

unbelievers, and saith, "He will not come;" and they take a false answer from Christ. What! shall I wait any longer upon the Lord? And so their faith falls in two in the waft. Wait upon Christ's answer. If it be not an answer of mercy, wait on still, for there is a better one coming from Christ—to Whom, with the Father and Holy Ghost, be glory, praise, and honour, for ever and ever.—Amen.

The Church Seeking her Lord.

"The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love. What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us? My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand."—SONG OF SOLOMON v. 7-10.¹



Now this text we have two things. 1. What befell the Kirk in seeking of her Lord—the watchman gave her straiks.² 2. What speeches fell out betwixt her and her fellow friends. And there is a dialogue betwixt them. 1. The Church not finding Christ Himself to her desire, layeth a charge on her companions to take her blessing and her hearty commendations to Him whenever they meet (ver. 7). 2. They upon the occasion of the vehemency of her charge not so spiritually affected as need were, answer, What a walie³ beloved is this? What din is that ye make to charge us so peremptorily about your Christ? Have you a Christ of your own? Whereof is your Christ made that you charge us this way? And (ver. 9) the Church's stomach arising that

¹ Preached in the afternoon at the communion at Anwoth, April 5, 1647.

² Strokes.

³ Excellent.

her Lord should be despised, falls out in a higher commendation of Him to the end of the chapter in all His proportions.

“*The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me*”—with their tongue (Jer. xviii. 18); wounded me, and drew blood of me (Luke xx. 12). No doubt she asked of the watchmen, as chap. iii. 3: “Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?” But they not only refused to tell her, but they wounded her conscience with reproachful words, and persecuted her. We see in the way of seeking lost Christ there are persecutions and troubles. I think Christ is even like dear over-sea wares. Men hazard both life and goods to sea for them, and (Matt. xiii.) He is the pearl that men must buy with the loss of all they have. The woman with the bloody issue gat a thrust in the throng, thrusting in through a multitude to be at Him; and the two blind men crying, for ilk¹ one of them had a pair of blind eyes, gat rebukes of the disciples. We may know, first, we shall never get Satan’s goodwill to come to Christ, and therefore he professeth he will wait the gate for us. Second, sufferings and persecutions are in the way to Christ. This is a piece of old rent that lies² to Christ’s house. He suffered Himself ere He went into glory. Let them put on courage who seek Christ. Let them resolve to take cuffs, blae-straiks,³ and bloody wounds, in the seeking of Christ and the professing of His name. “If any man will be My disciple, let him take up his cross and follow Me.” We will not get this changed. The cross is upon Christ’s back. It follows Him and backs Him. Suffer-

¹ Each.² Belongs to.³ Strokes.

ings are hard, and we love to lodge in a whole skin, yet we would seek Christ and profess Him, and jouk¹ about to beguile the cross of Christ, and play it a slip; and we think to slip to heaven another way, and therefore men study the art of wiliness now to hide their profession. Nay, that this is not straight dealing and fair play ye must fill the field and throw honestly and fairly, and be marked as one that follows the Lamb wheresoever He goeth.

“*The watchmen.*” Christ’s governors are sometimes Christ’s persecutors. Scribes and Pharisees and high priests were always against Christ and His disciples. Paul found the rulers of the Jews always against him and the gospel, wherever they had any hand or authority. And Christ told His disciples (Luke xxi. 12), “Ye shall be brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake.” The leaders of the people have been their persecutors. Ezekiel xxxiv. 4: “With force and cruelty have ye ruled;” verse 18: “They made the people to eat trodden on grass, and they gave them foul water to drink.”

But ye will say: Seeing God has laid a great burden upon rulers, especially upon watchmen, why may not the people lay the same burden on them and commit our souls to them? Nay, but we must know God is Lord of the decree of reprobation, and for His own glorious ends gives some over to corrupt teachers, and yet we sin in selling our conscience to their doctrine. But there is (1) something to be said here for people, (2) something for watchmen.

¹ Bend the head to evade the stroke.

1. Something for people. There be here two extremities.

Pride giveth too little, and slavish consciences give too much, to watchmen. Therefore let their feet be pleasant that publish good tidings. Rulers are tutors to Christ's bairns that are minors. Therefore let rulers get all their own, for pride against them stots¹ off them upon God; and when their laws are unjust we owe to them an upholding of the majesty, dignity, credit, and honour which God has given them. Therefore so to disobey unjust laws as that we take at² the majesty and face of rulers is unlawful, seeing we are willed to honour the king (1 Pet. ii. 17; Eccles. x. 20). So all comes to this, that troublers of the peace of the kirk or commonwealth condemned (Rom. xii. 18; Heb. xii. 14), and discrediting authority in the very act of refusing obedience to the unjust decrees, is unlawful. Again, the patience of an ass in any man that has a conscience is unlawful. People here stand still without a halter in their head while rulers lay a load of dirt upon them, and their best devotion here resolves in "God forgive our teachers if they lead us wrong, for we know no better." If the watchmen forbid or command, and load your conscience under the pain of straits,³ he is but an ill market man who would give much for such people's part of their inheritance. Men forget that we watchmen can put a toom⁴ spoon in a bairn's mouth, and cry, "The Church rulers! authority, authority! the law, the law!" as if the Bible were long ago burned. But know ye not that watchmen in Christ's matters can totter; yea, the chair and the pulpit can reel; and therefore if your light be your Scripture, God

¹ Rebounds.

² Oppose, or use freedom with.

³ Stroke.

⁴ Empty.

help you. I will not give much for your faith, for our faith often sits door-neighbour with the world, and the world prisoneth light. Go over sea to Rome and learn this. In the doctrine of the law of nature, of the God-head, of two natures in Christ, for the most part they are sound, for this truth has little trafficking with the world's fatness. But because Purgatory (denied by a famous Papist to have any just claim to truth by any patent in Scripture) doth lie in the world's fat arm, gain, giving milk and suck to it, therefore this chamber in hell is stiffly maintained, because this lie is a ship that bringeth home much gold, and one dying will toom¹ his purse to ease his conscience. Therefore when the command of rulers has ease, honour, the world and the fatness of the earth on the one side, and on the other there is nothing but losses and sufferings, the question speaks clearly the world's side is thief-like and to be suspected. And this is too ordinary in rulers, as also in us all by nature, to seek the truth as the wanton child doth his book, wishing he may not find it, and fearing the finding of his book cost him the loss of his pastime. Would men in the fear of God dig for wisdom as for gold, they would find it. But as if men foresaw the less light the more false peace, they take as much of conscience as makes for them, and no more. And when light of conscience cries on them too fast they wish it wanted the tongue, and in their heart pray a sorrow to the well-shod tongue of an enlightened conscience.

“The keepers of the wall took away my rail from me.”

¹ Empty.

Either they took away the scarf that covered her face, or her veil, or kerchief that did cover her head, which was both an ornament (Isa. iii. 23) and a sign of subjection of the wife to her husband (1 Cor. xi. 7); for because (Ezek. xxiii. 25) they took away the veil from lewd women, as a token they were harlots, whereas the veil is a sign of modesty. It is clear the rulers beat the Kirk from obedience to her Lord, and called her a harlot, heretical, and schismatical, and covered her with a veil of traditions. In Solomon's days rulers have been playing and encroaching upon the woman's veil and her subjection to Christ, her husband in hearing, and obeying his voice only; and this is again decorous and modesty to pull the poor woman's veil off her head and send her out barefaced and bareheaded among the enemies to be laughen at and mocked. This has come in rulers and tutors under pretence they owe obedience and subjection to the watchmen. Because watchmen think they get not in commanding too much (whereas Christ allows them in commanding only the chair¹ of sent servants, straitly bound with a written commission from the Lord), therefore they make a hole in the poor woman's veil, or they pull the kerchief off her head, and busk her with a veil of human traditions, a veil of fig-leaves, not a kerchief of Christ's fine linen. This is pride in men of eminent place in the Kirk; and pride is an ill and cumbersome neighbour beside Christ. It is always going over the line, and not content with its own side, and thinking its own bounds strait and narrow. It will be over the march in Christ's hained² pasture. It is a curse in the

¹ No other authority than.

² Enclosed.

law to remove our neighbour's landmark, and take in a piece of Christ's furrow. Watchmen have power and authority here, and it cannot be denied but they are often like the man who shearing away the hair, that he cuts both quick hide¹ and flesh. Rulers, in cutting off hair and exercising what power Christ has given them, they too oft cut Christ's quick hide and come in upon the flesh with their knife, meddling with the woman's kerchief and vail, which only should be of His busking, for it is His own kingly power to govern His Kirk and to busk her as He pleases. When men take upon them to do it they cut the quick flesh; and therefore our Lord had good cause to say (Psa. ii. 10), "Be wise, be instructed ye judges of the earth; guide well; look to your tackling;" but the mischief is, honour is an apple so sweet that Balaam will stem the spirit of prophesying, howbeit the form should nip in pieces. To come to the purpose, and men's honour and their unbounded appetite to be at the chair of it and to keep it has often made a wide hole in the kirk wall, and such a slap in the Confession of Faith as an idol as great as a kirk has come into Christ's house. Men would fain be at this to clip in length and breadth the woman's vail, to make it as meet for policy as a strait coat for a woman's body until it pain her, and she pains it until the seam skaileth² and loupeth out. The woman's vail is most seemly when rulers suffer it to keep the just quantity and length and breadth of the Lord's pattern on the Mount, and it is the wife's part to stick by the vail and put on no other. Better lose her tutors than her husband.

¹ Living skin.

² Parts and bursts.

“*From me.*” The Church gat this ill turn of the watchmen because she held her Lord at the door. For this cause, because (Lam. i. 8, 10) “Jerusalem had grievously sinned. . . . The adversary hath spread out his hands on all her pleasant things (and so also upon her vail); for she hath seen that the heathen hath entered into her sanctuary, when Thou didst command that they should not enter into Thy congregation.” The Kirk of God gets carnal lords to rule over her, and gods of wood and of stone to serve every day and night—Jer. xvi. 13; and verse 11, “Because your fathers have forsaken Me, saith the Lord, and have walked after other gods, and served them and worshipped them.” We can complain of our Lord’s absence and of His unkindness, and of cruel watchmen, and we are only to be blamed. We made the broust ourselves, and we can lay the blame of spoiled drink upon God. Would we keep good quarters with Christ, we should get pastors according to Christ’s own heart. People under blind shepherds should rather then cry out against themselves who are wandering sheep, than against their shepherds who cause them to err. A repenting man is more angry at his own heart that consented to sin than he is at the devil who did tempt him to sin. There is oft too much crying out against rulers who have not always hap to steer the rudder of the ship cannily,¹ and too little godly sorrow for our sins, that procure that “leopards and lions shall watch over our cities” (see Hosea xiii. 7, and Jer. v. 6).

“*I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem.*” The Church with much ado hath escaped the hands of the watchmen,

¹ Cautiously.

and finding small and very cold comfort from them, and no news about her beloved, turns her to followers and companions, and conferring with them to tell her well-beloved that she is sick of love for Christ.

This teaches what duty the saints owe one to another, to love one another (1 Thess. iv. 9), and to teach one another (Col. iii. 16); "Exhort one another daily" (Heb. iii. 13); "Provoke one another to love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together" (Heb. x. 24, 25); and among themselves to speak that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers (Eph. iv. 29), having speech always with grace seasoned with salt (Col. iv. 6). This God commanded: "Say to your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ru-hamah. Plead with your mother, plead." This charge is given to every one of the faithful to plead with the apostates of their time. And Mal. iii. 16, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and a book of remembrance was written before Him." Our Lord thinks so meikle of the sweet and comfortable speeches among the faithful ones, that He lays to His ear and hears it, and writes it up in a book; and Zech. viii. 21: "And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts; I will go also." This speaketh and crieth aloud against those who confine all exercise of God's worship within the walls of the kirk, making all their worship holiday worship, using godliness for holiday as they do their Sabbath clothes. But Abraham had religion within his house. He taught his children

sitting and walking in his house, and in the field, lying down at night, and rising up in the morning; and Philemon had a kirk at his house. Are not ministers Christ's stewards? and who knows not the bairns may possibly not be disposed to eat at the set time of the ordinary meal, and in the public ministry, for the Word's working and Spirit's working are not always confined to the hour of the sand-glass, neither is the Spirit tied to a pulpit, and a gown, and a minister's tongue. Shall we then think Christ's house is so narrowly holden and his pantry so scant that He will not allow a four hours' drink upon His bairns or a piece between meals? Shall not hungry bairns get no more nor public allowances in church assemblies? Nay, our Lord allows His bairns to carry home to their houses grapes and apples off the tree of life, and eat at home. For many coals make a great fire, and private Christians will rub one another's memory and their cold hearts; and often what ministers cannot do in public, God's Spirit with private helps will do it at home. It is seen when a great doctor of physic has given over the man, an old wife has come in after him, and wrought the cure, and made the man sound whole. This doctrine should be right understood, for it warrants not the conventicles and unwarrantable meetings of Separatists and Brownists, who despise public meetings, and make a kirk in private houses of their own. They learn not this from Christ, who honours the Pharisees' preaching sitting in Moses' chair with His own presence, and commanded others so to do; howbeit they had leaven in their doctrine. We will not get a church of clean paper and of new velvet as

Separatists and Anabaptists would have, and it is a fearful sin to make a rent and a hole in Christ's mystical body because there is a spot in it; and this place will not help the conventicles of Separatists, for the Church here has conferred publicly with the watchmen, as chapter iii. 3. She so honoured the public means that she said, "Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?"¹

"*Tell Him that I am sick of love.*" This is a broken, fiery, and passionate kind of speech, wherein she lays a charge upon her companions that they would in their prayers to God show Christ her errand, and take her hearty commendations and blessing to Christ because for the present she cannot get Himself. In a desertion anything is good meat to a hungry soul. When the Church had Christ, and was near to Him, there being a thin door only betwixt Him and her, she counted little of Him, and would not fyle² her feet to let Him [in]. To a full soul even the honeycomb is loathsome. But now, having lost Christ, with a great desire she is content to get one that will carry her commendations to Him. Hunger for Christ is good cheer, and a good feast. Experience may confirm this doctrine, for sometimes a kiss of Christ's mask when ye cannot get His bare face is a full dinner. When David is at home the worship of God and His tabernacle is not so sweet, when he may have the best rowme³ in it. But in Psalm lxxxiv. he would be content with all his heart of the swallows' rowme³ in the bowers of the house, and then a psalm was sweet-

¹ See this clause more fully expounded and applied at pp. 307-327 of Rutherford's treatise, "Influences of the Life of Grace."

² Soil.

³ Place.

meat. But when he yoked¹ with Bathsheba both the tabernacle and Psalms dreed² of cold, and were laid up to a full sea. Compare here faith and sense together, and you will find sense prouder nor³ faith. Sense will have nothing except it find an open door to go into God, and faith will be content to busk and to look in through the key-hole to see but the half of Christ's face or one of His ruddy cheeks. The Kirk's sense is at this—Cant. i. 2: "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth." That is a piece of pride to rest with nothing as content but the Lord's bare face, His breath, and a kiss. But (Luke vii.) a poor woman is content to kiss His feet. "Set Me as a seal upon thy heart," says the Kirk (Cant. viii. 6). Sense there will be in no place except at the board-head, and the first mess and the hand in the plate with Christ. But the woman of Canaan's hungry faith is glad to lie under the table with the dogs, and to eat the crumbs that fall from His table. Thomas his sense has not except he see Christ and put his finger in the print of the nails and his hands in the hole of His side. The silly⁴ hungry woman with the bloody issue will be content to touch the hem of His garment. Servants' bread is good cheer to the home-coming forlorn son. It was once another world when bairns' bread was no delicacy to him. This reproves doated lovers, who when they have full wallets and abundance of Christ's love and their armful of Him, misregards Christ, and makes small reckoning to anger Him, and set not by⁵ His presence because wealth causes wit to waver. Such spoiled bairns in a wealthy world let wisdom's good

¹ Joined himself to. ² Suffered, endured. ³ Than. ⁴ Feeble ⁵ Value not.

meat spoil and sour. And when that world is away they would be glad of the licking of Christ's trencher. O, but humble hunger will think meikle¹ of half a smile and half a kiss of Christ. And the reasons are these :

1. Desertion and absence of Christ is a great scourge to pride and security. When we have Christ at will and access, presence, sense, and liberty, ere we are aware we turn wanton and secure, and count little of Christ's sweet tongue and His lovely knocks. It is even so here. Beggars dow² not bear wealth, Christ's lordly beggars, His full spoiled and doited³ louns,⁴ find the ground of their stomach then. And because you are too full and know not well wherefore the well serveth you till it go dry, it is the wisdom of Christ that ye go over hungry grass, and seek after the half blinks that ye counted little of before, and eat sweetly the last year's leavings, and be glad of Christ's mouldy bread.

2. Humility is never well-fed, and fat till sense grow traiked⁵ and lean, and then when sense is traiked⁵ and lean, and like to starve in a famine, spiritual humility (to speak so) gets cheeks, and grows fat, under desertion, while hunger makes a wide mouth : then comes David's "How long, Lord?" (Psa. v.)

"*I am sick of love*"—or, as the Hebrew word beareth, "weak through love." That is, feeling wrath and the curse of the land, and wanting the sense of His pardoning love. I am sick through longing to have reconciliation and forgiveness, as is expounded well in Isa. xxxiii. 24 : "The inhabitant shall not say I am sick ; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity." So is it

¹ Much. ² Can. ³ Stupid. ⁴ Worthless persons. ⁵ Weak.

in this song at chap. ii. 5 ; at Matt. ix. 12 : " They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick." He means Saviour-sick for the physician Christ ; and, Psa. ciii. 2, 3 : " Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases." This is her pained conscience saying : " I am pained, I am in a fever, the health, constitution, and frame of the life of my soul is troubled because I want Jesus." To take the thing up that aileth the Kirk now we must know that it is not the bairn's truant sickness, nor the loun ill that aileth the Kirk, for there is pain and sorrow in this sickness : " My soul panteth after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God : when shall I come and appear before God ?" (Psa. xlii. 1, 2.) " My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord : my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." When the heart panteth and the flesh has a tongue to cry, David was not at himself. It is with the saint's longing for Christ as when a woman's husband has been long over sea ; every ship she sees makes her both blith¹ and sad, for hope deferred is a breaking of the bones. The first sight is half joy, but with pain, when all the passengers land and her husband is not there, then her heart breaketh. Every one that knocketh at the door makes her both blith¹ and sad when she sees it is another, she sighs and says : " Alas ! it is not my love." In this Saviour-sickness the soul in the word and sacrament waiteth for Christ. When it is not He, oh ! then the heart is woe : " I missed Him and I got Him not." Second : As in other sickness

¹ Glad.

so here, meat and drink do the sick man little good, and sleep can he not. The sick man now has no mind of sleep; his absence holds her waking. Word, sacraments, reading, prayer, conferring, have no taste. They feed not. The soul is ill-like and sick, until Christ come Himself, with a drink of cold fountain water of the well that runneth out from the sanctuary from under the throne of God and the Lamb (Rev. xxii.) The poor soul gets never a kindly cool of love fever. Third: In this sickness there is fear of wrath, a fire in the soul, and a sort of unbelief and fear He come not, for hunger is hard of faith. When hunger and faith run together hunger is speediest of foot, and out-runneth faith. Old Jacob hearing this that his son Joseph liveth, he believeth not, for his heart fainted (Gen. xlv. 26). Yet he would fain have had it true, but desire made such a wide mouth and racked itself so far until faith took the cramp. It is as we say, "What good news! Alas! I fear they be not true," and say to a sick soul burnt up with God's wrath, "Be blith,¹ Christ is coming;" he will let out a look with a watery eye, and death, earth hunger. "Alas! I fear it be not He, I would so fain have it Him. I dow² not believe it. Fear fills my heart, and that fear is a pain of the fever."

But is it not a dangerous case, may you say, to be thus sick? *Answer*: As Christ said in another sense, so may we here: "This sickness is not unto death, but to the glory of God," for there are speaking and crying tokens of life here. And, first, this sickness has a fair long tail. It is drawing Christ down out of heaven to the broad side of the poor soul that is Christ-

¹ Glad.² Can.

sick. Christ comes always to the cooling of the fever. Nay, He is always in the house, howbeit the person in the fever know Him not; He is at the sick man's bedside preparing drugs and washing herbs for him. He is looking on. Her groans and her sighs are of my well-beloved Christ, my dear husband, and His groans and His sighs, howbeit not heard by her, answer hers behind the curtain. Oh! for my dear bride, the Lamb's wife. And—

Second: There is here another good token, a sweet impatience in this love-sickness. Every hour for absent Christ is a day, every day a year. "And oh!" says the soul, "Saw ye Him. . . . Oh! He is long in coming. He goes slowly. Oh! run, well-beloved like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains."

Third: This one symptom of a Saviour-fever is also that there is a deadly sorrow until He come again. The harp of joy [is] laid by and hanged up until Christ come again and put in tune.

Fourth: All this time there is a fire of love to Christ in the heart, and His absence is like a fan to cause it to burn faster.

Fifth: The special prevalent mark that proveth it will end well is hunger and thirst for Christ, and a rude working hunger, and hunger that has hands and feet, and it is the only choice token of life.

But a question may be asked here in this sickness. That there is here a heart fainting and hunger for Christ, pronounced by Christ to be a mark of those whom God shall fill (Matt. v. 6); yet the hungry soul will not accept of this mark, and because he has the

mark of hunger rather reasoneth the contrary, he is none of God's? *Answer*: Because extreme hunger would so fain believe that often out of desire to have it true that Christ cometh, it unbelieveth, as is said before.

Second. Hunger is of kin and blood to want, and is of its own nature a toom,¹ empty thing, and thereupon the man thinketh he wanteth all.

Third. God disposes it to be so because hunger is given to man that he should not rest upon it, but seek meat. But we may learn how to spain² our desires, even to send them out in love-sickness for Christ. If the pulses of many souls in our time were graiped,³ they would be found not sick of love, but sick of lust. Some have, alas! sickness for their neighbour's vineyard, others Haman's sickness after he led Mordecai through the streets, sick of court because his honour got a scad.⁴ This age is full of sick men, fevers are rife, every man seeks for this world.

If ye find my beloved what shall ye tell Him [Authorized Version, "If ye find my Beloved that ye tell Him"]. The Church must find Christ ere she can tell Him. It is only a found Christ we must pray to. If we start Him not, and snapper⁵ not on Him where He is, we cannot pray to Him. This condemns those who tell Christ's news and they never find Him. They pray and speak to Christ, and they never meet with Him. They must then be dumb prayers; and so they are. When men get not access at all, they but cast away prayers in the air. He that prays in one measure or other, must win in to the King's chamber of presence, and to the feet of King

¹ Empty.² Wean.³ Felt.⁴ Scald.⁵ Stumble.

Jesus' chair of state: "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand" (Rom. v. 2).

Objection: Oh! I pray often, and I think I have not found Him. Are all these prayers then lost? *Answer:* All find not Christ in a like measure, yet little faith is faith, and every weight of gold is gold, a mool¹ as a mountain of gold. Second: If you have found yourself in prayer, you may soon find Him. If you get but in prayer the sense of a pair of blind eyes, and a dead heart, it is a degree of finding Him. Third: Know there be three degrees of those that find Christ. First: Your Lord gives you sometimes but the beggar's welcome, a closed door, and liberty to set your mouth to the hole of Christ's lock, and cry through that ye find Him, when ye find but the very hole of Christ's lock. Second: Sometimes the half-door is casten up, howbeit your weak arms dow² not cast up the door to the wall; and this is more than the first, and here they lie whining and scraping at His doors with some degree of motion and liberty, wrestling with an unbelieving heart. Third: Sometimes you find the whole door casten up, and your bridegroom taking an hearty armful of you, which is possibly a feast by the common.

Any of these are a finding of Him. Only beware of fashionable and dead prayers coming from custom, not from conscience. One of the marks whereof, is that men cast in their bill to Christ, and never ask whether it be heard or not. Then ere ye go away, leave a loud, last knock, and observe what God sayeth, and always so pray as that you instantly urge the answer of your bill.

¹ A crumb or particle.

² Can.

Objection : Then when I cannot find Christ, shall I not bide ¹ aback, and pray none till I find Him ?

Answer : This is a deep one of Satan, that some men will not come to Christ until they be so busked that there is not a wrong pin upon them. Nay, it is best to go to Christ with ragged and rent clothes. Necessity cannot blush. Young children rive ² two or three books ere they learn one. Better spill ³ a prayer or two and fumble at it, as be deluded of Satan to wait until your heart be on a good blood. Nay, a cold man must walk and stir himself until he be hot. Prayer is like God's file to stir a rusty heart; blowing helpeth a cold fire, and by moving, working, and stirring upon the new birth, the heart will grow warm. To stay from praying until the heart say, "Now, God, now I am prepared," is the way to lose what ye have, but not to find more. Be doing though weakly. If there be something of yours and something of Christ's, He will accept of His own, and pardon yours freely and fully.

"*If ye find my beloved.*" Then Christ is a seeking, and [is] lost in the Kirk's feeling, yet notwithstanding is her well-beloved, as ver. 1. Christ standeth without at the wrong side of the door, yet is her well-beloved. Nay, the covenant standeth if ye were in hell and He in heaven at the right hand of the Father, yet He is my Lord and my God. We see want of present possession of Christ depriveth not the saints' right and just claims to Him. A man year and day our king's rebel loses his life-rent of present possession, yet the heritage is his and his heirs. He loses the use, but not the right. A

¹ Remain.

² Tear up.

³ Mar, destroy.

nobleman having three houses to dwell in, the king for his fault confines him for all his life within one of them. His confinement forfeits the use of the other two, but his right remaineth. So right doth it fare with the saints; they, being Christ's outlaws for some offence, do often lose a very life-rent of spiritual joy and comforts, and so are Christ's confined rebels, and they lose joy, comfort, and present access, liberty, feelings, love blenks;¹ Christ in His felt presence being under a wadset² to them; yet faith all this time will not deny. They will say, "My Lord, my Saviour, my well-beloved;" Isa. xlix. 14: "Zion said, My God hath forsaken me." Well, Zion, think on of that! "Thy God," and yet He has forsaken you that is thy God and not thy God. Your tongue makes you a liar. But here under the fore-faultery³ the claim standeth still. Jonah ii. 4: "Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight." I said, whilk⁴ I? "Even I roving, dreaming, Jonah said." God said it not, for Jonah's claim, right, and title to God stood still. They are fools, then, who hang up all the rights of their salvation upon a felt presence; a loose, rotten pin. Money lent out upon bank is a man's proper goods, howbeit not in his coffer. Christ to the saints is sometimes lent-out money, yet is He yours. You see the furnace making for you, and finding Christ behind the wall you learn to *swim*, howbeit a wombful of feeling be not at hand to hold up your head. Dauted⁵ bairns, you must learn to go your alone, howbeit your mild

¹ Gleams, glimpses.

² A legal deed by which the debtor hands over his heritable property to his creditor that the creditor may draw the rents in payment of the debt.

³ Forfeiture.

⁴ Which.

⁵ Caressed, fondled.

nurse Jesus be not at the bairn's back to hold you by the two shoulders. If you can do this and keep your assurance, howbeit hell and wrath were in the shell of your heart yet Christ and heaven are in the yolk of it.

“What is thy beloved more than another beloved?”

The companions of the kirk being somewhat carnal and not well acquainted with love-sickness as the Church is, giveth her a sore check, for the Kirk spake with feeling, and took an hearty mouthful of it in charging of her well-beloved. And therefore the companions of the Church double¹ the question, and they say, “Have you any beloved of the new cut. Whereof is your Christ made more than other Christs? There is fell² great din of your beloved. What needs all this? You are fell² hot in the chase that you come on with adjurations and charges. I would not have you over-fine. Be like neighbour and other. Neighbour-like in holiness is very good.” We see in as far as we are carnal we dow³ not bide heat and forwardness in religion. We love still a moderation in God's matters. We need not think but the old world thought Noah too holy and too just. He will make a great vessel on dry land far from the sea, and he will have all the world but seven moe⁴ and himself drowned for sin. Noah in all the world, and none like him; he is the only man. You know Jeroboam in bringing in the golden calf in 2 Kings xii. 28: “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem to worship. Behold thy gods, O Israel! which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” He would say: “It cannot be denied but it is God's law to

¹ Repeat.

² Strange, unusual.

³ Cannot abide.

⁴ More.

go up to Jerusalem to worshipping, but, saving his own wisdom, it is a strait one, it is too much and more nor¹ necessity. If God be worshipped I doubt not but the place where is indifferent. Therefore it is not good to be fiery and lay too sore a burden upon the people, to pain ourselves to take the young ones, the male children, thrice a year up to Jerusalem." Therefore Jeroboam with a piece of desertion would slack the girth. There is a thing now in religion that they call discretion and a wise moderation. This is the only safeway. Let cold, politic, canny² men go before you, and follow them and dance ye as they pipe, and that is now sure work. "He is old enough, ask himself," say the parents of the blind man. They thought the rulers burdened their discretion with a tempting question, and therefore they would not take the tale ere it came to them. "I love Christ," says the middoway man or the half-lan³ man, "but I would not make a blowing horn of my religion. They shall never know upon what side I am. Fye! fye! for wisdom to this age. I hope I am as good a Protestant as any of them. I hope I have a soul to keep, but ill mot⁴ I thrive if I endure too great preciseness, and that men should start at a strae⁵ and carry so kittle⁶ stomachs, and they will not do as neighbours and others do, having forgotten what common people say, 'Too holy was hanged.' I would not have men's consciences too small spun. A conscience of small linen and cambric dow not,⁷ for the thread will soon break. It is good to be holy, but not over⁸ holy." It

¹ Than. ² Cautious. ³ Or halting; one not fully grown.
⁴ May. ⁵ Straw. ⁶ Nice, squeamish. ⁷ Profits not. ⁸ Too.

can hardly be thought but such men as seek this way, and they live as they speak, believe that God's law is too high a tuned lute, and therefore let moderation slack the string. When David says (Psa. xvi. 4), "The idols' drink offering of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names in my lips;" such men would judge David had precise lips who would not name an idol. This mid-course Christ blamed. People thought they might come to heaven, and there was no necessity to be so holy as Scribes and Pharisees. But Christ said: "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Men are gone so far that atheists have taken this course as to think, not to swear, drink, and not to follow the ordinary chambering and wantonness of the time, is to be precise so as lewdness is no moderation. Nay, I wish men were persuaded in the contrary, and would know that Christ's pass to heaven is either go quickly and with all your speed to heaven, or then miss your lodging at night; take even your choice. The old job-trot,¹ the old mid-course, well-a-ways brother, will not do the turn. Therefore no marvel nor² this world think that the saints have another beloved than the rest of the world has. It is known our divines think not in matters [of] faith much of what Papists say; as learned, as holy as you believe other ways, and we hear this daily, "Others have a soul to keep as well as you." What then? Must not every man be his own herd here? Men think with one stroke of the hammer they have felled a man cold dead to the ground. And yet all

¹ Jog-trot.

² Than.

they have said is no better nor¹ a rotten argument from excellent logic that is not sure in the dry land, and very dangerous in the sea. Let the pilot say to the passengers, "A better seaman nor¹ even I was, or will be, and who loveth life, goods, ship, as well as we do, sailed upon yon rock. Come, I will try my skill to follow him that way." Is not this unhappy sea logic? And conscience in God's matters sailing by another man's compass must then be in danger. It were better ask for truth; then, whither he goeth, truth cannot go in the mire, but men may.

"*More than others.*" That the companions of the Church ask this question, "What the Kirk's beloved is more than others?" shows they were not so well acquainted with Christ, nor with the fits of spiritual ague and fevers for absent Christ. The Lord has bairns in His house, and Christ's bairns must creep ere they gang.² All within the Church have not a like experience of Christ. 1 John ii. 13 makes some fathers, some young men, and some little children. There may be two sons of one and the same father, and the one be thirteen years of age, and the other a sucking child that can neither speak, stand, nor walk as yet.

The *use* is, that the aged bear with the infirmities of the younger and weaker, and if a weak one fall and break his leg, the apostle (Gal. vi. 1) will have those that are spiritual to put the broken leg in joint again with the spirit of meekness. Love should bind up softly and tenderly. Spelk³ the broken bones. Who are in this carriage toward men to keep these rules?

¹ Than.² Go.³ Support by splinters.

First : The wilful and proud Pharisee is not to be borne with in obstinacy. No man owes his tongue to lick his neighbour's running boils.

Second : It is rashness to break up a window in any man's soul, and fly upon his conscience at the first. Let God sit judge there.

Third : In Church controversies, in a great wood of sundry controversies anent matters of faith, we should attentively go by the thorny bushes, and walk so with men who worship one and the same God with us, albeit they err in some things from the truth as we put on a compassionate mind towards them. Know Christ will send no man to hell for errors coyning¹ from mere weakness.

Fourth : We are to look as well to that which men have as to that which they want. We look always to the blind and bloody side of a man, and to men's cloudy part. Men would say, "Turn the leaf and cast up the other page, and look upon the enlightened part of the man and his moon side." We are like the fly that cannot sit down upon the whole skin, but with eyes, smell, and tongue, we fall down upon the sore boil at the first.

Fifth : Let them be wicked men, we are then not only to look what they want, but what possibly the grace of God may give them. Fish playing in the sea to-day, for aught we know, may be ordained for Christ's hook the morn.²

Sixth : A common fault in us all that we look to sick men with pity, and not to sinful men with pity. Christ

¹ Arising.

² To-morrow.

wept for Jerusalem, and yet Jerusalem slew Him. Samuel wept for Saul and envies him not, howbeit he had taken his office over his head. Pity in place of grudging, thankfulness for what Christ has given us, a humbling fear for what justice has denied them, would turn our spirits if we considered the matter right.

Seventh: The judge not perversely wicked claimeth the largest share of every subject's love and charity. Thou barkest at him and smitest him with thy tongue, but little knowest thou he sits in the cleaving of a windy mountain. Four temptations from all the four airts¹ come on him every day. Thou art on the shore and he is in the raging sea. And this is one of Solomon's ills, the poor man can lie in his cothouse. Under David and Solomon the music went not unpleasant to all men's ears. Many eyes are on government, and to many it seems to crook and bear a leg; but men are ready to give authority more judgment nor² mercy.

Eighth: All men have holes and wants, but here is the matter. Some men have a crooked toe, and yet it is not seen; and some a crooked nose, and that is soon seen; because some carrieth the blot on their face they are soon seen and spitted at. You pity your own crooked toe and offendeth at your brother's crooked nose. You pity yourself, and summon your love home to lick all your own sore. Lend charity and love to others, and send some of it from home to love and pity others, and so much the more because fire will be under much ashes, and if the man be good gold will you cast him off because he wants some grains, or because his King's

¹ Quarters.

² Than.

stamp is clipped in the edge, and it wants half a letter? Christ will pay the skaith,¹ and take him in His own treasure, whom you have casten out of your heart; and beware of that when God is taking in you are casting out. That is to be feared. In a word, where there are weak and strong in a Kirk, every man should have a back and saddle in readiness to bear in love his brother over the water. Our Lord Jesus will not cast away a bruised reed, or deny a poor, weak bairn of his kindred and blood, because he has a little crook or halt. Neither should we cast away any but in love. Wait on, pity, help, and be thankful for what our Lord has given us.

“*That thou so chargest us*” [Authorized Version, “*That thou dost so charge us*”]. The adjurations of the Kirk sick of love are to naturally disposed daughters of Jerusalem, [as if] uncouth things and miracles. “O what means the woman,” say they, “to come on with fiery cannon yell? We have seen many holy folks before, but we saw never the like of her who cometh on with cursing and oaths to bid us speak to Christ for her.” We see in as far as we are carnal, we are ignorant of God’s true wisdom and God’s way of spiritual love and fever in the conscience of His own children. Paul heareth this of Festus, “Too much learning hath made you mad.” And so did they to Christ. Others say, “Why hear you Him? He is mad.” 1 Cor. i. 25: “But the foolishness of God is wiser than men.” That which men call foolishness and stark daffing² in God, is wisdom above all worldly wisdom, and they think God’s saints silly gouks,³ and God’s bodies climbing crow-nests, and they wot not what they are

¹ Damage.

² Folly.

³ Weak fools.

seeking. "Honest man," say they, "he means well, but he has no wit. There are bees in his head." And in so far as men are natural they can put Christ till an assize, and hold a justice court upon the power of godliness, and give out a doom¹ that holiness is plain fancy. Howbeit nature had now to be God's scholar, yet it will needs put a book in God's hand and be His master, and teach God a lesson. Jehu and his companions call one of God's prophets a mad fellow (2 Kings ix. 11). And what was Jeroboam's natural estimation of obedience to God's law? 1 Kings xii. 26, 27: "And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me." Does not here [the] head of wit speak a fool's tale? God had said that by obedience to God his throne should be established (1 Kings xi. 38). He says in plain language, "If I be holy I shall never do well. If the people worship God as He has commanded in His word, then farewell good policy. I and my new honours shall shoot short." Any man that has nature in him let him take up his cross and follow Christ, and when it comes to obedience with a hazard or seen danger, his wisdom shall say, "Take heed what you do. Look ere you loup. You resolve well, but you walk upon coals covered with ashes. You spit further nor² you will loup, and these that obey Christ because natural reason leads them, they obey natural wisdom, and not Christ." In God's matters

¹ A judgment.² Than.

men had need to take heed to their natural wisdom else it will lead them in the briars. When God calleth you either to do or to suffer, hear no voice but one, even Christ's own word; for our wisdom has a rank smell. Go at leisure, pity yourself, see to your own standing. Christ sayeth (Matt. xi.), "Wisdom is justified of her children." Then God's wisdom is condemned of His own bastards. They can call God's wisdom rash folly. The ill-step bairn will never speak good of its stepmother. Worldly minded men are not wisdom's full gotten bairns, and therefore they speak ill of their mother; but the full gotten and lawful sons of God's wisdom speak good of their mother, and follow her footsteps. It is not good to obey God upon conditions, and the condition comes home to his door. "Carnal wisdom, shall I do it?" This wisdom is the devil's wife, and will lord it out against Christ; but it does always dance as the ill world pipeth, and thinks it folly and ill manners to be out of tune and fall out with the multitude and come to daggers, as Christ did with the Scribes and Pharisees, and court, and time, and the doctrine of the elders. Oh! learn to deny yourselves, and be in tune, and keep measures with Christ Jesus. A good conscience is a good, soft, well-made bed. He is wise enough who is wise to salvation, and has saved his own soul, and shall hear God's "Well done, good servant." What is well done must be wisely done. Goodness cannot be a fool.

"My beloved is white and ruddy." The Kirk with an edge of words takes Christ's part. "My beloved, my beloved," I would you wist what you say when you speak of

my beloved. I scorn He be made fellows with any [one, be] he in heaven or earth. One thing is here worthy in the Kirk.

First: That hearing Christ laid in an uneven balance, she starts quickly and takes the temptation presently by the nose, and with a long speech sets Christ even up presently in the skies, and dings¹ speedily, with force of words, her companions out of an opinion that Christ has any mortal match. This is right, not to let the temptation go on. We should not let men away with it when they would put a ruffle upon Christ Jesus. Nay, true grace will borrow strength from a tentation,² as Paul, seeing idolatry at Athens, and God put out of His room,³ he grew hotter nor⁴ he was before, like a horse that cannot endure the spur. So when Christ says (John vi.) to His disciples, upon occasion that Capernaum had played turncoat, and left Him, "And will ye also leave Me?" Peter answereth with a piece of stomach: "Leave thee, Lord! To whom shall we go?" Leave you! Whither then? To the devil. The disciples (Acts iv.) were charged to speak no more in the name of Jesus. Peter and John draw out a strong one against that. They will not leave it so, but speer,⁵ "Whether it be righteous to obey God or man, judge ye." This speaks right against such as will hear Christ ill-spoken of, and will hang their head and let a reproach, lighting upon Him that died for them, blow over their shoulder, and misken that there is a good friend ill-spoken of. Nay, ye cannot be fiery enough when Christ gets a tout; when the black-mouthed dogs in the world bark agains

¹ Throws down. ² Temptation. ³ Place. ⁴ Than. ⁵ Ask.

that well-given stranger Christ, there should be a staff in your mouth. Now the curse of God be on them that love not my well-beloved. You hold with your own; ilk^r one takes part with his own country. A man will speak for his own father, brother, bairn, wife, or friend he will plead for; but not a word in favour of his own Christ. He will go his own errands and speak his own business to his prince, but not a word for Christ. Christ has tongue enough, let Him speak for Himself. Well, well, nobles of Scotland! I dare not say; so be ye served when your eye-strings break and your life is come to your lip; but God forgive you. And what better are they who will stand at Christ's back and see His head broken in His cause, in His members, in His Church, and not party their well-beloved, and never say it is ill done. True zeal makes a quarrel of a wrong done to Christ, and He gets too many wrongs now; and He is like the man that has many kin and few friends. Many now are with Christ, and few for Christ. He is worn out of friendship in the world.

“White and ruddy” is the best temperature, and strongest and most lively constitution of a man, and seemeth to note his Godhead—white, pure, innocent, holy—as (Dan. vii. 9) He appears in the vision all white as snow and as pure wool; and in His glory His face shineth as the sun, and His raiment white as light (Matt. xvii. 2); in Him dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii. 9). And read the Hebrew Adam, the last Adam (1 Cor. xv. 45), flesh and blood with us (Heb. ii. 14). This shows that Christ is the beautifullest and fairest among the

^r Each.

sons of men (Psa. xlv. 2). Fair things delight us much, and perfect white and perfect red make a beautiful person. Beauty be a great conqueror of love, and will take a castle in the heart. We love fair things, as fair sun, fair moon, fair roses, lilies, men, women, &c. But put out all the beauty of the creatures in one; they are all but caff¹ and sand to fair-faced Jesus. I had far rather have one look of fair-faced Jesus as have all the world, and ten worlds, with sevenfold more beauty than they have. See Isa. lxiii. 1: "Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength?" The Kirk, wondering at Christ's beauty to see Him go so manly-like, says, "O, who is yon goes so manly and so sonsy-like?² He is a lucky-like³ person." It would rejoice one's heart to see Him go in the greatness of His strength. Is not yon fair, glorious Jesus, in red scarlet, having all His clothes dyed in blood? And the answer is made, "It is I, even I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." John i. 14: "He dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, as the glory of the only-begotten Son"—like the heir of a great king. His beauty is answerable to all that is said here (Col. i. 15-19; Rev. i. 13-16, and x. 1-3, xix. 11-13). If any fair thing allure your heart, and fair, lovely Jesus do it not, ye must be lordly, and ill to please.

You make a good *use* of this doctrine if you take Him with all His forms and fairness as your husband whom you love, as your Master whom you fear and serve, as your King and Lord whom you obey, as your Shepherd

¹ Chaff.² Well-conditioned-like.³ Altogether prosperous.

and Guide whom you follow. And for¹ all His beauty, He is not proud, nor lordly; He will match with black ones. Surely Christ's beauty helps to marry Him. He is always white, ruddy, and most when He wooeth. I marvel not that He seem black and dun to some men who get a sight of Christ but² in Satan's dark glass (for there be two sights and representations of Christ); and in that He is all black, for He comes upon men's wrong side with His beauty.

First: Natural men, without faith, with only natural eyes, see Him, and they see but Mary's son—not Christ white and ruddy; they see not the King in His beauty, nor in His holiday clothes.

Second: Some see Him in His law of commandments, commanding hard things to flesh and blood—to deny themselves, to enter in at the strait gate which leads to life. Men would love Christ's beauty if He only shined with light and love; but His light commandeth, accuseth, summoneth, challenges, condemns, and this makes Christ both gray and black-skinned. Men should love light as well because it commandeth and convinceth as because it shineth as light; and should break the devil's glass, and learn out of love to obey; and then Christ's yoke would be easy, and then you would say, "O, fair Jesus! O lovely, white, and ruddy Jesus!"

Third: Man looketh to His cross; and this is Christ's black skin and His black dool³ clothes. Isa. lii. 14: "As many were astonished at thee; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." Then to many He cannot be white

¹ Notwithstanding.

² Only.

³ Mourning.

and ruddy, if He have under His sufferings a marred and a holed¹ face, blue and black, and all bleared with strokes. These that cannot rejoice in Christ's cross, and think it exceeding joy when they fall in divers temptations, as in their crosses they have communion with Jesus, they see only but Christ's outer half, and start aback at His marred visage; but faith here shall look Christ within; He is well lined within, even under sufferings.

"*The armour-bearer among ten thousands.*" In the Hebrew it is, *Bannerer*² above ten thousand. The banner, or standard, is a war-like thing. He that carries it is the chief of the thousands that follow him. So Judah (Numb. ii. 2, 8) was the tribe that was chief standard-bearer; and out of this tree Christ sprang (Heb. vii. 14), who is the lion of the tribe of Judah (Rev. v. 5). He standeth for an "ensign of the people" (Isa. xi. 10); Him the armies and thousands in heaven follow (Rev. xix. 6, 14); He ruleth over the Gentiles (Rom. xv. 12). Put white and ruddy, which betoken health and strength, with this, that "He is the standard-bearer," then we see that Christ is a strong, active soldier, and the prettiest man of His hands in all the company. Bring ten thousand—that is, many—yea all the armies in heaven and earth together, and Christ is the fairest, prettiest, bravest, and ablest man among them all. One look of Jesus is worth them all. So speak of all Christ's virtues, this is among the first of them, that He is a tried man of war; for who but He fought the Lord's battles, and fought it out with the curse of the law, with sin, with the devil, with death, with hell,

¹ Pierced.

² The Lord of the standard.

and goes with many crowns on His head to conquer. He His alone has laid many a pretty soldier on the broad¹ of his back. But this description bodeth² that Christ will have ado³ with His strength; nay, ay, while there is a devil, ay, until he be bound and cast into the lake of brimstone, and locked up, Christ will have but the fighter's life. Christ and the ten thousand, His brave bairn-tyme⁴ at His back—God bless them all—must fight. It would even do a man good, and rejoice his heart to see Jesus fight. It sets Him to fence and wale⁵ His sword. But take Christ at His best, He has the soldier's life; therefore, all you that come to take or leave, you must come upon these terms—either to do or to die; either to fight with your standard-bearer, or lie down and be slain. “O,” say you, “suffering is a hard life. Will Christ and His Kirk never get rest?” Certainly little until they be at home together. It was never otherways with Christ. He was aye⁶ oftener in the camp, watching, than in a soft bed sleeping; and therefore, as you who would follow Him, rise up off the hearthstone and from the fireside, and to the camp with you! Put on your shoes and all your armour—blood, the blood, the cross of Christ, for you to your dying day until you be at home! It is proclaimed at our King's Market-cross, in Jesus' name, red war betwixt you and three—the devil, the world, and sin. But Christ bears the colours; He is well worthy of that place. He ventures foremost with white and red, God and the Kirk's colours and their

¹ Breadth.² Intimates.³ Business.⁴ Brood of children.⁵ Choose.⁶ Always.

arms. Silly,¹ tempted, wounded, crossed soldier, look up to the standard-bearer, Ensigner Jesus, in red and white! Take courage and buy a heart from Christ. "O, but," you will say, "Jesus is often in His cause, and members put to the worse, and His colours slapped² with cannon bullets." *Answer*: Nay; but God sews the holes in Christ's standard again, and we may certainly say two things of Christ—

First: This text makes Him white and ruddy, and so strong, lively, able. Our Captain is not sickly; He is able of person to fight, to watch, and ward, and not take sickness. Neither cannon bullet, arrow, nor spear will go through His corset of proof. He is God, and not man only; the strength of Israel, and He wearies not.

Second: I dare lay a wager He will win yet; and when it comes to the last onset, He will make bloody brooks; the ark will be sent home again, and glory shall dwell in our land. Christ will mow down His enemies, and loose the belt of the rulers of the earth that are against Him. When Christ puts His finger in the loop, both belt and sword will fall from them; and how will they then fight? In Rev. xvii. 14: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called chosen and faithful." And in end, when Christ and we shall lay down our swords together in heaven's entry, and put on our crowns of glory and our king's robes, Christ shall be all in all. To whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be dominion and glory for ever.—Amen.

¹ Feeble.

² Broken into gaps.