



SERMON IX.*

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 v. 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,

* Preached at a Communion in Anwoth, April 5th, 1637.

† Quarrels.

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 lii. 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 undefied.*"—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 confi-

* It ill becomes.

dence, 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 key-hole, 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. ii. 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. xxv. 5), “While the bridegroom tarried, they (even the wise virgins) all slumbered and slept.” (Rom. xiii. 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. v. 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. xi.) 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 xi. 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?

* Locked out.

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. xxviii. 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. v. 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,^o 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† 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,‡ and when the peace betwixt them is cried down for a time (1 John iii. 9), the seed of God abideth in them (1 John ii. 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 defec-

* The weights. † A mere burst, or for fashion's sake.

‡ Quarrels.

tion 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. vii. 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† 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. i. 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

* Protests in legal form.

† Make invasion.

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.

* In the very act.

† Strange.

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. ii. 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. i. 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

* Protest.

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. i. 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. xviii. 31), “Make you a new heart, and

a new spirit." (Col. iii. 10), "Put on the new man." (Rom. xii. 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

* Attempt; aim at.

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. xviii. 31), and He promises to work in us what He commands us to do (Ezek. xxxvi. 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. xiii. 44). Then Christ filleth to comers, at the first meeting, a cheerful heart. And (Matt. xi. 28) ease and rest to their souls is promised. (Rev. iii. 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. ix. 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† 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

*-Happy is.

† Get in.

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. ix. 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. xxxi. 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 bairn's 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;† 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

* The prize offered. † In days long past and gone.

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. vii.), “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. i. 7). The saints must be undefiled when their sins are put up in Christ’s account. (Isaiah liii. 6), “The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” (2 Cor. v. 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

* Indictment.

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. i. 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

* The chance of winning.

us. Let in thy slain Husband in thy heart, and give Him a night's lodging (see 1 Peter i. 18), because Christ bought you dear, not with silver and gold. (1 Peter ii. 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 xxii. 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

* In all obedience that is worth the name.

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† 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

* Men gave Him little inducement to expose Himself in the cold night.
 † Is owner of.

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. xxvi. 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

* Agreed with ; coincided with.

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. xxi. 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 xxx. 7), "Thou didst hide thy face (now the horse is saddled), and I was troubled." So then, unbelief makes a road.^o 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

* Invasion, as in 1 Sam. xxvii. 10.

† Gawin Douglas, many of whose words occur in Rutherford, uses "braik and bost" for "threat and frighten." In the old copies, the sentence is, "to ready and to breakfast," which has no meaning.

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.

* Points of time.

