



SERMON VII.*

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. xi. 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 potters: a goodly price that I*

* Preached at a Communion in Anwoth, in the year 1634.

† What is due to Me for the past.

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 potter'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. xxiii. 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. xxi. 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. xxv. 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 lxxiv.; when God left feeding His sheep, in came the enemies, warred, burnt the sanctuary, &c. And when God left the flock (Psalm lxxix. 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. viii. 9, 10, 11,

* Plump and thriving.

and xii. 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 liii. 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. iii. 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 vi. 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 ii. 8; 2 Cor. x. 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 cx).

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,

* A blow.

† A stroke that makes them black and blue. Old Gawin Douglas uses this expression.

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 ii. 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. v. 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 li. 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.

c. 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. xxiii. 37, 38, Luke xix. 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. iii. 6, "If I had sent thee to a nation of a strange language," &c. Matt. xii. 41, "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it." Chap xi. 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^o 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 xxii. 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.

*Foot of the table.

†Put on a level with.

They gave Christ the thier'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^o 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† 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

* Bundle up and go.

† Fling it about.

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. xxxi. 36, 37, Isaiah liv. 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. xxxii. 40, chap. xxxi. 32, 33, 34, 35, Luke vi. 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 lxxxix. 33).

* Make to bleed.

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. xvi. 8, "Thy time was the time of love,—I swore 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 iii. 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 infest-

ment 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† and duty.‡ The tack§ 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

* Keeps the management. † Rent. ‡ Tax. § The lease.

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. vii. 13, Job xii. 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 suspen-

* Broke; transact business with.

sion on the Lord's decret? Nay (Jer. xv. 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. viii. 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 cxxiii., "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 cxxx. 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 iii. 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. i. 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 fair, 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

* Prospect of things to come.

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. ii.) The Church sees Him on the mountains, standing behind the wall ; she misses Him (Cant. iii.), 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. vii. 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 v.), "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. iii. 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

* Quantity; mere body.

† Press onward.

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. xx. 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 xlii., "Behold My servant, whom I have chosen." At the meeting, Christ said, I will do Your bidding; and so He did (Psalm xl. 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 l. 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

* Past kindness.

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. ii. 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 lii. 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^o 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,

* Leave it as a question to be discussed.

† Way.

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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

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* Do not put Me off. † Stroke that makes black and blue.

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. xxi. 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 iv. 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

* A small stone in the wall.

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

* The value of thirty shekels of silver.

vanity and pride in apparel, extortion, no justice, but many false laws, incest, and adulteries; many unre-
 venged 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

* Favour and influence.

† Interest.

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.

* Crippling. So used in old Gawin Douglas.

“*Thai 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. xxvii. 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

* Closely related.

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

* At his back to help. † Uncommon ; extraordinary.

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† 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 swimm'd 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

* Setting to; undertaking. † The acquisition of the estate.

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

* Suppose; believe.

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 comparing 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.

* Load the dice so as to cheat in playing.