

Fear not, thou worm Jacob.

No. I.

*“Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them; and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.”—ISAIAH xli. 14–16.*¹



THE Lord, beloved in Him, in this chapter is looking upon the case of a captive people, looking upon the case of a people that were both weak, few, poor, and were also amongst the midst of their enemies. And the Lord knows well what are the thoughts of His children when they are in such a case. He knows well enough what is in the heart of these who are strangers unto Him. And He knows also the heart and thoughts of His people

¹ In MS., “For preparation to a fast, August 22, 1640.” The Scotch army of from 20,000 to 30,000 men had crossed the English border two days before, August 20, 1640. The sermon is full of allusions to the army. This and following sermon on the same text, and the sermons on Hosea viii. 1–3, and Jchn xx. 8, were all preached at this period. The fast day had been appointed by the General Assembly which commenced its proceedings at Aberdeen on the 28th of the preceding month of July. Rutherford was present at this meeting of the Assembly, and took part in the discussions that arose in regard to disorders said to have taken place at night meetings for prayer and reading the Scriptures, &c. Rutherford defended these meetings. See Stevenson’s “History of the Church and State of Scotland,” Book III., chap. 5, p. 893.

when they are in captivity. And for that reason, to hold up their head above the water, which now might have swallowed them up, and put them in peril of losing for ever the promise that the Lord had made, in the words that now are read there is an encouragement given unto the captive Kirk, unto a base, miserable, weak, and destitute people, amongst the midst of their enemies. And in the words there be thir¹ particulars remarkable.

First of all there is an encouragement, "Fear not." (2) A description of the party to whom the Lord speaks this: "Worm Jacob" and the "Men of Israel." And (3) There is a warrant why the Lord speaks this, and why He comforts "Worm Jacob." "Fear not, says the Lord thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." (4) There is a reason of this taken from a promise of God, and the promise it is set down two ways in the words: first, in general terms on God's part, "I will help thee;" second, more particularly on the people's part, what they shall be, "I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as caff."² All the powers in the world that are against thee, albeit they be grown, and high above the rest, as indeed the enemies of the Kirk of Christ, they are swelled pieces of clay, and yet the Lord says that the Kirk shall get strength from Him to thrash these mountains, and to beat the hills, &c. And, lastly, by whose strength is this done, and who shall get the thanks of it? "Thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and glory in the Holy

¹ These.

² Chaff.

One of Israel." That is, thou shalt thank Me for doing of this, and not thyself and thy power.

Now, if ye will consider to whom it is that the Lord speaks this, and gives this encouragement—to a worm and to Jacob, a worm! He says to them, "Fear not." It would teach us this meikle,¹ that a distressed Kirk and people they have cause to rejoice upon luck's head,² long before the deliverance come. And the reasons wherefore a distressed Kirk and people may rejoice on luck's head,² even before the deliverance come, they are very good.

First, if ye will look to God, who bids them rejoice, He knows very well what will be the end of all the troubles of the Kirk, and He knows very well what will be the end of these who are troublers of them; for His Kirk and people He knows that they shall laugh, and in the end shall rejoice in His salvation. He knows there the rod of the wicked shall not always rest upon the lot of the righteous. The Lord's Kirk maun³ laugh and rejoice when He calls them to it. And there is none who has right to be merry and to rejoice but the Kirk and people of God, and so He knows that their time is coming. And He knows also what shall be the end of the wicked who are troublers of them (Psa. xxxvii. 13); it is said of them that the Lord laughs at them, for He sees their day afar off. He sees them when they are in all their mirth and joviality, and knows there is a black hour coming upon them, albeit they see it not themselves; and therefore He laughs at them.

And then a second reason wherefore the Kirk may

¹ Much.

² In the chance of winning.

³ Must.

rejoice upon luck's head¹ before the deliverance come, is because the Kirk of God they see this also, what is to come, and so may rejoice beforehand, they know how all shall be in the end. And that is the difference between the Kirk's enemies and the Kirk. The enemy knows not what will be the night-year,² and what the end of things will be, and therefore they are led to hell blindlings.³ They know not what is at the foot of the stair where they are coming down. But where faith is, it has the gift of prophesying and foresight there, albeit hand should join in hand, and all armies by sea and land should gather against them, yet it shall be well with them in despite of them all, as it is, Isa. iii. 10: "Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him, for the fruit of his doings shall be upon him." Faith tells these news beforehand.

A third reason whereupon they may rejoice beforehand is this—if we will look unto God's dispensation, His people under trouble may rejoice upon luck's 'head' before their deliverance come; I say, if we look unto His dispensation of justice and mercy, albeit the people of God be worms and despised ones in the eyes of the world, they need not to cast away their confidence for all that, because there is mercy in God, and it maun⁴ out to His people. Let them mourn and weep before noon; yet in God's wise dispensation they maun⁴ laugh afternoon. Let them be sorry and afflicted, and borne down

¹ In the chance of winning.

³ With the eyes closed.

² What will occur a year after this, "this night-year." ⁴ Must.

this year, yet there is light sown for the righteous and joy for the upright in heart. And if ye will look upon the other side, to the wicked, and to those who trouble the Kirk, there is justice in God, and so they may not win away with it. They maun¹ in the dispensation of God's justice be taen² order with. They may not aye³ be in prosperity and laugh. They maun¹ of necessity mourn at last, and the righteous shall rejoice. Their shell of the balance shall go down, and the godless shall go up. When the short heaven of the wicked is expired, they maun¹ sorrow then, for there are righteousness and justice in God, and it is a righteous thing with God, that He recompense to them who trouble the Kirk vexation and sorrow, and to them who are troubled joy and peace.

Whom to is it that the Lord speaks thus? To "*Worm Jacob*," and to the men of Israel, or to "*the few men of Israel*." This is sweeter nor⁴ if the Lord had said "My people," and it is liker God nor if He had called them "My sons," or "His spouse and married people with whom I am in covenant, by all the people of the earth." It says this meikle⁵ to us that the Kirk of God is never so miserable, nor so desolate and forsaken, but they have a Lord that pities them, One who sees their misery, and takes notice of it with a pitiful eye. That is an eye, indeed, that is spoken of, Exod. iii. 7: "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of My people, and their groaning which are in Egypt." There is a Father's eye in heaven that is lifted up towards the Kirk when they are in trouble, and He pities their case. See what a style⁶ the Kirk

¹ Must. ² Taken. ³ Always. ⁴ Than. ⁵ Much. ⁶ Title.

gets from God, Isa. liv. 11 : " O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours," &c. Even such another style as that which is given to the Kirk, Ezek. xxxvii. 4 : " Propheesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord," &c.

Why would not the Lord say to them, " My beloved people," " My people with whom I am in covenant," &c., but " Worm Jacob " ? This is a word of pity, and it sets ¹ our Lord very well to show pity. The *use* of this is, let us learn to make use of all these styles that the Lord gives unto His Kirk and His children in this world. Isa. lii. : Zion, wallowing in the dust, is comforted with many sweet promises and encouragements. And fra ² our Lord casts comforts into our hand that way, let us put out our hand and to take a grip of them. Fra ² the Lord is pleased to make many fair promises to His Kirk, when it is black in the West, let us take them unto us when we are under trouble, let us learn to take all our crosses from our [Lord] as it becomes us to do, and spill ³ not our crosses by taking them from any other cause than the hand of God. If we could learn to put all our crosses over into our Lord's hand to be disposed of by Him, and take them all from Him, we would get a better gate ⁴ of them nor ⁵ for the most part we do. But it is well wared ⁶ that thy cross and trouble be thy death, when thou wilt not put it over upon thy Lord, that puts not a crazed estate or the cross of an ill husband, or an ill wife, or wicked children, or fears

¹ Becomes.

² Since.

³ Mar, destroy.

⁴ Way.

⁵ Than.

⁶ Well expended.

for the cause of God, that it go not well, that puts not all over upon the Lord. If all these things could be put over upon the Lord Himself by us, there is no doubt but He who is a giving and a pitying Lord, who sees our sufferings and our crosses, He would no doubt send a sure deliverance to such who, in faith and patience, commit themselves and all things that come upon them unto Him.

Again, "*Worm Jacob, and men of Israel.*" This is as base ¹ a style as can be given to any—a *worm*. Where met they His married people and the people in the world whom He thought most of, and why should He not [have] given them a more honourable name? The Lord is now speaking of them as they are in the eyes of the world, and not as He thinks of them; for His people are never the most in multitude, nor are they the strongest to look to, nor the wisest, nor the richest, &c. No; for the most part they are the basest bodies. Jerusalem is a forsaken woman; and (Lam. ii.) when all go by Jerusalem and see it so sore sacked they say, "Thou city which men call the perfection of beauty and the joy of the whole earth, all the enemies opened their mouth against her to devour her." And yet ye will get the Lord's Kirk no better (Mic. iv. 6), ye will get the Lord's Kirk there, a halting cripple woman, that has but one leg to gang ² upon. Aye (1 Cor. i. 27), His Kirk there is called the nothings of the world, those that are not worth the uptaking, the kinless things of the world, the ignoble, base, contemptible ones, the refuse of men! and (chap. iv.) "the off-scourings of the world." Are

¹ Mean.

² Go.

the Lord's people so, indeed? No. They are not so, indeed; for (Mal. iii. 17) they are called the Lord's jewels, His beloved people. Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? (Jer. xxxi. 20.) How comes it to pass, then, that God speaks so of His Kirk? *Answer*: The Lord speaks so of His Kirk and people as men speak of them and according to their outward estate in the world, for the world sees not the Kirk's best side. The world knows not our Father, nor they know not our joy nor our inheritance; they see not our day of rejoicing. That which makes the Kirk glorious is hid from the eyes of the world (Prov. xiv.). A stranger meddles not with the joys of the Kirk. They know not our joy, for it is hid up with God in Christ. All our best things are hid from the eyes of the world; they only see our worst.

The thing that we have to learn from this is, if the Kirk of Christ seem to be thus in the eyes of men, and then if the Lord, upon the other hand, count so highly of them, then let us not despise them, ¹bourd not with them, albeit they be baselike in the eyes of the world; ²for rise against the Kirk who will, because they think her strength not to be great, for, as weak as she is, they shall be broken in pieces whoever they be who draw a sword against the Kirk of Christ, or rashes ³hard heads with it. Look there! they had not an arm to put up their sword again. See there! they be not all broken in pieces. What a cursed word is spoken of these who are enemies to the Kirk and haters of Zion! Psa. cxxix. 6: "They shall be as grass upon the housetop,

¹ Jest not, mock not at them. French, *bourder*, to humbug, from the old French *behourde*, to joist with lances.

² Regarded as obscure.

³ Dashes against it.

which withereth before it groweth up: wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom. Neither do they who go by say, The blessing of the Lord be upon you: we bless you in the name of the Lord." None that sees them at their work shall bless them, but the wrath of God shall be upon them; the mowers, nor shearers, shall get no good of them, but wrath and calamity shall seize upon them.

There is another thing in this style. He calls them Jacob, and Jacob is the Lord's covenanted people. And so it is as meikle¹ as if He had said, "Fear not, despised and weak people, and yet the Lord's covenanted ones." There is not a cross, misery, or affliction that comes upon the people of God but it is the Lord's, and is sib² to Him, for the first word is as meikle¹ as they were despised and silly³—a worm; but the next word, "Jacob," is a word of honour. We have to learn here that the very misery of the Kirk of God it is glorious, the very crosses of the Kirk have another sort of lustre nor⁴ all the glory that is in the world; for thir⁵ two words are as meikle¹ as if it had been said, "Base bodies, and yet highly honoured of God, the refuse of the world, and yet for all that those whom the Lord has taen⁶ by the hand to be His people, and He has taken upon Him to be their God." There are three blessed things that befall the children of God in all their crosses that the world has not in its troubles and crosses.

First. There is a moderation while they are under them. We may see the proof of this in this text.

¹ Much.

² Related.

³ Weak.

⁴ Than.

⁵ These.

⁶ Taken.

“ *Worm Jacob* ” He calls them, and yet He says to them, “ I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth, to thresh the mountains and to beat the hills to caff.”¹ The Kirk under affliction dreeing,² and yet they live, hungered and yet well fed, persecuted but not forsaken. The enemies are doing what they can to put us in the grave ; and yet even then, when we are in the grave, we shall live. No ; there is such a moderation of the troubles of the Kirk of God and of His children that there is not one ounce of sorrow or trouble that comes upon them but it is all weighed in heaven before it come upon you, and thou shalt get no more of it nor³ the Lord pleases. The Lord will have you to drink no more of that cup nor³ thy stomach will bear. He will not have you to drink till thy heart stand. Such a sweet attemperation have the children of God in all their troubles. This meikle⁴ baseness shall come upon them, and no more ; and it shall be mixed with honour.

Another thing that is in the afflictions of the children of God, even a trim⁵ lustre upon them. “ *Worm Jacob,*” and despised of the world, yet thee whom I have chosen from among all the people in the world to be Mine. O ! there is such a trim⁵ lustre on all the crosses of the children of God, that whatever befall them it is well watered over with the love and favour of God, Rev. xiv. 13 : “ Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours and their works follow them.” What is sourer and more fearful-like than death, and yet death being in the Lord it is sweet, and well watered to the children of God, for then they rest

¹ Chaff.² Enduring.³ Than.⁴ Much.⁵ Fine.

from their labours, and Job (chap. v. 17) says: "Blessed is the man whom Thou correctest." Of itself correction is sour, and yet coming from the Lord, and being watered with His love, it is sweet, and so sweet, that it is a thing wherein blessedness stands (Acts v. 41). The apostles when they were scourged before the council for preaching the gospel, it is said of them, "They went out rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus." There are two trim coverings there put upon their sufferings. First, the Lord's blessed estimation of them. He "counted them worthy." Second, they themselves rejoicing "that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus." Well is it that we get a blae hide¹ and bloody shoulders for preaching our Lord's gospel. There is glory in such baseness as that is. Our shame it is a glorious shame. Our hunger is His fulness. With it our Christ is a refreshing Christ. Our death it is a life unto us.

Third. "Worm Jacob." This is as meikle² as the Lord He esteemed Himself sib³ to their crosses. There is no cross or misery that befalls the Kirk of God or any of His children, but it is sib³ to God. There is an excellent word which is spoken by the apostle (Col. i. 24), "I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh;" and (Heb. xi. 26) speaking of Moses, he says of him: "He esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." The sufferings of the Kirk and the children of God, they are Christ's sufferings. Thy wae⁴ heart, thy losses, thy sufferings,

¹ Livid, discoloured skin.

³ Related to or connected with.

² Much.

⁴ Sorrowful.

they are Christ's. The world's afflictions, they are bastard afflictions, they belong not to Christ. There are enew¹ under crosses that Christ has nothing ado. Well's them who are under crosses, and Christ says to them, "Half mine." And you should learn to make use of this and see when you are under crosses how sib² they are to Christ. Is it your grief and your sorrow for fear that the Lord's cause and His people in the camp be not well? That is a sorrow that is sib² to Christ, and He will comfort those who are under sorrow that way. But if your grief and your sorrow be that ye will be poorer nor³ ye were before, because there is something sought of you to the cause of God that ye will be in greater danger nor ye were before by entering in a covenant with God ye will get none of Christ's comfort then for your cross and trouble: He has nothing ado with it. Well's them who know their crosses are not their own, but they are Christ's crosses, and then their crosses are well winded⁴ up in a web of His love, for then it shall neither hurt you nor kill you, but thou shalt bear it patiently and handsomely. That is a happy affliction that is Christ's affliction, and He has waled⁵ it to thee.

"Fear not, worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel," and to speak the word with a warrant, he adds to it: "*I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.*" What ground of comfort were this if it were said by one that could not help?—but the Lord says it.

There are three sorts that take upon them to comfort under trouble.

First. There are some who can do more, but only

¹ Enough. ² Related. ³ Than. ⁴ Wound. ⁵ Chosen.

speak a good word to them. And that is but a cold comfort, to speak a word, and no more, to a troubled conscience.

Second. There are some who take upon them to comfort under trouble, and they can do something; but it is but man's help when all is done, and we are forbidden to trust in any help of man—Psa. cxlvi. 3: "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man in whom there is no help."

There is a third, again, that helps in trouble, who only should take upon Him to help, for He can infallibly help in trouble. But He is a king of His word. He helps indeed where He promises. When God says "Fear not," albeit thou wert compassed about with enemies on all sides, and there were as many devils round about you as there are piles of grass upon the earth, or as there have fallen of drops of rain since the world began, thou needst not to fear; thou may go through the sea then, and the sea shall not drown you, the fire shall not burn you; thou may'st dance on the grave, for the grave shall not rot you. And so this is a well-fard¹ word: "I will keep thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." What if Jeremiah or Isaiah had said this to them! No, certainly that had not been enough, but the Lord says it, and that maun² stand sure. Then hang by this word, and this word is putten³ to to tell us that a trembling and doubting soul in trouble, it can get no fastening word, but only that which the Lord speaks. Albeit an angel or a king should say, "Fear not," or twenty or thirty thousand

¹ Well-favoured.

² Must.

³ Added or set down.

armed men should say it, it is nothing; and God grant that we trust not more in men nor¹ we do in the Lord at this time. But if the Lord say to a soul in trouble, "Fear not," we may trust in that word. A doubting soul it gets no sure word to fasten on until it get God's word to uphold it. Bind a ship to a rash² bush to hold her by! That is but a slim anchor; it cannot hold her when she begins to be moved. Even so to bid a distressed soul believe in the Kirk, or in the Pope's word, or lippen³ in a Service-book,⁴ it is worth nothing to it, especially to a soul under perplexity and trouble, when many enemies are besetting it. And, you know, a *worm* is a beast that has as many enemies as any beast has, for when it is creeping on the ground it has as many enemies as there are feet going upon the ground ready to tramp upon it, and to put out the guts⁵ of it. So is the Kirk and the children of God, environed with enemies on all hands. But there is a binding⁶ word here for "worm Jacob:" "*I will help thee, saith the Lord,*" and so they may ride it out against all storms and temptations that can overtake them. You may know how many doubtings are ready to overtake the children of God, especially if there be armies about them, and if the power of those who are against us be great, as, if there be kings upon their side. But even when it is so, the Lord's "*Fear not*" is a powerful word to them who can grip to the

¹ Than.² Rush.³ Trust to.

⁴ The Service-book was a transcript of the English Liturgy, but with some alterations bringing it into nearer conformity with the Romish Breviary. It was accompanied by a book of canons in which the Presbyterian polity was set aside. Both the Service-book and the canons were introduced by royal prerogative. The Church or the nation was not consulted in the matter.

⁵ Bowels.⁶ Supporting.

promises of God, who can say in faith, "If I die God's promise shall die with me, for I shall hold by it." When God, who is a king of His word, says, "Fear not," what need you to care for hundreds, or thousands, or fear them when they are about you? The Third Psalm says, "I will not be afraid for ten thousands of the people that have beset themselves against me round about." That is a stout soul, and he is the best sojourner¹ and the stoutest that draws a sword that lippens² more to the promise of God nor³ to all other outward helps in the world beside.

Again, some may object and say, "I know that there is enough every way in God, but what is that to me, when I am so unworthy? What the better can I be of His promises, I am so sinful and unworthy?" *Answer*: Whom to is His promises made if not to you? If Christ be thy Redeemer, and thou be in covenant with Him, then all His promises, they are made to thee whoever thou be, though never so unworthy in thy own eyes. But that is our great neck-break⁴ in the point of believing, and in the point of faith, that because we may justly find fault with ourselves, therefore we are ready also to find fault with God and with Christ. O, say we, "There is meikle⁵ guiltiness in me, and so I cannot believe your word of promise that I have anything to do with it." That is as meikle⁵ as to say, that because thou art ill, therefore Christ is ill also. A doubting soul is ready to find many faults with God and with Christ. Thou wilt say He is long in coming, and complains that He lets them not soon enough into Him. The truth is,

¹ Soldier.² Trusts.³ Than.⁴ Ruin.⁵ Much.

because thy eye is ill therefore thou believest His to be ill also. It were good for us in looking to the promises of God, to look out of ourselves and to look to them in Christ only ; for if ye look for any cause or ground of believing in yourselves, or in the creature, ye shall never believe. That is the surest way of believing to say, "Thou, thyself, art toom,"¹ but Christ is full. I am a lost soul, but He seeks that which is lost, and He is found of them who seek Him not." When once we come to this, and rest upon the Lord this way, then we take a right grip of the promises. Now for all that we have heard of, or seen, to be against us, and for as weak as we are, yet we may bless God for what is done in this land : four and twenty or thirty thousand men going into a neighbour kingdom. But they may raise five score thousands to come against them : yet if we could grip to this word of promise, "Fear not, worm Jacob, and men of Israel, I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel ;" and if they resolve (if they be put to it) to fight because they believe ; and if we who stay at home can be instant in praying to God for them, that the Lord would make many to favour them and make the hearts of their enemies to faint, what would not our Lord do for them who believe in Him ?

The style² that God gets here. It is a new style, for God has two sorts of styles in His word. There is Jehovah and God ; and the Lord, He would hold these styles albeit the world had not been or any created thing. But if there had not been a world, and lost sinners, and a Kirk, He had not been a Creator, nor a

¹ Empty.

² Title.

Redeemer, nor a Husband to His Kirk. And so the Lord He has these styles of Creator, Redeemer, the Lord of the whole earth, the Husband of His Kirk, the Holy One of Israel, from us, and our house. And we may say two things of these styles that the Lord has from us. *First*: That they are very humble styles, and very comfortable to us; for by that we may see, that He has married with us, and with our house, because He has taen¹ styles from us: from His lost people He takes the style of a Redeemer; from the covenant that He has made with His people He takes the name of the Holy One of Israel; from marrying with His people He takes the name of Husband. This is even like unto a house that is like to go out of the name for want of male heirs, and there comes in one and marries the heritage of the house, and takes styles from the house, and calls himself after the name of it and so keeps it in the name. *Second*: We may say again that the Lord He has no toom² empty styles. Many in the world indeed they have toom² names and toom² styles. The Lord has made many kings, and many of them fill not the chair of a king; albeit they be princes, yet they have not the minds of princes. And magistrates in the Psalm (Psa. lxxxii. 6) they are called "gods;" and yet they will die the next day, and so they fill not the chair of a god, for God cannot die. And many that are called friends, yet they fill not the rowme³ of a friend; for either they will change their mind, or they will die the next day, and

¹ Taken.

² Unsubstantial, shadowy. Toom, as distinguished from empty, is something that has been vacated; emptied out. An empty barrel may never have been full, but a toom barrel has.

³ Place.

then their friendship is gone. But for the Lord our God He has no toom¹ names at all; Isa. xliii. 8: "*I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour;*" and Mal. iii. 6, He says, "I am the Lord that changeth not." This should teach us to put our trust and confidence in this Lord who thus takes styles to Himself from us, and to trust more in Him nor² in all the men in the world who are not able to fill their seat—to trust in Generals and Commanders, and such others as these who are not able to fill their seat. No, it is better to trust in the Lord who never yet tint³ a field and who takes no toom¹ styles to Himself. Whatever God is called in His word that He is indeed. It is a damnable⁴ doctrine that the Arminians teach to say that Christ is a King, and yet it may be that He have no subjects; for they make His kingly office only to stand in this, that He has right to be a King, albeit all His subjects they should be apostates. And they say He is a Husband because He has right to marry a spouse, albeit she will not marry Him. O, but that be a most damnable⁴ doctrine to say, that Christ is a King and yet it may be that He have no subjects! That He shall be a Lord and not have a willing people! He taketh no toom¹ names to Himself. Whatever name the Lord takes unto Himself is salvation. The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are saved. Is that the letters of the name Jehovah that is a strong tower? No; it is the Lord Himself. The righteous trust in the name of the Lord, and to trust in the name of the Lord is to trust in Himself. So that if we can learn to acknow-

¹ Unsubstantial, empty. ² Than. ³ Lost. ⁴ Condemnable, odious.

ledge the Lord in His styles, and in His lordship and dominion, and put Him in His chair of state, then no doubt but He will be all unto us that He is called, He will be a friend to you who want thy friend, a father to the fatherless, a king to those who trust in Him, and want no earthly king, or has a king who does not his duty to them. He will be a husband when the husband of those who trust in Him dies, or have a husband who does not his duty to them. He fulfils all the wants that those can have who trust in Him.

“*Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth: thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.¹ Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away.*” Lest the Kirk should take ill with this style, “*Worm Jacob*” and “*Men of Israel,*” as base styles—as base styles they oftentimes cast our hearts down—the Lord says to them: “Giving, but not granting, that it be so, yet I will help you, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” And the help it is set down in the 15th verse, “I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth.” There is a doubt met with here in this 15th verse. They might have said, “Why have not we just cause to fear, we being but a worm and *few men* (as the word in the first language reads); and so why have we not cause to fear?” The Lord says to them, “Ye have no cause to fear for all that;” and I shall meet with that objection as there is no ground of doubting in a weak believer, but the Lord He has a wedge to meet it with to ding² it out again: “I will make you a new

¹ Chaff.

² Drive by force.

sharp threshing instrument having teeth." How meets this with their objection? Very well; for first they are called a worm, and now they are called a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth. A base and a despised Kirk, and base and lightly esteemed in the eyes of the world; and yet for all that a flail to beat the mountains of the earth to nothing, and to beat them so small that they shall be blown away, so that they are not able to bide¹ their straike.² Then ye see the Kirk, it is a small party in the eyes of the world, and despised of them; and yet for all that the hardest party that ever the powers of the world yoked³ with. Rise up against the Kirk of Christ who will, they shall find that they never yoked³ with the like of them. Let kings and antichrist, the Pope and his power, and prelates and Papists, rise up against the Kirk of Christ, they shall find that they had never such a tough party as the Kirk is, for the Lord He has ways anew⁴ to make His people strong, that they may prevail.

How is it that they become a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth? The Lord makes them so, and were it not so that they are something of the Lord's making they were nothing indeed. But fra⁵ they are something of the Lord's making they are strong enough against all opposers; an'⁶ the kirk were slain He can win a battle with them; and⁶ they were dry bones He can put sinews and flesh and skin upon them and put life in them to make them prevail; and⁷ ye were a worm, ye shall be a new

¹ Endure.² Blows.³ Engaged.⁴ Enough.⁵ From the time.⁶ "And," if.⁷ If.

sharp threshing instrument having teeth, to beat the mountains of the world and make them small, and to make the hills as chaff. Then the strength of the Kirk it is from God's making of them strong. We are daft¹ that looks to our own strength, and to the number of our men. God grant that our eyes be not fixed upon men for our security! And, indeed, I fear that more nor² anything that our eyes be fixed upon men over meikle.³ Let us look to the Lord's making of us strong. And, indeed, we look all wrong if we look not to our Lord's strength and to anything else. This says that we look all wrong when we look to anything that is in ourselves, and look not only to that which is in Christ. Alas! says some one, "I am a great unbeliever, and will Christ lay His fair face to my black cheeks? Will He kiss me who has so foul a mouth? No." And⁴ God make you something, then ye shall be something indeed. It is not our wit or strength or worthiness that will do our turn. It is our Lord and His strength who must do it. Paul he is nothing in himself and in his own account, and yet through Christ that strengthens him he is able to do all things (Philip. iv. 13). And, Heb. xi. 34, it is said, of weak He makes strong—"they waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the enemies," through His strength; Rev. i. 6: "The Lord makes us to be kings and priests unto Himself;" and Rom. viii. 37, who are made "more than conquerors through Him that loveth us."

How will the Lord do this to His weak Kirk, to worm Jacob, and to the few men of Israel? There are four

¹ Crazed.² Than.³ Much.⁴ If.

ways how the Lord does this. The *first* way is this. Sometimes the Lord He gives unto them worldly strength to overcome their enemies outwardly ; as sometimes the Lord He will make some few thousands to rise against many thousands and to put them to flight. The Lord will make good that word which is spoken, Numb. xxiv. 5, 7, 8 (albeit he was a false prophet who spake it, yet it is the Word of God for all that) : “ How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel ! He shall pour out the waters of his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God brought him forth out of Egypt ; he hath as it were the strength of unicorns : he shall eat up the nations his enemies, he shall break their bones, and pierce them through with arrows.” This was spoken of the seed of Jacob when they came out of Egypt, and had not a foot of ground of heritage ; nor had they a cothouse¹ above their heads, nor a sheaf of corn growing, to show that our Lord He can give security to those who are mean and weak in the eyes of men, and as it is, Isa. x. 33 : “ He will lop the boughs with terror ; and the high ones in stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled.” He can make them to bow down under the prisoner. Ay, albeit we of this nation were blocked up by sea and land, yet they wanting the Lord’s strength and we having it, they shall fall under us.

A *second* reason of this is, Because they who come against Zion, [whoever they be, they have seen their fairest day. Fra² once they come against Zion they

¹ Cottage or outhouse.

² From the first moment.

have never a day to do well again. You know what end Babylon made fra¹ once they carried away the Lord's people to captivity, and Babylon is called the Lord's hammer for beating the earth; and yet fra¹ once they carried away the people of God, their well² days are done. And Jeremiah he brings in all the nations about against Babylon; fra¹ once they come against God's people, and His land. And among many other plagues pronounced against them, Jeremiah he pronounces this, li. 26: "And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate for ever, saith the Lord." Fra¹ once Pharaoh came against Israel and against Moses, there came one plague after another upon him till at last he was made meat for the fishes, and the wrath of God lighted upon him and upon his princes and his people. The Kirk of God is a mite, but crack that mite who will they will break their chaft-teeth³ upon it, that they shall never eat well again. Be an enemy who will to this covenant that God has made with this land and they with Him (and⁴ it were but to be an heart enemy to it), it is a hundred to one if ever they have a day to do well. Can the husband endure that any should come against his married wife to wrong her? No; we believe certainly that the Lord He will take vengeance upon the enemies of our Covenant in Scotland, and of this cause that we are now called to go unto the fields for.

The *third* way, How the Kirk is victorious over her enemies is because her head, Christ, has strength enough for Him and her both. You know what is said of Christ,

¹ From the time.

² Good.

³ Jaw-teeth.

⁴ If.

Psa. ii. 9: The Lord has put a rod of iron in His hand to dash all His enemies in pieces therewith as a potter's vessel. All that rise against the Lord and against His Kirk they shall be broken in pieces. In Isa. xlix. 25, there is a terrible word spoken there to the enemies of God's people: "I will contend with them that contend with thee, and I will save thy children; and I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob." So this is all done through Christ's strength. For as He is Mediator there is a promise made unto Him (Psa. cx. 5) that whoever they be who are His enemies they shall never thrive nor do well; and fra¹ the Lord has given Him all power in heaven and earth He may take order with all His enemies, for He may head² and hang within His own bounds. He shall fill the pits with the dead bodies of His enemies; and in the pursuing of His enemies He shall be so hot, and in such a haste, that he shall not go into the tavern to take a drink of wine there and to take good cheer, but He shall drink of the water out of the brook until the time that He has brought utter judgment and desolation upon His enemies.

Fourth. The Kirk of Christ it maun³ be a sharp threshing instrument because of this gospel, for the ill and sorrowful days of the enemies of the Kirk they are contained in this gospel and in this Covenant that Scotland has sworn with God. And whoever they be who will not obey this gospel there is vengeance prepared for

¹ Since.² Behead.³ Must.

them ; to let all the world see this, that it is better to make any party in the world your enemy nor¹ to make Christ and His Kirk your enemy, and to comfort those who are upon our Lord's side of it. Let the world say the contrary, whoever they be who are upon our Lord's side of it when He triumphs, they shall also triumph. And is it not enough that we get a part of our Lord's triumphant victory, and that He will rain vengeance upon His enemies and ours? And it is a part of the Kirk's joy that there is a day coming when no devil in hell, nor no Pope, nor no prelate, nor any whoever they be, who have given wicked counsel against His people, if they have not repented unto Him thereof He shall tread them all under His feet, and He shall say to them, "Bring hither those My enemies who would not that I should reign over them : bind them hand and foot and cast them in utter darkness." That is a sore sentence, and yet our Lord has left it in His Testament to His enemies, and to the enemies of Zion. And they shall have a share of Christ's joy who love His cause and covenant, and rejoice when Zion rejoiceth, and sorrow when it is in distress. Look, what is your greatest fear and sorrow?—that which wakens you first in the morning and is last in your thought at night? If it be concerning the estate of the Lord's Kirk and Zion there cannot be a more blessed mark of a child of God than to be rightly mindful of Zion's case; Psa. cxxxvii. 5, the penman of that Psalm says there: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, then let my right hand forget her cunning." If thy joy or thy sorrow be according as the Kirk of Christ is joyful

¹ Than.

or sorrowful, thou shalt then get a share of her victory thou shalt help to divide the spoil with her. When Christ has overcome all His enemies, Rome, and Spain, and Pope, and prelates, and thou shalt sit down beside Christ all sweating, then He shall take the napkin of His consolations to dry thee withal. And He shall then lay thee into His heart and bosom, and shall say: "Come sing a song of victory with Me! All ye who were partners of My woe, come now and take a share of My joy. Come and sit down in a cushion beside Me, and rejoice in Me and in My salvation." Now, to this Lord who has purchased this unto us, and fights for the keeping of it, to His Father and our Father and to the Holy Spirit be all praise, dominion, and glory for ever.—Amen.