



SERMON X.*

Christ's Napkin.

This title was, no doubt, given by the friend who took down the notes; for Rutherford was not in the way of putting titles to his sermons. The expression, "*Christ's Napkin*," occurs in this sermon, and also in the sermon on John xx. 13, which might as suitably be so called. The Edinburgh edition of 1734, says, "*By that flower of the Church, famous, famous Mr. Samuel Rutherford.*"

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

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

"*And God shall wipe away all tears.*"—When friends meet, they give the stranger his welcome-home. Here is the pilgrim's welcome that our friend, Christ, gives us. It was spoken from heaven, and therefore it is

* A sermon preached at the Communion in Kirkcudbright, May 12th, 1633.

true doctrine. Then we see that the sufferings and tears of the saints shall be wiped away and removed, but not fully, until* the world to come; for then is Christ's welcome-home to poor sinners. They come all to Him with wet faces, and bleared† with tears for sin and the manifold troubles of this life; and Christ meets them in the door, with a fair soft napkin in His hand, and puts up His hand to their faces, and says, "Hold your tongue, My dear bairns; ye shall never weep again." And indeed, in my judgment, it is a speech borrowed from a mother that has a bairn with a broken face, all bloody and all bleared with tears, and it comes to her (and woe's her heart‡ to see him so), and she sits down and wipes the tears from his eyes, and lays her hand softly on the wound, and his head in her breast, and dights§ away the blood, and lays her two arms about him, and there is no end of fair words. So when Christ and we shall meet in heaven, He will hush us, and wipe away all tears, and lay our head in His bosom. See how He alludes to this place (Isaiah liv. 11), "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy foundations with sapphires," &c. It is there, to speak so, our Lord is rueing|| that ever He had handled the saints as He did. (Isaiah lxxv. 18, 19), "Be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." If ever there was a blythe¶ meeting betwixt two, it must be betwixt the Bridegroom and the bride in the mar-

* "Whill," in old copies.

† Bedewed and soiled.

‡ Sorry is her heart. § Wipes. || Repenting. ¶ Happy.

riage-day. And what a meeting there is of joy betwixt such a Bridegroom and bride cannot be conceived. For Christ, that day, will have on all His best clothes. And such a bride as the Lamb's wife! when we shall be clothed, and not a wrong pin on us; a fair bride in silk and purple of Christ's own busking.* And what a welcome she will get! To get a drink at our first meeting and incoming to heaven, "of the well of the water of life." Oh, strong comforting water! And Christ our Lord shall present His bride to His Father; and our Father-in-law, the Father of our Husband, shall take us by the hand and lead us bent the house to the dining hall, and set us down at a table to feast our fill upon "the tree of life"—to feast upon the Trinity for evermore! Now, mock and scorn the way to heaven as ye please; ye never heard of true happiness till now. Here is a "banquet of joy" for evermore.

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

The kirk is half a widow here; her Lord is in an

* Dressing.

† To the inner part.

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

Use 1st. Let us prepare ; for tears will follow us to

* Each low fellow.

† Feeble.

heaven; unto the very entry of the door our face shall be wet, for we go out of this life sad and groaning for this miserable life; and to thrust through the last port, and to wade through the hindermost water—it is a sore set.* But be blythe,† Christians, and grip to the promises. God's bairns that can now mourn for their own sins, and the sins of the land, rejoice in heaven; there are never seen greeting bairns‡ there; God has a napkin to dight§ their faces. It is the laughing, rejoicing people that God destroys. But ye that laugh now (Luke vi. 25), (and are so far from tears—that ye mock the mourners of Zion), you may sigh and close the Bible, and say, "Alas! I never shed a tear for Christ; your text is not for me." It may be Christ shall that day make you weep and shed tears for evermore. This sour, laughing world will pass away—there is a day of tears coming on you; "greeting|| and gnashing of teeth." And when a man gnasheth his teeth, one against another, he has no mind of laughing. I would not have your mirth for a world. Be doing; we shall see who will laugh fastest yon day.

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

* Difficult work. † Cheerful. ‡ Weeping children.
§ Wipe. || Weeping.

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

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

1. A speaker. "*He that sat upon the throne.*"—Who spake the speech is not told, whether an angel or an earthly king, for they sit on thrones also. But it is He of whom it is said (Rev. iv. 2), "And behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne." John tells not His name, but he thinks so much of Him, that he takes it for granted that there is none worthy to be a King but He, and to sit on a throne but He. The saints measure all the affections of others by their own affections. As, if one speired* at John, "Who is He that sits upon the throne?" he would have answered, "What needs you speir? is there any in heaven or earth, in my estimation, worthy to be a King but He? and to sit on a throne but He? and to take a crown upon His head but He?" The saints set aye Christ alone—they set Him above all. Speak of kings to them; but Christ is out of play. So (Cant. iii. 3), the kirk, meeting with "the watchmen," saith, "Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?" What kenned† the watchman of Him whom her soul loved? for she might have loved a loon, or a harlot, or an idol-god, or the world. But she measureth the watchman by herself. There was none in *her* mind but Christ; and therefore she needed not to tell them, as she thought. So Mary Magdalene (John xx. 15) says to the gardener (as she thought), "Sir, if ye have borne Him hence, tell me where ye have laid Him."

* Inquired.

† Knew.

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She tells not what *Him*, taking as granted, that what so much possessed her own soul would doubtless equally occupy the thoughts of every other; and none was so much in her mind as Christ. Now, I pray you, let the same mind be in you that was in John and in Mary. Let Christ be to your soul the pearl of the ring. Among all kings, Christ should be made high, and esteemed by us as He—the only He—that is worthy to “sit on a throne.” So, in Cant. v. 10, He is to the kirk “the chiefest among ten thousand.” Gather all the angels in heaven and earth together; Christ is too good to be their Captain. And, indeed, what is all that sits on a throne? It must be infinitely more in Him. And whatever glory is in the world, is far more in Him. Take all the roses in the earth, and put them all in one, that would be a dainty thing and sight. But what are all these to Christ?—no more than a nettle to the fairest rose. Fie upon the tasteless love of men, that never loveth Jesus Christ, and yet falleth in love with lusts. They love gold, riches, and honour, and put Christ to a backside. Ay, Christ gets not His own among us. We recommend Him not; neither will we match with Him.

2. A speech. “*I will make all things new.*”—This is as much as, all things are old. Sin hath made all things old. They are like a woman groaning in child-birth with pain and vanity, because of our sin (Rom. viii. 22). All the creatures are sickened because of sin. Because of our sin, vanity came on the sun, moon, and other creatures. They sigh under this, and pray, in their kind, a malison\* and a woe to man, for sin has made us all miserable. The heavens, that are the fairest part of the great web of the world, “wax

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* Evil; curse.

old as a garment ;” the prophet saith they are like an old clout.* The water saith, “Let me drown sinners—they have sinned against my Lord ;” the fire saith, “Let me burn them—let me burn Sodom, for they have sinned against my Lord.” All things have lost the glory that they got at their first creation. Jesus seeth all things gone wrong, and quite out of order, and man fallen from his Lord. And He did even with the world as the pilot, who, when an unattentive man at the rudder was steering the ship on a sand-bank, stept in quickly and turned her incontinent, or else all would have gone to confusion. So our Lord stept in when the great ship of this world was running on a sand-bed ; and when the sun and the moon looked sad-like, and said they would not serve us, He renewed them by His death, made them all laugh on the elect again, and gave them all a suit of new clothes.

Drunkards, Christ gave His blessing on the wine that ye spue on the walls. Ye that dishonour your Maker with your vain apparel, ye know not what it cost Christ our Lord to buy a right to those things that ye abuse in vanity. All that set the world in their hearts, where the Lord should be, forget that Christ bought the world to be their servant, and not to be as their darling and wife that lies in their bosom. Ye that make the earth, and the broad acres of it, your soul’s portion, forget that Christ bought the earth, and made it new, to be a footstool, and not a chair for our souls to sit down in. And if Christ has this art to make all things new, come to Him all ye that are old. Oh, ye that have old hearts ! come. Christ may get His craft among ye, if ye would come

* Rag.

to Him. "He makes all things new." The devil has borrowed your heart for covetousness, and crooked it with the thorny cares of this world, and holed^o it, and knocked the bottom out of it. Oh! if ye would put it in Christ's hand, He would put it into His furnace, and melt it again, and by His art bring it out a new heart for Himself to dwell in. Alas! Christ gets not His trade or calling among us. But why are not our old hearts mended? Because we handle them as a foolish mother doth her dawted bairn; † she will not let him go to the school to learn, and why?—because she dow‡ not want him out of her sight. She will therefore never let him do well, but feeds him for the gallows. We dow not give away our souls to Christ, who would fain have, and could easily mend them. But lust, or pride, or covetousness, like the foolish mother, keeps them out of Christ's company; so that we will not let that dear craftsman, who made the earth under our feet and the mountains new, make our old hearts new. Our souls are all hanging in tatters, worn and old with sin, and yet we dow not put them in Christ's hand, that He might make them whole and cleanse them. Fie upon thee, that thy garden, cursed in Adam's day to bring forth nettles and thorns, is blessed again to bring forth fruit in Christ, and thy soul gets not so much of Him as thy yard; it is made new, but thy soul remains old. Oh! bring it to Jesus; He will create in you a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within you. Indeed, Christ may get His craft among ye, if you would go to Him; for it is His trade to "make all things new."

3. A direction to keep the speech. "*And He said*

* Made it full of holes. See his "Letters." † Indulged child.

‡ Dare not; cannot.

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

Verse 6. *"And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will*

* Trusted.

give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

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

1. A prophecy. Christ says to John, "*It is done.*"—That is expounded in Rev. xvi. and xvii. The world is ended. So speaks Christ of the world. The glory of it passeth away in the twinkling of an eye, and Christ crieth to those that have the world in both their arms, "It is done," it is a past thing, there is no more of it. It is but a word to our Lord. He said, "Let all things be," and they were; He will say, "Let all things depart," and they will be at an end. We are beginning with the world as if it would be evermore ours; and our Lord says, in a moment, "Let it be plucked from them," and it is done. It is not for nothing that the taking down of this inn of heaven and earth is touched in so few words—"It is done." For it is an easy thing for the Almighty to take in His own hand the staves that hold up this fair tent, and, when He pulleth it, He garreth^o it come down with a tilt. So (Rev. vii. 1), four angels are brought in, "holding the four winds of the earth," as if they had the world in their hands, and as if they had it ready to fold up as a sheet. And oh! what a fighting and business do men make to get a clout[†] of this sheet!—he staring out his eyes—and he setting out his neck, for a piece of this holly[‡] clout and sheet, and for a gloib[§] of the earth. But (see Rev. vi. 14), "The heavens shall depart away like a scroll" of parchment that is rolled together, and the fair stories thereof are like figs; with the shake of the Almighty's

* Compels; causes.

‡ Tattered; full of holes.

† A piece of linen rag.

§ Piece of ground; glebe.

arm shall they fall together to the ground. And, what is more, with a touch of the Almighty's hand, or a putt of His little finger, or a blast of His mouth, saying, "It is done," the cupples* of the walls of the house shall come down. Now, I cannot but speak of fools that have their heads full of windmills, and cry it is beginning, "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant" (Isaiah lvi. 12), and there is no end of buying and selling. I came not here to bid anybody be unthrifty; but be not like bairns building sandy bourockst† at a burn-side, when presently a speat of water comes and spills all their sport, or a shower chases them in from their play. Men are ever bigging castles in the air. In very deed, we are like bairns holding the water at a river side with their hands. They think (daft‡ things) they hold the water, while in the meantime it runs through their fingers. And what says God of honour, riches, pleasure, lands, fair houses, and sums of money? Even that in a word, "all is done." Ask of them that had the world and broad acres once at will what is to the fore? And what is to the fore§ of so many thousands? What has the world of them but their name? And what if their name be lost too? for what is their name? Ten or eleven letters of the A B C; and for their bodies—howbeit, when they were living, kingdoms would not content them—the clay into which their bodies are dissolved would not now fill a glove. I think that a true and a strange spoken word (Isaiah xi. 22), "God sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers." We even creep like grasshoppers up and down the globe of this earth,

* The couples are two rafters joined at top. † Places of shelter.

‡ Out of their right mind.

§ Remains still.

and cry to men of the vanities of all things, while death comes, like a common thief, without any din or feet, and plucks them away, and there is no more of them; then they say, "It is done." All men must confess it is true that I say; but I think to be dead ere they believe it, and act accordingly, or be brought to hate the world. I think the world is the devil's great herry-water-net,* that has taken thousands and slain them. Ye say ye are sure of it. Then I say ye are a dieted† horse for heaven.

2. The second thing that is in the verse is a description of Christ—"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end."—Our Lord here being to make an offer of the water of life, He first showeth what He is—even the first and the last letter of the alphabet—the Ancient of Days—the Eternal Son of the Eternal God. This teaches us that we may crack‡ more of our old holding, and old charter, than all the world can do. For why? When began Christ to bear a good will to a sinner? Even when He began to be God; and He was God from all eternity. Suppose the sun in the firmament were eternal, the light of it behoved to be eternal; for the light of the sun is as old as the sun. Now love is a beam of life and heat that comes from Christ, the Sun of Righteousness; therefore ever living Christ—ever living love. For love comes not on Christ the day, which was not in Him yesterday. Man's love and a king's love are hunted for very much; and yet they die, and their love dies with them, and often their love dies before themselves. But who seeks Christ's love, that "changes not?" Yea, this a matter of admiration and wonder, that Christ should have thought on us worms of the clay ere ever we were,

* Great trawling net. † Well fed. ‡ Talk freely.

and that our salvation is as old as evermore—as old as Christ, and Christ is as old as God !

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

3. The third thing in the words is a promise of the

* Permit God to shew.

water of life to the thirsty—"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." (Isaiah lv. 1, and John iv. 14). Christ at the market-cross cries the well free. Here learn,

1st. The thirsty and hungry souls are meetest for the water of life. What! (ye will say) and are not all thirsty? Yes; all want the life of God, and the sap of grace, and are burnt and withered at the root; but all know not their own want. Here is indeed a special comfort for the weak ones who say, "Oh! I know Christ doth good to believers, to repenters, and to such as love Him; but I dow not, cannot, win to faith and repentance, hope and patience; I have too short an arm to rax* so high." Then, say I, have ye a desire—a hunger—for faith, and repentance, and love? Now, upon your conscience, speak the truth. I trow ye cannot deny it. Then your Lord bids you come—the well is open to you; for hunger and thirst being next to motion, and the two properties that begin first with life, so every one that is new-born is lively, and hath a stomach for meat and drink. "Oh but," say ye, "I am many times, in my soul, at death's door. I have neither faith nor feeling. I am even at this—'God loves me not,' and the well is not ordained for me at these times." Would ye fain be at the well? In my mind ye cannot win away. In the children of God, when at the lowest ebb—even when faith, comfort, joy, love, and disposition to pray is away—is there not a longing for a presence? I speak to the conscience of God's child; lie not. David (Psalm vi.), when he thought God spake to him in wrath, was at, "How long, Lord?"—a cutting word. I think he looked like a hungry beast looking over the dyke; he

* Reach.

would fain have a mouthful. He was going about to seek a slapp^o to break over the dyke of his doubtings. And so it is with God's bairns, under their thirst[†] for the water of the well of life. See Canticles iii., when the kirk can get no speiring of Christ, and has no smell of Him, and cannot find the print of His foot, yet she is at this, "Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?" And (chap. v. 8), "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell Him, that I am sick of love." Then let me now tell you weak ones who are Christ's companions, and who it is shall drink with Him, and get their hearts and heads full of the water of life—even the tender Christians that are aye seeking. The bairn in Christ's house that is most cumbersome, and makes most din for his meat, is the best bairn that Christ has. The bairn that is greeting[‡] ilk hour of the day for a piece and a drink—we say of such a silly thing, "He would fain love." Aye, the cumbersomer[§] that Christ's bairns be, they are welcomer. Na, He loveth the bairns best that have no shame, and are aye crying, "Alas! black hunger, dear Lord Jesus; I am burnt with thirst; oh for an open cold fountain!" Oh, it is a sweet thing aye to be whinging,^{||} and crying, and seeking about Christ's pantry doors, and to hold aye an eye upon Christ when He goes into the house of wine, into His Father's fair lucky wine-cellar, where there are many wines; and bout[¶] in at Christ's back! But, in a word, have ye a good stomach?—much hunger and thirst? Well, ye shall get much satisfaction of grace in Christ. Is there not a time when ye cannot get a presence, and ye have no pith to put up

* An opening.

† Opportunity of enquiring.

‡ Weeping every hour. § Troublesome. || Whining. ¶ Push.

the door and bout in, but ye put it half up and blink* in? Love ye to pray, or desire ye but a desire of prayer? Hold on then; ye are right. The true desire is absolute, and not conditional. Not like the sluggard that would have a crop, upon condition he might have a feather bed to lie on for fear of cold. Even so some would have heaven, upon condition that they might keep their lusts, and take their lusts with them.

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

2nd. But, secondly, hunger is aye seeking through the house; for the belly can hardly play the hypocrite. The natural man is in darkness—he is in a sleep—it is night with him. He is like a cumbersome bairn greeting in the night for a drink, and crying, "Who will shew me any good?" (Psalm iv. 6). And Satan is ready at his elbow with his dishful of the dirty, miry waters of lust to the world; and he drinks till he sweats and tines‡ breath; and tines all sight and desire of Christ, "the Fountain of the Water of Life." It is true this fountain is said to proceed "out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Rev. xxii. 1). But it is all one; for the streams of the water of life proceed from the fountain, Christ. How, then, is the

* Look in. † I refuse you. ‡ Loses.

water Christ? *Answer.* It is *Christ-man*, dying, and sending out His heart's blood for quenching the thirst of such poor sinners as find the fire of hell at the stomach of their souls, burning them up with the fire of the wrath of God for sin. This is the well: this is why He is called "a fountain of the water of life." A man, burnt with thirst, nothing can quench him; no, not a world of gold is so good as a drink of pure, cold, clean, fountain water. In a word, a soul wakened under sin findeth nothing in the world satisfactory to the soul's appetite but in Christ. Tell me, art thou a thirsty sinner after Christ? Then thy soul is dead sick while ye get Him. Is a man faint, and fatigued, and way-worn? Lay him down on a soft bed, dry the sweat off him, give him a cold refreshing drink. In like manner, ye cannot speak such a word to a soul bursting under sin, as to lay it upon a crucified Christ. Oh, that is a soft bed! His sinful soul being stretched upon the open wounds and warm-flowing blood of Christ. Oh, that is a soft bed! Oh, but a part of Christ's blood is a refreshing, cooling drink to him! A slave of hell to know that he is made a free heir of heaven—oh, that is sweet! Hence it is that those who are wakened with the furies of hell, howbeit they know not yet what Christ is to them, yet this world cannot calm their conscience—because for men that are soul-sick and sin-sick there is no physic but one—only a "drink of the well of life." And because they ken not the gate to this well of life, they, in despair, loup* out of this life into the fire of hell, through the madness of an awakened conscience. A thirsty soul finds two things in Christ, never to be found in all the world or in anything else.

* Leap.

1st. Christ takes off the hardness of sin. None has power to do this but He. All the pardons of sin are in Christ's keeping, and of Christ's making. It is His office to forgive sin. 2nd. They find in Him an influence and abundance of happiness, so as what they sought before in the creature, they find nowhere else but in Him. Then speak to them of gold—it is nothing to Christ. Speak of lands and lordships—a Saviour, and such a Saviour, is, and has another name to a sinner that is awakened.

3rd. The text calls Him "*the water of life.*" We see here there is some water that is rotten and ill-tasted. Will a thirsty man drink of it? He shall not be the better. But the wholesomest water is the running spring; so all that sinners can get beside Christ is standing water. Let them drink in gold, and kingdoms, and lands; these will never be satisfying to a sick soul as He will be. And they who have drunk in these, at death would be content to spue them out again; they lie so heavy upon their stomach. But Christ is the cooling, wholesome spring—"the well of water springing up to eternal life." Now, to make our use of this. Seeing Christ is such a living well of water, how comes it that under the gospel there are so many dry and withered souls? I answer; for God's part, indeed, God has not put an iron lock upon the well of life; but Christ, by His word and sacraments, opens the well in the midst of us, and for seventy years and more in this kingdom the well has been open—Christ and His messengers have been crying to dry souls. But now, for aught we see, He will close the well again. He has been setting out the means of life, and opening the booth-doors to give us freely, even to such as would take it; but He gets no sale. Therefore He must put up His wares and

go away, for men are not thirsty for His waters. But one thirsts for court and honour, another for lust and money, and a third for sinful pleasures. There be few stomachs gaping for Christ. They have not a vessel to cast down into the well and take up water. This is a fruitless generation. Oh, we loathe Christ, and Christ loathes us. We need speak no more of the call of the word. All the land—court, king, noblemen, and kirkmen—have spued the waters, by despising grace and contemning the gospel; and in very deed, when we cast in clay and mud in Christ's well, and mix His worship with the poison of the whore's well of Rome, what do we else but provoke the Lord to close the well?

"I will give it freely."—So are all Christ's mercies given of grace. His mercy is for nothing, and of free grace. I grant the well is dear to Christ. God's justice digged it out of His side, and heart, and hands, and feet. The man, Christ, got not this water for nothing; yet He gives it to us for nothing, because He minds not to make a gain of us. We live upon Christ's winning. For know ye that Christ, who redeemed many, did so, by the rule of justice, since "He gave Himself," and has bought all "with His own blood;" so that in this sense Christ was bought to us with blood, else we could not get Him, for He was both the price and the wares. So that, as far as we can see, it was decreed by the Lord, by order of justice, that Christ could not have lived and given to us the waters of life. It was dear water to Him; for in the garden God deserted Him, and blood came out; on the cross God bruised Him, and blood came out; and *that* is the well we have here. We think we would have something to give to Christ for the water of life—some of our own righteousness—some

of our own worthiness ; but this is plastered humility, watered* copper. And in doing so we refuse grace, and make grace to be no more grace ; for if it be given for any worth in us, then it is no more grace. Let men here see, then, that the kingdom of grace is a good, cheap world, where the best things are gotten for nothing. And therefore, I think in this dear world, where all things go for money, whose court costs expenses, lands are dear, gold is not gotten for nought, and law is dearer than ever it was. Yea, paper and ink are dearer than jewels and gold rings were long syne. Nothing now is bought for nought. Yet Christ for all that will not change His word. All things with Him are given *gratis*, and ye are welcome when all is done. Here we get no garments for nought, no physic for nought ; but Christ gives “white raiment,” “eye salve,” and all for nought. Sinners say, “Lord, what take Ye for the water of life?” He answers, “Even nothing, and yet welcome.” Christ plays not the merchant with His wares : He makes no gain, but cries, The well is free. No, says the Pope—not a drop of it, till ye tell down money. That bloody Beast would sell the water of Rome for gold. As meikle money—as meikle grace and forgiveness. Want ye money? (He swears) Ye shall not come here. Nothing in Rome without money. Fie, fie ; the stink of the devil’s world. Nay, but Christ is for nothing. Nay, justice giveth money, and officers give money ; it is a dear world. But Christ and His word care no more for money than before.†

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

* Plated and gilded, † Than if there were no Pope and world,

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

2. There are excellent promises made to the over-comers—to him that taketh heaven with stroke of sword and blood. For heaven is a besieged city or castle. There are many foes to fight against. Armies of sin with all their armour, and the deceiving and malicious world. The world has Eve's apple in one hand, and fire and sword in the other; and the devil is the captain of the army. Now, here is a prize set, and an offer made to him that overcometh—to him that will mount up by faith and hope, and leap up into Christ's chariot, and betide him life, betide him death, will go through. But they are cowards that take a back-side, and let the devil coupt† them in a gutter. But yet to lead men on, here is a promise, "He shall inherit all things." Ye see that the Christians' Captain is a man of a fair rent; "for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours" (1 Cor. iii. 21, 22). And to let

* Causeway; good road.

† Upset.

us see He bides* by the thing He has said, He says again, "All things are yours." Ye see in this world one has a kingdom, as Asa, but wants health, and is sick of his feet; he has not all things. Another, as Samson, had strength of body above any living, yet he had many troubles and wanted his eyes; he had not all things. Oh, the business Adam's sons are at for inheritances! Here a mailen†—there a lairdship—there a new lordship. That they call their all things. I think this is a greedy style, and proud-like lordship or lairdship. Yet, greedy Adam's sons have more greediness here than wit. They run all upon their lordships, that they call the lordship of many things. "Martha, Martha, thou art troubled" (Luke x. 41). Worldlings, ye are aye careful and troubled about this, to be called "My lord" of many things. But we shall see if the text be true.

"*I am Alpha and Omega.*"—Ye will notice that Paul puts in "death" into the rent-roll. I think death an ill mailen; better want it out of the charter. Nay, but death is also a part of the lordship this way (because it is "My lord of all things"), and a coach to glory—Christ Himself being the coachman and driving the horse. Death is the servant. As the wind serveth to bring the seaman home, so death serveth him that hath the new lordship. Death is Christ's ferry-boat to carry the Christian home, for in Christ he sets his foot on death's neck. It is a bridge over the river of hell that he walketh on to heaven; and it is his. The Christian is advanced in Christ's court, and gets the new style to be "My lord of all things," the prince, the duke of all things. Yet I shall get you a lordship far inferior, but much sought for—the lordship of

* Stands by; adheres to.

† A farm.

vanity or nothing. "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?" He that is rich has nought; "for riches certainly make themselves wings—they fly away as an eagle towards heaven" (Prov. xxiii. 5).

2. Again, if the Christian "*inherits all things*," the whole world is his, and so he wanteth nothing. (Psalm lxxxix. 25), "I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers." Here see how broad Christ's two arms are. His one hand upon all the sea, and His other hand upon the rivers. And that promise is made to Christ as principal cautioner of the covenant; for it is said (verse 26), "He shall cry unto Me, Thou art My Father, My God, and the rock of My salvation." Verse 27, "Also, I will make Him My first-born, higher than the kings of the earth," which is expounded of Christ (Heb. i. 6). Again, in Rev. x. 2, He has "His right foot on the sea and His left foot on the earth." Put these two together, and see how wide His arms and legs, or feet, are. They go over the whole world as His inheritance, which He won to Himself, and His heirs after Him, with His blood. Now, Christ got land not to Himself. What! needed He land? and to give His blood for clay? But He won it to us, and took infestment in the earth, in the name of His friends; so that in Him they inherit "all things."

3. But here one may say, "How is it, then, that the saints are hungry and poor?" *Answer.* It is true, they are not now possessors of all things. But minors' wants*—ye see their interest is in and over all things, yet their tutor lets them go with a toom† purse. He knows the heir is a young one, and cannot keep gold,

* Take the case of those under age; they are often poor.

† Empty.

and therefore he gives him food and raiment for his present necessity, but keeps the lordship till he be able to guide it. Even so Christ is made of God, our Tutor and Purse-Master. It is all one whether our wealth be in our chest-nook or if it be in Christ's purse, to keep till we need it, providing we want not.

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

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

