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# FOURTEEN COMMUNION SERMONS

**SAMUEL RUTHERFORD**

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SERMONS**

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# **Fourteen Communion Sermons**

**By Samuel Rutherford**

**WITH A**

**PREFACE AND NOTES**

**BY REV. ANDREW A. BONAR, D.D.**

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## **PREFACE**

ALL who relish "Samuel Rutherford's Letters" will welcome the reprint of this volume, entitled, when first printed, "Collection of Valuable Sermons Preached by him at Sacramental Occasions, in the years 1630, 1634, and 1637." I have added two discourses to the collection, one preached in 1630, and another in 1633, and also what is commonly called a Communion Address, delivered in London.

All breathe the same spirit as the famous "Letters," and are full of racy remark and illustration, bearing on scriptural doctrine and Christian experience.

The Sermons were not published by himself, but from the notes of hearers, and so there are some awkward sentences and clauses. But still they are exceedingly valuable. The first nine sermons were originally printed at Glasgow, "from an old manuscript." The rest have frequently appeared in various forms. A Sermon, which bears the title, "The Cruel Watchman," and a fragment, "Christ's Voice from Heaven," are not genuine, and so are not included in this collection. His only other Sermons are that on Luke 8:22, preached

before the House of Commons, 1644, and that on Daniel 6:26, preached before the House of Lords, 1645.

ANDREW A. BONAR.

GLASGOW, 1876.

## **PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION**

THE first issue of two thousand copies has been sold off within a year. In the meantime, two more of S. Rutherford's Sacramental Sermons have been sent to the Editor by friends who had them in their possession, and were happy to offer this addition to the First Twelve. They are given in this volume.

ANDREW A. BONAR.

GLASGOW, 1877.

# COMMUNION SERMONS

## SERMON I.—Revelation 19:11, 12, 13, 14

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war, &c.—Revelation 19:11, 12, 13, 14.

CHRIST is here brought in triumphing on horseback, and His armies following Him upon white horses. Here Christ is discovered gloriously: 1. From His triumph, on horseback. 2. From His style, Faithful and True. 3. From His righteousness in government. 4. From His head, His eyes, His name, His habit, His convoy, His power of the sword, and His high style. KING OF KINGS, &c., which are all here set down.

Before ever John see this triumph of Christ over Antichrist, he sees "Heaven opened," which shews him a new revelation. For, until God open the door, and glance<sup>†</sup> from heaven with new light, we never do certainly believe that Christ shall win the battle. If God's door be closed, and our eyes be darkened, we think we see Christ going on foot, persecuted and banished, and put to the worse; then we begin to droop and die, and cast away our confidence, as Elias did. But we have faith and hope when a window is opened in heaven to give us light, but until then, no marvel the saints have their faith to seek. David said, One day or other, I shall fall by the hand of Saul; and yet he had that promise, that he should live and be king. He had then many experiences; how comes this then, that he was in the dark? Here is a reason; God had closed the door. We think no more of our trouble, but at first\* by faith and hope to open our King's door, and in to Him, and be stayed with flagons, and comforted with apples. No, but God will cause His children to come and stand, and pant, and cry, and wait upon an open door. And yet they are believing

though they know it not, they are waiting on for faith though they know it not; and howbeit they think they believe not, yet that is believing to one of His children. And therefore howbeit our Lord keep a good house, His children will get leave to sleep and mourn twenty-four hours for bread. God loves a hungry child that's aye crying for bread. Nay, I say it is more glory to God, to knock a while at a locked door, than if the door were open to us night and day. We see not that hunger is often better for us than a full stomach. In hunger we seek and cry, and it pleases God; but when we are full, we can lay ourselves down in the sun and fall asleep.

"And behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True."—Here we have a glorious description of Christ; as also in Song 3:10; Col. 1:15, 16, 17; Rev. 3:14. And wherefore is all this? I think it is a putting Christ to open market, a commending of Him as highly worth the buying. What think ye of Him? Well, is He not a lovely one, a sweet excellent person? Saw ye ever the like of Him? (I will talk of this and the convoy, and let you see both together). Where is Christ? He is triumphing upon a white horse, and the saints, His armies at His back, following Him on horseback in white. Here indeed is a fair company of horsemen, all in white! Here all are in one livery; Christ is the Captain or Colonel, and all His company, His armies with Him. Christ and all His Elect are a fair company together, and a well-favoured sight. "And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads" (Rev. 14:1). "Behold, I and the children whom thou hast given me" (Isa. 8:18). I think he would say, Am not I and my children a pleasant sight? Judge ye then what a sight it will be at the last day, when Christ, having ended His court, and the saints have met Him in the air, He and they shall go back again to heaven, and He shall come in at the door with such majesty, and all the first-born, the fair bairntene,\* the whole Elect, nations, tongues, languages and people, that none can number, at His back, every one of them as fair as the sun! And He shall present them as a gift to the Father. "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all

nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands" (Rev. 7:9). In very deed, then, he is a happy man who is amongst them; for that must be a glad meeting for evermore, when we shall meet with the Bridegroom. This white horse that Christ rides on, teaches nothing else than that He triumphs in Himself, and His cause and truth. He rode through death and hell, and was never thrown off the saddle. Nay, upon the cross, "having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:15). "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18). Here is Christ riding over hell and death upon His triumphant horse, and breaking the wards, and taking the keys of the prison with Him. And is He not daily posting upon this horse? Has He not ridden like a victorious Lord through Germany, and sparkled dirt upon the Beast's face, and the false Prophet? Ye will say, Christ loseth a battle sometimes. I grant you, Christ's horse seems to snapper\* sometimes, and is upon his knees, but he doth not fall. Nay, even when the woman is chased, by the Dragon, to the wilderness, Christ keeps the saddle and bridle; the devil cannot lay Him on the breadth of His back, and take His horse from Him. The horse seemed to lose a stroke in a mire, when Christ cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and when the Kirk was in captivity, at the river of Babel, weeping like a poor silly captive. But believe me, Christ will win the race, and will get the gold,<sup>†</sup> and we shall get a part of it. Christ in His members will get a fall, but He will rise again and win the field, say all what ye will. He will yet ride in Scotland, and win the race. Ken ye what He said? (2 Cor. 4:9), "Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

"Faithful and True."—So is He called the Faithful and True witness, the Amen, who spake the truth betwixt God and us, and told us all that ever He heard of the Father. And these styles the Lord Jesus gets because all the promises of God, made to us, are fastened to Christ, as so many bonds that God has given us in the gospel. Says Christ,



"He that believeth on Me, is passed from death to life;—he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father; and we will come into him, and make our abode with him;—he that overcometh, shall eat of the tree of life." Christ's name is in all the bonds, in all the bargains betwixt God and us. Christ is aye one, and He is a Cautioner, not only for us but with us; for God challenged Him for our debt, and He, as Faithful and True, answered without bout-gates,\* and was very honest in His word to His Father. He is (let me speak so) God's Cautioner to us, taking on Him that God shall keep true to us. This is a point not considered as it should be by us; for there is not a promise made to the true believer, but he may challenge Christ for it by law; though it is the law of the new Covenant. But in this good sense, Christ is God's debtor, and He is become our debtor. Indeed Christ is fastened in the Mediator's chair and offices, with strong nails and iron wedges, on both sides: God hath bound Him by law. "For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed" (Isaiah 50:7). There Christ says, I am bound, but I hope I shall not die in my bonds: I shall be true both to God and man: I hope I shall have no shame of my handy-works. Then we are far in the wrong to Christ, when we believe not. Nay, ye say ye dare not yet believe. Ye say ye are aye doubting. Ken ye what ye say, when ye say that? Ye are even saying, I fear Christ play me a slip: I fear Christ be but a false promiser. I say it is wrong to believe a falsehood of an honest man; for, thou that wilt not believe the promises, thou art saying the Lord Jesus Christ is but a double\* dyvour: "He that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar" (1 John 5:10). Now when the text says Christ is Faithful and True, this is the King's broad seal for your salvation; and aye the truer Christ be, it is the better for you. For when in judgment your salvation is questioned, and your sins come in<sup>†</sup> reckoning, whether they be satisfied for, or not, ye may see an easy way. Say ye, Lord, ask at Christ, the faithful witness, if they be not taken away. Christ is one of the sworn men (if we may so speak) upon His conscience for clearing of you, and He is Faithful and True, and will tell the truth. And will Christ get it denied, what scourges, whips, and strokes, He suffered for you? Nay, indeed we

have gotten, I think, a strong hold of salvation, when we have gotten it laid over on Christ the Faithful and True. It is much that a faithful man is in office, and that he keeps all the writs in the country; and if he keeps the register who is faithful, true, and an honest witness, then all the writs and charters are safe. The writs you and I have for heaven, are all in Christ's hand, and ye should aye be looking them over.

"In righteousness He doth judge and make war."—He rendereth to every man according to his works; but in battles amongst men, much blood is spilt, falsehood, and violence used, while those who may be strongest, whether it be right or not, keep the field. Nay in very deed, are not kingdoms often ruined by opposite parties, who rent them in pieces amongst them? As to Nebuchadnezzar's, the Medes, and Persians did. They draw it among them, and the thing they get is a fine web of linen, a bit of a kingdom with an ill conscience, which never does them good. They are like so many men striving about a leme\* vessel; he draws, and he draws, and the one pulls the side from the vessel, and breaks it in pieces: So conquerors, when they have subdued a kingdom, are like those who get the leme vessel, that seldom bides the second heir. Christ makes not war with the shedding of innocent blood; when He takes in a city, He plays not foul play as other captains do, where often the soldier's right to a country is by the point of the sword; for there is no difference betwixt his sword, his conscience, and his musket. But it is not so with Christ. How then? 1. When Christ takes in a city, nation or country, He has God's right to it, and His Father's promise of it (Psalm 2:8; Psalm 72:8). "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." 2. When besieged men render and give up themselves to Christ, O! but they get good quarters from Him! They live and are not made captives, but kings and priests to God. Christ's captives have a king's life of it. 3. Christ makes not war in a passion, but sweetly to His people in the end, though seemingly bitter at the first. But when Christ's enemies who get the worse, are all driven to pieces with a rod of iron, they have no comfort; yet He hath done them no wrong, He hath made His war in righteousness.

Then ye who are His enemies shall never be cured nor healed again, nor yet by Him pitied; nay, let Christ drive an enemy all to flinders, He doth it by laws God bade Him. Who will then gather them or mend them? Oh! there is no balm, no cure for the mending of Christ's wounds again. But there is sweetness, and comfort to those whom Christ takes in, and sets on to win them to the obedience of the gospel. He has good right to you, and has God's warrant to have you. Has Christ fought a battle with the devil and sin, and hath He won you? Then He hath better right to you than you have to the coat on your back. Be glad ye are His own; He wan you with the sweat of His brow. It is true, ye deserve not Christ, but indeed He deserves you; therefore be glad and humble, for Christ will not want His own. Who can rob, spoil, and oppress Christ? I know well He is able to hold His own with the best of them. Then fear not that ye be lost, for Christ's right cannot be broken, God must give Him justice and law, and by law you are His; for open market-right is a good right, and Christ has that of you.

Verse 12.—"His eyes were as a flame of fire."—Fire flies out of His eyes, to cause His enemies flee and hide themselves. "And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of the Lamb" (Rev. 6:15, 16). What is the matter they are so afraid, when Christ had not as yet laid a finger-end upon them? What then, saw they in His fiery eyes? They saw fire in His face: Hide us, say they, from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. "There went up a smoke out of His nostrils, and fire out of His mouth: coals were kindled by it" (Psalm 18:8). When there is such a fire and anger in His face, how soon, with a frown of His countenance, will He make the hearts of His enemies to melt like wax? And this fire of His eyes will soon burn up the chaff and stubble. A glance of His fiery eye made Belshazzar's knees to shake and strike one against another. Then what wisdom is it for men to be sporting with Christ, and pulling at His Crown, and

playing with His Sceptre? Surely I think them like a child thrusting up a stick in the nose of a sleeping lion, and pulling his beard; which is no wise play. Is it good play for fools (like bairns) to be sporting and playing with the Lion of the tribe of Judah? I think they are now scorning Christ, and breaking a jest upon Him; but one stroke of His paw, one of Christ's roars when He is angry, will cause them all to take a back-side. Fire shall go before Him, and shall devour and burn all His enemies.

"And on His head were many crowns."—I tell thee or ever\* I go further, O believer, thou need not think shame of thy master. Saul went to the devil in the night; but he that serveth Christ may not think shame of his master; he may think it an honour to go to Him in fair day-light. He is more than a double king. For as He is God essential with the Father and Holy Spirit, He is an honourable Lord. All the kingdoms of the earth are His; all the crowns in the world; (of Britain, France, Spain, Israel and Judah, and tell\* until the morn), they are all Christ's as God Creator. "By Him kings reign and princes decree justice" (Prov. 8:15). All the kings of the earth hold their being of Christ: He is appointed of the Father, "King upon the holy hill of Zion" (Psalm 2:6). "Kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him" (Psal. 72:11). By His rising from the dead, He has gotten a name far above every name; so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. "The Lord at thy right hand, shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath" (Psalm 110:5). Then kingdoms and kings that stand by policy, and not on Christ and His word, they stand on rotten tree<sup>†</sup>-legs. Now men of policy devise a way, and cast their wit in a pair of balances, how to shift the matter. Had they been in Daniel's place, they would have devised some way to have kept the court and place; and would have said, "Can ye not speak low, and make little noise with your prayers? To save yourselves from the lion's den, might ye not keep a close door and windows? What need ye like fools make all the fields ado with your prayers?" ‡—and so have sewed the black coat with white thread. But in so doing, Daniel would have denied Christ to have "many crowns upon His head." And would not policy have said to the three Children, "Bow, bend

your knee before the golden image, and think upon the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that so ye may put by an ill hour, and the harm of the fiery furnace!" Nay, but such counsel as this would have come from hell. Men are surest when they stay on Christ's side, and are always strongest when they stand with Him.

"And He had a name written that no man knew but Himself."—O! what a nameless king is this! What? Is Christ unbaptized that He wants a name? Is there no man knows His name? "What is His name, and what is His son's name, if thou canst tell?" (Prov. 30:4). "He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation?" (Isa. 53:8). Here is a strange thing! Says the angel, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus Christ." Nay, but His name is Himself; and His nature, and so He is an infinite God. None knows infinite Christ but Himself. Ay, surely Christ is an unknown person; though each one has Christ Jesus in their mouth, yet they know not what they are saying.

There are three mysteries in Christ we cannot perfectly ken in this life, nor understand. 1. The infinite wisdom, mercy, goodness, love, and grace in Christ; which the angels delight to look into and wonder. Come near Christ here, and ye will never see the bottom of Him. Ye have seen mercy, mickle mercy; there is yet more behind. One has seen much of Him, another more; the angels that are sharp in sight have yet seen more; nay, but there is infinite more behind. You will as soon take the sea in the hollow of your hand, and bind the wind in your cloak, as ye will take Him up. Ye must even stand still here and wonder, and cry out, O! great Jesus, who will or can fathom Thee out? 2. The work of Christ's incarnation. O! what a depth is in it! God and dust married together! How blood remains in a personal union with God! How the finite Man-hood subsists in His infinite personality! And how the God-head in the Second person, and not in the First or Third, assumed our nature, and yet but one God-head in all the Three! How the God-head stood under the Man-hood that was stricken, and the God-head as a back-friend\* held Him up, and yet the God-head suffered not! How Jesus man died, and Jesus God

lived, and remained in death God and man! And the 3rd mystery is, What a name Jesus has gotten by His rising from the dead, and how the Man-hood is advanced. Christ kens all these full well; He can read His own name. Ye will speak of learning to measure the earth, number the stars, and to learn their motion; that is deep knowledge; but God help you to come hither, and see this unknown name, JESUS, and find it out if you can. I trow ye cannot.

Now ask, Where will ye set Christ? Where will ye get a seat, a throne, a chair to Him? He cannot be set too high; nay, if there were ten thousand times ten thousand heavens, and each to be above another, and Christ to be set in the highest of them all; yet were He too low. Alas! He is too little thought of! He is like the field where the pearl is, that men go over, and tread upon the grass that grows above it, and yet they ken it not. Men tramp upon this pearl, and yet they know not what they are doing. Fy! fy! earthly man that thou art! Wilt thou put a cow or a sheep in thy affection beyond thy salvation? Fy for shame for evermore, that men set their lusts above Him! And O, fy for shame! that you should set your new-come-over lord, Wilful-will, above the old eternal Lord, the Ancient of days, Jesus Christ. O! how is Christ put out of His place? O let us long for glory, that place where we will read His name clearly, and will see Christ face to face. O strange! we long not to be in heaven, to see this comely glorious one (if I may so speak), a darling indeed, and to play God's bairns in heaven. We will then come and look into the Ark; for the curtain will be drawn by,\* and we will see our fill of Christ there.

"And He was clothed with a vesture dipt in blood."—That is a strange garment! I leave all expositions, and take it to be Christ in His suffering clothes, wooing His Kirk; represented thus to John in His wooing clothes. He is also represented so in Isa. 63:2, "Wherefore art Thou red in thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat?" Christ, in His suffering for us, was wet to the skin in His own blood. When He was slaying our enemies, He was all bloody to look upon; even a loch of blood, dropping blood. O then come and see if He be not a red man! Had there been but a drop of blood here

and there upon Him, it had been less; but He was all dyed with His own blood; for blood dropped from Him and He wet the ground where He lay! "And His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). So as I think for the space of near hand twenty-four hours, the blood got not leave to dry on Christ, in His suffering for us. For, after Supper, in the garden, He swat a sweat of blood that wet the ground He lay on, and it would be long ere it dried. Then immediately after that, there came a band of men with lanterns and torches, and they bound Him and led Him away, and He got blue marks anew. Pilate then scourged Him; and blood came upon blood. Then, a crown of thorns was put upon His head, to renew His blood again. First God bled Him, then man bled Him, and then the laying on of the cross upon His holy shoulders, would thrust out more blood; (for His wounds could not be closed then) and then His holy hands and feet were nailed to the cross, and He hung bleeding there until the ninth hour, which was about three in the afternoon of the day after He was taken. Then His side was pierced until blood and water came out. So as from after supper in one night, until it was near night the day following, He was under blood. What think ye now of Christ's bloody coat, and bloody skin? Was He not a strong keen warrior? Fought He not well for you? Is He not well worthy of your love? God grant Him good of it, and joy of it! He fought for it, and would not give over the play; and God forbid He had given it over, and rendered up the cause; woe then had been to us. Should ye not then give your best things to Christ? for He gave the best things He had for you—even His precious blood; for the life is in the blood. He seeks no more but the blood and life of your heart-idols and sins; for, says He, "I slew Myself for you, and if ye love Me give blood for blood."

"And His name is called the Word of God."—The word is the birth of a man's mind, and an image of what is conceived in the understanding; and it represents to the hearers what is in the mind. Now, because man is a finite creature, the birth of his mind is finite also. As the image of a man in a glass represents the likeness of himself; so his words are the image of his soul, representing what is

in him. Christ is the infinite and eternal Word of the invisible God, not only like Him, but God Himself, differing only in manner of subsisting from God, "Who is the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15), "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. 2:6). "He that hath seen Christ, hath seen the Father also. No man hath seen the Father at any time, save the Son who is in the bosom of the Father, and He to whom He will reveal Him: All things that I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you" (John 15:15). Christ is God's tongue (to speak so) to us, betwixt us and our King. He is privy to all the Father's secrets; then, would you have news from that great Court, and want to know the secrets of God, and how the work of your salvation thrives? Christ only knows His Father's mind; make your acquaintance with Christ, and be oft with Him, and ask Him questions often times. He keeps the book where the names of the first-born are recorded; desire Him to let you read your name there. Ye will advise with lawyers, about your lands and inheritances; Christ is our advocate, and has our law-book, to tell us what a holding we have, what duty we owe to our Lord the King; what a fair rent and possession we have. Our inheritance is made sure unto us. Now, because Christ is the only one in all the world likest God, and being His substantial image, yea, being very God, if ye would send your commendations, your love, and services to your heavenly Father, desire Christ to do it, and He will carry them. If ye send a kiss to God by Christ, He will carry it to His Father and your Father.

"And the armies which were in heaven, followed him upon white horses."—This is not to be understood simply of the church triumphant in heaven; but also of the heavenly army of the church militant on earth; for the church on earth is burghess of another country. Heaven is her home; her members are but merchants hereaway\* seeking the pearl of great price, but Christ has given them their burghess tickets, and made them free men. They are sworn to be true to the burgh, and to hold with the heavenly company, to watch and ward with the saints, or "heavenly armies"—called so because they smell of heaven, and their portion is there. "Our conversation is



of heaven" (Phil. 3:20). Ye shall ken a man by the smell of his breath: if he savour of the earth, it says, that he is none of the spiritual or heavenly army. Ye might ken by Judas' breath (who said, of the box of spikenard, might not this have been sold for so much) that he was a burgess of the black pit. But see here, they are all on horseback, and in their Master Christ's livery, white and holy; they bear the King's arms upon them. "I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots" (Song 1:9). See, then, that the saints are on horseback with Christ; He does not ride and His people walk, but will have His own mounted on horseback with Him. He is even then triumphing with us over all our enemies. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8:37). He will get the victory over all His and His people's enemies; and He will enable His people to get the victory at last. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14). See, then, all the saints are on horseback, galloping and posting to heaven after Christ; overcoming all temptations, triumphing over the world, sin, and death. Then, ye that are but Christ's foot-runners, take heed to this; you that have your souls licking the dust of the earth, and have aye a smell of clay, who mind earthly things. By the smell of their breath ye will ken what country they are of; they are upon their feet with it, wading to their knees, and on their elbows, among the filthy clay-ground of covetousness. Ride up, and ride down, and ride else where\* ye will, ye will not get Christ overtaken. Ay, ye will get some like the young man in the Gospel, who would have galloped after Christ, but when Christ bade him go sell all he had, that threw him off the saddle, and laid him on the breadth of his back; and so he fell behind, and never overtook Christ again, so far as we hear of.

The devil and the world make some men say, that yon Captain, Christ, rides so hard and fast, that they cannot keep up with Him, and so lose Him. Demas posted awhile along with Paul after Christ and the Gospel, yet at last his horse stumbled, and he fell off, and lost his horse, and company, and altogether. Judas, he posted awhile, but

the devil shot a musket ball at him, even thirty pieces of silver, and so he gave it over, and there he lay. Men ken not that the devil and the world are lying betwixt them and heaven, stealing a shot at Christ's horsemen. I assure you the devil seeks no better, than that ye will light and take a bait,<sup>†</sup> a drink of his strong wine, worldly lusts, and fleshly pleasures, that so your Master on the white horse may be far before you. A little of lawful pleasure is best! Then light not, for the devil will have you lose sight of your Captain; and if ye lose your Master, Christ and fall behind Him, it will stand hard with you. Therefore when ye lose Him, seek and be diligent to find Him out again. Seek the right way, follow the horse's foot-steps, the print of Christ's foot-steps, in holiness, faith, patience, and hope, which may be seen all the way betwixt this and heaven. Ask Him out as the church does; "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" (Song 3:3). When the church said, Draw me, she was three or four miles behind. When David said, "O Lord, how long?" (Psalm 6:3), he had almost lost sight of his Captain. Nay, when Christ is a mile or two before, so that there is a little hill betwixt Him and us, with watery eyes and panting heart, look a long look over the mountain, and cry, Lord Jesus, ride at leisure, tarry and take a poor wearied traveller with Thee! Lord, tarry, or else Thou wilt lose a footman. Job said, "Lord, Thou takest me for an enemy." He brake a girth there. Christ has many a sore tired horse to take out of the mire.

In this triumphing host, many of Christ's soldiers will be very near off their horses, and hanging by the houghs.\* "I said in my haste, All men are liars" (Psalm 116:11). Here David was hanging upon the saddle by the houghs. Peter got a fall off his horse, and he fell into a swoon, and lost his horse when he denied his Master. Yea, God will have the horse sometimes to stumble, and will have His servants laid on the breadth of their backs, and all their clothes spoiled, and a leg or an arm broken; because they, like young riders, are full of self-importance, and will not follow their Captain, and care not about keeping a good bridle-hand. As David will ride on a hanging and steep hill of murder and adultery; Lot upon incest and drunkenness; and or ever they be aware, the devil trips up their heels to the sun,

and gives them such a fall, that they be on their knees with it, and shall lose their horse, and so be obliged to creep up the hill on their hands and feet. "Then see that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15, 16). "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling." I think He speaks by this text, as if He would say, Be not rash; take heed to your ways; keep a good bridle-hand; hold off the hills, and hanging precipices of ice; for if ye give the devil and your lusts the horse bridle to lead, they will sink you to the girths in a black marsh, near to the mouth of hell, and leave you there, and laugh at you when they have done. The devil is aye playing such sports and tricks as these; they are but feckless\* sports; and I tell you, do your best, ye will get a broken brow ere ye win to heaven. But come weeping to Jesus. I ken the saints fall on Christ's floor; when they break their faces, He is at their elbow, to blow upon the wound, and take them up again. We, like fools, will ride at full career, and cross the long sands; and we grow too jolly and proud of our victory. I said I shall never be moved, says David; I shall die in my nest, says Job; but God breaks the bridle, and the horse loses his feet, or runs from him on a hard causeway, and there lies syne† a stout man! Be not high minded, be not too wanton, nor too secure, after ye have won a race at The Communion, and have gotten a hold of Christ; ye know not how soon ye may get a fall, or your mittens laid up‡ (as we commonly say), and then your boasting will be laid. Ye will say, Ye bid us rejoice in the Lord. I bid you rejoice; but see that it be humble rejoicing, sober joy, with fear and holy care.

"Clothed in fine linen, white and clean."—Whiteness being the most perfect colour, is a token of innocence, and blackness is a mark of guilt. Here the saints are in their Master's livery, clean and holy: "Be ye holy as He is Holy." Be ye harmless as He is, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again. Let the white clothes of your profession be also adorned by the innocency of your lives. Let your good works shine before men, that your heavenly Father may be glorified. Thus manifest your thankfulness after The Communion. Christ's sheep have His mark upon them, and are like Himself in holiness. Let them

see Christ's stamp and coat of arms upon you: your King's arms, in all your actions, Faith, and Truth. What is it that makes men profess that they are riding to heaven after Christ, but to deceive the world: they are the devil's black armies, and are wearing the devil's double-black arms, Falsehood and Vanity. They choose to live in sin, pride, and vanity of apparel, which is not booked like the white livery or linen of the saints, but rather like the black livery of the prince of the bottomless pit. May the Lord direct your hearts unto the love of God, and to a patient waiting for Christ, and to Him be praise. Amen.

## **SERMON II.—Zechariah 13:7, 8, 9**

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones, &c.—Zechariah 13:7, 8, 9.

AS the Eunuch, when reading Isaiah 53 asked the question, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?" so may we of the sufferings of Christ. Christ's sufferings were so admirable that they made Him a world's wonder! As if a man would say, What a sight do I see? The like whereof I never saw! I see the Son of God, the Lord of Life, all mangled in His hands and feet.

There are three grounds of wonder in our Lord's sufferings. 1. Look at His Person. 2. Compare Him with others. 3. Look at the rare way of clearing mercy and justice.

1. Look on His Person, and wonder that the Way should be weary; Strength, faint; Life, die; Bread, hungry; and Water, thirsty. Is not

this a rare matter? A wonder! that the God-head should be knit in a personal union with the Man of Sorrows! For God with His Spirit to bear up a man under sorrow, is nothing, compared with giving His personal subsistence to stand connected with wounds, blood, curse, and shame! For the God-head to breathe, live in, and dwell as one with the person shamed, cursed, hanging on the cross, dead, and buried, is truly wonderful! Here God is made a curse, God is made a shame; and the personality of the God-head still abiding with the shame and the curse, howbeit neither cursed nor ashamed.

2. Compare Him with others. It was nothing to see Moses subjected to scorning; Zechariah slain, between the porch and the altar; and many of the ancient Fathers rent in pieces: but for Christ, for God, to be so handled is strange! No wonder though all the world wonder and cry, O God, what wonders do we see! The hand that spanned the heavens, pierced with nails! The feet of Him that treadeth on the stars, nailed to a tree!

3. What man or angel could have dreamed of this rare work, and strange way to heaven, that justice would have God-man to suffer? This was a voluntary work, for God to come down and save men; which He needed not to do by any necessity of nature. God's own free will was above, beyond, and before this set and decreed law of justice. Out of His free good will, He breathes out goodness, love, mercy, and tender compassion. What a mystery? The infinite God to suffer for miserable men!

Use. Then he that counteth little of sin, counteth little of God. The wilful sinner, who takes sin into his bosom, is cruel to his Maker. If Christ be your husband, and you His wife; then sin slew your husband. Will the wife love the knife that cutted her husband's throat? Ye will say, The wife loveth not the husband, if she take the man into her bosom who pursued her husband to the death, and helped to execute him on the gallows. Should the redeemed of the Lord then love their lusts, that pursued Christ to the death, and

nailed Him to the cross? Then beware, by going on in sin, of saying Amen to the shedding of Christ's blood.

Love, and learn to look at, Christ in His suffering for His people. O the love of God, it passeth all knowledge! "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" (Romans 5:10). Christ laid the ground-stone, and foundation of His love very deep; even down upon the earth, the grave, shame, the curse, hell, and the wrath of God. Yea, in His love, He maketh all His elect children kings and princes to God, and they shall reign with Him for ever and ever. O! then what great fools are they who will not be kings and princes!

But alas! that the world is aye picking quarrels with Christ and His followers. "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Psalm 2:3). When Christ came to the nation of the Jews, they were offended at Him. I assure you he is far forward who finds no fault with God; who thinks Christ so fair and lovely, that there is no spot in Him, and loves Christ, even when He seems to be angry at him.

If it be asked, Should Christ have offered mercy to the Jews? Is it not against justice, that mercy should be offered to those who trample mercy under foot?

Ans. 1. If you consider Christ's nature and offices, ye will see that He behoved to give an offer of mercy to those who spat in His face. Having man's nature in Him, He behoved to put on bowels of mercy. God's infinite mercy upon Christ's tender heart, bound Him that He could not go away and leave His friend's house; but constrained Him to stay still, and take all the strokes that His friends gave Him. A man has compassion on his first-born; a woman on the fruit of her womb; a husband on his wife; a kinsman on his friend; and a faithful king on his people: but Christ is infinite (even mercy running over the banks) in His nature. Christ said to Justice, "Stay till I woo My bride:" for justice (as manifested to us) is a voluntary decree of God to punish

sinner; and justice would have been at us to slay us. Absalom sought to slay David his father, but David gave command to the captains and officers to deal gently with the young man Absalom. Be not sore upon my child. So mercy comes to sinners through Christ.

2. Look to Christ's office, as dying Christ. Our Lord would never say amen to our forwardness, nor run away and leave us, nor yet would He say amen to the curse of the law. The law cried, Death upon all sinners; Christ, as Mediator (to speak so) said, God forbid, My Father! I would rather give My heart's blood ere it were so. How went the matter then? Thus; aye the unkinde the world was to Christ, He was aye the kinde to it; they abused Him, He kissed and embraced them in His arms. Christ, as Mediator, came and bowed down to go into the house of clay that He had borrowed from the Jews (to speak so), but they met Him in the door, fell upon Him and abused Him, and bruised both His hands and His feet.

3. (Which may be sweetest of all). Upon what terms did Christ make the bargain with His Father? He got commandment to die, but not continually. He said, Content, I will die, and be warm-hearted to them; I shall take a lift of them in My two arms, to pull them out of hell, and from all their miserable toil. Our Lord says, Let them be as ill as devils to Me, I will be as good as God to them.

Use. Then it reproves those who seek a reason why Christ died for them. O, say they, I am a hard-hearted body, so rebellious that Christ would never die for me! Well, then, do ye think that Christ died for hire? Would you make Christ a Popish God, who died for sinners only for as good again. Christ, ere He came out of heaven, knew the worst of it, and said, Let My friends slay Me, I will die in love for them. Look, then, sour, unthankful world, what a hold Christ took of your souls, and held them fast, and would not let them go. So it is a shame to us not to clasp to Him. This mercy of the Mediator has shamed us all out at the door; we are ashamed for ever more, if we do not take Christ who would so fain take us. Come to yourselves, then, and fight no longer against Him. Say, Woe's me, that my Lord kissed

me, but I abused Him! If this move not our heart, and melt it with love to Christ, God shall break it all to pieces, and it never shall be healed again. O, my friends, Christ never got a good turn of His friends. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11). The house of Israel crucified Him; the daughters of Jerusalem stirred Him up before He pleased. The rulers and teachers of the kirk, and professors are the traitors, who sell Christ, even the men who pretend friendship with Him. It is a shame to beguile and be false to any friend, far less should we be false to Christ. Art thou a professor and in the kirk? Be true to Christ, and stand to His cause.

"Awake, O sword, against My shepherd."—As if the sword had ears, and were asleep, the Lord speaks to it. "If I bring a sword upon a land, and say, Sword, go through the land, to cut off from it man and beast" (Ezek. 14:17). He is speaking to the sword as if it were a messenger who had ears, whom He sends on an errand. We should be afraid to anger the Lord who hath so many on His side. Providence and justice have many friends, and mercy has many servants. If God say, Sword, go to Germany, go through Scotland, it dare not sit His call:\* God's providence has a secret impulse upon all the creatures. If God say, Arise, pestilence, and set on them; Awake, devils; Come hither, graven images and set on Scotland; Come hither, whore of Rome, smite Scotland, and make it a den of dragons, they must obey. He bids the sword awake against His Son, and Shepherd, Christ, because, by the determinate counsel of God, He was to be slain.

And there be two sweet reasons why He awaketh the sword against Christ. 1. Because the sword behoved to sleep a while, till Christ's twelve hours of the day was over. Says He, Luke 13:32, "I must work to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." So long as Christ hath the world to teach with the gospel, and any seed to sow, any soul to convert, as long the sword slept; for His Father gave Him a time to suit<sup>†</sup> His wife, and O! but our Lord bestirred His time, and hastened before the sword awaked against Him. 2. The sword behoved to sleep till the term-day came; and then the sword



awaked, for God would not want payment an hour beyond the time, and that was a black and dreary hour to Christ. He got not two summons, with continuation of days, but He behoved to keep the first day, and answer the first summons. Therefore, when He was to answer peremptorily to the justice of God, and (as it were) an hour of awakening to the sword (for God would not let the diet pass the day, nor renew Christ's bond), He said, "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour" (John 12:27). So Christ desired it not; but for the love He had to us He was glad of the day, and willing to pay the debt, and had the sum ready; "For their sakes I sanctify Myself" (John 17:19). He made His soul and body ready for the fire, to be burnt as a sacrifice for man upon the altar of the cross. And because He was minded not to play the dyvour,\* He was willing, with all His heart, to suffer; therefore, says He, "Arise, let us go hence" (John 14:31). He went to that place where He knew they would take Him, and willingly went to prison for the debt. He was like an honest man who resolved to pay His debt, and would fain have the money off His hand, and receive a discharge. O! fain would Christ have had a written discharge in His hands for Himself, His heirs and assigns.†

Hence, we are taught to use our time well, our twelve hours of time here, as Christ did. At the hour of death, at the hour of call, He had nothing to do; so let us be ready against our hour, that so death and judgment awake us not. It is an unmeet time to sleep then, while the judge is before the door; and when we hear the voice of the Lord's feet coming in wrath against the land, it is not time for us to lay down our head, and say, "Soul, take thine ease." And yet it is often seen, when God is crying to the sword to awake against a land, it is midnight with men therein; then they are sleeping; and it is the fearfulest death of all to die in a sleep, and unprepared; to be slain in that state and leap into eternity in a night dream, when we know not where we are going.

"Awake, Sword, smite."—Spare that man by no means; Justice, Spare Him not; Curse of the law, Spare Him not; Men and devils, Take your

will of Him. To hear God say this of Christ was a world's wonder! O sun, hide thyself, hide thy face! O heavens, put on a mask of darkness! O angels, go down and dry the sweat off Him! O earth, tremble! O graves, open! O rocks, rent! Fools mock and laugh at sin, but Christ wept when He satisfied for it.

"Awake against my fellow."—Christ who is equal with the Father, "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature" (Col. 1:15), the "exact character"\* of His person; is the man who stands with God ever ready to do His work, and to run for us where ever the Lord bids Him. Hence learn, that Christ in nature is even the brightness of God's glory, "the express image of His person" (Heb. 1:3). We see the printing iron leaves behind it every way, the print of itself; so the Lord from eternity brought forth another like Himself, the Second Person of the Trinity, stamped with that same glorious God-head, with all the essential properties that are in the Father. As the Father has life, so the Son has life in Himself. As all men honour the Father, so should they honour the Son. The brightness of God's glory is a great word, a rare and great mystery. The glancing † brightness coming from the sun, is not another sun; nor is the glancing brightness of a precious stone, another stone. And so it is here with Him. Because, all that is in God is God, and there is nothing in Him but what is in His nature; therefore the riches and beams of infinite glory, and that substantial glancing glory, and beauty in God, is God, and the very nature of God, and the same God with the Father. Only this substantial glancing of God's glory, has subsistence in itself, to make it a person distinct from the Father; and, therefore, Christ is God, and co-equal with God in all things, carrying the substantial stamp and character of the God-head. Now, this glorious image, being the Lord's delight from all eternity, He would not enjoy His alone,\* but put a copy of the God-head, as it were in print, on the flesh and blood of man, when The Word was made flesh, that we might take this fellow and companion of God, to be our fellow and companion. See, then, the dignity of the elect in Christ, that God and they are made one! are made one in such a manner that He has (so to speak) parted His own Son betwixt

Himself and them. Take Him, take Him, then, with God's blessing. God gave you Him with good will, take ye Him with heart and good will then.

"Smite the Shepherd."—Smite Christ and the apostles shall be offended, run away and leave Him. Here is a command to the sword to set on Christ God's Fellow and the chief Shepherd. Even Christ is arraigned before the judge, for the sins of men. Wherefore should this have been? We would have been stricken and condemned for ever, had not the Lord stricken and condemned His own Son. Here we have God taking the sacrifice of His Son, and letting us go. He knew that His Son would bear the strokes best. What reason had Christ to be stricken? He came but under the debt; might He not have gone free? No, no, as He came under the debt, He behoved to pay. Justice would not let Him away; but smote Him so, that indeed it struck the Lord's soul from His body. You that live in sin, are ye not afraid when the God of glory got such a stroke? We make but sport of it, but God's sword goes through flesh and bones, soul and body. Beware of a stroke of it out of Justice's hand; for if ye get it ye will never do well again: ye will be like Moab, a broken and lame pot,\* and shall curse the day wherein ye were born (Jer. 20:15). "He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out; He hath made my chain heavy (Lam. 3:7).

"And the sheep shall be scattered."—That is, The disciples shall flee away for fear, and shall start and fall at Christ's sufferings; because they were thinking He should be an earthly king, and make them great men in the world. But they were all mistaken: for He came to get strokes, and not an earthly kingdom.

Doct. Observe here: The faith of the apostles, when Christ was taken, gets a crack; the back of it is near broken, and they are at the point of giving up with Christ, taking Him not to be the Redeemer of the children of Israel. O, but God's children, in their way to heaven, get many sore backsets! † Many sore trials have the people of God to encounter with. They are many times at that of it, that they know not

what to do. What might the disciples now think, but Christ and they were separated never to meet again? "Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?" (Job 13:24). Christ, the true heir, was put to this, What shall I do? "Now is," says He, "My soul troubled, and what shall I say?" Howbeit He never doubted, though He was put to tears and strong cries. I think the saints, in their way to heaven, are like rash children, who get many a fall, and break their face twice a day. God will give them such a backset and fall under temptations, that their eyes will reel again, their hands grow weak, and their hearts faint; so that there is but as a hair-breadth, betwixt them and their giving up with God. Faith, as it were, goes through fire and water to heaven: or like a soldier going through an enemy's camp, this one runs at him with a spear, another discharges a musket at him, one runs him through the arm or thigh, with a sword; another has well nigh put him off his horse, and he is very near surrendering; yet he spurs through, and at last gets away with his life. So the Christian warrior, however many hazards he may meet with, shall come off victorious at last. This may be a comfort for all under temptations and down-castings for their grievous sins. Ye sometimes cry, "No, but God loves me not; I am often doubting if the dead rise, if there be a heaven," &c. These are backsets, but take ye no fear, give not over, all shall be well. Faith must not be like foolish people, to seek law-burrows\* of temptations. True faith is an herb that grows best in winter weather.

When the disciples in the ill day forsake Christ, ye need not marvel to see many blown away with temptations. So long as Christ has fair weather, and feeds the multitudes with loaves, they seek Him and would make Him their king (John 6:15). But when the court changes, and it grows black in the west, and there comes winter weather; Oh! then, What do they? They all turn back and flee. Ay, Christ in a day of trial is like (if we may use the comparison) an old waste dove-house; the doves flee away, and there is nothing there but old nests. It is just so when Christ has ought to do: many of His friends prove weak, and get a backset; and many fall and deny Him: "Will ye also go away?" said He to the Twelve. Many marry Christ, as some men do rich

women, who marry their riches, but not themselves; and when they have gotten their riches, their affections are elsewhere, and the women are lightly esteemed. So has it often been. When Christ's cause came in question, the rulers of this land suffered Christ and His cause to be wronged, and many of them took a back-side: but He has been a moth in many of their purses, and they are worm-eaten for it. When our Lord's Temple was measured, they suffered lowns and knaves to take acres of His land from Him, and so Christ got not all His bounds: and they see but little who see not, that for this, or since that time, God has taken broad lands from them, and even now is doing it: for they had put lordships in their purses.

"And I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones."—Christ kept the faith of the little ones, when they were in Satan's sieve, and prayed to the Father that their faith should not fail. The turning of Christ's hand upon them, was much as "Though He had given them a back-stroke, yet He would lend them a lift for it again." He had scattered, but He would gather them again; forsaken them, but He would return to them again. I think I recollect a story of one who had gone to see a dear friend, whom he found fighting with an enemy, and like to be overcome; upon which he fell to and helped him, and took the enemy off his hand. Christ saw the disciples like to be overcome and mastered with the temptation. He saw that if He helped not, they would be shot through; therefore He came in as a third man and helped them. Whence ye may see the privilege of the children of God, under a trouble or heavy sin; God helps them; so they fight not alone. If ye be God's, in all your fights Christ is a third man with you. If ye be like to be overcome with defection, if ye be His, He will bestow three things on you, which none get but the sons.

1. Suppose that God would seem to deny them, yet they will not deny Him. I think they are like noble minded heirs; though their lands are under thousands of debt, yet they will never sell them without reversion; for then they would lose all.\* If they quit the eye-look to the estate, they lose the place also. So it is with God's children under fear for sins; when, to their apprehension, their part of Christ is

mortgaged, and under thousands, yet they dare not resign their part of Him. I would have you doing this. God's children are under many sins; but I pray you sell not your right of Christ; for if ye do, the devil is at your hand, to take instruments that you have quit Christ. But let your sins be ever so many; still stick by this, that you are a son of God, and so Christ will redeem the inheritance, and make all free. David said he was cast off, yet still prayed as if he thought not so: Psalm 31:22, "I said in my haste, I am cut off from before Thine eyes; nevertheless Thou heardest the voice of my supplications, when I cried unto Thee." There we may see he thought he was cast off, yet he prays and cries, and could not be at ease, and that tells us that he had not subscribed a resignation to his Lord.

2. God gives to His scattered little ones a sanctified nature. In opposition to sin, the renewed part cries aye out as a friend to Christ, "I vote not for that, that's against Christ, that's against me; I will never say amen to that. I take instruments in God's name, I hate that, and all other sins." Christ has an advocate in thy soul to plead for Him.

3. There is this in God's children, after they seem to have taken their leave of Christ, they look eagerly after Him. And it is a look over their shoulders, with a "Woe's me! O to be back at Him again!" So the disciples, after they had fled, came the third day to the grave to seek their Lord again. Then learn, under temptations, to keep Christ on your side, and not to take on the work your alone,\* lest when you are wrestling against temptations, ye be left to play the coward. But steal out of the gripes of sin and Satan, and yoke † them and Christ together, and He will give them their fill of it; and if He be like to be overcome, let him take that in his own hand. He who would fain have amends of his enemies, if he be a man great with the king, uses means to get a plea raised betwixt them and the king, and then the king takes them off his hand.

"Two parts shall be cut off and die; but the third part shall be left therein."—For the slaying of Christ, and the contempt of the gospel,

the land shall be divided. Learn, Scotland (for I may not stay to amplify the doctrine), learn to make much use of Christ. Are ye not more obliged to God than His beloved people the Jews were, the Lord's first bride, the wife of His youth? The sorest stroke that ever a land gets, is a stroke for rejecting Christ and the gospel. The third part shall be left therein. Two parts are cut off. Take them out of my sight. Jer. 15:2, "Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword; and such as are for the famine, to the famine; and such as are for the captivity, to the captivity." Chap. 9:13, 14, 15, "Because they have forsaken my law, and walked after the imagination of their own heart, and after Baalim,—Behold, I will feed them, even this people, with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink." For oppression, see Amos 8:7. And for vanity, see Isaiah 3.

When the workers of iniquity are taken out of this life, it is said to be a cutting off; but it is not said so of the godly. Isaiah 57:1, "Merciful men are taken away." God taketh away merciful men in His arms as children; but He cuts the wicked off like the trees of the field, and pulls them up by the roots. "They shall drive out Ashdod at noon-day," as so many cattle out of the corn, "and Ekron shall be rooted up" (Zeph. 2:4). God sends sword, famine, and pestilence, as so many dogs, against the wicked, to destroy them. But He needs not to hunt these out after the godly, nor summon them, for they go willingly. Says Joshua, 23:14, "I go the way of all the earth." A good preparation before God's anger come to cut us off, is to get peace made up with Him. O to be ready to lie down under His feet. When the king calls some to judgment, He does not summon them, but writes them with His own hand. In Ezekiel 8, He denounces judgment in four several places against idolaters; but in chap. 9. He bids them see the judgment. But how gets Christ His "third part?" He must fight for them; and kindle a fire, and cast them into it, before He get them. He draws the sword, kindles a fire, and casts them into the furnace, and courts His wife there. Now Christ is like no other captain: many captains get towns without stroke of sword, which surrender willingly to them; but Christ never took in a town, nor got

a people, but by a strong hand. He is like a captain who gets His living by His sword. The rod, the sword, the fire, and pulling, drawing, and storming the conscience, are used, and yet they stand out. (See Hosea 6:4, 5, 6, 7). God has a church here, but He cannot get His third part separated from the rest, but by stroke of sword. It is a sore matter or He conquer!\* He must first fill the places with dead bodies, (Psalm 110:6). And ere our Lord get His third part in this land, to be as He would have them, it will cost Him to plead the quarrel of the covenant with fire and sword. I have chosen thee in the fire, I have set my love upon thee; and ere I could have thee, thou wast cast into the furnace. He will refine thee as silver. Though the house should be burnt, God will have a care of the silver and the jewels, the godly, whom He gathers into His treasury.

Now, there are two sorts of metal, which our Lord will not admit into the treasury. 1. Light clipped metal. The clipped silver that wants so much due weight, that is the money God refuses. So it is said of the king of Babylon, Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found light. Such are the men that are found light in God's balance, windy, light, and soft men: when God puts His hand to them, they cannot abide a touch, but go all to pieces among His hands; they cannot suffer trouble, but they melt in the fire, and are worse after a downfall than before: these God casts away. Now, see that ye have the two weights that God seeketh; I mean, be answerable to your profession. When ye are weighed, the balance will tell you better than the eye. God's weights will try if you have true grace.

2. He casts away the dross, the tin, and the brass, and will put none of it in His treasury. Whether it be gilded or washen brass, and put in a bag beside the gold, God will see what is but copper. Gold is gold now. Go therefore, each man, and see what metal ye are of, for God is kindling a fire in this land to try us; and when God's trial is come, we will see who burneth, and who glanceth\* in the fire (Ezek. 22:18). Many will appear like gold, and yet in reality are but watered † copper: they look like gold, they glitter and are yellow coloured, but when they are cast into the fire, the watering will go off, and there



comes out nothing but dross. Demas and Ahithophel were of brass, which a little knock of the hammer broke all to pieces, and the devil comes to gather up the fragments. Joseph stood a temptation to lust, and did not yield (Gen. 39:9). Ye make a wide profession, yet art not like Joseph, who said, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Fill up your chair, and fill up your coat; fill it up; the trial is near! God has taken up His balance to weigh you. Look what you want, and run to Christ's golden mine and get it. See that ye be in Christ, and when Christ and you are put in the balance together, you and He will be good weight. His righteousness will be weighed with you, and it is no clipped metal.

"They shall call on My name, and I will hear them."—See then, that this is the way to get relief from troubles and temptations, when ye are trysted, with them. Call on God by prayer, and ye shall obtain mercy. Thus the fire at last brings out mercy: and prayer in the fire is one of those sweet smells that God's spices cast forth. In the fire, the smoke of prayer, sighing and groaning that comes forth, goes up to heaven. See then what comes of trouble. It looks not unlike that, Rom. 5:3, 4, 5, "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed." We would not have so many errands to the Lord, if we wanted trouble. An afflicted church is a praying church, and we need not be afraid of a praying church, if we could attain to this. If ye ask, Why the Lord tries His children so hard? Answer. Because they are slack in prayer. God gets not that worship of prayer that is due to Him by fair means: He useth law against us, and what mercy they shall have, says He, they shall have the sense of My favour.

"I will say, It is My people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God."—There is (if we may so speak) a shaking of hands on both sides. There God claims kindness to His people, and they claim kindness to Him; He takes hold of them, and they cleave to Him; He loveth them, and they love Him. Kindness between God and His people, stands never on one side, it is on both sides. However, God must begin. Love is not an herb that grows with the root uppermost, and the top down: it

grows not up, but comes down from God, and the beams of it spring up to Him again. See this meeting, Song 1:4, the church says, Draw me. She speaks to Christ to draw her; then says Christ, chap. 2:10, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." He seeks her, and she seeks Him. She says, "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest," chap. 1:7. I will be where thou dwellest, I will be where thou art. Christ seeks you in the sacrament, seek ye Him again, and though the devil should say the contrary, there shall be a meeting. She says, chap. 3:3, "Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth." He says, chap. 4:8. "Come with Me from Lebanon." He calls her. She says, chap. 1:4, "We will remember Thy love more than wine!" He says, chap. 4:10, "How much better is thy love than wine!" He calls her, "His love and fair one," chap. 2:10. She calls Him, chap. 5:10, "White and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand!" Let His love get a meeting; He fought through death and hell to find you; seek ye Him through all troubles. He bought you dear; say ye, O that I could buy Him, and give all that I have or could do for Him. There is not any blessed marriage otherwise. Love ye not Christ dearly? Would ye not suffer and die for Him, as He suffered and died for you? It is not marriage-love if it is not so; it is but feigned love. Now Christ is holding forth His love to you this day, will ye not accept of the offer, and will ye return nothing again? I like not that kindness when there is no taking and giving, no borrowing and lending betwixt Christ and you. May the Lord Jehovah persuade you to embrace the offer, and flee into lovely Christ Jesus, the glorious Prince of renown, and to Him be praise for ever and ever. Amen.

### **SERMON III.—Zechariah 13:7, 8, 9**

— Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones, &c.—Zechariah 13:7, 8,

9.

WHAT is the Kirk like when the Shepherd is stricken, the head all black with strokes, the members all chased away, and hiding themselves in this hole and that hole? The case is dolorous enough.

Indeed Christ's back is at the wall now. The great Shepherd (if we may say so) has gotten such a bite on the heel, by that great hell's hound, the devil, that he cannot walk. He is under God's wrath, and death has given him the stakes<sup>†</sup> to keep. Dogs have come in among the sheep, and scattered them; and stout fair-tongued Peter has taken a backside. The enemy is saying, Take up holy Christ now! for all His holiness He is slain! and His disciples have taken to their heels for it, fled to the hills, and are gone.

Christ might now say, as it is in Psalm 69:20, "Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." Now might Christ say, Where are all my friends and mother's sons? Ken ye where Christ dwells with His wife in this world? I say, Just in a cot-house; they lie on a straw bed, and even on the floor. They are in a silly smoky house, all full of reek. Here is the man "whom the nation abhorreth" (Isai. 49:7). And his kirk is like a gardener's lodge, a cot-house, or a shepherd's tent. Ken ye not Christ's word, "The kingdom of God comes not with observation." His noise is not heard in the street; he comes not with coaches rattling on the causeway, and many men with him. It is said, Zech. 9:9, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee." How comes he then? In truth not very king like, "Lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." No mantle, nor yet a saddle; but they laid their garments on the ass, and the foolish children about him, crying, Hosanna. Yet there is the Kings of kings. He was Christ, for as simple and despicable as they took Him to be. And what are His own poor folks? Even esteemed in all ages the off-scourings of the world. See what a word the apostle has, 1 Cor. 1:25, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men: and the

weakness of God is stronger than men." When Christ came, each one said, Is this He? A scorn! This is not the Messiah, the King who Jeremiah said shall reign and prosper? (Jer. 23:5). And who Daniel said, should have an everlasting dominion? (Dan. 7:14). Is this the Messiah? the son of a carpenter, a beggar's son! O fy! Ye disgrace the nation of the Jews, if ye say this is your king. This man looks not like a king. I recollect a story of a man, who had no genteel fashions, who came in amongst a number of nobles; he shoots him, and he shoots him,\* saying, Where away is the ill-bred body going? So was Christ tossed from side to side; they all hissed at Him, and scorned Him; and yet He was their King!

This condemns a proud lordly faith. The repenting thief had a humble faith; he believed that crucified Christ was Christ, and the King of the Jews; although he saw Him a despised man. I say, there is a humble faith, and a lordly faith. The disciples had a proud faith when they thought Christ should have restored the kingdom to Israel, and made them like kings on the earth; but they were all mistaken. We have a proud high-looking faith if we will not have Christ to be Christ, unless He come in clothes all of gold, with much noise and rumbling coaches on the causeway, with six thousand chariots, and many horsemen. Because we see rulers, princes, and nobles against Christ, our proud faith saith, It is not He. Nay, but our faith must learn to look to Christ as low as the grave, and to His kirk in prison.

"I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones."—That is, I will turn My hand, and gather the scattered flock. Now, "turning of the hand" is a speech, in allusion to shearers, or mowers in a meadow, who fetch in a great roll of hay, or corn, with the scythe and hook. Christ takes not in all His corn in one day; He comes and drives in one flock this day to the kingdom of grace, and some day another. Christ's house is daily growing; and, indeed, it will cost Him many turnings of His hand ere He set us all in His Father's barn-yard. For we are over fond to be in Satan's broad fields, in following the sinful fashions and customs of the times. We have itching ears after new guises.\* See

what outbreakings are in Noah, David, Peter, and the rest of the Aposles, who ran away from Christ when He suffered; but He turned His hand upon them and brought them back. He will take many shifts before He lose one of His little ones. He is hunting and seeking after them by every sermon, and at every communion. He must of necessity, from His redeeming love and election in the covenant of redemption, bring them all in. "All that the Father giveth Me, shall come unto Me; and him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). And what more? He says, verse 39, "And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." His Father said, Son, bring them all in with Thee, they shall all be welcome for Thy sake. "That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5:27). The Lord Jesus (if we may so speak) shall take all His little ones in His arms at the last day, and say, Father, take, there's them all. And then He shall give up the kingdom to the Father, when all things shall be subdued, and made subject unto Him; "that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28). May a poor conscience think, alas! What will Christ do with me? Answer. Nay, thou shalt not fall by\* in the telling.† If one of His, thou shalt be among the rest; Christ will turn His hand upon thee also.

"Little ones."—Who be these? Those who are learning to speak, and can cry little more than Abba, Father. It is true, except ye be born again, and be as little children who are learning to speak, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. Little children who are but learning to speak, have not high spirits, nor ken what pride is. Never one of them seeks to be a lord, a prince, or a king; though they be King's children. If they be but learning to speak and walk, there is no striving for place among them, as among the old, who must have a place in Parliament. So are all those who are Christ's; they are humble, and not high-minded. But the proud man is a broad and high man, he casts up his heart to look above both God and man. Habakkuk 2:5. The king of Babylon's appetite was as wide as hell, and the grave. These creatures, greatly swelled with pride, must have

much driven off them before they enter heaven's gates. For the porch door of the palace of the King of glory is low, and narrow; so strait, that, ere Christ-man could win in, and get a new room to be Prince and Lord, He became a little one. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). Then, big men, ye will not win to heaven. If ye say, Who is the big man? Even the proud man, who is so long and so broad, and the door of heaven so low and narrow, that there must be much clipped off him before he win in there. Pride gets up to be at the throne in heaven, the country where it was first conceived in the breast of the proud devils, those fallen stars who were driven out of heaven for their pride. But God will not let pride in there again; it is for ever debarred. Then woe to the proud man, for he shall not enter in there. Amongst all sins, pride takes most room: it is a cumbersome neighbour to God, and would be in upon His bounds. The prince of Tyrus saith, "I am a God, I sit in the feet of God, in the midst of the seas" (Ezekiel 28:2). The man who is not given up to the love of the world but dead and crucified to it is one of Christ's little one's. Then the covetous man cannot enter into heaven; there is strange tatters of clay hanging on him. He cannot enter until the bunch be driven off his back. Ye might as well put a ship's tow\* through a needle's eye. Worldly men are too great to win through the strait gate. Adam, ere he sinned, was a little one. But O! how big doth sin make men. In a word, we could be content with heaven if we could win there with our predominant lusts. We have no will to want anything in length and breadth.

"And it shall come to pass, that in all the land, saith the Lord; two parts therein shall be cut off, and die, but the third part shall be left therein."—Here is an universal trial: all the land shall be divided into three parts, two parts shall be cut off and die, and the third part shall come into the fire, come out as they will again. All must go through God's fire, to see whether they stand it or not. All must be winnowed, to try whether they are corn, or chaff, Isaiah 31:9, "He is called the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem." God cannot want fire in His house, He has aye something to do with it.

And because the case is thus with us, What will ye do when the Lord's fire is kindled in Zion? Then let the wicked now laugh at the righteous for adhering to God's cause as they will, we will one day see who will laugh best and longest. For, when the trial comes, the wicked—two parts—shall die; and the godly—one part—shall be left alive.

"The third part shall be left."—When all goeth to all, the Lord's third part shall be left, and His kirk spared. God winnoweth the kirk, but let the hardest world come that can come, He will aye have a kirk, and not want a witness. This is it that the enemies continually hunt after, that the Lord may not have a kirk on the earth. The gates of hell are opened, and armies are come from hell against the kirk of God. And armies from Rome, Antichrist, and the Dragon, follow the woman near to be delivered of a man-child: but God provides a place for her in the wilderness. And, howbeit, the dragon spew out of his mouth a flood after the woman; yet the earth openeth her mouth, and swalloweth up the flood. So let the enemies rage, let the devil mount on horseback, and let all his vassals put on their armour and follow him, they shall as soon put Christ out of heaven, as utterly destroy the kirk of God. The gates of hell cannot prevail there; nay, the devil and all his emissaries shall be finally overcome at last. "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about." A cup of cold poison; it is said that those who drink cold poison tremble to death with cold. So will the enemies of the kirk. "In that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut to pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it" (Zech. 12:2, 3). Let them be doing, then, and dash hard heads\* with Christ, and see whose head is hardest. When God sets the house on fire, He takes out His children, His jewels, and His gold; and lets the fire take the rest, though they were silks and satins.

"And shall bring the third part through the fire."—There is a necessity for us to go once through the fire. Can our Lord not get a kirk from among the dross, but by fire? No, indeed. Christ plucks His

own out of hell, and from among the rest of the world, by fire and sword, as it were by the hair of the head. It is not with our will that Christ gets us. To be short—those who come to Christ, first or last, are chased upon life and death. Christ wins all His at the point of the sword ere He get them. Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this of Christ here is with burning and fuel of fire. What a battle had the Lord with Jonah, when He fought with him in the sea, and in the whale's belly. Also, David, near ten months' time, held out a castle against God; and our Lord behoved to fall on, both with word and sword, before He would yield. We are indeed a piece of hard metal, and ill to work. Christ will spare no pains to gain His own.

"I will bring the third part through the fire."—There is a sweet word. God, says he, will take His bride by the hand in the furnace; He will tell them each step they have to go in trouble. "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him" (Psalm 91:14, 15). "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isaiah 43:2). Would ye ken where the Lord is? Even at the bed-side of a groaning child. Yea, when His people are in a swoon, He is under their head, bearing them up; and when in trouble, He has them by the hand, and sustains them. Trow ye not but a hold of His hand would be heartening to them though they were in hell? He has a hold of you by the hand, and ye may be His, though ye know it not. Ye may truly believe in Him, and not have the sensible assurance thereof. He may be leading you with faith, and hope of light and direction, though, for the present, ye want His sensible presence. Ye may be raving and in a fever, and your heavenly Father at your bed-side, howbeit ye see Him not. Because ye droop, and have not a joyful sense of His presence, ye say, "He is not with you." Ye cry with the kirk, "For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the



comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me" (Lam. 1:16). How far from you? Even standing at the furnace, blowing the bellows, and looking on whilst His gold melts. Ye will not believe that your sense can make a lie of God. Indeed, it were easy to prove that ye are seeking a plea\* with God, and fancying a fault in Him, because ye get not a feast of joy and comfort. May it not satisfy you, that He leads you in trouble, howbeit He kiss you not.

"And will refine them as silver is refined; and will try them as gold is tried."—Then, if there be any good metal in you, as silver and gold, make ready for the furnace of the children of God. When trouble comes through the land, His people are ready to think that, because they have true grace, they shall be kept from the scourge. Nay, but your gold must go to the fire as well as the devil's dross. Peter says, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than the gold which perisheth, though it be tried in the fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7; Jer. 1:18). There, says the Lord, "I have made thee a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land," &c. But for what end? Not that Jeremiah might go and lay himself down in the sun. No. Verse 19, "And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee." When Jesus is full of the Holy Ghost, the devil shoots three of his arrows at Him, one after another. (Luke 4:1, 13.) So it is with God's children. When Paul was converted, he had an enemy in every town. God's gold is made for the fire, and not to be laid up in the corner of a chest, or hidden in the earth as the wretch's pose.\* Then make you for the fire, I say, make you for it. The devil will blow until he sweat, and yoke to† his hammer-men to batter you, and his plough to make long furrows on your souls. The enemies of the kirk are the devil's under-smiths, to mend the fire and blow the bellows. Nay, if God be sending a trial on this land, ye are to thank Him for it. Blessed be God, because He hath silver and gold in Scotland! Yea, ye say ye are never tempted. Alas! it is very possible, ye are but deaf nuts,‡ and so God thinks He will not lose His elding and fire-wood for you. A city or town that the devil sets not on, to

take it in, has little luck in it: or else he has the keys of the port at his belt already. What said James, chapter 1:2, he says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;" but ye are ready to count it all sorrow. Christ says, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (James 1:12). Then, beware ye be not all dross, for the fire will burn you into white ashes, a blast will blow ye away, and ye will be cast out like dung, and turned into hell. For would ye know what men are not gold? The men who are all soft dross; and when the burnt dross and ashes are cast out, the wind blows them away through the air. The wicked are as soft ashes, and a blast will blow them all away. They are as soft dross: a temptation wins into the soul, prevails at the first knock, and the devil goes through it as a feal\* dyke. Let Balaam hear tell of gold! because he was but dross that temptation went through him: he saddled his ass, and would go and try the market. When the High Priest came athwart with thirty pieces of silver, then Judas is blown away with it. When Absalom sees an appearance of the people's hearts being towards him, he yields incontinent and makes to it. Nay, I think when the temptation comes to the wicked man's soul, and knocks, he knows a friend's tongue at the door, and opens and lets him in; whereas the children of God are hardened against troubles and temptations, and can give the devil three nay-says.†

"And they shall say, The Lord is my God."—Then the people were at a feast of sense and joy, when they answered God. We see then there is a time when you get your sense full; as much joy as you can hold. So was the Church, Cant. 2:3, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." But gets Christ aye an answer? No; He knocks and better knocks,‡Cant. 5:5, but she is more concerned about a good sleep, and a warm bed, than all her beloved's love. Yea, ye may say, Why is it not aye so? Nay, but a feast of sense is a feast appointed for a high time. Send up faith, hope, and love, to God, for it. What ails you at your meat? Nothing; but ye have a lordly stomach, like a servant that is offended if he be not as well fed as his master. Sense and joy are kings' meat, to be enjoyed in heaven. Your

weak stomach is like the children's, who love to eat meat that they are not able to bear, but would be death to them.

"They shall call on My name."—The people of God claim kindness to Him even in the fire, and though they think that they are cast off. Nay, the children of God will not fall out with Him for strokes: they cannot be driven away from Him. When the children of this world are put away from God, they take their leave and seek another master. When a servant is put out of the house, and gets his leave, he will not break his heart; he goes and seeks another master, and cares as little for the former one as he does for him. But a son cannot do so; he may not quit the inheritance so, but will stay about the house till his father repent, and take him in again. The wicked are like the shipwrecked man, who quits the ship, and betakes himself to swimming, and resolves to make legs and arms serve him for a ship. So do the wicked, when God seems to be a wrecked ship, they quit Him; for they cannot pray in trouble, and therefore resolve to swim. I do not love it when men resolve to seek another refuge than God. David could say, 2 Sam. 15:26, "But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him." He is showing there how little the Lord is obliged to him, and that he is patient, and willing to submit to the Lord's chastening, as both just and wise.

But is it not presumption to lay claim to God when He denies us? No. Ye desire to claim kindness to Him, and dare not give up with Him? I say that is a hold of the covenant which ye have. Allowing, but not granting, that God has given up with you, yet ye have no warrant to lose your hold of Him. Although you may think that God has given you up, yet keep the earnest and love tokens ye got at the communion; for if ye begin to question the work of God, that is to return again the earnest of the bargain betwixt you.

"I will say, It is My people."—Here a sweet meeting, a sweeter agreement between God and His people than if they had never fallen out. Hence we see that after a sore outcast there is greater love

betwixt Christ and His people than before. The forlorn\* son came home, loved his father, and his father's house and bread, better than ever he did before. So it is with the people of God. "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go and seek the Lord their God: they shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten" (Jer. 50:4, 5). And He says in the sixth verse, "My people hath been lost sheep; their shepherds have caused them to go astray; they have turned them away on the mountains." He afterwards promiseth a free forgiveness, verse 20, and foretells the destruction of their enemies, the Babylonians, verse 35. Read another sweet place, Jer. 31:20, "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him." Then the Lord says, Dear, silly Ephraim, My dear child, has a broken heart that he has grieved Me, and I tell you I have a sore heart and troubled bowels that I was so rough to him, and cast him off. And so there is a new embracing betwixt the Lord and His people (Ezekiel 16:60), &c. There God, after a new agreement, remembers His covenant towards them. Then marvel not; though there be new outcasts betwixt Christ and Scotland, I hope that the end of it shall be, that Christ and Scotland shall yet weep in one another's arms; and the poor people, after they have come through the trial, shall go towards Zion, and say, Which is the way to Zion? Where shall we find the Lord? When the Lord shall again take in this land anew. As after a wood is cut, there appears a fair young green wood, so the Lord will have a numerous seed yet to serve Him in Scotland. Scotland will have a new growth, like a second growth, that grows after a long hot drought. There will be many sweet calm showers, summer showers, which will make our withered garden grow green again; and so become a fair green garden with many pleasant flowers. Seek to be among Christ's little ones, and covenant yourself away to Him, that so ye may be able to say, the Lord is your God; and that He may acknowledge you to be His people. And, if you are His, there is no

fear of a happy out-gate, though you should have ever so many straits, trials, and difficulties in the way. The Lord enable you to close with Him. Amen.

## **SERMON IV\* —Luke 14:16, 17**

Then said He unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready, &c.—Luke 14:16, 17, &c.

THERE are two things which we have to mark in this parable. 1. The dependance thereof on the preceding words. 2. The sum and scope of Christ's words therein.

The Lord is shewing what sort of guests they must invite to their feast; even the poor and needy, whom the Lord shall recompense "at the resurrection of the just." Whereupon, a man who sat at meat with Him (whether a Pharisee or not is uncertain) says to Christ, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Many call them happy who have part in Christ, and yet think it not. Many will talk broad words for the kingdom of heaven, and of the worth of Christ; but when it comes to this, What will ye quit for Christ? Will ye quit your farms and your lands for Christ? Will ye quit your five yoke of oxen for Christ? And will ye quit your new married wife, and your children, for Christ?—then they make a stand, and question all. We are all good Christians till we be tried. We often make a fair profession, while we mar all in practice. Many do with Jesus Christ

as onlookers do in a great fair; they go through the market, and commend everything they see, but never open their purse to buy any thing. So multitudes can say, "It is good to be a Christian; O! the Son of God is worth all the world;" but they will never offer a penny for Christ's cause. They will not want a ridge of land, nor suffer the loss of an ox for Him. They will rather lose their immortal souls than lose their gear. All you who now speak proudly of Christ, when persecution comes, see what ye will lose for Him. Oh! the Lord Jesus has many friends, who yet are but false friends and flatterers at bottom. They will speak good of Him, but will do no good for Him. Few leave their nets and custom-box for Him. But the man who finds the pearl, he sells all, and buys it.

This man would here say, Blessed are they who have a keen appetite to banquet with Jesus Christ. This lets us see that many have a false stomach, and can call them blessed who eat bread with Christ, as if it were from true hunger; and yet it is only like the hunger of sick folk, who cry for meat, but as soon as they taste of it their stomach recoils, and they can take no more of it. Many have the like hunger for Christ; they are soon full of Him when they come to the table. Balaam could say, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel," and yet for the peace of Jacob, he would not lose court with the King of Moab. The petty kings of clay are often obeyed at the expense of disobeying the great King of heaven.

I now come to enter upon the particulars of the parable. The scope of it is to show "that few obey the gospel of Christ," set down under the similitude of a man who made a great supper, and invited many, who, notwithstanding of that, refused to come, the parts of which are these:—

I. The Preparation of the Supper: "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many."

II. The Invitation of the Guests: "Come; for all things are now ready."

III. Their refusal: "They all with one consent began to make excuse," &c. And—

IV. The Servant's coming, and "shewing his Lord these things."

The Lord then takes a second course of filling up his table, albeit they refuse who were first bidden; for he loses not his supper. Wisdom's wine that was drawn sours not: he gets two sorts of guests to eat his meat. I. The diseased and poor. II. The common people up and down the streets. And then, III. Ye have the Lord's sentence upon the recusants or refusers.

I. "A certain man made a great supper."—The Lord is here offering mercy in the gospel, and is compared to a man, not a common man, nor to one who makes a supper only for his friends. This shows us God's mercy in the gospel. He shows Himself to us a man, a friend, banqueting us. But when we become beasts, and like the horse or mule that have no understanding, He then turns from a man to a lion, and to the house of Judah as a young lion; "I, even I, will tear and go away, and none shall rescue him." It is a hard word that the Lord speaks to Ephraim, Hos. 5:14, "I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and to the house of Judah as a young lion." If we be men, God will be a man to us; but if we be beasts, God is as a lion and a bear, Lam. 3:10, "He was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places."

Use. God carries Himself to us as a man and a friend, and has been feasting us these seventy years; and, I assure you, the Lord is near the drawing of the table. The ordinary time of removing the table is, when all at it are full, and can eat no more. The gospel is now loathed by us, and the word of God contemned. At the beginning of this Supper, one sermon or a Communion was sweet; people ran to it like hungry banqueters; now it is disregarded. One sermon in the day of the Lord's banquet is now thought sufficient. Well, I see men are fallen asleep. I fear, beloved, I fear (think of it as ye please) the word

shall be taken from you, the board drawn, and the plague of the Lord follow it. Amos 8:2, The famine of the word of God shall come. The

II. Part of the parable is, the Lord's invitation of the guests, "Come, for all things are now ready."—Here there be three things. 1. A commission to His servant, that is, His ministers, to bid those that were called Come. 2. The Time—It is at supper-time. 3. A Reason—"All things are now ready."

I shall only touch these points, and briefly go over the words.

Doctrine. The Lord invites us to a banquet and great Supper. That is the hardest word that the Gospel speaks to poor sinners, "Come." Never a word of hell, the wrath of God, or the plagues of God for sin. But His words are all (though He speaks in wrath to His enemies), My dear friends, I shall think Myself in your common,\* if ye will come and sup with Me. Surely, beloved, the Lord might have supped His<sup>†</sup> alone. The angels are good company; but God thinks He wants company if the children of men are not with Him! In Proverbs 8:31, says Wisdom (which is Christ), "I was with God, yet playing and sporting with the children of men." Here, indeed, is love itself, the Lord inviting us to embrace the gospel! He resembles it to a great supper. Merciful God! Thou mightest command us, under the pain of condemnation, to come and believe in the Son of God. But not a word of that here: the Lord will hire us to come to the kingdom of heaven—this is evangelic. The first word that the gospel speaks is mercy, mercy to poor sinners. Song 5:2, The key wherewith Christ, the husband, opens the heart of His kirk is, "Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled; for My head is filled with dew, and My locks with the drops of the night." He might have said, Woe be to thee, thou hast put me to the door, and hast taken a strange lover in My place; I will quit thee; I will go suit\* in another place; the back of My hand to thee; I shall never look on thee again. No; but His hardest knock is, Sweet Dove, Love, Fair One, I am both wet and weary; let Me not lie in the streets all night. Jer. 3:14, "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord." What is the Lord's argument to



move him? "For I am married unto you, I am your husband." Hosea 11:3, "I taught Ephraim to go taking them by the arms." God's mercy is a great net; all the fish that come in the net are brought to land. Well, beloved, this is the gospel's voice, Come, ye wearied and laden; but this voice will not last aye. In that day when the heavens shall part away like a scroll, the elements melt with heat, and the wicked cry, "Hills and mountains, fall on us, and hide us from the face of the Lamb, for the great day of His wrath is come, and who can stand?" Not a word of a Supper then. Alas! the board will be drawn, and God will not care for your company then. The

Second particular is, The servant is sent out at supper-time, near night, and bed-time. Then the day of God's mercy is but a supper-time; the edge of the evening; the sun-setting. As long as the gospel speaks, it ever cries, Come, welcome, welcome, Sinners, ye will be welcome to sup with the Lord.

When all the rest were set down at the table, Paul came in, and the master of the house gave him the board-head.

Use. We shall be as welcome to come in at mid-supper, as those were, who came to the Lord's vineyard at the sixth and ninth hour of the day. If ye come at the board-drawing, as the thief who died at Christ's right hand, and those who came at the eleventh hour, ye come to the dessert. But, beloved, I beseech you, beware that ye come not after supper, when the board is drawn, the goodman of the house in his bed, and the door shut, as the foolish virgins did. Remember that it is even now Supper-time, while the word is preached, and the Sacrament of the Lord's body and blood offered; and blessed are they who come to the Supper. But woe be to them who come after, for they shall lie down in the beds of their graves unsupped. As Job says of the hypocrite, "Their bones shall be full of the sins of their youth." Oh! the world has many debtors, ill debtors, who sell their souls for sin; but what a pitiful thing! for what can they give in exchange for their souls? A man who has to cross the water will run at the first call of the seamen, because he knows the tide will

not wait him. And yet now, men who profess they would sail to Canaan, will not come out at the voice of the Lord's mariners, crying, "Come, it is now tide;" but they let the sea ebb, and sit still. And this is the devil's craft, when we have our one foot on the shore, and the other in the ship, and have a purpose to sail from our sins, Satan has a word to say. The Levite's father-in-law, urged him to stay a night with him,\* and promised him he should go to-morrow, but then, tempted him to stay another night. Even so it is here, after we have stayed in the devil's service one year, he will urge us to stay another year, and promise he shall then demit. O! that we were wise to close our eyes and ears at Satan's delays and temptations. And now in the short time of the Gospel, while the table is covered, embrace the Lord's Supper. Walk while ye have the light, says the Lord; "the night cometh wherein no man can work." Our sins tell us that the long shadows are approaching; the night is at hand, the gospel is to be removed, and happy are they who sup in time. The

Third particular is the reason why they should come—"For all things are now prepared." And so reasons Solomon, Prov. 9:1, 2, "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars; she hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table." Matt 22:4, "Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come to the marriage." Thus is mercy offered to the people of the Jews, where their God made all external means (as the word and sacrament) ready for them. So that he says, in Isaiah 5:4, What could I have done more to my vineyard, that I have not done. (Isaiah 65:2), He stretches out His arms, and holds them out all the day long. (Prov. 1:20), "Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets." Here God is crying, shouting, and casting out His arms, Matt. 23:37, Luke 19:40, crying and shedding tears. He would have them turn and live. But as it is true of the Jews, so it is of us; He has dressed the whole Supper Himself, covered the table, and there is no more for us to do, but sit down and eat. If we look to this dressed Supper, Christ dressed it all Himself, in the furnace of God's wrath, and the bread that we here eat is His flesh,

which He gave for the life of the world. John 6:51, The wine which is mingled and drawn is His blood. And, O, sirs, was not our Lord a hot man in making ready this Supper? Not one dish is mis-cooked, all is set before us in the gospel, and Jesus craves no more for all His pains, but only that His friends come to the banquet and eat and be merry; and if ye will come, Christ will pay all the reckoning. When the Israelites were fed with manna, they behoved to go out of the camp, and gather it themselves; but we furnish nothing of this Supper. God be thanked, Christ bears all the expense. Alas! alas! that the unhappy world will not eat heartily, since Christ pays for all. The poor sons of Adam were all sick and at the point of death, and their stomachs were so spoiled with a sour apple that Adam did eat, that they were famished and not able to eat. In comes Jesus and makes a medicinal dinner of His own flesh and blood; lays down Himself and is slain to make physic of His crucified body for us, in order to affect our cure. It is just they die for hunger, and lose their stomach for evermore, who loathe this meat. In the sacrament all things are ready; whatever the soul wants, it shall find at the Table. All the hungry shall find Christ meat and drink. John 6:55, They who are poor shall find Him gold, they who are naked shall find Him garments, they who are blind shall find Him light to the eyes. (Rev. 3:18), "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich: and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." Look to the Supper and ye shall find it very expensive to Christ, for the fire that made it ready was the wrath of God; the fuel and the elding\* was Christ, and a great burden of the sins of the elect on His back. And if Jesus had not been green timber He had been burnt all to ashes. Christ was first boiled in His own blood, in the garden of Gethsemane; then He was roasted and burnt on the cross, and carved all to pieces with nails, spears, and buffetings, to make Him God's bread for the mouth and stomach of believers. And the sourest sauce in this supper to Christ, was His dear Father hiding Himself. And when all is done ye cannot do Him a worse turn than not to eat heartily. Now, for the Lord's sake, beloved, please the goodman of the house, and eat and welcome. The last wine

will be the best. What would ye have! Here is sweet company, eat, ye are heartily welcome; and ye use to call that great cheer that has great servants. Then there is not a plate set on this table by angels, far less by man. A curse upon them who bring in Mary's Milk, with Martyrs' Blood, as a dessert! No, Christ's blood is in every dish, Christ's flesh is in every mess, and Christ's merit is a sweet sauce to all the messes. Other meats have no taste at this Supper. No, they are plain poison, put in by the devil's hand, who would wish never a living man to rise from the table, but all to be poisoned.

III. "And they all with one consent began to make excuse."—Reason would hold the opinion, that, when the Lord makes a great Supper for the world, they would all be glad to come, and take a meal from Him; and that they would all run, striving who might be foremost at the table, and nearest the Lord's hand! No, but it is not so here; for there be three sorts of men, who all with one consent refuse to come. The first says, I have bought a farm: the second, I have bought five yoke of oxen: and the third says, I have married a wife. Honour holds away the first; riches and profit, the second; and pleasure and lust, the third. It has been so since the beginning. God and the world have aye been at holding and drawing for men's soul; God draws and the world holds fast. Here be the world's three gods: honour, profit, and pleasure. This is their trinity, their Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. John, in his first Epistle, chapter 2, sets down the doctrine of the world's trinity. In that place he is forbidding men to love the world, and gives good reason for it. Says he, verse 16, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh," that is, inordinate pleasure, "and the lust of the eyes," that is, coveteousness, "and the pride of life," that is, honour, "is not of the Father, but is of the world."

"And they all with one consent," says the Lord, "refused." I would have you to consider two things. 1. The refusal of the guests. 2. The number of recusants.

For the first, "All with one consent began to make excuse."—Indeed, it seems wonderful that, amongst the three sorts of people, not one of

them will leave so much as an ox for Christ! May not the Lord bring them all in to the Supper whom He calls? I answer, He may do that; "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14). But we must here consider one of the deepest mysteries of God's counsel. There is a twofold calling. 1. There is one external, or outward, whereby God calls men who obey not: here many are called to the Supper, but few come. 2. There is an inward calling, whereof the Apostle speaks, Romans 8:30, "Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified."

1st. If you look at God's outward calling, in respect of the word and sacraments. This calling finds men hand and foot in Satan's chains, and looses them not; for God has bound them. He bids them loose themselves, as they are obliged to do; because obedience is a debt that reprobates, in so far as they are God's creatures, are owing to Him. And why should not the great Creator and Lord of the universe crave dyvours and bankrupts, although, by their own fault, they have nothing wherewith to pay? And, therefore, unto both such as are effectually called, and such as obtain not grace to obey, the Lord is crying, Dyvour, pay thy debt or else go to prison. God, not having elected them to salvation, and finding them in the state of sin, and so only slaves and bastards (for the Cautioner, Christ, will not pay every bastard's debt), He leaves them with this, Either pay or die; and they willingly lie still, and love to live, and die in Satan's arms. But

2nd. There is an inward calling, whereby God, not only by His word, cries and shouts to waken up sleeping sinners: but also by His Spirit inwardly breathes the life of God into them, and sets them upon their feet. Those are said to be given of the Father to the Son; the Son receives and keeps them: and this is a wonderful calling. The Father craves the debt of obedience from us, and says, "Pay, and obey My calling, as ye are obliged to do;" and in comes the Son, by His Spirit, and slips the sum into our hand, even the price of obedience, and says, Because My name is in the contract betwixt the Father and you, I will give you to pay my Father withal; and, so long as I have, you

shall not want. So that, although the elect be dyvours, yet they are their Father's dyvours; and have a good Friend that pays for them.

In this calling there is a great mystery. God is both calling and answering in our hearts. In a good sense, this calling is God's calling upon His own Spirit in us, and we returning an answer by that same Spirit which dwelleth in us—the Father crying, Come to the Supper, My elect people; and the Son, by His Spirit answering in our hearts, My Father, behold we are coming. In the Word of God, this calling is called a knocking at the door of our hearts for access to come in and sup with us. And, indeed, at one time the Lord is without knocking for admittance, and at another time He is within opening the door—without knocking, and within drawing. Ye will find Scripture for this, Acts 14:14, Paul is preaching to Lydia's heart: now, behold, there is God without calling and knocking by the word; and behold, in the same verse it is said, "The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." God be thanked, God craves and pays for us. While God is crying, Open, His one arm is without the door knocking, and the other arm is within drawing the bolt, and preparing a lodging for Himself. God is His own harbinger,\* He makes His own bed, dresses His own supper, sweeps His own lodging, and does all when He comes. He has nothing of us but bare house-room: all the furniture is His own: He brings all with Him. The ground and reason of this inward calling and sweet election thus run equally together. Election is the King's letters and decret, ordaining such persons, by their names, to the kingdom of God; and effectual calling is comprisement and imprisonment,† following upon these same letters, whereby such as are in Christ's Roll and Register Book, are called by the word to grace and glory. And, when they force‡ the King's charge, the Father draws them, and the Son bears them in His arms: then He rides upon the white horse of the gospel, and shoots the arrow of the irresistible word of God into the hearts of God's elect, so that they must obey and become the Lord's prisoners, His conquered, ransomed, and bought ones by virtue of the Father's decret.§ Thus the Son has caption against the elect. The Father gives them to the Son, and He

will not want them (Cant. 2:14). He draws His church (John 6:44). The Spirit of the Father draws us to the Son; for that Christ has of the Father by gift, and that He has by good right paid for. It is no riot for Him to break both doors and windows in the soul to get His own. He has law upon His side, and a sufficient decret passed and subscribed by His Father's hand. And the doctrine that arises from this is,

1. That the outward means of the word, without the inward working of the Spirit, will not bring us to the King's Supper. Here are many called, but they excuse themselves that they cannot come, because of other employments. This should teach us to hang upon the word, but withal to look beyond the word, and with the use of the word, call for the inward grace of the Spirit. It is not the bottle of the physician that heals the sick, but the medicine in the bottle. The word and sacraments are but empty bottles, except the Lord fill them with His virtue; and without this secret virtue we shall set our mouth to an empty bottle, and draw in wind, to the hurt of our souls and stomachs, which shall prove the savour of death unto death, and not the wine of God's refreshing grace. Our Lord, speaking to the woman of Samaria, says two sundry times (John 4), that it is He who gives the water of life. Now, indeed, in the word and sacraments is the well of life; and since that well is opened up in the house of David, good reason that He be found of His own, and that He be steward of His own heart's blood, and only have the key at His own girdle. And for what cause else is the kirk said to lie within the two arms of Christ? (Song 2) How can she then fall into a swoon for hunger, or faint when she is in the house of wine, where she may be cheered up with the comforts of His word? Yes, indeed, even there at the fountain head she will die, except the Lord hold the cup of spiritual refreshment to her mouth. This was experienced in Ezekiel's day by the dry bones, chapter 37, where he says, the Lord caused him to prophesy; then bone came to bone, and sinews upon the bones, and flesh upon the sinews; then to prophesy to fetch spirit and breath that they might live. So the word without the Spirit is a blank charter, without our name written in it, without a seal, and without a

subscription. The sacrament without the Spirit is no better than a piece of naked wax without seals of land. The

Second point is, the number of recusants. "They all with one consent began to make excuse," says the Lord. Hence, observe,

1. The number who follow an ill course are the greatest, Gen. 6:12. In Ahab's days, there was only one honest, Micaiah, while there was four hundred lowns.\* Abraham durst not give his word that there would be five righteous persons in five great cities. Jer. 1:18, Against the Lord and Jeremiah, are kings, princes, priests, and people: there is a whole parliament, the three Estates of the land. Desolate truth stands her alone;† she has a thin court (Matt. 27:21). Men would say, Sin has not such a throng court now as it had in the days of Christ; for now men, because of their oxen and their land, come to Christ's Supper. This is soon said. If we mean only eating and drinking, that proves nothing to justify our age; for Judas came that way; and if the devil himself had a true body, he might come to the Lord's table in that way. But how many in this kirk leave their hearts at home, when they come to the table of the Lord. Try your consciences here.

2. It condemns the religion of our time. "We live as our neighbours," say many. Many have a custom of swearing. Will ye do so, then? I say, these men take upon credit, and believe as the world does. Company is good, but company in hell is small comfort. Men vow Christ to be their husband, just as kings woo their queens; for they only hear of them by report, and see their pictures, and upon that marriage passes betwixt them: so the men of our age hear of Christ by report. They paint a heaven in their own head, and a faith of their own, and run as a beast after the drove. But a man who would serve Christ as he should do, must indeed be a mocking stock to the world, and a wonder to many, Psalm 71:7. But think nothing to be counted, with Marius, a good man, all except one thing, that is, he is a Christian. Their answer is not a flat denial of God, and a disgraceful speaking of the Supper; but they all form a reason, every one, and desire to be excused. What is the meaning of the excuse I pray? You



tell God that ye love Him, ye love His Supper, ye love to be in His company; but say, "I pray Thee have me excused;" I cannot but love my land, my five yoke of oxen, and my wife, better than Thee. But if men knew Christ, they would say, Woe be to that farm, woe be to that ox, and woe be to that pleasure, that holds Christ and me asunder so long. However, they refuse to come to the Supper, yet they give a fair excuse to the Lord, and pray him to excuse them.

2. There is no sin we commit, if it were even to the treading of the blood of the New Covenant under foot, but we put a mask on it. The devil has taught men to baptize their sin with a new name, lest it should appear frightful. The murdering of the Son of God is done by an assembly of kirk-men, under a fair pretence: "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die." Idolatry is called humble kneeling. Satan is a coiner of false money, and upon his reprobate coin he puts the King of heaven's stamp. Herod's killing is sold for worshipping; killing of the saints is called good service to God. The devil comes to none and says, "I am the devil, hear my counsel, and I shall draw you to hell." No, he is not such a fool; he changes himself into an angel of light. Blessed are they who, in the wisdom of God's Spirit, can pull the mask off the devil and sin; see the devil to be the devil, and sin to be sin. If God's commandment be uppermost, it is no hard matter to discern sin. If God command a duty, no excuse in the world should cover thy disobedience. Alas! What excuse can men have for staying from the kingdom of heaven? for refusing of Jesus Christ crucified? How can Satan run so far into men's hearts, as to make them say in God's face, "Excuse me, Lord, I cannot come to heaven! Excuse me, I cannot believe in Christ, because I have other business to do!" What horrible ingratitude is here? God offers a heavenly inheritance for a few acres of land, but they refuse God, and neglect the offer of Christ. Now here is the first excuse.

"I have bought five yoke of oxen."—O, merciful God! shall an acre of land, or an ox, be laid in the balance with Christ? Woe be to them. Oh! how many Esaus be there in the world, who sell their heavenly inheritance for a mess of pottage. Since the day that Adam did eat of

the forbidden tree, the taste of our souls is so corrupt, that we call sweet sour, and put sour for sweet. Jesus Christ is like the white of an egg, tasteless in the world's mouth. Give to Balaam the King of Moab's gold, and for all his broad words, he seeks not another heaven. Let Jeroboam keep the kingdom, he cares not for God's worship; but for fear the people revolt, he will not let them go to Jerusalem to worship, as God had commanded, but will have them to worship a god of gold nearer hand. And so it is now in our kirk, give men a piece of ground and five yoke of oxen, and they will consent to any religion, either Arminianism or Popery. Give the soldiers Christ's coat, and they seek no more, they will shed His blood, and take away His life. A drink of Jacob's well is better to the woman of Samaria, than Christ, the water of life, or heaven. Her heaven is in the ground\* of Jacob's well, "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water?" (John 4:11.) A sow is better to the Gadarenes than Jesus Christ. Christ has lost court† in men's hearts, He is worn out of fashion and request. The heaven we would have is a heaven we would see with our eyes, and catch with our hands. What is it, I pray you, that keeps the first rank of people from heaven? Not a kingdom nor a broad inheritance, that would seem something; but a piece of ground, one village, a little room that keeps only ten oxen! O, Lord God, say they, if Christ could be bought for money. But He is worth much money.

It is a dangerous thing once to let the world into the heart: if ye be in love with, and wedded to the world, then bid adieu to Christ. The world is like a great fire, if a cold man stands at a reasonable distance, it warms and comforts him; but if he go into the midst of it, it burns him. Men who have an indifferent hold of the world, and stand at a proper distance from it, are benefited thereby; but those who cast themselves into the midst of it, are thereby swallowed up, and for ever lost. Oh! but poor worldlings get but a silly‡ heaven. In Luke 16 it is described, in the person of the rich glutton, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. Is that their heaven? meat and clothes! Indeed it is. Servants get no land, that is ordained for sons; but they get a present hire, and more

they seek not. Poor men, they get five yoke of oxen, and a little farm. God knows that is but a pitiful portion!

He begins again here, "I have bought a farm, and I must needs go and see it."—He says not, I must needs use it, enjoy it, live upon it, take my pleasure, and delight in it: but "I must needs go and see it."

Doctrine. All that men have in the world is indeed but a sight. Eccles. 5:11, "When goods increase, they are increased that eat them, and what good is there to the owners thereof, save the beholding of them with their eyes?" When the devil would have bargained with Christ, He let Him see all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, in the twinkling of an eye; but more he could not do. He could not put Christ in the peaceable possession of them. All the glory of the world wins never into the soul! It stands at the door, nay, it stands at these two utmost windows of the soul: before the two eyes, and comes no further. Mark the fool's words, Luke 12:19, "Soul, take thine ease, thou hast much goods laid up for many years." Every word here is like the fool who speaks them. Blind liar, they are not laid up for the soul; for all his full barns and gold could never fill the soul. The poor soul did but look out at the two windows—the eyes—and see them. Then, I counsel you, since you must go to the market and buy, spend not your money on a sight; buy something that may be seen, heard, and felt. Buy Jesus Christ; ye may see Him, hear Him, and feel Him; rub souls with Him, and enjoy Him; rest upon Him, and make your moan to Him. You can never make the world your own, but you must leave all at the mouth of the grave, and creep in like a naked worm that leaves a knot of lime at the mouth of their hole when they creep into the earth. But you may take Christ into the grave with you! ye may take Him up to heaven with you! ye may take Him to back you, and speak for you in the last day of judgment!

"I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it. I have bought a yoke of oxen, and I must go and try them."—But these fools are bad merchants; the first should have seen the ground before he bought it; the last should have tried the oxen before he bought

them. They first buy, and then try; but Solomon's virtuous woman (Proverbs 31:16), first "considers a field," and then "buys it." Thus fools first buy their land, and their oxen, and then go to see them.

Doctrine. The foolish worldlings buy the world before ever they take a good sight of it. The devil is a deceitful merchant; he would not give Christ a good hearty sight of the kingdoms of the world before He bought it; he showed them to Him in a short glance, in the twinkling of an eye. Like a deceitful merchant who has no will to open up his wares that are adulterate before the sun. For the devil knows if a man saw the world, the griefs, the miseries, and the wrath of God, that hang over such as give themselves up to the love of the world, he would never come speed. But the devil's bargains are blind bargains; he sells by guess, and the fools of the world buy by guess and hearsays. So, indeed, he hides the end. O that men would look to the inner side of ambition, covetousness, and love of the world, they would not then forget Abner's word to Joab, 2 Samuel 2:26, "Will it not be bitterness in the latter end?" The devil causes us to buy sin before we see our merchandise. Judas bought an ill conscience before he saw the halter. The young man (Prov. 7:21–27) sees the strange woman before he sees her dwelling-place, which is the entry of hell. Foolish souls take on the debt of sin, spend, and take aye on more till the term day come, and then God puts an account into their hands, that they must read and plead with watery eyes.

"I have married a wife and I therefore cannot come."—The third person in the world's trinity is inordinate lust. And this, indeed, you may gather from the words, is the mightiest god of the three: the other two had business which they must do, but he who worships the third god, says, "I cannot come." The other two, in a pretended humility, said, "I pray thee have me excused." The third absolutely said, "I cannot come," and never a word of "I pray thee have me excused." Then,\* we see pleasure is a more dangerous temptation than either honour or profit. Beware then of the love of pleasure and inordinate lust. The thing that makes men hunt after honour and profit is pleasure, self-love, and pleasing of themselves. Men seek

profit for pleasure; so that pleasure is the devil's common bait, that he puts upon all his hooks. And even in the sin against the Holy Ghost, which to nature itself is the most thorny faced sin, yet Satan puts upon it the face of pleasure. For in a sort of hellish pleasing of themselves, they spit upon the face of the well favoured and beautiful Son of God. And therefore Solomon, speaking of the adulterous woman, (Prov. 7) uses many forcible words, expressing the power of this temptation; she led the young man as an ox to the slaughter, until a dart struck through his liver. She wounds many, she slays strong men. And if ye ask where pleasure lodges? the same Solomon, in the last verse of that chapter will tell you; she chambers in the way to hell, in the very mouth of the grave, the throat and entry of hell; there is pleasure's dwelling house. I may well say pleasure is the devil's sportsman, and his broker, who sells and buys, and makes the price for him; and goes through the world, and suits souls in marriage to him.

This should teach us to strive for mortification; for when the apostle speaks of this sin, the lust of the flesh, that which is to be done against it is, that it should be taken to the cross and crucified. The eyes, the ears, and heart of the old man must be nailed to Christ's cross. We shall never get the victory over this temptation except we be dead men to the world; and the nails that pierced Christ go through the heart, soul, and body of the man of sin. Offer to dead men, kingdoms, jewels, and much gold; it were but a ploughing of the sand, they will neither see nor hear your offer. Mortified Joseph was crucified to the lust of the flesh; says he, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9). He being a dead man to that could not get it done. Blessed are they who are weaned from the love of the world. In the

IV. Part of the parable, the servant reports his diligence, and it works some effect in the master of the house; it angers him, and, as Mathew says, "He went out and destroyed them, and burnt up their city."

1. The Lord takes a new course, and will not want guests; He will have His table filled. God's Supper will not be lost for want of eaters. God, in the beginning of this parable, was as a man: now He is turned as a lion. Mercy is His first offer, Come is His first word: but when that is refused, there is nothing for those but burning and slaying. Those men need not blame God for the burning of their city, for that is not a stolen dint,\* or stroke. We may think that the servant said, Dear friends, and loving brethren, come and sup with my master; he thinks<sup>†</sup> long for you, he will not eat till you come, he loves and delights in your company, ye will be heartily welcome and well entertained. No doubt, although the servant said this, yet he also said: If ye refuse to come, God's wrath will come on you; ye shall never taste of His Supper, and ye shall seek Him, but ye shall not find Him.

God steals not a dint, or decreet against such as are disobedient to the gospel. They are twice or thrice summoned, and the penalty of non-compearance set down in the Scriptures before ever God be angry. The gospel is now crying in the ears of the unthankful world, "He that believeth not is condemned already." He that refuses to come in at supper-time shall not be let in after supper. O! but the gospel makes many fair offers to sinners. The law says, "Do this and live;" but it speaks but once of life: for men having once sinned, the law never speaks another word of life. No, though you should mourn till your eyes fall out of your head, the law cries, "I will hear of no repentance; but away to hell immediately."

But the second covenant says, Jeremiah 3:12–14; Ezekiel 18, "For all that has come and gone, if ye will turn and repent, sin shall not be your ruin." Our Second Husband says, Welcome to Me, although ye have played the harlot with many lovers (for love is soon entreated), yet return again unto Me, any time before supper, before the board be drawn. But if ye let the day of the gospel slip, and refuse Christ offered, till after supper, the gospel then turns into a law, and will hear no more of repentance. And why? Because there is not a covenant after the second covenant; there is not another gospel after

this gospel; and there is no other collation after the King's marriage-supper. No, Christ cannot die again: death and He will never meet again; the devil will never get another yoking\* with Him upon the cross.

I will give it to you in a comparison. Our heavenly inheritance was forfeit in Adam, and by our own voluntary transgression of the law; but in comes Jesus, our elder brother, and makes a charter, wherein He serves Himself nearest and lawful heir to the inheritance; whereby He loses the mortgage, redeems and makes all free, and puts us in our place again. But with this clause in the end of the charter, That if we shall sell the land again, and make a new mortgagement, and subscribe not the second covenant, by embracing the gospel, and coming precisely at supper-time,—that is, in the day of the gospel (while the word speaks to us, and the sacraments offer Christ as the body of the new charter to us): it shall serve only for as much blank paper. For Christ will not die the second time; but "the wrath of God abides on you, and ye are condemned already." And, of all condemnations of ungodly men, this shall be the greatest, even that of those who hear the gospel and obey it not. For the charter is offered them to subscribe, and they refuse to put to their hands. It shall be more tolerable for Turks, who never heard tell of that covenant. Then beware, ye who have been at the Lord's table, that ye start and meet Christ precisely at supper-time: for ye need not trouble yourself to seek Him in the night. Then, see to it, for if anything be doom in Scotland in the day of God's account, this will be it, "I waited My supper on you till the meat was like to be lost, and My blood became cold, but your pride kept you back till the board was drawn: now ye shall not taste of My supper, and well ye deserve such disappointment." All the quarrel with us will be, we would not agree with Him. The

2. Effect that the servant's message makes on the goodman of the house is, He commands His servants to go out to the high-ways and hedges, and bring in "the poor, the blind, the maimed, the halt, and the lame." So although all the world should refuse mercy, God can

make a kirk to Himself of the very stones of the field. When the Jews will not come to the Lord's Supper, He can fill the table with Gentiles; and those that are not a people, such are made a people; those that have not obtained mercy do obtain mercy. Ye see the Lord holds up the door of the house long: He closes the door on no man. He keeps a great open house both to poor and rich; and indeed the poor, the blind, and the halt, will be at the board-head,\* when the children of the kingdom shall be shut out, and put to the door. Here, in effect, is a description of God's kingdom. They are poor ones, and have no riches of their own; but Jesus gives them fine gold. They have not a leg to go upon; are halt, &c., but the Lord Jesus bears them up. They have not a hand to hold Christ; but what then? Christ takes fast hold of them. They have not an eye in their head; but what then? Jesus Christ leads them. Now, that is true which Jesus saith; he justifies the fact (Luke 19:10) in going to Zaccheus; "He came to seek and save that which was lost." Multitudes of miscarried Christians cry, Alas! I am a sinner, and can have no part in Christ! Fool, if thou be a sinner, thou art the man or woman whom he is seeking. I pray thee, What is heaven? Nothing but a company of broken-hearted sinners; and there is none of all the sons of Adam, who stand before the throne and the Lamb, but their faces were once blotted. Although they be now kings, they were once slaves; there is none born noblemen in heaven. O! this is a great comfort to the sons of Adam, that those who are most base in their own eyes are greatest in God's eyes. His calling runs upon babes, and passes by wise men (Matt. 11:25). His call runs upon publicans and sinners, and passes by the self-righteous (Luke 16), and upon whores and harlots, and passes by the children of the kingdom: upon the base and off-scourings of the earth, and passes by the disputer of this world. Then, although it be ill to be a sinner, yet it is a glorious thing to be one of God's sinners, whom the Lord will call. As for the wicked and sinners indeed, they are Satan's sinners and their own sinners; Christ came not to seek them as His sinners. Now, What are those sinners in the streets and high-ways? Answer. When the Lord calls on us, He finds us not in our house, or under the shadow of God Almighty, but in the streets, without any shelter against the storm; or in the fields,



like Judah (Jer. 2:23, 24), who is compared to "a swift dromedary traversing her ways." "A wild ass used to the wilderness, snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure." We are "dead in trespasses and sins—and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:1, 12). "We are cast out in the open field, dying in our own blood, and no eye to pity us" (Ezek. 16) Now, those who are beggars in the streets, who never dream that the king will send for them, may make the invitation welcome when it comes. And woe be to them who think we lay money upon heaven, and mortgage grace, if not to buy it at full price; for when Christ comes to us, we can see as\* much as blind men, catch as much as maimed men, and run as swift as halting men.

"And the servant said, It is done, Lord, as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room."—There is here never a word of buying of land, trying of oxen, and marrying of wives, but immediate obedience; at the first word they come to the King's Supper. We see that where God's Spirit accompanies the word, the invited cannot but come to the Lord's Supper. In the next verse, he gives direction to his servant to compel them to come in; wherein, ye see, there is a sort of divine violence used in the effectual calling of God's children. What a long dispute is there between Him and the woman of Samaria. She gives the Lord two or three taunts, yet He will not want her nor leave her, till He say to her soul, "I that speak unto thee am He." And as Isaac said to Esau, "I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed;" so may the Lord say to this poor land, Blind, lame, halt, and maimed, I have called thee, and thou shalt be Mine; I have taken thee, and thou shalt be taken.

Christ will lay many oars in the water before He want His own: yea, although one of the elect should run to hell, yet He will follow them. And O! but Christ be swift in following those whom He hath chosen. The way to heaven is an unknown way to sinners; but behold the Lord teaches them (Psalm 25:9). And when they are taught, they dare not go alone, because of the enemies in the way. Then that same Psalm says, verse 8, "The Lord leads sinners in the way." Ay, but sinners will not be led, because they do not like the way well: then ye

shall find the Father and the son drawing and compelling them, Cant. 1:2; John 6:44. And if drawing will not do the turn, ye shall find bearing and carrying in the Lord's bosom (Isa. 40:11) and upon His shoulders (Luke 15:5), and upon His heart (Cant. 8:6).

What is the reason that Jesus will not want any of His own? I answer: There be three causes of this:

1. That day that the Lord Jesus died for the elect, He bought them with His heart's blood; with His soul he prized them, and thought them worthy of His life. Now, the Lord Jesus is God unchangeable: ye must not think that God buys any of the elect with His blood, and then begins to repent of the bargain.
2. Jesus is Almighty. Having once comprized\* the elect as His own, who can free comprizement? Christ has law on His side, and power to execute the law; then He cannot want His own.
3. The Father has given the elect to the Son, and He must render an account of them to the Father, man by man.

The last thing to be considered is, the Lord's sentence against the recusants—"None of those men who were bidden shall take of my Supper."—This is a hard word; for in effect it is, They shall never have part in my Christ, shall never see my face. So now those men know not what God is doing, they are home at their farm, their oxen, and their new married wife, thinking no such thing, when God is concluding a black process against them. Eli knew little what the Lord was doing, when He was leading a black process against Him and His house (1 Sam. 3:14). And Ahab knows little what God is doing, when He is going down to take possession of Naboth's vineyard, when the Lord, in the upper court, is giving out a doleful decreet against him. Elihu says of the wicked, "They cry not when He (God) bindeth them" (Job 36:13). We may be laughing, sporting, and making merry upon earth, while there is a black process going on against us in heaven. The destroying angel has gotten a commission to go forth and destroy: happy are they who can see how their process goes forward in heaven. Ye should see and try how it goes betwixt God and your souls. I pray you, beloved, when ye are toiling

at your farms, trafficking, or sporting, be asking at God, Lord, how shall it go with me at the last judgment? If ye ask at me, How shall we know that, for that is a secret? Indeed, ye must go to my Lord Secretary, Jesus Christ, and pray Him to tell you, and write from heaven to you how your case thrives. Say, Lord Jesus, Is there any hope of my action? Many who are careful of their estate on earth, are often at their advocate; they pray him, they write, and send friends to him. Why then should ye not do the same with Christ? Amen.

## **SERMON V\* —Heb. 12:1, 2, 3, 4, 5**

Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, &c.—Heb. 12:1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

BELOVED in Christ, here there is, 1. A conclusion drawn from the doctrine of the former chapter, "Let us run our race." 2. A reason, Many have gone before us, a whole cloud; it is a fair market-gate, a high street to heaven. 3. The way how we may come good speed in our race, get the gold, and win the bell, is set down in two things, viz.:

I. What we must quit for the gold. a. All weights and clogs of this clay world that retard us in our journey, and make our race toilsome. b. Sin that hangs fast upon us, and beguiles us.

II. What shall we do? What rule shall we follow? What airth shall we look to?

The Apostle says, Know ye not how they look who run a race? They look not over their shoulder, but ever straight before them, towards the end of their race. Look ye to Jesus in the end of your way. Now, the Apostle seems to go a little off the text: he sees a friend, even Jesus, and he cannot pass by Him, but must speak a word of Him. In your race I shall let you see two things in Jesus.

1. Efficacy and power. He is the captain and leader of your souls in the course of faith, and He will not tire: when He begins, He will also crown and perfect your faith.

2. I will let you see another thing in Jesus: A good example. How wan He? His heart longed to be at the gold, as yours should do. He saw the glory in the end of His way. He suffered both pain and shame, and so was seen on it: and He is now set down on the throne of God. Now then, the Apostle, still dwelling on Christ (for he cannot win off Him) gives them a new exhortation to hold on; in which there is included the following things:—

1. Consider what that lovely person suffered of all men—how they gave Him the lie, and spake against Him. 2. Consider how little ye have suffered; ye have not yet resisted, and striven unto blood, as Christ did. 3. He gives a reason why they should do so; for fear they give over, faint, and fall a swoon. Having in chapter 11 spoken of the fathers who wan to heaven, through patient suffering, he compares them (5:1) to the cloud that led the Israelites, by day, through the wilderness. He sets the example of those before them to encourage them.

We see the way to heaven is now a high market gate, and paved by hundreds and thousands who have gone before us; and we should follow after. Are ye wanting a settled house and dwelling in the world? Then set forward, look for a city above. Indeed, says Abraham, I shall be witness of that, that ye shall receive the recompense of reward. Will ye rather suffer affliction with the people of God than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season? Moses says, I

shall be witness then, that ye shall win home safe and sound. In the way ye may see a whole cloud of them as witnesses to lead you through the wilderness. Where away\* can ye go, or what can befall you in your journey to glory, but in which the Lord's saints have gone before you? Are ye your alone,† and seeking God amongst many who live as they list? So was Noah, a walker with God, when all flesh had corrupted their ways. Let it be true ye have all taken from you goods, children, and health. So was Job handled! So the saints have set up steps, and way-marks, at every turn in your way; and cry, Ride about. And howbeit now, many fools think to win through at the nearest, yet they win not, but stick there. The saints' going before, in the way, is a great benefit to us; their falls, and the ill steps that cumbered them, ye must beware of. Ye must hold off adultery, for David stuck in that mire. Hold off drunkenness, for Noah and Lot wet their feet in that dub. Beware of mocking and persecuting the saints, for Paul's ship had almost sunk in that quicksand. See these dead carcasses lying on the road: Judas, Demas, Hymeneus, and Philetus, brake their necks, by attempting to go to Canaan and falling off again.

Make this use of holy men's lives, here condemned, who followed the devil, but were recovered again. Beware of those temptations and sins which so easily beset them. Here is a cloud of witnesses; the world and the fashions thereof, they did not follow. (Rom. 12:2) "Be not conformed to this world," and the guises‡ thereof; and yet ye can justify yourselves in the daily transgression of this divine prohibition. Wherefore is vanity in marriages and banquets? "It is the fashion," say they. Proud Scotland! poor Scotland! near cut out to thy skin; it is worm-eaten. Wherefore is such vanity in apparel? so that women are become indecent, and men like monsters. Men are taking whole baronies of land on their backs? "It's the fashion," say they. O! proud and poor Scotland; men are cut out to their skin, and women want not vanity enough; but are not cut to the bone. And wherefore comes swearing, and drinking, see ye not? No otherwise than from the fashion. "It is the fashion," say they: but if ye will follow such a cloud of fashionable witnesses, let me conclude ye will go to hell also; for I can assure you that is the fashion. Ye may keep that excuse till the

day of judgment; and when God asks what ye have done, and wherefore ye did so; say ye, "Lord, for nothing but the fashion," and see how ye will win off.

"Let us run the race."—But how shall we run? So run that ye may obtain. Many run upon hope of heaven, and get hell in the end. But hear what the Spirit of God says, Lay aside every weight; every clog. What is the weight? The world, the love of riches, honour, and lusts. He speaks to us as to men having their back burden of clay, or clogged with heavy lumps of earth, and great tatters and bunches of the world's glory. Nay, a number of devils, pride, lust, and covetousness, hang upon us. Give them a shake, says he; down with them. Let the ground bear all.

How hardly do cunning\* men enter into the kingdom of heaven! Methinks I see three sorts of men beguiled in their race to glory.

1. Some go not a step at all in the way to heaven; for, going too near the hedge, they get a thorn in their foot, which swells it so that they must sit down, and lay it on their knee: and they sit there, and never make any further attempt towards heaven, till night come, and there they lie. One of those says (Job 21:15), "What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" They say in plain terms, God is but a poor Master to follow; it's long ere he be rich who follows Him; therefore we will have none of Him. Luke 14:19, "One said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them, I pray thee have me excused," &c. "And the Pharisees who heard these things mocked at Him."

2. Another sort run a start after Christ for a time, as Judas, who in men's eyes followed him, till the devil meets him in the race, casts down a purse, and breaks his leg; and syne went he over the brae. In John 6 ye see a number following Christ for the loaves. And Demas galloped awhile after Paul and the gospel, but he thought it a hungry trade; and the world crossed his road, and after it he went. I say, The world, like a fair strumpet in her silks and velvets, came in his way,

and gave him a kiss, and he ran to the gate,\* saying, Sorrow have my part of the gospel and Paul, any more! So Paul says (2 Tim. 4:10), "Demas hath forsaken me, and has embraced this present world." But

3. Another sort are those who have some more love to the race, and yet they cannot want the world. Like the young man (Matt. 19:21, 22) who came to Christ and said, he had kept the commandments from his youth; when Christ bade him sell all that he had, and give his goods to the poor, and come and follow Him, he went away with his heart in his hose, looking as if his nose were bleeding, for he had great possessions. So there are a number who would climb up the mountain to heaven, with thousands by the year, and with baronies, and a great bunch of clay, bound hard and fast upon the neck of their souls: and they think to hold foot with Christ, ride as hard as He pleases, and twenty stone weight of clay upon their soul! But they will be all mistaken; they will burst and die by the way; and shall never win to the top of the hill. Ask at them how they will win up to heaven, with their lusts upon their backs; they will say, "God will draw us, He will help and bear us." Indeed God makes His own people ride in chariots with Himself, and draws them (Cant. 1:2). But will ye make Christ a pack-horse to carry your clay, and your lusts? How long is it since He has carried our pack-mantle! Believe me, he is no cadger-horse. Demas and Judas, and the like, would have ridden after Christ, with all their bags of clay; but ken ye what Christ did with them? He threw them and their clay off at the broadside, and left them lying there, and posted away.

Question. What then shall we do to be quit of these weights? In answer,

1. Direction. The world is a foul way, like deep-watery new-tilled ground, where pound weights hang to every heel of the traveller, and retard him; and as he shakes off one, another comes on, so that he cannot go fast on his way. Now the affections are the feet of the soul; take heed to your feet, and come off the deep-wet land. Use the world

as if ye used it not. There is a dry way to heaven; hold ye off the deep way, and be content with food and raiment. Go ye the way that Christ and the saints went before you; who scarce ever wet their feet. Indeed Jesus was never wet-shod in the world; He had so good mind of His errand, and His home, that the world got no room in His heart. They who will not keep this clean dry causeway, it is no marvel to see them stick in the miry world, be drowned, and never win home. It is with many, as was said (Hos. 2:2), Their adulteries lie between their breasts; the world in a great bunch lies betwixt their breasts all night. Is it any wonder to see such heavy-headed mardels,\* get the mell<sup>†</sup> in this race? like stiff horses, unmeet for a journey. And how can they once give a trot? Nay, they but walk in a circle. The

2. Direction. Satan and the world will play you foul play, and cast their feet before you, and give you a fall. But care not for that, rise again. But, I pray you, beware of sore falls, or sins against the conscience, light, and love. For the conscience is like an earthen vessel if ye break it, ye will not mend it again. Some, in their race, give their conscience such a backstroke, that they break their legs, and are never meet for the race again. But, whatever ye do, keep the conscience whole.

3. Direction. Cast off all things that make you heavy: make yourself light, that ye may be nimble, skip, and spur away. Run, run, look not behind you, remember Lot's wife. Although ye should be like to burst, tarry not. Ye will mend of a sweat, and a heat. God has a napkin to rub the sweat of you, and He has a chair and a cushion for you, against the race be ended, and He will lay your head in His bosom. Take a little pains in the day, for I promise you, ye shall get rest at even.

"Cast off the sin that doth so easily beset us," or goes round about us. —This is the body of sin that remains in our nature; he speaks of it, as if one had us clasped in his arms. For original sin has us in fetters as captives; it is a thing we cannot win from, go where we please. It is



like a ghost, ever in our eye: behind us, pulling us back; before us, standing in our way; at our right hand, hindering us to hear, pray, believe, repent, hope. It is like the wind in our face, or in the face of a weak traveller, that blows him some steps back, where he goes one forward. It is as a man going round about us. It is in the mind, darkening the judgment; in the will, thrawing it in the contrary way. God bids us walk in the lowest room, down in the affections: but we do the contrary. And this sin, as weedbind goes about a tree, wraps about us in every good way. It is a serpent biting our heel, and cries, A lion in the way. When God draws, sin holds under, at meat, drink, and sleep. It is a joker;\* it promises us much, but gives us the wind, and yet we believe it.

But here a question may be asked. How does the Apostle bid us shake off this sin, which dwells in us so long as we live? it is death and the kirkyard that makes us quit of this sin: How is it then that we can shake it off?

Answer first. The dominion of it we break by grace. Every woe heart\* we have, for this indwelling sin, breaks a bone of old Adam, gives his back a crack, and makes him cry. As we repent, and advance in holiness, we break a leg, or an arm of this sin; but for the root of it, God only, in death, can pluck it out. Yet we must be hacking, and cutting the branches, and roots of it, else we cannot make progress in our race. We must not take this defiling sin forward with us in our race. We must leave it when we start, and deliver it over to Christ, that He may put it on His cross, and nail it to His gallows.

Answer second. He speaks of sin, as of a thing going about us, like a stone wall, in our very way to heaven. Till, by regeneration, Christ make a gap in the wall, that we may pass over, there is no possibility of going one foot. And even when the wall is broken, we shall see this sin hanging on our legs and arms. This sin keeps a lodge by the gate for Satan, and is a common robber, who slays many by the way. 1. Some it tricks out of the way, and lays asleep in security; like a drunken traveller, who sleeps in a moor, till the sun be down, then he

awakes from his sleep and cries. 2. It blinds some, as Paul, while a Pharisee, and Papists, and chases them a wrong way (to hell instead of heaven), when they make a fashion of repentance to slay their sins; and go again to their old pass. Such are those who, with willingness, walk softly, and go to sin again. Now, he sets down the exhortation, "Let us run the race." This is more than to walk and step at our own leisure. Running shews there is a set time, which will go away, a short day; and that the way is long, and we have much to do to get sin slain. And therefore, we must to the way with speed, and run fast. In Matt. 11:12, The kingdom of heaven is said to be taken with violence. Luke 13:24, "Strive to enter in." The word is, fight and throng in by force. When God by faith lets a man see heaven, he resolves that in he must be, come what will. Phil. 3:13, 14, "Reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press forward toward the mark." The word is, "I follow after," I reach out my hand. The apostle means he ran that so his head and breast pressed forward before his feet, and his two arms reached out to catch hold of Christ. To speak so, he chases Christ and heaven, and they seem to flee from him, and he follows: so should we do. Then chase on; the prize seems to flee from us; but it cannot flee further than to heaven's gates, there we will get a hold of it.

But how will they do who say, "Hooly\* and fair comes home against even?" And what needs all this din; all these prayers, and these flockings to communions? I hope to be in heaven as soon as the best of you. Answer. Beguile not yourselves, Loiterers, and drowsy persons, who go not one mile of twenty in a year; such as walk in a circle round about from pride, to lust; from lust to drunkenness; from that to covetousness; and from that to pride again; like as if they were in a fairies' dance, and run not at all. Can men come to heaven lying on their back? "The good lucky old religion made a sonsy world," say they. Yes, they use religion like a post-horse; as one wears out of fashion, they take another.

Heaven must be taken by violence. He speaks of heaven as of a fortified place, that must be forced by fire and sword, ere they render

it up. We are like drunken travellers, cast twenty miles behind; sometimes with lust, and sometimes with pride; and such companions cannot be put to the gate. They have a friend to Satan's messengers within; and when they knock, he cries, Coming, Master. Men have gotten a gate of their own ("like neighbour"—another, "the good old use and wont,") to walk as they please; and they are no gluttons of religion, neither of the word, nor communions. Religion, to them, is a good custom of going to the kirk.

"The race set before us."—This race is, by our Lord, set before us in His word; for men set the way to hell before themselves. God's word sets hell before no man as a way that He allows of. He sets not that before us, but behind our back. But men turn their face to hell, and not to heaven. Know, therefore, that this is a race of God's choosing, and not of our own; and the ill roads, the deep waters, the sharp showers, and the bitter, violent winds that are in our face, are of God's disposing. We will not get a better road, than our Lord allows us. He has called us to suffering, and not a stone is in our way by chance; but by His wise providence, all the waters are told; all the streams, the storms, and stones, that are in our way are written in His book. Our wanderings are numbered. It is our comfort that our Lord is looking on. God is like the nobleman who lays the cup in pawn; and appoints the bounds. He sets down the race in His word, with all the way-marks, and sets His Son at the end of the way, holding up in His hand the Crown of glory, and crying to the runners, To the gate with speed! See the prize. Win, and have it. As in a horse race, many are galloping and posting from one sin to another till they be at hell! and Satan, out of his own stables, furnishes them with fresh horses; and aye as one tires, immediately another is brought! But not a step should we go, but as God has directed us. The kirk does not set this race before us: neither may king or kirk change our King Jesus' way, to cast us about dykes, into Rome's foot roads, and Antichrist's by-ways. Scotland's race is set down, Jer. 8:6, "Every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth in to the battle." The commonality are galloping on covetousness, the nobles on oppression, and the whole land on strange apparel; and some of all

ranks in the three kingdoms are posting to hell on idolatry and masses.

When God's temple was last measured in this land, much was taken from Him. Either we must change our course, or look (1.) to lose the prize; or (2.) to want Christ's company and convoy; or (3.) to get leave to go all upon horseback in an ill course with patience. There is a necessity for hope and patience to wait on; because, at the place where they start, men see not the gold in the race: but must run the first mile; and not only the first, but to the end, before they sit down. He that falls back, within his own length of the score, or draws his bridle and sets up within a quarter of a mile, loses the race. We see not the prize here, neither is it before our senses, nor hard by our hand, but it is out of sight; we have nothing but God's promise for it, and some small arles.\* Behold, "The husbandmen waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth." We must wait on, winter, spring, and summer, till harvest come; for howbeit ill weather, and a rainy season come, yet the husbandman folds not his hands, nor lays up the plough by the walls; and with patience works for the harvest; for he knows God may, and will send a good and full crop. And what of a winter storm! What albeit they mock and persecute us, and Satan send out his dogs to bark at us, to make us take a house over our heads? Let us be going forward; it will blow up fair again. Read Luke 21:19, "In patience possess ye your souls;" verse 28, "Lift up your heads; for the day of your redemption draweth nigh." This condemns such as will not run one foot in this race, except the gold be in their hand, and they will have God paying interest, and giving wages in hand. But faith trusts God, and if ye get but one kiss of Him in this life, or the welcome of His bowels, with a sweet smile, and embrace in His arms, it is worth all ye can suffer for Him in this life. Got not Abraham a promise of the land of Canaan, and yet got it not in this life, but dwelt in tents, and hung by hope! Ay, ye will not play, except God give you heaven in your hand; as if God were a child, to give you the garland, ere the race be run. No, God's on-waiters come to honour in God's court; the more the good servant is faithful he has the more to crave. He who takes all at once, and forenails\* all before

the term, will be a poor man. We, like fools, would forenail our heaven; but it is best that God keeps all until the term day; for he is a rich servant who, in the end, has his heaven to crave. No marvel then, that patience be needful. Satan runs up and down like a great warship, with twenty pieces of ordnance, shooting at all who are sailing for Canaan; and roaring out, Surrender. But give not up; suffer, suffer, take a shot, hold out Christ's white flag; Christ will mend the gap that Satan's bullet has made. We fear ill upon the land, for the abuse of the gospel; and indeed that there will be an onset. Have patience and ye will win the field.

"Looking to Jesus."—Well kend the Apostle the devil would come our gate in his holiday clothes, with an "All these will I give thee." And when we are running, he will cry, Here away! But, said the Apostle, Give him not one look, although he should burst. What have ye to do with him? "Look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith." Look to your forerunner, and follow Him in the race.

Then in this our following, we must look how Jesus ran. We must observe all the properties of his running, and do just as He did. 1. He yoked\* to the Jews, early in the morning, and was obedient to the law in the cradle. At twelve years of age He disputed with the doctors in the temple; He was still about His Father's business, late and early. Yea, even upon the cross He was running. So run, young men, in your youth; start to the gate, break off, and run to your dying day; halve not your lives. If ye have lost time, and were too long in beginning, be like a man far behind, when he looks to the sun and sees it low, and remembers he has far to go; he sets the spurs to the horse. So rouse up your lazy souls and post. Post, post, heaven is waiting for you. A special virtue, or property, in a runner, is to look even before him: for it ye look over your shoulder, ye may possibly not break your neck, but ye will certainly miss a stride. If ye look at meadows, houses, and worldly pleasures by the way, ye will possibly fall and break your toes; therefore look aye home, straight out before you. Give not the world a look for the world. But very often, after we have taken our leave of the world, and of sin, we have a strong

inclination to be back again. While taking a hearty look of the world, a stone may take a man's foot in his journey, and break his leg.

2. Christ, in His race, got many lets, the devil came in with, "All these things will I give thee," to turn Him into His Inn, and to lay Him over the board.\* The world set on Him; but they could not all make honest Jesus come one foot out of the road. Keep aye the high-way. Smart men will not come under trysting with juggling knaves, nor subscribe any writs, for fear they bring them under a sum, and then take their lands from them. Never, never come in communing with Satan and sin. Some fools give the devil writs, and subscribe a submission to the world and sin, and take the devil and their own hearts to be overseers. Beware of that work. Christ would have nothing to do with the world, in His journey. When they offered to make Him a king, He refused, and ran to the mountain, and there He prayed (John 6:15). He took but His meat of it, and all He had was borrowed. He looked blunt-like on it; like a man who would fain have been away; and so was seen on it. We should be like some old men that want children, who quit all to their friends, and get a bond, for meat and clothing, all their days. Our love and affection should quit the world, and seek a bond of our Lord, for food and raiment, all our days, and be content therewith.

3. So run as Christ; He ran so as He left nothing undone. "Father, I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17). See that ye have all ended against night, that ye may say as Paul said (2 Tim. 4:7), "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." There are many who run as Paul, when a Pharisee, ran; but they know not where-away. Many forget their conscience by the gate,\* as a drunken man forgets his sword at the Inn in which he lodged. Take all with you, your conscience, and faith. They who go to sea take all with them: for when the wind and tide has put them off land, they will not win back again, to fetch any thing they have left behind.

"But what good will our looking to Jesus do us?"—Very much, He is the Captain of our salvation, "the author and finisher of our faith." For Christ is all, He draws with His Spirit, and He leads us through the mire, and goes before us. And we have this advantage, when we faint, He looks back over His shoulder with a smile, takes us by the hand, and says (Luke 12:32), "Fear not, little flock," &c. (John 16). "Yet a little while, and I am with you." Even as a loving guide says to the tired man, "We have but a little water or two to pass through: and see there is but yonder hill betwixt us and the town, ye are near the city." He will see you again, for He is a Captain indeed. In taking in a town, the soldiers will venture sometimes to scale the wall where the captain is; but it is not so here. Jesus Himself took the castle of heaven first: it cost Him blood to win in and break up the doors. Now He stands in the entry, and cries, Come in, I have broken up the gate, I have win the city; be not afraid, I shall warrant you. Therefore (Heb. 6:10) He is called a forerunner, He went before to open the doors, and the park-dykes,<sup>†</sup> and take the stones out of the way, and says, Step forward, my brethren, be not frightened. So then, when we run, we are not to lean to our own strength, for fear we get a fall. He who thinks he has little need of Christ's help is ready to fall. He who knows not his own weakness fears not; and he who knows not his own heart has good cause to fear he may get a fall, and dash out all his brains."

"The finisher of our faith."—We will not have Jesus pulling us to the gate, and leaving us there. No (1 Cor. 1:8), "Who shall also confirm you to the end." It is a work of Christ as Mediator, and written in the commission His Father gave Him, that He should lose none, but raise him up at at the last day (John 6:39.) In Eph. 5:27, He presenteth His church to Himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle. He shall get His bride, the church, all arrayed in His Father's clothes, in at heaven's gate, and slip her in His Father's hand, and say, Father, there her now! I have done my part; I have not laboured in vain. Let them be confounded who take this glory from Jesus, and give it over to that weather-cock, free will. For, here an argument that hell will not answer. The Father promised Christ a

seed (Isaiah 53:10). And a willing people (Psalm 110:3). And the ends of the earth (Psalm 2:8) to serve Him as a reward of His sufferings. Now, shall God crack His credit to His Son, and shall Christ do His work and get the wind for His pains, except free will say, amen? This were a bairn's bargain. No, it is a part of Christ's wages, that men's free will shall come with cap in hand, and bow before Him. He shall have a willing people.

We must digress a little, and speak of Christ's race. Observe, this is the apostle's manner, Christ comes in his way, and he cannot pass by Him: but he must stand still and speak a word with Him, and give Him a kiss by the way. (Col. 1:14), "In whom we have redemption," &c. And there, ere he go further, he must run out upon Christ, and His nature, and offices. Verse 15, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature." See Rev. 1, "Grace be to you, and peace from Jesus." Then he runs out, who is the "faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead," &c.

Learn a lesson. When Jesus comes in your mind, leave your way, and go and speak with Him a while, and go not soon from Him. Is He come? Let Him not go without a kiss. Oh! and alas! we oft times let Him go as He comes. But why do His friends commend Him so much? Even that you and He may fall in love together.

"Who for the joy that was set before him."—He sets down a special virtue in Christ's running: who, for the eye-look\* to joy, "endured the cross, and despised the shame." Here is a question, What an eye-look to joy was this, that Christ had? What made Him run, seeing heaven was in His bosom? What needed He rejoice to be at home?

Answer. As He was God, nothing could be added to His joy. Yet, howbeit He carried the God-head about with Him, the sight and sense of the God-head was covered in the days of Christ's humiliation: there was a bar and a lock put on the God-head, that He saw not as He now seeth. In that, He took the pilgrim's lot with us, and was a traveller in respect of sense and clear light;—for, He as



man was ignorant of some things then, as of the day of judgment, and fruit on the fig-tree. He knew He would be nearer God; the God-head stood aloof from Him then.

2. The joy before Him was, the contentment He would have in His new Bride; the joy that He had won through hell, and gotten His errand. Sad and heavy would His heart have been, to have missed us: He was glad of the hire His Father had promised Him. It is natural for a man to rejoice when he gets the fruit of his labours: and there is thanksgiving, and joy in heaven for the conversion of sinners. And He gives thanks far more when they are redeemed fully (Heb. 12:12). In the midst of the congregation, He sings praise to God His Father, for the children He had given Him; but more especially when He shall have ended all, and got the goods in His hand, that He bought so dear. He shall then sing for joy; and when Christ sings for thy redemption, and giveth thanks, thou hast far more cause to sing than He.

3. The joy set before Him was the glory to be manifested in Him, which He prays for (John 17:5) which "He had with the Father before the world was:" that joy that His Father will welcome Him with and (to speak with reverence) clap His head for His pains. As He rejoiced from all eternity with His Father (Prov. 8:31), and was His Father's delight: so now He shall rejoice with His Father, He and He together in redeemed mankind. And the manhood with all His members, and the angels (for they rejoice at the conversion of sinners) shall rejoice with Him to see His body fulfilled, and to have them all under His wings.

4. Consider the sadness Jesus had, and the tears He shed in the days of His flesh; but that His Father dried, and wiped the blood and sweat off His face, and set Him in a place, where He should shed tears, and die no more. So do as Jesus did. And why? Because never man endured out his longsome race but He who got a sight of heaven. See wherefore Abraham dwelt in tents, and Moses (Heb. 11) "choosed rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to

enjoy the pleasures of sin." He saw a sight that every one cannot see. Ye know a man who has been seven years away from his wife and children, coming home again and seeing the smoke of his own house, his heart rises a foot higher than it was before. Would ye run? Get a sight of the city. Get Christ's prospect, to see the joy set before you. Get the earnest of the inheritance, and ye will never rue the bargain. Whosoever has a mind for heaven, runs a while in blind zeal, until they sweat, and then grow lame, like a horse that is ill taken care of, after hard riding; so are those who never saw heaven afar off by faith. But a sight of the gold makes the runner spring and run. O what wrought this joy that was set before Him! It made Him endure the cross; His Father laid the cross on His back, and He carried it thirty-three years, and never gave it a shake to put it off. Oh, what crosses! Never man was handled as He was; for some are under some crosses, and free of others. When Satan and men struck Job, the Lord blessed him and upheld him: But on Jesus, all at once fell God, man, devils, law, justice, sin, and the curse! Ye cannot tell me what comfort Christ had, when He cried, "My God, my God!" That was a sore thraw for His back. O! the fire was hot then. But, when Christ was in His prison, in this dark night, there was a hole to let Him see day. He had His eye by faith upon the hope of the joy of the fair day before Him. He got a foul black day, all clouds of darkness about Him; but He said within Himself, I will get my fair day when all this ill weather is away.

Now let me speak to a heavy heart; that looks for a shower upon this land. And indeed it is black in the west; the clouds are gathering; the shower is coming. Take a house in time, yet fear not, a shower will not melt you, and Christ has a fire in His Father's house to dry your clothes. O! but he who has faith to look up through yonder blue sky to see the throne of God and the Lamb, and to wait for the rending of the heavens, when Christ shall get through His fair head, with a great crown of gold upon it; I say, he who gets faith to see, and wait for these, will give a leap, and a skip in his journey. Let us suppose Christ were bodily upon the earth, and a water betwixt you and Him: yea, a lake of fire betwixt you and Him; I think ye would venture to

be at Him. Now set out in your journey, set down your feet, and be not beguiled with the devil's apples, which he casts down in your gate. Christ, in the end of the journey, holds out His long arm, with a crown of glory, and shouts, and cries, Silly, tired bairns, Look here-away! look up the brae, come this way.

Ye may ask what power had Christ to give His manhood to die for others. This would seem to be against justice; as a king's subject has not power to slay himself, because in so doing he takes a subject from his prince. Answer. The subject is not altogether his own; he owes his life to his king, and may not dispose of it, except he fail, against the king. But, howbeit, the manhood was God's creature, yet it was by the law of a personal union God's manhood, and God's flesh and blood; and the God-head gave to the manhood absolute power to give his life for men, and to pledge Himself as the price of our redemption. See, then, here a sweet mystery; the God-head furnished the sum to Jesus, and gave Him the price to pay; and the manhood gave it back to justice, as suffering and dead, for a ransom: law furnished the sum, and justice received it, and gave Christ our bond to tear in pieces.

Another fruit of our Lord's to-look\* to the joy that was set before Him, was, "He despised the shame." What shame? Lighted there any shame on Christ? Ay, in truth! Heaven and earth wonder at an ashamed Christ. Look if Christ got not His part of it; when mickle black shame came upon Him. But how. Shamed by men, and shamed by God, I shall prove both.

One rascal struck Him on the head, another villain spat on His fair face: a great shame; they wagged their heads, and brake a jest upon Him. Take up holy Jesus now! say they. He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him! Think ye not but that went to Christ's heart, to hear those black mouths make a mock of God's glory? Herod, and his men of war mocked Him. And see more shame yet; howbeit He was an honest man all His life, they conveyed Him out of the town, and the guard at His back: His enemies scoffing at him, and children

wondering at Him. And what more? Dear Man! He went out at the ports, † bearing His own cross on His back! Of seventy disciples, twelve apostles, and all His friends, not one to help Him, or take an end, or a lift of the cursed tree! And they put a crown of thorns on Him, scorning His kingdom. Was not this to put the thieves' mark on Him? And what more? Might they not have said, This poor man has few friends? But His friends would take no part of His shame, and yet He took all their shame.

God shamed Him also. His Father said a curse and malediction light on Him, shame light on Him. Start not at this. I shall clear it. Sin has aye shame on its back: ye know that God made Him sin; and if God made Him sin, and a curse, He behoved to bring shame on Him. For the shame that should have come on us, and the reproachful words that justice would have given sinners, they lighted on our Lord. Ye see when a thief is taken in the fang;\* and brought before the judge, and put to an assize, and challenged; he looks down, and thinks shame to look any man in the face. When the judge says, How durst thou do it? Silly man, he blushes, hangs his head, and never says a word. So God put Christ upon the pannel, arraigned Him before His tribunal, and accused Him for our sins. Christ could not deny them, but stood as a sheep dumb before her shearers. He hung His head before justice, and the honest Man took with the fault. He said he would die for the murderer, adulterer, swearer, idolater, drunkard, &c. Now there was reason here, that God should put Christ in this plea, † for the shamed man: because God's wise will is the rule of all justice. God made the first covenant that Adam should be legally for us, and the second covenant was so contrived that Christ should be for us. For Christ's manhood has a personality, not of its own, but of the God-head; and by the law of a personal union, Christ should enjoy Himself. Now, because Christ had a legal personality from us, and as in His person under His sufferings He enjoyed not the fruits of that personality, but was plunged in fear and horror, while He said (John 12:27), "What shall I joy?" yet the God-head (to speak so) was like cork to make the manhood sweem above, that it was not swallowed up with God's infinite wrath; and the manhood had

personal legality from us, to bear the strokes by law due to us. Hence come and learn and be willing, with Christ, to want a limb of your credit for Him. He was shamed for you. O wonderful! An ashamed sinner is nothing, an ashamed devil is ordinary: but God ashamed, an ashamed Christ is a miracle! One honest man will suffer loss for another; but to take another's shame is a different thing: yet this rarity was in Christ. A man who is a cautioner for his waster friend, the judge counts not him the waster, he is still thought an honest man; only he pays the sum. But Christ our Lord, besides the sum He paid by law, He was as the dyvour, for our sins were laid upon Him: for He and we are so near here, that He is as us, and made sin for us.

"And is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."—He was a good man, and endured all patiently, and so it was seen. He got much glory in the end; there could not but grace come of Him, He was so mild under His sufferings. (Phil. 2:9), "Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him," &c. Wherefore, then, is His sitting down nothing but an exaltation, a state of glory above men and angels. To Him is all power given; and He has received a name (Acts 5:31), "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Now to understand this the better, note that His sitting as God upon His Father's right hand is but the open manifestation of His glory, which He had before the world was. His rising as a man to this state hath two steps going before it.

1. The nature of man in Christ is made of the same metal with our nature, and therefore deserved a personal union: and therefore the God of grace raised the manhood above itself, to be married to the God-head. This is the first step of the Headship spoken of (Heb. 1), God has made Him "the heir of all things." For God indeed lifted man above Himself, in giving to the manhood no created personality, but the personality of the God-head; so as that blessed manhood, at one moment should subsist in the Word, and subsist in the infinite

personality of the God-head: that the man Christ, and the God-head should be in one person.

2. Upon this, He resolved a free donation of Christ to the manhood, to be King, Priest, and Prophet, sufficiently qualified to grace us. This was grace also to the manhood, yet this grace was not given in such a measure to Christ, in the days of His flesh. Howbeit this grace, and the personal union did sufficiently bear Him up under all His sufferings.

3. After His sufferings, the manhood saw the God-head, in a more glorious manner, and enjoyed Him after an admirable manner, and is made a personal worker, and absolute commander of the world; a Prince, a Judge, a Lord, and next to God; over and above all creatures. That our Husband is so high, is great matter of comfort to the faithful. Men who have a friend at court are aye troubling him with suits and writs; we write not half many letters up to our Friend at court. He delights to speak of us to His Father, and to carry us in His heart, as the High Priest did the names of the twelve tribes on his breast: and to engrave us on the palms of His hands. Then see the gate, and follow Christ Jesus on the cross; the cross is your way. Christ got a deeper gate; His way was the cross, and the crown. Now, says the apostle, "Consider such an one," and yet spoken against by sinners: for sinners gave Him the lie. Look upon Him lest ye faint. (Psalm 31:22), "I said in my haste, I am cut off before thine eyes." (Isaiah 49:14), "Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me." Think not, ye will aye be alike stout in the journey; sometimes ye will fall down, and Christ will have you a lifting; but He is near you with His flagon of wine to comfort you. Amen.

## **SERMON VI\* —Isaiah 49:1, 2, 3, 4**

Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far. The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath He made mention of my name, &c.—Isaiah 49:1, 2, 3, 4.

THE Prophet, from the fortieth chapter of this prophecy, to the end thereof, discourses of these two things. 1. Of the bringing of the Church back from Babylon. 2. Of the restoration of the Church by Jesus Christ. Here is

1. A preface to the doctrine of Christ, and the glory of the Church under Him. And in these words Christ Himself is speaking to the islands, and, among others, to Scotland and England: for Britain is one of those islands.
2. The Person spoken of is described from His calling, and the power of His mediation, compared to a sharp sword.
3. In allusion to the people for whom He is to work, it is said of Him, "Thou art My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified."
4. The unsuccessfulness of His ministry, occasioned by the obstinacy of the Jews; "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain."

"Listen, O isles, unto me."—Christ first made choice of the people of the Jews; but now He has broken down the partition wall betwixt Jew and Gentile; and cries to us, "Listen, O isles, and hear, O Scotland and England." Ye who lie far out in an isle of the sea, listen unto Me, and ye shall be My land and heritage. Now, O Scotland, God be thanked, thy name is in the Bible. Christ spake to us long since, ere ever we were born. Christ said, "Father, give Me the ends of the earth, put in Scotland and England, with the isles-men in the great Charter also: for I will have them among the rest (Psalm 2:8). God said, He should get all the land He named; all Sinim, and all the ends of the earth: all beyond the river, Sheba and Seba. The land in acres, and ridges,\* was measured out to Christ, and the march- †

stones set. And as ye ken, in Charters, houses, crofts, mosses, moors, fowling, and fishing, even all in the land's length and breadth are included, so Christ gets all His chosen ones that are included in the grand Charter of election. Believe in the name and authority of the Son of God, I pray you believe, and read Scotland's Charter Psalm 2:8, 45 and 72:10. Will ye then believe?

But now we are like to be turned over to a new master; Antichrist is claiming us. Let us be wo<sup>‡</sup> for that. Ken ye what the enemies of the Kirk are doing? They are working hard that they may get Christ overthrown, and His Father's land taken from Him. Think ye they will come speed? Nay, they shall not: the gates of hell and Rome shall not prevail against Him. Regard them not, for they shall not overcome. Christ's Charter is surer than that. Then let the isles hearken and obey; and I fear not that Christ shall lose one foot-breadth in Britain. But if ye will not believe and obey Him, surely there will be a land lost, and we will be given away. It was not an ill conquest that Christ made, and could not but thrive. It was well won (as we may say) by the sweat of His brow. Christ is not like many daft\* young heirs, who lose their estates by their folly. Christ is no waster, He never sold, nor mortgaged a furr<sup>†</sup> of His Father's land. It is our sins that have sold us, and not He.

"Listen, O isles, Hearken, &c."—The isles must be Christ's, upon condition they hear and obey Him. Christ our Master must have service from us; else we cast away our rights. "And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all who believe and obey Him" (Heb. 5:9). Of Him the Father says, "This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear Him." Listen therefore to the matter, for upon your peril be it, if ye reject the Lord Jesus.

"The Lord hath called me from the womb."—What means this? Might not Christ have come uncalled? Nay, "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron" (Heb. 5:4, 5). "So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made unto Him an high



priest, but He that said, Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee." If ye ask what was Christ's calling? I say it was, 1. God's eternal decree, wherein it was decreed, and agreed upon in the Covenant of Redemption, betwixt the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; that Christ should be the person: and writs, as it were, past betwixt them. 2. This calling is God's laying all the elect over upon Christ. Therefore the Father has not a personal oversight of the elect, they are all given to Christ; they are all given to the Son's hands. "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5). There is not another Mediator than He: neither the Father nor the Spirit. There is not another to answer, or compare personally for us. The Father (so to speak) has given all our bonds and writs over to the great advocate, Christ Jesus. The Father seeks, purposes, and pleads against mystical Christ, and cries, Payment, or death:—Death or payment, either from the Head or the members. But the Father laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6). Was only our sin laid upon Christ? Nay, He is also made the author of eternal salvation by suffering. Never such a word is spoken of the other two glorious persons, in all the Book of God. If Christ had not given an infinite satisfaction, and payed the debt, none could have attained salvation. Works of supererogation will not do the turn; man's free will cannot avail. Nothing but the blood of Jesus was able to compensate the matter.

3. The Lord's calling Christ is His giving Him law on His side, by a public office; to teach as a Prophet, to suffer as a Priest, and to subdue, rule, and defend, as a King. For we may know for certain, that howbeit, Christ-man had a private goodwill to us, pitying our case, and desiring we should be set at liberty; yet that would not have done our turn, except He had been a divine person, and given the required satisfaction. A man may have a goodwill to be cautioner and surety for another; but if he is a rebel against the king, the law cannot accept of him. No, he cannot be accepted unless he be a free subject, and a sponsible\* man. So Christ having man's bowels to pity us, God gave Him law upon His side, and public authority against all sin. Here is a singular comfort to all weak, sick, and heavy-laden souls. If

ye doubt of your salvation, remember that Christ by law, and God's good-will and special calling, is made and appointed a Mediator for you. Then it is no false pretension that Christ took your plea in hand: He has a calling to it by law. Then rest and rely upon Him alone for salvation. The Lord has made a resignation of you over to Christ; and if ye truly believe in Him as He is offered to you in the everlasting gospel, there is no fear that He cast you off or that ye shall not be saved. Whom! He loves, He loves unto the end. If ye are His, He will not lose His right. Then boldly claim salvation, forgiveness, and Christ's righteousness. It is yours by God's calling; take your own, and be not driven from it as silly bodies: be not bosted<sup>†</sup> from salvation, by temptations, crosses, and faithless fears. If you believe in Christ, your rights are strong. Christ says, "The Lord God called Me from My mother's womb:" that may be your warrant, to trust in Him as an all-sufficient Saviour. Unbelief, then, must be a great liar, and slighter of Christ. It says as much as Christ is not a lawful Saviour, that He came uncalled, and that His work will not stand. See then how deep in sin thou art, O unbeliever! Thou turnest worse than a Jew, and sayest at the first, Christ is a deceiver, and not a true Saviour. There is much talking of faith; but I wish it were well kend.<sup>‡</sup> Alas! that it is not better known.

"From the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name."—The law asked who should suffer for man? It was not content with the general answer, "A cautioner and surety;" but one behoved to be named. So the Lord named Christ, and said; Talk no more of that, there is none other meet for the work but Mine own eternal Son; the Son of God, and the Son of man. And upon Christ's consenting, and answering to His name, God booked Him; and writes it in His holy word, that Christ is Cautioner for His people. He was made to undergo the curse due to us, and His name was written in our bond. An honest man, especially in a high station, will not have his name called in question for a sum of money. He would rather pay the sum ere his name were heard in the Court. So, ere his name be heard for a fault that deserves infamy and death by the law, he would rather die. But our dear Redeemer was not so thin skinned;

for His name was within our black bond, along with the perjured man, the adulterer, &c., and justice laid hold on Him as if He had been the transgressor and sinner. He did not become the sinner actually, as the Antinomians say, else He could not have made satisfaction for the sins of His people. It is but a foolish conceit of theirs to imagine that He was both the sin, and the sacrifice for sin. No, instead of being the sinner, "He was holy, harmless, and undefiled" (Heb. 7:26). Yet (what is matter of admiration and wonder) this Holy One did undergo the full punishment that law and justice did require! "He poured out His soul unto death; and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12). Lo, hear His name in God's high count-book, and the Father cries, "Jesus Christ is made sin for sinners." This is a sore ditty,\* the law of God's curse and malediction lighted on Christ! O! The angels might wonder to hear Christ's name called in question. Then ye who think much to be spoken of for Christ, to be reproached and nick-named; or to have your names heard of before judges and rulers for Him; why do ye so? He took a blot on His name for you! Christ did not hang down His head, nor think shame of you! He avows you and your cause before His Father. So then, avow ye His name, Him and His truth also, before all the world. Take not a backside, hold not your peace, flee not the place, when His cause comes in competition, with your name being heard of for Him. "It is your honour." Oh! That we love ourselves so well, that we will not suffer a wrong for Him! Oh! Thy spirit will rise if thy name is but changed. And some of you will say, I thank God, none will say that of me, "But a whore's son!" and I thank God, my name is known where I dwell. And so is His name. Is thy name better known than thy Saviour, Christ's? Who has the name of King of kings? And yet His name was put in God's book along with the transgressor's. Christ took a little low style, as from a lord or an earl to a good man. He is aye called here, in our country, the Son of man. Many irreverent people, in the days of His flesh, called Him Mary's son.

"He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword."—Christ can shed blood with the tongue. (Rev. 1:16), "And out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, that with it He should smite the nations." All whom Christ slays, as Mediator and Saviour, He slays them with His mouth; for see how sharp His sword is, (Heb. 4:12), "The Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Woe, then, to them who have a heart of iron and flint, that slips Christ's word, and are never slain with it. Some men's consciences are made of iron; let Christ strike they will never stir. But yet Christ will beat such men's consciences all to flinders, and then they can never be mended again. But of this afterward.

It is true some are moved at the word, they will thrust out a tear. But I compare their motion to a strong physic on a weak stomach; they are sick for a time, but incontinently they vomit it up again, and are as well as ever they were again. So are some men's hearts with the word; they will be physic sick, but they will soon vomit up Christ's physic again: it goes not out of the kirk-yard with them; it abides not with them till the next Lord's day.

"He hath hid me in the shadow of His hand."—This is a speech borrowed from a man carrying his child in his arms, in a stormy day, who keeps his hand betwixt the child and the blast. Or, when he is on his knee, and is too near the fire, he holds his hand betwixt the child's face and the fire, and keeps him from burning under the shadow of his hand. The man, Christ, was made to suffer a sore blast: a black storm of the north wind of God's anger blew upon His fair face till it was like to take all the skin off it. God put His hand betwixt His face and the fire, and preserved Him in the shadow of His hand. And this is nothing else but God's protecting and defending Christ at His calling as King, Priest, and Prophet.

What would have ye more? In all Christ's sufferings, and troubles, God had the man, Christ, hidden under the shadow of His hand. God

had a hearty handful of Christ, and that two ways. Ye know oftentimes His enemies would have been about with Him, but no man laid hands on Him, for His hour was not yet come. God gave Christ twelve hours in His day, so that He could neither stumble nor fall till His night came: for, in despite of His enemies, He stayed in the city till He got His turn done. They could not chase Christ to the fields, nor make Him flee the place. He came down to plead for the life of His Church and her laws; and made a vow that He would not go home again till He got a decreet, and wan the plea; and He got that or ere He rested. He was not chased out of the town till He had done His errand. Until He had all His silly ones brought out of hazard and danger, and brought out of hell, He wan not up to heaven again. He died not before His time: He was not like green corn, cut down ere it be half-ripe. But Christ got His fill of the ground, and was ripe at all will, ere ever the Lord's hook cut Him off out of the land of the living; and so He was aye in the shadow of the Lord's hand.

But under Christ's last sufferings, how He was hid under the shadow of God's hand is harder to understand: for Christ got justice and law, and no mercy. But I answer.

1. That although Christ got no sparing mercy, yet He got helping mercy under His sufferings. Observe it, for there is need we go attentively here: the ground is somewhat slippery. The Word says, "God spared Him not." There was no collusion, or secret paction betwixt Christ and God's justice. Nay, the law would not take a composition from Christ for so much and forgive the rest, as if it had been great rigour to take all. If Christ had gotten a remission, He should have got some of the sweet Evangel. Nay, but Christ got nothing but law, the sour law; and kept all the sweet Evangel to His poor dyvour friends, to poor, silly, helpless sinners. Therefore, Christ said, I will take all the sour, and ye shall get all the sweet. Nay, under desertion, Christ could not get a blink or word of His Father. Nay, I say more, God might not, He could not, as law went then. Christ cried, Is there not a word, dear Father, not a look? And He answers, No, not a look for a world. But Christ got God's helping mercy: the

sweet shadow of His almighty hand covered Him. For God sent His angel to comfort Him, but would not come Himself. God gave Him armour against all the strokes; for He had assurance that the God-head and the manhood should never sunder. That was Christ's great Charter that He leaned mickle to in time of trouble.

2. He got aye help sent Him from the God-head, at every stroke, inspiring Him with faith, strength, and patience of soul, Isaiah 50:7, "Therefore have I set my face as a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed." Christ's soul, because of the personal union, was all as flint. God smote, but the arrows never pierced Him: they only made wounds and rents; but the soul never flew in pieces, nor was turned to nothing. But then, How was the matter? I say, Justice kept Christ from a kiss of the God-head. For there were two things here; a. The windows of the God-head were closed, that neither the light nor the heat thereof, shined in upon the powers of Christ's soul. b. All the powers of His human soul were bound up. 1. The natural power of joy was bound up like a great water dammed in, that none could get a blyth\*look of Christ! for He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." 2. The natural power of seeing God in the union was restrained. God hiding Himself, a black cloud of horrible fears was over Christ's judgment, that He should then believe, but not see nor contemplate the God-head, as before. 3. That power of enjoying, in all the whole humanity, and sweet actual complacency, and resting upon a felt Lord, who was absent, was restrained. And yet (which is a wonder of wonders) with horrible fear, He had faith, and extreme love, with sadness; in calling God His Father, with strong cries and tears, admirable patience and hope, which made Him long for an open window, to see day light. Indeed, though it was not possible that Christ should miscarry; yet to our appearance, our salvation was in a venture. If Christ had here gotten a wrong cast,\* and gone a wrong step; then adieu to our salvation. But God be thanked, it was not a loose matter, nor loose hung. God had, all this time, Christ and our heaven in the hollow of His hand. See then, whenever God sends Christ, or any of His servants, an errand, He has them aye hard and fast in the hollow of His hand. God's faithful ministers and

professors, serving in a lawful calling, are all here. If He send you to bear witness, and suffer for Him, He will bear your charges. If He yoke<sup>†</sup> you against any foe, He will defend you: but if ye go to the whore, and get an uncouth<sup>‡</sup> sickness; or go to the world, and seek your happiness there; then you are not under the shadow of God's hand: He will not bear your charges. If ye but yoke against any sin, He will defend you; but if ye sin against Him, ye are exposed to all the arrows in His quiver. Why? The devil has employed you, and not God. Were you in God's service, your Master would stand for you. Then go on in His service, and draw upon Him for all your expenses. Christ, at the time when He stood at the great bar, held by the grand Charter in His hand, and answered.

Now, what can Christ not abide, and what can He not do? What can bits of clay creatures, rulers and princes, do against Him? Even He endured such a battle! We lose heart and courage, when we fear matters go so hard against God's service, and His truth. Indeed, our unbelief will be saying, Christ suffered not such a thing as God's wrath. Know ye what ye say? Some will say, We doubt not but Christ can break all His enemies in pieces, like as many potsherds: but O, say they, we fear we have no strength; we wot not if He will give us part of His strength.

I Answer. Christ's strength is not to lie beside Him, as the wretch's gold:\* it is to give out for His kirk. But I must say one thing; every professor should try whether he be in Christ or not. If you be not in Christ, this world will blow you clean, clean away from Him. Nay, in any trouble, it is not possible you can stand still. For this cause our Lord has sent a trial, that those who have nothing to do with Christ may be blown away. If ye would suffer for Christ, slay your affections, and mortify your lusts. They shall not be honoured with suffering who have not given sin its death's wounds. If ye would suffer for Christ, and die for Him, ye must be a member: for a tree-<sup>†</sup>leg suffers not when the head bleedeth. If your heart be prepared, and if you be resolved to see Christ get a bloody head in His members, or in His cause, see that ye suffer with Him.

"He hath made me a sharp arrow;" an arrow with a sharp point. The sword slays near at hand, and the arrow kills afar off. They are within Christ's bounds who are slain with the sword; but the arrow flies over the devil's camp, and kills many on the other side of it. Therefore, it slays those who are over in Satan's wilderness, and the wild beasts that are in the woods. It kills lions, leopards, asses, and tigers, that is, men of a wild and savage nature, and makes them obedient to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This arrow flies over to the wild people of America, and those who are without Christ in the world, worshipping the host of heaven. I think Christ is a keen hunter; He lays about Him with His sword, and slays those who are within His reach. Those who are half in half out, He pulls them in, and takes them in His arms. Those who are afar off, over in America, He bends His bow, and sends a flight or two of arrows amongst them, and the wounded come mourning in, and say, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? But know this, that some in this world, at whose conscience Christ shoots His arrows, they lie behind a dyke, and the arrow flies by them. (Matt. 22:5, 6, Luke 14:18, 19, 20), "When the chief priests and Pharisees had heard the parable, they perceived that He spake of them: and they sought to lay hands on Him." They who brought the woman taken in adultery (John 8:9), when they heard Christ say, "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her: being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest even unto the last." The Lord shot an arrow at their consciences, but they crouched and hid themselves behind a wall. See we not that the seventh command shoots an arrow at the fleshly man? he crouches by it and runs to the harlot. The eighth command shoots an arrow at the covetous man, and cries, Wo upon the oppressor and deceiver; and yet he skips away by, crouches and goes after his covetousness. Nay, some wild beasts go away, and the arrow sticking in them, and the blood coming out; but they shake and fling out the arrow, the blood dries, the wound closes up, and mends again. The conscience of many that God's arrow makes a hole in, and causes them bleed, fling out the arrow, and the wound mends. The devil can lay a plaister upon a wounded conscience, and heal it again. See Acts 7. Some heard Stephen preach, and they saw



his face shine like an angel of God; and were not able to resist the spirit wherewith he spake. He calling them stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart, and casting up to them their idolatry, they pulled out Christ's arrow, and fell to their idolatry again, and stoned Stephen to death. I love it not when men can crouch, and run away from the word, and find excuses, and wrestle a fall with Christ, and His word. Well, beware of this; if ye wrestle with Him and fight against His word, take heed ye break not your arm, and that your shoulder blade be not out of lith.\* But this is not Christ the Mediator's arrow, this is His deaf arrow. Our Lord Jesus has another arrow with a thistle point, that He shoots at the heart of His elect, the Lord crying with its coming, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" He shot him off his horse, and laid him on the ground, that like a wounded man, he cried, trembling and astonished, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). Come near to Christ in the word and Sacraments. Christ has now here, under the elements of bread and wine, a bended bow in His hand; with which, and by the foolishness of preaching (as it is called by men) He is lying, as it were, behind a dyke, and stealing a shot at you. Lord, send Him His prey! The Lord send you in the gospel the thing you shall never shake off again. For know ye when Christ speaks to the Elect there, there is a sharp steel-pointed arrow in the end of His tongue, that will pierce sinners to death, and lay them low. (Isaiah 50:4), "The Lord hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." For our Lord has good skill to aim a shot of His arrow, and drive it even to the feather: right to the head in the conscience of His own. See when He comes by Matthew, and says, Follow Me; immediately he falls over like a dead man: he leaves his custom and his count-books, and follows Christ. Christ comes by Zaccheus, sitting on a sycamore tree and bids him come down: He bends His bow, and shoots an arrow at him, and cries, "Come down, Zaccheus, for to-day I must abide at thy house;" and he came down good speed; and from his heart he could never pull out the arrow to this day. Coming by Jacob's well at Samaria, Christ bended His bow and shot the woman of Samaria: she left her water-pot, and came in to the city and said, "Come, see a man that told me

all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?" (Acts 2.) With an arrow from Peter's mouth, Christ shot three thousand at one shot: He shot them all with one broad arrow through the heart: they were pricked in their hearts. I think Christ, ever since Adam sinned in Paradise, has been hunting, and until the end of the world, will still be hunting and shooting wild beasts. O! but He will come to His Father at night with a rich prey: many slain men—many shot with His arrow. It is true, we think Christ's arrow is sharp, and that the word of God pains us, for we have no will\* to a bloody head. But we must bear and suffer the word of exhortation. Christ will not slay us, but will bind up the wounds again: His wounds are sweet.

Now, we know that when an arrow is loosed off, and flies through the air, if a man sees it not coming upon him, and if it be shot with pith, he cannot hinder it to go through his flesh, or enter into the bone. So no man can resist one of Christ's arrows. The enemies of God's grace say, that free will is so good and hard, that it will break the point of an arrow, and drive it back. I'll warrant you that free will is as hard as flint; but if the devil had put on a double corslet of proof upon the soul, Christ's arrow will go through it. Why? Because (Eph. 1:19, Col. 2:12), by as great power does Christ work faith in us, as was that omnipotent power which raised Jesus Christ from the dead; and it was by the strong hand of the Almighty that Christ of necessity behoved to be raised. And therefore they are liars who say, In conversion, grace and free will start and begin to run both together, like two horses at the starting place. They lie, for God's grace has the first start. It breaks off first, and powerfully and sweetly draws our free will, so that we run: but Christ prays, calls, and gives us strength, and speed of foot. It is not here, as in a ship equally belonging to two merchants, the one half his, and the other his; as if Christ did the one half, by shooting the arrows; and we the other half, by opening the windows of our hearts, to let the arrows come in. Nay, all is Christ's work; His arrow drives up the window. There is no danger that Christ's arrow turn aside and kill nothing: He is a complete marksman, and will not miss. Nay, He waits not on till our free will

be in her good blood, and well disposed; He makes us well disposed, and draws, and runs, then we run.

It is true, our will is like the stomached child, who has taken offence, and will not go near his father. But here Christ winds in His arrow near the heart, and makes the child love the father, and come creeping in to him; as Matthew and Zaccheus did. Fy then! If Christ be such a tried Saviour, lay mickle on Him: it is a pity that such a strong Saviour should not be burdened. Who is here who have not their own burdens? One groaning under covetousness; another under pride, sweating with the devil's packmantle:\* a backful of lusts, running at the devil's horse foot. Fy then! Ease yourselves, and lay the burden upon Christ; and yourselves also. Now, I say, debts, losses, horses, sums of money, lands, &c., lay them all upon Christ.

I trow men pity Christ; they fear He lose. No, fear not; I'll warrant Him: He will bear both you and your burdens. Then let us all burden Christ; lay enough upon Him; come and hang upon Him. O! if all who are in this house would come just now, as fast as they could win forward, and hang all about Him, like a hive of bees. Rest upon Him, about His neck, and upon His arm, as birds upon a branch. O, fly as doves to His windows, and build your nests in Him (Isaiah 60:8).

"And said unto Me, Thou art My Servant."—Christ was not indeed hired by any, but by His Father. His Father sent Him and He wan the hire, saved the Kirk, and was very faithful; but the world gave Him the devil for His thanks. God behoved to have service, and a hard piece of service out of the Man, Christ; even such a service as made Him sweat the best blood of His body. It was dear service to Christ but (so to speak) considering the way that God had laid down to bring man to heaven and satisfy justice, it was not possible that He could get the work done without a servant. The work would have lain, and our redemption ceased for ever. Man nor angel, neither would nor could look upon the bargain. Then Christ, God-man, behoved to be hired, and He sought no wages of His Father, but a Kirk, a seed, and the place in glory, for Himself and His which He

had with the Father from eternity. (John 17:5.) From you He seeks no hire, but faith and obedience; and it in a manner, breaks Christ's heart, to consider what service He undertook for you, and how coldrife and indifferent ye are in His service! He ran till He swat for you; but alas! you have neither heart nor hand in His service. He is, by His infinite benevolence, forcing good-will, kindness, love, and friendship out of us! but alas! He comes ill speed. Men will not want their pleasures, nor deny themselves for Him. Christ may say, Why, and what ails you at Me? I veiled My glory, and made Myself of no reputation, yea a curse for you! And is this your kindness to your Friend?

Truly men misken Christ, in His sufferings. He came so far below His place, was so ill handled, that they all said, This is not the Messiah. Let me see who will come beneath their place, or quit an inch of their will, for Him; or cast away their lusts, deny this world's glory, and take up their cross and follow Him? He left heaven for you; but ye will not quit the earth for Him, and yet there is no comparison betwixt the two.

"Thou art My servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified."—That is, it is the nation of the Jews, to whom I will first shew My glory: "Go first to the lost sheep of the House of Israel." For ye ken, when a kinsman is to sell anything, reason is he give his friend the first offer before ever he offer the bargain to any other. So Christ came into the world to sell Himself to man. But the Jews were His brethren by birth: He took on Him the Jew's flesh and blood, for He was a born Jew. So Christ said to the Jews, Ye are My friends, ye shall get the first offer of Me. I will not begin with the Gentiles, till ye say nay. Christ was even like a great market town, the ports\* were closed upon us poor Gentiles; and upon all Britain, while the Jews got the morning of the market. But they made few or no bargains in the morning: there was no sale for Christ among the Jews. Then, on the afternoon, Christ bade open the ports, and let the poor Gentiles come in. He said to His servants, Go your way, bid the isles come; bid Scotland and England, and the land of Sinim, and the utmost ends of

the earth come. Wherefore? The Jews will not have Me: I will bargain with the Gentiles. There was a fair, and rich table covered for the Jews, God's fair high board, and He called them to the first mess: but they, like daft bairns, ran to the play, and had more mind of their play than of their meat. They did let their meat turn cold, and ran after salvation in Moses' law, and would not take the new feast of slain Christ; but loathed at their meat, and spilt Christ's blood. He held the cup of His blood to them, but they did cast it all back in His face again. God said, their by-board\* might serve the Gentiles: but when the Lord saw that Israel would have none of Him, He shut out the misleard<sup>†</sup> bairns; and turned them to the broad fields to shift for themselves; their Father scourged them to the door, and said, Bring in the poor hungry Gentiles. Call in the hungry isles-men, bring in the poor, the lame, the cripples, and blind beggars. Now, Scotland and England, Take your meat, and eat, and grow. God be thanked we got the cold meat: the Lord did fetch us to the first mess.

Now be not high-minded, but fear. Learn a lesson of the Jews, and be not spoilt bairns. Eat your meat and grow thereby; take this afternoon's market of Christ. But alas! The fair is like to skail<sup>‡</sup> Alas! it is now growing like old sour drink in Scotland: and we are beginning to play with our meat. We are now beginning to clip Christ's ordinances, and to add to, and part from His Testament. Indeed, I think Scotland is making a quarrel with Christ: they say, Our religion is naked, and clipped like, wanting the busking;§ it must have ceremonies to busk it with. The gospel was sweet to us at the beginning; but now men have no list|| to the word; our zeal is away and dead, we have fallen from our first love. Jezebel, the false prophetess, and false apostles, are come in among us. It is a marvel, and may be a marvel, if there be not bloody heads for this labour. I fear we will be sent to the hills, as well as the Jews were: mourn for the abominations of the land. If ever ye awake till the last trumpet, awake now, and look about you; and see where Christ was hidden; even in the hollow of God's hand. Flee to Him and He shall hide you, the members, there also.

"Then I said, I have laboured in vain."—See Christ is brought in here complaining of the Jews to His Father. Take heed He make not His moan of Scotland and England (for Britain is one of the chief isles). Is He not saying even to you who are here, Will ye play Me the same measure that the Jews played Me? O play it not! Many a dirty armful I had of them; long did I bear them in My arms, and yet they gave Me small thanks. So Christ is here, as it were, sorry that He had lost His travel, and spent the strength of His body, in seeking the Jews, and saying, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida!" (Matt. 11) "Jerusalem, Jerusalem" (Matt. 23:37). "And He came to His own, and His own received Him not." And this complaint He bears to His Father; He is even, as it were, saying, Take up the welcome the house of Israel gave Me: they pierced My hands and My feet. And here is a help and encouragement to all God's faithful ministers, after their taking pains, and having spent their strength in vain, and seeing little fruit of their labours. Lo, here Christ in Isaiah's days making the same complaint.

There is an ordinary word of the Papists, "If your doctrine be the truth, where is the power of it?" How comes it that there are so few gained to Christ by the power of it? Answer. Surely the Jews might have said the same of Christ? If Ye be the Messiah, where are all who follow You? We see only twelve men and seventy disciples, and some few women: but what are they to all Israel and Judah, who are not brought in? Christ says it is very true, few follow Me, I have spent My strength in vain, and for nothing. What then? "My reward is with the Lord." Jesus Christ is not the worse, that few follow Him, that few will take Him. Although only two in a kingdom take Christ, Christ is not to be casten away. Neither will Christ rue because the Jews will not take Him, or because few follow Him. But when Christ comes with His sword and bow to a land, if we, like as many wild beasts, run into the woods, and our consciences flee into dens and caves of the earth; one to his pride, another to his den of covetousness, a third to the wilderness of vanity as we do, and refuse to abide the shot of Christ's bow, yet He will do the office of a Mediator and Saviour, and say of us to His Father, as He said of the Jews, I have spent My

strength in vain: and will give in a heavy complaint of us to His Father. And God will read and hear Christ's bill, and give Him justice. It will be a hard matter, if our Saviour turn our pursuer; if our Advocate, who should plead for us, turn a complainer, plead against us, and say, Father, I came to them, and knocked till My head was bedewed with rain, and they would not let Me in.

See then; if Christ preach, and say, I got the wind for My pains, none were converted, it is not the power and holiness of the preacher that convert men. Nay, men think it is the want of ministers that undoes us. If I had (say they) heard Christ from the pulpit, as Mary and Peter did, I would then soon have been converted. Nay, Judas heard Christ, but what the better was he? I grant if a minister be not called, and graced with God's Spirit to preach, he who made him a preacher might as well have made a swine-herd of him. But when God's chosen servants cast out the net, they take not aye in fish. Christ went through the seas, and shot His lines seeking fishes, and sometimes caught nothing. Peter (Acts 2) shot his line, and caught three thousand. What is the want of success, but God's saying, It is not the preacher, but the Spirit of God that does it? Then call no man Rabbi: we take God to witness, that we would have you off our hand. We say not, Christ is only with us. Read the King's letter, carry it who will, if they have God's calling. And yet I tell you it is possible when Christ preaches, your tide of conversion is not yet come; may be it is not marrying time; it is not time to shake the tree. Ye have not gotten play enough yet, and therefore no marvel ye are not yet converted. Will not one fisher fish a pool, roll over the streams, and get nothing; and another of less skill may come and catch the fishes?

"I have laboured in vain."—When Christ came to the world in His flesh and preached; did they receive Him as Mediator? He had no greater errand in the world; all was against Him. In His cradle they sought His life; He had as many sore temptations in the world as He had even of the devil himself. Nay the world so tempted Him, in His calling, that He and they were aye at holding and drawing. They could never agree any time. What ailed them at Him? for He came a

good errand to the world, to bring them home to His Father. He wronged no man, yet they say He is a deceiver. The best work that could be, was to forgive sins: yet they called that blasphemy. They mistook the casting out of devils. No, say they, He has the master devil, Beelzebub, the captain of all the rest, who commands all the little ones, and by him He casts out devils. And they slew the Heir, and cast Him out of the inheritance. So if Christ found the world a hard bed, I think all His friends have cause to think so of it too. For badly were His friends treated. Jeremiah cries out (15:10), "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast born me, a man of strife, and a man of contention to the whole earth." All the people cursed Jeremiah: and see how the apostles were treated and what they met with, 1 Cor. 4:11, 12, 13, "Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth and offscourings of the world:—We become all things to all men."

Was not that a sad welcoming, that He and His got in the world? Christ owned all His members: but they will be flouted at, and gloomed\* at here. Ye know the mother will not let her own child want; but cares not how long her step-bairns be both naked, and starving for hunger, because she is a step-mother. So the world is a step-mother to Christ, and all His children; it cares not to see them, naked, poor, and hungry, persecuted and heart-broken.

I like it not, when the world handles you as her own children, and casts a piece to you when ye weep. Better be God's sons, and the world's step-bairns, than the world's daties.† I love it not ill that all God's children get a hard bed, and ill cheer in this world. Christ had not a house amongst them: they would not give Him a drink of water in His thirst: they would not welcome Him and His doctrine: they gave Him but cold cheer when He came to the house of His friends. David was once that he could neither get bread nor water in the wilderness, and said, he was a sojourner here, as all his fathers were.



Abraham dwelt in tents; and Jacob was a herd to Laban, a broken stranger, and was glad to lodge in the fields, with a stone under his head for a pillow. Israel lodged forty years in the wilderness, like the beggars, not two nights in one place. Moses wanted father and mother to bring him up. Christ and His disciples could not get lodging in Samaria. Woe worth Esau, but the world plays him a slip, and makes him sell his birth-right for his breakfast. I think all God's children may call the world an uncouth\* inns: but they must e'en take it as they get it, as their Master before them did.

Let us carry ourselves like the good natured stranger, who resolves never to quarrel, nor fight with his host; howbeit his meat be ill, and his reckoning dear, and he have to sleep on a straw bed. He says, What the matter, for all my time, I will never make a noise about it: I am but to stay for a night. Surely Christ and His Spouse get but a cot-house, and a straw bed here. See ye not how all the wicked have their horns out against Him and His silly lambs. They are chasing them from one kingdom to another, and hunting them out at the town's end; just as if ye saw a poor man going through a town, sad, weary, and hungry; this blackguard and that blackguard hound their dogs at him; the poor man is glad to get away with a whole skin. Christ and His dear children are going through this world, sad, weary, and heart-broken; and the indwellers of this city send out all their dogs after them. O, if ye were at home. O fy! sleep not in this dear inns. I dare say, Cain, Saul, and Judas have not reason to speak good of it, but to say as men say of a dear bargain: Woe be to it, we spent much on it, but got little good in it. Esau may say, I lost my soul for a breakfast in it. Judas may say, Woe worth it; for I lost my soul in it, for thirty pieces of silver. All men may say, We got a crack in our conscience for our pleasures, and all was but vanity; a broken tooth, a snow ball, a feather. Alas! That we love it so well, make it our darling and sit down upon it. Elijah was a heart-broken man, and would fain have been out of the world. Job was in it like an old ship, that gets a dash on this rock and that rock; and would fain have been hidden in the grave. Daniel was a poor persecuted man, and a captive under the enemy's feet. And what should I say of the rest? They all

got ill cheer in the world. See Heb. 11:38, "Of whom the world was not worthy; they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth," and there had no light. John the Baptist lived in the wilderness, a friendless man; and at last they took off his head.

It is good if the old ship comes in at the port, ere she be driven all to flinders. If a man was riding through his enemies, and every one shooting at him, he would spur his horse fast, till he came in to his own ground. I think the believer's poor soul is like a ship among rocks; it gets dash after dash. O that we were in Christ's good sea-room, then we should defy them all.

"Yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God."—Lest men should think Christ did rue the bargain, lo, here He sorrows not, nor rues. He says not, Let Israel go to hell! No; but My conscience says to Me, I have done the work, and My God will reward Me. So, then, in a temptation, when ye are ill handled by the world, when ye have a sore heart, and ye cannot get matters as ye would have them, fear not; a good conscience will get comfort. When the people were wrong (1 Samuel 12:3), and wronged Samuel, they would have another judge, he mends himself well, and says, "Whose ox or ass have I taken; or whom have I defrauded?" Job 16:19, when he was tempted by his friend, said, "My witness is in heaven, and my record is on high." And David, when He was accused of treason by Saul, when he might not clear himself, prays (Psalm 7:3, 5), "O Lord, my God, if I have done this; if iniquity be in my hands; let the enemy persecute my soul."

That which is called a good conscience is like a glass, wherein a man may see his face. Whereas, the wicked have a conscience like a foul, muddy fountain, where the bottom cannot be seen. Nay, he dare not in a heavy temptation, or in death, go into his conscience; for it is like a smoky house all full of reek, that a man who hath tender eyes cannot abide it, nor be able to hold up his head in it. But when all the people are cursing Jeremiah, and he thinks he has a hard lot of it, he goes into his conscience, and takes it before the Lord, and says, "Thy

words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart" (Jer. 15:16). Now, I think the wicked man's conscience is like a dung-hill, all full of filth; he dare not, he cannot take it up: his old adulteries; his old rotten falsehood that he committed twenty years ago. So his thefts, his blood-shed, his covetousness, his oppression, his backbiting, and his wrongs done to this man and that man, are such nauseous things, that he dare not turn them up, for fear they cause him vomit. When Judas looked into his conscience, he wakened a sleeping lion; for out came falsehood to his Master; out came blood-shed; and out came love to the thirty pieces of silver like three furious lions, and devour and tear him to pieces. See that ye keep your consciences void of offence towards God and man.

Make your life a fine, good, and sound building, reared up upon a good foundation, for the time to come: that when your life is ended, and your work done, you need not think shame of your work. But you must not essay this on your own strength, for that will be of no avail; but only in the strength of Jesus Christ and Divine aid. It is in the Lord only that there is righteousness and strength. Man's free will is not able to effectuate a saving change upon any person. You might as well say that the Ethiopian could change his skin, and the leopard his spots.

But, oh! woe's me to see so many men land masters of their consciences: as if their conscience was so great that they might sell part of it in fairs and markets to the best bidder. Some count little of their conscience: they will take an edge thereof to augment their house. Another will dispense with part thereof to enlarge his possession. Another will part with half of his conscience to enhance his credit. Many pay little respect to their conscience in buying and selling if they can get gain. The merchant wastes his conscience; for before he quit an inch of his credit, he would rather quit an ell of his conscience. The proud man wastes his conscience, to carry on his pride. Many now, for the world, and the standing of their estate, can sell both goods, truth, and three or four ells of their conscience. Thus

the kirk-man wastes his conscience; as if his conscience were a long web of an hundred ells; he may throw away part thereof, and it never be missed. And ken ye what some men have now devised? They have devised what they are pleased to call indifferent things, indifferent truths in religion; and think that they may sell twenty stone weight of them, and have enough behind. But in Moses' days truth was scarcer: Moses behoved to make all things according to the pattern he saw in the mount: and he would not leave a hoof behind. But it is a wealthier world now! We have broad fair fields, broad and long indifferent things: we may sell acres of them good and cheap. But how any thing lawful, or unlawful, can be indifferent, we have yet to learn. Sin is still sin, and truth truth; and none of them a matter of indifferency. Lord, help this nation to prepare for the awakening storm that is coming to bring us to our right senses. And I pray you, take His word along with you, as a means of preparation. Keep your conscience clean and undefiled. Christ kept His conscience to the latter end of the day, till He had spent His strength, done His work, and finished His talk; and then He got joy of it. Keep your conscience pure, as much as possible, to the end of your day: for a clear conscience in a dying hour, will give more satisfaction than all that this world can afford. And beware of the devil's or the world's hammer of covetousness, lest it light on your conscience, and break it all to pieces: and then see how all the craft ye have will mend it. To God only wise, be praise. Amen.

## **SERMON VII\* —Zech. 11:9, 10, 11, 12, 13**

Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another, &c.—Zech. 11:9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

BELOVED in our Lord, this text is Christ's farewell to the Church of the Jews. He is, as it were, half out at the door, leaving His harlot wife; and saying to her, Seek ye another husband, and I will seek another wife: and so He bids her adieu. The words contain,

1. Christ's good-night: "I will not feed you."
2. A fruit of His farewell: "That that dieth, let it die."
3. The manner of His departing from them: "I took My staff, and cut it asunder."
4. What followed upon that: "The poor of the flock that waited upon Me knew that it was the word of the Lord."
5. Ere He go clean away, and give over His calling, He says, Pay me my bygones:† "Give me my price."
6. They gave Him for His price, thirty pieces of silver to buy Him, that they might get Him crucified.
7. He is sorry, is offended, or grudges the price, and says, "Cast it into the potten: a goodly price that I was prized at of them." As if He had said, Give it to your beggars and strangers, to buy a burial place for them: for I will have none of your wages, if that be all you will give Me. And so the Lord's wages was casten back again into the potten's field, to buy it.

1. "Then said I, I will not feed you."—Here is a terrible word, and a hard threatening spoken by Christ, the great Shepherd, sent of the Father, to gather in His own sheep. "I will feed you no more." Beware, O people of Anwoth, lest He be saying this unto many of you; for your want of love to Him, and slighting His ordinances with the means of salvation and mercy offered unto you. Hence we may observe, that when Christ has gathered in all His own sheep, all His own elect children and people, He sometimes gives them up for a season. This prophecy has a relation to that time, after Christ's death and ascension, when the Apostles left the church of the Jews, and turned themselves to seek and suit a young wife for their Master, even the church of the Gentiles.

Even in Abraham's days, when it was but morning, and the beginning of days, the Lord began to feed His sheep, and sent Moses and Aaron to herd them in the wilderness: and sent prophets and servants to His vineyard, with an order to say, Render fruit; send in the rent of your farm to My Father. But they slew and stoned the prophets (Matt. 23:37). Then He sent other servants unto them, and they beat them. At length He sent the King's own Son, the Heir and Lord of all, to them; and they slew Him. And He sent the apostles last of all, and they persecuted and killed them (Matt. 21:36, 37, 38, 39). All this time Christ was gathering in His own sheep, for Christ will want none of them. And when Christ had gotten in all the lost money, even all to the last farthing; then He blows out the candle, and cares not for the rest, but says, Take ye the sweepings of the house and cast them away; I have got My own. Wherefore holdeth a great man a house? It is not to entertain beggars and strangers: they get a bit, or a meal in the by-going, which is all their errand to the house. But He holds His house to entertain His children and servants in: and were it not for them, He would give up house-keeping. When Christ's children are grown up, and married to their new husband; and when His sheep are gathered into His fold, sealed and marked; and when there are but strangers without; then He gives up house-keeping, locks the door, and says, He will feed them no more.

Hence also, here is a spark of hope to those who fear Christ. If He say to this land, I will feed you no more; yet there is in the land children and sheep to be fed. Ye shall aye get your meat of it, go as it will. Though ye should be hounded and scattered from mountain to mountain; and though the dogs should bark at you; yet Christ must feed the poor of the flock, till He get them out from among the rest. And therefore eat ye now, and take the meals that your Lord sends you, with good will: it is for you that God feeds the flock. It is not for the rocks and the mountains, that God sends down rain; it is for the grass and the corn.

2. The fruit of Christ's departure: says He, "That that dieth, let it die."—This, no doubt, is hard. Lord, if you feedest us not, we will die, we will be hounded and slain upon the mountains. Yea, I know, says Christ, it shall be so: but I shall be blameless; I shall give up with you, and lay down My calling.

Hence, we see what follows, when Christ turns His back on the sheep. They die, they perish, they eat one another's flesh for hunger. For not only were those people made vagabonds upon the earth, as they are at this day; but their souls famish, and they are groping in darkness for the coming of another Messiah. So we see when Christ, the Shepherd, goes away, the fox, the lion, the wolf, and all the dogs of hell, come and run away with the flock. For this is Satan's way, when Christ has gone away, pulled down the Shepherd's tents, removed a preaching ministry, and taken His flock with Him. The leavings and the goats must fall to the lion. The devil gets Christ's leavings; what God refuses, by law falls to the devil: when Christ has gotten in His wheat, then Satan comes and takes up the loose sheaf. Woe to you who are not in Christ's bundle, but fall out and lie in the field, and will not be gathered into Christ's barn, for ye are the devil's by law.

Then, ere we proceed further, let every one try whose side they are on. Ye cannot deny that Christ is at His harvest, and gathering in His sheaves in this land. See whose mark and arms you carry: ye must

carry either God's or the devil's. See whether ye be in Rome's black camp, wherein the fallen star, the red dragon, and the prince of the bottomless pit, are the captains. For Christ is now mustering His men, and proclaiming, Who is for Me, and who is for battle? Some are saying, God help us, for we know not which of the sides is rightest: ye say one thing, and they say another. If ye say, "I am indifferent;" I like not that. Ye will get a master ere long. Satan, by his due, gets the wandered sheep; I mean the indifferent man, or him who is on none of the sides.

Many temporal evils come upon a people, when Christ says, "I will feed you no more."—Multitudes who heard Zechariah, would be glad at this, "I will feed you no more." They would say, We will get the good old lucky world again: when we baked cakes to the queen of heaven we wanted nothing: we will get quit of that which the barking prophets are aye crying: "The burden of the Lord, the burden of the Lord." So say our people, If this religion were away we will get the good old merry, sonsy\* world again, wherein there was much luck and grace.

Then let our text answer you both. So then, would you have the old lucky, sonsy world again? Then take it to you out of God's mouth; "Ye shall eat every one the flesh of another," when the gospel goes away. God said then; Devil, anti-Christ, Jesuite, pestilence, famine, and sword, set on them! I have done with them. The Romans, sword, and famine, did devour them. Will a mother eat her own child of a span long for hunger? yet this was done. That was the old world the Jews got when Christ turned His back upon them. For this, see Jer. 25:17, When the people rejected the word of the Lord, and put it from them, as we are doing, the Lord put in Jerusalem's and Judah's hand the cup of the wine of the wrath of God, and bids them drink, and spue, and fall, and never rise again. Now what think ye of this old sonsy world? See also Psalm 74; when God left feeding His sheep, in came the enemies, warred, burnt the sanctuary, &c. And when God left the flock (Psalm 79:2), the dead bodies of His servants are given for meat to the fowls of heaven. And see what follows on God's departure



(Ezek. 8:9, 10, 11, and 12:13). The prince shall flee away on his feet, with his flitting upon his back. "I will spread my net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare: and I will bring him to Babylon." They shall be taken as birds, &c.

3. "And I took my staff, even beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people."—Here there are three things. 1. What the staff is. 2. The name of it, Beauty. 3. The Lord's breaking of it.

I shall go no further to seek the meaning of it. The breaking of the staff is the breaking of the covenant: the staff itself is the word of God and covenant. And indeed the word of God is Christ's shepherd's staff, whereby He driveth His sheep to heaven, and awakes the conscience. For Christ has no rod over the neck of His sheep but His word; it is His sceptre. Christ's strength, in bringing in His sheep is in His word, for it is His sceptre; and therefore it is called, The Lord's arm (Isaiah 53:1). And an arm must have a hand and fingers. It is even that, whereby He wrestles with His enemies, with sinners, when He makes them saints: and no man dare separate them. The devil would fain separate Christ and the soul, when they are wrestling a fall; but Christ gives him a back-stroke, and with His staff can wound the conscience of one who has seven devils, and can cause them fall under Him. But know, our Lord useth this sort of staff against several sorts of men, wherein ye shall see the use of it.

a. Christ casts His staff at many, and it misses them, for the pikes of it go no more in the conscience of some men than a pointless arrow in a wall of brass (Ezek. 3:7). Are there not many who are no more moved, nor touched with the sharp point of Christ's staff than a dead man is with the sound of a trumpet blown in his ear? The word never draws blood in their consciences, they can fence and ward their souls from a stroke.

b. Some get a blad\* and a blea † stroke in their conscience, as trembling Felix did, and despairing Cain, and others got. But the

devil heals their wounds; as Cain got a plaster on his wound, and went and built a city. See, for this, Hosea 6. There ye see how our Lord blads and strikes with His staff. Verse 5, He says, "I have hewed them in pieces by My prophets, and slain them by the words of My mouth." There was blea wounds in their conscience made by Christ's staff. But what then? Verse 7, "But they like men have transgressed the covenant." They mended again, after Christ's staff had wounded their conscience.

c. Some get a dead stroke with Christ's staff. It is a dead trumpet to them, and cries nothing to them but God's curse and malediction; 1 Peter 2:8; 2 Cor. 10:6, "Christ is to them a stone of stumbling and rock of offence, even to them that stumble at the word, being disobedient thereunto." Christ strikes with the rod and strength of His power: "He strikes through kings, and fills the high-ways with dead bodies" (Psalm 110).

d. The Lord's own sheep get a wound in their consciences with the staff, Beauty, as when He cries, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Saul bled with the pikes of the staff, so that the law, and the curses and terrors of it drew him off his high horse, and made him lie on the breadth of his back; so that he cried, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Christ, with His staff, struck three thousand at once, until they were pricked in their hearts (Acts 2:37). And they cried, for their consciences were driven all to flinders, saying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" Lydia got such a back-stroke with the pikes of this staff, that Christ, with infinite power, brake up all the locks of her heart, till it was made to receive the word. Then know ye when God's word strikes the conscience? If ye did, ye would say, Lord, strike on! ye would wish that Christ's staff, Beauty, laid you in a swoon. Many of you are angry when it touches you. Ye are not wise; it is but Christ's staff knocking your crown (Rom. 5:10, 11). He made Paul's head blood: "the law (says he) slew me." He gave to David, by Nathan, so many strokes with the word, that his bones were broken (Psalm 51:8). Better get a broken head, than get leave,

with the silly, foolish sheep, to slip into a pit-hole, or ditch, for a little green grass, and be drowned there.

It is called Beauty because the word of God is purer than gold tried in the fire seven times. And what a sweet sight it is to see Him, who is the fairest of men, the fairest among the sons of men, standing in all His beauty, in the midst of His flock, with His staff, Beauty, in His hand.

e. The breaking of this staff is of the greatest weight and concernment. And this our Lord speaketh as a shepherd tired of his part of it; and threateneth to go away. So, as it were in a passion, our Lord speaketh thus, I will go seek a new master, and seek ye a new servant. Nay, He was both angry and sorry; so that He shed tears at His flitting, Matt. 23:37, 38, Luke 19:41, "If thou hadst known in this thy day," &c.

Doctrine. Then Christ has a term day with a particular church; and when He is ill used He may go where He may do better.

But let us see whether Christ had good cause or not to break His staff and leave His flock to the foxes. Answer. He had; because He was true and faithful in His service, and was aye seeking out the wandering sheep; soon up and late up, with many a sore heart, seeking them: and He lost none, but made an account of them all to His Father. What were all these? Ezek. 3:6, "If I had sent thee to a nation of a strange language," &c. Matt. 12:41, "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it." Chap 11:21, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin," &c. These show that Christ had but a hard life when He fed them.

But to come nearer yet. What causes a servant tire of his services? The ruler of the house changes his wages, and strikes him, howbeit he do his duty: and the rest of the servants mock him; he is set at the board foot\* and matched† with every running beggar that comes to the house. Few give him good words: they all look down upon him

with contempt and scorn. Just so was Christ handled; the rulers, Pharisees, and priests, did not pay Him His wages; they smote Him. Every lown in the house made a fool of the honest servant; yea, the high priest's servants smote Him on the face, and spat upon Him. Indeed, they set Him to the by-board, yea, to the foot of the board, Psalm 22:7, "I am a worm, and no man." They matched Him with every vagabond that came to the house, and put Him in the midst, between two thieves. They gave Christ the thief's seat, and Barabbas was thought better than He.

Might not Christ break His heart for all these things, and say, What ails ye at Me? Might He not break His Shepherd's staff, put up His wares, and flit? Might He not say, It's time for Me to pack\* to the gate, they are tired of My service. And yet I have gotten many a wet foot in seeking these sheep? Yea, He may say, they are ill worthy of Him.

All that is true. But to come to ourselves. In His members He is ill used: banished, silenced, and treated worse than Barabbas. He gets no justice in our Parliaments; Papists, Arminians, and Atheists, get favour, honour, and court preferment; but an honest professor is counted an ill subject, a seditious man, and an enemy to authority. But see how God has met us, He has broken His staff, Beauty: the purity, power, and life of doctrine is away. The word of God is not sharp from preachers' mouths: it draws no blood in men's consciences. Nay, we wield not the staff with force, until the fire fly from the pikes of it. We cast<sup>†</sup> and handle it, as if our arm was broken! We see the sheep gone out of the way, and over the march, in the Lord's forbidden pasture. We see every man out of his place, and everything wrong in the Kirk. We see the sheep devoured and poisoned with Popery and false doctrine in colleges and pulpits. The staff is not drawn; and why? Because it is broken; and ye will yet see it worse broken. Think ye that a pair of organs, and an ill said mass (as King James the VI. termed it), and a busking of dirty ceremonies, the whore's abominations, which we once spued out, think ye that ever this staff will draw blood of a man's conscience? Nay, ere this

staff break, or blood\* a proud hard heart that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, ye may as soon essay to break a man's head with a straw, or a rush. The Lord says this is a broken staff, and we see it not.

"That I might break my covenant."—Because of the doctrine of the pestilent enemies of grace, I will crave leave to free this place, and to prove, 1. That the covenant of grace with the elect cannot be broken. 2. Show in what sense the Lord says, He will break His covenant.

For the first of these, see Jer. 31:36, 37, Isaiah 54:10, "For the mountains shall depart," &c. I intend, at another occasion, to prove that the covenant is made fast with Christ, and so stands not in our free will. See Jer. 32:40, chap. 31:32, 33, 34, 35, Luke 6:13. God's oath and promise is a sure thing. "Aye sure," say they. What then? "Sure and sealed on God's part, providing we sin not, for God swears that believers shall be saved." Nay, but the Lord made the covenant with Adam everlasting; for if Adam had stood, the Lord would have done His part. Nay, the law of nature, given to the reprobate angels, in their creation, should have been as stable as the new covenant: for will any call in question, that God would have rewarded the apostate angels, providing they had continued in their obedience. "Nay," say they, "the covenant keeps not men from sinning against the covenant; but sinning against the covenant breaks the covenant."

Answer. Sin on the elect's part breaks not the new covenant (Psalm 89:33).

But the question is: If the elect can sin against the covenant? If that were objected,

I answer. They may sin, and sin against the doctrine of the covenant, and against the articles of the contract of marriage, as a wife may take another lover. But if this be in the contract, "She shall be my wife, howbeit she take another lover," then her harlotry by no law, destroys the marriage contract. Now, when Christ marries His

church, He says He will forgive her sins, and swears He will forgive her harlotry.

But I ask, What makes a man to be within the covenant? Answer. Not faith nor obedience. What then? God's free love. Ezek. 16:8, "Thy time was the time of love,—I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee." Then how long is a contract valid? So long as the chief clause is kept. Now, the chief head of the contract is God's eternal love, and all here is fastened on God's free promise; and this is surer than mountains of brass. As long as the foundation and corner-stone is firm, the wall standeth. Now, in all the sins of the elect, the unchangeable love of God standeth still. And let Papists, Arminians, and Socinians, come and loose this corner-stone if they can: it will break all their backs to aim at it, and has clouded their wits already.

To sin against the covenant is to cast the grace of the covenant fully away, so as if they were without it; so that they are not now within it; as Adam was after the fall. But, by sin, the elect cannot shake off the seed of God (1 John 3:9), "For His seed remaineth in Him." Here is a special difference betwixt the first and the last covenant that will clear the matter.

In the first covenant, Adam had not a tutor, he was like a daft young heir, who, having gotten infetment of all that his father gave him, he wastes and spends all. But, in the latter covenant, God does with us as a father doth with a bankrupt son: he gives him little at once, infests him not, but keeps a hank in his own hand,\* and gives him over to a tutor. Man has cracked his credit with God; and so the Lord will not put a sum in free will's hands again; but He doth two things. 1. He gives little in hand but the end of the covenant, and keeps the body of it in His own. Our writs and charters are in Christ's keeping, we lose aye the thing we get, and therefore God gives us only a copy of the charter; but while here we never get the principal; Christ keeps the great sum and gives us but like a penny to keep our purse. 2. We

have not power to cast out the seed again no more than a man child has power to make himself a woman child.

Now, the point is, Wherefore saith God He will break His covenant with His people?

Answer. It is not He will break His covenant with these same elect persons, as John, Thomas, Anna, Mary, and all who are elected, or within the covenant: but He breaketh the covenant with a new generation, a generation of castaways, who are their seed, and gloried that the covenant was made with their fathers, and call themselves Abraham's seed and chiefest kindred: their kindred was better than themselves. That particular church, had so many years of Christ for mail<sup>†</sup> and duty.<sup>‡</sup> The tack<sup>§</sup> expires, they sin, and pay not; then Christ warns all the tenants, in His Father's name, to flit. The contract was made with their fathers; they came in their fathers' room, but did not their duty, and God put them away. But as for the true, friendly, and tender believers, He takes some of them to their rest, and some to their kingdom. And if here and there one be left, when the Shepherd's staff is broken, He feeds them secretly; and is a little sanctuary to them, and they shall get crowns immediately from God. And therefore the breaking of the covenant is nothing but the breaking of the staff, and taking away of the word from the people of the Jews.

And therefore we may learn our lesson, if we are good scholars. The Lord has given us summons, and our tacks are worn out. Many are called home who are within the covenant. God can separate His own from the wicked, and then God shall tear the contract of marriage. Therefore try your holding, and look out your papers, and see upon what terms ye brock\* Christ. I fear some have nothing but profession, empty, windy profession; others have the thoughts of their own head; many have little law or right upon their side for Christ. Therefore see to yourselves; Christ has said He will try your sitting, what shall either be His, or your own. Your rights are growing old, renew them to-day, and make sure work.

"And it was broken," &c.—When God will break the staff, who can keep it whole? There can none come after God that can mend the thing that He doeth. When God gives out the doom, it is no empty talk. The thing that God makes crooked no man can set a foot on it and even it (Eccles. 7:13, Job 12:14). He says, Behold He breaketh down, and it cannot be built up again. Then, ere the decreet be given forth, let us return: for who will get a suspension on the Lord's decreet? Nay (Jer. 15:1), "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, my heart could not be towards this people." And therefore, if He give His church a shake for her sins, it will try all our art to mend her; and if He shall drive our hard hearts all to pieces, then put ye your hands to mend it.

4. "And the poor of the flock knew that it was the word of the Lord."—Hear how He speaks of the remnant of election. Ask what is the church, and especially after judgment has gone through the land? They are a number of on-waiters. There was nothing left now, when Christ had broken His two staves, Beauty and Bands, but to wait on an absent hidden Christ. For we can all wait on and believe when the Bridegroom fills our eyes with His presence, but see what the prophet Isaiah saith, chap. 8:17, "I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and will look for Him." This is something to wait for a hidden God, and to kiss Christ in the dark night, that is a wonder, Psalm 123, "Behold, as the eyes of servants look into the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden into the hand of her mistress: so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that He have mercy upon us." Ken ye not, when a poor servant has gotten a bloody skin, and comes in all bloody to his master, what a look will he let out, even as he would look through him: so are our Lord's children, when oppressed with bloody faces, looking up to our Lord and waiting on (see Psalm 130:6). As the morning watch waiteth for the morning; so we see the saints holding out their tired arms to God, and longing and looking over the mountains. And they have little or nothing in hand but hope.



Here is a doubt answered. Worldlings say, What have ye that we have not? Ye are a sick, poor, oppressed, banished, and mocked people; and where is your happiness. We have here an answer to such; we are on-waiters on God. Ken ye not some are very rich, and have thousands in this man's hand, and thousands in that man's hand. If ye ask them where their riches is, and bid them let you see what they are worth; they can let you see nothing but a number of papers, and bonds; even so, heaven is the land of promise, and the land of hope to believers. Let the apostle answer in this, 1 John 3:2, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him." We are the poor of the flock, and the nothings of the world (1 Cor. 1:21). We are nothing, that is, but little less than a straw, or a feather. But stay, I pray you, our stock is in God's hand. Wait ye on until yonder day, until the fait, clear, and bright heartsome morning of your long summer day, when Christ shall take His weeping bride in His arms, kiss her and wipe her face, and say, "My dear sister, hold thy tongue," and shall busk her with His own hand.

Will ye let this foul black shower blow by; die not for sorrow. Wait on; now stir about Christ's door, cry over the wall, Lord, Jesus, take in a begging brother. Cry and wait, and I can assure you Christ Jesus is cautioner, and the Holy Spirit notary, who writes it, and takes heaven and earth, sun and moon, to be witnesses, that ye shall laugh and rejoice, and be forced to say, Believers indeed have a great to-look,\* and are very happy.

"Then I knew it was the word of the Lord."—So soon as the staff is broken, and the Lord flitted: the Lord's poor on-waiters miss Christ, they begin to clap their hands, and to say, Alas! He is away. And the rest know not what that means; they remember not that, though it was written as Zechariah had prophesied. So the Doctrine is, That Christ cannot steal away from His own, and beguile them, but they miss Him, and know that He is away. The faithful know when He goes, and when He comes. If not so, what means that of the spouse? "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? And I charge you by the roes, and

by the hinds of the field, that ye tell him when ye find him that I am sick of love" (Cant. 2) The Church sees Him on the mountains, standing behind the wall; she misses Him (Cant. 3), and cannot find Him with the watchmen. But on the contrary, you see the wicked never miss Him; they know not what God is doing when the staff is broken. Nay (Hos. 7:9), "Strangers have devoured Him, and He knows it not." And even when our church is falling there are men who say she is rising, and that the staff is as whole as ever it was, and more so: and say our church was under beggary and misery before. And why? They would have a kirk, conscience, and religion made of gold, silks, and velvets, and foot-mantles, and high horses, and much court. But this text says, the poor of the flock are the only on-waiters on Christ.

5. But to proceed to verse 12, "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price."

Doctrine. A good servant, such as Christ was, should get His hire uncraved: but Christ gets leave to crave His hire thrice over, ere He get it: yea, and to seek His own by law. Now, I think, I recollect to have heard of a humble meek Steward, speaking very modestly to his master, and saying, If it please you, I would have the thing I have wrought for. Even so (to speak with reverence), it is here.

Doctrine. Hence we see where Christ has laboured, He will seek fruit (Isaiah 5), "I looked for grapes, and behold wild grapes." He will not work for nothing. He bade John Baptist make ready His way, ere He came. In Matt. 3:8, says John, Bring forth fruit worthy of amendment of life. And in all His doctrine, He urged the bringing forth of fruit. And as for the Jews' waste, He cursed the fig-tree, because it had leaves, and no fruit; therefore every one in Christ's house, seeing Christ served you in hard service, and gave His life in ransom for you, pay Him. Remember Christ is a hard craver, and will seek His own, especially His wages from you, even obedience, and newness of life. O then! See that ye bear not bulk\* in His garden, and no more; but do good for fear He pull you up and cast you over the

dyke. When men are redeemed, and have gotten forgiveness, they are ready to sit down and do no more; just as if a drink of the well in David's house had made them drunken, and laid them over to sleep. Nay, but when ye have gotten mercy, ye must up the brae.† For know ye, that when Christ saves you, as your Shepherd, and gives His life for you, see that you bargain, or change with Him, to give Him yourself for His wages. When an honest man bargains with another, he says to him, Ye shall be no loser: I shall lose ere ye lose. So should ye, when Christ bargains with you; let Him not be behind, but rather lose yourselves, ere Christ want a penny of His wages. Woe's me, to hear that professors, in buying or selling, will, for five or six shillings more of a price, let Christ's glory get a blot. Is this to pay Him His wages? It were something to be a servant, would ye pay Him for by-gones.\* In this ye may learn a doctrine.

Doctrine. Christ is made a servant, and a servant is not his own, but a bond man; an hired servant is his master's, and all his work is his master's; and he is bound to serve no other. How is this? Was Christ our servant? Yea, He says, in Matt. 20:28, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

But it were well done here to clear the matter to you, and to let you see that Christ was hired, and who hired Him. We hired Him not. Why then should He crave His wages of His church?

Answer. His Father hired Him. For understanding of this;—God, our Father, and Christ's Father, had a necessary piece of service to do: He had His sheep to bring out of hell: sheep that had gone astray, over and beyond the black river of death and hell: and our merciful Lord would fain have them brought home again. The angels could not take the service in hand: they could never have won the hire: but in comes Christ, and says, I will win the wages. And He struck hands with the Father: and was booked God's servant. Isaiah 42, "Behold My servant, whom I have chosen." At the meeting, Christ said, I will do Your bidding; and so He did (Psalm 40:7, 8), "Then said He, Lo, I

come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is written within My heart." And (Isaiah 50:5), "The Lord hath opened," or pierced, "mine ear:" as the servant under the law, who would not leave his master's service; so was our Lord. And further, He says, I was not rebellious, neither turned I away My back. Verse 6, "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair." And (Phil. 2:7), "He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant." There is Christ saying, My Father bored My ear, and hired Me as a servant, to suffer shame and death. And says Christ, I did My duty, I played not the truant, I brake not to Him: or I came not back, nor turned to a back-side: I brake not away from My Master, as an ill servant. Now then, ye see, God hired Him to Himself, and God hired Him to us; and Christ was true to His Master, and God trusted all to Him (Isaiah 52:13), "Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently." And so God gave Him in hand grace and strength above His fellows for the work; and promised Him a willing people, or a kingdom. And Christ accepted of the condition, and said, Send Me, a bargain be it.

Now, God be thanked for that hired Servant. And God gave to Christ something in hand; even our nature. By taking a body, Christ bound Himself to us, head and foot, as well as He was bound to God. For He having taken our nature, was sworn to bestow His manhood upon us, to redeem us. For had He taken on man's nature, and not saved man, He had not kept the condition as a faithful servant: but now being bound, He then puts His hand to the pen, and says Amen to the bargain. So then, when Christ became man, He said, A bargain be it. It's true, naked manhood was not enough to make Him a sufficient servant; but Christ said, I shall put to that which is wanting. I shall put to My grace to your nature, and My God-head to your manhood, to make the work hold forward. Now know that the Lord was bound to God and to us, not merely to do His best to perfect the service; not to bring our salvation under free communing\* betwixt God and us: not as if He had said, I shall do what I can to make the agreement betwixt you, and to save you: I will see if I can please parties; and, if not, I shall leave it no worse than I found it. Nay, but accepting the

office of a Mediatorship, He took upon Him an absolute submission to make up the difference, or else to stick by the gate;† and that what God had left undone (to speak so) Christ was bound as a Servant to make it up. So God and man made it up; for God had lost the glory, both of His truth and justice: of His active and passive obedience. Man had taken it from Him; and Christ said to His Father, All Thy losses be upon Me, and crave Me for all: and here what man had stolen, Christ gave it again, of the same kind: as if money was stolen, and money was given again to him from whom it was stolen.

Let us learn, then, to bind ourselves to Christ, as He bound Himself to us; for He could not run away when once He was bound. So when once we are His, we may not take the play. Christ once gave in obedience (when we had lost heaven) to justice and truth; and Christ said, My dear brethren, all your losses be on me, Amen. Now, well said, Lord Jesus. Look then now, how Christ was bound for you, and yet ye think much to bind your necks to His service, for thirty or forty years, and then to go to heaven through Him? But he went a rougher gate for you, to hell and the grave. Now, be content to bind yourselves to Him, I pray you.

"And if not, forbear."—As if Christ would say, If ye will not pay Me, I will not break My heart for the matter; keep it to yourselves. I will do My work; My Father will pay Me. He is even speaking as they use to do to dyvours. Either pay Me, or say ye will not: shift\* Me not. Give Me either wages, or surety, that I may seek My own by law.

But then I see when all is done, Christ cares not much to want His wages, He resolved to do the work whether He got hire or not. It was another He was looking to than man. He had an earnest desire after the work, howbeit we should pay Him nothing. For the matter stood not upon our will, and our love, so as if Christ had said, I work My work, and die, upon condition they will pay Me. Nay, it was not so; but a reason in His death and mediation was to win our will to obedience, and to purchase grace, whereby we should be made willing to pay Him His wages. And here we see, if a nation refuse

Him, as Scotland, He will get others willing to pay Him His wages. He will not want a new master.

6. "So they weighed for My price thirty pieces of silver."—Consider this answer was neither boasting nor high; but like the meek Lamb of God; like a poor oppressed servant, He craved His wages, and said, Give me My hire for My labour. See the rough answer they gave Him, Give You Your wages; the carpenter's Son who has a devil? Give Him thirty pieces (say they) to buy Him to the gallows! Hire Judas to put Him out to us, that we may take Him and hang Him, for that is the wages we allow upon Him! Is not this indiscreet talking to the Son of God. They pay the Shepherd His wages with many a blea stroke, † saying, Let Him take that for His pains. They answered even as a rough master does to an ill servant, who says, Pay me, and let me go my ways. The master answers, Give you your wages! give you the gallows! So do they answer Christ, as if He were an ill servant. But His Father sent Him with good words, "I am that good Shepherd, come unto Me all ye that are weary, and heavy laden. If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink." Then might not the priests have given our Lord a good answer? Nay, see two words in Matt. 21:38, 39. The Heir came to seek fruit, of the vineyard they caught Him and cast Him out of the vineyard, and slew Him. Would ye have believed, when Christ came to His own vineyard, that the servants would have slain Him and casten Him over the dyke; denied Him a grave, and let Him borrow another man's! Would ye not wonder to see Him come in to the church, in to the Parliament House, and to see men cast the door in His face, and hold Him out. Yet even so (Acts 4:11), He was the stone set at nought, and thrown over the wall. O! a strange thing! Would they give Him no room in the wall? Might they not have made Him a pinning? Or was He not fit for the work?

Now ye may say, Foresaw not Christ all this; saw He not, ere He was hired, what wages His master's would give Him? Ay, this text tells, in Zechariah's days He saw it. Wherefore then entered He on the service?

Answer. If ye look the text, ye will see He took the hire and would not return it again; but in His providing, He cast it to the Potter's field, and went on in His service for all that. See yet more, what a meek and patient servant Christ was. He cried, Pay Me My wages; but they said, Give You wages! give You thirty pieces of silver to buy You to the gallows. Thus they stormed at Christ's answer, and ran away. Yet indeed He took it, and employed it as he thought good. He calls it His wages; as if He would say, This is even as much as refusing to pay Me. Why not willing, My dear spouse? Thirty pieces of silver to buy Me to the cross! I am even content; a bargain be it. I see it will be so: I foresee and prophesy it will be so.

Then the Lord saw how matters would go, and how He would be handled; but yet He would not repent of the bargain; He would not give it over; He accepted of the money, and goes forward in His service, until He be betrayed, slain, and buried. Ye may see, then Christ had resolved on the worst, to swallow all indignities, and set His face against the stormy blast. Now, see ye, all that Christ got was a hard reward for His service: He had many a wet foot in seeking His sheep; and got but twenty-six pounds Scots\* for His pains. Christ did not stumble on the matter by guess, as one who makes a bargain, and when He sees what it will cost Him, He says, It had been good for Me if I had never seen it. Nay, but Christ saw the worst, and resolved on the worst. Nay, but has He not been serving all along ever since the Reformation? And who can deny that He has been feeding His sheep amongst us, craving His wages, and seeking His fruit? But alas! we have given Him as little as they did before the Reformation? We have sold Him and His truth. What fruits has He gotten? They are worth nothing. Nothing but ignorance of God, idolatry, cursing, lying, and swearing; and on His Sabbath He gets but raw service, an hour and a half, and on some days mickle vanity and pride in apparel, extortion, no justice, but many false laws, incest, and adulteries; many unrevenged bloods, a wicked and windy profession.

"A goodly price."—Christ speaks as a man to be pitied or bemoaned; like a poor servant beguiled of his wages. As if he had said, God kens

if I wan it not dear. I endured the winter's cold and the summer's heat. Many a weary night was I awake when they were asleep; and look at the hire they have given Me! Indeed, a good price that I the Lord was valued at! These worldlings, like Judas, the Scribes, and Pharisees, who love the world, and never have a right estimation of Christ; for thirty pieces of silver the kirk-men bought and sold Him. If the world be great in your books, Christ has then lost court\* in your hearts; for faith and a good conscience die and live together. Make once a hole in a good conscience, and bring in the world into your hearts, and ye shall see faith sink very soon. I wish men saw with two eyes here, that the world is a golden hammer to break religion in pieces, and that it breaks down the kirk walls. For what has overturned Christ and religion but men's love of the world, court, and honour. Go over to Rome, and see how they love God, who make golden kirks and golden images their religion. They have riches and fat benefices, and therefore they have put a tongue in Purgatory's mouth to cry, Money, Money. They love honour well, and therefore their doctrine cries, A Pope above all kings and emperors in worldly glory. And because the second commandment speaks against their images, they have shut it out as a servant. Men see not their court.† and the world can put a lie in their consciences, and cause them to believe black is white, and idolatry is a thing indifferent. Would ye know the cause of it? (but men will not believe it). When once the affections are passionate, and when therefore the truth comes into the soul of men of corrupt minds and affections, it is like good wine put into old bottles: our hearts sour the truth. Or, like a beautiful stranger coming into a very smoky house, who is all bleared and blackened to-morrow. And why? God's truth charges us to bow to it, and to deny our own wills, and lusts; and yield obedience to it. But when men's affections are poisoned with their lusts, they change the law to say as they say, and wrest, patch, and make religion, and the truth, as a wide shoe to suit their foot: or as a coat with a wide bosom, that they may take both religion and their lusts into it. Hence the adulterer will not bow his back to the seventh commandment; he would have it get a back-blow with his hammer, that it might crook and bow to his lusts. And the covetous man, because he will not be



reformed, would wish a reformation on the tenth commandment. The fool's poisoned heart says, God will not bow to him, therefore he gives his conscience a back-throw, till it take the cramp again: and then he says in his heart, There is no God. And do we not see it so this day? Religion goes straight, and the truth of God takes even out at the gate: but men's hearts are upon policy, state, benefices, honour, and court; therefore they would cast religion in a pair of moulds and give it a back-throw, to cause it go halting and clinsing\* after the world. And if Christ would say and do, as the rulers of the people would have Him, He should not be crucified.

"That I was valued at:" which I the Lord Jesus, Jehovah, who brake the staves, of beauty and bands, was valued at.—This is clear in the 13th verse, and in Matt. 27:8, 9. It is the man, Christ, whom Judas sold, for Matthew cites the text: but he says that it was cited by the prophet Jeremiah. Now, the text is here in Zechariah: and there is not such a place in Jeremiah; therefore it is like that Zechariah was also called Jeremiah. For it was ordinary for the Jews to have two names; and especially because Zechariah and Jeremiah come both from the same fountain in the Hebrew: and they have both one signification; and both in our language signify, a man exalting God.

But here the thing I would be at against the blinded Jews. Zechariah says, Jehovah was valued at thirty pieces of silver. Matthew says, the Son of man was valued at thirty pieces. So these two are one and the same person; which is a clear proof that our Mediator is both Jehovah, God Almighty, and also a betrayed Man, for thirty pieces of silver. The Jews might have remembered this prophecy when they gave thirty pieces of silver for Christ, and before their eyes it was cast down in the Lord's house, and by themselves made use of, to buy the Potter's field. So then, Christ is God and man (the Jews will not have Him, let us take Him); for thus it behoved the work of our redemption to be a mixed work, coming from two natures. Then take Him as sib\* to you: Christ, God-man, is all beauty and fair to behold.

Two things commend a wife, a sweet smell, and a fair colour. Christ-man smells of love, as sib to us; and Christ-God is all beauty and fairness itself, to behold. A precious stone, for beauty and colour: and also for the rareness of it, most excellent. So then in everything Christ is excellent. For the God-head and manhood are like two men lifting a dead man out of the water, and each of them lifts to the other's hands. For the manhood draws dead and condemned men from under sin and wrath, and the God-head lends strength, and holds out an arm to the manhood to do it. The manhood prays, is sad, hungry, thirsty, cold, weary, dies, and suffers God's anger. The God-head stands it out as a back-friend,\* lifting and bearing up the manhood, under that great work, at that great day of law, when our action is called. The God-head backed Christ, and convoyed Him to the bar of God's justice, where He answers for it. The God-head cannot suffer: the manhood suffered, the God-head being overclouded, yet so as it broke the force of the stroke, by doing and supporting. As an arrow shot at a brazen wall, the point of it is broken and driven back. So the arrow of God's indignation went through Christ, soul and body, and made Him heavy unto death: but the God-head, like a brazen wall, brake the point of the arrow, and held up the man, Christ.

This was a rare work, strange and uncouth † to see! The angels marvelled to see God stand. The God-head stood to ward off the Lord's arrows shot against the holy child Jesus. And never a hole that the arrows had made in Christ-man but the God-head was aye at hand, immediately to pour in balm, and fill it up in the very moment of suffering. And as Christ-man was burnt in His soul, the God-head held a well of faith, comfort, hope and courage to His head to drink His fill. For Christ ever believed, and still hoped, and prayed in faith.

Then, believers, count heaven a precious thing that was so dear bought. Here was an uncouth wonderful yoking\* for it! Then fy upon thee, if thou sell it for clay and swinish lusts. The thing that Christ wan with His sweet life, wilt thou slip from it like a knotless thread? Alas! I see men have not the estimation of salvation that Christ had.

He gave much for it: they cast it at the cocks for a penny, for a feather. The young heir knows not how hard the conquest<sup>†</sup> was to his poor father; who was soon up, and late up, and ventured through the seas, and was shipwrecked thrice, and taken with Turks and Pirates. So we are but young daft heirs, and know not how dear Christ bought our inheritance. He wanted the night's sleep for it; it cost Him many a weary and heavy heart: yea He swam the salt sea of the Lord's wrath for it.

7. "And I took the thirty pieces, and cast them to the potter."—To buy a field with, for beggars and strangers; for the Jews would not have the uncircumcised buried with them. See ye not how Satan served Judas. He sought in his heart how to betray Christ. Satan said to him, Thou servest a hungry master. Wilt thou put Him in a purse, and get something from the high priest for Him that will do thee good? Judas does so. And now, when Judas got it, it burns his conscience and he throws it from him, and it is cast to the potters to buy a field. What gets Judas' heirs and executors of his thirty pieces? First, he makes a dog's testament; then he leaves nothing to his heirs. Many a purse gotten with selling Christ is casten to the potters: strangers and beggars get it. Then look to court, honour, and benefices, and estates gotten with the selling of Christ, if they thrive to the third heir. Many earldoms, and lordships that come this way will be casten to the potter's field. Satan filled Judas' head and heart with hope when he tempted him; now when he casts away the money, he gives him the cheat for his bishopric: he would laugh him to scorn. For, when Judas was conscience sick, he would not come and hold his head. I think Satan is like a lown, or sporter, who has put in his finger among ashes, where there is fire, and burneth himself, and, tempting, he says to his neighbour, It is not hot; and makes him put in his hand, till he is burnt, and cries; and then he laughs, and says, Good speed. The devil has burnt his hand with sin, and he says to Judas, and others, It is not hot, put in your hand and feel. And when they are scalded, and cry, and cast away the thirty pieces of silver, he but laughs at them. Nay, I have now mind how Jacob took Esau at the right time, when he was dying for hunger: he would not give him a

soup of his pottage till he sold him his birth-right. Satan, finding men dying for hunger after the world, court, and riches, he makes them trow\* they shall get nothing, unless they sell their birth-right. And when Satan once gets them in a right mood, and to lust after the world; hence, he gets them to sell their birth-right for sin. But, believe me, ye but burn your lips with the devil's pottage; when ye quit Christ and your birth-right for sin. Ye but scrape, and draw together for the potter's field. Ay, but stay till it come to Saul's and Judas' case, in the hinder end of the day. When a house takes fire, it is not long in going to all the corners thereof. So if ye sell your birth-right to Satan, sin, and the world; when death comes, the fire of hell will kindle in your conscience, till all be in a flame; and ye will not get water to quench it. O then, take heed, and beware of Satan's flatteries, sin's vain pleasures, and the world's deceitful allurements: for they are all but empty nothings, a matter of mere moonshine. It is storied of men going over to Italy and selling their goods to wizards, and getting, as they supposed, chest-fulls of gold: and when they came home and opened their chests they had nothing but a number of round slate stones, and were all beguiled. So, in believing the world, Satan, and sin, you can meet with nothing but deception. Ken ye not that the devil, the world, and sin, can all cog\* the dice, and promise gold, while all is but mere nothings, empty shadows, and worse than slate stones?

Now, I pray and beseech you, by the mercies of God, by the blood of the eternal covenant, by the price of your souls' redemption, by the salvation of your immortal souls, and by your compearing naked and bare before the judge of the quick and the dead; cast this world and sin over behind your backs. Hate and abhor every sin, whether in yourselves or others, and go up through this world leaning upon Christ, keeping your eye fixed upon Him, as your only safety. The Lord bless His word to you. Amen.

## **SERMON VIII\* —John 20:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18**

And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him, &c.—John 20:13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

HERE is first a conference betwixt Mary Magdalene and the angels who had watched Christ's grave, and been witness of His resurrection (verse 13). Then she turneth from them, and lights upon Christ, and knows Him not.

Second. A conference betwixt Mary and Christ, while she knew not that it was He (verse 14, 15). A person may believe in Christ, and yet not have the assurance thereof. They may have true faith in Him, and yet not the sensible assurance of His love.

Third. A conference betwixt Christ and her, after knowing Him, all full of comfort. The Lord alloweth<sup>†</sup> comfort to His people after a time of mourning. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5).

Mary Magdalene comes first to the grave, and meets with Christ: for He had dispossessed her of seven devils, and she loved much, because many sins were forgiven her. We are ready to count sin and Satan a sweet possession as long as we have them; but when Christ taketh these from us, we loathe them, and rejoice in Him and His mercy.

"Why weepest thou?"—There is no envying of the angels at her desire after Christ. They are glad that sinners are sick of love for their well beloved. Mary had cause to rejoice, and not to weep: for Christ's rising should be as a napkin to wipe all tears from sinners' faces.\*

Doctrine. We have foolish and vain affections, poisoned with sin: we weep when we should laugh, and laugh when we should weep. The disciples should have rejoiced, because He said, "I go to the Father." It was a blessed way for them. He was going to prepare a lodging-house for them; but they were afraid, and had sorrow of heart for His way-going. Some think He feeds not His people in His absence: nay, but let me say it, God indeed not only feeds His own people with sense of presence, but also with absence. When the moon is under a cloud, and the Lord is away, the desire groweth, and the hunger and thirst after Him increaseth, which is a good evidence. We often mistake our Lord, and are really going forward, when we apprehend we are going backward.

"Why weepest thou?"—The angels could teach this, That Christ's rising from the dead is matter of joy. Christ seeing John falling down before Him for fear (Rev. 1:17, 18), laid His right hand upon him, saying, "Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen." (Psalm 118:24), "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." (Acts 13:32, 33), "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us, their children in that He hath raised up Jesus again." Therefore, Christ, after His resurrection, said unto His disciples, "Peace be unto you. It is I, be not afraid." All is well; seeing "He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). Just as if Christ should say, You and I have won the action; be glad and come out, all is paid. "Because I live, ye shall live also." Wo\* and cold would our comfort have been for ever, if death had arrested Christ in the grave. It is an uncouth† cold bed to go into death's dark pit never to come out again: they are all lodged there for ever. It is a miserable house; the inner chamber is the king of terrors: yea, black hell, hell and the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. But the Lord, in His resurrection, hath triumphed over death and hell, and delivered all His elect people from this grievous curse that they were lying under, in being heirs of hell. Therefore our Lord's coming out of prison is a relieving all His

children. Think now (if we may make the supposition) ye see a poor man with one or two bairns on his back, wading a deep water; he is like to drown, and the bairns crying for fear, and he cries to them, Hold your tongue, my bairns, and I shall warrant you; and then when he comes out, he wipes all their faces. So Christ in the grave had all the children that His Father gave Him legally hanging about His neck, and in His arms. Our heaven, and all our writs and charters, all our salvation, was in the grave with Him.

"Mary answered, They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."—Have I not good cause to weep? May I not be permitted to weep my fill? They have carried away my Christ from me. We see then two things in her. They have taken away my Christ. He is dead, and they have borne Him to another place, and I wot not where he is: but yet howbeit He be away, He is my Lord. The Note then is this:

Dead Christ, as ye think; a hidden, and a frowning Christ may be thy Christ, and my Christ. (Isaiah 49:14) "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." Then a forsaking God may be Zion's God. When faith and fainting are wrestling a fall together, faith keeps a hank\* of Christ in its own hand. Faith can say, Christ is not dead, albeit there be a hundred miles betwixt Him and me; yet He is my Christ, "my Lord, and my God." The child of God may be driven from many holds, and from the faith of his rising again from the dead, and from the faith of many sweet promises, and, fainting and doubting, may slander Christ, and say, He is unkind and away: but there is aye an hold to the fore,<sup>†</sup> and faith says, "He is my God." Like a captain besieged when there are many walls battered down to him, and the enemy has taken in mickle ground about him, and taken all the outer works, yet there is aye one castle untaken and to the fore that cannot be taken.

They say, The hold that a dying man gets of a thing, he keeps it till death. The dead-hold that a child of God gets of Christ it keeps for ever. It is good if we can stick to Christ any way, either dead Christ or

living Christ, whether kend Christ or unkend Christ, we must still keep something, or we lose all. Let us keep a hold of the hand that strikes us, and kiss it, if we cannot get His face and neck to kiss.

We count little of Christ when we have our fill of Him, and when He is living, but stay until hunger come, and then ye would give a world for His dead body. There is such a hunger in Mary Magdalene that she would be glad even to have dead Christ in her arms! She thinks it is better than nothing! Mary seeks no better than to have her arms full of dead Christ.

Sometimes we let good meat spill, and count little of it! We think little of His company at Communions: there is a day coming, wherein ye shall be blyth\* of a small crumb of Christ's bread. Were ye hungry, as may be ye will when this board is drawn: ye shall be blyth of a touch of the hem of His garment and a kiss of His feet. Little ken ye what it is to want. (Lam. 1:16), "For these things I weep: mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the Comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me." I trow that was no bairn's play. (Psalm 77:3), "I remembered God, and was troubled," how in former times He embraced me, and loved me; but now He has left me, and I know not what to do. "I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed." What is that? "I remembered God, and was troubled." Should it not rather have been, I remembered God, and leaped for joy? Nay, I remembered God, He that once remembered me, and loved me, but now He has left me, and I know not what to do! At such a time a blink of God, howbeit it were as short as a flash of fire in the air, it were half a heaven. It were good we were all at Mary's part of it, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."

She says, "I know not where they have laid Him."—A sore matter to lose Christ: but a sorer matter not to know where to find Him. It is a trial both to want Christ, and not to know where to find Him. Says the spouse, "Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth? If ye find Him, tell Him I am sick of love." Sometimes it will be that the children of God



will seek Him in many wynds,\* and not find Him in prayer, in the word, nor at the holy table, nor in reading, nor in conference. They will, as it were, follow Christ from place to place, and not know where to find Him; they know not where He is.

"I know not where they have laid Him."—She believed that Christ was yet dead, and this was her ignorance and infidelity; for He had often told them that He would rise again, but they believed Him not. Then we see that there is ignorance even with a good and hearty affection to Christ, in God's children. In Cant. 5:5, there we see a church both sleeping and wrestling at once. Nicodemus loved Christ's company, yet there was great ignorance in him. The Lord's disciples followed Him, and yet they were fools and slow of heart to believe the Scriptures (Luke 24:25). Our soul is like a harp, wherein there is a broken or mistuned string; our mind and our affections are like a broken or lame leg. We have some light in the mind, but our affections are cold like lead. And when the affections are blown upon by the wind of the Spirit, the mind and memory both may have the truant sickness; nay, if God yoke them not all, and drive them up the furrows, some piece or other will lie back like a lazy ox. There is aye a crook or halt in us, so that we go crooked to heaven, as Jacob did. But a sound, hearty affection, even an ounce of it, is worth a stone weight of dim light. Alas! This age hath light, but it is barrelled up. We start all up to be professors! but few have the furniture for heaven. God forbid, that I should discourage any, but I see men contenting themselves with too little; some light, and weak love, to the word, and the preacher, and still their old sins and old jog-trot\* is kept; and as dead in practice and reformation of life as they were ten years ago, and some of them worse. Now in the name and authority of the Son of God, try that it be good sufficient work; see that it be stamped and sealed with Christ's arms.

"She turned herself about."—I see the angels cannot help a wounded conscience that has lost a hold of Christ (Cant. 3:1, 2, 3). The watchmen could not lead the church to Christ, unto Him whom her soul loved. Nay, in prayer sometimes He cannot be gotten, (Psalm

22:2), "O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not: and in the night season, and am not silent." What meant the prophet's dry throat, and yet could not get God? Job says, chap. 13:24, God hideth His face. In the Word there is often such deadness that the child of God cannot win to his feet: and they may wonder who have seen and had the experience of defection. Will ye not say, When God lays His finger on the soul, and breaks a string of the conscience, what means will be used to get a knot on this broken string, and to get the broken bone knit again? I grant you God (in prayer) has been found, but I am speaking of a presence, or of an access to a blink of Christ; I have experience to say with me, and I knew it of late. Wot ye that presence and comfort is sweet meat, and not for Christ's bairns' ordinary food? There is a time or tide when the wind bloweth where it listeth, even after the use of means. Christ will come, and there is but deadness in the meantime, when ye can neither feel, see, nor hear Christ. Then ye may say, What shall we do, if means prevail not?

Answer. I know no child of God, who is ever in such a case, as they can neither hear, see, nor feel. The sleeping Church has a waking heart (Cant. 5:1). Grace to miss Christ is some feeling, hearing, and seeing. Those who are in Saul's case (1 Sam. 28:15), who said, "I am sore distressed, the Lord is departed from me," are in a sad taking: but the children of God may blame themselves, who are in the exercise of conscience seeking comfort and do not find it. I say I forbid not but that they pray, hear, read; yea, use all means for it; but I would have them doing two things.

1. That ye would continue to cry, look heaven's height, and be very impatient till you get your rights and a new stamp. Sleep not, eat not, rest not, until He come again. Complain, fret, make haste, long, and hunger, for Christ. Look up as if ye were angry at the clouds that hide Him and hinder you to see Him. Shall one bid men fall asleep who have lost Christ?
2. Yet be very patient and submissive, binding Him to no time or manner of coming. (Psalm 40:1), "I waited patiently on the Lord, and

He inclined His ear, and heard my cry." Then David both cried, and shouted, and yet had patience. Is a shouting and crying man a patient man? I say he is, 2 Peter. 3:12. Wait on and hasten to the day of the Son of God. See if I lie.

"And saw Jesus and knew Him not."—As in the body seeing and hearing went out, so in the soul we may see Christ, and not know Him. Many have light, as sick men have meat at their bedside, but cannot use it. But here is the matter; at every new meeting we misken\* Christ. While your soul is sick, and while He kens not you, the acquaintance is aye to make over again. He must blow the coal; Christ's hot head must warm our cold ones, and His living hand must hold our dead hands and quicken them, and then we begin to stir our fingers, and to take hold of Him. But if Christ be but three days away, we are to begin at A B C again. He left Peter but a while of a day or night, and Peter forsook Him, and never repented till the Lord looked a loving look to him that awakened him. He turned a little from His disciples and they forsook Him and fled, and never wan to their feet again till He reproved them for their infidelity and opened their hearts. He knows a weak sheep fallen into a pit or hole that cannot win out itself. Christ aye looseth the fankled† lamb, bleating and bleeding in the thorny bush. A bow cannot bend itself, a man's arm must do it; it cannot shoot itself, a hand must put the arrow on the string, and draw and loose it. So ye must learn the gate‡ to heaven. It is a borrowing life we have here! We are aye falling, and Christ is aye setting us to our feet again! I see Christ must be cumbered in leading us the right gate to heaven. I think I have mind of an old crazy barque, each dash it gets on a rock it falls out in a hole, and new timber must be put in; and the next day it gets another dash, and a whole board falls out, and a new board must be put in again. This is like our conscience, this crazy soul of ours, having rotten timber in it. A dash of desertion for three days makes a crack in Mary Magdalene's soul, that she sees Christ, and sees Him not! David dashed against a rock of lust, and falls out in a wide rent of adultery and murder. Peter's old barque gets a knock of fear, and he falls out in denial of his Lord. The Lord's fore-hammer lighted upon

the disciples, and they fall out with a love of honour and ease here; and they fall out in a great rent, and think He shall make them great men in the world, and restore again the kingdom to Israel. I tell you Christ must aye be putting in new timber till all be made new work, for Christ will take old Adam's rotten timber out of us, and mickle work it is to make this old crazy conscience new, that is like to fall to flinders.\*

Jesus saith to her, Woman, why weepest thou?"—What needs Christ question thus? Why should Christ ask at a broken-hearted woman, seeking none but Christ, Why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? Ye know a father will be minded to give an apple to his bairn, and he will say, holding it out, Will ye have that? Ye know He said to a poor man, "Wilt thou be made whole?" There may be some souls longing for Him this day, and yet He say, My dear people, tell Me whom ye would have, and whom seek ye? See here, there was a fault in her desire; she sought a dead Christ, or His dead body, and He would have her to seek a living Christ. And therefore, look, when ye are seeking Christ, that there be not a fault in your desire; ye are perhaps serving yourselves when ye are seeking Him. Ye are all seeking comfort, and He perhaps brought you here to hear nothing but conviction, and to humble your proud hearts. When we are seeking God, and our affections opened, the devil can shute\* in his arm to the shoulder blades, and cast in a handful of his draff† and spoil the mask. ‡ Who would think that a woman weeping for Christ was wrong? and yet she knows not whom she seeketh? Yea, at Communions, let me ask, for Christ's sake, whom ye are seeking? Ye will say, Christ. I say, Would to God it were so. I will have nothing, says one, but comfort. I will have nothing, says another, but a soft heart. And a third comes because it is the fashion! I will ask at these souls, Whom seekest thou? Painted hypocrite; plastered, rotten, dissembler, thou art seeking the devil and condemnation to thyself.

"She supposing Him to be the Gardener."—Her mind was confounded with sorrow and infidelity in her heart, and the Lord

held her eyes that she kend not Christ to be Christ; and yet Christ looked more heavenly-like than He wont to do.

Doctrine. Then a child of God may be speaking to Him, and not ken Him. Alas! we often measure Him by our own foot! So Job takes the Lord to be a changed Lord, another God to him, and one that was turned to be his enemy! And so did Jonah, Jeremiah, Elijah, Habakkuk, &c., in their wrestlings. For infidelity is a thick mask upon men's eyes; and who are they whom Satan will not blindfold? He would have put a mask upon Christ's eyes, and put all the world's glory betwixt Him and His Father! but Christ saw through the mask. And Satan would have laid court, honour, and pleasures of sin before Moses' eyes, but God rent the mask, and he looked to the recompense of reward. The devil laid gold over Balaam's eyes. Has not that trumpet of Rome made Christ the gardener? There is no Christ in question or request now but that which rides in Parliament! They have put silks\* on Christ and His Kirk, and they will not wear them. I pray you cast off the devil's hoods and his masks, and seek from Christ the salve, to see Christ to be Christ.

"Tell me where thou hast laid Him."—What a lift would this corpse have been? Would not dead Christ, His grave clothes, and an hundred pound weight of myrrh and aloes, that was laid upon His body, have been a heavy lift to a woman? Six stone weight or more? Yet Mary says she would bear Him hence, nay, though she could not, she would take<sup>†</sup> a lift of Him till her back cracked, and her arm guard had been out of lith,<sup>‡</sup> but she would have had Him.

Doctrine. Love has strong broad shoulders: the high mountains and the heavy burdens will not tire love. Love will never sweat, faint, nor fall in a swoon, for God helpeth love. Love is as strong as death, or the grave (Cant. 8:6). Get love, and no burden Christ will lay on you will be heavy. Were not the martyrs fraughted§ with love when heavy death and burning quick did not weight them when it was laid on them? But love made them run up the mountains with death and tortures on their back! Lay all hell upon a soul that has love to Christ,

he will run with the burden. Seek and get love, and it will make you bear sufferings: for love will not burst at the broad side. Came not Moses from the court, with his back laden with affection to the people of God, and tired not?

"Jesus saith unto her, Mary."—See Christ calleth upon Mary by her name. Thus it is no dry general acquaintance that Christ has with His own. As ye use to say, It is hard to know such a man, but I have seen him. Nay, but Christ knows all His sheep by the head. (Luke 19:5), "Jesus looked up, and said, Come down, Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for today I must abide at thine house." (See John 1:48), "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." (John 10:14), "I am the good Shepherd, I know My sheep." This behoved to be Christ, He is not such a rash merchant, but He saw His wares, and kend them all by their names ere He laid down a price for them. Nay, God brought them all before Him, and said, By their dwellings and names take them; and I will give the ends of the earth for Thy inheritance. He shall get all beyond the river (Zeph. 3:10), the dispersed of Judah, &c. (Isaiah 6:10). All these are His. The Father hath said, Son, Ye shall not work for nothing. What think Ye of your wares? how please your goods and mine? And His Father gave Him a fair roll of all their names, by the head, man and woman, as particularly as He had named them, John, Thomas, Mary, &c. And the whole flock was marked. As when a man out of a great flock selleth so many sheep, and sets them by for the merchant; he lets him see his wares, and he puts his mark upon them. So the world, even all mankind, was a great flock before God, and the Father gave Christ the pick\* of the market. And He chose so many out of the flock, and bargained with Him for them. And the Father told† them all over to the Son, a fair number of bairns, saying, Take them, Son; but ye shall pay dear for them. And they were all of God's mark and Christ's mark together; and Christ kens what fields they go in; and He has them booked, and calls them, and puts the Mediator's name on them—the new name, even His mark. So here is the reason why, of two or three thousand in one kirk together where the word is preached, Christ calls out one man by name, and the other by name.

I trow it is because here is Christ's bought wares, He is up in the count. The Father must keep condition with Christ, for He got arles<sup>‡</sup> (as you say) in Abel's days, and He must keep remembrance of all His sheep. But ye will say, Alas! Christ has forgotten me. Well, beware of that. Will ye say the Father has miscounted a sheep, and Christ has lost a sheep in the telling? Then He is sleepy and careless. But it is not so. This is a sweet thing that He cares for you; thou art up in my books, John, Mary, &c. Ye are up in the white roll, and on that condition I give to you myself, my flesh and my blood, this day. O then be blythe§ man, thou wilt not fall|| by in the telling. There is no miscount between the Father and the Son, but faithful and sicker.¶ I pray you tell me when heard you Christ name you by name? I tell you when you think each promise is spoken to you by name, and when you say, Yon is spoken firm. And as when a roll is calling, each one cries here, "Here," to his own name. Then when the gospel is preaching, Christ is a calling the roll, your soul, with joy beliveth when ye cry, Here, here, Lord Jesus. Therefore take good tent when ye hear your own names called, and answer them.

"She saith unto Him, Rabboni."—Thereby acknowledging herself Christ's scholar, and Christ to be her master.

Observe. Here is but a short preaching that Christ makes. He says but one word, Mary: but it is more than a word; and Mary presently knows. So soon as ever Christ speaks, the kirk saith, "It is the voice of my beloved!" A wife who has wanted her husband seven years, when He returns she hears his tongue in the closs, and shouts and cries, Its my dear husband's tongue, and comes out to meet him. "It is I, be not afraid" (Matt. 14:27). And they kend His tongue, and presently received Him into the ship. Christ may learn us all to preach; for one of His preachings is worth a horse-load of our preachings; He has the tongue of the learned indeed. With His mouth He can blow up iron doors. Well kens He all the back-springes\* and double locks of the soul, and how Satan has need-nailed<sup>†</sup> the door. Christ has the way of it, and can draw the bolt with His voice. So then when Christ cometh and speaketh, He brings His word with Him. When the devil comes

he has a dumb knock; he raps but will not speak. He cannot bring the word with him, or it is a hollow earthly voice and harsh, aye crying, Clay, clay! court, honour, the world, your lusts, your fill! This is not like Christ's tongue. An image speaks not; the dumb ceremonies have not a tongue; they speak not to the soul; they have a dead knock. I shall be answerable when they come you shall break your heart and say, Yon is not Christ's tongue.

"Rabboni."—Mary had been seeking a dead Christ, and thought He had not been risen; and she gets a living Christ. Doctrine. No man ever went to seek Christ in a right way, but he got more than he sought! The woman of Canaan sought a crumb under the board with the dogs; but ere Christ and she parted, I trow He set her at the boardhead above all Israel.

The forlorn\* son came home, and he would be nothing but a servant; he craved but to stand at the by-board. He speaks but of dry-bread; he spake not of whole clothes; but his Father put on him the best robe, and a ring on his finger, and killed the fatted calf, and set him at the high board, and at the first mess. "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20).

Now ye hear us speak of Christ; ye come to seek Him; ye think there is much in Him. Come and see, and taste, and ye shall feel that there is a hundred thousand degrees more! See then that you make an errand to Christ, for a sick bairn, for a weak body, for a troubled friend; and ye shall get more than ye seek! Ken ye not that poor folks are glad to get an errand to a hall-house? † If they can make an errand they ken they will find plenty there! Christ is a hall-house: go to Him.

"Jesus sayeth unto her, Touch Me not."—Matthew says, the women held Him by the feet; and no question Mary was hanging about His neck to kiss Him, and would have thrust Him into her heart. But Christ says, "Touch Me not." Alas! (might she think) what means



this? Ye may wonder what ails Him at the poor woman! Trow ye Christ was grown lordlier? Was He more lordly than He was, because He was risen and glorified in part? Or, will lordships change manners with Him? No. Its true He forbids her; it was a fault in her seeking to touch Him; she doated too much on His bodily presence; and thought He had come up again to live on the earth, and to eat and drink with publicans and sinners as He was wont to do. But He will not feed her foolish love; Christ would have wise love. Ye are aye craving sense, joy, comfort. Look if that be wise love of yours, and that ye serve not always your pleasure, and delight in Christ, but not for Christ Himself. I say, seek yourself in Christ and your joy; but not for yourself. I pray you mark this; we are beguiled often in our seeking of Christ, for Christ here would be at another thing.

"Touch me not, I am not yet ascended," &c.—It is as much as to say, When I go to heaven and send down the Holy Ghost upon thee, thou shalt then touch Me by faith thy fill: but now hold thy hand, hold thee by that thou hast. When, I say, Christ, for causes known to Himself, will give you no aumus,\* nill ye, will ye, then ye should not be in a marvel that ye do not see Christ! Rent not your bills† until I tell you Christ will cry to His beggars, Ye will not be served at this time.

Take an Answer. Now, I come to answer experience here. Will ye not pray, and come from God as it were with empty wind and nothing?

Answer. Christ said, "Touch Me not:" ye were perhaps seeking to play yourself like a bairn with Christ; and He will let you know He is Christ. He is not a Christ to play bairns with. So after we would have joy and comfort in Christ for our pleasure, is often as bairns that would have a painted hat to play with. Ye think, so soon as ye knock and pray, no more should be, but that all heaven's gates should be opened or casten up, and that the King will come out and meet you immediately, and take you into the house of wine. Nay, but stay: what haste? stay, at leisure, and ask at your souls what ye are seeking when ye seek sense and joy. If ye be not out of yourselves, and seek it

not for this end, that ye may be hearted\* to pray, and hearted to go up the mountain to heaven, I say, Beware ye find not a closed door: and howbeit this were not, beware. "Touch Me not," is good and sweet meet for you. Stand and knock, and go away, and come again and knock; and that draws out faith in a long and strong thread. And that is as good for you as if Christ and you had met at first. For know ye that access, feeling, and liberty, are graces? And He will give them but when He pleases: and it is best that Christ make delicates of such good cheer.

But what is the best mark then in seeking of Christ?

Answer. Take Christ anyway: if He be here, it is He; if there, it is He. Be as content with Him with tears and down-casting as in tears and joy. Nay, here is a second mark—If you can take Him out of hell smoking in your arms. But to seek comfort in Christ is not to seek Christ, say ye? I answer, If ye seek Christ for comfort, and not comfort for Christ, and joy. If ye ask how these are differenced? I answer, Even as the spouse loves the bridegroom, not for his fair clothes, and gold rings and bracelets, but for himself. So must ye seek Christ for Himself, and not Christ for comfort. For, I say, Joy and comfort is but the bridegroom's jewels; but the bridegroom himself is better. Nay, a convicting and rebuking Christ is no less true than a loving Christ! Then I say, It is not Christ, but His love ye would be at.

"Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father."—Christ brings His word with a reason; when I am ascended into heaven, then ye shall get touching Me your fill, wait on till that time. So this is no absolute nay-say, but a delay.

Doctrine. There is never one of Christ's refusals, but they are mixed with hope; the seed of faith and hope is in them. So He said to the woman of Canaan, let the children be first served. There is no refusal, but He puts her in hopes that when the Jews had gotten their dinner, then the poor woman should get the broken meat. Paul, when

buffeted, prayed. Christ returned the answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee." This was a good answer. When the disciples would fain have had Christ abiding with them, He said, Nay, but this nay had with it, "But I will come and receive you to Myself." Then take not Christ's nay-say at the worst; it is both sweet and comfortable, and His strokes there is aye that in them, "Ye shall get." Then Christ's refusals are comfortable, and His strokes sweet and healthful. If we have honest hearts in seeking, one way or another God shall comfort us.

Being now risen from the dead, He says, "Go, tell My brethren." He would comfort His brethren with this comfortable doctrine, letting them see this glory He was to be advanced to; it took not away that communion of nature that was between Him and them: therefore He is not ashamed to call them brethren. (Heb. 2:11) We have one God, they and I are halfers together. And more than that, we are Father's bairns. God is their Father and my Father. So we have one mother; for Christ was born of the kirk. "Go forth, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals" (Cant. 3:11).

This is Jesus, the King of Peace, named by His mother the Kirk. But He was crowned with a crown of thorns; and also, crowned by the faithful who made Him their King. Then Christ and we are more than half brethren, we are full brethren; for God will have no step-bairns. We are native and of kin to Him; all the water in the sea will not wash Christ's blood and ours asunder, for Christ and we behoved to be more than second or third a-kin. For the law's cause, we behoved to be as sib\* as brethren: and therefore, in (Cant. 4:5) He calls the Kirk His Sister, and delights to avow His kindred to her, for Christ will not man-swear<sup>†</sup> the silliest of His kindred. Now by the law, the poor brother that had mortgaged his land, had power among the Jews to make an assignation of his right to his brother, or the nearest of his kindred: and so might put his brother in the right of it. As an oppressed man, who is bereft of his inheritance, and has not moyen nor means to double out his matter by law, he makes an assignation

of his right to his nearest friend or chief, who has means and moyen to win the action; and that friend has it also in his power to put the poor oppressed man in his place again. So here: no one but God who is above law, having given to Christ a body, made Christ an assignation to our bloody bond, which the law and the justice of God had against us. And when we had forfeit paradise, and could not double out our cause, the kind kinsman, Christ-man, was very kindly to pardon and come in our room as assignee to His poor ruined brethren. And God put into the assignation whereto Christ's name was borrowed, three things.

First, Our flesh and infirmities as sinless. Secondly, All our sins, and whatever followed them. So Christ got with us mickle black debt and many cumpers. And the cursed bond of the law was removed, and Christ was written in the bond accursed, and hanged on a tree. And thirdly, Christ was assigned to our heaven, and He named it to Him, by us.

Then Christ got the law, and we the gospel; and the assignation was mutual. And this was sweet, for Christ made us assignees to His bond, and He was assignee to our flesh. He made the work so as we should be assignees to His Spirit and His grace, that out of His fulness we should receive grace for grace. And so by law, Christ's grace is ours, and He puts us in His own place, and makes us assignees to His glory. (Luke 21:25), "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me."

Then believers be blythe. You are Christ's executors and assignees.\* Now that Christ's testament is confirmed, intromet with<sup>†</sup> His goods, the law will warrant you so to do.

But there is a third thing in Christ's assignation, which He will not take well with if ye refuse it. He makes His brethren assignees to His cross. Ye will start at this, but it is your glory! In the world ye shall have tribulation, or affliction. When ye have subscribed the assignation, the said binds and obliges me to suffer for Him. Even for

every cuff Christ took for you and me (and He got many a blue stroke for us), ye must be ready to take a cuff for Him. And know ye there was a clause in the end of the assignation full of comfort; Christ gives you a back-bond\* that the cross will not slay you. Christ says, Brethren, I bind and oblige myself I will not leave you fatherless, I have overcome the world, I will see you again.

See then how ye are matched. And say not; Indeed it sets us not to be handled this way. But learn ye to be like your brother, meek and lowly, and then ye may ken ye are brethren. Professors be like Him; ye are come off for Christ's cause. Live holily, for fear Christ man-swear † you; and in judgment say, Ye are none of His kindred, "Depart from Me, I know you not." So, look; as your brother was but like a strange man in the world, so must ye be. Christ will deny step-bairns, and illegitimate bastard brethren that are not born again.

"I ascend to My Father."—He sends His disciples word or ‡ ever He sees them, He must up to heaven for them. And therefore, He forbids them to dream of a Christ ever bodily present with them on the earth. And therefore they that would have Christ must follow His trodden path, and trace Him all the gate§ to heaven, and they shall find Him there. Ask Him out in heaven, at the right hand of the Father. And therefore believe His death and resurrection, and so stand there, and go no further, nor slip from Christ like a knotless thread, and lose His footsteps. But we must go after Him to heaven, for where our treasure is, there will our heart be also (Matt. 6:21). If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Father. For except we sunder\* with Christ, we must be where He is, and He is now up in heaven. He is now up in glory, and we are all down in a low valley; for sinners are aye playing at the mouth of the black pit, like daft bairns playing at the brink of a deep river. And Christ is crying, Come up, come up, after Me, lend Me your hand, I will draw you up. O! should He cry, Up with Me; and we are aye falling down upon the clay of this earth. He would have us flying to heaven: and we are still creeping upon

this earth. What will become of the worms, and gathering worldlings?

A man that must ride forty miles ere night, and ye see him drinking at an inn at four o'clock afternoon, thirty-nine miles from his journey's end; ye may think he purposes not to be there that night. Is it not afternoon with our life? many be here past their twelve hours! And who knows how soon it may fall on night? and many have not gone one mile to heaven! Believe me, many men live as if they had the keys of heaven at their belt; and think to stick in this clay of the earth all their days, and leap to heaven at their death, at one leap! Believe me, ye never did leap such a leap in your life time; if ye would be there, its high time ye were on horseback already, and in Christ's chariot driving and posting to heaven as fast as ye can or may. Have ye not furnishing in heaven before you? Christ is there, is not your flitting before you? Then up, ye must after Him. Home, home, flee for your life, this town ye dwell in, and all about it, will be burnt with fire (2 Peter 3:10). Flee then, else ye will be burnt if ye stay here.

See the good word the apostle has (Phil. 3:20), "Our conversation is in heaven:" our burgess-haunting\* is in heaven. And when ye would seek a man, you must seek him where he haunts and usually resorts to. As if ye seek the drunkard, he haunts amongst the barrels! for he is but a living barrel himself, to fill and empty, and to glut up his belly again with a new browst!† Would ye know the fleshly man's dwelling, where haunts he? In the whore's chamber; sits he not down at the mouth of hell? (as says Solomon) is he not well neighboured? The devil and her are door neighbours, upon the march together. Would ye see where the earthly man haunts, what need you ask? You shall get the worm in the earth among clay. Ask where the child of God haunts? where haunts he? Up in heaven; the Saviour and He cannot be sundry.‡ He is climbing on His hands and feet to be up. He is ascending and desiring to be with Christ.

Oh! the devil leads many down stairs; and when all is done, men get not their prey on the earth. I think I see them fishing for baronies,

and thousands setting their lines and making all their might for a draught of fish, and to make up a fair estate to them, or theirs. And then I may see the tide, and the storm breaking the lines and taking them away, and they come home with empty creels like traiked§ slippery fishers, both wo|| and slippery, crying, shame, ruined; we have got nothing, but have lost twenty pounds worth of nets. So are men undoing their souls through the storm to seek fishing, and they lose their conscience, and a tide of temptation takes their conscience from them, and they go home to their grave with nothing. And some of them are forced to cry, The soul is lost.

My beloved, in the bowels of Christ, who has given His flesh and His blood, and offered it to you this day, in the Sacrament of His Supper, let us lift our thoughts from off this vain world, and transitory things below; and let us set our heart and affections on things heavenly and divine, trusting in the Lord through the whole of our wilderness journey, and inquiring for Him all the way to the very ports and gates of heaven.

We must not attend ordinances for the fashion, and according to use and wont (as we say), but for His glory, and our own soul's salvation. Nothing is to be done here, but upon the footing of divine authority. Away, therefore, with all Romish trash, will-worship, and superstition, in the service of God! All the trumpery of the Romish harlot ought to have no place in the House of God. But not insisting.\*

Live soberly, righteously, and godly in your day and generation. In the midst of trials and difficulties, trust in the Lord, and put your confidence in Him; and there is no fear of an outgate, in the Lord's due time and way. Remember, He saith, I ascend to My Father, and your Father; to My God, and your God: Follow ye Me. Amen.

## SERMON IX\* —Song 5:1, 2

I am come into My garden, My sister, My spouse, I have gathered My myrrh with My spice, I have eaten My honey-comb with My honey, I have drunk My wine with My milk: eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved, &c.—Song 5:1, 2, &c.

BELOVED in our Lord, hitherto in this song there has been much love, and few out-casts † betwixt Christ and His church. In the beginning of this chapter (of which I have read a part unto you), according to the Hebrew, I fetch from verse 2, "I sleep," &c., that there is an out-cast betwixt Him and His church. In other parties there is more love in wooing than in the married state: for our love has a fair and sweet honey month, while it is green and young; it is like the child's new coat, fairest the first day. Our love at length, so far as it is natural, grows thread bare, breaks out, and has need of mending. However the plain contrary is in the true love betwixt Christ and His Church. This militant state is the period wherein Christ and His people differ: but they shall agree well together in the other life, in the triumphant state above.

This chapter hath three parts. 1. The lamentation of the Church, that she had offended her dear one, Christ, in holding Him at the door, with His wet frozen head in the cold night. For Christ in coming to us got a terrible blast out of the north; the storm of God's indignation was in His fair face, and took all the skin off it, and made Him a marred visage, as it is in Isaiah 52:14.

2. There is a conference betwixt the Church and her companions about Christ and His worth. In the former part, there is the Church's confession of her wrong to Christ, and the cause of holding Him at the door is set down and expounded. "I sleep, but my heart waketh." But I sleep not as carnal men do, because my heart, the renewed part, wakes: and through my sleep I ken His tongue. And the spirit



cries to the flesh, Wrong, wrong, it is ill your common,\* to hold out the Son of God. And she plays the advocate for Christ against herself: enlarges and presses in breadth and length the indignity of the wrong done to Him. First. From the testimony of her own conscience, in knowing His tongue and discerning His knock. Second. From reasons that He used to move her will to consent: as

1. Christ's just claim to her; "My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled."—Styles that we deserve not; for when Christ has gotten us with much intreaty, and hard war, ill and well as it might be, He has gotten but a dirty armful of us. The 2. Reason is, from His sufferings: "My head is full of dew." 3. She comes to her own backwardness, and carnal shifts. In speaking to herself in allusion to the custom of going barefooted in those hot countries, and to the washing of their feet ere they went to bed; says she, I cannot rise now, and quit my ease. And with confidence, she propounds questions to His conscience. How can I in this cold night put on my clothes? how can I defile my feet? Be you judge, husband, if this be reasonable, that ye should not come in day-light before the sun go down. Shall I quit my pleasure, how can I do it? Is this possible? Shall I now defile my feet again? Is this reasonable? Her 4. Reason is, from his manner of working in her heart; My well beloved put in His hand by the keyhole, and made my heart lively, and warmed it by some bestirring motions: and O! unhappy I, who would not rise and open to Him. Her 5. Reason is, from her sorrow in that her bowels were turned for her Lord, who was thus unworthily received (verse 3).

3. Then is subjoined (in verses 4 and 5), the fruits of her laziness, which was the losing of her well beloved; in which are these six particulars.

1. "I rose to open."—This is a new purpose, condemning her former neglect. 2. What befel her in that work; the Lord left upon her heart the smell of His love, sweet as myrrh, which made her hands to drop when she had purposed to open. 3. It is set down, her opening out of

time, "He had withdrawn Himself." 4. Her missing of Him when He was gone. 5. Two fruits of her missing of Him, the one which is the fifth in order, her godly sorrow, in that she fell aswoon for Him. The other which is the 6. Particular, her seeking, praying, and longing for Him; but not according to her present desire, "she found Him not." Thus ye have the division.

Now I come to the doctrine.

"I sleep."—It is not long since it was another world, "Let my beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruit;" but now it is a changed world. Once it was as in chap. 2:6, "His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me:" but now there are harlot lovers in the church, and it is ill sleeping in a chamber where Christ is locked to the door.\* Perhaps the devil had made the bed, busked the chamber, and drawn the curtains. Hence the holiest living, while the flesh dwells in him, a neighbour to the Spirit, he will fall asleep. (Matt. 25:5), "While the bridegroom tarried, they (even the wise virgins) all slumbered and slept." (Rom. 13:11), "It is high time to awake: for the night is spent." They were in a nap when the apostle would have them to awake. (1 Thes. 5:5, 6) "Ye are the children of the day, therefore let us watch and be sober." Then we must beware lest that, in the believer's day, and in the Lord's day-time, we take a noon sleep.

Question. But what are the causes that those whom God has once awakened fall asleep?

Answer. 1. A full man seeks a bed, a drunken man asketh for a soft resting bed. In prosperity and health, when men sit right against the hot sun—when David is at home, and his kingdom established in his hand, he falls asleep, and lust asketh the way to his house (2 Sam. 11) When it is full moon with the soul, and it has been filled with God's presence, take heed then that you lay not your face to the sun, and fall asleep. When Peter got a fill of glory at the transfiguration of Christ, then he falls asleep; and in a dream, he spoke he wist not

what, when he said, "Master, it is good for us to be here" (Mark 11:5, 6). It was a word he spoke through his sleep. If ye, Peter and John, will stay still in that glorious estate ye have soon done with it. But how shall the Christian world be gathered in to Christ by your ministry? Nay, awake ye must, come down from the mount, and be scourged, imprisoned, and suffer death for bearing witness of Christ before the world. The devil does here, as some physicians who give physic when it is full moon. Satan kens well when it is full moon with the soul, and then he waits on with a soft pillow and a made bed. Therefore, after your fill of Christ, and after you have gotten many love tokens from Him; keep your soul waking.

2. Men cast away holy fear, and then they must sleep. They forget their soul's being ill locked up, and forget that loose-handed devils (if we may so say) are going up and down the house: and that they have a great house to keep that is well filled. Their conscience and their affections are treasures often loosely laid up: and there is but a thin wall betwixt us and Satan. And we forget that sin has made us heavy headed and lazy sluggards, inclining to sleep. "Blessed is he that feareth always" (Prov. 28:14). We may catch much harm in sleeping, and therefore holy fear should keep us waking. He that knows himself to be on the head of a top-mast, and with giddy head looking down, he will forget sleeping.

3. We turn idle and leave off our spiritual exercise: and so fall over in Satan's perfumed bed (1 Thes. 5:8). To keep men waking, the apostle sends them to the use of faith, love, and hope. Before men fall asleep, they turn lazy and cold in good works. Such as watch a castle, when they fear sleep, walk up and down, speak and sing; for if they sit down, they will but soon welcome sleep. Let a man for a month do nothing but sit in one place night and day, the sinews of his legs will readily freeze and dry up. Use the body and have the body. When we give up with prayer, reading, hearing, conferring, meditating, and walking in love and good works; no marvel though the sinews of the conscience dry up. Let a watch or a clock stand a year, lay aside the paces,\* then all the wheels rust and gather dirt and moths, and so

clog it that it cannot go. Leave off to do good, and turn lazy; and the wheels of the conscience, and the affections of love, joy, desire, sorrow, hope, fear, let them gather rust; and if they freeze, the soul must then fall asleep, and turn as dead for a journey to heaven as a sleeping man is to walk. These two last causes of sleep say it is no wonder though all we in this land be fallen asleep. Our little fear of losing our well Beloved, and our deadness in good works and spiritual exercises, cannot but bring us to this sleep.

"But my heart waketh."—My renewed part waked, and knew Christ's tongue. This is not spoken as a volley<sup>†</sup> or vogue; as many folk in a shew, scant of friendly neighbours to praise them, they save their neighbours the labour, and praise themselves: but the church speaks this to the praise of the grace of God. Hence, we see the worst case the child of God can be in he can discern, even through his sleep, the voice of God in Christ; and in his dream can take up Christ as Christ. For even under these out-casts,<sup>‡</sup> and when the peace betwixt them is cried down for a time (1 John 3:9), the seed of God abideth in them (1 John 2:27). The anointing that they have received of God abideth in them. Neither must we think that Christ giveth His friends a spur visit and a standing word, and away again, seeing He still dwells in His own; howbeit He doth not aye work in them.

Under greatest unkindness there is never a defection in the soul, for the Lord's seed of righteousness remaineth in them. Howbeit it casteth not aye heat, yet it casteth aye light, whereby the man seeth sin, and protests and takes instruments\* in Christ's name, of the wrong done to Christ. And if the new man cry, Wrong, wrong, think on that: the converted sin not without an eye-witness that speaks against the ill (Rom. 7:17, 18).

But by the way then another Question. How do the renewed in Christ sin at all if the seed of God abide in them?

Answer. Because Christ can lie down in the soul, and not work at all, and suffer the unrenewed part, I mean the old man, to make a road<sup>†</sup>

in the soul: Christ in the new man only making a little struggling, as the birth hurt in the mother's womb makes a stirring. This should be known; it is not grace in the habit that hinders sin in us, but God working and blowing upon that grace. For our watching and walking in God's way, is not like ordinary fire that burns of itself; but is like the smith's fire that must be blown up with the bellows. And therefore, in the time that God's bellows blows not on our fire, it is dark and dead. Then Christ's fire with little heat lies beneath the devil's ashes. God says to Jeremiah (chap. 1:18), "Behold I have made thee this day a fenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land." Might not that have sufficed Jeremiah, except he were ill to please? Nay, but the fenced city might be taken! Therefore the Lord promised that that should do the turn. (Verse 19), "They shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail." Why so? Because Jeremiah was an iron pillar, &c. Nay, another reason is given; and that is, "I am with thee, to deliver thee, saith the Lord." So then, it is God Himself working upon His own grace, and blowing upon His own fire, that is the proper and only cause of our standing.

But to the point. The waking heart through the sleep knows the Lord's tongue; and this should comfort and bear up the child of God under falls and different sins, from being a castaway; when Satan comes in in a deep sleep, and steals away the soul and is never trapped. But the devil cannot steal a sleep on the child of God, but the renewed part will awake him, and take him with it red-hand.\* Or at least, it is like the tender eye that waters with a blast of wind or a mote. Or thus; when Satan casts water on the faith of the saints, Christ's fire makes a noise and cracking; or when sin lies upon the conscience like uncouth † meat, raw and undigested, on a weak stomach, the child of God gets no rest till he vomit it up again. Now this is a matter of comfort, and it saith the conscience is tender, sensible, lively, and thin-skinned, and will easily bleed. And as it betokens a tender, and a waking heart, so it says that that conscience has a bottom. But for the reprobates, the devil has driven the bottom out of their conscience, so that sin runs through it as a vessel without a bottom, that holds nothing; for sin, after it is committed, is done,

or out of mind with them. The Pharisees killed Christ, and were soon washen, though it was with foul water; and they fall to, and eat the passover, and there is no more of it. It is past with them, and that quickly, and there is no more of it by reason of a running out conscience. Cain's murder did not stick long in his throat when he went out of God's presence and built a city.

This confession of the kirk, that in sleeping, "the heart waked," will reprove many who overcharge their conscience and themselves (as the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. 2:7), until they be swallowed up with grief. They only speak of the evil that is true of themselves, but no good at all. The church doth not so (Cant. 1:5), "I am my beloved's," &c. I am black, yet she denies not, but Christ's part is comely as the tents of Kedar. We ought to confess our sleepiness; but we should not deny the grace that is in God. As the wretch sinneth away all he has and sayeth he has nothing. Thus some imagine it to be both the root and top of true humility, to say they have no grace at all; there is nothing in me that God can own as His own work. This they think true humility, to put the price of a dog on themselves. As they think they are riding God's errands when they have put the saddle on the wrong horse! But, in doing this, men take Satan's place over his head, for he is an accuser of the brethren, and they play the advocate for him. And this is in confessing to bend the bow beyond the compass of it. And when men say this, that they have nothing of them in God, they forget that Satan is at their elbow, to say, Then I take instruments\* on your word, ye must then be mine.

There is also a third sort, who abuse a waking heart in their sleep. They who think they may take a little liberty and elbow room to sin, because, say they, Howbeit I sleep, yet the renewed part is waking. I know Christ's tongue: it is not any gift to suffer for Christ. I will crouch and let the cross of Christ slip by me; yet I wish all well. I love the good cause! Yet they can feed their lusts, and make them fat and wanton. I hope, say these men, I have true grace, I am woe at any slips I make! Now, well said Pilate! Scourge Christ and then condemn Him; and then wash your hands and proclaim yourself a

just, clean man. If any man be wrong, then these with the first are playing about the mouth of hell.

"Open to me."—There is then a locked door upon Christ; His face is hidden. So soon as He goes out there is one that pays rent to an uncouth Lord, who wins the house of our hearts, and takes it up. Hence it is, that Christ must beg lodging for God's sake, ere He get possession of His own again. Then by our security, taking the play, and giving a night's lodging or two, to an old lust, dear Jesus must stand and call for Himself, as if He were the Man to be meaned, crying, "Open, My sister," &c. Yet this would seem a hard command, if He would say to us, Open.

Answer. When God commands anything to us, He adviseth not with our lazy flesh. Neither says He, What think ye of the command? He says to Moses, Go to Pharaoh, and say, Let My people go. But He asked not counsel at Moses in his cold blood, nor stood at his natural fear to go to Egypt where he had slain a man. He sends Jeremiah to kings, princes, prophets and people, and makes no great reckoning of the prophet's fleshly shift. "Ah, God! I cannot speak;" says he, "I am a child" (Jer. 1:6). Yea, if our Lord advised with wicked men (to say no more of the saints) in asking their mind anent His commandments, they would shape a law like a wide coat, to take in both God and their lusts. But God's commandments must stand, of His own mould. Hence comes this

Question. How are evangelical commands directed to us? (Ezek. 18:31), "Make you a new heart, and a new spirit." (Col. 3:10), "Put on the new man." (Rom. 12:2), "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind," &c. This seems to lay the weight on our free will, which it cannot bear. What shall ye then do with these things?

Answer. Because lazy nature flings at the load, it should not be refused at the first hearing. We are to take us to our feet, no less than the power were in our own hand. Christ helps fair ventures. Better die working and doing as we can, than cry in the fire, Lord, lift me

out. It is our fault; the want of the command breaks our resolution to obey in two pieces, and there we lie.

God sends not His commandments to us because we have strength to do them. But God seeks that His charge be met with humility. Wherefore, the gospel is a mass of humble commandments; and we sigh because we cannot win up the brae. It is acceptable; providing we creep on hands and feet as we can, it is sweet obedience. Because faith has always in the second covenant the first stroke, and the fore-start, before doing, as being the condition of the covenant, therefore our Lord commands, and seeks in the command, that we believe. He will put His Spirit in us, and cause us to do what He craves of us. A father charges his child to bear a burden far above his strength, and threatens him if he obey not. He obeys if he stoop, and mint;\* and pant; and withal weeps, yet he cannot get it done, and believes that out of love his father will help him. So in opening of our hearts to Jesus; if we but weep, and look up with watery eyes to Christ, and then cry and mint, to open it as we can, using the weak fingers that we have. For though our money wants many grain weights, yet Christ fills the scale of the balance, and weighs down where we want. So Christ's commands to us are commanding promises and promissory commands. He charges us to do (Ezek. 18:31), and He promises to work in us what He commands us to do (Ezek. 36:26, 27).

The use of this point is to teach us to meet God's commands with humility; as going out of ourselves with faith in the commander. For want of this, our lazy nature lies down under the load, and we stick in the mire.

This speaks against the enemies of grace, who slander us, as if we denied Christ to be a law-giver, who speaks good words to, and speaks good words of us; and said that the gospel does not command at all, but only shews and teaches what God by His Spirit works in the elect. Nay, we teach that it both commands and craves obedience (as they teach); and He irresistibly works by His Spirit what He craveth; and His grace pays our debts. He pays our debts with His



own money; which they deny, to God's dishonour, and the reproaching of His grace, that free will may get the throne. But better we want, than grace want.

"My sister, My love."—Christ speaketh like Himself, He calls His church four times over His own, "My sister, My dove, My friend, and My undefiled." Even as if He were proud of His heritage. Mine is a sweet and a friendly word; every one loves well their own. So doth Christ speak of His own, being well content with His conquest, as having no stronger reason to work upon us, to win in upon our souls, than to allege properly His claim to us. And His property and interest is a great one. And it is but reason every one get his own; and far more reason that Christ get His own. We see Christ had begun, or renewed, conversation on low and lovely terms; such as a man has when he finds a treasure (Matt. 13:44). Then Christ filleth to comers, at the first meeting, a cheerful heart. And (Matt. 11:28) ease and rest to their souls is promised. (Rev. 3:20), "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me." There a feast of joy (Prov. 9:5), Christ saith to a parcel of fools: "Come, eat of My bread, and drink of My wine." There is a home-coming soul set to a full covered table.

I deny not but there be down-casting terrors, and ploughing of the conscience before; but that is before Christ come. Sorrow ushers the gate to Jesus. The reasons are these. 1. The conscience is as a dainty small spun thread at conversion, either begun or renewed. There is a double knot upon it, law terrors, and the threatenings are a sharp knife to cut the thread; but not to loose the knot: and loosed it must be. For well\* is the soul that Christ wooeth with its own consent. Therefore love's sweet graces and felt promises have a rank smell of the soul's delight and comfort of Christ's presence: and they are the small soft singers of Christ, whereby, with the strong, soft, and subtile art of love, Christ looseth the knot. The soul is, until then, a locked door. The law is the wrong key, it would break the lock ere it opened the heart. When Christ comes, the law and our affections are like ill ravelled yarn; force would ravel them worse.

But in Christ's coming first to win<sup>†</sup> in upon our hearts, we are like old vessels made new; it is best to try old vessels with water ere ye put wine in them. Love is like water in the soul; it is not so sore looking in the soul as wine. It is best at our first starting of the race to see the gold.\* Christ puts not new wine into old vessels. While His disciples are young and weak, He soothes them with the company of the Bridegroom; but afterwards, when they are older, and have strength, He will take the Bridegroom from them, and then they shall weep in those days (Matt. 9:15). To draw home Ephraim's heart to God, He plats the rope double, that it break not. See our Lord's word to him (Jer. 31:20), "Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a pleasant child?" &c. And a new garment, feasting, and kissing, is for the forlorn child.

The first love-token is a copy and sampler to all the rest: therefore it must be given with a hearty impression from Christ's own mouth in His word. The bairns' copy should be written with fair and large letters, that it may make them learn with the better will. Our Lord knows we will have to do with experience; and therefore, ordinarily at our first meeting we get as much feeling as we shall never cast off all our life-time again. I will not affirm this to be universal; for Christ steals in upon some souls from the womb, so that they can say, Here He is; but how He came in I cannot tell.

Use. Some may say I have had much sweet delight in Christ langsyne;<sup>†</sup> but Oh! I may say, God be with good old by-past years.

Answer 1. New love has aye the sweetest breath. While it is new, it is in this point, like the bairn's new coat, it delights because it is new. So is love because new, and afterward it delights because it is love only. But this is not spoken to bolster up any who are fallen from their first love, like Ephesus. We like all well to be soothed in our affections; but be not casten down, because old feasts are turned to hunger; for hunger is as good for you as feeding and feasting. A man on the top of a mountain will see the city though he be many miles from it: and when he is within half a mile of the city, may not see it at

all, because he is on valley ground. Longsyne, when ye were Christ's creeping bairns, He set you on the top of a mountain, and made you to see heaven: now ye are within half a mile of the city, and in His wisdom He makes you walk on valley ground, though ye are nearer it now than before. For of old, He was only letting you see the ground, that ye might run fast.

Since Christ in conversion worketh thus by love; it is a vain thing for the enemies of grace to say, God's determinate grace doth strangle free will, because it worketh irresistibly. Nay, seeing grace works by love, it is clear that grace doth not strangle, but clap and kiss free will in its most kindly and natural inclination.

Let never a man please himself in obedience to Christ, until he finds His love load him. I will tell you, for every ounce weight of spiritual love there is as many of spiritual obedience. Get once your soul fraughted with the love of Christ, as a bird in the net, and all is well. Let fear and terror, or other winds blowing our sails stand by, for they shall never take the ship home. It is but a violent motion, and not perpetual. The will going about as the wheels of a watch wearie, because of the violent motion. The sun wearie not to shine, nor the fire to cause heat, nor a fountain to spring, because the motion here is natural. Law, fear, lust, gain, credit, and the like, bloweth us forward to obedience, causeth but a violent motion against the hair; the wheels will wear and tire. But when our actions come from the love of God, as from a co-natural fountain, O! the motion is like the action of nature that is not forced. For the love of God is not short of breath, and it will not weary.

"My undefiled one."—Passing the other titles, this shews that the kirk has a feast in Christ's heart, and partaking of His nature. My fellow friends, touching the communion between Him and her, "My dove," it respecteth the chastity of the kirk and matrimonial love to her only husband, Christ. I but touch this, "My undefiled one" is expounded (chap. 7), "Thou art fair, My love, there is no spot in thee." Whence is this, that a sinful kirk is called undefiled?

Answer. Our Lord reckons us from our best part; the new man is an undefiled thing. There is a chain of gold melted, though there is some dregs in it; yet we call it a chain of massy gold. Christ calls His mixt wine, wine. When Christ once loves His, He never reckons the dross: it is holden out of Christ's count book. We are undefiled in Christ, "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins" (Eph. 1:7). The saints must be undefiled when their sins are put up in Christ's account. (Isaiah 53:6), "The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all." (2 Cor. 5:21), "God made Him sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." O then (say the Papists), we are as righteous as Christ, if His righteousness be ours; which is blasphemous. And because it is of a truth, that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us: says the Antinomian, we are Christ's, and as righteous as He, and so cannot sin, and we are not under the law. Now to the first; let the Papists, who mock at Christ's imputed righteousness, know, if we look to the quantity of Christ's righteousness, it follows not that we are as righteous. For He is inherently righteous, and His personal sufferings has righteousness for all the elect, and for many worlds. But if we look to the manner of having His righteousness; then, as He is righteous, so are we. Even as a child of one day old is no less a man than a man of thirty years: but the child is not a man of such quantity and stature as a man of thirty years. Christ has righteousness for Himself, and us all; but we have our righteousness in Him, and every one for himself, because sin is but one debt, first upon us, and then on Him. Our bond over Christ's head, and over our own, is but one process; "He was made a curse for us." In challenging one ditty;\* my sin was laid on Christ: sad and black ditty; one sum on us both, one death, and which is best of all, one discharge. God be thanked, Christ got free out of prison, and took all dyvours with Him. Hence let us make our own use of it, ere the libertine get his answer. Satan intends summons against weak consciences. Thou art a filthy sinner, says he, and that is the ditty God has at thee, and the plea the Lamb has against thee. But thou mayest get an answer to Satan. It is untrue that there is a plea betwixt me and the law; the plea is betwixt Christ and the law; it is

Christ's plea and not mine. Therefore send the devil to Christ for that plea; Christ is old enough, and can answer for Himself.

The devil can trouble us for Christ's plea; yea, he can wade deep here. "Thou art not an elect person, nor written in the Lamb's book of life."

Answer. These doubts of our election, are dreams raised in our heads by the devil; for not any but jugglers and wizards have read your fortune, and told you such a dream. I ask, Hath Christ given you your last answer, and said, I care not for you? Nay, He has not, nor will not say this. But know this, neither the devil nor thy conscience speak always law, if thou can but unfeignedly creep under Christ's lap. There is no water yet casten on Christ's kindness. If His love reek and smoke, there is fire.

The devil can here turn his hand, and borrow the conscience of the Antinomian, and the fleshly libertine, who says, "I am Christ's undefiled one, He has made payment before hand for all my sins, past, present, and to come."

Answer. Ay, He is so righteous to thee, as He is made sanctification to thee also (1 Cor. 1:30). If thou thinkest Christ died for thee, and still sinnest upon luck's head,\* because Christ has blood enough to wash thee: as a waster of Christ's blood, thou turnest His grace into wantonness. Christ redeemed none upon such conditions; your faith should never lay claim to Christ. None are saved, except they live to Him who has died for them. As just claims has any man to Christ as they have, if they lead not a holy life. A man in strong prison with iron fetters on his legs, cries, I am a free man. May not the devil laugh under thumb, and say, My freemen? free to bear my bands.

"For My head is full of dew."—This is a strong plea, My spouse. I have endured a cold stormy night for thee: I am all dreeping with rain. My dear wife, pity thy Christ's frozen head, and give Me a night's lodging.

It is a strong argument in Christ, to win ground on our souls, to hear Him tell what He has suffered for us. Let in thy slain Husband in thy heart, and give Him a night's lodging (see 1 Peter 1:18), because Christ bought you dear, not with silver and gold. (1 Peter 2:24), "Christ bare our sins in His own body on the tree." What then sought He in that? "Even that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness." This way Christ's death should work the death of sin in us. In obedience,\* which describes the name, what is it, but that which comes from a heart softened and broken with love to Him who had a sore head. He who crieth by His ministers, is He whose head and breasts are pained with knocking to get open doors. And even now, howbeit glorified, when our head is pained with crying, He means His head. He bought the house, and should not be holden out. When a bird builds its nest in the hall of a king's palace the nest is in a wrong place. The devil has a nest of lust, pride, covetousness, revenge, idolatry, atheism, and falsehood in the soul, which is a house redeemed with Christ's wet head, and precious blood. Thou hast a right to cast down the nest, it is in a wrong place. Christ was shut out in the cold winter night, and got the stormy side of the brae, a storm on head and face, like to take the skin off it, to buy the house; then let Him in. So long as men labour not, the devil and they keep a merry castle against Christ.

"My head, My locks," &c.—It sets Christ well to tell His sufferings; "They pierced My hands and My feet" (Psalm 22:16). He would say, It is little to you to hold Me at the door, but My holy manhood paid dear for it. (And He had not much reason for Him to take cold.)\* But it is as if our Lord would say, What Christ gave to God for the ransom of sinners was His own head, His own body, His own soul. So there are two things required in a Redeemer. 1. The act of paying a sum, and telling it over the board to the creditor. 2. The sum must be His own, for if He pays a ransom with another man's gold, the man that aught<sup>†</sup> the gold is the ransomer rather than he: the payer in that case seems to be but a factor to another. But Christ was no factor; He paid the redemption with His own proper gold. So the manhood being made one, in a personal union with the God-head, yet it was His own

flesh and blood, and His own soul that He offered to God. For howbeit it was borrowed from us, yet, in substance personal, it was His own: and both His will and God's was one agent in the offering of it, which was a ground of infinite mercy, and the holy will of the manhood earnestly desired it. Here He took on Him the seed of Abraham. And (which is a mystery) the manhood not being a person, but a nature, the drawing of it to a personality with the God-head, made it Himself and His own.

Whence we learn, love both creeping near to us in Christ, and so near that He became us. This is the love of Christ, that no man could go a step beyond Him, in coming down unto us. And therefore see how homely is Jesus, in coming unto us, that our faith here might be as homely and kind as His love was to us. We may lean fully, and lay all our weight upon this ransom. Seeing it is the ransom of God, and is made God's payment as well as man's. For let a subject find a silver mine; suppose it were the king's gift, and the metal were made properly his own; yet the metal will never pass, or be current money, without the king's stamp put upon it by authority. So the manhood slain was metal of our mine; the union with the God-head made it current money. And having a stamp from the God-head, it must be of infinite worth. So our faith may trust itself, and set down both its feet heartsomely and securely here, for it is good, sure, steadfast, and sicker ground.

"I have put off my coat."—This is the spouse's answer to Christ. Like one gone to bed, and having washen their feet (as was the custom in these hot countries) because of sweat after travel. "Trouble me not, for my doors are now shut, and my children are in bed with me, I cannot rise now and give you." This shews that while we are asleep, and bedded with our pleasures, Christ has no place. For here, for all Christ's sweet words to her, calling her, "My sister, My love, My dove," telling His dear head was wet, cold, and frozen; yet all that cannot move her, to open and let Him in. While the temptation was up, and on horseback, and takes us on that score, and finds us on a ground of sinning, with hot blood, we can hardly stand on our feet

and resist, and hold our temptation. The prophets rose early in the morning, and sat late up, and spake to Israel to return from the evil of their ways; yet Israel hearkened not (Jer. 26:5). For idolatry had taken them on the right score, and that jumped\* with their ease. David was not himself, in commanding to number the people: for Joab (otherwise a bad man) had better light than David, a man after God's own heart; for Joab was against the numbering of the people. But the devil stood up, and took David at the right side, when his pride was swollen over the bank (1 Chron. 21:1). Job's friends find him in a fit of distemper, through the vehemency of his pain, causing him to slant a little off the line. The devil winnowing Peter, came upon his right side, put him upon the denying of his Lord when he was in his cold blood in the fear of his life. Now there be four reasons of this.

The first is common; the withdrawing of God's grace: for if the dam grow dry and ebb, the miln stands. (Psalm 30:7), "Thou didst hide thy face (now the horse is saddled), and I was troubled." So then, unbelief makes a road.\* When fear will hold the bridle, up goes the rider's heels, and he falls on his own weight. And so it cannot but be, for obedience is not a web of our spinning, or making. The temptation in this case is of many stone weight heavier than our shoulder can bear.

Then also, lust, laziness, and security, are the great water: the saints in their own strength are the short-legged horse, and down they go! God gives the devil liberty to braik and bost† many in our kirk. Be humble then, and fear. He knew us full well. Pray, "Lord, lead us not into temptation."

There be two herbs that grow quickly in our souls in summer weather; security and pride. Humility is a strong flower, that grows best in winter weather, and under storms and afflictions. When security and pride, and other like weeds, are rank and up, the temptation has us in the night. Then if ye would be kept from the black hour of temptations, swell not on pride, turn not lazy in the use



of good means. If ye do, look for a temptation, as God's lance, to make a hole to let out the wind.

When light is turned blunt, and wants an edge; then the temptation of a warm bed will prevail, to hold Christ at the wrong side of the door. For here I appeal to your experience, to discern two nicks\* you will be in. On the one hand the temptation goes home without its errand; on the other, ye are taken at a preaching or a communion, with the glance of a renewed face, with a blink of Christ at the death of a friend, or under a sharp rod.

It were a good use of this doctrine, to observe the right frame of your souls, to sharpen a blunted light. To beware of pride and security. Often learn to know the case of your hearts. Seek out the way to the bottom of it, and plumb it often, and see how deep it is. When the heart is on the devil's rack, then take yourselves off quickly. Guide well, and choose your steps. Fear and quake, and cry unto your Rock. To Him be everlasting praise. Amen.

## **SERMON X\* —Rev. 21:4, 5, 6, 7**

Christ's Napkin

This title was, no doubt, given by the friend who took down the notes; for Rutherford was not in the way of putting titles to his sermons. The expression, "Christ's Napkin," occurs in this sermon, and also in the sermon on John 20:13, which might as suitably be so

called. The Edinburgh edition of 1734, says, "By that flower of the Church, famous, famous Mr. Samuel Rutherford."

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, &c.—Rev. 21:4, 5, 6, 7.

THIS text contains three things. First, The state of the glorified, verse 4. Secondly, A part of Christ's office, verse 5. Thirdly, A description of His nature. Fourthly, The promises as to 1. Drink to satisfy the thirst; 2. An inheritance to the overcomers, or overcoming soldiers; 3. A threatening of eternal wrath to offenders against the first and second tables of the law.

"And God shall wipe away all tears."—When friends meet, they give the stranger his welcome-home. Here is the pilgrim's welcome that our friend, Christ, gives us. It was spoken from heaven, and therefore it is true doctrine. Then we see that the sufferings and tears of the saints shall be wiped away and removed, but not fully, until\* the world to come; for then is Christ's welcome-home to poor sinners. They come all to Him with wet faces, and bleared† with tears for sin and the manifold troubles of this life; and Christ meets them in the door, with a fair soft napkin in His hand, and puts up His hand to their faces, and says, "Hold your tongue, My dear bairns; ye shall never weep again." And indeed, in my judgment, it is a speech borrowed from a mother that has a bairn with a broken face, all bloody and all bleared with tears, and it comes to her (and woe's her heart‡ to see him so), and she sits down and wipes the tears from his eyes, and lays her hand softly on the wound, and his head in her breast, and dights§ away the blood, and lays her two arms about him, and there is no end of fair words. So when Christ and we shall meet in heaven, He will hush us, and wipe away all tears, and lay our head in His bosom. See how He alludes to this place (Isaiah 54:11), "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy foundations with sapphires," &c. It is there, to speak so, our Lord is rueing|| that ever He had handled the saints as He did. (Isaiah 65:18, 19), "Be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create;

for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." If ever there was a blythe meeting betwixt two, it must be betwixt the Bridegroom and the bride in the marriage-day. And what a meeting there is of joy betwixt such a Bridegroom and bride cannot be conceived. For Christ, that day, will have on all His best clothes. And such a bride as the Lamb's wife! when we shall be clothed, and not a wrong pin on us; a fair bride in silk and purple of Christ's own busking.\* And what a welcome she will get! To get a drink at our first meeting and incoming to heaven, "of the well of the water of life." Oh, strong comforting water! And Christ our Lord shall present His bride to His Father; and our Father-in-law, the Father of our Husband, shall take us by the hand and lead us ben<sup>†</sup> the house to the dining hall, and set us down at a table to feast our fill upon "the tree of life"—to feast upon the Trinity for evermore! Now, mock and scorn the way to heaven as ye please; ye never heard of true happiness till now. Here is a "banquet of joy" for evermore.

"He shall wipe away all tears."—Christ our Lord in this world wipes the tears from His bairns' faces; yet after that they weep new tears. He never wipes away all tears till now. Here shall be our last "good-night" to death—Good-night to crying, and mourning, and sorrow! We shall be on the other side of the water, and over beyond the black river of death, and shall scorn death; for Christ shall take death and hell and cast them in the prison of fire (Rev. 20:14). The mother that lost her bairns shall get them—all the Lord's widows shall get their husbands—the old world, which was the mourning world, shall be away. And therefore, never till now shall "all tears" be wiped away.

The kirk is half a widow here; her Lord is in an uncouth country; far from her home: and ilk loon\* round about plucks at this silly<sup>†</sup> widow, while she is in the valley of Baca, wherein is no water. The watchmen strike her and take her veil from her; but Christ writes a love letter to her, and after she has read it she rejoiceth and wipeth her face. But when the letter grows old, and she has lost the letter, new troubles

come on; she sheds new tears, and comes under new persecutions; and her Lord, for her sins, goes in behind the wall and hides Himself, and lets her mourn her fill. But in that day "He will wipe away all tears from her eyes." See then how it goes here in this life—first a fair day, then again a foul day, till at last that fair day dawns when all shadows flee away; and there shall never be a foul day after that; but aye the long, lasting, summer day for evermore. You see a man travelling to his home—here is a water, then dry land; then another water, then dry land; then a water, and at last only dry land between him and his home: then he goes home to his wife and bairns, and has no more waters. So all our tears are never dried till we come to heaven; for the saints have a liferent tack of the cross of Christ, while we are here, and aye ill weather—(Matt. 16:16)—ever the cross. See in John 16:20, 22, our Lord compares our troubles to the pains that come upon a woman in travailing; now a shower, and then some ease; a shower again, and then ease—aye till the last shower that she be delivered, and then no more showers: "She remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." We must be in pain ere our birth be born; but we shall be delivered of our birth.

Use 1st. Let us prepare; for tears will follow us to heaven; unto the very entry of the door our face shall be wet, for we go out of this life sad and groaning for this miserable life; and to thrust through the last port, and to wade through the hindermost water—it is a sore set.\* But be blythe, † Christians, and grip to the promises. God's bairns that can now mourn for their own sins, and the sins of the land, rejoice in heaven; there are never seen greeting bairns‡ there; God has a napkin to dight§ their faces. It is the laughing, rejoicing people that God destroys. But ye that laugh now (Luke 6:25), (and are so far from tears—that ye mock the mourners of Zion), you may sigh and close the Bible, and say, "Alas! I never shed a tear for Christ; your text is not for me." It may be Christ shall that day make you weep and shed tears for evermore. This sour, laughing world will pass away—there is a day of tears coming on you; "greeting|| and gnashing of teeth." And when a man gnasheth his teeth, one against

another, he has no mind of laughing. I would not have your mirth for a world. Be doing; we shall see who will laugh fastest yon day.

Use 2nd. There is an ill coming on this land. Sin is not come to full harvest. Often have I told you of a fan of God's word to come among you, for the contempt of it. I have told you often of wrath—wrath from the Lord to come upon Scotland, and yet I bide by my Master's word; it is quickly coming—desolation for Scotland, because of the quarrel of a broken covenant. Now, my dear people, my joy and crown, seek the Lord and His face; let Him be your fear. "Flee to your stronghold, ye prisoners of hope." Doves, flee to Christ's windows, and save your souls.

Verse 5. "And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful."

John heareth more of Christ—a sweet speech. Here are three things mentioned—1st, a speaker; 2nd, a speech; 3rd, a direction to keep the speech.

1. A speaker. "He that sat upon the throne."—Who spake the speech is not told, whether an angel or an earthly king, for they sit on thrones also. But it is He of whom it is said (Rev. 4:2), "And behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne." John tells not His name, but he thinks so much of Him, that he takes it for granted that there is none worthy to be a King but He, and to sit on a throne but He. The saints measure all the affections of others by their own affections. As, if one speired\* at John, "Who is He that sits upon the throne?" he would have answered, "What needs you speir? is there any in heaven or earth, in my estimation, worthy to be a King but He? and to sit on a throne but He? and to take a crown upon His head but He?" The saints set aye Christ alone—they set Him above all. Speak of kings to them; but Christ is out of play. So (Cant. 3:3), the kirk, meeting with "the watchmen," saith, "Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?" What kenned† the watchman of Him whom her soul

loved? for she might have loved a loon, or a harlot, or an idol-god, or the world. But she measureth the watchman by herself. There was none in her mind but Christ; and therefore she needed not to tell them, as she thought. So Mary Magdalene (John 20:15) says to the gardener (as she thought), "Sir, if ye have borne Him hence, tell me where ye have laid Him." She tells not what Him, taking as granted, that what so much possessed her own soul would doubtless equally occupy the thoughts of every other; and none was so much in her mind as Christ. Now, I pray you, let the same mind be in you that was in John and in Mary. Let Christ be to your soul the pearl of the ring. Among all kings, Christ should be made high, and esteemed by us as He—the only He—that is worthy to "sit on a throne." So, in Cant. 5:10, He is to the kirk "the chiefest among ten thousand." Gather all the angels in heaven and earth together; Christ is too good to be their Captain. And, indeed, what is all that sits on a throne? It must be infinitely more in Him. And whatever glory is in the world, is far more in Him. Take all the roses in the earth, and put them all in one, that would be a dainty thing and sight. But what are all these to Christ?—no more than a nettle to the fairest rose. Fie upon the tasteless love of men, that never loveth Jesus Christ, and yet falleth in love with lusts. They love gold, riches, and honour, and put Christ to a backside. Ay, Christ gets not His own among us. We recommend Him not; neither will we match with Him.

2. A speech. "I will make all things new."—This is as much as, all things are old. Sin hath made all things old. They are like a woman groaning in childbirth with pain and vanity, because of our sin (Rom. 8:22). All the creatures are sickened because of sin. Because of our sin, vanity came on the sun, moon, and other creatures. They sigh under this, and pray, in their kind, a malison\* and a woe to man, for sin has made us all miserable. The heavens, that are the fairest part of the great web of the world, "wax old as a garment;" the prophet saith they are like an old clout.\* The water saith, "Let me drown sinners—they have sinned against my Lord;" the fire saith, "Let me burn them—let me burn Sodom, for they have sinned against my Lord." All things have lost the glory that they got at their first

creation. Jesus seeth all things gone wrong, and quite out of order, and man fallen from his Lord. And He did even with the world as the pilot, who, when an unattentive man at the rudder was steering the ship on a sand-bank, stepped in quickly and turned her incontinent, or else all would have gone to confusion. So our Lord stepped in when the great ship of this world was running on a sand-bed; and when the sun and the moon looked sad-like, and said they would not serve us, He renewed them by His death, made them all laugh on the elect again, and gave them all a suit of new clothes.

Drunkards, Christ gave His blessing on the wine that ye spue on the walls. Ye that dishonour your Maker with your vain apparel, ye know not what it cost Christ our Lord to buy a right to those things that ye abuse in vanity. All that set the world in their hearts, where the Lord should be, forget that Christ bought the world to be their servant, and not to be as their darling and wife that lies in their bosom. Ye that make the earth, and the broad acres of it, your soul's portion, forget that Christ bought the earth, and made it new, to be a footstool, and not a chair for our souls to sit down in. And if Christ has this art to make all things new, come to Him all ye that are old. Oh, ye that have old hearts! come. Christ may get His craft among ye, if ye would come to Him. "He makes all things new." The devil has borrowed your heart for covetousness, and crooked it with the thorny cares of this world, and holed\* it, and knocked the bottom out of it. Oh! if ye would put it in Christ's hand, He would put it into His furnace, and melt it again, and by His art bring it out a new heart for Himself to dwell in. Alas! Christ gets not His trade or calling among us. But why are not our old hearts mended? Because we handle them as a foolish mother doth her dawted bairn;† she will not let him go to the school to learn, and why?—because she dow‡ not want him out of her sight. She will therefore never let him do well, but feeds him for the gallows. We dow not give away our souls to Christ, who would fain have, and could easily mend them. But lust, or pride, or covetousness, like the foolish mother, keeps them out of Christ's company; so that we will not let that dear craftsman, who made the earth under our feet and the mountains new, make our old hearts

new. Our souls are all hanging in tatters, worn and old with sin, and yet we do not put them in Christ's hand, that He might make them whole and cleanse them. Fie upon thee, that thy garden, cursed in Adam's day to bring forth nettles and thorns, is blessed again to bring forth fruit in Christ, and thy soul gets not so much of Him as thy yard; it is made new, but thy soul remains old. Oh! bring it to Jesus; He will create in you a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within you. Indeed, Christ may get His craft among ye, if you would go to Him; for it is His trade to "make all things new."

3. A direction to keep the speech. "And He said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful."—He bids John write these things about the state of the glorified, and calls them faithful and true. He would not intrust His word to man's memory and conscience—He would have it written. Blasphemous Papists, laugh not at this, nor call the Pope's breast the Bible; here is a warrant for written Scripture. Indeed, it tells us that man's falsehood wore his conscience. Had his conscience been a faithful register, there should have been no need of a written Bible. But now the Lord has lippened\* more to dead paper than to a living man's soul. Our conscience, now under sin, had not been a good Bible, because man is ready to run away from his conscience, and because what is written on our conscience (as, that there is a God—a judgment—a heaven—a hell), Satan and sin come in as two false witnesses and blot it out, and write that in the fool's heart that says, "There is no God." And there are many holes in our souls; the word of God comes in and runs out again at back-spouts, except Jesus make our souls waterfast, so that "the word of God may dwell in us plentifully" (Col. 3:16). Are not our hearts compared to a field, wherein the preacher sows the seed, and the black spirits of hell come and gather up Christ's wheat? Oh! but there are many running-out souls; and much need we have of a written Bible. Therefore make much of the written word, and pray God to copy His Bible into your conscience, and write a new book of His doctrine in your hearts, and put it in the conscience as He directs (Jer. 31)



Verse 6. "And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

Here, also, are three things—1st, a prophecy; 2nd, a description; 3rd, a promise of water.

1. A prophecy. Christ says to John, "It is done."—That is expounded in Rev. 16 and 17. The world is ended. So speaks Christ of the world. The glory of it passeth away in the twinkling of an eye, and Christ crieth to those that have the world in both their arms, "It is done," it is a past thing, there is no more of it. It is but a word to our Lord. He said, "Let all things be," and they were; He will say, "Let all things depart," and they will be at an end. We are beginning with the world as if it would be evermore ours; and our Lord says, in a moment, "Let it be plucked from them," and it is done. It is not for nothing that the taking down of this inn of heaven and earth is touched in so few words—"It is done." For it is an easy thing for the Almighty to take in His own hand the staves that hold up this fair tent, and, when He pulleth it, He garreth\* it come down with a tilt. So (Rev. 7:1), four angels are brought in, "holding the four winds of the earth," as if they had the world in their hands, and as if they had it ready to fold up as a sheet. And oh! what a fighting and business do men make to get a clout<sup>†</sup> of this sheet!—he staring out his eyes—and he setting out his neck, for a piece of this holly<sup>‡</sup> clout and sheet, and for a gloib<sup>§</sup> of the earth. But (see Rev. 6:14), "The heavens shall depart away like a scroll" of parchment that is rolled together, and the fair stories thereof are like figs; with the shake of the Almighty's arm shall they fall together to the ground. And, what is more, with a touch of the Almighty's hand, or a putt of His little finger, or a blast of His mouth, saying, "It is done," the cupples\* of the walls of the house shall come down. Now, I cannot but speak of fools that have their heads full of windmills, and cry it is beginning, "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant" (Isaiah 56:12), and there is no end of buying and selling. I came not here to bid anybody be unthrifty; but be not like bairns building sandy bourocks<sup>†</sup> at a burn-side, when

presently a speat of water comes and spills all their sport, or a shower chases them in from their play. Men are ever bigging castles in the air. In very deed, we are like bairns holding the water at a river side with their hands. They think (daft<sup>‡</sup> things) they hold the water, while in the meantime it runs through their fingers. And what says God of honour, riches, pleasure, lands, fair houses, and sums of money? Even that in a word, "all is done." Ask of them that had the world and broad acres once at will what is to the fore? And what is to the fore§ of so many thousands? What has the world of them but their name? And what if their name be lost too? for what is their name? Ten or eleven letters of the A B C; and for their bodies—howbeit, when they were living, kingdoms would not content them—the clay into which their bodies are dissolved would not now fill a glove. I think that a true and a strange spoken word (Isaiah 40:22), "God sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers." We even creep like grasshoppers up and down the globe of this earth, and cry to men of the vanities of all things, while death comes, like a common thief, without any din or feet, and plucks them away, and there is no more of them; then they say, "It is done." All men must confess it is true that I say; but I think to be dead ere they believe it, and act accordingly, or be brought to hate the world. I think the world is the devil's great herry-water-net,\* that has taken thousands and slain them. Ye say ye are sure of it. Then I say ye are a dieted<sup>†</sup> horse for heaven.

2. The second thing that is in the verse is a description of Christ—"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end."—Our Lord here being to make an offer of the water of life, He first showeth what He is—even the first and the last letter of the alphabet—the Ancient of Days—the Eternal Son of the Eternal God. This teaches us that we may crack<sup>‡</sup> more of our old holding, and old charter, than all the world can do. For why? When began Christ to bear a good will to a sinner? Even when He began to be God; and He was God from all eternity. Suppose the sun in the firmament were eternal, the light of it behoved to be eternal; for the light of the sun is as old as the sun. Now love is a beam of life and heat that comes from Christ, the Sun

of Righteousness; therefore ever living Christ—ever living love. For love comes not on Christ the day, which was not in Him yesterday. Man's love and a king's love are hunted for very much; and yet they die, and their love dies with them, and often their love dies before themselves. But who seeks Christ's love, that "changes not?" Yea, this a matter of admiration and wonder, that Christ should have thought on us worms of the clay ere ever we were, and that our salvation is as old as evermore—as old as Christ, and Christ is as old as God!

Indeed, if God should begin at any point of time to love sinners, His love would have had a beginning; and if His love had a beginning, Christ Himself would have had a beginning, because love with Him is one with His essence and nature. But it may be said, can the love of God be older than the death of Christ? Answer. Christ's death doth not properly make God a hater or a lover of man; for then both His will should be changeable and His love have a beginning. How then? Christ's death doth only let that God kythe\* the fruits of His eternal love out upon us, but after such a way as He thought convenient for His justice; and therefore we are said in Scripture "to be reconciled unto God," and not God to be reconciled unto us. His love is everlasting; because by order of nature it was before the seed, before we had done either good or evil; so that sin could not change God's mind. But only by the order of justice, sin stood in the way to hinder us of life everlasting, which is a fruit of His love. Yea, more, God with that same love in Christ, loveth the elect before and after conversion; and therefore, in feeling any of God's love to us, we have to rejoice in Christ. It is old acquaintance between Him and us. And therefore, as it is folly in man (as Solomon saith) to cast off his old friend, and his father's friend, so let us think it madness to cast off such an old friend as Christ. And under temptations and desertions, let our faith hold fast by this—Alpha and Omega changeth not; the change is in us.

3. The third thing in the words is a promise of the water of life to the thirsty—"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the

water of life freely." (Isaiah 55:1, and John 4:14). Christ at the market-cross cries the well free. Here learn,

1st. The thirsty and hungry souls are meetest for the water of life. What! (ye will say) and are not all thirsty? Yes; all want the life of God, and the sap of grace, and are burnt and withered at the root; but all know not their own want. Here is indeed a special comfort for the weak ones who say, "Oh! I know Christ doth good to believers, to repenters, and to such as love Him; but I dow not, cannot, win to faith and repentance, hope and patience; I have too short an arm to rax\* so high." Then, say I, have ye a desire—a hunger—for faith, and repentance, and love? Now, upon your conscience, speak the truth. I trow ye cannot deny it. Then your Lord bids you come—the well is open to you; for hunger and thirst being next to motion, and the two properties that begin first with life, so every one that is new-born is lively, and hath a stomach for meat and drink. "Oh but," say ye, "I am many times, in my soul, at death's door. I have neither faith nor feeling. I am even at this—'God loves me not,' and the well is not ordained for me at these times." Would ye fain be at the well? In my mind ye cannot win away. In the children of God, when at the lowest ebb—even when faith, comfort, joy, love, and disposition to pray is away—is there not a longing for a presence? I speak to the conscience of God's child; lie not. David (Psalm 6), when he thought God spake to him in wrath, was at, "How long, Lord?"—a cutting word. I think he looked like a hungry beast looking over the dyke; he would fain have a mouthful. He was going about to seek a slapp\* to break over the dyke of his doubtings. And so it is with God's bairns, under their thirst† for the water of the well of life. See Canticles 3, when the kirk can get no speiring of Christ, and has no smell of Him, and cannot find the print of His foot, yet she is at this, "Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?" And (chap. 5:8), "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell Him, that I am sick of love." Then let me now tell you weak ones who are Christ's companions, and who it is shall drink with Him, and get their hearts and heads full of the water of life—even the tender Christians that are aye seeking. The bairn in Christ's house that is most cumbersome,

and makes most din for his meat, is the best bairn that Christ has. The bairn that is greeting<sup>‡</sup> ilk hour of the day for a piece and a drink—we say of such a silly thing, "He would fain love." Aye, the cumbersomer<sup>§</sup> that Christ's bairns be, they are welcomer. Na, He loveth the bairns best that have no shame, and are aye crying, "Alas! black hunger, dear Lord Jesus; I am burnt with thirst; oh for an open cold fountain!" Oh, it is a sweet thing aye to be whinging,<sup>||</sup> and crying, and seeking about Christ's pantry doors, and to hold aye an eye upon Christ when He goes into the house of wine, into His Father's fair lucky wine-cellar, where there are many wines; and bout<sup>¶</sup> in at Christ's back! But, in a word, have ye a good stomach?—much hunger and thirst? Well, ye shall get much satisfaction of grace in Christ. Is there not a time when ye cannot get a presence, and ye have no pith to put up the door and bout in, but ye put it half up and blink\* in? Love ye to pray, or desire ye but a desire of prayer? Hold on then; ye are right. The true desire is absolute, and not conditional. Not like the sluggard that would have a crop, upon condition he might have a feather bed to lie on for fear of cold. Even so some would have heaven, upon condition that they might keep their lusts, and take their lusts with them.

Now, who are they that are debarred from Christ's well? Answer. Those who have gotten an ill drink from the devil, full of lusts, pride, and covetousness—full of love of the world. Such are they that have no stomach for Christ. Alas! and woes me! Christ standeth at the well's side, and crieth, "The back of My hand<sup>†</sup> to you." The Lord Jesus gives such a vomit-drink, that they may grow wholesome and hungry again for Christ; for till then they are never meet for Him.

2nd. But, secondly, hunger is aye seeking through the house; for the belly can hardly play the hypocrite. The natural man is in darkness—he is in a sleep—it is night with him. He is like a cumbersome bairn greeting in the night for a drink, and crying, "Who will shew me any good?" (Psalm 4:6). And Satan is ready at his elbow with his dishful of the dirty, miry waters of lust to the world; and he drinks till he sweats and tines<sup>‡</sup> breath; and tines all sight and desire of Christ, "the

Fountain of the Water of Life." It is true this fountain is said to proceed "out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. 22:1). But it is all one; for the streams of the water of life proceed from the fountain, Christ. How, then, is the water Christ? Answer. It is Christ-man, dying, and sending out His heart's blood for quenching the thirst of such poor sinners as find the fire of hell at the stomach of their souls, burning them up with the fire of the wrath of God for sin. This is the well: this is why He is called "a fountain of the water of life." A man, burnt with thirst, nothing can quench him; no, not a world of gold is so good as a drink of pure, cold, clean, fountain water. In a word, a soul wakened under sin findeth nothing in the world satisfactory to the soul's appetite but in Christ. Tell me, art thou a thirsty sinner after Christ? Then thy soul is dead sick while ye get Him. Is a man faint, and fatigued, and way-worn? Lay him down on a soft bed, dry the sweat off him, give him a cold refreshing drink. In like manner, ye cannot speak such a word to a soul bursting under sin, as to lay it upon a crucified Christ. Oh, that is a soft bed! His sinful soul being stretched upon the open wounds and warm-flowing blood of Christ. Oh, that is a soft bed! Oh, but a part of Christ's blood is a refreshing, cooling drink to him! A slave of hell to know that he is made a free heir of heaven—oh, that is sweet! Hence it is that those who are wakened with the furies of hell, howbeit they know not yet what Christ is to them, yet this world cannot calm their conscience—because for men that are soul-sick and sin-sick there is no physic but one—only a "drink of the well of life." And because they ken not the gate to this well of life, they, in despair, loup\* out of this life into the fire of hell, through the madness of an awakened conscience. A thirsty soul finds two things in Christ, never to be found in all the world or in anything else. 1st. Christ takes off the hardness of sin. None has power to do this but He. All the pardons of sin are in Christ's keeping, and of Christ's making. It is His office to forgive sin. 2nd. They find in Him an influence and abundance of happiness, so as what they sought before in the creature, they find nowhere else but in Him. Then speak to them of gold—it is nothing to Christ. Speak of lands and lordships—a Saviour, and such a Saviour, is, and has another name to a sinner that is awakened.

3rd. The text calls Him "the water of life." We see here there is some water that is rotten and ill-tasted. Will a thirsty man drink of it? He shall not be the better. But the wholesomest water is the running spring; so all that sinners can get beside Christ is standing water. Let them drink in gold, and kingdoms, and lands; these will never be satisfying to a sick soul as He will be. And they who have drunk in these, at death would be content to spue them out again; they lie so heavy upon their stomach. But Christ is the cooling, wholesome spring—"the well of water springing up to eternal life." Now, to make our use of this. Seeing Christ is such a living well of water, how comes it that under the gospel there are so many dry and withered souls? I answer; for God's part, indeed, God has not put an iron lock upon the well of life; but Christ, by His word and sacraments, opens the well in the midst of us, and for seventy years and more in this kingdom the well has been open—Christ and His messengers have been crying to dry souls. But now, for aught we see, He will close the well again. He has been setting out the means of life, and opening the booth-doors to give us freely, even to such as would take it; but He gets no sale. Therefore He must put up His wares and go away, for men are not thirsty for His waters. But one thirsts for court and honour, another for lust and money, and a third for sinful pleasures. There be few stomachs gaping for Christ. They have not a vessel to cast down into the well and take up water. This is a fruitless generation. Oh, we loathe Christ, and Christ loathes us. We need speak no more of the call of the word. All the land—court, king, noblemen, and kirkmen—have spued the waters, by despising grace and contemning the gospel; and in very deed, when we cast in clay and mud in Christ's well, and mix His worship with the poison of the whore's well of Rome, what do we else but provoke the Lord to close the well?

"I will give it freely."—So are all Christ's mercies given of grace. His mercy is for nothing, and of free grace. I grant the well is dear to Christ. God's justice digged it out of His side, and heart, and hands, and feet. The man, Christ, got not this water for nothing; yet He gives it to us for nothing, because He minds not to make a gain of us. We

live upon Christ's winning. For know ye that Christ, who redeemed many, did so, by the rule of justice, since "He gave Himself," and has bought all "with His own blood;" so that in this sense Christ was bought to us with blood, else we could not get Him, for He was both the price and the wares. So that, as far as we can see, it was decreed by the Lord, by order of justice, that Christ could not have lived and given to us the waters of life. It was dear water to Him; for in the garden God deserted Him, and blood came out; on the cross God bruised Him, and blood came out; and that is the well we have here. We think we would have something to give to Christ for the water of life—some of our own righteousness—some of our own worthiness; but this is plastered humility, watered\* copper. And in doing so we refuse grace, and make grace to be no more grace; for if it be given for any worth in us, then it is no more grace. Let men here see, then, that the kingdom of grace is a good, cheap world, where the best things are gotten for nothing. And therefore, I think in this dear world, where all things go for money, whose court costs expenses, lands are dear, gold is not gotten for nought, and law is dearer than ever it was. Yea, paper and ink are dearer than jewels and gold rings were long syne. Nothing now is bought for nought. Yet Christ for all that will not change His word. All things with Him are given gratis, and ye are welcome when all is done. Here we get no garments for nought, no physic for nought; but Christ gives "white raiment," "eye salve," and all for nought. Sinners say, "Lord, what take Ye for the water of life?" He answers, "Even nothing, and yet welcome." Christ plays not the merchant with His wares: He makes no gain, but cries, The well is free. No, says the Pope—not a drop of it, till ye tell down money. That bloody Beast would sell the water of Rome for gold. As meikle money—as meikle grace and forgiveness. Want ye money? (He swears) Ye shall not come here. Nothing in Rome without money. Fie, fie; the stink of the devil's world. Nay, but Christ is for nothing. Nay, justice giveth money, and officers give money; it is a dear world. But Christ and His word care no more for money than before.†



Verse 7. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God and he shall be My son."

1. Alway in this book John urgeth "fighting" and "overcoming" for heaven. We wonder much that God will not have poor men go to heaven but by fighting, seeing He might have sent us to heaven by a second heaven. But this is but a thought of men, that would make a new back-gate of their own to heaven. God advised well when He made His causey\* to it, and ordained all His saints, yea, His own Son, to go that way. But it is easier for us to complain on God's decree than to obey, and to dispute than believe. Men have too thin skins. For health, they will cut a vein, or let a leg or an arm be cut off for fear of a fester; and yet for "life everlasting" they are so, that they dow not venture a moment's pain.

2. There are excellent promises made to the over-comers—to him that taketh heaven with stroke of sword and blood. For heaven is a besieged city or castle. There are many foes to fight against. Armies of sin with all their armour, and the deceiving and malicious world. The world has Eve's apple in one hand, and fire and sword in the other; and the devil is the captain of the army. Now, here is a prize set, and an offer made to him that overcometh—to him that will mount up by faith and hope, and leap up into Christ's chariot, and betide him life, betide him death, will go through. But they are cowards that take a back-side, and let the devil coup<sup>†</sup> them in a gutter. But yet to lead men on, here is a promise, "He shall inherit all things." Ye see that the Christians' Captain is a man of a fair rent; "for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours" (1 Cor. 3:21, 22). And to let us see He bides\* by the thing He has said, He says again, "All things are yours." Ye see in this world one has a kingdom, as Asa, but wants health, and is sick of his feet; he has not all things. Another, as Samson, had strength of body above any living, yet he had many troubles and wanted his eyes; he had not all things. Oh, the business Adam's sons are at for inheritances! Here a mailen<sup>†</sup> —there a lairdship—there a new

lordship. That they call their all things. I think this is a greedy style, and proud-like lordship or lairdship. Yet, greedy Adam's sons have more greediness here than wit. They run all upon their lordships, that they call the lordship of many things. "Martha, Martha, thou art troubled" (Luke 10:41). Worldlings, ye are aye careful and troubled about this, to be called "My lord" of many things. But we shall see if the text be true.

"I am Alpha and Omega."—Ye will notice that Paul puts in "death" into the rent-roll. I think death an ill mailen; better want it out of the charter. Nay, but death is also a part of the lordship this way (because it is "My lord of all things"), and a coach to glory—Christ Himself being the coachman and driving the horse. Death is the servant. As the wind serveth to bring the seaman home, so death serveth him that hath the new lordship. Death is Christ's ferry-boat to carry the Christian home, for in Christ he sets his foot on death's neck. It is a bridge over the river of hell that he walketh on to heaven; and it is his. The Christian is advanced in Christ's court, and gets the new style to be "My lord of all things," the prince, the duke of all things. Yet I shall get you a lordship far inferior, but much sought for—the lordship of vanity or nothing. "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?" He that is rich has nought; "for riches certainly make themselves wings—they fly away as an eagle towards heaven" (Prov. 23:5).

2. Again, if the Christian "inherits all things," the whole world is his, and so he wanteth nothing. (Psalm 89:25), "I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers." Here see how broad Christ's two arms are. His one hand upon all the sea, and His other hand upon the rivers. And that promise is made to Christ as principal cautioner of the covenant; for it is said (verse 26), "He shall cry unto Me, Thou art My Father, My God, and the rock of My salvation." Verse 27, "Also, I will make Him My first-born, higher than the kings of the earth," which is expounded of Christ (Heb. 1:6). Again, in Rev. 10:2, He has "His right foot on the sea and His left foot on the earth." Put these two together, and see how wide His arms and legs, or feet,

are. They go over the whole world as His inheritance, which He won to Himself, and His heirs after Him, with His blood. Now, Christ got land not to Himself. What! needed He land? and to give His blood for clay? But He won it to us, and took infetment in the earth, in the name of His friends; so that in Him they inherit "all things."

3. But here one may say, "How is it, then, that the saints are hungry and poor? Answer. It is true, they are not now possessors of all things. But minors' wants\*—ye see their interest is in and over all things, yet their tutor lets them go with a toom<sup>†</sup> purse. He knows the heir is a young one, and cannot keep gold, and therefore he gives him food and raiment for his present necessity, but keeps the lordship till he be able to guide it. Even so Christ is made of God, our Tutor and Purse-Master. It is all one whether our wealth be in our chest-nook or if it be in Christ's purse, to keep till we need it, providing we want not.

Another question and doubt is, "Seeing they are under so many troubles in this life, and have no ease, the saints have not 'all things?' I answer, Yes; I must defend it, and say, if they have the inheritance, they have all things, because the sweet and the comforts of trouble is theirs.

A third question or objection is, The saints have not heaven and glory, at least, in this life, and therefore they have not all things. I answer, 1. The promise is not fulfilled in this life. Yet, when a man has shorn a stock or two of corn, we say he "has got harvest and new corn." So the believer gets joy, hope, faith, assurance of heaven, and the first-fruits of the Spirit. These are a foretaste of the full harvest and new corn. 2. Having God and Christ, the saints have all things. For ye see the great ship draggeth the cock-boat after her, so the great Christ bringeth all things after Him at His back. So I say, having Christ, believers, ye have all things—ye have "the Father and the Spirit, the word, life, and death." Amen.



## SERMON XI - CANTICLES 2:14, 17

Christ and the Dove\*

CANTICLES 2:14, 17.

IN the 14th verse, there is (1) a style given to the Kirk; (2) a suit made; (3) a doubt answered. In the 15th verse, a new doubt is answered, and a suit made.

He calls her "His dove." He rues nothing that He said; He bides by His word; He calls her "His love, His fair one, His undefiled." He avows it, He bides by it; you are even My dove: yet He is not flattering her. If ye be Christ's, He will give you all your styles of honour; He will speak much good of you, both behind your back and before your face.

She is termed Christ's dove:—First. Because the dove is a fearful bird, and soon scared. (Hosea 11:11.), "They shall tremble like a dove out of Assyria." Any thing, the smallest noise or din that can be, frights and chases these timorous birds in their dove-house, into Christ. It is an happy rain that chases Christ's doves in to Himself. For all the devil's wit, he is soon beguiled; the storm that arises against the ship where Christ and His disciples are makes them to awaken and pray.

Secondly. The dove is a mournful bird; so are the doves of Christ mourning, and in tears. (Ezek. 7:16.) "They that escape of them shall be on the mountains, like doves in the valleys, all of them mourning: every one of them for their iniquities." If ye be God's doves ye will have many a sorrowful day in the world. There are bloody wars betwixt the Kirk and the world. Keep the dove from the nest, and she mourns without; keep the Kirk from Christ, and she will break her heart.

Thirdly. She is not a revengeful bird; she has no other armour against the ravens and vultures, but her wings to flee away. God's children's best armour when they are wronged is, by faith in prayer to mount up to God. They must be like Christ. He went out of the world with many a wrong, and they are not yet revenged. His blood is keeping to the last court-day. Christ sits\* with many a wrong in heaven; He has not gotten amends of those that spat in His face. Many a time the Kirk and her Husband, Christ, will be here wronged, albeit it be seen betwixt them. (Cant. 5), She shuts<sup>†</sup> Him to the door, and lets Him lodge all night in the rainy fields.

And then Fourthly, the Kirk is like a dove mourning without a marrow;<sup>‡</sup> for that fowl cannot want a marrow. If ye be God's doves, woe will ye be when your marrow, Christ, flies away: she falls aswoon, and her heart flies out of her when Christ flies away.

Fifthly. The dove is an innocent, harmless bird; she cannot offend. So is the Kirk; the meek spouse of Christ will not marrow with a malicious house.

Sixthly. The dove is a silly, weak, tender fowl, and if they be compared to the rest of the birds, they are but counted the tenth of flying fowls. Surely God's Kirk in herself is but a weak bird and tender woman, compared in Rev. 12 to a woman with child lately delivered, and little betwixt her death and her life, if she be not carefully attended. A Christian is a tender thing; a jewel in the hand of Christ. If He let us fall we are soon broken in pieces. We should pray that Christ may handle us softly, and not let us be tempted above our strength. The Kirk is called (Micah 4:6) a cripple woman that goes only upon her one side. So surely we had need to come out of the wilderness leaning on our Beloved (Cant. 8:5).

Seventhly. And for their number they are but an handful (Isaiah 6:13). The tithe or remnant, God's part, is but the tenth, and the devil has all the stock; often God has one, and the devil nine; great need have we to labour to be of God's tenth.

"My dove that dwells in the holes of the rock."—We need not to go far off to seek the exposition of these words, for Christ is the rock upon which the Kirk is builded. (Matt. 16:18), "Upon this rock I will build My Church," says Christ. And (Psalm 18:2), "The Lord is my rock, and My fortress." And God is also "the secret place of the stairs," where the Kirk hides her from the storm. So David calls God his Secret Place, his Hiding Place (Psalm 32:7). Thou art a Secret Place to me from distress; Thou wilt preserve me (Psalm 91.) And because in all this song we must ever hold up the line and string of the allegory of marriage, and consider the Kirk as the spouse of Christ, the Rock is Christ; in whom the Kirk dwells by faith, and Christ dwells in her heart (Eph. 3:17). "Abide in Me, and I in you" (John 15:4). Abide in Me, as branches impeded\* into the vine. Now the imp is ingrafted in a cutted stock; Christ was haggged,† hewed, and cut on the cross, the stock wherein we are ingrafted. So that the holes of the rock may well be expounded (as Bernard says) to be the wounds of Christ. So that the meaning is, O my dove, that by faith has thy abode in the wounds and the holes made in the hands and sides of crucified Jesus: or, O my dove, that believes, and that by faith has thy abode in the wounds, and abides in Christ as an imp ingrafted in a tree, in Christ, who died. And so, man, flee into Christ all wounded, and holed‡ for thy sin, flee into Christ, thy Rock; and so into God (Psalms 18:2). Hence we see what a Saviour the Kirk believes in; a Saviour that's God and man; as man to be a sufferer, and as God to be a supporter. There was great necessity of these two natures. God would not seek payment of our debt off His Son as God; for by the law He could not answer, for He was the creditor, and so could not be the debtor. And therefore, for the better understanding of this, I would have you with me to consider how our nature, and God's nature, work to other's hands in the work of our redemption. A sinner cannot dwell in Christ as God only. There is no hole nor chamber for a sinner to dwell in God; and therefore Christ behoved to be man, that we might find fair chambers in the wounds of Jesus, wherein the doves of Jesus might dwell. And if He had been only man, He could not have been an House upon a Rock, and so could not have borne the weight of all the doves. But there be some questions in the work

of our redemption that only man can answer. Man has sinned, and man must die, says God's justice. Be it so, says Christ; Man sinned, and I, the Man, Christ, shall die. 2. Man took on the debt, therefore another cannot pay for him. Be it so, says Christ; I, the Man, shall pay the ransom. 3. Man behaved to make amends, because man did the fault. Let it be so, said Christ; I, the Man, Christ, shall make amends again.

Secondly. If Christ had not been our Rock, there had been no dwelling in Him, He would not have kept wind and weather off us. Therefore, the Divine nature was a pillar on which the human nature did hang, and this is the cause why Christ-man leans to the Divine nature, as His warrant in all that He does. For if ye will consider in this work, there are three bargains, or covenants, so to speak.

a. God and man bargained together; ye shall believe, that's your part. I shall give you live eternal, that's My part, says God. Now man dare not promise this of himself without Christ's bond to relieve him, that is to enable him through His grace to believe.

b. God bargains with His Son (Isaiah 53:10), Son, if Thou shall lay down Thy life, Thou shall see Thy seed, and prolong Thy days, and have many fair children. (Psalm 2), Ye shall have the heathen to serve you. (Heb. 1), I will be Your Father, and Ye shall be My Son. Christ is content, but He cannot do this alone; He must borrow flesh and blood from man, and in it suffer.

c. The Man, Christ, bargains with the Divine nature. The human nature says, I love man, and I will die for him: the Divine nature says, now I shall hold Thee up under Thy sufferings, and Thou shall overcome death. The Man, Christ, without the backbond\* (to speak so) durst not for ten thousand worlds have ventured to yoke\* in the fields with the justice of God, and death, and hell, and sin, and the devil—except He had the Divine nature in a personal union to bear Him up under His sufferings. Therefore Christ, when He looks upon His sufferings, looks also upon His warrant. (Isaiah 50:6), "I gave My



back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair." These be the words of the Man, Christ.

Now, it might have been said, A man will suffer all that his alone; † but here He looks to His warrant (verse 7) and says, I have My warrant with Me, "the Lord God will help Me, I shall not be confounded." I have God's warrant, who is united to Me in a personal union to bear Me up. Even sick-like ‡ Christ goes down to the grave. (Psalm 16:10), "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell (or the grave), neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption." As if Christ would say; I am sure, O Lord, Thou will be as good as Thy word, and make good Thy bargain, and will warrant Me against death. See then how it goes; the Man, Christ, takes man by the hand to bring him out from under God's wrath. So, beloved, be glad in such a Saviour; come all into the Rock, for God, Christ, and man, all these three are linked together as in a chain, and Christ in the middle link of the chain. Now, let all the kings of the earth that boast of fair houses and stately palaces, come and see if they can compare with the dove that dwells in the holes of the Rock. Nebuchadnezzar said, Is not this great Babylon that I have built? Surely men are to be rebuked that are careful for houses and settling in the world, and has no assurance of this lodging. Worldlings are but ravens that big\* in the wild mountains. The Kirk is only at home bigging in faith. These be indeed dear chambers, being built by Christ Himself. God has made holes and windows in Christ that His doves may flee into, and make their nest in His heart. O dear and precious dwelling! the lodging cost us nothing, yet we are desired to dwell in it.

Now what is Christ's petition? "Cause Me to hear thy voice." Its ordinary for man to beg from God, for we be but His beggars; but it is a miracle to see God beg at man. Yet here is the Potter begging from the clay; the Saviour seeking from sinners! What is His suit? It must be some great thing; it is even a sight of His bride. He is even saying to her, My dear spouse, be kind to Me, let Me see thy face, be not blaite † and wavering; be plain with Me, your Husband, tell Me all your mind in prayer. I delight to hear your lisping and hisping, and

speaking to Me in prayer. Ye may see all the wooing comes on Christ's side of it; she cannot hold up her face, or let one love-blink on Christ, but as He commands her, and wakens her up. She is a sour bride of herself: if she laugh, it is He that makes her rejoice by the Holy Spirit that is given to her (Romans 5:5). She keeps her chamber and is ashamed to go forth; He bids her be kind and shew her face. We cannot love Him till He first love us (1 John 4:19). We run because He draws us (Cant. 1:4). (John 6:44), We apprehend Christ, but we are first gripped of Him (Phil. 3:12). Beloved, there is great skill in wooing Christ, every bride has not the gate<sup>‡</sup> of it, but He must teach us.

In all other matches ye will find two things that are not here. a. In other matches the bride makes some wooing of her own sort; but here men cannot move but as Christ's Spirit woos in us, and teaches us. b. In other contracts the bride and her friends are bound for their part, the bride has some tocher\* of her own, or she may be an heretrix,<sup>†</sup> she may have all and he nothing. But here the bridegroom in this contract is obliged for all, He gives His name for Himself and His wife. (Ezek. 36:27), "I will put My Spirit in you, and cause you to walk in My judgments." Here the Kirk has no tocher of her own, and yet she has not the good manners to look up to her Lord, but as He commands and holds up her head: all the tocher is Christ's, and the inheritance is Christ's; the Kirk has nothing. He has the houses (John 14:2). He has the land (Rom. 8:17). He has the fine gold (Rev. 3:18), and buys the spouse the clothes of the religion that came in with her Saviour, Christ, and that is the best religion in the world; for it gives most to God and least to man. I will tell you who are meet for Christ, even those that are out of themselves, and lays all upon Christ. The best scholars that Christ gets are publicans and sinners, harlots, blind, lame, cripples, and such like, and such as feel themselves sinners. Look, how much you trust in yourselves, and rest upon the world, and love your lusts, as far ye are from Christ. And when ye are all out of yourselves and changed into God's image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:18), then ye are meet for Christ, begging poor sinners are our Lord's scholars. The lintel-stone

of our Lord's school-door is a low stone, ye must stoop low and lout.‡ Ye will be on your knees with it or ye§ can win in; ye must be very humble, else that stone will take your head and ding you back, and ye will not win in. Then be fools that Christ may be your wisdom (1 Cor. 1:30). There is as much merit in Christ as will buy a thousand heavens. Now if our wooer; Christ, were not kind, and sought our kindness (even words of us), and brought love-tokens, the friendship betwixt Christ and us would soon wear out of date, and grow cold. Christ aye blows at the coal ere it wear out: Christ would win a friend, yea a foe, to be kind to Him. He is aye threaping\* and claiming kindness of us, as if He were the beggar and the poor man, and we the king. O, He claims kindness to us: then surely we need not think shame of our Friend. Would ye ken for whom Christ died, and prayed? even for dyvours, such as swore themselves bare,† and came out of prison upon caution, or a cessio bonorum.‡ Poor men that have been upon the dyvours-stone, and are far from payment by the dyvour bill, when there is not a finger in all your hand fastened upon yourself, then ye are meet for Christ. For who are better met and yoked than a poor, sick, dying man and a skilful physician; who is better yoked than a crying, begging sinner, and a rich Christ? But oh it is oftentimes not so! for Christ would give us more nor§ we will receive. He scatters His gold; we proud beggars will not bow our back, and lout down and gather. He would fain sell, we will not buy; so there will be no blocking.

Let Me see thy countenance.—An allusion to Israel, that was to present themselves before the Lord thrice a year in the tabernacle; the meaning is, Walk before Me. It is not enough that thou believe, and so dwell by faith in the holes of the Rock; but thou must also shew thy faith by good works and prayers, and worshipping of God. Christ loves not professors that never wan\* to love to pray, and such as hate not the world. But you will see they are believers by their holy living (Matt. 13:23). The word of God is seed sown that brings forth thirty, sixty, and an hundred fold. Ilk † boll brings out thirty; ilk sermon, ilk Communion should bring out an hundred good works. Beloved, God's land is set at an high price; He is a Master that will

have all His own from His tenants; and as the Song says (chap. 4:2), Every one of God's sheep brings out twins. There is a ground that drinks in rain from heaven, and yet brings forth briars and thorns, it is near a curse. Bring forth fruit, or else ye will make God say, My curse and God's malison be upon thy heart, thou hearest much, and bringest forth no fruit. Therefore beware; a tree that once gets a dadd<sup>‡</sup> with God's axe, it will never do well again. Ye shall become like the girdle (Jer. 13:17) which the prophet did hide at the river Euphrates; it was profitable for nothing, it was marred, it shall never go about God's waste again. Beware, then, that ye be not blasted professors and fruitless Christians; but be ye always in His sight. For there be some that come never in God's sight, they are God's dyvours: they are aughting<sup>§</sup> so much that they dare not come to God, and compt<sup>||</sup> and pay—outlaws and borderers that come not, or keep not Christ's kingdom, but run like wild asses and dromedaries up and down the mountains, and snuff up the wind at their pleasure. I compare their life to those that ride post. Many a horse has Satan in his stable; and when these outlaws have wearied in their greediness after sin, and have gotten they know not what, they mount upon a fresh horse, some upon pride! and if they ride once out of God's sight, they run till they be in hell in the end: for the devil is upon the horse and the rider. God seeks dear, and for His money ye must give Him more than ten in the hundred: for five talents, He must have ten again; He must have double stock. Look what grace ye receive by weight; render to Him His own in weight and more: if His gold want an ounce, He will cast it to you again: for one boll's sowing ye must give Him thirty again. God would have His servants aye keeping His chamber; if they go their own length from Him, He misses them. Ye must not be God's chamber pages, and steal out of His presence, and give the devil a baggage-yoking.\* Nay, He must aye see your face, and hear your voice. There be many that would serve God, and be in Christ's school; but they are like souls that take the play, and run to play, sometimes with the world, and the devil, and love to sport themselves with the world and the devil. But God's scholars may not take the play.

"Let Me see thy face."—The Kirk might have said, Dear Lord, my face! Oh dost Thou desire to see my face, it is very black, I am sun-burnt, sin hath made me deformed; and for my voice it is both harsh and mistuned. What then says Christ? I think not so, My dear spouse; I think it is a fair face. I think ye have a sweet voice. It is great comfort for God's children when they rise many times off their knees from prayer with a woe heart,<sup>†</sup> thinking, because they have no heart, nor feeling, nor sense, that God is offended with their prayers, and thinks little of their works; when as their prayers, and tears, and works are accepted before God. Ye think nothing of one tear, yet God puts it in His bottle; and nothing of one sigh, but God gathers it in His treasure. If God thought of us as the world does, and as we think of ourselves, oftentimes woeful would our case be; but God has not a pleasanter sight in the world than the face of a child of God. No music delights Him more nor the sighs and tears, complaints and prayers of His children. See ye not the Spirit of God bringing in Christ, longing for a sight of His wife, longing for a word of her (Prov. 8:31). Christ rejoiceth, and sports, and plays in the habitable parts of the earth, and His delight is with the sons of men. Ye will see more of this upon the last words of this Song.

"Take us the foxes."—Its a speech of Christ to the Kirk, to take, convince, censure, rebuke, cut off, and excommunicate all inordinate livers and offenders in the Lord's vineyard (Ezek. 13:4). O Israel, thy prophets are like foxes in the deserts (Jer. 12:10). Many pastors have corrupted My vineyard. O what can there be upon the earth to make a Kirk happy, but it is here. To hear a Kirk sick of love for Christ, and hear Christ sick of love for His Kirk: Christ's left hand is under her head, and His right hand doth embrace her: she is His fair one, His love, His dove, His undefiled. She dwells in the wounds of her Lord by faith. Yet for all this, His Kirk is a vineyard that has many foxes in it to destroy the vines; so that we see, so long as God hath a vineyard there will be foxes in it to destroy the vines; that is, crafty men, false teachers, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ (2 Cor. 1:13). Paul planted a Church in Ephesus (Acts 20:28), yet after his departure, grievous wolves entered in, not

sparing the flock. Surely in this life marches are not redd betwixt God and the devil; the devil files the score\* and comes over the march upon God's bounds (Matt. 13) God sows His wheat, and the devil steals up the rigg, and with hot fur<sup>†</sup> he sows his tares (1 Kings 22) In Achab's court there is never an honest man. Till he be tried, the false knave and truth are door neighbours. (1 Kings 22), In Achab's court there is an honest man that tells the king the truth; but there are four hundred false knaves that say against him, and, poor man, he must to prison, and they get leave to keep the court. For the thief is ever the honest man till he be tried; the false knave and the truth are door neighbours, and almost twins born at one time; howbeit truth be eldest and first-born. Isaiah complains (chapter 56:2) of dumb dogs that could never have enough. In Jeremiah 10, He complains of many pastors that corrupted the vineyard. Ezekiel complains of foxes. Zachariah (11) of idol shepherds. Hymenœus and Philetus spoke against Paul. The Sadducees in Christ's days denied the resurrection. And not only are there false teachers in our days, but in the best kirks were, and are many foxes; for all is not fish that comes in the net. And if ye be God's sheep, ye must not think to want foxes to nibble, and to work under the earth to destroy you. Ye may not look<sup>‡</sup> that Christ is Master of the fields without blood. Ye will not be long in prosperity in the world. There be a number of foolish people wonders that God brings such a good Husband that should not hold out the foxes from His own vineyard. They would have a Christ of gold, and a Kirk of velvet, or of fair white paper. They think Christ's bride should be clad in purple and scarlet, as the whore of Rome is, or does wear.

I will show you how Christ and His Kirk meet. When the bridegroom wooed His Kirk, many a black stroke got He both of God and man. He was the Vine, God and man strake at Him with axes! He bought her dear; it cost Him blood ere He got her. And think ye she has fair weather when she woos Him? Nay, many a cuff\* gets she from the world; this fox and that fox pulls the skin off her. She is hardly handled in this wooing, there be strokes on both sides: for fain would the devil have the contract cancelled, and the marriage going back.

And let me speak to you that are God's young vine; make you for it,<sup>†</sup> the foxes of the world will peel the bark off you. If there be grace in you, they will do what they can to eat it up in the bud. Hold your hands about the grace of God, be not robbed; if ye give them their will, they would pull the skin off your face.

Ye see Christ hath gotten out letters of caption,<sup>‡</sup> against all His foxes. Here is a commission obtained in Christ's court, that all that hurts Christ's vineyard should be apprehended and laid fast! but alas! the commissioners, the pastors, the judges, over-see§ them. But here a comfort for you, who are the Lord's vines, that are troubled with foxes. I assure you, that the Kirk has law against all her enemies. Be not casten down, because the world hates you; twenty-six hundred years syne, Christ hath given out a decreet against all His enemies, and yours, to take them. Here ye have assurance; your enemies are rebels, and all of them under caption. (Psalms 110:6), "He shall fill the places with dead bodies. He shall wound the head over them, even in many countries." Ye that complain of your predominant sins, and think ye are hardened with them (for these also be foxes that do harm the Lord's vineyard), fight against them, for Christ has given out a decreet against those that they shall be taken.

"My beloved is mine."—These be the words of the contract of marriage; for there is a covenant betwixt Christ and His Kirk (Ezekiel 36:26), "I will be their God, and they shall be My people." But here there is a doubt to be answered by these words: it would seem Christ and His Kirk are two different parties in the contract, Christ upon the one side, and the Kirk upon the other. Is not Christ upon the Kirk's side, and obliges for His wife? I answer; Christ, having two natures, has two contrary considerations. He is one party, and we another; and so He promises to us life eternal, and we promise by His grace to believe.

Christ is considered as Mediator, God and man, and so He is upon our side; for the promise is made to Him and His; and He, as principal contractor, binds for us, and we are His assignees. So Jesus

skips betwixt both the sides, because He is a friend to both. But it is certain these very words proves Him to be on our side of the covenant, because our Beloved is ours, and we are His; He is our Mediator, and Cautioner bound for us. The very words of the covenant are spoken to Christ (Psalm 89:27), "I will make Him My first-born, higher than the kings of the earth:" and He said (verse 26), "He shall cry to Me, Thou art My Father, My God, and the Rock of My salvation; My mercy will I keep for Him for evermore, and My covenant shall stand fast with Him." The enemies of grace would have Christ a God folding His fingers, and a looker-on, and beholding fair play. Liars! He is more than half play-Master! The devil will not get His name out of the contract; and, beloved, see ye not but it is a sweet thing to have anything to do with Christ. His chaff is better than other men's corn; if ye have any fastening\* with Christ, the cause is won. Now hold you by Christ. It is a shame for Him that ye fall out of the covenant, because He is a Cautioner. As ye know, it is a shame for a nobleman that his poor friend be cast in prison for the debt that he is obliged to pay. Christ is now obliged that He fulfil the covenant, and make good both your part, and his part. Boast not of yourselves, or of your own strength; be not proud of yourselves, but ye shall have full liberty to boast yourself of Christ. Crack<sup>†</sup> enough of Christ; be proud of Christ's merits, ye cannot err there. The debt of faith and obedience that we are aughting<sup>‡</sup> to God now (to speak so), is not our debt but Christ's, and He is Cautioner for us. It were a shame that a poor friend should be imprisoned for his chief's debt, especially since He is a rich man and able to pay.

Now let us consider the mutual interest Christ and the Kirk has every one of another; "He is mine, and I am His;" He is my Husband, and I am His wife; He is my head, and I am His body: He is my King, and I am His people; He is my rich Cautioner, and I am His dyvour. Let us see what claim Christ has in the Kirk, and what claim the Kirk has in Christ. Now, to hold§ upon the comparison of this song betwixt a husband and a wife. The husband and the wife have no sundry\* goods; if he be a king, she is a queen; if he have a fair inheritance, it is hers also, as long as she lives; if they live ever together, it is ever



hers. Then when she says, He is mine, I am His, Christ is mine, and I am His, and all His, His flesh and His blood; His death and merits; His glory; His kingdom; His court and credit, and all is mine; and all mine is His, my soul and body, my sins, my trouble, my cross, they are all His. Christ and she are (to speak so) carded through other. (John 15), "Abide in Me, and I in you." Cursed be he that says not amen to that. (John 17:21), "That they also may be one, as Thou, Father, are in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us; I in them, and they in Me." But we will labour to reduce them, the particulars to a certain number. There be these things common to us betwixt Christ and us.

1. There is a sibness<sup>†</sup> of nature betwixt Christ and us. There be pawns given and received betwixt both sides. He has a pawn of ours, our flesh, and He took that pawn with Him to heaven, and He is never minded to give it again. But we have as good a pawn of Him, His Spirit. We were of that flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14). Let us keep Christ's pawn, as long as He keeps ours; let Him not be to the fore<sup>‡</sup> with us. Now He keeps our pawn for ever; He will never lay down our flesh; we are never minded to lose the pawn, let Him keep it for ever; long may He keep it. Let us keep His Spirit; for it is not His will to loose that pawn; let Him keep it for ever (Heb. 4:2). Christ would also be a bairn and partaker of flesh and blood. Would to God ye would all strive to get His pawn, and to keep it well; seek His Spirit, and keep it well. Worldly men, ye have little claim to Jesus; God help you, there is no borrowing nor lending betwixt you and Christ.

2. There is community. We got all His good, and He gets all our ill, that's a good coss\* for us. He took our curses, we took His blessings; He our shame, we His glory; He our sins, we His righteousness: He is the Kirk's, and the Kirk is Christ's. That day God laid upon Christ, we were shifted out from under God's wrath; and God struck the Kirk's Head, to let the members go free. When Christ was in blocking<sup>†</sup> to buy His Kirk, He knew the faults in the wares; He kend well enough that curse of God, and wrath of God, and hell, and sin, and many ills followed the Kirk. Yet Christ would not rue in time; He said freely, I

will take her, and all the ills that follow her, howbeit she be blind, lame, yea, a cursed bride; yet I will make her My wife. Would to God we could take Christ and all the faults that follow Him. There be men that will not coss with Christ; but will keep their will, their lust. God was about to strike us, and had lifted (to speak so) His wand to bring a stroke of His wrath upon us; and Christ came in, and held His hand, and laid down Himself, and bade His Father lay upon Him. Ye never saw such a suiter as Christ; He prays us to coss for the better. He cries to you for God's sake give Me your dross, and ye shall get My gold; give Me your sins, and I give you My righteousness. Is it not an hard matter? Men will not give their ill to Christ, and transfer and give over their sins to Christ. He says to you, Give Me your lust that I may crucify it, and I will give you love for it: give Me your anger, and I will give you My zeal for it. Then make a coss and take Him at His word, ilk day be making new blocks\* with Christ. Deny your folly, and give it to Him to crucify; and seek ye His wisdom, you must do this ever, till all nature be away and done, and nothing in you but grace.

3. There is a community of gifts and graces betwixt Christ and us. Not a grace we get from God, but it comes through Christ's hands to us; so that Christ keeps the pawns betwixt God and us. God gives grace to His Kirk, but where is it? It is in Jesus. Grace is laid in pledge in the hands of Jesus, and it was made a running over fountain. For as we see in a race, the wage,<sup>†</sup> or the garland, is not in the hand of the runners, but some friend keeps the stakes<sup>‡</sup> for both: so Christ keeps the wage for the Father and us. Christ indeed is the Fountain (John 1:14), "We beheld His glory, as the glory of the only begotten Son." Some friend keeps the stakes<sup>§</sup> for both. There the Well is running over, but for what end? (verse 16), "That out of His fulness we might all receive, even grace for grace." So God gave us life eternal. But who has this life in pledge? Even Jesus Christ. (1 John 5:11), "And this is the witness that God hath given us, even eternal life; and this life is in His Son." Lord, send us part of this consigned grace. Again, ye send not up a sigh to God, but first it must be laid down in the hand of Him that keeps the pawns (Rev. 8:2).

(By the way I shall give the use, with every article of the doctrine.) Try thy light, try thy grace, try thy honour, and credit, riches, and all the blessings that ye have; the silver and the gold, whether these blessings be impawned\* in Christ's hand or<sup>†</sup> ye get them. If ye get them not in Christ, they are unchristened blessings, and they want the fashion.‡ Woe be to these blessings that came never through Christ's holy hands. Again, try your prayers, sighs, and desires, and your service, if ye offer them to God in Christ. Many unchristened prayers go to heaven that are never welcomed of God. Ye must take your communion out of God's hand; at the nearest, out of Christ's hands. There should be nothing done betwixt God and us, but Christ should be at it.

4. There is a community of sufferings betwixt Christ and us. Poor would we be, if His sufferings were not ours; woe would be our case if His sufferings were not ours. But this way it goes; He is that apple tree excellent above all the trees of the forest, and we do rest under the tree. Now when the shower of rain falls, it lights first on the tree, and the stroke of it is broken, and it does not great harm to those that are under the tree. Each new shot at the Kirk, lights first on the head of Christ, and He breaks the point of the arrow. If ye be ill spoken of, so was He; if ye be hated of the world, so was He; if your blood be shed, and your face deformed, so was His fair face deformed and marred (Isaiah 52:14). Be content to drink with Christ. Woe be to them that are not in Christ, and yet are in trouble: the arrow with the sharp point comes upon them, and goes to their heart, and slays them. Try if your troubles be christened troubles, that light first upon Christ, the Head, and then upon you as the members. Try if by faith ye have an union with Him. Now here by the way is a great comfort in trouble: those that are dear to you die, and ye mourn: Christ mourned and groaned in spirit for dead Lazarus: ye weep, so He weeped. Are ye poor and aye at the borrowing? so was Christ at the borrowing trade all His days; should ye not then with good-will drink off the cup that He drank off before you. When ye murmur, and will not drink willingly, ye refuse to pledge Christ: but ye must pledge Him, and drink with God's blessing, and with joy; He will not poison

you. They are none of Christ's friends that will not pledge Him (Matt. 20:21).

5. There is a community of glory betwixt Christ and us. The heaven that the Mediator, Christ, enjoys, is our heaven; our heaven is to the Man Christ in a conquest: heaven was bought with blood to Him and us. And to make you rejoice, none of God's children gets a heaven properly of their own; why? We got a share and part of Christ's inheritance, He is the principal heir (Rom. 8:5). We are the conjunct heirs. Sweet is that word which He speaks to His children. (Luke 22:29), "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me, that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, sitting on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." The meaning is, My Father hath made a disposition\* to Me of the kingdom of God. It is Mine; and, My dear children, I will think heaven uncouth† if ye be not with Me. Here I make a disposition and resignation of that kingdom to you; ye shall sit at My table in My kingdom. Up your heart! howbeit ye be not lords in earth ye shall be lords in heaven; I and ye shall part kingdoms and thrones together.

Rejoice in this, ye that are in Christ, and see your condition, ye and Christ are halfers\* together of heaven and glory. O† if God's children be in a sweet case. As long as Christ is in heaven and keeps the inheritance, as long shall we keep our right; and who can cause Him flit? ‡ The devil hath made the enemies of the grace of God to misken§ all our communion with Christ. They have put Christ and the elect together as a man in an inn for a night, and to go away tomorrow. They have yoked Christ and us together as if He were one and we another; as if He were His own, and we were our own; as if Christ had no law and right to us, and we had no law and right to Christ, but met at a venture, and sundered at a venture; as if we had one heaven, and He had another; as if He had His portion by Himself alone, and that He keeps for ever; and that we had our share by our alone,|| to sell when we pleased, so as if we dispone heaven, we dispone not Christ's heaven. Nay; in the fighting, He fights all the battles His alone; We but look on: but when it comes to the dividing

of the spoil, we get a rich share of the spoil. Yea, He gave the whole sum for the inheritance, and we nothing; yet we are set at His elbow in a throne with Him. Now seeing our rights are good, slip not from them: do not as some unworthy heir, who having a good right, slips from it for a feckless composition after drink, and quits all, howbeit he should beg. Indeed the wicked do this. The devil drinks them blankful,¶ and fills them with worldly pleasures, and garrs\*\* them subscribe a resignation, and gives them an unworthy composition, some present pleasure. Compone not with the devil to go the law with him; let Christ be your advocate, subscribe not a submission with the devil, come never in trysting\* terms with him. Hold you aback from the world, and the lusts of it; it is the devil's arles that he gives to silly drunken heirs. When they cry hills and mountains fall on us, they would fain give back the arles, and rue; but it is out of time.

"And I am His."—This property of the covenant is mutual. As she says and acknowledges that He is hers, and so Christ is bound to her by His promise: so she acknowledges that she is bound to Him, and is His by right. Multitudes of the world would play fast and loose with Him: they would have Christ fast, and themselves loose. They devise a covenant of their own, and say, Christ died for all, and God is merciful to all, and God will relieve all Christian souls from hell; and they think God and Christ fast enough to them, but in the meantime they are loose, and live like dogs and swine in their filthiness. These men would have Christ as a child in making of the covenant, and exceeding silly. Should Christ give Himself for you, and will ye neither give life nor goods for Him? Christ came to save you (Matt. 20:28), and will ye be His master? Are ye not obliged to serve Him? This is to make a Gospel of your own: too many obey the Gospel as long as it flatters them. As long as it tells them Christ's part, and that He shed His blood, and came to save sinners freely: that is the best chapter in all the Bible! But when the Gospel begins to tell them what is their part, and that they must deny themselves, crucify their lusts, and take up Christ's heavy cross, they start back. These are tender-footed Christians that walk in the law and in the

Gospel, so long as they go softly on it as a bed of roses, and hurt not their feet: but when a thorn of the command touches them, they stand aback. Ye may not have God's law, and take as much of it as serves you. As Christ gave Himself to be yours, and has subscribed the contract; so give yourselves to Him, and subscribe your part of the contract to be His, as He is yours. Take therefore the law and this sweet Saviour both together, bind yourselves to Him to be His, as He is bound to be yours.

"He feedeth among the lilies."—To prove that Christ doth esteem her as His kirk and flock, His wife, His beloved; she says, He feeds her amongst the lilies. That is, the pure and uncorrupted word of God. Or, the lilies are the fruits of the Spirit, opposed to stinking roots, and bitter roots that grow in the Kirk, when judgment is like hemlock, or wormwood. Or, the lilies are the saints of God, that are lilies amongst thorns. However it be, it is certain the Lord feeds His Kirk with as much spiritual food as holds in their life in the way to heaven, till their day of marriage come (Rom. 8:23). We receive here the first fruits. When a man has shorn a stouk\* of his corn-field, that puts him in assurance of the whole crop. God would have Israel to taste of the vine grapes of Canaan, to assure them they should get the land itself (2 Cor. 1:22), God hath sealed us and given us the earnest of His Spirit in our hearts.

Here be two words. 1. God does with His children in this life as a merchant does with his wares he has bought; because he cannot transport them presently, he puts a "seal" or mark upon them, and then it may be sold to no other body. His children strike hands, He writes His name, and His arms, the image of God in their soul; and then when the devil comes through the market to buy (for he offers aye money in hand, pleasure, lusts, honours), ye have an answer to give him. Tell him, your soul is sealed already; you have blocked\* with an honest Merchant, Christ; and He has put His mark upon you that ye may not sell; and it were a pity to beguile Him. And, therefore, bid that deceiving loon † go seek his market in another place; ye are not his merchant. The devil will promise them as fair as

God: he will not prig<sup>‡</sup> with them: he will not care to promise much more than heaven. "Ye shall be like God!" but he pays not so well as God doth. Agree not with him: block not with him.

2. There is another sweet word used; that God gives to His children, "the earnest" of His Spirit in this life; He gives them arles, faith, hope, joy. These be like six or seven shillings to warrant that ye shall get the principal. Beloved, God has blocked<sup>§</sup> with you, and given you arles. He would therefore that the bargain hold. Will ye then take God's arles, and block with the devil? By God's arles ye have assurance of this, God will come and loose His arles; rue not of the block, never any man had cause to rue the block with Jesus Christ. There is another word used (John 16) Christ is going to heaven to leave His disciples; He promised to come again to them to see them: how sorry were they to want Him, and blythe<sup>||</sup> were they of that word that He said, He will come again. Therefore, in sign and token that He would come again, He promised them a pawn; that was His Holy Spirit. Ye know Christ and we are contracted in this life; we will be married again at the day He comes to judge the world. Now all the wooing time, there goes love tokens betwixt them, and missive letters. Tell me when ye got a letter last from Christ? There will be messengers going betwixt you. This same word is a messenger; the Sacraments are love tokens that our Wooer has left to assure us that He is contracted with us. I pray you take no gifts from the devil; away with ill conquests;\* away with lusts, and the love of the world. I hope ye are not minded to marry with sin; if ye do, ye are ashamed then for all your days. Ye are come off God's house, and are His image. Fy, it is a shame to hear tell of it, to marry with a base slave, the devil. I allow<sup>†</sup> you here to be wise and prudent in your marriage; marry not for gear, <sup>‡</sup> keep yourself to be a good match. There be a sort of indifferent men, that ye call harmless men. They have neither good nor ill, they love not falsehood; they love not Popery, and yet they will not burn for the truth; they are like blank paper as it is thought, neither God nor the devil has blocked with them. But has God given you no arles, nor no pawn? Satan will get you. But do this first, hold yourself with Christ, and then ye have an answer to give other lovers,

the world and the devil. Ye may laugh and say, ye are too long in coming; I have promised myself away to another husband, and therefore I cannot have you also; for I will not have two husbands (1 Cor. 6:19). The Apostle takes a reason to prove that the body should not be given to an harlot; it is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Set the house of your soul to God, and then for shame ye cannot win off Him to cause Him flit. "Ye are bought with a price." Married folk have not many wooers: the devil is busy to seek them that are virgins, and love not Christ to be their Husband.

"Till the day dawn;" that is, the marriage day; and in Hebrew called, The Day for excellency. To say the truth, it is a day! And called The Day of Christ, The Day of redemption (Eph. 4:29, 2 Tim. 1:12). It is called the day for these causes. It is the day when Christ is perfect in His members. Now Christ's body is mangled, arms, and legs, and hands, in sundry places; some not born, some born, but in the devil's service; some rotten in the earth, and casten in the sea. Christ is bleeding in His members; there is many a wound in the mystical body of Christ this day. All will be gathered; in that day He gets His bride, He enters in peaceable possession of her.

That day Christ shall give in His accompts, and all His Father's generally. He shall render an accompt of all that He took by the hand, and shall put up His sword, and never draw it again. And as the Chief Shepherd, He shall make an accompt of all His lambs, and tell His Father, these be all My silly sheep; they have win away with their life. I went through woods, and waters, and briers, and thorns, to gather them in, and My feet was pricked, and My hands and My side pierced, ere I could get a grip of them; but now here they are. Good cause shall the Lord have to clap Christ's head that day. And judge ye if ye will have a blyth heart, to hear Christ and His Father to compt\* together, when ye shall be all standing under the broad scarlet robe of Christ's righteousness, and as many glorified angels looking on.



And every soldier that day shall shew his wounds to his Lord, saying, Lord, I have lost this and this for Thee! And God shall clap our head, and take us benn\* to His chamber of presence, all glorious tapestry there! (Psalm 45:14). The Lord make you ready for that day.

"And the shadows flee away," or mist. This life is all but a night, because of the ignorance and darkness of our mind. We see but the portrait of the kingdom in the glass of the Word and sacraments. Then when that day dawns, we shall see Him face to face. So long as the night is, we do nothing but by the use of candle; when the sun rises, the candle is blown out, lest we should burn day-light. The Gospel is God's candle to let us see the way to heaven; but when it is day-light, and Christ lighted to us from heaven, then shall come light and heat from Him, clear light and knowledge that shall endure for ever. Our soul here is like an house in the night, when doors and windows are closed. In that day the doors and windows shall be cast<sup>†</sup> up, that the sun may shine for ever upon us. We shall not need to seek communions; the Lamb of God shall be present with you for evermore. (Rev. 21), "I saw no temple there, for the Lord God Almighty is their light." We get but here the parings of God's bread, and a four hours'‡ drink, a slight afternoon's meal, to speak so. There the board shall be covered, and the great loaf set upon it, and all shall eat, and all be welcome, and the table shall never be drawn. Ye shall have your fill of Christ. Ye shall drink, and drink at the well's head, the cup of salvation for evermore.

It is night here, because we know not what we are. Marches are not redd\* betwixt God and Satan here. We are but silly bodies here, earthen vessels often in trouble (1 Cor. 1), and yet King's sons (1 John 3:2), "Behold, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He doth appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." A friend from a foe cannot be known in the night: care not what the world think of you, it is night, they cannot well see you.

It is night, because of great trouble which besets us (Luke 3:1, 2). Let us be content with an hard bed; the morn will be a good day. And think ye what a comfort it will be to you, when God puts up His own holy hands to your face, and to your watery eyes, and shall dry them with the napkin of His consolation. Through this short night, lie still in peace, and sleep by faith in God. Be content to lie down in your grave for a night or two; for your Husband, Christ, shall be at your bed-side soon in the morning.

"Turn, My beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether."—As (Psalm 71:21), Thou did turn about and comfort me. Turn about and come to me, as swiftly as a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether. The mountains of division or separation, were Mount Gilead, severed or parted from the rest of the land of Judea by the river of Jordan; in the which mountains, there was pleasant haunting.† Here, she desires His presence, either in the last judgment, or in His incarnation, or by the comfort of His Holy Spirit; and prays that as roes and harts are not hindered any whit by any craigs or down-falls of the rocks to descend and meet one with another: so Christ would be kind to His love, and count mountains as valleys, and let no craigie-way\* hinder the Lord Jesus to come. She can never get her fill of Christ; she is so browden† on Christ, that she ever would be at a union with Him, where is kissing (verse 7); in the place where He dwells (chap. 23) under His shadow, in His cellar. We cannot be far enough on in going to Christ: we can never be near hand enough Him.‡ Cry ye to Him, Come! for He crys to you, Come; and then ye will meet. Ill§ gate will not hinder our Bridegroom to come, He cares not for a shower of rain, or a dark night. He louns|| over hills to be at His Kirk. Give ye Him a meeting. Amen.

## Sermon XII.—Christ's Love and Loveliness

IT is Christ's will that His bairns get their fill and that they grow. Christ never had an hungry house, nor His Father before Him. There is bread and drink in His Father's house: eat and drink: much good may it do you, for ye get it with Christ's good-will, and with His heartsome blessing. Now in the strength of it work a good work to Christ, your Master. He gives His servants meat and drink with a good house in a new city.

Who is this that hath His garments dipped in blood, yea, in red blood? Know ye Him, beloved? But He kens you full well. Come near Him, and stand not afar off. Christ says not, "Look by<sup>†</sup> Me," but, "Look on Me, Whom you have pierced with your sins." Ye must not turn your shoulder to Him, but set your face toward Him. Love your new Husband well, and let all the old go and play themselves. Rent<sup>‡</sup> your contract, that was betwixt you and your hearts' lusts; and now Christ says, you shall have a better life than ever you had in your old husband's time. Provide much plenishing<sup>§</sup> against the time ye and He take up house in heaven together. Christ is dressing all the chambers and the hall for you up in your Father's house. Make away as fast as ye can. Take home your writs with you: Christ hath subscribed them. Take home the King's pardon with you, written with your Lord's own heart-blood, and the King's great seal at it: and stamp upon the seal Christ's arms, even the slain Son of God, hanging upon the Cross, subscribing a large dispensation to you.

Now remember before witnesses ye are His. Have ye not reason to think that Christ is heartsome in His own house? He has made His wife a great feast to-day. Lie not down to sleep after your meat. Christ has fed you to run a race, even a race to heaven. Awake therefore! In the Word and Sacraments Christ now takes you into the chariot with Himself, and draws your hearts after Him. Be Satan's and the world's footmen no longer, for it is a wearisome life. But ride

with Christ in His chariot, for it is all paved with love. The bottom of it is the love of slain Christ: ye must sit there upon love. Love is a soft cushion: but the devil and the world make you sweat at the sore work of sin, and run upon your own feet too. But it is better to be Christ's horsemen and ride, than to be Satan's trogged\* footmen, and to travel upon clay. Christ says, He has washen you to-day; sin no more. Keep yourselves clean, go not to Satan's sooty houses; but take you to your Husband, The Fairest among ten thousand, that your lovely Husband may make your robes clean in the blood of the Lamb. Ye are going into a clean heaven and an undefiled city; take not filthy clayey hands, and clatty<sup>†</sup> feet with you. What say ye of your new Husband? Please<sup>‡</sup> ye your new Husband well? May not His servants say in His name that ye are heartily welcome to Him? And may they not say in your name that He is heartily welcome to you? A plain answer? Ye cannot well want an half-marrow;\* no soul liveth well a single life. Now, seeing ye must marry, marry Christ. Ye will never get a better Husband. Take Him, and His Father's blessing. Be holy, and get a good name, and Christ will not want you. It is many a day since ye were invited to this banquet, why should you bide from it? Ye are come not uncalled. Christ both sitteth and eateth with you, and standeth and serveth you. Christ both said the grace, and blessed the meat, and says it to-day, and prays, "My Father's blessing be on the banquet." Your Father cries, "Divorce, divorce all other lovers; go and agree with Christ, your Cautioner,<sup>†</sup> and purchase a discharge if ye can." It is better holding than drawing; better to say, "Here He is," than, "Here He was;" and, "Slippery-fingered<sup>‡</sup> I held Him, and would not let Him go." Rive<sup>§</sup> all His clothes, and He will not be angry at you. In death, He held a strait grip of you. Hell, devils, the wrath of God, the curse of the law, could not all loose His grips of you. Christ got a claught|| of you in the water, and He brought all with Him. Look up by faith to Christ. Ye could never have been set up by angels. May not Christ say, The law took such a cleek¶ of Me, and drew Me here amongst thieves, for your cause? And was not that strong love, that humble Christ cared not what they did to Him, so being He might get you?

In that night wherein our Lord was betrayed, He ordained the Supper for you upon His death-bed. He made His Testament, and left it in legacy to you. In death He had more mind of you, His wife, than He had of Himself. In the garden, on the cross, in the grave, His silly lost sheep was aye in His mind. Love has a brave memory, and cannot forget. He has graven you upon the palms of His hands; and when He looks to His hands and says, "My sheep I cannot forget. Yea, in my death, My Sister, My Spouse, was aye in my mind. She took my night's sleep from Me, that night I was sweating in the garden for her."

When Christ was dead, and sleeping on the cross, and His side broken with a spear, until blood and water came out, the Lord was forming a wife for the second Adam, your Husband. In death He was doing and working what no wedded man could do, even blessing and embracing His beloved. Come near, and kiss dead Jesus. O but slain Christ has a sweet smell, even when He is dead! What think ye of the smell of His love? What think ye of itself? What of these feet, that went up and down the world to seek His Father's lost sheep, pierced with nails? He that healed the diseases of the lame and the blind, He is now blind Himself. The eyes that were oft lift up to heaven unto God in prayer, wearied with tears? His head pierced with thorns? The face that is fairer than the sun, the dearest beloved, is now all maimed with blood, and the hair pulled out of His cheeks! Could love be painted then? Christ was pained, and Christ panted on the cross; so pained mercy and justice set\* God in His loveliness towards man. Who comes with outstretched arms to meet and embrace Him? When Christ was black and blae † upon the cross, and pale with death, He was then fairest and pleasantest; God, the Father, was reconciled, and looked sweetly upon slain Christ. And then mercy and peace were proclaimed to all believing sinners. The law and justice gloomed\* still, until Christ's life was put forth; and now they smile upon believers, and say, "Come into heaven, pulled open by Christ's holy arm from the cross, when it was shut by the strong iron bar that held to † the door of heaven, until He hurt His arm, and took it by." And now Christ says, "Be not afraid, come away." But ye will

say, "We are weak, we do<sup>‡</sup> not put up<sup>§</sup> Christ's door." "Well then," says Christ, "I am strong enough for you; and now seeing it is already open, get up quickly, and enter into it, and there abide." Ye are Christ's brethren and sisters. When ye were under hell and condemnation, He pleaded the law for you. It was no bought plea|| to His hand that Christ snapped<sup>¶</sup> on when He fought with your enemies. Christ is "flesh of your flesh, and bone of your bone." He tired Himself in paying the law, and in getting the inheritance for you; and, God be thanked, He won the plea, but it was great charges to Him. Take to you now free purchased redemption, your Brother's new forgiveness of sins, peace, joy, and a kingdom. And more, take Him to be your Lord, and much good may you have of your new Master, Jesus Christ.

Of all wonders that ever were read in a printed book this is the first: Christ made an exchange; Christ would coss\*\* lives with you, and make a niffer.<sup>‡</sup> He never beguiled you, for He took shame, and gave you glory. He took the curse, and gave you the blessing, He took death, and gave you life. The fairest Candle that ever was lighted is blown out. The Head of the Church is dead, and the Lord of Life is laid down in the grave! No wonder that the sun, that did shew\* part of his labours, be shut down; because the great Sun of Righteousness was shut down in the grave, and a stone laid above Him. Good right have ye to Christ, accept of His niffer, and change with Him, and take His best blessing and purchased redemption.

What a sight is our Lord Jesus going out of the gates of Jerusalem, and His cross upon His back! He went like to fall under it, He was so weak in body and weary in soul, when He went to the top of Mount Calvary. And all the time He saw black death before Him, and a curse. He was even then bearing God's curse upon His back, and that was heavier than the cross. Look on Him, and follow Him, He will not bid you lend Him a lift.<sup>†</sup> Give Him obedience, and give Him love, for it is better to Him than if you had been crucified for Him. Look upon Him, and look for Him. "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." Christ this day lets you see all the footsteps in your way to

heaven. In His death and blood He made a new way to heaven. He went in an hard way Himself, through God's curse, and painful sufferings. He bids you not follow Him that way, but believe in Him, and love one another. And stick fast by Christ. The old gate † ye dought§ never have gone; but Christ's market-gate is a sweet and easy way. If ye will bear Christ's yoke, and so love Him, ye and He will come in each others' hands together to heaven. And ye will be the welcomer that He is with you—"A little while," says Christ, "and I will come again." Take you here Christ's flesh in token that He will come again to you, and marry you to Himself for ever. Your new Husband hath said, within a little while He will come again and see you; and see that ye keep yourselves for Him; abide in Him. Christ says to you, "My dearest ones, weary not, fight on, I shall be at you your fray-hour.\* Be true to Me, as I was aye true to you."

Indeed, when our salvation was in Christ's hand, it was between the tyning† and winning. But our Lord Jesus played us not a slip, He was aye to be lippeden‡ in. What think ye of Christ? Is not He fair, and lovely? Has not His wife good cause to say, "He is altogether lovely?" (Cant. 5:16). His breast is all made of love. If ye had but Him once in your arms, ye would thrust Him into your heart; yea, and beyond it, if it could be gotten done. Christ took a hearty grip of you upon the cross; He let you not slip out of His fingers again.

"Many waters cannot quench love."—Christ was the Lamb, roasted with fire for you. He suffered hot fire for you. He got a toast and a heat that made Him sweat blood, but yet His soul was not burnt away with love. Oh! Christ would fain have you; are ye not burning with love to be at Him? Dow ye§ find in your hearts to want Him? Oh! thrice sweet death—to die of love for Him that died of love for you! Christ in the garden, on the cross, in the grave, under the pursuing of His Father's wrath and anger, speired|| aye for His beloved, His Kirk. He sought you in all these places, and He sought aye till He found you. He would not want His errand for the seeking. He went triumphing and rejoicing, and His wife in His hand. Christ rueth\* nothing that He has done for you. He thinks it all well wared.†

Christ loves you better than His life, for He gave away His life to get your love. He spared neither cost nor expense. Christ, who was without sin, gave Himself a ransom for you, sinners. His Father laid a cross on Him. He bought you with His Father's curse! Was not that a dear wife to Him? Then let Christ be dear to you. Pilate scourged Christ, and brought Him forth to the people, to see if they would rue<sup>‡</sup> on Him when they saw His bloody shoulders. They might have said, "Poor Man, thou art ill enough handled else, for aught that thou hast done!" But these hell's hounds would have His heart's blood, and His life, or nothing. And your Husband said, "Amen," to it, for the love He did bear to you, and for all that God had done to Him—"Be it so, Amen, Father."

What a sight was innocent and harmless Jesus when He stood before the Governor, and had not one word to say! They laid thieves' bands on our Saviour's hands, that had never stolen, that had never shed blood. Bands bound His hands, but love, mercy, and grace bound His tender heart with stronger bands and cords, to loose us out of the bands of sin. He cried in the Spirit, "Father, bind Me, and loose them; slay Me, and save them. All their ill be upon Me." So be it, dear Jesus!

Christ cried with a loud voice in death, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." Then our Lord died; because it was His will. Death could not bind Him, but love to His wife bound Him. Love is stronger than death; nay, love was as strong as Christ. The law was weak now, for Christ satisfied it; and now it has no power over you. Ye are in Christ; and He is a better Master than the law. Change not with any Master again. Follow Him all the way to heaven. Christ's new love got a wissil\* in His blessed manhood.

How do ye since ye married Christ last? Tell your mind of Christ. Let faith speak, let love speak of slain Christ Jesus; of His kissing you. Ye are now at Christ's pierced side; get heaven and mercy when Christ has the cross on His back.



Was not Christ's love-tocher<sup>†</sup> good enough. O! what is sewed<sup>‡</sup> and covered up in Christ's love! Come, and press His love, and get heaven and glory out of it. Live on His love, and you are wholly fed. Lie on His love, and that is a sweet bed. Ride on His love, and it shall carry you through hell and death, and every evil way. That which Christ has dear bought, He will not want. Ye are sold over to a Lord that will not want you, but will have you. Make no merchandise with any other. He rues not: why should ye rue?

Mount Calvary, since God laid the first stone of it, did never bear such a weight as when the Lord of Glory was hanging upon a tree there—O! it was made a fair tree when such an Apple grew on it! It was a green orchard! It was our summer, but death's winter! Darkness was in all Judea when our Lord suffered. And why? Because the Candle that lighted the sun and the moon was blown out. The God-head was eclipsed; and the world's eye was put out. He took away the sun with Him, as it were, to another world, when He that was the world's sun was put out. When He went out of the earth, the sun would not stay behind Him. Sun, what ails thee? "I have not will to shine when my Lord is going to another world." As if the sun had said to Jesus, "Lord, if Thou be going to another world, take me with You." The dead come out of the grave to welcome Christ's death. Life itself was coming to the grave, and therefore the graves opened, the dead lived; the bairns sprang and started in their mother's belly. Why? Because the Lord of Life was coming to the grave. The dead wondered, to see Life coming down among them. He went beforehand, to sponge\* death and corruption for you.

Jesus cried with a loud voice, with such a shout as never before went to heaven. The Son, crying to the Father, shouting with tears and strong cries, "Father, Father, God's mercy!" O what a cry would all believers have made in hell, if Christ had not cried. Ye had been always crying. But O what a fray<sup>†</sup> was there! God weeping, God sobbing under the water! Never was there such a fray in heaven, and earth, either before, or shall be after. Angels might have quaked, if they be capable of such passion. They might have said, "Alas! What

ails our dear Lord and Master to cry so hideously?" Christ worried ‡ on a piece of tree! He who takes up the isles of the sea as a little thing; yea, He who can take up heaven and earth with a touch of His little finger! He who can weigh the mountains in a balance! O what a set§ was it to Christ's back and His fillets!\* No wonder; there was more than a tree upon His back. The curse of the law of God was above the tree; and that was heavier than ten thousand mountains of iron. Ah! A wonder His back brake not in twa, and all His bones were not crushed with it!

Christ cries, "I thirst."

"I thirst."—No wonder; there was a fire in His soul. Such a furnace, that would have dried up the sea, and all the waters of it. Cast a coal of God's wrath in the midst of the sea, and it would soon suck it all up if there were as much water as might lie betwixt the bottom of the sea, and the heaven of heavens: between the east point of heaven, and the west point of heaven. The pure unmixed wrath of God would drink it all dry in a moment. All the wells in the earth set to Christ's mouth could not have quenched His thirst. A drink of His Father's well was that which cooled His burnt and dried soul. Christ cried, "My soul is heavy unto death. Sorrow is like to kill Me! Fear and horror is like to break My heart!" "What, dear Lord Jesus, art Thou ruining the voyage? Wouldst Thou cast Thy bargain?" "No, no, but it is a bargain of sorrow to Me. It's a sad cup." O! I see an ugly sight! I see the Lord covered with wrath! I see a fire, greater than if you put all the fires in hell in one! And the Lord has made Me, poor Me, greeting, † weak Me, His contrary party. ‡ The Lord is running upon Me like a giant. My martyrs and My servants sing and rejoice at the gibbet and fire; but I weep, I lie sad and dreary, mine alone§—Why? Because My Lord is away.

O wells! O lochs! O running streams! Where were you all when my Lord could not get a drink? Oh fie on all Jerusalem! For there was wine enough in Jerusalem, and yet their King, Jesus, is burnt like a keel-stick.\* O wells, what ails you at your Lord Jesus? The wells and

lochs answer, "Alas! We dare not know Him; the Lord hath laid a fence<sup>†</sup> upon us; we are arrested;<sup>‡</sup> we dare not serve our Master." Is there any cooling in all Judea? Or is there any room? Yea, there are tables full of vomit; but our Lord was forced to take a good-night of the creature, with a nay-say.§ Oh! to hear the wells say, "We will give Herod and Pilate a drink, but we will give Christ none." Yea, give me leave to say there is none on earth brewen for Christ; nothing but a drink of gall and vinegar! The wells say, "We will give oxen and horses drink; but never a drop for the Lord of glory." For all His service done at Jerusalem; for all His good preaching; for all His glorious miracles—not so much as a drop of cold water! Fie on you, famous Jerusalem! Is your stipend this? Is this your reward to your great High Priest? No, not so much as the beggar's courtesy, a drink of cold water, to your dear Redeemer, Jesus! But by this, Christ has bought drink for all believers.

Jesus "gave up the ghost."

O Life! wouldst thou bear that blessed Body no longer company? O Life of Life! wouldst thou be death's taken prisoner? Oh! to see that blessed Head fall to the one side! Oh! to see Life wanting life! To see Life lying dead! To see that blessed mouth silent! To see that fair corpse rolled in linen, and laid in a tomb! Oh! to see sweet Jesus, that blessed Body in Joseph's arms! Come hither, come hither, believers, and see a sight that ye never saw the like of! Oh, what would the disciples say, but that, "We are beguiled men! We thought that He should have restored the kingdom to Israel; and now He is gone away; and now He is dead, that raised Lazarus from the grave." Oh, angels would think "Our Master is dead." Meikle\* scant of life in the world (might one say), before He should have died for want! The whole guard about Christ might say, "Oh what evil hath He done?" O sun! why wouldest not thou lend Him light? He never angered thee, but gave thee light! O floods, O rivers, O running streams! what has thus angered you at your Creator, that ye would not send your Lord a drink? O bread! why art thou gall to Him? O drink! why to Him vinegar? O worldly pomp and glory, what ails you at Him—that He is

so ashamed? O Life, where goest thou? Why leavest thou the Lord of Life! O joys! why would ye not cheer Him? O disciples, why left ye Him, and forsook Him? O Father, what ails Thee at Thy dear and only Son? O what evil way went these feet, that they are pierced? What evil have these hands done that they are pierced? O what evil, and what vanity did these eyes behold, that death has closed them? O what sin hath that fair face done, that it is spitted on? O what did these hands steal, that they are bound? O what evil has that blessed Head done, that it is crowned with thorns?

## **SERMON XIII\* —Revelation 19:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14**

### The Lamb's Marriage

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready," &c.—Revelation 19:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

THIS text has three parts. 1. The Kirk's triumph under the Antichrist's persecution, in the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses. 2. John's fall in worshipping the Angel. 3. A new revelation, wherein Christ and His members are seen triumphing, which contains a glorious description of Christ. I take not this absolutely to be the victory and triumph of the kirk triumphant in heaven, but it is the joy of the kirk on earth, groaning and longing for the marriage day.

In the 7th verse is contained an exhortation to be glad and rejoice," with thanksgiving and two reasons of it, "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." Here is a question in the entry: Is there not a time to rejoice, and a time to mourn? It is

not rather a time for the church to mourn and be sad (chap. 12) The Kirk, the poor woman with child, hard at the down-lying (travailing), and has not an hour's reckoning, is chased by the dragon to the wilderness. But in chap. 14, a judgment is denounced; chap. 16, the arrows of God's wrath are going through all the earth, a great din and hurlie-burlie in the Kirk. But in chap. 19:7, the Kirk is brought in singing and rejoicing. Hence let the world turn upside down, and come as it will, the saints will get a life of it. They are God's birds that sing in the winter, for the time is come. Isaiah 54:1. "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing," &c. And yet they are captives and banished people in the meantime. Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly, O Jerusalem, shout, behold thy king cometh," and yet they had not a king at all, but were "in the pit where was no water;" they were in bondage. So in Isaiah 40:1, when the people were under the water, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, says the Lord. Speak comfortably to Jerusalem." When the day is fair, and the spirit flows, and the wind is in the west, we can all then sing and rejoice, and believe. If God would each hour of the day come, and take His children on His knees, and lay their head in His bosom, saying, "Weep not, hold your tongue," we could all then sing and rejoice, and believe. But we must make a window in our prison, and look out and see daylight, and the Bridegroom coming, and rejoice beforehand. We are like fools and spilt\* bairns, taking offence at our Lord, and, like Jacob,† will not be comforted. Our Lord cannot get us drawn to the house of wine to take a cup of consolation. But we must learn to sing when God bids us. If the winter night were never so dark, believers must aye rejoice. Therefore rejoice, my dearly beloved, for we will get day about‡ yet when the marriage day is come. Luke 6:23, "Rejoice for that day," and leap for joy every day, (verse 25), even when they hate you and separate you from their company. "When these things shall come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for the day of your redemption draweth near" (Luke 21:28). They were casting down their heads; but faith must rejoice in the hope of an out-get.\*

"Let us give honour to Him."—Joy should not want praise. Alas! we rejoice in ourselves and not in God. It is a bastard joy that is enjoyed without praise, Psalm 33:1, 2, "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; praise the Lord with harp." In 1 Thess. 5:16, the apostle couples these together, "Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, in all things give thanks." It is double music in heaven that wants<sup>†</sup> praising of Him who sits on the throne. Our Lord gets often deaf nuts from us in our spiritual joy. We take joy as a breakfast to cheer up our foolish sense, and sit down upon our joy, and whine as we do. So we wrong our Lord when our joy bringeth not forth thanksgiving. It is not enough to rejoice that ye hope to get a kiss of Christ in ordinances, except ye come to this, to give Him a sacrifice of praise. We often draw our joy home to ourselves, and make Christ a babe to play ourselves with, and feed our foolish sense. Were we thankful, and did refer all our sense to praising, we would not get so many hungry meals.

But what is the matter? Wherefore are we bidden rejoice and be glad? The Kirk speaks her words with a warrant, "Know ye no better nor so? Have we not good cause to rejoice? Is not the Lamb's marriage come?" Then nothing more feeds the soul of the godly with delight than this, that the marriage day is come, and is at hand. It is something worth indeed, that the poor widow, the Kirk, has married so rich a husband; "for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (Psalm 24). Ye need not fear scant,\* nor that Christ will scale<sup>†</sup> house.

"The marriage is come."—It is not simply the glorified in heaven, but the time when God will make good all His promises to His Kirk in Christ. Say ye, was not this marriage of the Lamb before? Yea, was not Christ His Kirk's husband, and her well-beloved from the beginning? Answer. In God's purpose, He was from eternity the King, Lord, and Husband of His Kirk; but for the going out of the marriage, we are to know that the Kirk was suited<sup>‡</sup> and wooed long before the marriage. Christ takes not His wife at the first blink, as Samson fell in love with his wife. But He married with advisement so to speak. He and His Kirk are thrice lawfully proclaimed in the

preached gospel; there are meetings and communings about the heads of the contract, wherein Christ tells of His own excellencies, and the worth of His Father's glory, and what mansions are above. As long as the first husband lives (the law our first husband) Christ does not marry (Rom. 7:1). If ye and the world be hand-fastened§ together, that marriage must be divorced, or else He will not look on that side of the house that ye are in. Before it came to this, "Even so I take her," Christ made three journies to His wife: 1. When He came in the flesh He wooed sinners and offered Himself to the world. 2. After His Ascension to heaven He comes another journey, by His Spirit, in His ministers who preach the gospel. So Paul betrothed to a new husband.\* 3. He will come again at the last day, and complete the marriage. I suspect a hasty marriage to be a sudden vengeance; men and women fly to Christ, and flock to ordinances, to eat and drink with Him, or† ever He woo them. Many come to take Christ, and have another husband at home, the world and your lusts. That is foul play: you must be single, or else ye cannot marry Him. I will ask at all of you that are come here this day, if your husband, the world, be dead? Try if your lusts be dead, and sin mortified; otherwise look for no match with Christ. If the world and you are as great‡ as ever you were, I shall not believe that Christ and you are in the way of marriage. They that are married to Christ have been cast down, wintered and summered, burnt and scalded, and can tell you what God's anger is, and what a strange put§ the love of Christ has to make. Loathe at sin and all other things.

"His wife hath made herself ready."—How makes the Kirk, the Lamb's wife, herself ready? In Col. 1:12, it is said, "Giving of thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Doth not God here readily answer both as true? God draws and we run; for God and we meet not against our will, as Simon carried Christ's cross; nor as Balaam's ass spake that knew not what he spake; nor as the lilies grow and labour not, and yet are better clothed than Solomon was. Our Lord has our heart in His hand, as man's way is with wax before the fire,\* to wring and work it as he pleaseth, and to set the stamp on the man's heart.

He puts on the stamp as the wax receiveth it; a stone would not receive it. The man blows the trumpet, but all the sound comes from the man's breath. The ship sails; the pilot fills not the sails, but it is the wind that fills the sails. Our Lord begins and works upon the will and the heart, and changes it, and lets us see the excellency of our new husband and lord. And when we "make ourselves ready," we follow on to the smell of His garments. If God draw and ye stand still, if God blow upon you, and strive and work and cast you down, and ye are as hard as a rock or a stone under His hand, you have not "made yourselves ready;" so ye are not at all married to Christ. O, my dearly beloved, make some preparation, less or more, for Him. Ye must be changed and manswear<sup>†</sup> your old Adam, and forget your father's house, cast off your ilk-day<sup>‡</sup> garment and get a wedding garment. And think not that Christ and your old ragged garments, your lusts, will agree together.

Many on the other hand, hearing that there must be a preparation for the marriage, and that they must not come to Christ in their sin and guilt, and not knowing that He is angry, especially after a great outcast,<sup>§</sup> will stand far off from Christ and not seek after Him, because not prepared. "The Lamb's Wife doth make herself ready."— But I have not made myself ready; (say ye) nay, I know not but if I go in my guilt, I shall be put away in His anger. And there ye stick, like a ship, on the sand-bed of fears and doubtings, lest God be angry; and not a foot can ye win nearer to Christ.

What, then, shall unprepared souls do under these doubtings, especially under challenges for unrepented of sins that anger Christ? I shall labour to answer what troubles such and hinders their humble setting to,<sup>\*</sup> and coming away. 1. They are troubled about Christ's nature. 2. About their warrant to come unprepared. And 3. They are troubled with Satan and the Law of God. "As for Christ" (say they) "it is a needless errand; I will not amend myself, such an unprepared soul as I am." Answer. Go forward till<sup>†</sup> locked doors hold you again. You can have no less than you have; it is but that much lost travel. Say ye, "It is a needless errand; I will not mind myself." Answer. The



sluggard tells aye his answer before he goes his errand. The knavish servant's excuse is aye, when he is sent an errand, "There is a lion in the way." What if ye find an open door, and Christ coming out to meet you mid-way? Christ played as merciful a sport to the forlorn son. "Ay, but I see fire and sword when I come to the door, how shall I go in?" Answer. What if it be a false glass wherein ye see? When sinners would be at Christ, He never holds out fire and sword to chase them away: that is but Satan's fire and sword that fears you. I love that (warrant) yet the better that the devil opposes it; but I say, though Christ gloom<sup>‡</sup> on you, as on the woman of Canaan, yet go forward; they are sweet coals that burn a soul flightering\* to be at Christ. That fire will never be your death. When want of preparation holds a man from Christ, it is of the devil. Men take Christ to be proud, when it is themselves; they are proud and will not go to Christ till they can give Him a meeting, and buy mercy. Nay, you are to go without money; that is a better market. O! think ye shame to be in Christ's common?†

2nd. Oh, says the soul, "I want a warrant; it is presumption to go to Christ with such a backful of guilt as I have." Answer. I say it is both pride and presumption to bide away. I hope you will not trust in yourselves or your own strength; you are doing so, or else you would not complain of your being unprepared as ye do. Lean but to Christ, and then complain not, but presume your fill on Him, providing you think yourself unworthy of Him. It is not presumption to take a grip of Christ's naked sword, though it should cut your hand. "Oh," says the soul, "you have not told me of a warrant to rush in unprepared to an angry Christ." Would ye have a warrant? there it is; the beggars warrant is as good as I would wish. His warrant and testimonial to a beggar is a lame leg, a cripple hand, a hungry belly, a bare back, that is good reason and cause for him. So I say, have ye a hungering and longing desire after Him? Or know ye that ye are unprepared, that is, a cripple both of legs and arms? That is a notable warrant to go to Christ. "Oh, but," says the soul, "I have not a promise, I have not the Covenant to take with me, and for want of faith I have lost the promise." Answer. The Covenant is twice written, God has a copy, the

principal is in His hand and mind, and ye have a copy in your heart. If ye have lost your double,\* what then? Says Christ, My copy is to the fore.† The Covenant stability is to the fore, it stands; not in this that ye shall evermore‡ believe; there is no such covenant as that, yourselves have made that covenant and not Christ. Let me see such a covenant as this, that all that doubt and say, they are unprepared for Christ should bide away, and never come to Christ, till they be prepared to come, and are ready as the Lamb's wife is for her marriage. Yet, says the soul, "the warrant is not sure. It is hell and utter darkness to come to the marriage supper of the Lamb without a wedding garment (Matt. 22:12), and so unprepared as I am." Answer. That man cared not how he came; he took no care of a wedding garment; he had not so much as a hungering for Christ, which is the beggar's warrant, as you have heard. But let us reason thus; if that ye grant ye are unprepared, and that ye want much that ye should have, ye think it is death to go to Christ? I say, it is death to bide away, and the greatest death of the two. A man chased by his enemies on death and life has but two ways to flee to; either to the fire or to the water. If he be wise he will take himself to the water, and not to the fire, where he may swim; the water may cast him out. The water is the little death, fire is the meikle death. To abide still in sin, and never to come to Christ is fire; choose it not. To come to Christ with a hungering heart is the little death. There is hope of mercy in dying in the presuming hand upon the point of Christ's sword. When ye come to Christ, it is life if ye long for Him.

3rd. When the devil and the law challenge you, then show Christ's blood; that is, God's great seal, against the which, to speak so, is treason. If they say ye believe not, answer ye them; despair not.

Verse 8.—"To her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen."—Wherefrom comes this preparation? It is God's free gift in Christ; all is on Christ's charges and expenses. The fine linen is Christ's righteousness imputed to saints, a web of Christ's own making. It cost Him dear or ever it came on our backs; velvets, silks, king's parliament robes, clothes of gold, are nothing in comparison

to this web, woven out of Christ's own bowels and heart-blood. We are unworthy of Him; all that we can do or say here is with a borrowed tongue. When we say, "Even so I take Him," it was with a borrowed hand; for faith is not ours, it is the gift of God, to put on the fine linen. All this says that we are unworthy of Christ; if ye were worthy, slain Christ would not be your husband. Christ is a Saviour and Redeemer from head to foot, all made up of free grace, giving His blood, merits, and righteousness to His Kirk for stark nought. Men shape a sort of a Christ of their own making; not Christ but an idol; a Christ that will not ken\* a man, except he get a meeting of holiness and righteousness in him, that is a Christ of your own making; but the true Christ that God gave unto the world will either marry with a beggar or none. It is His honour to match with "captives and prisoners" (Isa. 61:1); "the sick that need the physician" (Matt. 9:12); "sinners that are lost" (Luke 19:10); "the poor, the maimed, the halt and blind" (14:21); "the beggars and dyvers\* of the world;" "the weary laden" (Matt. 11:28); "the thirsty, and those that have no money" (Isa. 55:1); "the wretched, blind, poor, and miserable, and naked" (Rev. 3:17); "the silly, halting, cripple kirk" (Micah 4:7).

"The fine linen white and clean, the righteousness of saints."—These are the properties of the linen which is Christ's righteousness, His perfect obedience, and sufferings. It is not gross and round spun; there is not a spot in it. I. Christ gave as much to God as He desired. The law cries, "With all the heart, soul, and strength." Christ answers, Psalm 40:8, "I delight to do Thy will, O God! Thy law is within My heart." Christ gives God lucky† heaped measure; not a penny that sinners took from God, but Christ restored a pound for it again. Nay, I say, if man had never sinned, God would never have given such a market.‡ Our righteousness would aye have been but MAN'S righteousness, which is gross and rund-spun§ in comparison of this. II. As for Christ's sufferings there was not a crack|| in them. Christ stood still; He never winked or minted¶ to take away His head; He did never jouk,\*\* or lout,‡ to miss a cuff.‡ He would not ware§§ a stroke off Himself. Isaiah 50:6, "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair." Our dear

Redeemer was like no others. Few lose a cause with their will. But Christ was content that a decret went against Him, and that the law should seize on Him. He purposed to pay, and not miscount; He took the strokes till God said it was enough, "it is finished." So His righteousness will do our turn, being clean, white, and fine. Then, when ye have put on this clean fine linen, keep it clean and white; spark\* no dirt on Christ's righteousness. "Be ye as holy as He is holy." We are all ready to file† our new clothes after we have put them on. Ezekiel must have a watchword, Ezekiel 2:8, "Son of man, be not rebellious like the rebellious house." Isaiah 8:11, "The Lord instructed me, that I should not walk in the way of this people." When we have put on this fine linen, temptations (the devil's dogs) are hounded out against us, to rive‡ our clothes. This world is a smoky room, a filthy house. What are malice, pride, love to the world, security, and avarice, but the devil's smoky walls, that we should keep ourselves from.

Verse 9, "He saith to me, write, Blessed are they that are called."— That which is written by God is sure, a concluded thing. The saint's happiness is not, He said it, and shiegled.‡ God has booked§ your heaven and your happiness, if you be called to the Lamb's marriage-supper. As the wicked man's hell is booked and written of God, and sealed up among his treasures, so vengeance is laid up for him (Deut. 32:34). Be glad and rejoice, O believers, your salvation is past through the great seal; this testament is confirmed with Christ's blood. Say ye, "The testament is written, but my name is not there?" Answer. Neither Abraham's nor David's names are in it, yet it is sure enough. A father leaves his inheritance to be divided equally among his sons; ilk\* one has no more ado† but to prove that he is a son; then he falls to his part of the inheritance. We err oftentimes in our applying either promises or threatenings. You make a question of God's part, "if Christ died for you, and loved you." Make aye sure your own part, and take no fear of God's part. If ye ask for whom Christ died, I answer; "for all that lean to Him, be who they will." Take ay‡ to you, till Christ say, I died not for you. A cord is cast down in a hollow pit to draw up you and a hundred more nor§ you. If ye

dispute, "Is the cord cast down for me?" I will tell you how ye shall answer that doubt, grip and hold fast by it for your life, and out of question then it was cast down for you. If ye take the offer, question not His good will; step in; Christ's good will will not ask to whom pertain ye? And if He ask, say ye, "I am Thine." If He deny it, be ye humble and bide|| it. Cain's and Judas' names are not written in the sixth command. "But they have no due right to His promises." Yea,¶ they have to His threatenings against murderers. If ye ask if Christ died for you? He answers you with another question, Would ye die for Him? Or are ye dying for love to Him? that answers your question. Sinners are like a number of men swimming in the sea betwixt life and death. Christ and His merits are like a strong boat and a man holding out both his arms drawing them in one by one, saying, "Give me your hand;" and so he presses them in.

Verse 9, "Blessed are they that are called."—Then all that hear His word are blessed. We are sent out to call you, and to cry, "Our Master, the King's son, is to be married, come to the feast, and bring all your best clothes with you." But there are many called, who are not called. That calling in the Proverbs 1:24, is not here meant, "I called and ye refused;" nor that in Matt. 20:19, "Many are called but few are chosen." There is a difference between the inward calling and the outward calling. First. In the person; none are called but the Bridegroom's friends, who are come of Christ's own house, and are native of kin to Him; strangers and bastards to the house get but a word. Different from this is that calling that is to the saints; a calling by their names, as when God called Abraham who said, "Here am I." The friends of the Bridegroom hear a voice upon their hearts, as if God had called them by their names; the rest are called, but they obey not the King. They hear a voice sounding in the air as afar off speak to a man of inheritance in Spain; he hears and hears not. The reprobate hear of God's calling as if ye were speaking to him of playing at the football, or some trifle. But speak to a man of his own inheritance, and how he shall be lord of all things; O, that goes near his heart. Secondly. The inward calling goes foot for foot with the decree of election. "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called"

(Rom. 8:30). The inward calling is more than a word; it is a word with an arrow shot at the heart, or struck on the soul, but it must yield to Christ and be led captive at His will. "Other sheep I have, them also I must bring in" (John 10:16). I must have them, cost what it will. If they be unwilling, they shall be made willing. Indeed, the wicked run away with one of Christ's arrows sticking in them, as a wild beast with a dart; (but if it is shot with Christ's full strength, it goes to the bone); it but draws blood, and makes a hole in the skin. The arrow falls out and the wound closes again. But it is the Mediator's arrow John speaks of in John 10:28. O, says the man,\* there is a grip called the Mediator's grip. "I, when I am lifted up to the Cross, will draw all men after Me" (John 12:32). No man can resist Him if he once get a blow of Him, and a wound in his soul with one of Christ's arrows. So Paul was not called to His supper till he was blind, and had fasted three days. So this in Zech. 12:10, "They shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn as one that mourneth for his only son." These that are called to the marriage supper are "blessed" for ever. To be called to the marriage is to be promised away and spoken for in marriage; and when the contract is subscribed and the woman gives her oath, hand, and promise, to her husband—when she is hand-fastened † before God to him—she cannot with honesty enter into marriage with another man. By the law, the last ‡ testament is of force. So, when we have given our names to our husband Christ, it is not honesty to fall in love again with other lovers; to marry two is vile falsehood. Are ye content that Christ get your first love, and to go with Him before§ another? All that are called to the marriage should be chaste, and think of that look of their husband Christ, who got the first promise of them. He has a tongue that is sweeter than all tongues. An honest merchant, who made the first black\* and stroke with you, will not beguile you for a penny more. And, when all is done, the devil and the world cannot over-bid † our Lord Jesus Christ. Can they bid more than heart? or Christ? or God? Yet many, after they have given away their hand to Christ in covenant, the world ravishes them ere ever Christ can come to claim them again.

"The Lamb's Wife hath made herself ready."—It is not said that, "The Lamb made Himself ready." There is no stop<sup>‡</sup> of the marriage on Christ's side of it. It is long since He died and rose again, and entered into His glory. But the wife is wild,<sup>§</sup> sweer, and slow to the draught. The reason why the last marriage-day is deferred is because God will have none of His own to be lost, or perish (2 Peter 3:9). Long for the marriage-day. Cry, "Come, Lord Jesus." Ye would be at heaven; but your lusts are not yet subdued. Get the body of sin, and the world, crucified, and the wedding-garment ready; for on Christ's side there is no stop, the lodgings are taken. Ye bid Him come quickly; He may bid you go fast; for He runs, and ye creep at leisure. Ye come out of the world, as Lot came out of Sodom, sweerly.|| Put every day some of your journey over, that you and He may meet. But ye stand still and sleep; ye are like a drunkard that says, "We are over long here, in the ale-house," yet sits still and drinks on. It were not telling¶ us that the marriage came when we seek it; there is a great part of the wedding-garment yet still unready.

"The Marriage-Supper of the Lamb."—Gospel promises and mercies are called a marriage-supper. God calls not brass gold. He calls blessedness in Christ, a supper and a marriage-supper, wherein are all pleasures that can delight hearing and tasting, music, and good cheer. It is a supper after which meek men get rest, and the night's sleep; for the saints have many a hungry dinner in this world. Pleasures are the husks that the swine feed on, the devil's draff.\*Hebrews 11:25, "The pleasures of sin for a season." They have much toil and labour the long summer day, but here is their blessedness, they know of a hearty meal of meat at night, and rest in the bosom of their well-beloved Christ. After this supper there is no such toil and trouble as is after dinner. Men have no rest, but are weary and laden till Christ and they meet; they are aye under Satan's yoke till Christ loose them. Habakkuk 2:13, "Behold it is not of the Lord of hosts that people should labour in the fire, and weary themselves with very vanity," and Jeremiah 2:20, "Of old I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands asunder." God's people were in Satan's yoke, and under abominable slavery in Egypt, till supper

came, when they got some rest and sleep. Satan has men yoked in a plough, and profit, pleasure, and honour, are his iron pricking goads. Balaam hears of gold and honour, Judas of money, and they go sweating up the furrows. So God's children are yoked till God loose and ease them, and call them to His supper; and then they rest from their long summer day's toil. Ye marvel to see the wicked get so good cheer, and to wallow in pleasures; ye startle at providence here when ye see the godly in trouble. But the reprobates are not called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Wonder not that God gives a greedy dog a bone; and so indeed is the world to them. Let them get the belly full of it; they shall for all that "lie down in sorrow" (Isaiah 50:11) without tasting the marriage-supper.

"And He said to me those are the true sayings of God."—Angels got a taste of Christ at the beginning, and have learned something that they had never known if man had not fallen. And though they be but beholders, and eat not of the supper as we do, yet when Christ's meat is on the table, it casts a good smell, and they delight to learn something of Christ which they knew not before. If they say, much more cause have we to say so, that God's word is "faithful and true." All the messes of the supper are for us, "His flesh is meat indeed" to us, and "His blood is drink indeed" to us. Say ye, Will not all men as well as angels say so? Do any deny God's word and sayings to be true? It will be thought, men for shame will not give God the lie in His face. Indeed, in general, we say God's words are true, but, when it comes to practice, we stand not to give Him the lie in His face. Like archers who set their eye upon the mark, and when all is done, the bow it breaks, and the arrow falls at their foot. Whilst conscience keeps in generals, and is a hundred miles from the word, we say the word is good, but when the word is near to command us, and to control our lusts, and deny our wills; then we do as Jeroboam's conscience, that slipt the shackles, when God's word was like (as he did think) to deprive him of his kingdom. Our conscience goes along with the word in general, but when it meets with our wild humours, or lights on Herod's belt,\* then we cry and complain as he did. When our lusts rise, and the Word binds our conscience, then conscience



gives God fair words, like a flattering friend, or knavish servant that is aye to seek when there is most to do. The adulterer says God's word is true, yet in time of temptation, when the seventh command comes in handy† grips, and hard wrestling, then he tells another tale. The mind is as a judge that aye does right till he get ill counsel, and then never a good turn. The mind afar off judges aright of God's word, but in comes the affections as an ill counsellor and does lead conscience by the nose. When it comes to practice, the affection is conscience's ill neighbour, like Rehoboam's counsellors, that led him wrong to his hurt.

Verse 10, "And I fell down at His feet to worship."—We read of very few of John's faults. Here he fell twice in idolatry, inconsiderately taking the angel to be more than an angel, he directing his worship to God, no doubt, as he supposed; but his heart being too much addicted to admire and reverence a creature, he slips when he doats so much on instruments. Observe, humility can steal on our heart in the heat of love; and Satan can beguile us with it. Idolatry comes in upon John with a sweet disguise; he welcomed it as God's worship. Our hearts and Satan do work to other's hands. While we are not advising with God, our hearts go far on in pleasuring of sin, and covering of idolatry. But let men wash idolatry with all the holy water of Rome, it has aye a black skin. Many go farther on in idolatry than John did. Saul would not himself kill David, and does not mind the matter and event of it; nay, but he gives him over into the Philistines' hands. Sins (especially gross sins) have a bloody, black face, so that men must put on a mask before they kiss them. Men think to beguile their consciences by challenging of some circumstances. The Colossians worshipped angels (2:18), but they did it under pretence of humility. Israel did swear that they would not give their daughters to the Benjamites; but how made they up the matter? They bade the Benjamites at a dance take their daughters by force, and so they play their conscience a slip. Sin can go out at one door, when conscience bosts\* it; and comes slipping in again with a new garment, it being that same sin. Pilate, he put murder from himself by washing his hands, and said, I am free of Christ's blood; he plastered his murder

fairly with this, "The people caused him to do it." So swearing is good enough to many, if they swear the truth; men would fain have God's law beguiled. If vanity of apparel lose the name of pride, and commend this that it is called the fashion, it is thought good enough. But if your clothes be proud, your heart cannot be humble. If the deceiver can conn<sup>†</sup> his conscience, and win by<sup>‡</sup> the eight command, and say, The bargain was made in daylight, your eye was your merchant, he thinks he has loupē§ dry-shod. But consider Jer. 2:22, "Though thou wash thyself with nitre, and take thee much soap; yet thy iniquity is marked before Me." Why is it that we learn not to deal honestly with God's law? Alas, we make the Almighty a child, provoking Him to anger, and then we put Him off with fair words. John here doated on the instruments, in his devotion, labouring to be thankful to God for the sweet news he had heard. It was an ordinary fault in many, to give more to some instruments, than was their due. Among the Hebrews (chap. 3), some will set up Moses as a High Priest. In Corinth, no preacher like Paul; says another, I think Apollos better; a third says, In my judgment, Cephas, Peter, is best of all. What are ministers but earthen pitchers carrying the heavenly treasures? If they be faithful, they should do as John the Baptist, when the people thought to have done homage to him, and took him to be Christ; he took them witness that he told them, "he was not the Christ, nor worthy to loose His shoe-latchet." Call no man Rabbi. God is witness that ministers desire to put you fair off their hands, and to send you to Christ. They are but the Bridegroom's friends carrying your love letters from your husband. But carry it who will, leave off comparing ministers with mysteries,\* lest you provoke God to blow out the poor man's candle; and ye know that a blown out candle will have an ill smell. They but carry the trumpet; the Spirit blows. Ye should not dote on any man. Would you have an idol to waste your love on? There is one Christ Jesus; dote your fill on Him. Love, and better love<sup>†</sup> Him, till ye be wearied of loving Him. Beware that ye move not the Lord to take the gift from the ministers. The devil can cast wildfire in people's zeal, and cause them make a god of a man in whom there is not much stuff, if he were sifted. Is comfort bound to any man's tongue above another? Balaam's ass once made a

preaching, that might have been a lesson to the ill man. I say, sirs, take God's meat, cook it who will. Alas! that ministers by their wicked lives should spoil God's meat, so as the children skunner.\* Who would believe when John was in an angel's company, and ravished in the spirit, and had seen Christ so gloriously revealed to him, and such comfortable victories over Antichrist, having his heart so well set to praise God, that he would have snappered<sup>†</sup> on a course of idolatry. Hence, if we were in an angel's company, as was Judas,<sup>‡</sup> the devil and sin are lying in wait to insnare us. This world is as a great wood, and at every tree-root there lies, and in every bush there lies a serpent. We had need to tell<sup>§</sup> all our steps to heaven, and see whether we go right or wrong. When we are rejoicing in God, the devil can deceive us. Peter thought himself a humble man, when he said to Christ, "Thou shalt never wash my feet," but he was devilishly humble. In praying, reading, hearing, communicating, &c., temptations are at our elbow. Satan, in Job's days, came before the Lord to accuse the man; think ye not the devil is as bold as ever he was? And think ye that he dare not come to the Communion table? When Judas was at the table with Christ, Satan goes in with a sop. The devil has been at Christ's high messes, and will be waiting on to go into every believing soul. The world is like a piece of broad sea full of nets and lines. Satan hath laid his lines through the world, and it is all full of girns|| and traps wheresoever we go. In an instant John is here hooked with idolatry. David with the glance of an eye was hooked with adultery. We had need to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," and that we go not through Satan's camp without our armour, and our Christ with us. For Satan's arrows and bullets are flying thick about our ears, whatever we be doing. We live here beside ill neighbours, we dwell on a dry march\* with Satan and his temptations. O let us beware of one that is at our elbow in the holiest work we can go about.

"See thou do it not, I am thy fellow-servant."—Angels will have none of God's glory. All that have gifts or light should labour to see that our Lord gets His glory. When that beast<sup>†</sup> suffered men to fall down on their knees to give him that worship and title that was due only to

Christ, we may know by that what spirit was in him. The man that is nearest to God would have all glory given only to God. God and we must not be halvers<sup>‡</sup> in His glory. Papists say they give glory to God, but images must have a bow by the way! Is not our part to keep good neighbourhood with God? to keep His marches?<sup>§</sup> Grace may well satisfy us; glory is a high mass,|| none may say to Christ in that half mind. Cornelius gave his knee to Peter, but he refused it. Where there is betwixt God and us a creature that represents God, if we bow a knee to it, that smells of idolatry, although our worship be directed to God. We have a jealous husband. If ye bow the knee to a creature, and say it is to Christ, it is as a wife should prostrate herself to a strange lover, and then say, "God knows my heart is towards my husband." Idolatry may be idolatry although men intend not idolatry in worshipping the creature. They who say John intended to worship the angel, have not well considered the place. John directed both his inward worship and his knee worship to God, and took the angel to be God, otherwise the angel's reproof, "I am thy fellow-servant," were not worth a straw. And yet he is rebuked for idolatry in directing knee-worship to an angel. Cornelius intended not to give to Peter what was due to God, he kend,\* as it was told him, that Peter was a man; yet he thought, for his Master's sake, and the gospel's sake, he would bow his knee to him. For which he was rebuked.

"The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."—This is the testimony of Christ, which comes from the Spirit of Christ, who reveals things to come. As ministers are witnesses for Christ, so they must see and hear, otherwise they cannot depone upon their consciences to the people. They must have the spirit that John had, John 15:26, "The Spirit of truth." 1 Cor. 12:3, "None can call Jesus the Lord, but by the Spirit." This will tell men if they be rightly called ministers; and if they want the Spirit, they sound not with the trumpets, but with rams'-horns. I shall add no more. Amen.

## SERMON XIV\* —Cant. 2:8–12.

The voice of my Beloved! Behold He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills, &c.—Cant. 2:8–12.

IN these words (as we observed in the last sermon on this text) there are set down five particulars as to how the Church calls Christ, "My Beloved," and how she takes Him up. I. She discerns His voice. II. She espies Him "coming." III. In His own person, "Behold He cometh." IV. The manner of His coming, "skipping and leaping." V. The impediments in His way, "mountains and hills."

These are already expounded, only there remaineth a few<sup>†</sup> things, that which should have been marked before, which I add in this place. The Church says not,<sup>‡</sup> It is "the voice of my Beloved," but for haste she says no more but, "My Beloved's voice!" When Christ is either heard or seen by a faithful soul, He wakeneth up, in the twinkling of an eye, the passions of that soul. Joy will not let her get out the rest of her words. What raises the child of God's heart? What but news from heaven of Christ? When the disciples hear tell of Christ's resurrection, they run to the grave for joy. The heart runs before the mouth. Ye may try by this way whether ye be Christ's or not; if the heart leap for joy at the name of Jesus, if the affections leap out and embrace Christ about the neck, so that the heart strive and out run the tongue. The conscience is slow, the heart is quick and swift. The affections like dry timber, any spark of fire casten in upon them makes them soon to burn; the conscience is like green wood that burns not soon, yet keeps the fire durable. The affections are like the needle, the rest of the soul like the thread; and as the needle makes way and draws the thread, so holy affections pull forward and draw all to Jesus. The affections are the ground\* and

lower part of the soul, and when they are filled they set all the soul on work; when there is any love in the affections, it sets all the rest of the faculties of the soul on work to duty, and when there is any corruption in the affections, it stagnates the soul, will, mind, and conscience. Affections are the feet of the soul, and the wheels whereupon the conscience runs. When a man is off his feet he cannot run or walk; so when the affections are lame, the soul moves on crutches.

There does yet remain something to be spoken concerning these "mountains." God comes in mercy to two sorts of people. He comes to some before ever they be aware of His coming; He steals upon them before ever they hear or see Him. So Christ stealed in upon the thief on the cross, when he was wallowing in his sins. He came unawares upon Paul going to Damascus to persecute the church. But after Regeneration, the child of God knows His tongue, and hears the noise of His feet before He come; yea, they be like hungry cattle so given on\* Christ, that they are ever looking over the mountains to see if He comes, and are always setting up their ears to hear if they can know His voice, and discern His leaps and skipplings.

"Behold He is standing behind our wall."—Before Christ speak, He comes leaping upon the mountains. Now here He comes near ere they see Him, so that there is but one wall betwixt them, and lest the wall should hinder from a sight of Him, she sees Him looking out at the windows. We see that it is a note or mark of the true Church and child of God, to grow in fellowship and communion with Jesus Christ. 2 Thess. 1:3, "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly." The word signifieth that it groweth above the blade. Let us be carried through with faith and love, with our sails up, into perfection. Heb. 6:1. Paul is brought in by the Spirit of God chasing the kingdom of heaven, and doing nothing else but chasing it: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." We must press fast

forward, and run as in a race after the prize of the high calling of God in the way to heaven, even in many difficulties. Like a boat sailing against tide, wind, and weather; if we do not go forward, we will not miss to sail backwards. This condemns many in our age, dwarf Christians, that eat much, and are not like to thrive! They have many glorious meetings at Communions with Christ, and yet they grow not; they remain still like the seven lean kine that Pharaoh saw, that devoured the seven fat kine, and yet remained still lean. And they may be compared to a strange fire that casts a blaze, and in end turns to smoke; and to locusts that loup up with a start, and fall down to the earth again. O! it is the ill of our church that it is going backward. Christ was once behind the wall; now He is beyond the curtain, and now removing. But how is this made good? How do I prove it to be the sign of a removing Christ? When God tells the prophet Jeremiah, (Jer. 16:2), that he was to remove, He says, "Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters in this place." Alas! Jesus Christ marries few now! every one seeks their own things, and few are born over again by the immortal seed of the word. When Christ will not marry a Church, and beget sons and daughters, it is a token that He is going away. Christ must be going away when He is transporting His goods. The power and life of preaching is away, His servants banished to other lands; our Bishops complain that there are so many in the land that have Bibles. Woe to them when I depart from them.

"Behind our wall," that is, Behold He dwells in our house of clay, as it is termed, Job. 4:19. John 1:14, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." And it is called our wall, because we have an interest in the man Jesus Christ, since He has our nature upon Him. Christ Jesus is here resembled to a great city, the blessed human nature of Christ is a wall; the gate or porch to enter in through to that city, are the wounds of our Lord Jesus. There is a fair fountain in the midst of the city called David's well, which is meant of the heart-blood of Christ Jesus crucified; the indwellers are the elect. The humanity of Christ is our wall of defence; all the stones of it are hewn stones, out of Adam; for Jesus Christ is Adam's son. Now, the use of walls is to

defend the city. Zech. 2:5. God is a wall of fire about Jerusalem; all that are within our walls are sure from God's wrath; this wall holds off all sorts of cannon. The body and soul of our Lord Jesus Christ was the buckler that received all the strokes that God's justice did let out against us. When the Lord did cast that great and heavy dart of His wrath against elect sinners, Christ had a body, and He came running and received that dart, both in His soul and body. Isaiah 53:5, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed."

The Lord did cast upon man a great mountain of His wrath; but betwixt God's casting and the lighting of it, Jesus, a Saviour timeously ready in trouble, came in and bare the burden. God had shot the arrows of His indignation at us; but betwixt the loofing\* of the arrow, and the lighting of it, our Lord came in and held the arrows off us. Christ's body was our shield of defence. Now, all ye that would be safe from judgment and the wrath to come, lie under this wall; keep the town as ye love your life; hold you within the city. If ye should die in the cause, it is but a pint or quart of your blood that ye lose for Christ, and it is not lost, it will surely be restored. Satan and the world strives to make a gap in this wall and to take the town; but stay within the ports and be saved. The Jews cast down this wall, but our Lord built it up in three days. It is a great benefit to us, that when (whereas) mountains of sin were betwixt God and us, now we are made so near, that in Christ there is but a wall betwixt God and us. How foolish is the church of Rome, that takes such a long journey by saints and angels to go to God by, when the way is easy and near, if they would come to Jesus Christ.

"He looketh forth at the windows, showing Himself through the lattice."—This looking out at the windows, and through the lattice, signifies the Lord Jesus showing Himself to His elect through the windows of His human nature. Jesus is a flower set in the windows of the human nature, and a rose with many leaves, that casteth a sweet smell through mankind. For as Jesus Christ is man, the Lord strikes



certain windows out of Him. Now the use of windows is, that such as are within the house may see such as are without the house, and that they may see them again. Christ had infirmities as we have every way, except sin, for in that He suffered Himself, and was tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted. "He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). Now at the window of His own sorrow, He looketh out to your sorrow, and my sorrow, and out at this window He sees all the mourners of Zion, and the broken-hearted. This is a sweet thing that the cross of Christ is so fair a glass, in which He sees our heavy cross. Dost thou sigh and groan? Jesus Himself sighed, and saw these sighs in the glass of His own. Art thou poor? pitiful Jesus sees thy poverty, He knows what it is to be poor, He was poor Himself. Art thou hungry and thirsty? so was our Lord Jesus. And Jesus Christ knows what it is to die, for He died Himself. Here are the emblems of Christ and His church. Jesus has gone along the narrow bridge, and He reaches back His hand to lead us along the bridge. Christ and we came to a deep running water together, Christ ventured His life to dry the ford, and having broken the streams of it, He runs back and convoys us through with Himself. "For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). And more; when He bruised our Lord Jesus, He did strike out fair windows in His body, deep windows with abundance of blood gushing out at them; and through these windows, we see Jesus in His love and in His mercy. We see His tender heart for us when we are under crosses and infirmities; we have a copy before our eyes. All ye crossed ones of Jesus, look up to this window, and behold the like in Christ. When a potter is to make a number of vessels all of one measure, he casts one first in the mould, which is a pattern to all the rest. So Christ, being first cast in the mould, must have all His elect children to be so also, all must have His stamp, His colour, His livery, His coat of arms."

"My beloved spake and said unto me."—Now does the Church relate the words of her beloved calling upon her; and see how many ways the Lord shows himself to His church. 1. He speaks to her ear. 2. He

runs and leaps before her eye. 3. He stands behind the wall. 4. He looks out at the window to her. 5. He ends as He began, and speaks to her ear. This lets us see there are some happy times, wherein Christ urgeth Himself upon His children, and fills both ears, eyes, tongues, hands, hearts, and fills all with Christ. The soul of the child of God has certain feast days; it is even with the child of God, as it is with Jordan, all the banks are full; sometimes the soul will be full of Christ, so that it is full from bank to brae. See how Christ fills the apostle, 1 John 1:1, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life, verse 3, that which we have heard and seen declare we unto you." Behold the apostle is going round about Christ, and filling himself with Christ, like hungry men at a feast. They hear Him, they see Him, they look upon Him, and eye Him, and which is more, they handle Him with their hands. O! these are glorious times when the child of God gets a great feast of Christ; and if He fill us here while we are from home, and are such narrow-hearted vessels that God must enlarge us, Psalm 119:32. How full shall we be of God when we shall see Him as He is! Psalm 63:5. "My soul shall be filled as with marrow and fatness. Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved," Cant. 5:1. When any of these glorious times comes, we may not think but Christ will away again. What should we then do? Even as Joseph did, he caused his brethren to leave a pledge to assure him that they would return again: so ye must cause Jesus to leave His seal, and His ring, and some footsteps of His grace, and take instruments in the hand of the Spirit, that He will return.

Ye see in the Church a sweet and commendable virtue in these words, she sets down the very progress of all the ways and dealings of the King of kings to her soul. In all His ways she sees what Christ is doing; when He is afar off, she knows Him, she sees Him running and leaping, she sees Him behind the wall, looking out at the windows, and through the lattice. She hears Him nearer hand speaking, she writes up His very words. We see the child of God marks the ebbings and the flowings, the comings and goings of the

Spirit of God, and sees Christ in all His footsteps. When Christ comes at the dead hour of the night, she hears His knocks through her sleep, and knows His voice. He can put in His hand, and open the bar of her conscience to come in, she knows what He is doing, she feels the smell that drops from His finger-ends. What bred\* experience of Christ? even a daily walking with Him, ye know the courtiours that are about the king's person day and night, they can write a chronicle of the king's life, and can tell how many miles he rides in the day. So says David, "My eyes are ever towards the Lord." Then ye must see what God is doing: it is God's quarrel with Jerusalem, that she knew not the things that belonged to her peace. God was offering peace to her, but she knew not what He was doing. This is the way of the wicked, God is on their right hand, and on their left hand, behind them, and before them, and they never see Him; they regard not the work of the Lord. There is fire made ready in heaven, and Sodom eats and drinks till God comes with fire and brimstone and draws the table. The old world is making marriages, and sees not what Noah sees, till God, with the deluge of water, comes to the ending of their contracts. Men will not give their conscience leave to believe all of God that it should believe; they will not let their consciences go through the earth to see what God is doing, but imprison, and set a march to it. All that we have to do in this life is to take heed what God does, and what we ourselves do. Isaiah 26:11, "Lord, when Thy hand is lifted they will not see." It is the sin of our age, our Beloved is come on the mountains, yet His leaping upon us is like a serpent upon a stone, and like the way of an eagle in the air, it leaves no print of the Lord's footsteps behind it in men's hearts; and (which is a more pitiful thing) God is departing and no man looks to it. The prophet Jeremiah has a word which is the very extracts\* of Scotland's case, Jer. 12:4. He sees the cause of God's wrath upon man and beast was upon the account of a speech among the people; "He shall not see our last end." A strange word! they say we shall die, and run through hell and the grave, and leap into eternity, and the Lord shall never see us! So we have said, God shall not see our last end; because we see not God, we think God sees not us; but persuade yourselves Scotland's doom is given up in heaven. And, therefore, for

the glory of God, and your own salvation, see what God is doing. I will tell you what He is doing; He is bidding the king take his dough<sup>†</sup> upon His shoulder, in the twilight of the evening, because he must surely go into captivity.

"Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away."—Here is two things to be expounded. 1. Christ exhorting her to arise and come away. 2. Our Lord's title and style that He gives her, "My love, my fair one." The exhortation we may marvel at. What needs our Lord bid her arise and come away, for she cannot but wait; for he is coming to her.<sup>‡</sup> But if Jesus come never so near a sitting and sleeping soul (as the church is here) Christ and that soul shall never meet. Before ever the Lord Jesus and we meet, we must once be wakened, and set upon our feet; 'tis true our Lord Jesus comes to us all lying; but before He and we have struck hands together, we must be on our feet. Ye have a notable example of this, Cant. 5. Christ comes a far journey to His spouse, our dear Lord Jesus, His head and His locks were wet with dew and rain, He comes to the door, He speaks to her, and she to Him, there is but a thin door betwixt them, men would think they will meet now; and yet for as near as Christ was to her they meet not; He goes His way, and that was upon the account she would not soil her feet, and open to Him. The reason is, heaven and salvation come to no man in a dream. There be two graces given to the children of God when the Lord and they meet, God's knocking and calling, or grace knocking and calling without; and God's wakening grace stirring up the soul within. When Christ comes near you in the word and sacraments beware of security. I know none in God's word that slept when they had the presence of Christ with them, but the three disciples. And they wakened with sorrowful hearts, they lost their Master, and never got Him again till He was shamefully put to death. Oh! security, security! may be called the Christian's falling sickness, wherever this sickness comes upon him, it will cast him into the fire and into the water. Solomon had a bed watched about with "threescore valiant men, that were expert in war" (Cant. 3:7). The spiritual meaning is, Christ is our Solomon, and the king of peace, that dwells in our hearts, and the souls of His children, by

faith; (He lies betwixt their two breasts), so the bed of Christ must be guarded by more than threescore watchful thoughts, for fear Christ should be stolen out of the soul, when the soul sleeps: and for fear that the new creature, or the image of God in man should be destroyed. Sleeping is an enemy to health, when used too much, especially in the spring time, for it breeds fevers, and many dangerous diseases; much waking preserves the health. When the Gospel is in a land, then is spring time; and ye lose the life of godliness, and fall in dangerous diseases of soul, if ye fall asleep then. It is true, God dealeth mercifully with His own elect, howbeit they be secure, and forsake them not, but it is not their deserving. David cried to Abner, because he watched not carefully his master, Saul. 1 Sam. 26:16, "As the Lord liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed." So it may be said to many Christians, "As the Lord liveth, ye are worthy of death, because ye watched not over Christ when dwelling in your hearts."

Now, if you shall ask for a guard to watch the soul, take these following. The first soldier that should be set in the very entry of your soul is, "the fear of God." See how excellently these two are conjoined, as the cause and the effect, fearing of God, and running away from evil. The second soldier to set at the door of your soul is, "sobriety and temperance." Noah and Lot forgot these, and therefore they fell into a nap or sleep. This sobriety is a modest and wise carriage, in the enjoying of the pleasures of this life. 1 Peter 5:8, "Be sober and vigilant," &c. The third soldier is that virtue which Solomon calls discretion; let it be before the door to try what guests come into the soul, what thoughts enter in. As the apostle John says, "Try the spirits whether they be of God or not." One devil is like another devil, and when we are thinking we are holding out one, another rushes in. The fourth soldier is suspicion and fear of our own ways, which should hold us waking. "Blessed is the man that feareth always" (Proverbs 28:14). Paul says to Timothy, "In all things watch;" even in the things of this life, in the setting a cup to our head, in the putting a bite in our mouth, or a soup at table, we should watch. If that seems to be but a feckless business, yet the devil entered into

Judas with a soup; it is to make us careful between the hand and the mouth, to look to ourselves. To speak two pitiful words to a friend seems a small matter; yet when Peter said to our Lord, "Master, pity Thyself," he was the devil's agent in that. Believe never well of yourself, nor of the old man within you. Let no man pass his word, or be caution for his own heart, "for the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). The fifth soldier that stands at the door of the heart is meditation on death; let the meditation of death stand in the threshold of the door. Wherefore doth Jerusalem (Lam. 1:9) come down wonderfully? but because she remembered not her last end. If men would remember Christ and that death and judgment come in the night as a thief, they would have their hand ever at the door bar, and stand behind the door, watching till the Lord should knock, "Blessed is the man whom his Lord shall find so doing." The sixth soldier that keeps the soul ever on foot, is a continual practice of good, and walking with God. Moving, walking, and serious business keep men from sleeping. Only be even-down honest with God, walking with Him in sincerity and truth, looking into His mercy, justice, kindness, and power. Remember the great work of your salvation, the keeping of an immortal soul, the gaining or losing of Christ. The seventh soldier, and last man of the guard, that I shall mention at this time is Faith, which tells us of the particular passages of heaven, hell, and judgment, of the wiles and devices of the roaring lion. And these be Solomon's valiant men that watch about His bed (Song 3:7). I mean the graces of God that keep Christ in the soul.

In this compellation there are two things to be cleared. 1. That He calleth her HIS love and HIS fair one. (We heard before how the Church called Christ HER Beloved.) 2. That He calls her in this exhortation, "love and fair one." Therefore, we must once for all expound in what meaning the Church is Christ's, and how He does, in law and equity, appropriate her to Himself, as His own. And 1. We are to observe that Christ has a right to the Church by birth; for He made us, and by the law of creation we are His, as the vessels are the potter's. And man did continue Christ's this way, even till He sold

himself to Satan and sin; and now by nature we are the sons of God's wrath, strangers from the life of God (Ephes. 4:18). Adam did us this ill turn; he sold us unto Satan for the forbidden fruit. And yet, howbeit the inheritance was sold, Christ, being the nearest heir, was most kindly to us\* as we say. The nearest kinsman among the Jews was a type of Christ. Among the Jews, he that redeemed land, or was a Goel, Brother, or Redeemer, behoved to have these two in his person; first, he behoved to have riches and substance to pay the sum that so he might enter into the inheritance; secondly, he behoved to be a brother or a near kinsman, and not a stranger. Now, these two were in Christ. 1. He was a brother, nearest the house; He was no stranger, but Emmanuel, "God with us," and took on Him not the nature of angels but the seed of Abraham; and so the law made Him nearest heir, and He had the right of reversion.\* And then 2. He is a kinsman of great riches and substance; for He was God Himself, the Lord of lords, and Prince of the kings of the earth (Rev. 1:5).

Here, then, we have to consider 1. With whom our Lord did bargain. 2. What price He gave for His Church. 3. How He takes possession.

There were three sorts of persons Christ had to do with in redeeming us. 1. The Lord, whose wrath and justice have a just claim to sinners; He was the principal to whom the price of redemption should be paid, and He was the person offended. Jesus satisfied Him, paid and satisfied Him for man, so that He said of Him, "This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Now there was many claims, and arrestments upon the inheritance, before Jesus got it; there were parties at variance to be reconciled. There was first mercy and truth, saying, Alas! shall silly man die? truth and justice on the contrary pleading, Why should not man die? has not the God of truth said, that sinners shall die? Yes, says Jesus, man shall die; man shall die, for His word must be true; I am man, I am made of the Father, that I might die for sinners, and truth and justice shall be pleased, for I will die for men and save them; and mercy shall be pleased also, I will pity man and give my blood for him. Behold how Jesus made mercy and justice to shake hands and kiss each other. Blessed be our

Peacemaker! 2. The law and the sinner were at red-war<sup>t</sup> against each other. It was the poor sinner's complaint, "I cannot speak an idle word, or think an idle thought, but it presently condemns me." And the law cried out against the sinner, "Man does neither eat nor drink, sleep nor wake, sleep nor think, but he treads me under foot; my curse (says the law) and the curse of God be upon him." But Jesus answered, "The curse of the law be upon Me, all the elect's idle words and thoughts be upon Me; all their light words and sinful deeds be upon Me." And upon this satisfaction the law is pleased with man. Whereas before it was a killing and condemning letter, working wrath, Christ turned it into a sweet and pleasant way to heaven. See what the child of God says, O! how I love Thy law! it is my meditation all the day or continually. Whereas the sinner under God's wrath says, "How hate I Thy law," behold Jesus hath made the believing sinner and the law shake hands together. 3. There were some parties that usurped the inheritance, but had no just right or title thereto, viz., Satan, that archfoe, and grand enemy of man's salvation. But Jesus would use no law with Satan; he spoiled principalities and powers; for man being God's creature, had no right to sell himself to God's enemy.

This much for the first anent being God's creature. As to the second, viz., the price, He gave for His own Church, His own precious blood, 1 Peter 1:10, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace (Eph. 1:7); for we are not our own, we are bought with a price."

A third point is anent our Lord's actual possession; wherein there be these three acts of the Father and the Son. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me, and him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which thou gavest Me out of the world, thine they were, and thou gavest them Me" (John 17:6). Upon the cross Christ paid for so many, and for no more. "I lay down My life for the sheep" (John 10:15). When the Father has given them, and the Son has paid the price, then Jesus has right indeed, but wants possession. He has



them still to seek in the highway to hell, and must leap in with the sword of truth, and His sword girded upon His thigh, and take His sword, His bow, and His arrows in His hand. After He has fought a hard battle with God's wrath, and won the field, and escaped with His life, He must fight against the rebels whom He has good right to by virtue of His blood, and must pull down every stronghold and high imagination in the soul; and must come in and put the devil of hell to the doors, and take man for His own use and service. He seeks him long ere He gets him to answer when He calls. But when He meets with them, He makes a covenant with them, and they become His. "Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was a time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; yea, I swear unto thee, and thou becomest mine, and I entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. 16:8).

There be five things that give Jesus a right to us. 1. The Father's giving us in election. This is not so much an actual giving, as a purpose to give, for He but marks us for the giving, and here the Father says, Son, win them and have them. 2. The Son takes on our nature, and in that becomes an heir to old Adam, to redeem his mortgage. 3. The Son gives a price for us on the cross. 4. The Father makes a second resignation of man, and says, Son, Thou didst sweat for man, behold I give him to Thee, "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession" (Psal. 2:8). "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Psalm 72:8). O! well\* is our soul when the Father and the Son come (if we may so speak) to bidding<sup>†</sup> and loving. 5. The Son seeks our consent, and brings us in, and says unto us, as it were, what think ye? will ye put in your names with Mine? And this should teach us our whole life to suspect our ways, even in God's ways or service, when we please ourselves. We should serve God as if we were not our own. A Christian is in a soldier's state, having received bounty-money, and the captain having enrolled his name, he is no more his own man, he is his captain's. There be many who wait upon God, like these they call dependents, waiting upon a nobleman; they are content to ride

with the nobleman, and at times to serve him, and attend on him. Yet it is for his countenance or some gain in the meantime, they will not be tied to a daily onwaiting; they would for all that be their own men, and live at liberty in their own houses. So there be a number in the world, that are God's dependers and onwaiters as they are called, who at a start, will ride and run for God, and profess they are Christ's; yet they will serve their lusts and please themselves, or follow their own pleasures; they will not wait on as God's chamber-boys. But if ye be Christ's, ye must be His chamber-boys, and not have a house or calling of your own to serve your lusts with. Ye must stand always before Him as a page waiting on, and not like a landed gentleman, that keeps a day of law<sup>‡</sup> with a certain nobleman, and perhaps for a year after will not saddle a horse for him. We deal with God as with children, who give and then take again, and we be like some that sell the land, and yet keep possession. We sell ourselves to Christ, and yet keep our hearts in our own possession. Now, beloved, ye all deem yourselves to be the redeemed of Christ, and I would it were so; but if ye be redeemed, ye are redeemed both in body and soul, and ye are not your own, neither must ye be your own. Your tongue is not your own, Christ has bought it with the rest of your body; ye must not therefore speak what seemeth good unto you. Your hands and your feet are not your own, ye must not work and walk at your own pleasure. Your eyes and heart are not your own, ye must not look to, or think what ye please or desire, and let the affections run out after Christ, with the bridle in their teeth! for ye must be either Christ's or your own. Wrong not our Lord Jesus, to spoil Him of His right. And again; give Christ possession, for in His word and sacraments He brings all His rights with Him. The decree is "Whosoever believes is Mine." Amen, dear Jesus. "As many as I paid the price of My blood for are Mine." In comes Christ by His Spirit to the believer's heart saying, "I paid the price with My blood for John, Mary, and all others of the elect, therefore they are Mine." Now, if ye can believe, see how you and Christ meet. He takes possession\* of you earth and stone this day. Then, will ye not believe? O! then, ye put Christ out of His possession: beware Christ do not go to law with you. For it is so with all mankind; we must compound with Christ,

and give Him what He will, that is obedience of faith: otherwise if men will not believe they renounce the Gospel; they force\* Christ's ineffectment. They say, Let Christ say what He will, and do what He will, I will bide the worst, I will not agree. What then remains, but that God may say, Since ye appeal to the law, ye shall go. And alas! poor sinner, there ye will get sharp justice, for there the Judge's first and last word will be, God's curse upon thee!

Has the Church lain down, now when Jesus has but turned His back? Has she forgot that He took her into the wine-cellar, and that His arms were about her neck and waist, when she thought his fruit sweet to her taste? Yea, surely! (Howbeit Paul hath been up in the third heaven, he will grow proud after it.) Yet how doth Christ waken her? Not with a rod as she deserved, but in great meekness. Howbeit she had forgotten Jesus Christ, and turned her back upon Him, yet our Lord says not, I shall never welcome thee as I did before, I shall have no more ado with you. No, no, but in meekness he says, "Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away." When once Christ has gotten His poor elect within the reach of mercy, He holds mercy and truth before their eyes (Cant. 5:2) The Church shuts† Christ to the door, and yet He never gives her a hard word; but, "Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove," for your loving husband stands without, with His head all wet with dew, and His locks with the drops of the night." He spoke never a word to Zaccheus, Peter, and the thief on the cross that died with Him. "Return ye backsliding children," that is God's word to draw Israel to repentance, "for I am married unto you." I pray you return, we may not sunder and part so, dear Israel. "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, He shall gather the lambs with His arm (He has not a shepherd's staff to cast at them), and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isaiah 40:11). If ye would know the reason of this, then,

1. Wherever the spirit of adoption is, it is a sweet, gentle, and meek spirit, and mercy is God's key that agrees with our hearts. Christ as Mediator does always come with peace, He brings good news. If the Gospel denounces wrath, it but puts a seal to the law's wrath, "He

that believes not is condemned already." Wrath abides on him, which was on him before.

2. To whom is Christ now speaking? He is speaking to the elect that are in Christ. Now if Christ would summon a child of God before Him to answer as law will, he would refuse to obey the summons, and why? Because he would say, "I am not under the law, but under grace," I am dead to the law as a covenant of works, though under it as a rule of life, I have a Saviour, I have nothing to do with the law, I am in Christ, I am not obliged to answer that Court; ye will get nothing of me, I am not lawbiding.\* But ye will say then, Does not Christ threaten in the Gospel, that He that believes not is condemned already? will He not thunder out judgments against His own children? and convince their consciences of sin by His Holy Spirit? John 16:8 says, "He shall convince the world of sin." Writes He not who has the seven stars in His right hand, sharp rebukes against the churches of Asia, that He will remove the candlestick from among them? I answer, God threatens in the Gospel indeed, but He doth it this way; he never cuts away hope of mercy so long as the Gospel is preached. The Gospel condemns sin, and infidelity, and denounces wrath: but this is always a new song in the end of it, "Believe and repent for all that ye have done, and ye shall be saved." But at the first breach the laws says, "The wrath of God and hell be upon sinners." And howbeit sinners would repent, yet the law will hear of no repentance; the Gospel says repent, or else ye shall perish.

3. Christ, the Mediator, speaks of judgment, even to the elect, but not as mediator. He knows the tongue and legs of the severe and self-condemning law, and then He speaks to the old man, to sin that dwells in the members. But the new man is the child of God. Although God Himself should come against him in law, he would say, I have nothing to do with the law, I am dead to the law, the law was my first husband, and I am married to a second husband, even to Christ Jesus. And here the Lord Jesus in threatening the elect with His judgment, and with the law, and wrath, is even like a man that summons his friends before a judge, but never calls\* the summons.

Why? They agree at home, and he passes from his claim. Jesus will summon His friend before the Judge of the world to answer, and threatens them; but in the meantime He sends His Holy Spirit to the soul, as a daysman, that makes us agree with Christ, and grip to His death; so our dear Lord Jesus Christ passes from His claim, and we agree. For a believing sinner in Christ will never be heard before a judge; they agree at length betwixt themselves. You shall get this doctrine warranted and proven from Jeremiah 31:20. "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still." I summoned Ephraim, my dear son, before my tribunal, and I have denounced fearful judgments against him, but think ye God will call the summons, and bring on the judgments? Nay, read the following words, "For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." What is that else but this? Howbeit I have summoned Ephraim, yet I shall never call\* the summons; I shall cancel the processes and pass from my claim. O, well said, sweet Lord!

Now let us apply the doctrine. The Gospel speaks nothing in effect to God's children, but "My heart and my joy;" it says only, "Arise, my fair one, and come away." Yet doleful shall the day be that comes on them who contemn the Gospel, and the offers of Christ and His righteousness held forth therein. O how good a case are they in that are found in Christ; O woeful will be the case of such as reject Him. Such as are in Christ, they need not thank the law for any mercy they get. Yet the law can hinder no man from God's mercy; and there are good news following notwithstanding of all the hard news that the law speaks of. But such as sin against the Gospel, there shall never another Gospel be preached unto them; for the next Gospel that the rebels, who hate God, shall hear shall be, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." The Gospel-time is a dangerous time for a hard-hearted sinner. We in Scotland are now between heaven and hell—either now or never! This Gospel is God's mariner crying, "Tide! tide! who will sail to Canaan?" God says, Hear Him now, or else God shall be silent, and ye shall cry next to hills and mountains

to fall on you. But here is the case of our Kingdom; mercy is fully holden out to us, and laid open to us, and we have trodden it under foot. There are but two meetings in the world; the first is the meeting of a broken-hearted sinner and a merciful God—this meeting we have now. The other meeting is fast coming, and it is a meeting betwixt a guilty sinner and a wrathful Judge. But if God and His Kingdom meet not in wrath, for the contempt of the Gospel and other great and grievous sins, He has forgotten to be just who is holy and just in all His ways.

"Come away."—This part of the exhortation is as much as if our Lord would have the Church leave some place she is in and come to Himself. Man never need think to come to Christ and bring his old sins with him. God finds fault with His people for this in Jeremiah 7:9, 10, "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name?" Many come to Christ as the young man that kept the commandments from his youth. Many come and would fill God's hand with sacrifices and new moons, as Isaiah 1:11–17. But God puts another task in their hand; "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well." Before ever John the Baptist spake of Christ, he begins at this, Repent and mend your lives. If Christ would welcome all that would come to Him, pleasing themselves with a back-burden of sins and lusts, he would have a thick court. Well, beloved, ye come to Jesus (as ye think) when ye come to the Lord's Supper; have ye brought your lusts with you? Is there a sin that ye have purposed to keep? Then I give you your doom out of Jeremiah 15:1. God says of such men, "Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth;" a doleful word; they and I shall never see each other's faces again! God forbids His prophet to pray for them, nor to lift up a cry for them, for He says, He will nor hear them. Would any man say that Judas was welcome to Christ, who came and kissed Him, and in the meantime had a band of men at his back, that were set upon killing, and not upon kissing? Shall men be welcome, then, who come to Christ's

house, with a burden of sin upon their back? who would crucify again the Lord of glory? Christ, in the word and sacrament, is like a king coming into a prison, and calling out so many by their names, and then departing and causing the prison doors to be closed again. When He has called the roll, and so many in Corinth, and Ephesus, yea, and in Scotland, have answered as are in His count book, He seeks no more.

"For lo! the winter is past."—In these words Jesus tells the spouse, that the winter is past; Christ invites His bride and Church to rise out of her dead sleep, and to come to Him; and the argument is taken from the time and season which is fit for journeying. It is now the spring and summer quarter, and winter's rough weather is past and gone; therefore, my love, "come away." The like reason does our Lord's Spirit use. Rom. 13:12, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

Doctrine I. The first doctrine is; the militant church, while here, she has always a summer and a winter, according as she enjoys the Sun of Righteousness, who hath "healing in His wings" (Malachi 4:2) "The dayspring from on high hath visited us" (Luke 1:7, 8), and "Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising" (Isaiah 60:1, 2, 3). "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12). Now, when the sun departs, when Jesus goes away, then it is dead winter with the Church. So then ye see that the doctrine is warrantable from Scripture. It is clear that under Joshua the Church had her summer and fair weather; the prince of their salvation did fight for them and their enemies were subdued under them (Josh. 5:14). Again, the Lord left them many times under the Judges, and sold them to their enemies, and this was their winter, when God departed from them, and they worshipped other gods. And are they not sometimes mourning, at the rivers of Babel? and sometimes dwelling peaceably under their own fig-tree! This is true, that the Church in respect of outward peace and war is changeable; for she must wade through one water, and then she goes some miles on dry

land, and then a water again. 2. In respect of the outward ministry of the word, Christ, when He has taken such as the Father has marked, then He blows out the candle. 3. In respect of His felt presence, He is ever coming and going, and He must up to court to His Father, and send down love-letters to us again. Christ Jesus, in the power and ministry of the word, is an abiding heritage to no people. Our Lord is riding through the world, on the white horse of the Gospel, riding indeed triumphantly, and as His people welcome Him, so does He remain. Christ Jesus in the Gospel, is like a king's servant, that comes into a prison, where there is neither coal nor candle, and brings a lighted candle in His hand, with a roll of 100 or 200 among 10,000, and the King's warrant to bring so many out; He calls the roll and brings them out, and blows out the candle, and then shuts the prison doors again, and lets the rest lie there till the day of execution. Jesus comes to blind Scotland, and finds them all in Satan's prison, without any light; He has two papers in His hand; one wherein the evangel is written; in it He preaches the casting\* up of the prison doors to the captives; in the other the names of the elect. Now the roll is called, answer, for the winter will come, and then the prison doors will be closed. Christ is amongst us now on horseback, the summer is now well near an end. Ye know what be the tokens of winter? Before the winter, the leaves fall off the trees: men now fall from their profession; many are ashamed to own Christ, and to profess Him, they will not be called Puritans. Trees dry up, and cast their fruit; and become barren; ye never saw the Gospel barrener in good works, and alms deeds than now. The very repairing of God's house, in our own parish church, you need go no further,—the timber of the house of God rots, and we cannot move a whole parish to spend twenty or thirty pounds Scots<sup>†</sup>, upon the house of God to keep it dry.

Doctrine II.—A people in a land are in a lamentable case when Christ and His Gospel is not among them. Let men that want Christ go where they will, the wind is ever upon their face; it is always dead winter with them. Ezekiel (16:4, 5) says, "In the day thou wast born, thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple



thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou was cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born." Hosea 7:11–13, "Ephraim is a silly dove without heart; they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria. When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven; I will chastise them. Woe unto them! for they have fled from me, destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me." In such a case it being winter, there is no fit season for travelling to Christ, the rivers and waters are all aloft and swelled; and the great river of the displeasure of a wrathful God is betwixt the soul and Christ, and neither man nor horseman dare venture upon that river. Then let men who are not in Christ judge of their own case as they please, they cannot go to table, or yet to bed, but the vengeance of God is hard upon their back, for they that want Christ, "walk in the vanity of their mind" (Eph. 4:17, 18). "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, being past feeling." There are frozen hearts, and howbeit all the devils in hell dance upon a frozen heart, it feels not. A man who is sensible that he is under the curse of the law, sees the wrath of God betwixt him and God as a great river, and for his life, he dare neither swim, sail, nor wade on foot; Christ must come through the water, in the great ship of His bloody merits, and so carry him over to dry land. The soul and conscience of some is so frozen, that neither God's mercy, Christ's blood, nor the fire of hell's terror, will melt it; it is like Jerusalem. Zeph. 1:12, "That are settled on their lees; that say in their heart, the Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil." Jeremiah 48:11, What are your privileges by the Gospel? a. Howbeit we are bounded by the river of God's wrath. Yet we come to the waterside and cry to Jesus, "Lord, take me over! Come and hoist sails and fetch us over." For the law, and God's wrath, and the Spirit accompanying it, will make us pray, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom 7:24). b. There is another help of the Gospel. We know not the way to heaven, and how we shall swim over the river, but the Gospel is God's memorandum, telling us the way from this town to that town. It tells that Christ made Himself

a bridge over the water and river of God's wrath. O it is the sweetest time we have in the world when Christ and the Gospel is among us! Then the sun shines upon our Jerusalem, the air is sweet, hot, and calm. The love of Jesus being shed abroad in the heart, the storms of God's wrath are over and gone, and the law dare not speak a word then; but in every street the Lord Jesus is heard crying, "God's mercy, peace, and blessing be upon all them that believe on the Son of God."

"The flowers appear upon the earth."—Then there is a fair garden in the Church: the hedge of it is the two arms of God Almighty going about His church, and the flowers and plants in it are the men of Judah and Israel. His own people fruitful in good works, the planting of the Lord in whom He will be glorified. There is the garden. And there is a clear fountain, our Lord's blood, running abundantly to all thirsty sinners; and in the midst of all the flowers of the garden is the Rose of roses, with an hundred, yea a thousand leaves, even Jesus, "the Rose of Sharon." The wind that blows upon this garden is the sweet north and south wind of the Spirit, blowing upon the beds of spices and causing them to cast out a sweet smell. And the voice of the birds sings sweet and glorious music, Christ speaking to His Church in His holy word, and His Church speaking to Him again in supplications, prayers, and thanksgivings. What pleasure would any soul have in the way to heaven which is not to be found in this garden? Men seek rest, Christ promiseth soul-rest. Matthew 11:28–30, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." And do men decline sorrow, sadness, and grief, and affect pleasure and joy? Then here is encouragement; for "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the Tabernacles of the righteous. David says of the members of the church, Psalm 36:8, "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures."

But I know the way to heaven is judged a harsh way, a low-lived, sad, and melancholy way, full of tears and mourning. I answer: it is known to all divines, that in every regenerated man there is, as it were, two men, the new man and the old man, the Spirit and the flesh; and these two men have contrary ways, contrary hearts, contrary hands, contrary judgments. When the children of God think the way to heaven unpleasant, and full of sorrow, then the old man bears rule in the soul, and that is but the opinion of the old man. The way to heaven is not the worse, though it be so to corrupt nature, which judges heaven and Christ Himself nothing worth. But ask the opinion of the new man, what he thinks of the way to heaven. O! he will say! God is dearer to him than thousands of gold and silver! sweeter than honey and the honey-comb! "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee" (Psalm 73:25). If ye then ask what is the reason of their mourning, tears, wrestling, agonies, and terrors of a guilty conscience? I answer; we may not think that the child of God, in His way to heaven, will never get a shower; nay, sometimes near mid-summer, there will fall out a blast of hail; but the nature and season of the year will soon melt and dry it up, and it will clear in the west, and the birds will renew their songs again, and the roses will spread their leaves again when the sun shines. So even whilst it is summer, the Sun of Righteousness will hide His face from the poor believer, Christ will seem to go away, and the conscience will quake and tremble. It was so with Hezekiah, when he mourned to God as a dove; and chattered like a crane. It was not the fear of death, but because, when he was so near death, God, in His feeling, was so far from him. It is said of the turtle that after it has lost its marrow, it never sits on a green branch; the soul that knows what it is to want Christ under these terrors will never look a blythe look until it clear in the west again, and the Sun of Righteousness begin to break the clouds of His wrath. See ye not Job's case when he was deserted of God? "Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing I long for! even that it would please God to destroy me! that He would let loose His hand and cut me off!" (Job 6:8, 9). I say, no man knows what it is to want God, but such as once had Him. Such will cry when He deserts them,

O when wilt thou return again! a thousand years in hell, for one kiss of a reconciled God! Men will say this is winter indeed, and the child of God is going backward, under such conflicts. I answer, that nothing grows and flourishes in winter, but even then there are many sweet flowers in the soul springing. It is true, sense and feeling wither, for it is not its time of year to grow; but now under these desertions humility grows, feeling of guilt grows, the love and longing to be kissed with the kisses of His mouth grows, a care to seek God's face grows, and smells sweetly like the rose in June.

The soul is never under such a good case as now; for the souls of God's children are ever but in three cases. 1. Towards Christ, it is mid-summer sometimes with the soul, when it enjoys God's sweet and felt presence. Sometimes we may be so drunken with sense, that we become proud and haughty. We think this a good case; yet, there is great danger that we provoke our Lord Christ to go away from us. Therefore, we have now need of a holy fear, and of ardent prayer to God to continue our case. 2. The soul will be in such a winter, that the Lord will withdraw Himself for many days and years, and yet the soul is so dead in sleepy security that it never misses Him. This is David's case; when news came to him that Uriah the Hittite was slain, he called it a chance of war, and sent Joab word to renew the battle again. But the Lord had then left David, and he knew it not. 3. The third case is best of all, when God is minting\* to go away, and the child of God holds Him fast. And be persuaded that God is well worthy† your souls, when it is at holding and drawing betwixt God and your soul. When God is saying as He did to Jacob, "Let Me go for the day breaketh," and Jacob said, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me" (Genesis 32:26). When God is sounding in the ear of Job's conscience, "Depart from me for I will destroy thee;" Job answers, "Lord, I will not leave Thee, I will not depart from Thee: I will trust in thee, howbeit thou shouldst slay me." And when Christ saith to the woman of Canaan, I came to the world for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, I came not for you, yet she still raps, and knocks, and cries for "mercy, mercy," and cries on Him, "Lord, sayst Thou so, that Thou camest not for me?" She would take no such

answer. Now it is the sweetest season in the year, when faith binds and holds Christ so fastened that He cannot win away. No cord will hold our Samson but faith, love, zeal, new desire of Christ, humility, &c. When all these graces flourish, then the soul has joy and comfort in Christ.

Doctrine III.—The time of the Gospel is but short; it is but a summer quarter, or thirteen weeks as our text bears; yea, but one day, Luke 19:42, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day." Yea, but a piece of a day, a little before supper time, when the King's table is covered for His guests, (Luke 14:17). The longest date that the word of God gives to it is a year only, "the acceptable year of the Lord." I will persuade you that the summer runs away, and you may fear that Scotland's summer is near an end; and happy are they that embrace the time, and spend the summer quarter in journeying to Jesus Christ. The damned in hell would buy time at the expense of lying ten thousand years in hell for freedom from that place of misery and woe, to enjoy the evening of one of our summer days. Germany and Bohemia mourn now that their summer is gone, as it is to be feared, with them. And we have cause to say with the Church, Jer. 6:4, "Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out."

Doctrine IV.—When the Gospel is in a land, and the word of Christ among a people, in life and power of a heavenly ministry, the very season should move us to come to Christ. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Rom 13:12). As if the apostle would say, It is a shame to lie asleep when the day is come and the night away; therefore cast off your night clothes, and draw on your coat, put your arm over the bed-stock and reach to your clothes; take a grip of Christ and put Him on as the armour of light. "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. 5:8). The apostle there reasons for the noble parts of "faith and love," and to cover the head with everlasting glory. In the day of the Gospel, the Lord Jesus

holds out in His right hand a lanthorn, and a fair candle in it, and is crying, "Run, run fast! Haste, haste into Christ before the candle be blown out." Would you know what the Gospel is? It is Christ's "cock-crowing," crying, "Up, O sleeping world, ye have far to go; it is a long journey to heaven, and it is hard upon day; I pray you ride and make for the gate."\* The Gospel is Christ's hour, the summer-sun; and all men know that the summer-sun is God's sandglass set above our head bidding the husbandman plough, sow, reap, for the winter is at hand—prepare houses and fire for the winter is at hand. So the Gospel is Christ's sandglass telling us the hour runs away; labour for the meat that endures to everlasting life; provide for winter. The last trumpet will waken the deadest and deafest of sinners that are in the world, and those that are in the deepest sleep; but they shall get the most doleful wakening who sleep when there is a candle burning, and a sun shining on their heads and bedsides—and these are they who sleep in the day of the Gospel. Men know that the Gospel is Christ's trumpet, and His voice, calling on all men whom it reaches; and ye know the poor man in the Gospel was so glad when they said, "Arise, Christ calleth thee," that he got up in haste and threw his cloak from him, that he might be the lighter and nimbler to run and come with speed to Jesus Christ. O beloved, up now! Christ calls you; cast off the world (it is an heavy cloak), and run to Jesus. And though men be obliged in the suntide\* to come to Christ, yet in the summer-tide of the Gospel men are under a more strict obligation. And this will more appear if you consider what way the Gospel offers Jesus Christ unto you. Christ is the food that feeds and nourishes His people's souls; now, He cannot be eaten except He be dressed, and prepared, and broken to the soul. So long as Christ is not preached in the Gospel and offered in the Sacraments, He is a whole Christ and does not feed His people. But when we preach Christ before you, we let you see Him torn, rent, and wounded for sin. We lay Him upon your plate or trencher, in the word and sacraments. So you see it is summer: betwixt God and you be it, if ye come not to Jesus Christ again.†

If we speak of those who live in the winter of ignorance, idolatry, &c., and never heard of Christ crucified; for anything I know Christ has not made a covenant of peace with them. The contract is but drawn up in a minute<sup>‡</sup> and unsubscribed. But it is not so with such as live under the drop of the Gospel; for Jesus Christ has formed the contract, and has written it, and ye know that a contract serves for nothing except it be subscribed by both parties. Our dear Jesus, to His great charges, subscribed the contract at the expense of His precious blood. Now, in the summer of the Gospel, He offers it to you this day; and there is His word for it, Isaiah 61:1, 2. Will ye consent and obey? The contract says in the general, "He that believes has life everlasting;" and in the word and sacraments the Lord comes to the conscience of every man in particular and says, "Wilt thou believe? Will ye quit yourselves and be Christ's wholly?" So there remains nothing, beloved, but that ye say, "Amen" to your Lord. I pray now, in this summer, give to Christ a good answer. So then, ye see, when the word of the Gospel is preached ye are obliged in a special manner to come to Christ.

This doctrine doth, in a special manner, strike against secure sluggards, and such as contemn the Gospel. A man that sins against the law, has indeed God's justice as a contrary advocate to plead against him; yet even in this case he has an advocate with God, even God's mercy, and that pleads for him, and requests Jesus Christ to take upon Him to be his mediator. But if a man close his ears at Christ's voice, in the Gospel, and sleep in summer when Christ calls upon him, and sin against the Mediator, and trample under foot the blood of the new covenant; both mercy and justice doth plead against him. And, therefore, he that sins against the law, justice is but angry at him; but he that sins against the Gospel, justice pursues him in wrath, and the very mercy of God is angry, and cries, "No mercy for that man, that sins under the sunshine, and summer tide of the Gospel." And this is righteousness with God. The Gospel cries mercy once, twice, thrice; these be the sweet and comfortable "O yeses,"\* proclaimed upon the cross of Christ, viz.: "Mercy, mercy, mercy, to sinners!" With a loud voice, the Gospel cries this at the third hour,

and the sixth, and at the eleventh hour, at the very striking of twelve, at the very going down of the sun, at supper time. But doth Chorazin and Bethsaida, England and Scotland, contemn this sweet voice? In God's righteousness and judgments, they shall never see another summer. When Lammas-wind<sup>†</sup> blows and summer is gone, a doleful winter of wrath, and all devouring fire of the anger and judgment of God, shall come. A man that has but one eye should keep that well. We have all sinned against God's justice; nothing remains as our eye to see God but through the prospect of His mercy. If we lose mercy, we are gone. In the first covenant, God takes man's word without a cautioner; in the second covenant Jesus became a cautioner: if we sin against our cautioner, and cast out with our advocate, offering Himself to us, we have none to speak for us. A man that cannot agree with Christ, he will agree with none; for without Him there is no access to God, for "He is the way, the truth, and the life."

"The flowers appear on the earth."—It is time now that we enter upon some directions upon the particular <sup>‡</sup> evidences, signs, and marks of summer. The first sign is the appearance of flowers upon the earth; by which I understand, the holy lives of the saints, which are beautiful in the eyes of Jesus, as the flowers in summer are beautiful in the fields and gardens. "Israel shall blossom and bud as a rose, and fill the face of the world" (Isaiah 27:6). "And they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth" (Psalm 72:16). "He shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon" (Hosea 14:5). The Church is God's garden, and plot of ground, and He Himself sets flowers in it, by the ministry of the word. Here there is a mark of the true Church of God, that the word is accompanied by the effectual working of God's Spirit, that sweet-smelled flowers grow in this plot of ground, in the garden of the word. Will ye know what makes the Lord's flowers fruitful in His vineyard? There be these four things that makes all Christians fruitful in it. 1. The Father's husbandry; He is a good husbandman, if any man be set by Him he must grow. 2. Christ is a piece of fertile ground: He brings forth a hundred bolls for one. If once a flower be planted in Christ, he draws life from Christ: "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we



shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom 6:5). All that grows fruitfully to God must be planted in the death of Christ; for when Christ died, He was sown and planted in the earth, and the third day He came above the earth and budded. So our body of sin is sown in the body of Christ, and the third day the image of God buds up again. So it is our engrafting into Christ makes us fruitful, "I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). But, beloved, there be two things in an engrafting. 1. The imps\* to be engrafted must be cut off their own stock, and impied in another; so we must be cut off old Adam, and must be engrafted in Christ Jesus. 2. Then, again, the stock in which the graft is set must be cutted and branched; for we were not planted into living Christ, but into crucified Christ! O! but our stock, Christ, was fearfully cutted and branched! He was cloven and hagged in body and soul, and we, the Lord's flowers, are impied in cutted and bleeding Jesus to draw life out of His death.

3. Abundance of rain makes flowers to grow. We are watered, and washed with the purging blood, and cleansing water, that came out of the side of Jesus.

4. Flowers must have sweet, wholesome air that will make them grow. The sweet worthiness\* of God's Spirit rebuking the conscience for sin, and the sweet south wind of the same Spirit comforting the soul, blows upon God's flowers. What then makes so many stinking weeds in our land, so that God may say, as He said of the people in Micah 7:4, "The best of them is as a brier; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge?" Pride has blossomed, "violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness" (Ezek. 7:11). "Judgment springeth up as a hemlock in the furrows of the field" (Hosea 10:4). Even here is the cause; men are not planted in Christ, but grow wild upon the mountains of the earth like nettles and thorns. And gain is a flower that smells sweet to many sorts of people; the inordinate pleasures of sin, oppression, covetousness, bloodshed, lust, &c., so that Christ

must run out of His garden for the filthy smell of the weeds that grow in it.

"The time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."—The turtle is a mourning fowl, and is especially so after she has lost her mate. This voice is heard in the Church uttered by repenting sinners with tears. Alas! we have all lost our marrow by our sins; we have lost God. And this is Christ's music in the Church, singing and mourning,\* mercy and judgment. Christ is our sweet Nightingale, that, in the time of the Gospel, sings sweetly. Wisdom sings without in the streets; for the evangel is Christ's love-song compiled by Himself, and the matter of it is how a Prince came from heaven to suit† a wife, and He loved her so dearly, that He lay down on the hard tree of a cursed cross, and died for His love, and thereafter lived again, and married her, a beloved dame. Now, when Christ is singing, rejoice at the glad tidings of mercy and salvation; be won with Christ's sweet music. The silly fowl is deceived and taken by the deceiving fowler's voice, which draws her to the net, where she is taken and slain. O! that we cannot be moved with the pleasant voice of Jesus, to be taken as captives, rendering ourselves over to Him. Jesus Christ also in the Gospel does mourn over us, and speaks of judgment with tears, as He did over Jerusalem (Luke 19:42), "If thou hadst known, in this thy day, but now they are hid from thine eyes." Beloved friends, that hear the Gospel, must have a soft heart to it, and not rejoice when Christ laments, and to pipe when Christ pipeth: because where neither mercy nor judgment will move a people, the heart is like a stone that will not receive the stamp.

"The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell."—The last mark of the summer of the Gospel is, that the fig-tree abounds unto fruits, which smell well unto God through Jesus Christ. This is conveniently casten in to us as the mark of the spouse of Christ; she is fruitful in good works. Faith cannot want holiness of life. "If any man will love Me, he will keep My commandments" (John 14:15). "Bring forth fruits meet for

repentance" (Matthew 3:8). "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27). When God's children are once planted in Christ, they begin then to bud. When Matthew was converted, he followed Christ; he made a feast to Christ, there is his bounty; he invited the publicans and sinners to Christ, there is his charity. So Job feared God, and eschewed evil. Cornelius prayed, and, with his prayers, his alms-deeds ascended up to heaven. Dorcas was a disciple full of good works. Many are disciples in profession, but they are empty vessels, and God has laid upon them the curse of the fig-tree. They are reprobate to good works. God, in His righteous judgment, has said to them, "Never man ripe\* fruit of thee while the world standeth. Thou shalt never have grace to do a good turn in the Church of God." Many in our day profess Christ, and give up their names to Christ, and put their hand to our Lord's charter, and yet are not Christ's. They have made shipwreck of the faith, and a good conscience. Like men that after they have sold their lands in such a place, and subscribed the bargain, then they have no more but a naked title; so when we are going out of the world, we may take nothing with us; death, as master porter, waits at the entry of the grave, and takes all from us. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them."

"Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."—Our Lord doubles the exhortation, arise and come away, and it teaches us that—

1. Our Lord allows not to His children one hour's sleep. When He calls us forth to watch, He bids us watch continually. He lets us see how ready we are to fall asleep. When the Lord turns His back upon us, our hearts are like the paces\* of a clock, that must be drawn up every six hours; we are down upon this earth; except the Lord draw the paces of our hearts.

2. Our Lord would have present obedience. As soon as Christ said to Zaccheus, "Come down," he came down hastily, and when our Lord bade Matthew follow Him, he stayed not to tell his money, nor mark it in his count-books, but came presently (Luke 5:28).

3. The doubling of this exhortation notes the earnestness of Jesus, to have the spouse's company. Christ has fair weather and walks in pleasant fields, yet He thinks He has no pleasure except He have His church in His company. O! so<sup>†</sup> serious as God is in the conversion of a sinner! He comes out in the street, "and crieth upon the high places of the city" (Prov. 9:3); like a man that sees a town on fire, urging his hands, and shouting to this sleepy world, seeing the wrath that is coming on them, and he has both prayers and tears, (Luke 19:42). "We pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20). My dear sons, I pray for you to my Lord Jesus; He is saying, For My blood, and My wounds' sake, come. It is no marvel Christ hath a count<sup>‡</sup> above His head as Mediator, for as Mediator the Father has given the church to His keeping, and it is one part of the Mediator's calling to render a reckoning for His kingdom, and His subjects to His Father; that He may say, Father, there is the roll of all the names, all are there, I have lost none; and we shall all stand with Jesus at His back. Now, when Jesus has this reckoning to make, and God has His bond as cautioner of the covenant, it is no wonder that He cry oftener nor\* once, twice, or thrice upon His church. For it goes this way betwixt the Father and the Son; the Father disposes and resigns so many to the Son. Says the Father, Son, I deliver such a man and such a woman, keep them and answer for them; and Jesus gives His bond for the receipt of them. Says Christ, "I, Jesus, Mediator of the new covenant, grant that I have received of My Father, so many children, and bind and oblige Myself to restore them all at the return of the last judgment." John 17:6–12, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them Me; those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost." John 6:37, 39, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out; but shall raise it up at the last day." Now from this count lying on Christ's head proceeds His earnestness in calling His church to come, crying, O come in! holding out His arms, which is a painful thing. "I have spread out My hands all the day to a rebellious people" (Isa. 65:2). In wishing, Deut. 5:29, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments." John 8:37, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." This is a singular

comfort to a weak child of God, that has a true desire to come to Christ Jesus, and rise and forsake the world; Christ has also an earnest desire that we should come, and if we would seek Him, with earnest desires, the marriage must hold ye would do Christ a pleasure this day if ye would rise, He prays you; My brethren (says He) for My blood's sake, be reconciled to Me!

O! but our Lord would like to be in when He stands, when He knocks at the door saying, "My fair one!" This is an ordinary epithet, given by Christ through all this song to His church, that she is called fair, pleasant, and comely. Once for all in this place we shall expound it; she in herself is black like the moon, spotted like the leopard, but she is fair, because of His inherent fairness, with the washing of water by the word (Eph. 5:26, 27). But we must dig somewhat further in to seek the cause of this beauty. Ezek. 16:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, "Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness, yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest Mine; then washed I thee with water, yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil; I clothed thee also with embroidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk; I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thine hands, and a chain on thy neck: and I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thy head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver, and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, honey, and oil, and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom; and thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty, for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God." The Lord's washing is the cause of her fairness; or rather it is Christ's fairness, that makes us fair. Christ is two ways fair, and clean: one way as God equal with the Father, and Holy Spirit, and so He is all beauty; another way as He is Mediator, and so He borrowed our spots, and took upon Him our sins, yea, He went

into the wine press of the Father's wrath, and there did free Himself and us of the blot of our sins. He being our head come out clean and beautiful, through His perfect comeliness (Ezek. 16:14). He puts on us this beauty; then, it is our Lord's righteousness wherewith we are beautiful, and righteous in the sight of God.

But because this beauty is scorned by the Church of Rome, I will labour to show you how Christ's righteousness is ours. I observe two times when we are justified before God, and set free from the condemning power of the law as a covenant of works.

1. When Christ died and rose again for our justification.
2. When we believe in Christ dying and rising again, and resting and relying upon Him alone for salvation.

When Christ was summoned, judged, and condemned, we also were summoned, judged, and condemned in Him. And as Christ ended the work and came out a free man from hell, the grave, Satan, and sin, we came out also with Him, for we are one with Him; for Christ and we are one. Now, that day that Christ digged the well that made us all clean, He purchased to us His beauty, His comeliness, and His innocency. That day upon the cross, in the garden, and in the grave, Christ did spin that long white robe of His righteousness, and innocency, to be a garment to us all. He has fair velvets beside Him to cover all the elect. Before we were born, Christ made new garments for us; that was the day when our righteousness was bought. Christ had all the elect's sins bound on His back, and God looking to us could see no sin, and looking to Christ rising from the dead, and having left our sins in the grave behind Him, God could see sin neither in Him nor in us. He could not challenge Christ, for He had died and risen again; He could not challenge the elect, for Christ had suffered for them, and risen for them. As Adam was our murderer by eating the forbidden fruit, before he was our father, and made us guilty before we were born; so Jesus saved us ere we who now live were born; and had righteousness ready, as one has a

garment shapen and made for a child that is not yet born. But there is another court, which is the judgment and court-hall of conscience, wherein conscience does accuse us as guilty sinners, and sets up a tribunal in the soul, and reads the book of the law, and makes the poor sinner see he is under God's curse and God's wrath. Here the child of God is feared to look God in the face, for fear God see sin in him, and see his filthy raggedness; and therefore he runs to the cross of Christ, and there puts on a garment of Christ's righteousness. The apostle says, Romans 3:25, that "God set forth" Christ (as in an open market place) "to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Christ is even the Lord's wardrobe (to speak so) to all poor sinners that come to Christ for a garment or clothes washen in our Lord's blood. Wash ye, then, in that blood, and God cannot see through that garment which makes a sinner so comely and fair that Jesus has reason to call her His "love" and His "fair one."

Use 1. Beloved, who knows how long and how large the web of Christ's righteousness is? We will be all summoned one day before the Judge that He may see us, and if we come not before Him in good apparel, it is Death. Now our own garments are ragged and torn, let us borrow from Christ, and above all things labour for His righteousness.

Use 2. If we speak of God's dealings with the consciences of men, many Christians wonder why God should deal with them so at the last court of the general judgment, to make them see their sins, and cause their consciences to convict and summon, when in the meantime, that day that Christ died, their debt was paid, their bill was answered, and the Judge appeased, and all paid and scored out. Answer. As it is known that some men are never sure of their inheritance until their rights be called in question before the judge, and then they get an absolution, and their rights made sure: so it is good our consciences should summon us before God, for by this means we get a decree of absolution or absolviture,\* so that at the

last court of the general judgment, we may say to God, Lord, remember such a day that I was by my conscience summoned before Thee, but before I went home Thy Spirit assured my conscience of the forgiveness of my sins, and Christ by His Spirit did write an absolution in my heart. "Indeed (Christ says) I cannot deny My own hand-write;" and when the Spirit is called, He cannot but say, "I will not deny the truth, it was so indeed." And when the Judge's count-book\* is looked, all is fair scored out, and paid, that day that Christ died. Yet the Christian has need daily to be going to the blood of Christ to get his sins washed away.

"Arise and come."—This coming is faith. This rising is a setting of the heart up to heaven, where Christ is at God's right hand. And these are fitly conjoined together. We see faith will not suffer a man to sleep, but draws the soul upwards. Abraham was a man like us; yet that made him never to seek a settled dwelling in the earth, he looked to a city with an eye of faith, for a city that has a foundation. So Moses' faith is commended, Heb. 11:24, 25, 26. He was no earthly-minded man, he made small estimation to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and to play the courtier. The word signifies that he looked away from that; faith set his face to a contrary point of the compass, where he looked to the recompense of the reward. The like we see in the thief at Christ's right hand; he had no mind to this life, as the other had, who esteemed it his happiness to come down from the cross. So then, I make great question if a worldly-minded man has faith, for the love of the world is a lying upon the dust of the earth, but faith is a rising and coming to Christ. See Heb. 10:34, 35, "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."

To God be praise, both now and for ever more!

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## MONERGISM BOOKS

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