SERMON XIV.*

The voice of my Beloved! Behold He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills, &c.—Cant. ii. 8-12.

IN these words (as we observed in the last sermon on this text) there are set down five particulars as to how the Church calls Christ, "*My Beloved*," and how she takes Him up. I. She discerns *His voice.* II. She espies Him "*coming.*" III. In His own person, "*Behold He cometh.*" IV. The manner of His coming, "*skipping and leaping.*" V. The impediments in His way, "*mountains and hills.*"

These are already expounded, only there remaineth a few † things, that which should have been marked before, which I add in this place. The Church says not,‡ It *is* "the voice of my Beloved," but for haste she says no more but, "My Beloved's voice!" When Christ is either heard or seen by a faithful soul, He

* It is not said where the publisher got these notes of the sermon; the language is evidently somewhat modernized, but the tone is quite like Samuel Rutherford. Most of his sermons that have been preserved to us were preached at Communion Seasons, and in all probability it was strangers who took notes of the sermons. These strangers came on purpose on these special occasions, and took down in writing as much as they could, in order to carry to others a portion at least of the provision of Anwoth.

† In the old copy, "two." ‡ "Now" in the old copy.

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wakeneth up, in the twinkling of an eye, the passions of that soul. Joy will not let her get out the rest of her words. What raises the child of God's heart? What but news from heaven of Christ? When the disciples hear tell of Christ's resurrection, they run to the grave for joy. The heart runs before the mouth. Ye may try by this way whether ye be Christ's or not; if the heart leap for joy at the name of Jesus, if the affections leap out and embrace Christ about the neck, so that the heart strive and out run the tongue. The conscience is slow, the heart is quick and swift. The affections like dry timber, any spark of fire casten in upon them makes them soon to burn; the conscience is like green wood that burns not soon, yet keeps the fire durable. The affections are like the needle, the rest of the soul like the thread; and as the needle makes way and draws the thread, so holy affections pull forward and draw all to Jesus. The affections are the ground* and lower part of the soul, and when they are filled they set all the soul on work; when there is any love in the affections, it sets all the rest of the faculties of the soul on work to duty, and when there is any corruption in the affections, it stagnates the soul, will, mind, and conscience. Affections are the feet of the soul, and the wheels whereupon the conscience runs. When a man is off his feet he cannot run or walk; so when the affections are lame, the soul moves on crutches.

There does yet remain something to be spoken concerning these "*mountains*." God comes in mercy to two sorts of people. He comes to some before ever they be aware of His coming; He steals upon them before ever they hear or see Him. So Christ stealed

* The foundation.

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in upon the thief on the cross, when he was wallowing in his sins. He came unawares upon Paul going to Damascus to persecute the church. But after Regeneration, the child of God knows His tongue, and hears the noise of His feet before He come; yea, they be like hungry cattle so given on* Christ, that they are ever looking over the mountains to see if He comes, and are always setting up their ears to hear if they can know His voice, and discern His leaps and skippings.

"*Behold He is standing behind our wall.*"—Before Christ speak, He comes leaping upon the mountains. Now here He comes near ere they see Him, so that there is but one wall betwixt them, and lest the wall should hinder from a sight of Him, she sees Him looking out at the windows. We see that it is a note or mark of the true Church and child of God, to grow in fellowship and communion with Jesus Christ. 2 Thess. i. 3, "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly." The word signifieth that it groweth above the blade. Let us be carried through with faith and love, with our sails up, into perfection. Heb. vi. 1. Paul is brought in by the Spirit of God chasing the kingdom of heaven, and doing nothing else but chasing it: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." We must press fast forward, and run as in a race after the prize of the high calling of God in the way to heaven, even in many difficulties. Like a boat sailing against tide, wind, and weather; if we do not go forward, we

* "To be given on" is to pry into.

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will not miss to sail backwards. This condemns many in our age, dwarf Christians, that eat much, and are not like to thrive! They have many glorious meetings at Communions with Christ, and yet they grow not; they remain still like the seven lean kine that Pharaoh saw, that devoured the seven fat kine, and yet remained still lean. And they may be compared to a strange fire that casts a blaze, and in end turns to smoke; and to locusts that loup up with a start, and fall down to the earth again. O! it is the ill of our church that it is going backward. Christ was once behind the wall; now He is beyond the curtain, and now removing. But how is this made good? How do I prove it to be the sign of a removing Christ? When God tells the prophet Jeremiah, (Jer. xvi. 2), that he was to remove, He says, "Thou shalt not take thee a wife, neither shalt thou have sons or daughters in this place." Alas! Jesus Christ marries few now! every one seeks their own things, and few are born over again by the immortal seed of the word. When Christ will not marry a Church, and beget sons and daughters, it is a token that He is going away. Christ must be going away when He is transporting His goods. The power and life of preaching is away, His servants banished to other lands; our Bishops complain that there are so many in the land that have Bibles. Woe to them when I depart from them.

"*Behind our wall*," that is, Behold He dwells in our house of clay, as it is termed, Job. iv. 19. John i. 14, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." And it is called *our wall*, because we have an interest in the man Jesus Christ, since He has our nature upon Him. Christ Jesus is here resembled to a great city, the blessed human nature of Christ is a wall; the gate or porch to enter in through to that city, are the wounds

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of our Lord Jesus. There is a fair fountain in the midst of the city called David's well, which is meaned of the heart-blood of Christ Jesus crucified; the indwellers are the elect. The humanity of Christ is our wall of defence; all the stones of it are hewn stones, out of Adam; for Jesus Christ is Adam's son. Now, the use of walls is to defend the city. Zech. ii. 5. God is a wall of fire about Jerusalem; all that are within our walls are sure from God's wrath; this wall holds off all sorts of cannon. The body and soul of our Lord Jesus Christ was the buckler that received all the strokes that God's justice did let out against us. When the Lord did cast that great and heavy dart of His wrath against elect sinners, Christ had a body, and He came running and received that dart, both in His soul and body. Isaiah liii. 5, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed."

The Lord did cast upon man a great mountain of His wrath; but betwixt God's casting and the lighting of it, Jesus, a Saviour timeously ready in trouble, came in and bare the burden. God had shot the arrows of His indignation at us; but betwixt the loofing * of the arrow, and the lighting of it, our Lord came in and held the arrows off us. Christ's body was our shield of defence. Now, all ye that would be safe from judgment and the wrath to come, lie under this wall; keep the town as ye love your life; hold you within the city. If ye should die in the cause, it is but a pint or quart of your blood that ye lose for Christ, and it is not lost, it will surely be restored. Satan and the world strives to make a gap in this wall and to take the

* It seems to be for "shooting."

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town; but stay within the ports and be saved. The Jews cast down this wall, but our Lord built it up in three days. It is a great benefit to us, that when (whereas) mountains of sin were betwixt God and us, now we are made so near, that in Christ there is but a wall betwixt God and us. How foolish is the church of Rome, that takes such a long journey by saints and angels to go to God by, when the way is easy and near, if they would come to Jesus Christ.

"*He looketh forth at the windows, showing Himself through the lattice.*"—This looking out at the windows, and through the lattice, signifies the Lord Jesus showing Himself to His elect through the windows of His human nature. Jesus is a flower set in the windows of the human nature, and a rose with many leaves, that casteth a sweet smell through mankind. For as Jesus Christ is man, the Lord strikes certain windows out of Him. Now the use of windows is, that such as are within the house may see such as are without the house, and that they may see them again. Christ had infirmities as we have every way, except sin, for in that He suffered Himself, and was tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted. "He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah liii. 3). Now at the window of His own sorrow, He looketh out to your sorrow, and my sorrow, and out at this window He sees all the mourners of Zion, and the broken-hearted. This is a sweet thing that the cross of Christ is so fair a glass, in which He sees our heavy cross. Dost thou sigh and groan? Jesus Himself sighed, and saw these sighs in the glass of His own. Art thou poor? pitiful Jesus sees thy poverty, He knows what it is to be poor, He was poor Himself. Art thou hungry and thirsty? so was our Lord Jesus. And Jesus Christ knows what it is to die, for He died Himself. Here are

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the emblems or Christ and His church. Jesus has gone along the narrow bridge, and He reaches back His hand to lead us along the bridge. Christ and we came to a deep running water together, Christ ventured His life to dry the ford, and having broken the streams of it, He runs back and convoys us through with Himself. "For we have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews iv. 15). And more; when He bruised our Lord Jesus, He did strike out fair windows in His body, deep windows with abundance of blood gushing out at them; and through these windows, we see Jesus in His love and in His mercy. We see His tender heart for us when we are under crosses and infirmities; we have a copy before our eyes. All ye crossed ones of Jesus, look up to this window, and behold the like in Christ. When a potter is to make a number of vessels all of one measure, he casts one first in the mould, which is a pattern to all the rest. So Christ, being first cast in the mould, must have all His elect children to be so also, all must have His stamp, His colour, His livery, His coat of arms."

"*My beloved spake and said unto me.*"—Now does the Church relate the words of her beloved calling upon her; and see how many ways the Lord shows himself to His church. 1. He speaks to her ear. 2. He runs and leaps before her eye. 3. He stands behind the wall. 4. He looks out at the window to her. 5. He ends as He began, and speaks to her ear. This lets us see there are some happy times, wherein Christ urgeth Himself upon His children, and fills both ears, eyes, tongues, hands, hearts, and fills all with Christ. The soul of the child of God has certain feast days; it is even with the child of God, as it is with Jordan,

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all the banks are full; sometimes the soul will be full of Christ, so that it is full from bank to brae. See how Christ fills the apostle, 1 John i. 1, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life, verse 3, that which we have heard and seen declare we unto you." Behold the apostle is going round about Christ, and filling himself with Christ, like hungry men at a feast. They hear Him, they see Him, they look upon Him, and eye Him, and which is more, they handle Him with their hands. O! these are glorious times when the child of God gets a great feast of Christ; and if He fill us here while we are from home, and are such narrow-hearted vessels that God must enlarge us, Psalm cxix. 32. How full shall we be of God when we shall see Him as He is! Psalm lxiii. 5. "My soul shall be filled as with marrow and fatness. Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved," Cant. v. 1. When any of these glorious times comes, we may not think but Christ will away again. What should we then do? Even as Joseph did, he caused his brethren to leave a pledge to assure him that they would return again: so ye must cause Jesus to leave His seal, and His ring, and some footsteps of His grace, and take instruments in the hand of the Spirit, that He will return.

Ye see in the Church a sweet and commendable virtue in these words, she sets down the very progress of all the ways and dealings of the King of kings to her soul. In all His ways she sees what Christ is doing; when He is afar off, she knows Him, she sees Him running and leaping, she sees Him behind the wall, looking out at the windows, and through the lattice. She hears Him nearer hand speaking, she

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writes up His very words. We see the child of God marks the ebbings and the flowings, the comings and goings of the Spirit of God, and sees Christ in all His footsteps. When Christ comes at the dead hour of the night, she hears His knocks through her sleep, and knows His voice. He can put in His hand, and open the bar of her conscience to come in, she knows what He is doing, she feels the smell that drops from His finger-ends. What bred* experience of Christ? even a daily walking with Him, ye know the courtiours that are about the king's person day and night, they can write a chronicle of the king's life, and can tell how many miles he rides in the day. So says David, "My eyes are ever towards the Lord." Then ye must see what God is doing: it is God's quarrel with Jerusalem, that she knew not the things that belonged to her peace. God was offering peace to her, but she knew not what He was doing. This is the way of the wicked, God is on their right hand, and on their left hand, behind them, and before them, and they never see Him; they regard not the work of the Lord. There is fire made ready in heaven, and Sodom eats and drinks till God comes with fire and brimstone and draws the table. The old world is making marriages, and sees not what Noah sees, till God, with the deluge of water, comes to the ending of their contracts. Men will not give their conscience leave to believe all of God that it should believe; they will not let their consciences go through the earth to see what God is doing, but imprison, and set a march to it. All that we have to do in this life is to take heed what God does, and what we ourselves do. Isaiah xxvi. 11, "Lord, when Thy hand is lifted they will not see." It is the sin of our age, our

* Produced.

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Beloved is come on the mountains, yet His leaping upon us is like a serpent upon a stone, and like the way of an eagle in the air, it leaves no print of the Lord's footsteps behind it in men's hearts; and (which is a more pitiful thing) God is departing and no man looks to it. The prophet Jeremiah has a word which is the very extracts* of Scotland's case, Jer. xii. 4. He sees the cause of God's wrath upon man and beast was upon the account of a speech among the people; "He shall not see our last end." A strange word! they say we shall die, and run through hell and the grave, and leap into eternity, and the Lord shall never see us! So we have said, God shall not see our last end; because we see not God, we think God sees not us; but persuade yourselves Scotland's doom is given up in heaven. And, therefore, for the glory of God, and your own salvation, see what God is doing. I will tell you what He is doing; He is bidding the king take his dough† upon His shoulder, in the twilight of the evening, because he must surely go into captivity.

"*Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.*" —Here is two things to be exponed. 1. Christ exhorting her to arise and come away. 2. Our Lord's title and style that He gives her, "My love, my fair one." The exhortation we may marvel at. What needs our Lord bid her arise and come away, for she cannot but wait; for he is coming to her.‡ But if Jesus come never so near a sitting and sleeping soul (as the church is here) Christ and that soul shall never meet. Before ever the Lord Jesus and we meet, we

* "Extracts," the sum; the essence.

† Ezekiel xii. 3, 6, "Stuff." The "dough" is from Exodus xii. 34.

‡ "And loving her is an answer," is added in the old copy—unintelligible.

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must once be wakened, and set upon our feet; 'tis true our Lord Jesus comes to us all lying; but before He and we have struck hands together, we must be on our feet. Ye have a notable example of this, Cant. v. Christ comes a far journey to His spouse, our dear Lord Jesus, His head and His locks were wet with dew and rain, He comes to the door, He speaks to her, and she to Him, there is but a thin door betwixt them, men would think they will meet now; and yet for as near as Christ was to her they meet not; He goes His way, and that was upon the account she would not soil her feet, and open to Him. The reason is, heaven and salvation come to no man in a dream. There be two graces given to the children of God when the Lord and they meet, God's knocking and calling, or grace knocking and calling without; and God's wakening grace stirring up the soul within. When Christ comes near you in the word and sacraments beware of security. I know none in God's word that sleeped when they had the presence of Christ with them, but the three disciples. And they wakened with sorrowful hearts, they lost their Master, and never got Him again till He was shamefully put to death. Oh! security, security! may be called the Christian's falling sickness, wherever this sickness comes upon him, it will cast him into the fire and into the water. Solomon had a bed watched about with "threescore valiant men, that were expert in war" (Cant. iii. 7). The spiritual meaning is, Christ is our Solomon, and the king of peace, that dwells in our hearts, and the souls of His children, by faith; (He lies betwixt their two breasts), so the bed of Christ must be guarded by more than threescore watchful thoughts, for fear Christ should be stolen out of the soul, when the soul sleeps: and for

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fear that the new creature, or the image of God in man should be destroyed. Sleeping is an enemy to health, when used too much, especially in the spring time, for it breeds fevers, and many dangerous diseases; much waking preserves the health. When the Gospel is in a land, then is spring time; and ye lose the life of godliness, and fall in dangerous diseases of soul, if ye fall asleep then. It is true, God dealeth mercifully with His own elect, howbeit they be secure, and forsake them not, but it is not their deserving. David cried to Abner, because he watched not carefully his master, Saul. 1 Sam. xxvi. 16, "As the Lord liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed." So it may be said to many Christians, "As the Lord liveth, ye are worthy of death, because ye watched not over Christ when dwelling in your hearts."

Now, if you shall ask for a guard to watch the soul, take these following. The first soldier that should be set in the very entry of your soul is, "*the fear of God.*" See how excellently these two are conjoined, as the cause and the effect, fearing of God, and running away from evil. The second soldier to set at the door of your soul is, *sobriety and temperance.*" Noah and Lot forgot these, and therefore they fell into a nap or sleep. This sobriety is a modest and wise carriage, in the enjoying of the pleasures of this life. 1 Peter v. 8, "Be sober and vigilant," &c. The third soldier is that virtue which Solomon calls *discretion;* let it be before the door to try what guests come into the soul, what thoughts enter in. As the apostle John says, "Try the spirits whether they be of God or not." One devil is like another devil, and when we are thinking we are holding out one, another rushes in. The fourth soldier is *suspicion and fear of our own*

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ways, which should hold us waking. "Blessed is the man that feareth always" (Proverbs xxviii. 14). Paul says to Timothy, "In all things watch;" even in the things of this life, in the setting a cup to our head, in the putting a bite in our mouth, or a soup at table, we should watch. If that seems to be but a feckless business, yet the devil entered into Judas with a soup; it is to make us careful between the hand and the mouth, to look to ourselves. To speak two pitiful words to a friend seems a small matter; yet when Peter said to our Lord, "Master, pity Thyself," he was the devil's agent in that. Believe never well of yourself, nor of the old man within you. Let no man pass his word, or be caution for his own heart, "for the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?" (Jer. xvii. 9). The fifth soldier that stands at the door of the heart is *meditation on death;* let the meditation of death stand in the threshold of the door. Wherefore doth Jerusalem (Lam. i. 9) come down wonderfully? but because she remembered not her last end. If men would remember Christ and that death and judgment come in the night as a thief, they would have their hand ever at the door bar, and stand behind the door, watching till the Lord should knock, "Blessed is the man whom his Lord shall find so doing." The sixth soldier that keeps the soul ever on foot, is a continual *practice of good, and walking with God.* Moving, walking, and serious business keep men from sleeping. Only be even-down honest with God, walking with Him in sincerity and truth, looking into His mercy, justice, kindness, and power. Remember the great work of your salvation, the keeping of an immortal soul, the gaining or losing of Christ. The seventh soldier, and last man of the guard, that I shall mention at this time is *Faith*, which tells us of

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the particular passages of heaven, hell, and judgment, of the wiles and devices of the roaring lion. And these be Solomon's valiant men that watch about His bed (Song iii. 7). I mean the graces of God that keep Christ in the soul.

In this compellation there are two things to be cleared. 1. That He calleth her His love and His fair one. (We heard before how the Church called Christ HER Beloved.) 2. That He calls her in this exhortation, "*love and fair one.*" Therefore, we must once for all expound in what meaning the Church is Christ's, and how He does, in law and equity, appropriate her to Himself, as His own. And 1. We are to observe that Christ has a right to the Church by birth; for He made us, and by the law of creation we are His, as the vessels are the potter's. And man did continue Christ's this way, even till He sold himself to Satan and sin; and now by nature we are the sons of God's wrath, strangers from the life of God (Ephes. iv. 18). Adam did us this ill turn; he sold us unto Satan for the forbidden fruit. And yet, howbeit the inheritance was sold, Christ, being the nearest heir, was most kindly to us* as we say. The nearest kinsman among the Jews was a type of Christ. Among the Jews, he that redeemed land, or was a Goel, Brother, or Redeemer, behoved to have these two in his person; first, he behoved to have riches and substance to pay the sum that so he might enter into the inheritance; secondly, he behoved to be a brother or a near kinsman, and not a stranger. Now, these two were in Christ. 1. He was a brother, nearest the house; He was no stranger, but *Emmanuel*, "God with us," and took on Him not the nature of angels but the seed of

* Acted according to His near relationship.

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Abraham; and so the law made Him nearest heir, and He had the right of reversion.* And then 2. He is a kinsman of great riches and substance; for He was God Himself, the Lord of lords, and Prince of the kings of the earth (Rev. i. 5).

Here, then, we have to consider 1. With whom our Lord did bargain. 2. What price He gave for His Church. 3. How He takes possession.

There were three sorts of persons Christ had to do with in redeeming us. 1. The Lord, whose wrath and justice have a just claim to sinners; He was the principal to whom the price of redemption should be paid, and He was the person offended. Jesus satisfied Him, paid and satisfied Him for man, so that He said of Him, "This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Now there was many claims, and arrestments upon the inheritance, before Jesus got it; there were parties at variance to be reconciled. There was first mercy and truth, saying, Alas! shall silly man die? truth and justice on the contrary pleading, Why should not man die? has not the God of truth said, that sinners shall die? Yes, says Jesus, man shall die; man shall die, for His word must be true; I am man, I am made of the Father, that I might die for sinners, and truth and justice shall be pleased, for I will die for men and save them; and mercy shall be pleased also, I will pity man and give my blood for him. Behold how Jesus made mercy and justice to shake hands and kiss each other. Blessed be our Peacemaker! 2. The law and the sinner were at red-war† against each other. It was the poor sinner's complaint, "I cannot speak an idle word, or think an idle thought,

* In Scotch law, *reversion* is the right to redeem property under mortgage.

† Violent; war to the knife.

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but it presently condemns me." And the law cried out against the sinner, "Man does neither eat nor drink, sleep nor wake, sleep nor think, but he treads me under foot; my curse (says the law) and the curse of God be upon him." But Jesus answered, "The curse of the law be upon Me, all the elect's idle words and thoughts be upon Me; all their light words and sinful deeds be upon Me." And upon this satisfaction the law is pleased with man. Whereas before it was a killing and condemning letter, working wrath, Christ turned it into a sweet and pleasant way to heaven. See what the child of God says, O! how I love Thy law! it is my meditation all the day or continually. Whereas the sinner under God's wrath says, "How hate I Thy law," behold Jesus hath made the believing sinner and the law shake hands together. 3. There were some parties that usurped the inheritance, but had no just right or title thereto, viz., Satan, that arch-foe, and grand enemy of man's salvation. But Jesus would use no law with Satan; he spoiled principalities and powers; for man being God's creature, had no right to sell himself to God's enemy.

This much for the first anent being God's creature. As to the second, viz., *the price*, He gave for His own Church, His own precious blood, 1 Peter i. 10, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace (Eph. i. 7); for we are not our own, we are bought with a price."

A third point is anent our *Lord's actual possession;* wherein there be these three acts of the Father and the Son. "All that the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me, and him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37). "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which thou gavest Me

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out of the world, thine they were, and thou gavest them Me" (John xvii. 6). Upon the cross Christ paid for so many, and for no more. "I lay down My life for the sheep" (John x. 15). When the Father has given them, and the Son has paid the price, then Jesus has *right* indeed, but wants *possession*. He has them still to seek in the highway to hell, and must leap in with the sword of truth, and His sword girded upon His thigh, and take His sword, His bow, and His arrows in His hand. After He has fought a hard battle with God's wrath, and won the field, and escaped with His life, He must fight against the rebels whom He has good right to by virtue of His blood, and must pull down every stronghold and high imagination in the soul; and must come in and put the devil of hell to the doors, and take man for His own use and service. He seeks him long ere He gets him to answer when He calls. But when He meets with them, He makes a covenant with them, and they become His. "Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was a time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; yea, I sware unto thee, and thou becomest mine, and I entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. xvi. 8).

There be five things that give Jesus a right to us. 1. The Father's giving us in election. This is not so much an actual giving, as a purpose to give, for He but marks us for the giving, and here the Father says, Son, win them and have them. 2. The Son takes on our nature, and in that becomes an heir to old Adam, to redeem his mortgage. 3. The Son gives a price for us on the cross. 4. The Father makes a second resignation of man, and says, Son, Thou didst sweat for man, behold I give him to Thee, "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and

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the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession" (Psal. ii. 8). "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (Psalm lxxii. 8). O! well* is our soul when the Father and the Son come (if we may so speak) to biding† and loving. 5. The Son seeks our consent, and brings us in, and says unto us, as it were, what think ye? will ye put in your names with Mine? And this should teach us our whole life to suspect our ways, even in God's ways or service, when we please ourselves. We should serve God as if we were not our own. A Christian is in a soldier's state, having received bounty-money, and the captain having enrolled his name, he is no more his own man, he is his captain's. There be many who wait upon God, like these they call dependents, waiting upon a nobleman; they are content to ride with the nobleman, and at times to serve him, and attend on him. Yet it is for his countenance or some gain in the meantime, they will not be tied to a daily onwaiting; they would for all that be their own men, and live at liberty in their own houses. So there be a number in the world, that are God's dependers and onwaiters as they are called, who at a start, will ride and run for God, and profess they are Christ's; yet they will serve their lusts and please themselves, or follow their own pleasures; they will not wait on as God's chamber-boys. But if ye be Christ's, ye must be His chamber-boys, and not have a house or calling of your own to serve your lusts with. Ye must stand always before Him as a page waiting on, and not like a landed gentleman, that keeps a day of law‡ with a certain nobleman, and perhaps for a year after will not saddle

* Good is it for the soul. † Staying with us.
‡ Some special day in the year; a court-day.

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a horse for him. We deal with God as with children, who give and then take again, and we be like some that sell the land, and yet keep possession. We sell ourselves to Christ, and yet keep our hearts in our own possession. Now, beloved, ye all deem yourselves to be the redeemed of Christ, and I would it were so; but if ye be redeemed, ye are redeemed both in body and soul, and ye are not your own, neither must ye be your own. Your tongue is not your own, Christ has bought it with the rest of your body; ye must not therefore speak what seemeth good unto you. Your hands and your feet are not your own, ye must not work and walk at your own pleasure. Your eyes and heart are not your own, ye must not look to, or think what ye please or desire, and let the affections run out after Christ, with the bridle in their teeth! for ye must be either Christ's or your own. Wrong not our Lord Jesus, to spoil Him of His right. And again; give Christ possession, for in His word and sacraments He brings all His rights with Him. The decree is "Whosoever believes is Mine." Amen, dear Jesus. "As many as I paid the price of My blood for are Mine." In comes Christ by His Spirit to the believer's heart saying, "I paid the price with My blood for John, Mary, and all others of the elect, therefore they are Mine." Now, if ye can believe, see how you and Christ meet. He takes possession* of you earth and stone this day. Then, will ye not believe? O! then, ye put Christ out of His possession: beware Christ do not go to law with you. For it is so with all mankind; we must compound with Christ, and give Him what He will, that is

* In the old copy, "*possession of earth and stone.*" The allusion is to the custom of giving a turf or stone to the person in delivering an estate to the person.

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obedience of faith: otherwise if men will not believe they renounce the Gospel; they force* Christ's infeftment. They say, Let Christ say what He will, and do what He will, I will bide the worst, I will not agree. What then remains, but that God may say, Since ye appeal to the law, ye shall go. And alas! poor sinner, there ye will get sharp justice, for there the Judge's first and last word will be, God's curse upon thee!

Has the Church lain down, now when Jesus has but turned His back? Has she forgot that He took her into the wine-cellar, and that His arms were about her neck and waist, when she thought his fruit sweet to her taste? Yea, surely! (Howbeit Paul hath been up in the third heaven, he will grow proud after it.) Yet how doth Christ waken her? Not with a rod as she deserved, but in great meekness. Howbeit she had forgotten Jesus Christ, and turned her back upon Him, yet our Lord says not, I shall never welcome thee as I did before, I shall have no more ado with you. No, no, but in meekness he says, "*Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away.*" When once Christ has gotten His poor elect within the reach of mercy, He holds mercy and truth before their eyes (Cant. v. 2.) The Church shuts† Christ to the door, and yet He never gives her a hard word; but, "Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove," for your loving husband stands without, with His head all wet with dew, and His locks with the drops of the night." He spoke never a word to Zaccheus, Peter, and the thief on the cross that died with Him. "Return ye backsliding children," that is God's word to draw Israel

* They violently reject. *Infeftment* is the act of giving possession.

† Pushes.

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to repentance, "for I am married unto you." I pray you return, we may not sunder and part so, dear Israel. "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, He shall gather the lambs with His arm (He has not a shepherd's staff to cast at them), and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isaiah xl. 11). If ye would know the reason of this, then,

1. Wherever the spirit of adoption is, it is a sweet, gentle, and meek spirit, and mercy is God's key that agrees with our hearts. Christ as Mediator does always come with peace, He brings good news. If the Gospel denounces wrath, it but puts a seal to the law's wrath, "He that believes not is condemned already." Wrath abides on him, which was on him before.

2. To whom is Christ now speaking? He is speaking to the elect that are in Christ. Now if Christ would summon a child of God before Him to answer as law will, he would refuse to obey the summons, and why? Because he would say, "I am not under the law, but under grace," I am dead to the law as a covenant of works, though under it as a rule of life, I have a Saviour, I have nothing to do with the law, I am in Christ, I am not obliged to answer that Court; ye will get nothing of me, I am not lawbiding. * But ye will say then, Does not Christ threaten in the Gospel, that He that believes not is condemned already? will He not thunder out judgments against His own children? and convince their consciences of sin by His Holy Spirit? John xvi. 8 says, "He shall convince the world of sin." Writes He not who has the seven stars in His right hand, sharp rebukes against the churches of Asia, that He will remove the candle-

* Subject to the law's demand.

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stick from among them? I answer, God threatens in the Gospel indeed, but He doth it this way; he never cuts away hope of mercy so long as the Gospel is preached. The Gospel condemns sin, and infidelity, and denounces wrath: but this is always a new song in the end of it, "Believe and repent for all that ye have done, and ye shall be saved." But at the first breach the laws says, "The wrath of God and hell be upon sinners." And howbeit sinners would repent, yet the law will hear of no repentance; the Gospel says repent, or else ye shall perish.

3. Christ, the Mediator, speaks of judgment, even to the elect, but not as mediator. He knows the tongue and legs of the severe and self-condemning law, and then He speaks to the old man, to sin that dwells in the members. But the new man is the child of God. Although God Himself should come against him in law, he would say, I have nothing to do with the law, I am dead to the law, the law was my first husband, and I am married to a second husband, even to Christ Jesus. And here the Lord Jesus in threatening the elect with His judgment, and with the law, and wrath, is even like a man that summons his friends before a judge, but never calls * the summons. Why? They agree at home, and he passes from his claim. Jesus will summon His friend before the Judge of the world to answer, and threatens them; but in the meantime He sends His Holy Spirit to the soul, as a daysman, that makes us agree with Christ, and grip to His death; so our dear Lord Jesus Christ passes from His claim, and we agree. For a believing sinner in Christ will never be heard before a judge; they agree at length betwixt themselves. You shall

* Actually enforces it—like calling in debts.

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get this doctrine warranted and proven from Jeremiah xxxi. 20. "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still." I summoned Ephraim, my dear son, before my tribunal, and I have denounced fearful judgments against him, but think ye God will call the summons, and bring on the judgments? Nay, read the following words, "For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." What is that else but this? Howbeit I have summoned Ephraim, yet I shall never call * the summons; I shall cancel the processes and pass from my claim. O, well said, sweet Lord!

Now let us apply the doctrine. The Gospel speaks nothing in effect to God's children, but "My heart and my joy;" it says only, "*Arise, my fair one, and come away.*" Yet doleful shall the day be that comes on them who contemn the Gospel, and the offers of Christ and His righteousness held forth therein. O how good a case are they in that are found in Christ; O woeful will be the case of such as reject Him. Such as are in Christ, they need not thank the law for any mercy they get. Yet the law can hinder no man from God's mercy; and there are good news following notwithstanding of all the hard news that the law speaks of. But such as sin against the Gospel, there shall never another Gospel be preached unto them; for the next Gospel that the rebels, who hate God, shall hear shall be, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." The Gospel-time is a dangerous time for a hard-hearted sinner. We in Scotland are now between heaven and hell—either now or never! This Gospel is God's mariner

* Carry it out into effect at law.

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crying, "Tide! tide! who will sail to Canaan?" God says, Hear Him now, or else God shall be silent, and ye shall cry next to hills and mountains to fall on you. But here is the case of our Kingdom; mercy is fully holden out to us, and laid open to us, and we have trodden it under foot. There are but two meetings in the world; the first is the meeting of a broken-hearted sinner and a merciful God—this meeting we have now. The other meeting is fast coming, and it is a meeting betwixt a guilty sinner and a wrathful Judge. But if God and His Kingdom meet not in wrath, for the contempt of the Gospel and other great and grievous sins, He has forgotten to be just who is holy and just in all His ways.

"*Come away.*"—This part of the exhortation is as much as if our Lord would have the Church leave some place she is in and come to Himself. Man never need think to come to Christ and bring his old sins with him. God finds fault with His people for this in Jeremiah vii. 9, 10, "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before Me in this house, which is called by My name?" Many come to Christ as the young man that kept the commandments from his youth. Many come and would fill God's hand with sacrifices and new moons, as Isaiah i. 11-17. But God puts another task in their hand; "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well." Before ever John the Baptist spake of Christ, he begins at this, Repent and mend your lives. If Christ would welcome all that would come to Him, pleasing themselves with a back-burden of sins and lusts, he would have a thick court. Well, beloved, ye come to Jesus (as ye think)

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when ye come to the Lord's Supper; have ye brought your lusts with you? Is there a sin that ye have purposed to keep? Then I give you your doom out of Jeremiah xv. 1. God says of such men, "Cast them out of My sight, and let them go forth;" a doleful word; they and I shall never see each other's faces again! God forbids His prophet to pray for them, nor to lift up a cry for them, for He says, He will nor hear them. Would any man say that Judas was welcome to Christ, who came and kissed Him, and in the meantime had a band of men at his back, that were set upon killing, and not upon kissing? Shall men be welcome, then, who come to Christ's house, with a burden of sin upon their back? who would crucify again the Lord of glory? Christ, in the word and sacrament, is like a king coming into a prison, and calling out so many by their names, and then departing and causing the prison doors to be closed again. When He has called the roll, and so many in Corinth, and Ephesus, yea, and in Scotland, have answered as are in His count book, He seeks no more.

"*For lo! the winter is past.*"—In these words Jesus tells the spouse, that the winter is past; Christ invites His bride and Church to rise out of her dead sleep, and to come to Him; and the argument is taken from the time and season which is fit for journeying. It is now the spring and summer quarter, and winter's rough weather is past and gone; therefore, my love, "come away." The like reason does our Lord's Spirit use. Rom. xiii. 12, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

Doctrine I. The first doctrine is; the militant church, while here, she has always a summer and a winter, according as she enjoys the Sun of Righteousness, who

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hath "healing in His wings" (Malachi iv. 2.) "The dayspring from on high hath visited us" (Luke i. 7, 8), and "Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising" (Isaiah lx. 1, 2, 3). "I am the light of the world" (John viii. 12). Now, when the sun departs, when Jesus goes away, then it is dead winter with the Church. So then ye see that the doctrine is warrantable from Scripture. It is clear that under Joshua the Church had her summer and fair weather; the prince of their salvation did fight for them and their enemies were subdued under them (Josh. v. 14). Again, the Lord left them many times under the Judges, and sold them to their enemies, and this was their winter, when God departed from them, and they worshipped other gods. And are they not sometimes mourning, at the rivers of Babel? and sometimes dwelling peaceably under their own fig-tree! This is true, that the Church in respect of outward peace and war is changeable; for she must wade through one water, and then she goes some miles on dry land, and then a water again. 2. In respect of the outward ministry of the word, Christ, when He has taken such as the Father has marked, then He blows out the candle. 3. In respect of His felt presence, He is ever coming and going, and He must up to court to His Father, and send down love-letters to us again. Christ Jesus, in the power and ministry of the word, is an abiding heritage to no people. Our Lord is riding through the world, on the white horse of the Gospel, riding indeed triumphantly, and as His people welcome Him, so does He remain. Christ Jesus in the Gospel, is like a king's servant, that comes into a prison, where there is neither coal nor candle, and brings a lighted candle in His hand, with a roll of 100 or 200 among 10,000, and the King's warrant to bring so many out; He calls

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the roll and brings them out, and blows out the candle, and then shuts the prison doors again, and lets the rest lie there till the day of execution. Jesus comes to blind Scotland, and finds them all in Satan's prison, without any light; He has two papers in His hand; one wherein the evangel is written; in it He preaches the casting* up of the prison doors to the captives; in the other the names of the elect. Now the roll is called, answer, for the winter will come, and then the prison doors will be closed. Christ is amongst us now on horseback, the summer is now well near an end. Ye know what be the tokens of winter? Before the winter, the leaves fall off the trees: men now fall from their profession; many are ashamed to own Christ, and to profess Him, they will not be called Puritans. Trees dry up, and cast their fruit; and become barren; ye never saw the Gospel barrener in good works, and alms deeds than now. The very repairing of God's house, in our own parish church, you need go no further,—the timber of the house of God rots, and we cannot move a whole parish to spend twenty or thirty pounds Scots†, upon the house of God to keep it dry.

Doctrine II.—A people in a land are in a lamentable case when Christ and His Gospel is not among them. Let men that want Christ go where they will, the wind is ever upon their face; it is always dead winter with them. Ezekiel (xvi. 4, 5) says, "In the day thou wast born, thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but

* The throwing open; the expression may allude to "casting up" the portcullis of a castle.

† About thirty or fifty shillings.

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thou was cast out in the open field, to the lothing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born." Hosea vii. 11-13, "Ephraim is a silly dove without heart; they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria. When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven; I will chastise them. Woe unto them! for they have fled from me, destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me." In such a case it being winter, there is no fit season for travelling to Christ, the rivers and waters are all aloft and swelled; and the great river of the displeasure of a wrathful God is betwixt the soul and Christ, and neither man nor horseman dare venture upon that river. Then let men who are not in Christ judge of their own case as they please, they cannot go to table, or yet to bed, but the vengeance of God is hard upon their back, for they that want Christ, "walk in the vanity of their mind" (Eph. iv. 17, 18). "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, being past feeling." There are frozen hearts, and howbeit all the devils in hell dance upon a frozen heart, it feels not. A man who is sensible that he is under the curse of the law, sees the wrath of God betwixt him and God as a great river, and for his life, he dare neither swim, sail, nor wade on foot; Christ must come through the water, in the great ship of His bloody merits, and so carry him over to dry land. The soul and conscience of some is so frozen, that neither God's mercy, Christ's blood, nor the fire of hell's terror, will melt it; it is like Jerusalem. Zeph. i. 12, "That are settled on their lees; that say in their heart, the Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil." Jeremiah xlviii. 11, What are your privileges by the Gospel? *a.* Howbeit we are bounded by the river of God's wrath. Yet we come to the waterside

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and cry to Jesus, "Lord, take me over! Come and hoist sails and fetch us over." For the law, and God's wrath, and the Spirit accompanying it, will make us pray, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom vii. 24). *b.* There is another help of the Gospel. We know not the way to heaven, and how we shall swim over the river, but the Gospel is God's memorandum, telling us the way from this town to that town. It tells that Christ made Himself a bridge over the water and river of God's wrath. O it is the sweetest time we have in the world when Christ and the Gospel is among us! Then the sun shines upon our Jerusalem, the air is sweet, hot, and calm. The love of Jesus being shed abroad in the heart, the storms of God's wrath are over and gone, and the law dare not speak a word then; but in every street the Lord Jesus is heard crying, "God's mercy, peace, and blessing be upon all them that believe on the Son of God."

"*The flowers appear upon the earth.*"—Then there is a fair garden in the Church: the hedge of it is the two arms of God Almighty going about His church, and the flowers and plants in it are the men of Judah and Israel. His own people fruitful in good works, the planting of the Lord in whom He will be glorified. There is the garden. And there is a clear fountain, our Lord's blood, running abundantly to all thirsty sinners; and in the midst of all the flowers of the garden is the Rose of roses, with an hundred, yea a thousand leaves, even Jesus, "the Rose of Sharon." The wind that blows upon this garden is the sweet north and south wind of the Spirit, blowing upon the beds of spices and causing them to cast out a sweet smell. And the voice of the birds sings sweet and glorious music, Christ speaking to His Church in His

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holy word, and His Church speaking to Him again in supplications, prayers, and thanksgivings. What pleasure would any soul have in the way to heaven which is not to be found in this garden? Men seek rest, Christ promiseth soul-rest. Matthew xi. 28-30, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." And do men decline sorrow, sadness, and grief, and affect pleasure and joy? Then here is encouragement; for "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the Tabernacles of the righteous. David says of the members of the church, Psalm xxxvi. 8, "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures."

But I know the way to heaven is judged a harsh way, a low-lifed, sad, and melancholy way, full of tears and mourning. I answer: it is known to all divines, that in every regenerated man there is, as it were, two men, the new man and the old man, the Spirit and the flesh; and these two men have contrary ways, contrary hearts, contrary hands, contrary judgments. When the children of God think the way to heaven unpleasant, and full of sorrow, then the old man bears rule in the soul, and that is but the opinion of the old man. The way to heaven is not the worse, though it be so to corrupt nature, which judges heaven and Christ Himself nothing worth. But ask the opinion of the new man, what he thinks of the way to heaven. O! he will say! God is dearer to him than thousands of gold and silver! sweeter than honey and the honeycomb! "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there

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is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee" (Psalm lxxiii. 25). If ye then ask what is the reason of their mourning, tears, wrestling, agonies, and terrors of a guilty conscience? I answer; we may not think that the child of God, in His way to heaven, will never get a shower; nay, sometimes near mid-summer, there will fall out a blast of hail; but the nature and season of the year will soon melt and dry it up, and it will clear in the west, and the birds will renew their songs again, and the roses will spread their leaves again when the sun shines. So even whilst it is summer, the Sun of Righteousness will hide His face from the poor believer, Christ will seem to go away, and the conscience will quake and tremble. It was so with Hezekiah, when he mourned to God as a dove; and chattered like a crane. It was not the fear of death, but because, when he was so near death, God, in His feeling, was so far from him. It is said of the turtle that after it has lost its marrow, it never sits on a green branch; the soul that knows what it is to want Christ under these terrors will never look a blythe look until it clear in the west again, and the Sun of Righteousness begin to break the clouds of His wrath. See ye not Job's case when he was deserted of God? "Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing I long for! even that it would please God to destroy me! that He would let loose His hand and cut me off!" (Job vi. 8, 9). I say, no man knows what it is to want God, but such as once had Him. Such will cry when He deserts them, O when wilt thou return again! a thousand years in hell, for one kiss of a reconciled God! Men will say this is winter indeed, and the child of God is going backward, under such conflicts. I answer, that nothing grows and flourishes in winter, but even then there are many sweet flowers

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in the soul springing. It is true, sense and feeling wither, for it is not its time of year to grow; but now under these desertions humility grows, feeling of guilt grows, the love and longing to be kissed with the kisses of His mouth grows, a care to seek God's face grows, and smells sweetly like the rose in June.

The soul is never under such a good case as now; for the souls of God's children are ever but in three cases. 1. Towards Christ, it is mid-summer sometimes with the soul, when it enjoys God's sweet and felt presence. Sometimes we may be so drunken with sense, that we become proud and haughty. We think this a good case; yet, there is great danger that we provoke our Lord Christ to go away from us. Therefore, we have now need of a holy fear, and of ardent prayer to God to continue our case. 2. The soul will be in such a winter, that the Lord will withdraw Himself for many days and years, and yet the soul is so dead in sleepy security that it never misses Him. This is David's case; when news came to him that Uriah the Hittite was slain, he called it a chance of war, and sent Joab word to renew the battle again. But the Lord had then left David, and he knew it not. 3. The third case is best of all, when God is minting* to go away, and the child of God holds Him fast. And be persuaded that God is well worthy† your souls, when it is at holding and drawing betwixt God and your soul. When God is saying as He did to Jacob, "Let Me go for the day breaketh," and Jacob said, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me" (Genesis xxxii. 26). When God is sounding in the ear of Job's conscience, "Depart from me for I will destroy thee;" Job

* Attempting; making as if He would.
† Perhaps, "well worthy of."

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answers, "Lord, I will not leave Thee, I will not depart from Thee: I will trust in thee, howbeit thou shouldst slay me." And when Christ saith to the woman of Canaan, I came to the world for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, I came not for you, yet she still raps, and knocks, and cries for "mercy, mercy," and cries on Him, "Lord, sayst Thou so, that Thou camest not for me?" She would take no such answer. Now it is the sweetest season in the year, when faith binds and holds Christ so fastened that He cannot win away. No cord will hold our Samson but faith, love, zeal, new desire of Christ, humility, &c. When all these graces flourish, then the soul has joy and comfort in Christ.

Doctrine III.—The time of the Gospel is but short; it is but a summer quarter, or thirteen weeks as our text bears; yea, but one day, Luke xix. 42, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day." Yea, but a piece of a day, a little before supper time, when the King's table is covered for His guests, (Luke xiv. 17). The longest date that the word of God gives to it is a year only, ".the acceptable year of the Lord." I will persuade you that the summer runs away, and you may fear that Scotland's summer is near an end; and happy are they that embrace the time, and spend the summer quarter in journeying to Jesus Christ. The damned in hell would buy time at the expense of lying ten thousand years in hell for freedom from that place of misery and woe, to enjoy the evening of one of our summer days. Germany and Bohemia mourn now that their summer is gone, as it is to be feared, with them. And we have cause to say with the Church, Jer. vi. 4, "Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out."

Doctrine IV.—When the Gospel is in a land, and

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the word of Christ among a people, in life and power of a heavenly ministry, the very season should move us to come to Christ. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (Rom xiii. 12). As if the apostle would say, It is a shame to lie asleep when the day is come and the night away; therefore cast off your night clothes, and draw on your coat, put your arm over the bed-stock and reach to your clothes; take a grip of Christ and put Him on as the armour of light. "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmit the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. v. 8). The apostle there reasons for the noble parts of "faith and love," and to cover the head with everlasting glory. In the day of the Gospel, the Lord Jesus holds out in His right hand a lanthorn, and a fair candle in it, and is crying, "Run, run fast! Haste, haste into Christ before the candle be blown out." Would you know what the Gospel is? It is Christ's "cock-crowing," crying, "Up, O sleeping world, ye have far to go; it is a long journey to heaven, and it is hard upon day; I pray you ride and make for the gate." * The Gospel is Christ's hour, the summer-sun; and all men know that the summer-sun is God's sandglass set above our head bidding the husbandman plough, sow, reap, for the winter is at hand—prepare houses and fire for the winter is at hand. So the Gospel is Christ's sandglass telling us the hour runs away; labour for the meat that endures to everlasting life; provide for winter. The last trumpet will waken the deadest and deafest of sinners that are in the world, and those that are in the deepest sleep; but they shall get the most doleful

* Set out on the road.

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wakening who sleep when there is a candle burning, and a sun shining on their heads and bedsides—and these are they who sleep in the day of the Gospel. Men know that the Gospel is Christ's trumpet, and His voice, calling on all men whom it reaches; and ye know the poor man in the Gospel was so glad when they said, "Arise, Christ calleth thee," that he got up in haste and threw his cloak from him, that he might be the lighter and nimbler to run and come with speed to Jesus Christ. O beloved, up now! Christ calls you; cast off the world (it is an heavy cloak), and run to Jesus. And though men be obliged in the suntide* to come to Christ, yet in the summer-tide of the Gospel men are under a more strict obligation. And this will more appear if you consider what way the Gospel offers Jesus Christ unto you. Christ is the food that feeds and nourishes His people's souls; now, He cannot be eaten except He be dressed, and prepared, and broken to the soul. So long as Christ is not preached in the Gospel and offered in the Sacraments, He is a whole Christ and does not feed His people. But when we preach Christ before you, we let you see Him torn, rent, and wounded for sin. We lay Him upon your plate or trencher, in the word and sacraments. So you see it is summer: betwixt God and you be it, if ye come not to Jesus Christ again.†

If we speak of those who live in the winter of ignorance, idolatry, &c., and never heard of Christ crucified; for anything I know Christ has not made a covenant of peace with them. The contract is but drawn up in a minute‡ and unsubscribed. But it is not so with such

* During the time the sun shines. They must come at any rate while it is day. † Probably "Anon;" at once.

‡ The first draught of the writing; and has no signature.

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as live under the drop of the Gospel; for Jesus Christ has formed the contract, and has written it, and ye know that a contract serves for nothing except it be subscribed by both parties. Our dear Jesus, to His great charges, subscribed the contract at the expense of His precious blood. Now, in the summer of the Gospel, He offers it to you this day; and there is His word for it, Isaiah lxi. 1, 2. Will ye consent and obey? The contract says in the general, "He that believes has life everlasting;" and in the word and sacraments the Lord comes to the conscience of every man in particular and says, "Wilt thou believe? Will ye quit yourselves and be Christ's wholly?" So there remains nothing, beloved, but that ye say, "Amen" to your Lord. I pray now, in this summer, give to Christ a good answer. So then, ye see, when the word of the Gospel is preached ye are obliged in a special manner to come to Christ.

This doctrine doth, in a special manner, strike against secure sluggards, and such as contemn the Gospel. A man that sins against the law, has indeed God's justice as a contrary advocate to plead against him; yet even in this case he has an advocate with God, even God's mercy, and that pleads for him, and requests Jesus Christ to take upon Him to be his mediator. But if a man close his ears at Christ's voice, in the Gospel, and sleep in summer when Christ calls upon him, and sin against the Mediator, and trample under foot the blood of the new covenant; both mercy and justice doth plead against him. And, therefore, he that sins against the law, justice is but angry at him; but he that sins against the Gospel, justice pursues him in wrath, and the very mercy of God is angry, and cries, "No mercy for that man, that sins under the sunshine, and summer tide of the

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Gospel." And this is righteousness with God. The Gospel cries mercy once, twice, thrice; these be the sweet and comfortable "O yeses,"* proclaimed upon the cross of Christ, viz.: "Mercy, mercy, mercy, to sinners!" With a loud voice, the Gospel cries this at the third hour, and the sixth, and at the eleventh hour, at the very striking of twelve, at the very going down of the sun, at supper time. But doth Chorazin and Bethsaida, England and Scotland, contemn this sweet voice? In God's righteousness and judgments, they shall never see another summer. When Lammas-wind† blows and summer is gone, a doleful winter of wrath, and all devouring fire of the anger and judgment of God, shall come. A man that has but one eye should keep that well. We have all sinned against God's justice; nothing remains as our eye to see God but through the prospect of His mercy. If we lose mercy, we are gone. In the first covenant, God takes man's word without a cautioner; in the second covenant Jesus became a cautioner: if we sin against our cautioner, and cast out with our advocate, offering Himself to us, we have none to speak for us. A man that cannot agree with Christ, he will agree with none; for without Him there is no access to God, for "He is the way, the truth, and the life."

"*The flowers appear on the earth.*"—It is time now that we enter upon some directions upon the particular‡ evidences, signs, and marks of summer. The first sign is the *appearance of flowers* upon the earth; by which I understand, the holy lives of the saints, which are beautiful in the eyes of Jesus, as the flowers in summer

* A French term "Oyez," Hear ye! A form of summons to attend at a court.

† The beginning of August. "Lammas" is "Loaf-mass day."

‡ In the old copy, "upon the particular, upon the evidences."

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are beautiful in the fields and gardens. "Israel shall blossom and bud as a rose, and fill the face of the world" (Isaiah xxvii. 6). "And they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth" (Psalm lxxii. 16). "He shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon" (Hosea xiv. 5). The Church is God's garden, and plot of ground, and He Himself sets flowers in it, by the ministry of the word. Here there is a mark of the true Church of God, that the word is accompanied by the effectual working of God's Spirit, that sweet-smelled flowers grow in this plot of ground, in the garden of the word. Will ye know what makes the Lord's flowers fruitful in His vineyard? There be these four things that makes all Christians fruitful in it. 1. The Father's husbandry; He is a good husbandman, if any man be set by Him he must grow. 2. Christ is a piece of fertile ground: He brings forth a hundred bolls for one. If once a flower be planted in Christ, he draws life from Christ: "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom vi. 5). All that grows fruitfully to God must be planted in the death of Christ; for when Christ died, He was sown and planted in the earth, and the third day He came above the earth and budded. So our body of sin is sown in the body of Christ, and the third day the image of God buds up again. So it is our engrafting into Christ makes us fruitful, "I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing" (John xv. 5). But, beloved, there be two things in an engrafting. 1. The imps* to be engrafted must be cut off their own stock, and imped in

* The young branch, or scion, that is engrafted.

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another; so we must be cut off old Adam, and must be engrafted in Christ Jesus. 2. Then, again, the stock in which the graft is set must be cutted and branched; for we were not planted into living Christ, but into crucified Christ! O! but our stock, Christ, was fearfully cutted and branched! He was cloven and hagged in body and soul, and we, the Lord's flowers, are imped in cutted and bleeding Jesus to draw life out of His death.

3. Abundance of rain makes flowers to grow. We are watered, and washed with the purging blood, and cleansing water, that came out of the side of Jesus.

4. Flowers must have sweet, wholesome air that will make them grow. The sweet worthiness* of God's Spirit rebuking the conscience for sin, and the sweet south wind of the same Spirit comforting the soul, blows upon God's flowers. What then makes so many stinking weeds in our land, so that God may say, as He said of the people in Micah vii. 4, "The best of them is as a brier; the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge?" Pride has blossomed, "violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness" (Ezek. vii. 11). "Judgment springeth up as a hemlock in the furrows of the field" (Hosea x. 4). Even here is the cause; men are not planted in Christ, but grow wild upon the mountains of the earth like nettles and thorns. And gain is a flower that smells sweet to many sorts of people; the inordinate pleasures of sin, oppression, covetousness, bloodshed, lust, &c., so that Christ must run out of His garden for the filthy smell of the weeds that grow in it.

"*The time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.*"—The turtle is

* It should be "working."

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a mourning fowl, and is especially so after she has lost her mate. This voice is heard in the Church uttered by repenting sinners with tears. Alas! we have all lost our marrow by our sins; we have lost God. And this is Christ's music in the Church, singing and mourning,* mercy and judgment. Christ is our sweet Nightingale, that, in the time of the Gospel, sings sweetly. Wisdom sings without in the streets; for the evangel is Christ's love-song compiled by Himself, and the matter of it is how a Prince came from heaven to suit† a wife, and He loved her so dearly, that He lay down on the hard tree of a cursed cross, and died for His love, and thereafter lived again, and married her, a beloved dame. Now, when Christ is singing, rejoice at the glad tidings of mercy and salvation; be won with Christ's sweet music. The silly fowl is deceived and taken by the deceiving fowler's voice, which draws her to the net, where she is taken and slain. O! that we cannot be moved with the pleasant voice of Jesus, to be taken as captives, rendering ourselves over to Him. Jesus Christ also in the Gospel does mourn over us, and speaks of judgment with tears, as He did over Jerusalem (Luke xix. 42), "If thou hadst known, in this thy day, but now they are hid from thine eyes." Beloved friends, that hear the Gospel, must have a soft heart to it, and not rejoice when Christ laments, and to pipe when Christ pipeth: because where neither mercy nor judgment will move a people, the heart is like a stone that will not receive the stamp.

"*The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell.*"—The last mark of the summer of the Gospel is, that the fig-tree

* In the old copy, "laughing" comes in here, without meaning. † To woo.

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abounds unto fruits, which smell well unto God through Jesus Christ. This is conveniently casten in to us as the mark of the spouse of Christ; she is fruitful in good works. Faith cannot want holiness of life. "If any man will love Me, he will keep My commandments" (John xiv. 15). "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew iii. 8). "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ" (Phil. i. 27). When God's children are once planted in Christ, they begin then to bud. When Matthew was converted, he followed Christ; he made a feast to Christ, there is his bounty; he invited the publicans and sinners to Christ, there is his charity. So Job feared God, and eschewed evil. Cornelius prayed, and, with his prayers, his alms-deeds ascended up to heaven. Dorcas was a disciple full of good works. Many are disciples in profession, but they are empty vessels, and God has laid upon them the curse of the fig-tree. They are reprobate to good works. God, in His righteous judgment, has said to them, "Never man ripe* fruit of thee while the world standeth. Thou shalt never have grace to do a good turn in the Church of God." Many in our day profess Christ, and give up their names to Christ, and put their hand to our Lord's charter, and yet are not Christ's. They have made shipwreck of the faith, and a good conscience. Like men that after they have sold their lands in such a place, and subscribed the bargain, then they have no more but a naked title; so when we are going out of the world, we may take nothing with us; death, as master porter, waits at the entry of the grave, and takes all from us. "Blessed are the

* "Ripe," search for. Or the word may have been "reap," gather.

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dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours, and their works follow them."

"*Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.*"—Our Lord doubles the exhortation, arise and come away, and it teaches us that—

1. Our Lord allows not to His children one hour's sleep. When He calls us forth to watch, He bids us watch continually. He lets us see how ready we are to fall asleep. When the Lord turns His back upon us, our hearts are like the paces* of a clock, that must be drawn up every six hours; we are down upon this earth; except the Lord draw the paces of our hearts.

2. Our Lord would have present obedience. As soon as Christ said to Zaccheus, "Come down," he came down hastily, and when our Lord bade Matthew follow Him, he stayed not to tell his money, nor mark it in his count-books, but came presently (Luke v. 28).

3. The doubling of this exhortation notes the earnestness of Jesus, to have the spouse's company. Christ has fair weather and walks in pleasant fields, yet He thinks He has no pleasure except He have His church in His company. O! so † serious as God is in the conversion of a sinner! He comes out in the street, "and crieth upon the high places of the city" (Prov. ix. 3); like a man that sees a town on fire, urging his hands, and shouting to this sleepy world, seeing the wrath that is coming on them, and he has both prayers and tears, (Luke xix. 42). "We pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. v. 20). My dear sons, I pray for you to my Lord Jesus; He is saying, For My blood, and My wounds' sake, come. It is no marvel Christ hath a count‡

* The weights. † O! how earnest God is.
‡ An account to give in.

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above His head as Mediator, for as Mediator the Father has given the church to His keeping, and it is one part of the Mediator's calling to render a reckoning for His kingdom, and His subjects to His Father; that He may say, Father, there is the roll of all the names, all are there, I have lost none; and we shall all stand with Jesus at His back. Now, when Jesus has this reckoning to make, and God has His bond as cautioner of the covenant, it is no wonder that He cry oftener nor* once, twice, or thrice upon His church. For it goes this way betwixt the Father and the Son; the Father disposes and resigns so many to the Son. Says the Father, Son, I deliver such a man and such a woman, keep them and answer for them; and Jesus gives His bond for the receipt of them. Says Christ, "I, Jesus, Mediator of the new covenant, grant that I have received of My Father, so many children, and bind and oblige Myself to restore them all at the return of the last judgment." John xvii. 6-12, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them Me; those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost." John vi. 37, 39, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out; but shall raise it up at the last day." Now from this count lying on Christ's head proceeds His earnestness in calling His church to come, crying, O come in! holding out His arms, which is a painful thing. "I have spread out My hands all the day to a rebellious people" (Isa. lxv. 2). In wishing, Deut. v. 29, "O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments." John viii. 37, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." This is a

* Oftener than once.

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singular comfort to a weak child of God, that has a true desire to come to Christ Jesus, and rise and forsake the world; Christ has also an earnest desire that we should come, and if we would seek Him, with earnest desires, the marriage must holds ye would do Christ a pleasure this day if ye would rise, He prays you; My brethren (says He) for My blood's sake, be reconciled to Me!

O! but our Lord would like to be in when He stands, when He knocks at the door saying, "*My fair one!*" This is an ordinary epithet, given by Christ through all this song to His church, that she is called fair, pleasant, and comely. Once for all in this place we shall expound it; she in herself is black like the moon, spotted like the leopard, but she is fair, because of His inherent fairness, with the washing of water by the word (Eph. v. 26, 27). But we must dig somewhat further in to seek the cause of this beauty. Ezek. xvi. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, "Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness, yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest Mine; then washed I thee with water, yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil; I clothed thee also with embroidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk; I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thine hands, and a chain on thy neck: and I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thy head. Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver, and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and

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broidered work; thou didst eat fine flour, honey, and oil, and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom; and thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty, for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God." The Lord's washing is the cause of her fairness; or rather it is Christ's fairness, that makes us fair. Christ is two ways fair, and clean: one way as God equal with the Father, and Holy Spirit, and so He is all beauty; another way as He is Mediator, and so He borrowed our spots, and took upon Him our sins, yea, He went into the wine press of the Father's wrath, and there did free Himself and us of the blot of our sins. He being our head come out clean and beautiful, through His perfect comeliness (Ezek. xvi. 14). He puts on us this beauty; then, it is our Lord's righteousness wherewith we are beautiful, and righteous in the sight of God.

But because this beauty is scorned by the Church of Rome, I will labour to show you how Christ's righteousness is ours. I observe two times when we are justified before God, and set free from the condemning power of the law as a covenant of works.

1. When Christ died and rose again for our justification.

2. When we believe in Christ dying and rising again, and resting and relying upon Him alone for salvation.

When Christ was summoned, judged, and condemned, we also were summoned, judged, and condemned in Him. And as Christ ended the work and came out a free man from hell, the grave, Satan, and sin, we came out also with Him, for we are one with Him; for Christ and we are one. Now, that

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day that Christ digged the well that made us all clean, He purchased to us His beauty, His comeliness, and His innocency. That day upon the cross, in the garden, and in the grave, Christ did spin that long white robe of His righteousness, and innocency, to be a garment to us all. He has fair velvets beside Him to cover all the elect. Before we were born, Christ made new garments for us; that was the day when our righteousness was bought. Christ had all the elect's sins bound on His back, and God looking to us could see no sin, and looking to Christ rising from the dead, and having left our sins in the grave behind Him, God could see sin neither in Him nor in us. He could not challenge Christ, for He had died and risen again; He could not challenge the elect, for Christ had suffered for them, and risen for them. As Adam was our murderer by eating the forbidden fruit, before he was our father, and made us guilty before we were born; so Jesus saved us ere we who now live were born; and had righteousness ready, as one has a garment shapen and made for a child that is not yet born. But there is another court, which is the judgment and court-hall of conscience, wherein conscience does accuse us as guilty sinners, and sets up a tribunal in the soul, and reads the book of the law, and makes the poor sinner see he is under God's curse and God's wrath. Here the child of God is feared to look God in the face, for fear God see sin in him, and see his filthy raggedness; and therefore he runs to the cross of Christ, and there puts on a garment of Christ's righteousness. The apostle says, Romans iii. 25, that "God set forth" Christ (as in an open market place) "to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past,

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through the forbearance of God." Christ is even the Lord's wardrobe (to speak so) to all poor sinners that come to Christ for a garment or clothes washen in our Lord's blood. Wash ye, then, in that blood, and God cannot see through that garment which makes a sinner so comely and fair that Jesus has reason to call her His "love" and His "fair one."

Use 1. Beloved, who knows how long and how large the web of Christ's righteousness is? We will be all summoned one day before the Judge that He may see us, and if we come not before Him in good apparel, it is Death. Now our own garments are ragged and torn, let us borrow from Christ, and above all things labour for His righteousness.

Use 2. If we speak of God's dealings with the consciences of men, many Christians wonder why God should deal with them so at the last court of the general judgment, to make them see their sins, and cause their consciences to convict and summon, when in the meantime, that day that Christ died, their debt was paid, their bill was answered, and the Judge appeased, and all paid and scored out. *Answer.* As it is known that some men are never sure of their inheritance until their rights be called in question before the judge, and then they get an absolution, and their rights made sure: so it is good our consciences should summon us before God, for by this means we get a decree of absolution or absolviture,* so that at the last court of the general judgment, we may say to God, Lord, remember such a day that I was by my conscience summoned before Thee, but before I went home Thy Spirit assured my conscience of the forgiveness of my sins, and Christ by His Spirit did write an

* The term in Scots law for acquittal.

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absolution in my heart. "Indeed (Christ says) I cannot deny My own hand-write;" and when the Spirit is called, He cannot but say, "I will not deny the truth, it was so indeed." And when the Judge's count-book* is looked, all is fair scored out, and paid, that day that Christ died. Yet the Christian has need daily to be going to the blood of Christ to get his sins washed away.

"*Arise and come.*"—This coming is faith. This rising is a setting of the heart up to heaven, where Christ is at God's right hand. And these are fitly conjoined together. We see faith will not suffer a man to sleep, but draws the soul upwards. Abraham was a man like us; yet that made him never to seek a settled dwelling in the earth, he looked to a city with an eye of faith, for a city that has a foundation. So Moses' faith is commended, Heb. xi. 24, 25, 26. He was no earthly-minded man, he made small estimation to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and to play the courtier. The word signifies that he looked away from that; faith set his face to a contrary point of the compass, where he looked to the recompense of the reward. The like we see in the thief at Christ's right hand; he had no mind to this life, as the other had, who esteemed it his happiness to come down from the cross. So then, I make great question if a worldly-minded man has faith, for the love of the world is a lying upon the dust of the earth, but faith is a rising and coming to Christ. See Heb. x. 34, 35, "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward."

To God be praise, both now and for ever more!

* Where all is recorded.

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