, and of men all the earth over. Now, first, delights arise out of the strongest and choicest desires. Men are pleased with many things in which they delight not. Christ's heart and desires must needs have been most on that which his delights are in. Again, secondly, the greater the persons are, and the greater their minds are, the greater are their delights. Things of great concernment are usually the objects which are the delights of kings, and which they take pleasure in. Now, the great God and Jesus Christ singled out the pardon and reconciliation of sinners for their chief delights.

(3.) Their delight herein is mentioned, and in no other work of theirs; not the angels, nor the world, nor anything in it.

(4.) This their delight is mentioned next to their delighting in each other.

(5.) And fifthly, this delight he took aforehand, whilst his heart was only in the expectation of it, and his mind but laying the plot of it. He delights in it ere he doth it. And if all this joy of his be only in the thoughts of it, how much more will it delight him when he comes to do it? All this argues how great a matter this was in his esteem, and how much his heart was in it, and that from everlasting.



## **Demonstrations From the Disposition of Christ's Heart, and his Carriage upon Earth.**

—As also some engagements since his death.

2. In the second place, when Christ had assumed our nature, and whilst he remained upon earth, how did this disposition of his abound in him? It were endless to give all the instances that his story and sermons do afford hereof. See but how welcome all sorts of sinners were at all times unto him. He cast out none that acknowledged him for the Messiah; he turned none away that gave up their souls unto him to be saved his own way. He was indeed most reserved unto that rich young man of any other, yet he used him courteously—the text saith, 'he loved him.' Christ turned him not away, but directed him the right way to follow him; and he went away of himself, undervaluing Christ to his possessions. And another time Christ indeed seems to discourage the Canaanitish woman, and put her away, calling her dog. But it was only in words; for underhand he strongly draws her heart to him by his Spirit, and suggests thereby to her heart by way of answer, a consideration of the highest faith towards him, that dogs might partake of the crumbs that fall from their master's table. I instance in these, because I would prevent and remove any exception which might be taken from them. For otherwise Christ's professed entertainment of all sinners was so open and notorious, as it was turned into his disgrace and opprobry, that he was 'a friend to publicans and sinners;' which yet he owns and glories in, professing that he 'came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' And how glad he was when any such came in unto him, he sufficiently expresseth by those parables on purpose taken up, of the joy of the prodigal's father for his return,

and of the rejoicing for the finding of the lost groat, and likewise of the lost sheep, more than of the ninety and nine.

We read of Christ's joy but seldom, and when it is at any time recorded, it is at the conversion of souls. He had little else to comfort himself in, being a man of sorrows; and he had nothing else on earth which he took delight or pleasure in. When he was converting the poor woman of Samaria, which he doth as a pleasure and recreation to him, he forgets his meat, although before he had been very hungry, and tells his disciples that he had 'meat which they knew not of,' which was indeed the saving that poor woman's soul. In Luke 10:21, we read that Jesus rejoiced in his spirit; but observe the occasion. He had sent out his disciples to preach the gospel, and they had in his name and through his power cast out devils. He bids them not rejoice in that, ver. 20, but shews them what they should rejoice in, by his own example, and by what most comforted him. 'Father' (says he) 'I thank thee that thou hast revealed these things unto babes.' This in the next words following recorded to be the matter of his rejoicing, he saw now an handsel, and an experiment of the fruit of his disciples' ministry, and comforted himself beforehand, in that as their souls had, so others of the poorer and meaner sort should thus come in unto him.

We find him at another time in like manner rejoicing, namely, in the story of his raising Lazarus, John 11:15. And what was it for? Not that himself should be glorified by so great a miracle, even the greatest that ever he wrought, but, says he, 'I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the end that you might believe.' He rejoiceth if any of his got a little more or further degree of faith. And on the other side, as sorry was he when men came not in. Witness his tears over Jerusalem, and those speeches of his, John 5:34, 'These things I speak, that you might be saved.' And thereupon in the ensuing verse he complainingly utters himself, 'You will not' (says he) 'come to me, that you may have life.' He speaks as one greedy of winning souls, and as sorry that any customers or hearers of his should pass by, and not turn in; 'You will not come to me,' &c. And he relieves himself

with this, that there were others that would, though they would not. So here in this place, when in the verse before my text he had complained of them, that they would not believe, he comforts himself with this in the words of the text, 'All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me.' And the like you have, John 10:25, 26, 'You believe not; but my sheep, they hear my voice,' &c.

And then at his death, when he was upon the cross, he then converts a thief that was crucified with him, and prays for those that crucified him. And after his resurrection his last words recorded in Luke 24:47 are, 'That remission of sins should be preached in his name, beginning at Jerusalem; that so those whom he had prayed for, though they had crucified him, might be converted and saved. Thus stood his heart all the while he was on earth, both before and after his death.

3. And then, in the third place, now that he hath died and laid down that price which was to purchase the salvation of sinners, he must needs be much more willing, if it were possible he should be, than ever. Many demonstrations there are from those obligations which Christ's sufferings and death do put upon him, which I have already given in a treatise upon this very argument, *The Heart of Christ in Heaven*, Part II. Only I have reserved one or two for this place. As,

(1.) It was the aim and utmost intent of Christ's soul, in his being crucified, to have sinners saved, and saved effectually. It was that travail which his heart was then big with. And certainly Christ would not that so many and so great sufferings, now that they are past and over, should be in vain. The apostle makes a motive of it unto the Galatians, 'Are ye so foolish?... Have ye suffered so many things in vain?' Gal. 3:3, 4. To be sure Christ's death shall not be in vain; he will not lose the end of his sufferings (as the same apostle intimates but four verses before, chap. 2:21). A business that a man hath prayed for much, how doth he long to see it accomplished and fulfilled! And how glad is he when it falls out as he hath prayed! And why but because it is the fruit of his prayers? Now, much more glad

is Christ to see the fruit of his death, 'the travail of his soul,' and thereby is 'satisfied,' Isa. 53:10, a place I often quote to this purpose. I will add but this to it. When a woman hath been in travail, she forgets all her pains for joy that a man-child is born, which is the fruit of that her travail; and so doth Christ. And then again for that other word, that Christ is said to be 'satisfied;' satisfaction is the accomplishment of desire, or the fulfilling of one's longings. So in that speech of Christ, 'Blessed are those that hunger, for they shall be satisfied.' So that this doth argue and presuppose the most vehement desires and longings in Christ for the salvation of souls, and his having died must needs increase them.

And (2.) add this engagement unto that former, that his death can be put to no other use than for the pardon of sinners. So as if he should not expend it that way, he should utterly lose the fruit of it, or let it lie useless by him. For divert it to any other use he cannot. And yet if he knew how to improve it to any other purpose, yet his love (he having intended it for the sons of men) would not suffer him to do it. But besides, if it be not employed and bestowed this way, it will be wholly in vain; for the good angels, though they stand in need of his personal mediation, to confirm them in grace, yet his blood was not requisite thereunto. And for the bad angels, they are utterly excluded the benefit of it. And then Christ himself, he stands in no need of it, nor can he have any benefit by it, all that personal glory which now he hath in heaven being due unto him by that hypostatical union. So that his death serves for no end if not for this. Christ indeed hath an honour in heaven besides the glory of the personal union; but then it ariseth to him from the salvation of sinners through his death, which salvation is the purchase of his blood; as you have it, Eph. 1, which might afford a third engagement, in that Christ should not only lose the fruit of his death, but that glory that is ordained him by the salvation of men. So that he should be a loser not only of his sufferings by-past, but of all that glory that is to come from the salvation of believers, which is no small thing unto him. As officers in courts of law, or in universities, get the more fees, the more clients and the more commencers there are, so it is the more for Jesus

Christ's gain that many sinners get out, and are received to grace and mercy.

Some extrinsical demonstrations of God's and Christ's willingness to pardon sinners.

And unto all these secret engagements both of God and Christ mutually to each other, and to us, we may add all the professed publications of their minds herein unto us, which have been made upon all occasions and by all means possible. As,

First, This news hath been published by all three persons: first, God the Father he began to preach it to Adam in paradise, and hath renewed it again and again, as with his own immediate voice from heaven when Christ was baptized, 'This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him;' which the apostle Peter records and confirms, as spoken a second time upon the mount, as a matter of highest moment to be known by us, 'which voice he heard' (says he), 'and is no fable,' 2 Pet. 1:16, 17.

Secondly, Christ who is 'the faithful and true witness,' Rev. 1:5, he came from the bosom of his Father, and preached peace, Eph. 2:17. Yea, and it was one of his first texts he preached upon, Luke 4:18, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel, to preach deliverance to the captives.'

Thirdly, The Holy Ghost he also herewith bearing witness, that 'God hath exalted Christ to be a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins,' Acts 5:31, 32. And so Heb. 2:4. And these are these 'three witnesses in heaven,' 1 John 5:7, whose record as it follows is this, 'that there is life to be had in his Son Jesus Christ,' ver. 11.

Secondly, God hath published this news both by all creatures reasonable, and to all creatures reasonable.

First, The angels they came and preached it, singing, 'Peace on earth, good will towards men,' Luke 2:13, 14.

Secondly, By men; and to that end he hath given gifts to men, powerful and full of glory, Eph. 4:8, &c. And a commission with those gifts, a most large and gracious one. 'And he hath committed to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself,' 2 Cor. 5:20.

Yea, and thirdly, he hath maintained this ministry in all ages, even to our times, all times have rung of the news hereof, and the world is still full of his ambassadors to treat with men about this peace, and they are to proclaim that he is fully willing; and upon that ground, to beseech men to be reconciled, and so long as lieger ambassadors reside uncalled home or not sent for away, so long the treaty of peace holds.

Fourthly, He hath proclaimed this by these his ambassadors in all places; he bade them go and preach it to all the world, 'to every creature,' Mark 16:15. And his disciples did accordingly. Now he would not have had it spoken so openly and generally, if he were not most serious in it.

Fifthly, Add to this, that he hath declared it by all ways and means that do argue faithfulness and seriousness.

(First.) Not by bare word of mouth, but we have it under his hand, he hath left his mind in writing. This book, which is dropped from heaven, the title of it is, 'The word of reconciliation,' 2 Cor. 5:19, the main argument of it being reconciliation. In this book we find proclamation sent forth after proclamation, book after book, line after line, all written to this end, that we sinners 'might have hope and strong consolation,' as the apostle witnesseth.

(Secondly.) He hath added to this writing those seals of the sacraments, and further, an oath to both, and that made advisedly with the greatest earnestness and deliberation that might be, Heb.

6:17, 'God willing' (the text says) 'more abundantly to manifest this his intent, the immutability of his counsel, he confirmed that promise with an oath; that by two immutable things, his word and oath, we might have strong consolation.'

(Thirdly.) If this be not sufficient, he hath pawned heaven and earth, the 'covenant of day and night,' in mortgage to forgive iniquity and pardon sinners. Thus, Jer. 31:34, 35, 36, 'This is my covenant (says God there), that I will forgive their iniquities, and remember their sins no more.' So ver. 34, and then it follows, ver. 35, 'Thus saith the Lord, who giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and stars for a light by night: if those ordinances depart from before me, then the seed of Israel,' &c. The like you have, chap. 33:25, 26. Day and night we see stand still, and therefore this covenant holds good still. But we have a greater pawn than this, the death of his Son.

And lastly, Let his actions and courses, which he hath taken from the beginning of the world, speak for all the rest; as Satan hath been a murderer from the beginning, so God hath been a Saviour from the beginning, and Christ is the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world. God began with the first of mankind, even with Adam and Eve, the ringleaders, the heads of this rebellion, who drew all the rest of the world into that enmity, these were yet reconciled. Kings usually hang up the heads and chief in treasons, for examples of their justice, though they pardon others; yet these did God save and pardon as examples of his mercy, to all that should come of them; and it is observable that the first thing he did, after the world was fallen, was this act of mercy, both in preaching this gospel and in pardoning them, he began to do that soon, which he meant to be always a-doing to the end of the world: it argues he delights in it, yea, and according to Christ's last promise on earth, that he would 'be with us to the end of the world.' God is to this day reconciling the world of men to himself; some that walk in your streets by you, live among you. And he will have thousands when you are gone, and

what are these but as flags, and patterns of mercy, hung forth by God to toll and bring others in, as Eph. 2:7.

Use. What should the consideration of these things work in our hearts, but what the scope of the text itself puts men upon, even that they would come in unto Christ, and believe on him, and give up their souls unto him? 'He that believes shall in no wise be cast out.' As Christ therefore is willing, so should we be 'a willing people.' That which keeps men off is, that they know not Christ's mind and heart. Think it not to be an indifferent thing to him whether you believe or no, as if he came into the world to do this duty of dying for sinners singly in obedience to his Father, so that men might be rendered saveable if they will; and that however, if they will not, he yet hath enough to satisfy and quiet himself with, even this, that he shall be glorified in what he hath done, though few or none of the sons of men be saved. It is a prejudicial doctrine this to the salvation of men, and derogatory to Christ's free love. What, do we think that Jesus Christ is gone to heaven, there to complain unto angels of the unkindness and hardness of men's hearts, that will not turn to him notwithstanding he hath done so much, and to tell what he had done for them, and what they would not be persuaded to do for themselves; and that so he can sufficiently please himself with such just complaints? No, surely; our effectual salvation concerns him more than so; and his heart is more fully bent upon it than thus to leave it. Of what he hath bought he will lose nothing. The truth is, he is more glad of us than we can be of him. The father of the prodigal was the forwarder of the two to that joyful meeting. Hast thou a mind? He that came down from heaven, as himself saith in the text, to die for thee, will meet thee more than half way, as the prodigal's father is said to do, by his Spirit: he will send him from heaven to thee, and at the latter day himself will come again to fetch thee and receive thee to himself. If among the angels in heaven there be joy at the conversion of a sinner, how much more joy is there in Christ's heart? If there be joy in the bedchamber-men (as John speaks) what joy is there in the bridegroom's heart? Or if among the standers by, when a man-child is born into the world, how much more doth the



mother that was in travail for it, as Christ's soul was, how much more doth she rejoice? O therefore come in unto him. If you knew his heart you would. As they that crucified him knew him not, so neither do those who believe not in him. If you had been on earth with him, or if he were now here, and had this day preached these things unto you, and uttered these his own desires and longings after you; how would you in troops go all thronging after him when the sermon were done, and each of you come about him, as those that had diseases did, and beseech him to pardon and save you, and not leave him till you have obtained some word of comfort and favour from him! Let me tell you, he had preached this day, but that he had other business to do for you in heaven, where he is now praying and interceding for you, even when you are sinning; as on earth we see he did for the Jews when they were a-crucifying him. Now because he could not for this other business come himself, he therefore sends us his ambassadors, and we in Christ's stead do beseech you; and it is as if 'Christ by us did beseech you;' and we preach but such things as were 'first spoken by the Lord himself,' as it is in Heb. 2:3. And he sends his Spirit, and continues to give gifts unto men to this very day; and in all these respects, whenever the gospel is preached, he is said to 'speak from heaven.' Refuse not him that speaks from heaven, Heb. 12:25. And though you have not his bodily presence, as they had who heard himself preach here on earth, yet you may by faith have as free an access unto him, and know as surely that he hears you, as if he were in the same room with you. Retire, therefore, into your closet, and treat with him in private, and there press these things on him; say them all over again unto himself, and ask him if they be not true; get the match struck up between thy soul and him, which if once made will never be undone again. Say unto him, Lord, why may it not be made up now? Only let me add this: see you come not to him without a wedding-garment, and without wedding affections. Take up a resolution to love him. For if thou comest to him, what dost thou come for? Pardon of sins. And what is it in him that must procure that? His having died for thee; that was it. And what was it that moved him to die? An infinite love; such a love, as were the thing yet to be done, he would certainly do it, and die to satisfy God for thee.

Now then, seeing he hath already done it out of such a love, with what face canst thou ask pardon of him, as the effect of such a love, and not love him again, and obey him in all things? But to make short with you, know this, that if you will not come in to him, thou wilt be damned. So saith Christ, 'He that believes shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned.' And I could tell you another, and as large a story of Christ's wrath against those that refuse him, as I have told you of his love. The Lamb can be angry, for he is a Lion also. 'O consider this therefore, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you.'

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