

former's prayers in his behalf. "Your husband," he answers, "is dear to me for that he is a man indued with some good gifts, but more dear for that he is your husband. Charity moveth us to thirst his illumination, both for his comfort and for the trouble which you sustain by his coldness, which justly may be called infidelity." He wishes her, however, not to hope too much; he can promise that his prayers will be earnest, but not that they will be effectual; it is possible that this is to be her "cross" in life; that "her head, appointed by God for her comfort, should be her enemy." And if this be so, well, there is nothing for it; "with patience she must abide God's merciful deliverance," taking heed only that she does not "obey manifest iniquity for the pleasure of any mortal man."¹ I conceive this epistle would have given a very modified sort of pleasure to the Clerk-Register, had it chanced to fall into his hands. Compare its tenor—the dry resignation not without a hope of merciful deliverance therein recommended—with these words from another letter, written but the year before to two married women of London: "Call first for grace by Jesus, and thereafter communicate with your faithful husbands, and then shall God, I doubt not, conduct your footsteps, and direct your counsels to His glory."² Here the husbands are put in a very high place; we can recognise here the same hand that has written for our instruction how the man is set above the woman, even as God above the angels. But the point of the distinction is plain. For Clerk-Register Mackgil was not a faithful husband; displayed, indeed, towards religion a "coldness which justly might be called infidelity." We shall see in more notable instances how much Knox's conception of the duty of wives varies according to the zeal and orthodoxy of the husband.

As I have said, he may possibly have made the acquaint-

¹ Works, iv. 245.

² *Ib.* iv. 221.