



SERMON XI.

Christ and the Dove.*

CANTICLES ii. 14, 17.

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

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

She is termed Christ's dove:—*First*. Because the dove is a fearful bird, and soon scared. (Hosea xi. 11.), "They shall tremble like a dove out of Assyria." Any thing, the smallest noise or din that can be, frights and chases these timorous birds in their dove-house, into Christ. It is an happy rain that chases Christ's doves in to Himself. For all the

* The full title is: "Christ and the Dove's Heavenly Salutations, with their pleasant conference together; or a Sermon before the Communion in Anwoth, 1630. By that flower of the Church, Mr. SAMUEL RUTHERFORD."

devil's wit, he is soon beguiled; the storm that arises against the ship where Christ and His disciples are makes them to awaken and pray.

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

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

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

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

* Puts up with tears.

† Thrusts.

‡ Spouse; match.

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

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

"My dove that dwells in the holes of the rock."—We need not to go far off to seek the exposition of these words, for Christ is the rock upon which the Kirk is builded. (Matt. xvi. 18), "Upon this rock I will build My Church," says Christ. And (Psalm xviii. 2), "The Lord is my rock, and My fortress." And God is also *"the secret place of the stairs,"* where the Kirk hides her from the storm. So David calls God his Secret Place, his Hiding Place (Psalm xxxii. 7). Thou art a Secret Place to me from distress; Thou wilt preserve me (Psalm xci.) And because in all this song we must ever hold up the line and string of the allegory of marriage, and consider the Kirk as the spouse of Christ, the Rock is Christ; in whom the Kirk dwells by faith, and Christ dwells in her heart (Eph. iii. 17). "Abide in Me, and I in you" (John xv. 4). Abide in

Me, as branches impeded* into the vine. Now the imp is ingrafted in a cut stock; Christ was haggged,† hewed, and cut on the cross, the stock wherein we are ingrafted. So that the holes of the rock may well be expounded (as Bernard says) to be the wounds of Christ. So that the meaning is, O my dove, that by faith has thy abode in the wounds and the holes made in the hands and sides of crucified Jesus: or, O my dove, that believes, and that by faith has thy abode in the wounds, and abides in Christ as an imp ingrafted in a tree, in Christ, who died. And so, man, flee into Christ all wounded, and holed‡ for thy sin, flee into Christ, thy Rock; and so into God (Psalms xviii. 2). Hence we see what a Saviour the Kirk believes in; a Saviour that's God and man; as man to be a sufferer, and as God to be a supporter. There was great necessity of these two natures. God would not seek payment of our debt off His Son as God; for by the law He could not answer, for He was the creditor, and so could not be the debtor. And therefore, for the better understanding of this, I would have you with me to consider how our nature, and God's nature, work to other's hands in the work of our redemption. A sinner cannot dwell in Christ as God only. There is no hole nor chamber for a sinner to dwell in God; and therefore Christ behaved to be man, that we might find fair chambers in the wounds of Jesus, wherein the doves of Jesus might dwell. And if He had been only man, He could not have been an House upon a Rock, and so could not have borne the weight of all the doves. But there be some questions in the work of our redemption that only man can answer. Man has sinned, and man must die, says God's justice. Be

* Graft; inserted.

† Hacked

‡ Full of gashes.

it so, says Christ ; Man sinned, and I, the Man, Christ, shall die. 2. Man took on the debt, therefore another cannot pay for him. Be it so, says Christ ; I, the Man, shall pay the ransom. 3. Man behaved to make amends, because man did the fault. Let it be so, said Christ ; I, the Man, Christ, shall make amends again.

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

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

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

c. The Man, Christ, bargains with the Divine nature. The human nature says, I love man, and I will die for him : the Divine nature says, now I shall hold Thee up under Thy sufferings, and Thou shall overcome death. The Man, Christ, without *the back-bond** (to speak so) durst not for ten thousand worlds

* Declaring the person free from the former bond.

have ventured to yoke^o in the fields with the justice of God, and death, and hell, and sin, and the devil—except He had the Divine nature in a personal union to bear Him up under His sufferings. Therefore Christ, when He looks upon His sufferings, looks also upon His warrant. (Isaiah l. 6), “I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.” These be the words of the Man, Christ.

Now, it might have been said, A man will suffer all that his alone;† but here He looks to His warrant (verse 7) and says, I have My warrant with Me, “*the Lord God will help Me, I shall not be confounded.*” I have God’s warrant, who is united to Me in a personal union to bear Me up. Even sick-like‡ Christ goes down to the grave. (Psalm xvi. 10), “Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell (or the grave), neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.” As if Christ would say; I am sure, O Lord, Thou will be as good as Thy word, and make good Thy bargain, and will warrant Me against death. See then how it goes; the Man, Christ, takes man by the hand to bring him out from under God’s wrath. So, beloved, be glad in such a Saviour; come all into the Rock, for God, Christ, and man, all these three are linked together as in a chain, and Christ in the middle link of the chain. Now, let all the kings of the earth that boast of fair houses and stately palaces, come and see if they can compare with the dove that dwells in the holes of the Rock. Nebuchadnezzar said, Is not this great Babylon that I have built? Surely men are to be rebuked that are careful for houses and settling in the world, and has no assurance of this lodging. World-

* Engage with.

† By himself.

‡ In such a manner.

lings are but ravens that big* in the wild mountains. The Kirk is only at home bigging in faith. These be indeed dear chambers, being built by Christ Himself. God has made holes and windows in Christ that His doves may flee into, and make their nest in His heart. O dear and precious dwelling! the lodging cost us nothing, yet we are desired to dwell in it.

Now what is Christ's petition? "*Cause Me to hear thy voice.*" Its ordinary for man to beg from God, for we be but His beggars; but it is a miracle to see God beg at man. Yet here is the Potter begging from the clay; the Saviour seeking from sinners! What is His suit? It must be some great thing; it is even a sight of His bride. He is even saying to her, My dear spouse, be kind to Me, let Me see thy face, be not blait† and wavering; be plain with Me, your Husband, tell Me all your mind in prayer. I delight to hear your lisp and hisp, and speaking to Me in prayer. Ye may see all the wooing comes on Christ's side of it; she cannot hold up her face, or let one love-blink on Christ, but as He commands her, and wakens her up. She is a sour bride of herself: if she laugh, it is He that makes her rejoice by the Holy Spirit that is given to her (Romans v. 5). She keeps her chamber and is ashamed to go forth; He bids her be kind and shew her face. We cannot love Him till He first love us (1 John iv. 19). We run because He draws us (Cant. i. 4). (John vi. 44), We apprehend Christ, but we are first gripped of Him (Phil. iii. 12). Beloved, there is great skill in wooing Christ, every bride has not the gate‡ of it, but He must teach us.

In all other matches ye will find two things that are not here. *a.* In other matches the bride makes some

* Build.

† Shy.

‡ Right way.

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

* Dowry. † Heiress. ‡ Bend down. § Before you can get in.

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

Let Me see thy countenance.—An allusion to Israel, that was to present themselves before the Lord thrice a year in the tabernacle; the meaning is, Walk before Me. It is not enough that thou believe, and so dwell

* Insisting on; pressing.

† Declared on oath that they kept nothing.

‡ Giving up all they had. § Than.

by faith in the holes of the Rock ; but thou must also shew thy faith by good works and prayers, and worshipping of God. Christ loves not professors that never wan* to love to pray, and such as hate not the world. But you will see they are believers by their holy living (Matt. xiii. 23). The word of God is seed sown that brings forth thirty, sixty, and an hundred fold. Ilk† boll brings out thirty ; ilk sermon, ilk Communion should bring out an hundred good works. Beloved, God's land is set at an high price ; He is a Master that will have all His own from His tenants ; and as the Song says (chap. iv. 2), Every one of God's sheep brings out twins. There is a ground that drinks in rain from heaven, and yet brings forth briers and thorns, it is near a curse. Bring forth fruit, or else ye will make God say, My curse and God's malison be upon thy heart, thou hearest much, and bringest forth no fruit. Therefore beware ; a tree that once gets a dadd‡ with God's axe, it will never do well again. Ye shall become like the girdle (Jer. xiii. 17) which the prophet did hide at the river Euphrates ; it was profitable for nothing, it was marred, it shall never go about God's waste again. Beware, then, that ye be not blasted professors and fruitless Christians ; but be ye always in His sight. For there be some that come never in God's sight, they are God's dyvours : they are aughting§ so much that they dare not come to God, and compt|| and pay—outlaws and borderers that come not, or keep not Christ's kingdom, but run like wild asses and dromedaries up and down the mountains, and snuff up the wind at their pleasure. I compare their life to those that ride post. Many a horse has

* Got the length of loving to pray.

‡ Knock.

§ Owing.

† Each ; every.

|| Reckon.

Satan in his stable; and when these outlaws have wearied in their greediness after sin, and have gotten they know not what, they mount upon a fresh horse, some upon pride! and if they ride once out of God's sight, they run till they be in hell in the end: for the devil is upon the horse and the rider. God seeks dear, and for His money ye must give Him more than ten in the hundred: for five talents, He must have ten again; He must have double stock. Look what grace ye receive by weight; render to Him His own in weight and more: if His gold want an ounce, He will cast it to you again: for one boll's sowing ye must give Him thirty again. God would have His servants aye keeping His chamber; if they go their own length from Him, He misses them. Ye must not be God's chamber pages, and steal out of His presence, and give the devil a baggage-yoking.* Nay, He must aye see your face, and hear your voice. There be many that would serve God, and be in Christ's school; but they are like souls that take the play, and run to play, sometimes with the world, and the devil, and love to sport themselves with the world and the devil. But God's scholars may not take the play.

"*Let Me see thy face.*"—The Kirk might have said, Dear Lord, *my* face! Oh dost Thou desire to see my face, it is very black, I am sun-burnt, sin hath made me deformed; and for my voice it is both harsh and mistuned. What then says Christ? I think not so, My dear spouse; I think it is a fair face. I think ye have a sweet voice. It is great comfort for God's children when they rise many times off their knees from prayer with a woe heart,† thinking, because they have no heart, nor feeling, nor sense, that God is

* A help in his work.

† Sad.

offended with their prayers, and thinks little of their works ; when as their prayers, and tears, and works are accepted before God. Ye think nothing of one tear, yet God puts it in His bottle ; and nothing of one sigh, but God gathers it in His treasure. If God thought of us as the world does, and as we think of ourselves, oftentimes woeful would our case be ; but God has not a pleasanter sight in the world than the face of a child of God. No music delights Him more nor the sighs and tears, complaints and prayers of His children. See ye not the Spirit of God bringing in Christ, longing for a sight of His wife, longing for a word of her (Prov. viii. 31). Christ rejoiceth, and sports, and plays in the habitable parts of the earth, and His delight is with the sons of men. Ye will see more of this upon the last words of this Song.

“*Take us the foxes.*”—Its a speech of Christ to the Kirk, to take, convince, censure, rebuke, cut off, and excommunicate all inordinate livers and offenders in the Lord’s vineyard (Ezek. xiii. 4). O Israel, thy prophets are like foxes in the deserts (Jer. xii. 10). Many pastors have corrupted My vineyard. O what can there be upon the earth to make a Kirk happy, but it is here. To hear a Kirk sick of love for Christ, and hear Christ sick of love for His Kirk : Christ’s left hand is under her head, and His right hand doth embrace her : she is His fair one, His love, His dove, His undefiled. She dwells in the wounds of her Lord by faith. Yet for all this, His Kirk is a vineyard that has many foxes in it to destroy the vines ; so that we see, so long as God hath a vineyard there will be foxes in it to destroy the vines ; that is, crafty men, false teachers, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ (2 Cor. i. 13). Paul planted a Church in Ephesus (Acts xx. 28), yet after his

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

* Erases the line.

† When the furrow is new ploughed.

‡ Expect to find.

Christ of gold, and a Kirk of velvet, or of fair white paper. They think Christ's bride should be clad in purple and scarlet, as the whore of Rome is, or does wear.

I will show you how Christ and His Kirk meet. When the bridegroom wooed His Kirk, many a black stroke got He both of God and man. He was the Vine, God and man strake at Him with axes! He bought her dear; it cost Him blood ere He got her. And think ye she has fair weather when she woos Him? Nay, many a cuff^o gets she from the world; this fox and that fox pulls the skin off her. She is hardly handled in this wooing, there be strokes on both sides: for fain would the devil have the contract cancelled, and the marriage going back. And let me speak to you that are God's young vine; make you for it, † the foxes of the world will peel the bark off you. If there be grace in you, they will do what they can to eat it up in the bud. Hold your hands about the grace of God; be not robbed; if ye give them their will, they would pull the skin off your face.

Ye see Christ hath gotten out letters of caption, ‡ against all His foxes. Here is a commission obtained in Christ's court, that all that hurts Christ's vineyard should be apprehended and laid fast! but alas! the commissioners, the pastors, the judges, over-see§ them. But here a comfort for you, who are the Lord's vines, that are troubled with foxes. I assure you, that the Kirk has law against all her enemies. Be not casten down, because the world hates you; twenty-six hundred years syne, Christ hath given out a decreet against all His enemies, and yours, to take them.

* Blow with the hand.

† Lay your account with this.

‡ For legally apprehending the person.

§ Overlook.

Here ye have assurance ; your enemies are rebels, and all of them under caption. (Psalms cx. 6), "He shall fill the places with dead bodies. He shall wound the head over them, even in many countries." Ye that complain of your predominant sins, and think ye are hardened with them (for these also be foxes that do harm the Lord's vineyard), fight against them, for Christ has given out a decret against those that they shall be taken.

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

Christ is considered as Mediator, God and man, and so He is upon our side ; for the promise is made to Him and His ; and He, as principal contractor, binds for us, and we are His assignees. So Jesus skips betwixt both the sides, because He is a friend to both. But it is certain these very words proves Him to be on our side of the covenant, because our Beloved is ours, and we are His ; He is our Mediator, and Cautioner bound for us. The very words of the covenant are spoken to Christ (Psalm lxxxix. 27), "I will make Him My first-born, higher than the kings of the earth : " and He said (verse 26), "He shall cry to Me, Thou art My Father, My God, and the Rock of My salvation ; My mercy will I keep for Him for evermore,

and My covenant shall stand fast with Him." The enemies of grace would have Christ a God folding His fingers, and a looker-on, and beholding fair play. Liars! He is more than half play-Master! The devil will not get *His* name out of the contract; and, beloved, see ye not but it is a sweet thing to have anything to do with Christ. His chaff is better than other men's corn; if ye have any fastening* with Christ, the cause is won. Now hold you by Christ. It is a shame for Him that ye fall out of the covenant, because He is a Cautioner. As ye know, it is a shame for a nobleman that his poor friend be cast in prison for the debt that he is obliged to pay. Christ is now obliged that He fulfil the covenant, and make good both your part, and his part. Boast not of yourselves, or of your own strength; be not proud of yourselves, but ye shall have full liberty to boast yourself of Christ. Crack† enough of Christ; be proud of Christ's merits, ye cannot err there. The debt of faith and obedience that we are aughting‡ to God now (to speak so), is not our debt but Christ's, and He is Cautioner for us. It were a shame that a poor friend should be imprisoned for his chief's debt, especially since He is a rich man and able to pay.

Now let us consider the mutual interest Christ and the Kirk has every one of another; "He is mine, and I am His;" He is my Husband, and I am His wife; He is my head, and I am His body: He is my King, and I am His people; He is my rich Cautioner, and I am His dyvour. Let us see what claim Christ has in the Kirk, and what claim the Kirk has in Christ. Now, to hold§ upon the comparison of this song betwixt a husband and a wife. The husband and the wife have

* Sure connection. † Speak often. ‡ Owing. § Continue.

no sundry* goods ; if he be a king, she is a queen ; if he have a fair inheritance, it is hers also, as long as she lives ; if they live ever together, it is ever hers. Then when she says, He is mine, I am His, Christ is mine, and I am His, and all His, His flesh and His blood ; His death and merits ; His glory ; His kingdom ; His court and credit, and all is mine ; and all mine is His, my soul and body, my sins, my trouble, my cross, they are all His. Christ and she are (to speak so) carded through other. (John xv.), "Abide in Me, and I in you." Cursed be he that says not amen to that. (John xvii. 21), "That they also may be one, as Thou, Father, are in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us ; I in them, and they in Me." But we will labour to reduce them, the particulars to a certain number. There be these things common to us betwixt Christ and us.

1. There is a sibness† of nature betwixt Christ and us. There be pawns given and received betwixt both sides. He has a pawn of ours, our flesh, and He took that pawn with Him to heaven, and He is never minded to give it again. But we have as good a pawn of Him, His Spirit. We were of that flesh and blood (Heb. ii. 14). Let us keep Christ's pawn, as long as He keeps ours ; let Him not be to the fore‡ with us. Now He keeps our pawn for ever ; He will never lay down our flesh ; we are never minded to lose the pawn, let Him keep it for ever ; long may He keep it. Let us keep His Spirit ; for it is not His will to loose that pawn ; let Him keep it for ever (Heb. iv. 2). Christ would also be a bairn and partaker of flesh and blood. Would to God ye would all strive to get His pawn, and to keep it well ; seek His Spirit, and keep

* Separate. † Relationship. ‡ Get beyond us.

it well. Worldly men, ye have little claim to Jesus; God help you, there is no borrowing nor lending betwixt you and Christ.

2. There is community. We got all His good, and He gets all our ill, that's a good coss* for us. He took our curses, we took His blessings; He our shame, we His glory; He our sins, we His righteousness: He is the Kirk's, and the Kirk is Christ's. That day God laid upon Christ, we were shifted out from under God's wrath; and God struck the Kirk's Head, to let the members go free. When Christ was in blocking† to buy His Kirk, He knew the faults in the wares; He kend well enough that curse of God, and wrath of God, and hell, and sia, and many ills followed the Kirk. Yet Christ would not rue in time; He said freely, I will take her, and all the ills that follow her, howbeit she be blind, lame, yea, a cursed bride; yet I will make her My wife. Would to God we could take Christ and all the faults that follow Him. There be men that will not coss with Christ; but will keep their will, their lust. God was about to strike us, and had lifted (to speak so) His wand to bring a stroke of His wrath upon us; and Christ came in, and held His hand, and laid down Himself, and bade His Father lay upon Him. Ye never saw such a suiter as Christ; He prays us to coss for the better. He cries to you for God's sake give Me your dross, and ye shall get My gold; give Me your sins, and I give you My righteousness. Is it not an hard matter? Men will not give their ill to Christ, and transfer and give over their sins to Christ. He says to you, Give Me your

* Exchange. This word is in Gawin Douglas. It is Anglo-Saxon "to barter:" sometimes spelt "coos."

† Bargaining.

lust that I may crucify it, and I will give you love for it : give Me your anger, and I will give you My zeal for it. Then make a coss and take Him at His word, ilk day be making new blocks^o with Christ. Deny your folly, and give it to Him to crucify ; and seek ye His wisdom, you must do this ever, till all nature be away and done, and nothing in you but grace.

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

(By the way I shall give the use, with every article of the doctrine.) Try thy light, try thy grace, try thy honour, and credit, riches, and all the blessings that ye have ; the silver and the gold, whether these bless-

* Bargains. † The deposit. ‡ Money deposited. § The pledge.

ings be impawned^o in Christ's hand or† ye get them. If ye get them not in Christ, they are unchristened blessings, and they want the fashion.‡ Woe be to these blessings that came never through Christ's holy hands. Again, try your prayers, sighs, and desires, and your service, if ye offer them to God in Christ. Many unchristened prayers go to heaven that are never welcomed of God. Ye must take your communion out of God's hand; at the nearest, out of Christ's hands. There should be nothing done betwixt God and us, but Christ should be at it.

4. There is a community of sufferings betwixt Christ and us. Poor would we be, if His sufferings were not ours; woe would be our case if His sufferings were not ours. But this way it goes; He is that apple tree excellent above all the trees of the forest, and we do rest under the tree. Now when the shower of rain falls, it lights first on the tree, and the stroke of it is broken, and it does not great harm to those that are under the tree. Each new shot at the Kirk, lights first on the head of Christ, and He breaks the point of the arrow. If ye be ill spoken of, so was He; if ye be hated of the world, so was He; if your blood be shed, and your face deformed, so was His fair face deformed and marred (Isaiah lii. 14). Be content to drink with Christ. Woe be to them that are not in Christ, and yet are in trouble: the arrow with the sharp point comes upon them, and goes to their heart, and slays them. Try if your troubles be christened troubles, that light first upon Christ, the Head, and then upon you as the members. Try if by faith ye have an union with Him. Now here by the way is a

* Pledged to you. † Before.

‡ Like clothes that have not the proper cut.

great comfort in trouble : those that are dear to you die, and ye mourn : Christ mourned and groaned in spirit for dead Lazarus : ye weep, so He weeped. Are ye poor and aye at the borrowing? so was Christ at the borrowing trade all His days ; should ye not then with good-will drink off the cup that He drank off before you. When ye murmur, and will not drink willingly, ye refuse to pledge Christ : but ye must pledge Him, and drink with God's blessing, and with joy ; He will not poison you. They are none of Christ's friends that will not pledge Him (Matt. xx. 21).

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

* Handed over to.

† Strange.

Rejoice in this, ye that are in Christ, and see your condition, ye and Christ are halfers* together of heaven and glory. O† if God's children be in a sweet case. As long as Christ is in heaven and keeps the inheritance, as long shall we keep our right; and who can cause Him flit?‡ The devil hath made the enemies of the grace of God to misken§ all our communion with Christ. They have put Christ and the elect together as a man in an inn for a night, and to go away to-morrow. They have yoked Christ and us together as if He were one and we another; as if He were His own, and we were our own; as if Christ had no law and right to us, and we had no law and right to Christ, but met at a venture, and sundered at a venture; as if we had one heaven, and He had another; as if He had His portion by Himself alone, and that He keeps for ever; and that we had our share by our alone,|| to sell when we pleased, so as if we dispone heaven, we dispone not Christ's heaven. Nay; in the fighting, He fights all the battles His alone; We but look on: but when it comes to the dividing of the spoil, we get a rich share of the spoil. Yea, He gave the whole sum for the inheritance, and we nothing; yet we are set at His elbow in a throne with Him. Now seeing our rights are good, slip not from them: do not as some unworthy heir, who having a good right, slips from it for a feckless composition after drink, and quits all, howbeit he should beg. Indeed the wicked do this. The devil drinks them blankful,¶ and fills them with worldly pleasures, and garrs** them subscribe a resignation, and gives them an unworthy composition, some present pleasure. Compone not

* Sharers. † Oh surely. ‡ Remove. § Misapprehend.
 || All of ourselves. ¶ Carte blanche. ** Forces.

with the devil to go the law with him; let Christ be your advocate, subscribe not a submission with the devil, come never in trysting* terms with him. Hold you aback from the world, and the lusts of it; it is the devil's arles that he gives to silly drunken heirs. When they cry hills and mountains fall on us, they would fain give back the arles, and rue; but it is out of time.

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

* Never must listen to his terms.

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

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

Here be two words. 1. God does with His children in this life as a merchant does with his wares he has bought ; because he cannot transport them presently, he puts a “ *seal* ” or mark upon them, and then

* Cut down a stack.

it may be sold to no other body. His children strike hands, He writes His name, and His arms, the image of God in their soul; and then when the devil comes through the market to buy (for he offers aye money in hand, pleasure, lusts, honours), ye have an answer to give him. Tell him, your soul is sealed already; you have blocked* with an honest Merchant, Christ; and He has put His mark upon you that ye may not sell; and it were a pity to beguile Him. And, therefore, bid that deceiving loont† go seek his market in another place; ye are not his merchant. The devil will promise them as fair as God: he will not prig‡ with them: he will not care to promise much more than heaven. “*Ye shall be like God!*” but he pays not so well as God doth. Agree not with him: block not with him.

2. There is another sweet word used; that God gives to His children, “the earnest” of His Spirit in this life; He gives them arles, faith, hope, joy. These be like six or seven shillings to warrant that ye shall get the principal. Beloved, God has blocked‡ with you, and given you arles. He would therefore that the bargain hold. Will ye then take God’s arles, and block with the devil? By God’s arles ye have assurance of this, God will come and loose His arles; rue not of the block, never any man had cause to rue the block with Jesus Christ. There is another word used (John xvi.) Christ is going to heaven to leave His disciples; He promised to come again to them to see them: how sorry were they to want Him, and blythe|| were they of that word that He said, He will come again. Therefore, in sign and token that He

* Bargained. † Vagabond. ‡ Try to lower the price.
§ Made a bargain. || Glad.

would come again, He promised them a pawn; that was His Holy Spirit. Ye know Christ and we are contracted in this life; we will be married again at the day He comes to judge the world. Now all the wooing time, there goes love tokens betwixt them, and missive letters. Tell me when ye got a letter last from Christ? There will be messengers going betwixt you. This same word is a messenger; the Sacraments are love tokens that our Wooer has left to assure us that He is contracted with us. I pray you take no gifts from the devil; away with ill conquests;* away with lusts, and the love of the world. I hope ye are not minded to marry with sin; if ye do, ye are ashamed then for all your days. Ye are come off God's house, and are His image. Fy, it is a shame to hear tell of it, to marry with a base slave, the devil. I allow† you here to be wise and prudent in your marriage; marry not for gear,‡ keep yourself to be a good match. There be a sort of indifferent men, that ye call harmless men. They have neither good nor ill, they love not falsehood; they love not Popery, and yet they will not burn for the truth; they are like blank paper as it is thought, neither God nor the devil has blocked with them. But has God given you no arles, nor no pawn? Satan will get you. But do this first, hold yourself with Christ, and then ye have an answer to give other lovers, the world and the devil. Ye may laugh and say, ye are too long in coming; I have promised myself away to another husband, and therefore I cannot have you also; for I will not have two husbands (1 Cor. vi. 19). The Apostle takes a reason to prove that the body should not be given to an harlot; *it is the temple of the Holy Ghost.* Set the house of

* Ill-gotten property.

† Advise.

‡ Goods.

your soul to God, and then for shame ye cannot win off Him to cause Him flit. "Ye are bought with a price." Married folk have not many wooers: the devil is busy to seek them that are virgins, and love not Christ to be their Husband.

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

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

* Reckon,

ing under the broad scarlet robe of Christ's righteousness, and as many glorified angels looking on.

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

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

* Far in. † Be thrown open. ‡ A luncheon,

drink, and drink at the well's head, the cup of salvation for evermore.

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

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

"*Turn, My beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.*"—As (Psalm lxxi. 21), Thou did turn about and comfort me. Turn about and come to me, as swiftly as a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether. The mountains of division or separation, were Mount Gilead, severed or parted from the rest of the land of Judea by the river of Jordan; in the which mountains, there was pleasant haunting.† Here, she desires His presence, either in the last judgment, or in His incarnation, or by the comfort of His Holy Spirit; and prays that as roes

* Matters are not settled.

† Place for company.

and harts are not hindered any whit by any craigs or down-falls of the rocks to descend and meet one with another : so Christ would be kind to His love, and count mountains as valleys, and let no craigie-way* hinder the Lord Jesus to come. She can never get her fill of Christ ; she is so browdent† on Christ, that she ever would be at a union with Him, where is kissing (verse 7) ; in the place where He dwells (chap. xxiii.) under His shadow, in His cellar. We cannot be far enough on in going to Christ : we can never be near hand enough Him.‡ Cry ye to Him, Come ! for He crys to you, Come ; and then ye will meet. Ill§ gate will not hinder our Bridegroom to come, He cares not for a shower of rain, or a dark night. He louns|| over hills to be at His Kirk. Give ye Him a meeting. Amen.

* Rough.
‡ Sufficiently close to.

† Fond ; warmly attached to.
§ Bad roads. || Leaps.

