



## SERMON II.\*

*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 xiii. 7, 8, 9.*

AS the Eunuch, when reading Isaiah liii. 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

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\* Preached at Anwoth, in Galloway, in the year 1630.

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 v. 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 ii. 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 sinners; 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 unkindler the world was to Christ, He was aye the kinder 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 i. 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. xiv. 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 xiii. 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 † 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

\* Fail to do His bidding.

† To woo.

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 xii. 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 xvii. 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 xiv. 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

\* Bankrupt. † Assignees: persons to whom property is destined.

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. i. 15), the “*exact character*”<sup>\*</sup> 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. i. 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<sup>†</sup> 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

<sup>\*</sup>The Greek word for “*Express image.*” † Bright-shining.



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

\* Himself solitary.

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. xx. 15). "He hath hedged me about, that I cannot get out; He hath made my chain heavy (Lam. iii. 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 xiii. 24). Christ, the true heir, was put to this, What shall I do? "Now is," says

\* Probably, "a broken *leme pot*," i.e., earthen vessel.

† Thrusts back.

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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 vi. 15). But when the court changes, and it grows black in the west, and there comes winter weather; Oh! then, What do

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\* A pledge that no injury shall be done.

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 lowms 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

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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 xxxi. 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.

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\* Hope of.

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

\* Without help.

† Join.

gospel. The third part shall be left therein. Two parts are cut off. Take them out of my sight. Jer. xv. 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. ix. 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 viii. 7. And for vanity, see Isaiah iii.

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 lvii. 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. ii. 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, xxiii. 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 viii., He denounces judgment in four several places against idolaters; but in chap. ix. 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

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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 vi. 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 cx. 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

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\* Ere He conquer, much must be borne.



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. xxii. 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. xxxix. 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

\* Shines bright.

† Plated over.

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. v. 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 i. 4, the church says, Draw me. She speaks to Christ to draw her; then says Christ, chap. ii. 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. i. 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. iii. 3, "Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth." He says, chap. iv. 8. "Come with Me from Lebanon." He calls her. She says, chap. i. 4, "We will remember Thy love more than wine!" He says, chap. iv. 10, "How much better is thy love than wine!" He calls her, "His love and fair one," chap. ii. 10. She calls Him, chap. v. 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.

