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BY THE REV JOHN WESLEY, A. M.,

SOMETIME FELLOW OF LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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E X T R A C T S

FROM THE

W O R K S

OF

ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON.

VOL. XXVII.

B

S E R M O N I.

OF THE ORDINARY INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY GHOST ON THE MINDS OF CHRISTIANS.

TO THE READER.

I HAVE the rather inserted the following Extracts for the sake of two sorts of people : Those who are unreasonably prejudiced *for*, and those who are unreasonably prejudiced *against* this great man. By this small specimen it will abundantly appear, to all who will at length give themselves leave to judge impartially, that the Archbishop was as far from being the *worst*, as from being the *best* of the English writers.

JOHN vii. 39.

But this spake he of the SPIRIT, which they that believed on him should receive. For the HOLY GHOST was not yet given, because that JESUS was not yet glorified.

OUR blessed SAVIOUR (who used from all sorts of objects and occurrences to discourse of heavenly and spiritual things) being present at the feast of tabernacles, in which it was the custom of the Jews, from the fountain Siloam, to fetch water with great pomp and ceremony, and to bring it into the temple with sound of trumpct, singing those words of the Prophet ISAIAH, “ They shall draw waters with joy out of the wells of salvation,” takes occasion from these waters, to proclaim those spiritual benefits which Christians should be made partakers of by the HOLY GHOST, and which are in Scripture represented by “ waters flowing from a living fountain. In the last day, the great day of the feast, JESUS stood up and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture saith,” that is, according to

the tenour of several passages in the Prophets, “out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water ;” and then the evangelist adds, by way of farther explication of our SAVIOUR’S meaning, “But this he spake of the SPIRIT, which they that believed on him should receive. For the HOLY GHOST was not yet given, because JESUS was not yet glorified.” In which words we have these three things considerable :—

I. The Gift itself, which is here called “the SPIRIT,” or “the HOLY GHOST.” II. The Persons upon whom this gift was to be conferred ; and those are believers. “This he spake of the SPIRIT, which they that believed on him should receive.” III. The particular Time of the first conferring this gift ; and this was not to be till after our SAVIOUR’S ascension, implied in those words, “The HOLY GHOST was not yet given, because JESUS was not yet glorified.” I shall briefly explain these three things.

I. The gift itself, which is here called “the SPIRIT,” or “the HOLY GHOST.” By which we are to understand a special power and presence of the HOLY GHOST with believers, the immediate operation and assistance of the Divine SPIRIT communicated and imparted to them ; and this comprehends in it these two things :

1. Those extraordinary gifts which were bestowed upon the Apostles and primitive Christians, in order to the planting and propagating the Christian religion in the world, and for the benefit of the church, while it was under persecution, destitute of all secular assistance, and of those ordinary advantages which are sufficient to preserve a religion, after it is once generally entertained. And these gifts were in a very remarkable manner conferred upon the first preachers of the Christian doctrine ; and they were in a high degree necessary, to give credit to this religion at its first appearance, and to awaken the drowsy world to an attentive consideration of it, to conquer the prejudices of men, and to support the teachers of this doctrine against that violent opposition which would certainly be raised against it.

2. The gift of the HOLY GHOST doth likewise signify a

more ordinary and gentle influence of GOD'S SPIRIT upon the minds of men, to all holy and good purposes ; by which I mean an immediate operation and assistance of the HOLY GHOST afforded to men, to relieve the weakness and impotence of human nature, to help and strengthen us to the performance of what the Gospel requires of us. And this I shall have occasion to explain more particularly, when I have gone over the other parts of the text.

II. You have here the qualification of the persons who were to be made partakers of this gift, that is, believing the Gospel. "This he spake of the SPIRIT, which they that believed should receive."

The extraordinary gifts of the SPIRIT were not conferred on any, but those who embraced the faith of CHRIST. Not that all Christians were endowed with those gifts, much less in an equal degree : But they were distributed, as ST PAUL tells us, in such manner and measure as the wisdom of GOD thought fit. But all were partakers of the HOLY GHOST in respect of his more ordinary influence, and this gift all Christians received upon their embracing the Christian religion. Thus "the HOLY GHOST" is said "to be given by GOD to them that obey him." (*Acts* v. 32.) And we are said to "receive the promise of the SPIRIT through faith." (*Gal.* iii. 14.) And "in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that HOLY SPIRIT of promise." (*Eph.* i. 13.)

III. The third thing considerable in the text is, the particular time of conferring this gift of the HOLY GHOST; and that was after our SAVIOUR'S ascension into heaven, implied in these words, "The HOLY GHOST was not yet given, because JESUS was not yet glorified;" signifying that this effusion of the SPIRIT was not to be till after our SAVIOUR'S ascension into heaven.

But was not the HOLY GHOST given to the Prophets of old? And were not good men in former ages under the influence of the SPIRIT? Why is it then said that "the HOLY GHOST was not yet given?"

The answer to this is easy, that our SAVIOUR here speaks

of that general and plentiful effusion of the **HOLY GHOST** which was promised to the latter days, that is, to the Gospel age; the like to which, both for the universal communication of this gift, and for the measure of its participation, had never been in the world before; and of this it is that the Evangelist speaks, when he dates the time of it, from after our **SAVIOUR'S** ascension into heaven. Now the dispensation of this gift of the **HOLY GHOST** was particularly limited to this time.

1. Because it was not so necessary before in our **SAVIOUR'S** life-time. For during his continuance with his disciples, his presence supplied all other defects; but when he left them, they were, as he calls them, orphans, destitute of help, comfort, and protection; and therefore it was requisite, that upon his departure from them, this "Comforter and Advocate should come to abide with them for ever." But this does not seem to reach fully the reason assigned in the text, why "the **SPIRIT** was not yet given, because **JESUS** was not yet glorified." Therefore

2. It seems convenient, not only that our **SAVIOUR** should be visibly taken up into heaven, but that after he was ascended thither, he should give some testimony to the world of the power and dignity to which he was there advanced; that as a King he should give some evidence of his authority and majesty, at his solemn inauguration into his kingdom, by dispensing plentiful spiritual gifts, as the Princes of this world are wont to scatter temporal favours. And this the Scripture takes notice of, as an evidence and testimony of his royal dignity, and glorious exaltation at the right hand of God. "Him hath God exalted" (speaking of our blessed **LORD**) "with his own right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so also is the **HOLY GHOST**, whom God hath given to them that obey him." (*Acts* v. 31, 32.) Where you see that the gift of the **HOLY GHOST** is mentioned as a testimony of our **SAVIOUR'S** being "exalted at the right hand of God." But more expressly **ST. PAUL** applies to our **SAVIOUR** these

words of the Psalmist, "Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." (*Eph.* iv. 8.)

After our SAVIOUR'S ascension, there was the greatest occasion that ever was for the bestowing this gift of the HOLY GHOST, considering what kind of persons they were that were appointed to publish the Gospel to the world; and that this great work being to be carried on by instruments so weak, and mean, and contemptible, there was an absolute necessity of an extraordinary testimony from heaven to the divinity of this new doctrine, and of a divine power going along with it, to support those weak instruments in carrying on this work, against the mighty opposition and persecution it was likely to meet with, and against such difficulties and obstacles as were plainly insuperable by any human power. For as there never was a work of greater consequence and difficulty than this, so could this divine power never have manifested itself upon a more worthy occasion. Since our SAVIOUR, according to the wise counsel of God, intended, that after his ascension into heaven, his Gospel should be published to the world, it was highly requisite that the minds of men should be prepared for it, and way made for the more ready entertainment and easy passage of it, by some signal testimony of the divine presence attending the first publishers of it, and by circumstances, though not so full of terror and amazement as those which did accompany the giving of the law, yet really of greater force and efficacy, and more apt to convince the world of the truth of this doctrine, and to insinuate it more effectually into the hearts and consciences of men.

And now that I have given you a brief account of the three particulars which offer, I shall return back to that which I intended more especially to insist upon, the ordinary influence of the HOLY SPIRIT upon the minds of those who believe; and this I shall endeavour to explain to you under these four heads:—1. I shall open the nature of it. 2. The necessity of it, to enable us to perform the condi-

tion of the Gospel covenant. 3. The blessed effects of it.
4. The extent of it, as to persons and times.

1. I shall open the nature of this gift of the **HOLY GHOST**, understanding by it the ordinary influence of the **HOLY SPIRIT** of **GOD** upon the hearts and minds of believers. And I doubt not but the Scripture means by it an immediate influence and operation of the **HOLY SPIRIT** of **GOD** upon the minds of men, an inward power, strength, and assistance communicated to Christians, to all the purposes of holiness and obedience, enabling them to be such "manner of persons in all holy conversation and godliness" as the Gospel requires: And not only that this strength and assistance is offered and afforded to us, "to work in us both to will and to do" all that is necessary to salvation, if we do not resist the **SPIRIT** of **GOD**, and the blessed motions of it; but likewise that this power does continually dwell and reside in all true Christians, if we do not grieve the **SPIRIT** of **GOD**, and provoke him to withdraw himself from us.

And this is sufficiently declared in several places of the New Testament, where we are said to be "assisted by a Divine Power, and strengthened with all might by the **SPIRIT** in the inner man, to walk in the **SPIRIT**, to be led by the **SPIRIT**, and by the **SPIRIT** to mortify the deeds of the flesh;" and likewise in those texts, wherein "the **SPIRIT** of **GOD**" is said "to work mightily in them that believe, to dwell in them, to sanctify and renew them," with many such like expressions. By all which, unless we offer notorious violence to the plain and obvious sense of them, we must necessarily understand something more than the confirmation which was given to the Christian doctrine, by the miracles that were wrought by the power of the **HOLY GHOST**. Such a remote influence of the **SPIRIT** of **GOD** upon men as this is, does by no means answer the fulness of those expressions; and if any man do but seriously consider them, nothing less than an immediate influence of the **SPIRIT** of **GOD** upon our hearts, and a real strength and power thereby communicated to us, can be imagined to

satisfy the proper sense and meaning of the several expressions which I have mentioned.

And that the Scripture, by the promise of the SPIRIT, and the various expressions concerning it, does mean this ordinary assistance common to all Christians in all times, and not the extraordinary gifts of the HOLY GHOST, which were peculiar to the first ages of Christianity, seems very plain; because the Scripture makes the gift of the SPIRIT to be common to all believers, and to be given to all that are baptized, and this in all ages of the Church; as appears from those words of ST. PETER, "Then PETER said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of JESUS CHRIST, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the HOLY GHOST. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our GOD shall call." (*Acts* ii. 38, 39.) This promise is the promise of the HOLY GHOST, which, he says, is made to them and their posterity, that in all succeeding ages should be gained to the faith of CHRIST.

And this appears yet more evidently, in that the Scripture makes the want of the SPIRIT a sign that a man is no true Christian. "If any man have not the SPIRIT of CHRIST, he is none of his. And on the contrary, makes our having the SPIRIT of GOD, a mark of a child of GOD: "As many as are led by the SPIRIT of GOD, are the sons of GOD." But our SAVIOUR hath assured us, that men may have the miraculous gifts of the SPIRIT of GOD, may "prophesy in CHRIST's name," and "cast out Devils in his name," and "in his name do many wondrous works," and yet be "workers of iniquity, and shut out of the kingdom of GOD." And on the other hand, men may not have these miraculous gifts, and yet be the children of GOD.

2. But this will yet more fully appear, if we consider in the Second place, The great necessity of such an immediate influence of the SPIRIT of GOD, to enable Christians to perform the condition of the covenant of the Gospel. The great corruption and degeneracy of human nature, and the

impotency consequent thereupon, is not only matter of Divine Revelation, but hath always been the general apprehension and acknowledgment, and the sad complaint of the wisest part of mankind; and indeed, every man may feel it in himself, and observe it in others. Now for our recovery out of this miserable state, GOD was pleased in great pity to mankind to send his SON into the world, to reveal his will and our duty anew to us, for our direction in the way to life and happiness; and by the sacrifice of himself to make a perfect expiation of sin, and to proclaim forgiveness of sins to us; and, in a word, to offer new terms of life and happiness to us, upon the conditions of faith and repentance.

But after all this is done for us, we are still without strength, our nature being depraved, and sunk into that impotency, that without the powerful assistance of divine grace, we are utterly unable to perform those conditions which the Gospel requires, "being," as the Scripture expresseth it, "dead in trespasses and sins, and estranged from the life of GOD, through the darkness that is in us, and the blindness of our hearts;" being enslaved to vicious habits, and having "a carnal mind which is enmity against GOD," and renders us incapable to receive or relish divine and spiritual things. So that notwithstanding all that our blessed SAVIOUR hath done and suffered for us, and all the merciful overtures of pardon and happiness, which the Gospel makes to us, all this will signify nothing, unless our impotency be relieved, and new life and strength be conveyed to us, to awaken and excite us to that which is good, to enable us to mortify our evil and corrupt inclinations, to break off our vicious habits, and to walk in the ways of GOD's commandments. "For we are not sufficient of ourselves, as of ourselves, for any of these things; but our sufficiency is of GOD. Without CHRIST we can do nothing;" and it is only "through him strengthening us," that "we are able to do all those things" which are necessary in order to the obtaining that happiness and salvation which our SAVIOUR hath purchased for us. And therefore our merci-

ful REDEEMER, that he might not leave his work imperfect, hath sent his blessed SPIRIT into our hearts, “to enlighten the eyes of our minds,” and to open and dispose our understandings, for the receiving divine and spiritual truth; to conquer likewise the perverseness and stubbornness of our wills, and to set us at liberty from the slavery of our lusts; (“for where the SPIRIT of GOD is,” as ST. PAUL tells us, “there is liberty;”) “to renew our natures,” and “to purify our hearts, to mortify our corrupt affections,” and “to assist us to every good word and work;” to strengthen us against temptations, to support us under sufferings; and, in a word, “to keep us by this mighty power of GOD,” and gracious assistance of his HOLY SPIRIT, “through faith unto salvation.”

So that whosoever shall but duly weigh and consider his own darkness and ignorance, the strange and unreasonable prejudices of a corrupt mind against divine truth, and against the practice of holiness, the strong bias of men’s natural inclinations to that which is evil, the mighty force of evil and inveterate habits within us, together with the great difficulties and discouragements of piety, especially when they are attended with grievous sufferings “for righteousness’ sake;” I say, he that considers all this, will easily discern how great a necessity there is of the assistance of GOD’S HOLY SPIRIT to all the purposes of a firm faith, and a sincere repentance, and a constant and universal obedience to the Gospel, to rescue us from the power and dominion of sin, to raise us to a new life, to engage us in a holy course, and to fortify our resolutions against sin, and to enable us to persevere and patiently continue in doing and suffering the will of GOD.

It is this gracious influence, and continual assistance of of GOD’S HOLY SPIRIT residing and dwelling in us, which secures all the other blessings and benefits of the Gospel to us, and conducts us safely through all the temptations of this world, “to the end of our faith, the eternal salvation of our souls.” For which reason, the SPIRIT of GOD dwelling in good men, and evidencing itself by its genuine

fruits, is said to be “ the pledge and earnest of our future inheritance, and to seal us to the day of redemption.” (*Rom.* viii. 11.) “ But if the SPIRIT of him that raised up JESUS from the dead, dwell in you; he that raised up CHRIST from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his SPIRIT that dwelleth in you.” For the same reason the Apostle makes the SPIRIT of GOD, by which Christians are governed and led, to be the mark of their adoption, and being the children of GOD, and heirs of eternal life. “ For as many as are led by the SPIRIT of GOD, are the sons of GOD.” (*Verse 14.*) And, “ The SPIRIT itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of GOD : And if children, then heirs, heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with CHRIST.” (*Verses 16, 17.*) And elsewhere the Apostle useth it for an argument, why we should be careful not to resist or quench the motions of GOD’s blessed SPIRIT ; because by this “ we are sealed to eternal life.” And “ quench not the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

3. I proceed, Thirdly, To consider the blessed effects of this gift of the HOLY GHOST.

I shall enumerate them as briefly as I can. And in general, all the good that is in us, and proceeds from us, all good thoughts and inclinations, all good purposes and resolutions, all good works and actions, are in Scripture every where ascribed to the dictates and motions, to the influence and assistance of the HOLY SPIRIT. It is He “ that works in us, both to will and to do of his own mere goodness.” All our strength and sufficiency is from him. To his blessed inspirations we owe all good inclinations; our beginning, and our progress, and our perseverance in virtue. And though the SPIRIT be said to be given to them that already believe, that is, so as to dwell and reside, to take up his constant habitation and abode only in these; yet this doth not exclude a preventing influence and operation of GOD’s HOLY SPIRIT upon the minds of those to whom the Gospel is offered, disposing them to embrace and entertain it, and working faith in them. And in this sense it is, that faith in

Scripture is said to be “the gift of God,” because it is first wrought in them by the influence and operation of that blessed SPIRIT, which is promised to dwell and reside in them after they have believed.

More particularly these blessed fruits and effects are constantly in Scripture attributed to the HOLY SPIRIT of God.

(1.) Our sanctification. We are said “to be renewed by the HOLY GHOST, and by the SPIRIT to mortify the deeds of the flesh.” That great change which is wrought in man, which in Scripture is called by the several names of “regeneration,” and “a new birth,” of “the new creature,” and “the new man,” is constantly ascribed to the SPIRIT of God as the Author of it.

(2.) The conduct of our whole Christian course, and all the actions of it, and our perseverance in it, are likewise ascribed to the same blessed cause. We are said “to be led by the SPIRIT,” and “to walk in the SPIRIT;” that is, to be guided and assisted in all that we do, by this blessed principle, which does as it were act and animate all good men; and we are said “to be kept by the mighty power of God,” that is, by the powerful operation of God’s HOLY SPIRIT, “through faith unto salvation.”

(3.) All particular graces and virtues are likewise said to be the “fruit of the SPIRIT” “The fruit of the SPIRIT is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (or rather fidelity,) meekness, temperance.” (*Gal.* v. 22.) And, “The fruit of the SPIRIT is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.” (*Eph.* v. 9.) And charity, which is the sum of all other graces, is said to be planted and wrought in us by the SPIRIT, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the SPIRIT, unto charity.” (1 *Pet.* i. 22.)

(4.) By the same SPIRIT we are said to be made partakers of that great and glorious privilege of adoption, and are advanced to that high honour and dignity of being “called the sons of God.” (*Rom.* viii. 14.) “As many as are led by the SPIRIT of God, are the sons of God,”

and consequently heirs of a blessed resurrection to eternal life: For so the Apostle reasons, "The SPIRIT itself beareth witness with our spirit," that is, is a testimony within us, "that we are the children of GOD. And if children, then heirs, heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with CHRIST; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (*Verses 16, 17.*) So that the HOLY SPIRIT, which is conferred upon all sincere Christians, and does reside in them, is a mark or seal of their being the children of GOD, and a pledge or earnest of the blessed "inheritance of eternal life," as the Scripture plainly and frequently declares, "Now he which establisheth us with you in CHRIST, and hath anointed us, is GOD; who hath also sealed us," or set his signet or mark upon us, "hath given us the earnest or pledge of the SPIRIT in our hearts." (*2 Cor. i. 21, 22.*) "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that HOLY SPIRIT of promise; which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." (*Eph. i. 13, 14.*) And, "Grieve not the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of Redemption." (*Chap. iv. 30.*)

(5.) By this SPIRIT we have free access to GOD in prayer, in confidence that we shall have our petitions granted: "For through him," that is, through JESUS CHRIST, "we both have an access, by one SPIRIT, unto the FATHER." (*Eph. ii. 18.*) By the same SPIRIT likewise we are assisted in our prayers to GOD, and directed what to ask of him. So ST. PAUL tells us, "we do not know what to pray for as we ought; but the SPIRIT helpeth our infirmities, and intercedeth for us;" (*Rom. viii. 26;*) suggests to us such petitions and requests as are fit for us to put up to GOD.

(6.) By the same SPIRIT "joy and peace in believing, and great consolation and good hope through grace," are frequently instilled unto us, and "shed abroad in our hearts." Hence are those expressions so frequent in Scripture, of "the consolations of the SPIRIT, of peace and joy in the HOLY GHOST," which as it is the fruit of righteousness, so so it is produced and increased in us, by the operation and influence of GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT.

Lastly, By the same SPIRIT Christians are supported and borne up, cheered and comforted in all their troubles and afflictions, and that in a very extraordinary and supernatural manner, when they fall under great sufferings for righteousness' sake. And this influence and assistance of the Divine SPIRIT, was very remarkable among the primitive Christians, who were so terribly exposed to the most cruel persecutions; and may proportionably be expected in all cases of extraordinary suffering for the testimony of God's truth.

And therefore we have reason, as the Scripture constantly does, to ascribe all the good that is in us, or that is done by us, to this gracious assistance and powerful influence of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD upon our minds, and thankfully to acknowledge that "in us, that is, in our flesh," in our minds, considered as destitute of the SPIRIT of GOD, "there dwells nothing that is good, and that by the grace of GOD we are what we are," and are enabled to do all the good we do, "through CHRIST strengthening us by his SPIRIT in the inner man."

4. I proceed to the Fourth and last thing I proposed to consider, viz. The extent of this gift of the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD as to persons and times, and in short, this gift is bestowed upon every particular Christian, every sincere believer; for "we receive the promise of the SPIRIT by faith:" And, "If any man, says" the Apostle, "have not the SPIRIT of CHRIST he is none of his:" (*Rom. viii. 9.*) that is, he is no true Christian. And "Know ye not," says the same Apostle, speaking of all Christians in general, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of GOD, and that the SPIRIT of GOD dwelleth in you?" (*1 Cor. iii. 16.*)

And that this gift extends to all persons in all times and ages of the Church, to all that sincerely embrace the Christian profession, is plain from that discourse of ST. PETER which I had occasion to mention before, "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of JESUS CHRIST, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the HOLY GHOST." (*Acts ii. 38.*) And that this

was not a privilege peculiar to the first ages of Christianity, but common to all succeeding times, is evident from what follows, “But the promise,” that is, the great promise of the HOLY GHOST, “is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our GOD shall call.” That is, this promise of the SPIRIT extends to all those who shall hereafter embrace the Christian profession.

And in this sense, our SAVIOUR makes good that promise which he made to the Apostles, “to be with them always to the end of the world;” that is, he would accompany the labours of the Pastors and Teachers of his Church in all ages, with such a presence and influence of his SPIRIT, as should be suitable to the occasions and necessities of the Church, both the Pastors and members of it, unto the end of the world.

In a word, this gift of GOD’S HOLY SPIRIT is bestowed upon all those who are admitted into CHRIST’S religion, and if it be cherished and complied with, and the blessed motions of it be not resisted and quenched by us, it will abide and continue with us, and produce those blessed fruits and effects which I have before mentioned.

Having thus explained the several particulars contained in the text, all that now remains is, to make some inferences from the whole.

I. What an encouragement is here to our duty, that we have such a mighty assistance promised and afforded us in the Gospel? So that the Apostle doth with great reason exhort, “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of GOD.” (2 Cor. vii. 1.) And we are utterly inexcusable, if we do not make use of that grace which is promised, and ready to be afforded to us to this end; it is our own fault if sin still “have dominion over us, and reign in our mortal bodies.”

II. What great cause have we thankfully to acknowledge the goodness of GOD to us, in bestowing such an invaluable gift upon us, as this of the HOLY SPIRIT, by whose assis-

tance alone we are made partakers of all the other blessings of the Gospel? Had we been still left without strength, that great salvation which CHRIST hath purchased for us, and which the Gospel offers, would have signified nothing to us, for want of power to perform the conditions which the Gospel requires of all that hope for eternal salvation.

III. Let us always be ready to comply with the motions and suggestions of the blessed SPIRIT; and sincerely make use of those assistances which he is always ready to afford us; and let us take great heed, that we do not by any disobedience to his blessed motions, or by any wilful presumptuous sins, resist, and quench, and grieve this "HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption."

If the SPIRIT of GOD vouchsafe to dwell in us, and to make his abode in our souls and bodies; let us do nothing that is unworthy of so divine a guest; let his presence with us fill our hearts with a continual awe and reverence of him, and engage us effectually to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; let nothing be acted by us, or proceed from us, which may defile this temple of the HOLY GHOST. "Ye are the temple of the living GOD," says ST. PAUL. "If any man defile the temple of GOD, him shall GOD destroy: For the temple of GOD is holy, which temple ye are." (2 Cor. vi. 16.)

IV Let us earnestly beg of GOD his HOLY SPIRIT, and continually depend upon him for his assistance, in an humble sense of our own impotency, of the frailty and treachery of our own spirits, of the fickleness and inconstancy of our best purposes, always remembering that saying of our SAVIOUR'S, "Without me, ye can do nothing." (*John xv. 5.*) And that of ST. PAUL, "For by grace are ye saved through faith: And that not of yourselves: It is the gift of GOD." (*Ephes. ii. 8.*) And that of ST. PETER; speaking in general of all true Christians, "Who," says he, "are kept by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation." (1 *Peter i. 5.*) This power of GOD is the

SPÍRIT which they that believe receive, and by the blessed influence whereof they are kept unto salvation.

V This shows us what an advantage we have by Christian faith, which makes us partakers of the HOLY GHOST, whereby is afforded to us all necessary direction, and assistance, and comfort in our Christian course. Our SAVIOUR tells his disciples, that the presence and influence of this Comforter and Advocate, whom He would “send to abide with them for ever,” would be more to them, than even his own presence among them, which surely we should look upon as an unspeakable privilege; and yet the inward presence of the Divine SPÍRIT is more for our security and comfort, than the best teacher and example; because it is inward, and conveys a real strength to us; and it is universal, diffusing itself at once into the hearts and minds of all good men, and is always present to them, which CHRIST’S personal and visible presence was not, nor could be; so that to all our purposes of direction and assistance, of security and comfort, we are in a better condition under the continual influence and conduct of GOD’S HOLY SPÍRIT, than they who had the advantage of conversing personally with our SAVIOUR upon earth. And therefore he tells his disciples, that it was really for their advantage, that he should leave the world, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: But if I depart, I will send him unto you.” (*John* xvi. 7.) So that they were gainers by the loss, and his departure from them upon these terms was really to their advantage.

Lastly, From hence it appears how happy it is for us, that we are not left in our own hands, and to our own weakness and impotency, “to work out our own salvation,” but that we are under the continual conduct and powerful protection of such a guardian, and that the HOLY SPÍRIT is always ready, to all the purposes of guidance and assistance, of comfort and support, of sanctification and obedience, of patient continuance and perseverance in well-doing.

Let us, therefore, as the Apostle exhorts, “work out our salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God that worketh in us, both to will and to do.” We are not left to ourselves to carry on this great work, for then it would certainly miscarry; but God works in us both the will and inclination to that which is good, and gives us the power to do it: He does not force our wills, but incline them by the gentle suggestions and motions of his blessed SPIRIT; with which, if we comply, we are happy; if we resist them and rebel against them, “We receive the grace of God in vain,” and “our destruction is of ourselves.”

But can we then do nothing? No, not without the preventing and assisting grace of God; but that being afforded to us, we may comply with the motions of God’s blessed SPIRIT; we may co-operate and concur with his assistance. God assists, but we do; he sanctifies and renews us by the HOLY GHOST, and yet we purify and cleanse ourselves.

But is not this injurious to the grace of God, if we do any thing at all, and the grace of God does not do all in us and for us? I answer,

1. It is a great grace of God, to help our weakness, and to relieve our impotency, and to enable us to do what we cannot do of ourselves. We owe our salvation to the grace of God, to the influence and assistance of his HOLY SPIRIT, if so be, that without it we should remain “dead in trespasses and sins,” and should never be able to recover out of that state.

2. Grace does not destroy nature, nor divine assistance take away our liberty, but free us from our bondage; and as DAVID expresseth it, “enlargeth our hearts to run the way of God’s commandments;” for if God do all, and we nothing, all exhortations and persuasions would be in vain.

But then it seems that we may “receive the grace of God in vain, and resist the HOLY GHOST;” and our complying with, or not resisting of it, is our own act; which is to make men their own saviour.

I answer, 1. The Scripture expressly says, that men may “receive the grace of God in vain, and reject the

counsel of GOD against themselves;" and that if we rebel against, and disobey the motions of GOD'S SPIRIT, he will depart from us.

2. All this is *αργος λογος*, mere cavil; as will appear to any one by this plain instance. A rebel is convicted, and liable to the sentence of the law, he sues for a pardon, and obtains and accepts it; will any man now say, that because he asks and accepts it from the King, and the King does not take his hand and open it, and violently thrust the pardon into it, that this man saves himself, and takes away the glory of the King's grace and mercy, and that he owes his life to himself, and not to the King's goodness? A man would be thought very senseless, that should so ascribe this man's deliverance from death to any act of his own, as not to think it wholly owing to the King's grace and favour.

The case is the very same, concerning men's complying with that grace which GOD affords them for their repentance unto life. I would fain know of these subtle objectors, whether MOSES when he says, "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life;" (*Deut. xxx. 1. 9*;) does not, in so saying, plainly suppose, that men may choose life or refuse it? And if so, whether he intended to make men their own saviour?

But this objection is pressed yet a little further; that if this be so, then JUDAS had as much cause to thank GOD, as PETER had. And who can deny, that a rebel who refuseth a pardon offered him by his Prince, hath the same real obligation of gratitude to his Prince, with him that accepts it? The Prince offers the same favour to both, and the obligation is equal; and though he that accepts it does not save himself, yet he that refuseth it destroys himself. And at the judgment of the great day, all impenitent sinners under the Gospel, shall be forced to acknowledge the grace of GOD to them, in affording the opportunity of salvation, and shall only blame and condemn themselves for neglecting that happy opportunity. But if irresistible grace be necessary to every man's salvation, it is

plain, that impenitent sinners never had the opportunity of salvation, and consequently cannot condemn themselves for the neglect of it.

And thus much may suffice to have spoken concerning the operation of GOD'S SPIRIT upon men, in order to their conversion: But after men sincerely "repent and believe the Gospel," they have the SPIRIT of GOD in another manner; he "dwells and resides in believers," as a constant and settled principle of holiness and obedience.

SERMON II.

ON EVIL SPEAKING.

PREACHED BEFORE THE KING AND QUEEN AT WHITE-
HALL, FEBRUARY 25, 1693-4.

TIT. iii. 2.

To speak evil of no man.

GENERAL persuasives to repentance and a good life, and invectives against sin and wickedness at large, are certainly of good use to recommend religion and virtue, and to expose the deformity and danger of a vicious course. But it must be acknowledged on the other hand, that these general discourses do not so immediately tend to reform the lives of men: because they fall among the crowd, but do not touch the consciences of particular persons in so sensible and awakening a manner, as when we treat of particular duties and sins, and endeavour to put men upon the practice of the one, and to reclaim them from the other, by proper arguments taken from the word of GOD and from the nature of particular virtues and vices.

If then we would effectually reform men, we must take to task the great and common disorders of their lives, and represent their faults to them in such a manner, as may convince them of the evil and danger of them, and put them upon the endeavour of a cure.

And to this end, I have pitched upon one of the common and reigning vices of the age, calumny and evil-speaking; by which men contract so much guilt to themselves, and create so much trouble to others: And from which, it is to be feared, few are wholly free. For, "Who is he,"

saith the son of SIRACH, “that hath not offended with his tongue?” (*Ecclus.* xix. 16.) And ST. JAMES, “If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.” (*James* ii. 2.)

But how few have attained to this perfection! And yet unless we do in some good measure attain it, all our pretence to religion is vain: For the same Apostle tells us, “If any man among you seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man’s religion is vain.” (*James* i. 26.)

For the more distinct handling of this argument, I shall reduce my discourse to these five heads. I. I shall consider the nature of this vice, and wherein it consists. II. I shall consider the due extent of this prohibition, “To speak evil of no man.” III. I shall show the evil of this practice, both in the causes and effects of it. IV. I shall add some further considerations to dissuade men from it. V I shall give some rules and directions for the prevention and cure of it.

I. I shall consider what this sin of evil-speaking, here forbidden by the Apostle, is. *Μηδενα βλασφημειν*, not to defame and slander any man, not to hurt his reputation, as the etymology of the word doth import.

So that this vice consists in saying things of others which tend to their disparagement and reproach, to the taking away or lessening of their reputation. And this, whether the things said be true or false. If they be false, and we know it, then it is calumny: And if we do not know it, but take it upon the report of others, it is, however, slander; and so much the more injurious, because really groundless and undeserved.

If the thing be true, and we know it to be so, yet it is a defamation, and tends to the prejudice of our neighbour’s reputation: And it is a fault to say the evil of others which is true, unless there be some good reason for it: It is contrary to that charity and goodness which Christianity requires, to divulge the faults of others, though they be really guilty of them, without absolute necessity.

Again, it is evil-speaking and the vice condemned in the text, whether we be the first authors of an ill report, or relate it from others: Because the man that is evil spoken of is equally defamed either way.

Again, whether we speak evil of a man to his face, or behind his back: The former way indeed seems to be more generous, but yet is a great fault, and that which we call reviling: The latter is more mean and base, and that which we properly call detraction or back-biting.

And lastly, whether it be done directly and in express terms, or more obscurely, and by way of oblique insinuation; whether by way of down-right reproach, or with some crafty preface of condemnation: For so it have the effect to defame, the manner of address does not much alter the case: The one may be more dexterous, but is not one jot the less faulty: For many times the deepest wounds are given by these smoother and more artificial ways of slander; as by asking questions: ‘Have you not heard so and so of such a man? I say no more. I only ask the question.’ Or by general intimations, that ‘they are loath to say what they have heard of such a one, are very sorry for it, and do not at all believe it, if you will believe them.’ And this, many times, without telling the thing, but leaving you in the dark to suspect the worst.

These and such like arts, though they may seem to be tenderer and gentler ways of hurting men’s reputation, yet in truth they are the most malicious and effectual methods of detraction; because they insinuate something that is much worse than is said, and yet are very apt to create in unwary men a strong belief of something that is very bad, though they know not what it is. So that it matters not in what fashion it is dressed up; if it tend to defame a man and to diminish his reputation, it is the sin forbidden in the text.

II. We will consider the extent of this prohibition, “To speak evil of no man;” and the due bounds and limitations of it. For it is not to be understood absolutely, to forbid us to say any thing concerning others that is bad. This

in some cases may be necessary and our duty ; the question is, in what cases by general rules of Scripture we are warranted to say the evil of others that is true ?

In general, we are not to do this without great reason and necessity ; as for the prevention of some great evil, or the procuring some considerable good to ourselves, or others. And this I take to be the meaning of that advice of the son of SIRACH, “ Whether it be to a friend or a foe, talk not of other men’s lives ; and if thou canst conceal them, divulge them not.” (*Ecclus.* xix. 8.)

But because this may not be direction sufficient, I shall, instance in some of the principal cases wherein men may speak evil of others and yet in so doing not offend against this prohibition.

1. It is not only lawful, but very commendable, and many times our duty to do this in order to the probable amendment of the person of whom evil is spoken. In such a case we may tell a man of his faults privately ; or where it may not be so fit for us to use that boldness and freedom, we may reveal his faults to one that is more fit and proper to reprove him, and will probably make no other use of this discovery but in order to his amendment. And this is so far from being a breach of charity, that it is one of the best testimonies of it. For perhaps the party may not be guilty of what is reported of him, and then it is a kindness to give him the opportunity of vindicating himself : Or if he be guilty, perhaps being privately and prudently told of it, he may reform. In this case, the son of SIRACH adviseth to reveal men’s faults : “ Admonish a friend,” says he, “ it may be he hath not done it ; and if he have done it, that he do it no more : Admonish a friend, it may be he hath not said it ; and if he have, that he speak it not again : Admonish a friend, for many times it is a slander ; and believe not every tale.” (*Ecclus.* xix. 13, 14, 15.)

But then we must take care that this be done out of kindness, and that nothing of our own passion be mingled with it : And that under pretence of reprovng and reforming men, we do not reproach and revile them, and

tell them of their faults in such a manner as if we did it to show our authority rather than our charity. It requires a great deal of address and gentle application so to manage the business of reproof, as not to irritate and exasperate the person whom we reprove, instead of curing him.

2. This likewise is not only lawful, but our duty, when we are legally called to bear witness concerning another. A good man would not be an accuser, unless the public good, or the prevention of some great evil, should require it. And then the plain reason of the thing will sufficiently justify a voluntary accusation; otherwise it hath always among well-mannered people been esteemed very odious for a man to be officious in this kind, and a forward informer concerning the misdemeanors of others.

But when a man is called to give testimony in this kind in obedience to the laws, and out of reverence to the oath taken in such cases, he is so far from deserving blame for so doing, that it would be an unpardonable fault in him to conceal the truth or any part of it.

3. It is lawful to publish the fault of others, in our own necessary defence. When a man cannot conceal another's faults without betraying his own innocency, no charity requires a man to suffer himself to be defamed to save the reputation of another man.

We are to "love our neighbour as ourselves;" so that the love of ourselves is the rule and measure of our love to our neighbour, and therefore, first, otherwise it could not be the rule. Indeed it would be very well for the world, if our charity would rise thus high; and no man would hurt another man's reputation but where his own is in real danger.

4. This also is lawful for caution and warning to a third person, that is in danger of being infected by another: or may be greatly prejudiced by reposing too much confidence in him, having no knowledge or suspicion of his bad qualities: But even in this case we ought to take great care that the ill character we give of any man be spread no further than is necessary to the good end we designed in it.

These are all the usual cases in which it may be necessary for us to speak evil of other men. And if no man would allow himself to say any thing to the prejudice of another man's good name, but in these cases, the tongues of men would be very innocent, and the world would be very quiet.

III. I proceed in the Third place, To consider the evil of this practice both in the causes and the consequences of it.

1. We will consider the cause of it: And it commonly springs from one or more of these evil roots.

(1.) One of the deepest and most common causes of evil-speaking is, ill-nature and cruelty of disposition: And by general mistake ill-nature passeth for wit, as cunning doth for wisdom; though in truth they are nothing akin to one another, but as far distant as vice and virtue.

And there is no greater evidence of the bad temper of mankind than the general proneness of men to this vice. For (as our SAVIOUR says) "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." And therefore men do commonly incline to the censorious and uncharitable side: Which shows human nature to be strangely distorted from its original rectitude and innocency. The wit of man doth more naturally vent itself in satire and censure, than in praise and panegyric. When men set themselves to commend, it comes hardly from them, and not without great force and straining; and if any thing be fitly said in that kind, it doth hardly relish with most men: But in the invective, the invention of men is a plentiful and never failing spring: And this kind of wit is not more easy than it is acceptable: It is greedily entertained and greatly applauded, and every man is glad to hear others abused, not considering how soon it may come to his own turn to lie down and make sport for others.

To speak evil of others, is almost become the general entertainment of all companies: And the great and serious business of most meetings and visits, after the necessary ceremonies and compliments are over, is to sit down and back-

bite all the world. It is the sauce of conversation, and all discourse is counted but flat and dull which hath not something of piquaney and sharpness in it against somebody. For men generally love rather to hear evil of others than good, and are secretly pleased with ill reports, and drink them in with greediness: Though at the same time they have so much justice as to hate those that propagate them; and so much wit, as to conclude that these very persons will do the same for them in another place and company.

But especially, if it concerns one of another party, and that differs from us in matters of religion; in this case, all parties seem to be agreed that they do God great service in blasting the reputation of their adversaries. And though they all pretend to be Christians, and the disciples of him who taught nothing but kindness, and meekness, and charity; yet it is strange to see with what a savage and murderous disposition they will fly at one another's reputation, and tear it in pieces: And whatever other scruples they may have, they make none to bespatter one another in the most bitter and slanderous manner.

But if they hear any good of their adversaries, with what nicety and caution do they receive it! How many objections do they raise against it! And with what coldness do they at last admit it! 'It is very well,' say they, 'if it be true; I shall be glad to hear it confirmed; I never heard so much good of him before; you are a good man yourself, but have a care you be not deceived.'

Nay it is well, if to balance the matter, and set things even, they do not clap some infirmity and fault into the other scale, that so the enemy may not go off with flying colours.

But on the other side, every man is a good and substantial author of an ill report. I do not apply this to any sort of men, though all are to blame this way: *Ilicos intra muros peccatur, et extra.* To speak impartially, the zealous of all parties have got a survy trick of lying for the truth.

Another shrewd sign that ill-nature lies at the root of this vice is, that we easily forget the good that is said of others, and seldom make mention of it; but the contrary sticks with us, and is ready to come out upon all occasions: And which is more ill-natured and unjust, many times, when we do not believe it ourselves, we tell it to others, with this charitable caution, That ‘we hope it is not true:’ But in the mean time we give it our pass, and venture it to take its fortune to be believed or not, according to the charity of those into whose hands it comes.

(2.) Another cause of the commonness of this vice is, that many are so bad themselves in one kind or another. For to think and speak ill of others is not only a bad thing, but a sign of a bad man. Our blessed SAVIOUR, speaking of the evil of the last days, gives this as the reason of the great decay of charity among men: “Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” (*Matt.* xxiv. 12.) When men are bad themselves, they are glad of an opportunity to censure others, and are always apt to suspect that evil of other men, which they know by themselves. They cannot have a good opinion of themselves, and therefore are very unwilling to have so of any body else; and for this reason they endeavour to bring men to a level, hoping it will be some justification of them if they can but render others as bad as themselves.

(3.) Another source of this vice, is malice and revenge. When men are in heat and passion, they do not consider what is true, but what is spiteful and mischievous; and speak evil of others in revenge of some injury they have received from them; and when they are blinded by their passions, they lay about them madly and at a venture; not much caring whether the evil they speak be true or not. Nay, many are so devilish, as to invent and raise false reports on purpose to blast men’s reputation: This is a diabolical temper, and therefore ST. JAMES tells us, that the slanderous tongue is “set on fire of hell:” And the Devil hath his very name from calumny and false accusation; and it is his nature too, for he is always ready to stir up

and foment this evil spirit among men. Nay the Scripture tells us that he hath the malice and impudence to accuse good men before God; as he did Job, charging him with hypocrisy to God himself, ° who, he knows, does know the hearts of all the children of men.

(4.) Another cause of evil-speaking is envy. Men look with an evil eye upon the good that is in others, and think that their reputation obscures them, and that their commendable qualities stand in their light; and therefore they do what they can to cast a cloud over them, that the bright shining of their virtues may not scorch them. This makes them greedily to entertain and industriously to publish any thing that may serve to that purpose, thereby to raise themselves upon the ruins of other men's reputation: And therefore, as soon as they have got an ill report of another man by the end, to work they presently go to send it abroad by the first post: For the string is always ready upon the bow to let fly this arrow with an incredible swiftness, through city and country; for fear the innocent man's justification should overtake it.

(5.) Another cause of evil-speaking is impertinence and curiosity; an itch of talking and meddling in the affairs of other men, which do in no wise concern us. Some persons love to mingle themselves in all business, and are loath to seem ignorant of so important a piece of news as the follies of men or any bad thing that is talked of in good company. And therefore they do with great care pick up ill storics, as good matter of discourse in the next company that is worthy of them. And this perhaps not out of any malice, but for want of something better to talk of, and because their parts lie chiefly that way.

Lastly, Men do this many times out of wantonness and for diversion. So little do light and vain men consider, that a man's reputation is too great and tender a concernment to be jested withal; and that a slanderous tongue bites like a serpent, and wounds like a sword. For what

can be more barbarous, next to sporting with a man's life, than to play with his honour and reputation, which to some men is dearer than their lives?

It is a cruel pleasure which some men take in worrying the reputation of others much better than themselves; and this only to divert themselves and the company. SOLOMON compares this sort of men to distracted persons: "As a man," saith he, "who casteth fire-brands, arrows, and death, so is the man that defameth his neighbour, and saith, Am I not in sport?" Such and so bad are the causes of this vice.

2. I proceed to consider, in the Second place, The ordinary, but very pernicious consequences and effects of it, both to others and to ourselves.

(1.) To others; the parties I mean that are evil-spoken of. To them it is certainly a great injury, and commonly a high provocation, but always matter of no small grief and trouble to them.

It is certainly a great injury, and if the evil we say of them be not true, it is an injury beyond imagination, and beyond all possible reparation. And though we should do our utmost endeavour afterwards towards their vindication, yet that makes but very little amends; because the vindication seldom reacheth so far as the reproach, and because commonly men are neither so forward to spread the vindication, nor is it so easily received after ill impressions are once made. The solicitous vindication of a man's self is, at the best, but an after-game; and for the most part a man had better sit still, than to run the hazard of making the matter worse by playing it.

I will add one thing more, that it is an injury that descends to a man's children and posterity; because the good or ill name of the father is derived down to them; and many times the best thing he hath to leave them is the reputation of his unblemished virtue and worth: And do we make no conscience to rob his innocent children of the best part of this small patrimony, and of all the kindness that would have been done them for their father's sake, if his

reputation had not been stained? Is it no crime by the breath of your mouth at once to blast a man's reputation, and to ruin his children, perhaps to all posterity? Can we make a jest of so serious a matter, of an injury so very hard to be repented of as it ought, because in such a case no repentance will be acceptable without restitution, if it be in their power. And perhaps it will undo us in this world to make it; and if we do it not, will be our ruin in the other.

I will put the case at the best, that the matter spoken be true, yet no man's reputation is considerably stained, though never so deservedly, without great harm and damage to him. And it is great odds but the matter by passing through several hands is aggravated beyond truth, every one out of his bounty being apt to add something to it.

But beside the injury, it is commonly a very high provocation. And the consequence of that may be as bad as we can imagine, and may end in dangerous and desperate quarrels. This reason the wise son of SIRACH gives why we should defame no man: "Whether it be," says he, "to a friend or a foe, talk not of other men's lives. For he hath heard and observed thee;" (*Ecclus.* xix. 8, 9;) that is, one way or other it will probably come to his knowledge, and when the time cometh, he will show his hatred; that is, he will take his opportunity to revenge it. At the best, it is always matter of grief to the person that is defamed; and Christianity, which is the best natured institution in the world, forbids us the doing of those things whereby we may grieve one another.

(2.) The consequences of this vice are as bad or worse to ourselves. Whoever is wont to speak evil of others, gives a bad character of himself, even to those whom he desires to please; who, if they be wise enough, will conclude that he speaks of them to others, as he does of others to them: And were it not for that fond partiality which men have for themselves, no man could be so blind as not to see this.

And this is very well worthy of our consideration, which

our SAVIOUR says in this very case, that “with what measure we mete to others, it shall be measured to us again,” (*Matt.* vii,) and that many times, “heaped up and running over.” For there is hardly any thing wherein mankind do use more strict justice and equality, than in rendering evil for evil, and railing for railing.

Nay revenge often goes further than words. A reproachful and slanderous speech hath cost many a man his own life, or the murder of another, perhaps with the loss of his own soul: And I have often wondered among Christians this matter is no more laid to heart.

And though neither of these great mischiefs should happen to us, yet this may be inconvenient many other ways. For no man knows the vicissitude of things and the mutability of human affairs, whose kindness and good-will he may come to stand in need of before he dies. So that did a man only consult his own safety and quiet, he ought to refrain from evil-speaking. “What man is he,” saith the Psalmist, “that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking falsehood.” (*Psalms* xxxiv. 12, 13.)

But there is an infinitely greater danger hanging over us from God. If we allow ourselves in this evil practice, all our religion is good for nothing. Accordingly, ST. PAUL puts “slanderers and revilers amongst these that shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (*1 Cor.* vi. 10.) And our blessed SAVIOUR hath told us, “by our words we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned.” To which I will add the counsel given us by the wise man, “refrain your tongue from back-biting, for there is no word so secret that shall go for nought, and the mouth that slandereth slayeth the soul.” (*Wisdom* i. 5, 1.)

IV I proceed in the Fourth place, To add some further arguments and considerations to take you off from this vice:
As,

1. That the use of speech is the peculiar prerogative of man above other creatures, and bestowed upon him for an excellent end and purpose: That by this faculty we might

communicate our thoughts more easily to one another, and consult together for our mutual comfort and benefit: Not to enable us to be hurtful and injurious, but helpful and beneficial to one another. The Psalmist, as by interpreters is generally thought, calls our tongue our glory; therefore we praise God and bless men. Now to bless is to speak well of any, and to wish them well. So that we pervert the use of speech, and turn our glory into shame, when we abuse this faculty to the injury and reproach of any.

2. Consider how cheap a kindness it is to speak well, at least not to speak ill of any. A good word is an easy obligation, but not to speak ill requires only our silence, which costs us nothing. Some instances of charity are chargeable, as to relieve the wants and necessities of others: The expense deters many from this kind of charity. But were a man never so covetous, he might afford another man his good word; at least he might refrain from speaking ill of him; especially if it be considered how dear many have paid for a slanderous and reproachful word.

3. Consider that no quality doth ordinarily recommend one more to the favour and good-will of men, than to be free from this vice. Nothing is thought a more significant commendation, than that he was never, or very rarely, heard to speak ill of any. It was a singular character of a Roman gentleman, *Nescivit quid esset male dicere*, 'He knew not what it was to give any man an ill word.'

4. Let every man lay his hand upon his heart, and consider how himself is apt to be affected with this usage. Speak thy conscience, man, and say whether, as bad as thou art, thou wouldest not be glad to have every man's, especially every good man's good word? And to have thy faults concealed, and not to be hardly spoken of, though it may be not altogether without truth, by those whom thou didst never offend by word or deed? But with what face or reason dost thou expect this from others, to whom thy carriage hath been so contrary? Nothing surely is more equal and reasonable than that known rule, 'What thou wouldest have no man do to thee, that do thou to no man.'

V I shall in the Fifth and Last place, give some rules and directions for the prevention and cure of this great evil.

1. Never say evil of any man, but what you certainly know. Whenever you directly or indirectly accuse and indict any man of any crime, though it be in private and amongst friends, speak as if you were upon your oath, because God sees and hears you. This not only charity, but justice, and regard to truth demand of us. He that easily credits an ill report is almost as faulty as the first inventor of it. For though you do not make, yet you commonly propagate a lie. Therefore never speak evil of any upon common fame, which for the most part is false, but almost always uncertain whether it be true or not.

Not but that it is a fault, in most cases, to report the evil of men which is true, and which we certainly know to be so: But if I cannot prevail to make men wholly to abstain from this fault, I would be glad with some persons, to gain this point however; because it will retrench nine parts in ten of the evil-speaking that is in the world.

2. Before you speak evil of any man, consider whether he hath not obliged you by some real kindness, and then it is a bad return to speak ill of him who hath done us good. Consider also whether you may not come hereafter to be acquainted with him, related to him, or obliged by him whom you have thus injured? And how will you then be ashamed when you reflect upon it, and perhaps have reason also to believe that he to whom you have done this injury, is not ignorant of it?

Consider likewise, whether in the turn of human affairs, you may not some time or other come to stand in need of his favour; and how incapable this carriage of yours towards him will render you of it? And whether it may not be in his power to revenge a spiteful and needless word by a shrewd turn? So that if a man made no conscience of hurting others, yet he should in prudence have some consideration of himself.

3. Let us accustom ourselves to pity the faults of men, and to be truly sorry for them, and then we shall take no

pleasure in publishing them. And this, common humanity requires of us, considering the great infirmities of human nature, and that we ourselves also are liable to be tempted: Considering, likewise, how severe a punishment every fault and miscarriage is to itself; and how terribly it exposeth a man to the wrath of God, both in this world and the other. He is not a good Christian, that is not heartily sorry for the faults even of his greatest enemies: And if he be so, he will discover them no further than is absolutely necessary to some good end.

4. Whenever we hear any man evil spoken of, if we know any good of him let us say that. It is always the more humane and the more honourable part to stand up in defence and vindication of others, than to accuse and bespatter them. Possibly the good you may have heard of them may not be true; but it is much more probable that the evil which you have heard of them is not true neither: However it is better to preserve the credit of a bad man, than to stain the reputation of the innocent. And if there were any need that a man should be evil spoken of, it is but fair and equal that his good and bad qualities should be mentioned together; otherwise he may be strangely misrepresented, and an indifferent man may be made a monster.

They that will observe nothing in a wise man, but his oversights and follies, nothing in a good man but his failings and infirmities, may make a shift to render a very wise and good man very despicable.

If one should heap together all the passionate speeches, all the forward and imprudent actions of the best man, all that he had said or done amiss in his whole life, and present it all at one view, concealing his wisdom and virtues; the man in this disguise would look like a mad man or a fury: And yet if his life were fairly represented, and just in the same manner it was led, and his many and great virtues set over against his failings and infirmities, he would appear to all the world to be an admirable and excellent person. But how many and great soever any man's ill qualities are, it is but just, that with all this heavy load of

faults he should have the due praise of the few real virtues that are in him.

5. That you may not speak ill of any, do not desire or delight to hear ill of them. Give no countenance to busy bodies, and those that love to talk of other men's faults: Or if you cannot directly reprove them because of their quality, then divert the discourse some other way; or if you cannot do that, by seeming not to mind it, you may sufficiently signify that you do not like it.

6. Let every man mind himself and his own duty and concernment: Do but endeavour in good earnest to mend thyself, and it will be work enough for one man, and leave thee but little time to talk of others. When PLATO withdrew from the court of DIONYSIUS, who would fain have had a famous Philosopher for his flatterer; they parted in some unkindness, and DIONYSIUS bade him not to speak ill of him when he was returned into Greece; PLATO told him he had no leisure for it; meaning he had better things to mind, than to take up his thoughts and talk with the faults of another man.

Lastly, Let us set a watch before the door of our lips, and not speak but upon consideration: I do not mean to speak finely, but fitly. Especially when thou speakest of others, consider of whom and what thou art going to speak: Use great caution and circumspection in this matter: Look well about thee on every side of the thing, and on every person in the company, before thy words slip from thee, which when they are once out of thy lips, are for ever out of thy power.

We should consider well what we say, especially of others. And to this end we should endeavour to get our minds furnished with matter of discourse concerning things useful in themselves, and not hurtful to others: And if we have but a mind wise enough and good enough, we may easily find a field large enough for innocent conversation, such as will harm nobody, and yet be acceptable enough to the better and wiser part of mankind: And why should

any one be at the cost of playing the fool to gratify any body whatsoever?

I have done with the five things I propounded to speak to upon this argument. But because hardly any thing can be so clear, but something may be said against it; nor any thing so bad, but something may be pleaded in excuse for it, I shall therefore take notice of two or three pleas that may be made for it.

Some pretend mighty injury and provocation. If in the same kind, it seems thou art sensible of it; and therefore thou of all men oughtest to abstain from it: But in what kind soever it be, the Christian religion forbids revenge. Therefore do not plead one sin in excuse of another, and make revenge an apology for reviling.

2. It is alleged by others, with a little better grace, that if this doctrine were practised, conversation would be spoiled, and there would not be matter enough for discourse and entertainment.

I answer, the design of this discourse is to redress a great evil in conversation, and that, I hope, which mends it, will not spoil it. And however, if men's tongues lay a little more still, and most of us spake a good deal less than we do, both of ourselves and others, I see no great harm in it: I hope we might, for all that, live comfortably and in good health, and see many good days.

But granting that there is some pleasure in invective, I hope there is a great deal more in innocence: And the more any man considers this, the truer he will find it; and whenever we are serious, we ourselves cannot but acknowledge it.

3. There is yet a more specious plea than either of the former, that men will be encouraged to do ill if they can escape the tongues of men; as they would do, if this doctrine took place: Because by this means, one great restraint from doing evil would be taken away, which these good men, who are so bent upon reforming the world, think would be a great pity.

Admitting all this to be true, yet it does not seem so good and laudable a way to punish one fault by another: But let no man encourage himself in an evil way with this hope, that he shall escape the censure of men: When I have said all I can, there will, I fear, be evil-speaking enough in the world to chastise them that do ill: And though we should hold our peace, there will be bad tongues enough to reproach men with their evil doings. I wish we could but be persuaded to make the experiment for a little while, whether men would not be sufficiently lashed for their faults though we sat by and said nothing.

So that there is no need at all that good men should be concerned in this odious work. There will always be offenders and malefactors enough to be the executioners to inflict this punishment upon one another. Therefore, let no man presume upon impunity on the one hand; and on the other, let no man despair but that this business will be sufficiently done one way or the other: I am very much mistaken, if we may not safely trust an ill-natured world that there will be no failure of justice in this kind.

Having represented the great evil of this vice, it might not now be improper to say something to those who suffer by it. Are we guilty of the evil said of us? Let us reform, and cut off all occasions for the future; and so turn the malice of our enemies to our own advantage, and defeat their ill intentions by making so good use of it: And then it will be well for us to have been evil spoken of.

Are we innocent? We may so much the better bear it patiently, imitating herein the pattern of our blessed SAVIOUR, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

All that now remains is to reflect upon what hath been said, and to urge you and myself to do accordingly. For all is nothing, if we do not practise what we so plainly see to be our duty. Many are so taken up with the deep points and mysteries of religion, that they never think of the common duties and offices of human life. But faith and a good life are so far from clashing with one another

that the Christian religion hath made them inseparable. True faith is necessary in order to a good life, and a good life is the genuine product of a right belief; and therefore the one never ought to be pressed to the prejudice of the other.

I foresee what will be said, because I have heard it so often said in the like case, that there is not one word of **JESUS CHRIST** in all this. No more is there in the text. And yet I hope that **JESUS CHRIST** is truly preached, whenever his will and laws, and the duties enjoined by the Christian religion, are inculcated upon us.

But some men are pleased to say, that this is mere morality. I answer, that this is Scripture morality and Christian morality. And who hath any thing to say against that? Nay, I will go yet further, that no man ought to pretend to believe the Christian religion, who lives in the neglect of so plain a duty; and in the practice of a sin so clearly condemned by it, as this of evil-speaking is.

But because "the word of **God** is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword," yea, sharper than calumny itself; and pierceth the very hearts and consciences of men, laying us open to ourselves, and convincing us of our more secret as well as our more visible faults; I shall therefore at one view represent to you what is dispersedly said concerning this sin in the holy word of **God**.

And I have purposely reserved this to the last, because it is more persuasive and penetrating than any human discourse. And to this end be pleased to consider in what company the **HOLY GHOST** doth usually mention this sin. There is scarce any black catalogue of sins in the Bible but we find this among them; in the company of the very worst actions and most irregular passions of men. "Out of the heart," says our **SAVIOUR**, "proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, false witnesses, evil-speakings." (*Matt.* xv. 19.) And the Apostle ranks "backbiters with fornicators and murderers, and haters of **God**:" And with those of whom it is expressly said, that "they shall not inherit the kingdom of **God**."

And when he enumerates the sins of the “last times,” “men,” says he, “shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, evil-speakers, without natural affection, perfidious, false accusers,” &c. And which is the strangest of all, they who are said to be pretenders of religion; for so it follows in the next words, “having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” So that it is no new thing for men to make a more than ordinary profession of Christianity, and yet at the same time to live in a most palpable contradiction to the precepts of that holy religion. As if any pretence to extraordinary attainments in the knowledge of CHRIST, could exempt men from obedience to his laws, and set them above the virtues of a good life.

And now after all this, do we hardly think that to be a sin, which is in Scripture so frequently ranked with murder, and adultery, and the blackest crimes; such as are inconsistent with any true religion, and will certainly shut men out of the kingdom of GOD? Do we believe the Bible to be the word of GOD? And can we allow ourselves in the common practice of a sin, than which there is hardly any fault of men’s lives more frequently mentioned, more severely reprov’d, and more odiously branded in that holy book?

Consider seriously these texts: “Who shall abide in thy tabernacle, who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.” (*Psalm xv.*) Have ye never heard what our SAVIOUR says, that of “every idle word we must give an account in the day of judgment; that by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned?” What can be more severe than that of ST. JAMES? “If any man among you seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man’s religion is vain.”

To conclude: The sin which I have now warn’d men against, is plainly condemn’d by the word of GOD; and the duty which I have now been persuading you to, is easy for every man to understand; not hard for any man that

can but resolve to keep a good guard upon himself, by the grace of GOD to practise; and most reasonable for all men, but especially for all Christians, to observe. It is as reasonable as prudence, and justice, and charity, and the preservation of peace and good-will among men, can make it; and of as necessary and indispensable an obligation, as the authority of GOD can render any thing.

Upon all which considerations let every one of us be persuaded to take up DAVID'S deliberate resolution: "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue." (*Psalm xxxii. 1.*) And I do verily believe, that would we but heartily endeavour to amend this one fault, we should soon be better men in our whole lives: It being hardly to be imagined that a man that makes conscience of his words should not take an equal or a greater care of his actions. And this I take to be both the true meaning and the true reason of that saying of ST. JAMES, and with which I shall conclude: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man."

"Now the GOD of peace, who brought again from the dead our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good word and work, to do his will; working in you always that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through JESUS CHRIST. To whom be glory for ever. Amen."

A N E X T R A C T

FROM THE

W O R K S

OF

M R. F L A V E L.

NAVIGATION SPIRITUALIZED:

OR

A NEW COMPASS

FOR

Seamen,

CONSISTING OF THIRTY-TWO POINTS.

THE
EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

TO ALL
MASTERS, MARINERS, AND SEAMEN.

I FIND it storied of ANACHARSIS, that when one asked him, Whether the living or the dead were more? He returned this answer, “ You must first tell me in which number I must place seamen:” Intimating thereby, that seamen are, as it were, a third sort of persons, to be numbered neither with the living nor the dead, their lives hanging continually in suspense. And it was anciently accounted the most desperate employment, and they little better than lost men that used the seas. And although custom, and the great improvement of the art of navigation, have made it less formidable now, yet are you no further from death than you are from the waters; which is but a remove of two or three inches. Now you that border so nigh upon the confines of death and eternity every moment, may well be supposed to be men of singular piety and seriousness. But alas! for the generality, what sort of men are more ungodly, and stupidly insensible of eternal concerns? Living for the most part as if they had made a covenant with death, and with hell were at an agreement.

It was an ancient saying, ‘ He that knows not how to pray, let him go to sea.’ But we may say now, (alas, that we may say so in times of greater light,) ‘ He that would learn to drink and swear, let him go to sea.’ As for prayer, it is a rare thing among seamen; they count that a needless business: They see the profane and vile delivered as

well as others; and therefore, "What profit is there if they pray unto him?" (*Mal. iii. 14.*) As I remember, I have read of a profane soldier, who was heard swearing in a place of great danger; and when one that stood by warned him, saying, 'Fellow soldier, do not swear, the bullets fly;' he answered, 'They that swear come off as well as they that pray.' Soon after a shot hit him, and down he fell. PLATO diligently admonished all men to avoid the seas: For, saith he, it is the schoolmaster of all vice and dishonesty.

It is a very sad consideration to me, that you who float upon the great deeps, in whose bottom so many thousand poor creatures lie, whose sins have sunk them down, not only into the bottom of the sea, but of hell also: That you, I say, who daily float and hover over them, and have the roaring waves that swallowed them up, gaping for you as the next prey, should be no more affected with these things. O what a terrible voice doth GOD utter in the storms! "It breaks the cedars, shakes the wilderness." (*Psalm xxix. 5.*) And can it not shake your hearts? This voice of the LORD is full of majesty, but his voice in the Word is more powerful, (*Heb. iv. 12.*) to convince and rip up the heart. This Word is exalted above all his name, and if it cannot awaken you, it is no wonder you remain secure and dead, when the LORD utters his voice in the most dreadful storms and tempests. But if neither the voice of GOD uttered in his dreadful works, or in his glorious Gospel, can effectually awaken, there is a fearful storm coming, which will so awaken your souls, as that they never shall sleep any more. "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: This is the portion of their cup." (*Psalm xi. 6.*) You that have been at sea in the most violent storms, never felt such a storm as this, and the LORD grant you never may; no calm shall follow this storm.

There are some amongst you, that, I am persuaded, do truly fear that God in whose hand their life and breath is; men that fear an oath, and are an honour to their profession; who drive a trade for heaven, and are diligent to

secure that happiness of their immortal souls in the insurance-office above : But for the generality, alas! they mind none of these things. How many of you are cast to and fro, from one country to another ; but never think of that heavenly country above, nor how you may get the merchandise, which is better than the gold of Ophir ! How oft do you tremble to see the foaming waves dance about you, and wash over you ; yet consider not how terrible it will be to have the waves and billows of God's wrath to go over your souls, and that for ever ! How glad are you, after you have been long tossed upon the ocean, to descry land, and how eagerly do you look out for it ; who yet never had your hearts warmed with the consideration of that joy which shall be among the saints, when they arrive at the heavenly strand, and set foot upon the shore of glory !

O Sirs ! I beg of you, if you have any regard to those precious immortal souls of yours, which are also embarked for eternity, whither all winds blow them, and will quickly be at their port of heaven or hell, that you will seriously mind these things, and learn to steer your course to heaven, and improve all winds (I mean opportunities and means) to waft you thither.

Here ye may venture life and liberty, run through many difficulties and dangers, and all to compass a perishing treasure ; yet how often do you return disappointed in your designs ! Or if not, yet it is but a fading short-lived inheritance, which, like the flowing tide, for a little while covers the shore, and then returns and leaves it naked again : And are not everlasting treasures worth venturing for ? Good souls, be wise for eternity : I here present you with the fruit of a few spare hours, redeemed, for your sakes, from my other studies. I have endeavoured to clothe spiritual matters in your own phrases, that they might be the more intelligible to you.

If God shall bless these meditations to the conversion of any among you, you will be the gainers, and my heart shall rejoice, even mine. How comfortably should we shake hands with you, when you go abroad, were we persuaded

your souls were interested in CHRIST? What life would it put in our prayers for you, when you are abroad, to consider that JESUS CHRIST is interceding for you in heaven, whilst we are your remembrancers here on earth! How quiet would our hearts be, when you are abroad in storms, did we know you had an especial interest in Him whom winds and seas obey! To conclude, what joy would it be to your godly relations, to see you return new creatures! Doubtless, more than if you come home laden with the riches of both the Indies.

Come, Sirs! set the heavenly Jerusalem upon the point of your new compass; make all the sail you can for it; and the LORD give you a prosperous gale, and a safe arrival in the land of rest!

So prays,
Your affectionate Friend to serve you,
JOHN FLAVEL.

TO EVERY SEAMAN

SAILING HEAVENWARD.

INGENIOUS SEAMEN,

THE art of navigation, by which islands especially are enriched, and preserved in safety from invasions; and the wonderful works of GOD in the great deep, and foreign nations are delightfully beheld, is an art of exquisite ingenuity: But the art of spiritual navigation is the art of arts. It is a gallant thing to be able to carry a ship richly laden round the world; but it is much more gallant to carry a soul (that rich loading, a pearl of more worth than all the merchandise of the world) in a body (that is as liable to leaks and bruises as any ship is) through the sea of this world (which is as unstable as water) safe to heaven, (the best haven,) so as to avoid splitting upon any soul-sinking rocks, or striking upon any soul-drowning sands. The art of natural navigation is a very great mystery; but the art of spiritual navigation is by much a greater. Human wisdom may teach us to carry a ship to the Indies; but the wisdom only that is from above can teach us to steer our course aright to the haven of happiness. This art is purely of divine revelation. The truth is, divinity, (the doctrine of living to GOD,) is nothing else, but the art of soul navigation, revealed from heaven. A mere man can carry a ship to any desired port in the world, but no mere man can carry a soul to heaven. He must be a saint, he must be a divine, (so all saints are,) that can pilot a soul to the fair haven in EMMANUEL'S land. The art of natural navigation is wonderfully improved since the coming of CHRIST, before which time the use of the loadstone was never known; and before the virtue of that was revealed to the mariner, it is unspeakable with what uncertain wanderings seamen

floated here and there: And, sure I am, the art of spiritual navigation is wonderfully improved since the coming of CHRIST: This art of arts is now perfectly revealed in the Scriptures; but the rules thereof are dispersed up and down therein. The collecting and methodizing of the same, cannot but be a work very useful to souls: Though when all is done, there is an absolute necessity of the teachings of the SPIRIT, to make souls artists in sailing heavenward.

1. In order to this, O consider, what rich merchandise the soul is. CHRIST assures us, one soul is more worth than all the world. The LORD JESUS doth as it were put the whole world in one scale, and one soul in the other, and the world is found too light. (*Matt. xvi. 26.*) Shouldest thou by skill in natural navigation carry safe all the treasures of the Indies into thine own port, yea, gain the whole world, and for want of skill in spiritual navigation lose thy soul, thou wouldest be the greatest loser: So far wilt thou be from profiting by any of thy sea voyages.

2. Consider, what a leaky vessel thy body is, in which this unspeakable rich treasure, thy soul, is embarked! O the many diseases thy body is subject to! It is above two thousand years ago, that there have been reckoned up three hundred names of diseases; and there be many under one name, and many nameless, which pose the physicians, not only how to cure them, but how to call them. And for the mind, the distempers of it are no less deadly, than the diseases of the body. But besides these internal causes, there are many external causes of leaks in this vessel, and very small matters may be of great moment to the sinking of it. The least gnat in the air may choak one, as it did ADRIAN, the Pope of Rome; a little hair in milk may strangle one, as it did a Counsellor in Rome; a little stone of a raisin may stop one's breath, as it did the Poet ANACREON. Thus you see what a leaky vessel you sail in. Now the more leaky any ship is, the more need there is of skill to steer wisely.

3. Consider, what a dangerous sea the world is, in which the soul is to sail in the leaky ship of thy body. As there

are not more changes in the sea, than are in the world, the world being only constant in inconstancy; so there are not more dangers in the sea for ships, than there are in the world for souls. In this world souls meet with rocks and sands, and pirates. Worldly temptations, worldly lusts, and worldly company "drown many in perdition." (1 *Tim.* vi. 9.) The very things of this world endanger our souls. By worldly objects we soon grow worldly. It is hard to touch pitch, and not be defiled. The lusts of this world stain all our glory, and the men of this world pollute all they converse with. A man that keeps company with the men of this world, is like him that walketh in the sun, tanned insensibly. Now, the more dangerous the sea is, the more requisite it is the Sailor be an Artist.

4. Consider, what if through want of skill, in the art of spiritual navigation, thou shouldest not steer thy course aright. (1.) Thou wilt never arrive at the haven of happiness. (2.) Thou shalt be drowned in the ocean of God's wrath. As sure as the word of God is true; as sure as the heavens are over thy head, and the earth under thy feet; as sure as thou yet livest and breathest in this air; so sure it is, thou shalt sink into the bottomless pit. Possibly now thou makest a light matter of these things, because thou dost not know what it is to miss of heaven, and what it is for ever to lie under the wrath of God: But hereafter thou wilt know fully, what it is to have thy soul lost eternally, so lost, as that God's mercies, and all the good there is in CHRIST, shall never save it. Hereafter thou wilt be perfectly sensible of the good that thou mightest have had, and of the evil that shall be upon thee; then thou wilt have other thoughts of these things than now thou hast: Then the thoughts of thy mind shall be busied about thy lost condition, both as to the pain of loss, and the pain of sense; so that thou shalt not be able to take any ease one moment: Then thou shalt have true and deep apprehensions of the greatness of that good that thou shalt miss of, and of that evil which thou shalt procure thyself; and then thou shalt not be able to choose, but to apply all thy loss,

all thy misery to thyself, which will force thee to roar out, 'O my loss! O my misery! O my inconceivable, unrecoverable loss and misery!' O that, to prevent that loss and misery, these things may now be laid to heart! O that a blind understanding, a stupid judgment, a bribed conscience, a hard heart, a bad memory, may no longer make heaven and hell seem but trifles to thee! Thou wilt then easily be persuaded to make it thy main business here, to become an Artist in spiritual navigation. But to shut up this, I shall briefly acquaint seamen, why they should, of all others, be men of singular piety, and therefore more than ordinarily study the art of spiritual navigation. O that seamen would therefore consider,

[1.] How nigh they border upon death and eternity every moment. There is but a step, but an inch or two, between them and their graves continually. The next gust may overset them; the next wave may swallow them up. In one place lie lurking dangerous rocks, in another perilous sands, and every where stormy winds, ready to destroy them. Well may the seamen cry out, 'I have not had a morrow in my hands these many years.' Should not they then be extraordinary serious and heavenly continually?

[2.] Consider (seamen) what extraordinary help you have by the book of the creatures; the whole creation is God's voice; it is God's excellent hand-writing, to teach us much of God, and what reasons we have to bewail our rebellion against God, and to make conscience of obeying God continually. The heavens, the earth, the waters, are the three great leaves of this book of God, and all the creatures are so many lines in those leaves. All that learn not to fear and serve God by the help of his book, will be left inexcusable. (*Rom.* i. 20.) How inexcusable then will ignorant and ungodly seamen be! Seamen should, in this respect, be the best scholars in the Lord's school, seeing they do, more than others, see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.

[3.] Consider how often you are nearer heaven than any people in the world. "They mount up to heaven" (*Psalms*

evii. 26.) It has been said of an ungodly Minister, that contradicted his preaching in his life and conversation, that it was a pity he should ever come out of his pulpit, because he was there as near heaven as ever he would be. Shall it be said of you upon the same account, that it is pity you should come down from the high-towering waves? Should not seamen, that in stormy weather have their feet (as it were) upon the battlements of heaven, look down upon all earthly happiness but as base, waterish, and worthless? The great cities of Campania seem but small cottages to them that stand on the Alps. Should not seamen that so often mount up to heaven, make it their main business to get into heaven? What (seamen) shall you only go to heaven against your wills? When seamen mount up to heaven in a storm, the Psalmist tells us, that "their souls are melted because of trouble." O that you were continually as unwilling to go to hell, as you are in a storm to go to heaven!

[4.] And lastly, consider what engagements lie upon you to be singularly holy, from your singular deliverances. They that go down to the sea in ships, are sometimes in a valley of the shadow of death, by reason of the springing of perilous leaks; and yet miraculously delivered, either by some wonderful stopping of the leak, or by God's sending some ship within sight, when they have been far out of sight of land; or by his bringing their near perishing ship near to shore. Sometimes they have been in great danger of being taken by the pirates, yet wonderfully preserved, either by God's calming of the winds in that part of the sea where the pirates have sailed, or by giving the poor pursued ship a strong gale of wind to run away from their pursuers; or by sinking the pirates. Sometimes their ships have been cast away, and yet they themselves wonderfully got safe to shore upon planks, yards, masts. I might be endless in enumerating their deliverances from drowning, from burning, from slavery. Sure (seamen) your extraordinary salvations lay more than ordinary engagements upon you, to praise, love, fear, obey, and trust in your SAVIOUR

and Deliverer. I have read, that the enthralled Greeks were so affected with their liberty, procured by FLAMINIUS, the Roman General, that their shrill acclamation of Σωτηρ, Σωτηρ, 'a Saviour, a Saviour,' made the very birds fall down from the heavens. O how should seamen be affected with their sea-deliverances! Many that have been delivered from Turkish slavery, have vowed to be servants to their redeemers all the days of their lives. Ah, Sirs, will not you be more than ordinarily God's servants all the days of your lives, seeing you have been so oft, so wonderfully redeemed from death itself by him? Verily, do what you can, you will die in God's debt. "As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD, in ceasing to pray for you." That by the perusal of this short and sweet treasure, wherein the judicious and ingenious Author hath well mixed profit and pleasure, you may learn the good and right way, even to fear the LORD, and to serve him in truth with all your hearts, considering how great things he hath done for you: This is the hearty prayer of

Your cordial friend,

(Earnestly desirous of a prosperous
voyage for your precious and im-
mortal souls,)

T. M.

A

NEW COMPASS FOR SEAMEN

OR,

NAVIGATION SPIRITUALIZED.

CHAPTER I.

Upon the Launching of the Ship.

OBSERVATION.

No sooner is a ship built, launched, rigged, victualled and manned, but she is presently sent out into the boisterous ocean, where she is never at rest, but continually tossing and labouring, until she be overwhelmed and wrecked in the sea, or through age and bruises grows leaky and unserviceable, and so is haled up, and ripped abroad.

APPLICATION.

No sooner come we into the world as men, or as Christians, by a natural, and supernatural birth; but thus we are tossed upon a sea of troubles: "Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards." (*Job* v. 7.) The spark no sooner comes out of the fire, but it flies up naturally; it needs not any external force, but ascends from a principle in itself: So naturally, so easily, doth trouble rise out of sin. There is all the misery and trouble in the world in our corrupt natures. As the spark lies close hid in the coals, so doth misery in sin: Every sin draws a rod after it. And these sorrows and troubles fall not only on the body, in those breaches, pains, aches, diseases, to which it is subject, which are but the groans of dying nature, and its crumbling, by degrees, into dust again; but on all

our employments and callings also: These are full of pain, trouble, and disappointment. We earn wages, and put it into a bag with holes, and disquiet ourselves in vain.

It were endless to enumerate the sorrows of this kind; and yet the troubles of the body are but the body of our troubles. The spirit of the curse falls upon the spiritual and noble part of man. The soul and body, like to EZEKIEL'S roll, are written full with sorrows, both within and without. So that we make the same report of our lives, when we come to die, that old JACOB made before PHARAON: "Few and evil have the days of the years of our lives been." (*Gen.* xlvii. 9.) "For what hath man of all his labour, and the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? For all his days are sorrow, and his travel grief, yea, his heart taketh no rest in the night: This is also vanity." (*Eccles.* ii. 22, 23.)

Neither doth our new-birth free us from troubles, though then they be sanctified, sweetened, and turned into blessings. We put not off the human, when we put on the divine nature; nor are we then freed from the sense, though we be delivered from the sting and curse of them. Grace doth not presently pluck out all those arrows that sin hath shot into the sides of nature. "When we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side." (*2 Cor.* vii. 5.) "These are they that come out of great tribulations." (*Rev.* vii. 14.) The first cry of the new-born Christian (says one) gives hell an alarm, and awakens the rage both of devils and men against him. Hence PAUL and BARNABAS acquainted those new converts, that "through much tribulation they must enter into the kingdom of God." And we find the state of the church in this world set out by the similitude of a distressed ship at sea: "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted." (*Isai.* liv. 11.) "Tossed" as JONAH'S ship was; for the same word is there used; (*Jonah* i. 11, 13;) as a vessel at sea, violently driven without rudder, mast, sail, or tackling. Nor are we to expect freedom from those troubles, until harboured in heaven. O what large

catalogues of experiences do the saints carry to heaven with them, of their various exercises, dangers, trials, and marvellous preservations and deliverances out of all! And yet all these troubles without, are nothing to those within them, from temptations, corruptions, and passions: Besides their own, there come daily upon them the troubles of others, many rivulets fall into this channel, yea often overflow the banks: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous." (*Psalm xxxiv. 19.*)

REFLECTION.

HENCE should the graceless heart thus reflect upon itself: O my soul! into what a sea of troubles art thou launched forth! and what a sad case thou art in! full of trouble, and full of sin, and these mutually produce each other: And that which is the most dreadful consideration of all is, that I cannot see the end of them. As for good men, they suffer in the world as well as I, but it is but for a while, and then they shall suffer no more; but "all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes:" But my troubles are but the beginning of sorrows. If I continue as I am, I shall but deceive myself; if I conclude I shall be happy in the other world, because I have met with so much sorrow in this: For I read, (*Jude 7,*) that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, though consumed to ashes, with all their estates and relations, (a sorer temporal judgment than ever yet befel me,) do, notwithstanding that, continue still in "everlasting chains, under darkness, in which they are reserved unto the judgment of the great day."

The troubles of good men are sanctified to them, but mine are fruits of the curse: They have spiritual consolations to balance them, which flow into their souls in the same height and degree as troubles do upon their bodies; but I am a stranger to their comforts, and "intermeddle not with their joys." If their hearts be surcharged with trouble, they have a God to go to, and when they have opened their cause before him, they are eased, and their "countenance is no more sad:" But I have no interest in,

nor acquaintance with this God; nor can I pray unto him in the SPIRIT. My griefs are shut up like fire in my bosom, which preys upon my spirit. This is my sorrow, and I alone must bear it. O my soul, look round about thee! What a miserable case art thou in! Rest no longer satisfied in it, but look out for a CHRIST also. What though I be a vile unworthy wretch! Yet he promiseth to "love freely," and invites such as are heavy laden to him.

Hence also should the gracious soul reflect sweetly: And is the world so full of trouble? O my soul, what cause hast thou to stand admiring at the goodness of GOD! Thou hast hitherto had a smooth passage comparatively to what others have had. How hath Divine Wisdom ordered my condition! Have I been chastised with whips? Others with scorpions. Have I had no peace without? Some have neither had peace without nor within. Have I felt trouble in my flesh and spirit at once? Yet have they not been extreme, either for time or measure. And hath the world been a Sodom, an Egypt to thee? Why then do I not long to be gone, and sigh more heartily for deliverance? Why are the thoughts of my LORD's coming no sweeter to me, and the day of my deliverance no more panted for? And why am I no more careful to maintain peace within, since there is so much trouble without? Is not this it that puts weight into all outward troubles, and makes them sinking, that they fall upon me when my spirit is dark or wounded?

CHAPTER II.

On the vast Extent and Depth of the Ocean.

OBSERVATION.

THE ocean is of vast extent and depth, not to be sounded by man. The earth is twenty-one thousand and six hun-

dred miles in compass; yet the ocean environs it on every side. And for its depth, who can discover it? The sea in Scripture is called, “the deep;” (*Job xxxviii. 30*;) “the great deep;” (*Gen. vii. 11*;) “the gathering together of the waters into one place.” (*Gen. i. 9*.) If the vastest mountain were cast into it, it would appear no more than the head of a pin in a tun of water.

APPLICATION.

THIS in a lively manner shadows forth the infinite and incomprehensible mercy of GOD, “whose mercy is over all his works.” In how many sweet notions is the mercy of GOD represented to us in the Scripture! He is said to be “plenteous;” (*Psalms iv. 5*;) “abundant;” (*1 Pet. i. 3*;) “rich in mercy;” (*Eph. i. 4*;) “his mercies are unsearchable;” (*Eph. iii. 8*;) “high as the heavens above the earth.” (*Psalms x. 4*.) Which are so high and vast, that the whole earth is but a small point to them; yea, they are not only compared to the heavens, but to “the depths of the sea,” (*Mic. vii. 19*;) which can swallow up mountains as well as mole-hills; and in this sea GOD hath drowned sins of a dreadful height and aggravation. In this sea was the sin of MANASSEH drowned, and of what magnitude that was, may be seen, *2 Chron. xxxiii. 3*. Yea, in this ocean of mercy did the LORD drown and cover the sins of PAUL, though a blasphemer, a persecutor, injurious. ‘None,’ saith AUGUSTINE, ‘more fierce than PAUL among the persecutors; and therefore none greater among sinners; yet pardoned.’ How hath mercy rode in triumph, and been glorified upon the vilest of men! How hath it stopped the slanderous mouth of men and devils! It hath yearned upon “fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners;” to such hath the sceptre of mercy been stretched forth, upon their unfeigned repentance. What doth the SPIRIT of GOD aim at in such names of mercy, but to convince poor sinners of the abundant fulness and riches of it, if they will but submit to the terms on which it is tendered to them?

In the vastness of the ocean, we have also a lively emblem of eternity. Who can comprehend or measure the ocean, but God? And who can comprehend eternity, but He that is said "to inhabit in it?" (*Isa. lvii. 15.*) Though shallow, the rivers may be drained and dried up, yet the ocean cannot. And though these transitory days, months, and years, will at last expire, yet eternity shall not. What is eternity, but a constant permanency of persons and things, in one and the same state for ever, beyond all possibility of change? The Heathens were wont to shadow it by a circle, or a snake twisted round. It will be to all of us, either a perpetual day or night, which will not be measured by hours or minutes. And as it cannot be measured, so neither can it ever be diminished. When thousands of years are gone, there is not a minute less to come. Suppose a bird were to come to some vast mountain of sand, and carry away in her bill one sand in a thousand years; what a vast time would it be ere that immortal bird (after that rate) had carried away the mountain! And yet in time this might be done: For there would be still some diminution; but in eternity there can be none. There be three things in time, in which there is a succession; one generation, year, and day passeth, and another comes; but eternity is a fixed now. In time there is a diminution and wasting; the more is past, the less to come. In time there is an alteration of condition; a man may be poor to-day, and rich to-morrow; sickly this week, and well the next; now in contempt, and anon in honour: But no change passes upon us in eternity. As the tree falls at death and judgment, so it lies for ever: If in heaven, "thou shalt go forth no more:" If in hell, no redemption thence, but "the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever."

REFLECTION.

AND is the mercy of God, like the great deeps, an ocean that none can fathom? What unspeakable comfort is this to me, may the pardoned soul say! Did Israel sing a song,

when the LORD had overwhelmed their enemies in the sea? And shall not I break forth into His praise, who hath drowned all my sins in the depth of mercy? O my soul, bless thou the LORD, and let his praise ever be in thy mouth. Mayest not thou say, that he hath gone to as high a degree of mercy, in pardoning thee, as ever he did in any? O my GOD, who is like unto thee, “that pardonest iniquity, transgression, and sin?” What mercy, but the mercy of a God, could cover such abominations as mine!

But O! what terrible reflections will conscience make from hence, upon all the despisers of mercy, when the sinner’s eyes come to be opened too late! We have heard, indeed, that the King of heaven was a merciful King, but we would make no address to him, whilst that sceptre was stretched out. We heard of balm in Gilead, and a Physician there, that was able and willing to cure all our wounds; but would not commit ourselves to him. We read that the arms of CHRIST were open to embrace us, but we would not. O unparalleled folly! Now the womb of mercy is shut up, and shall bring no more mercies to me for ever. Now the gates of grace are shut, and no cries can open them.

How often did I hear the bowels of compassion sounding in the Gospel for me! But my hard and impenitent heart would not relent, and now it is too late. I am now passed out of the ocean of mercy, into the ocean of eternity, where I am fixed in the midst of endless misery, and shall never hear the voice of mercy more.

O dreadful eternity! An ocean indeed, to which this ocean is but a drop; for in thee no soul shall see either bank or bottom. If I lie but one night under strong pains, how tedious doth night seem! And how do I tell the clock, and wish for day! In the world I might have had life, and would not; and now, how fain would I have death, but cannot! How quick were my sins! And how long is their punishment! O how shall I “dwell with everlastings burnings!” O that GOD would but vouchsafe one treaty more with me! But, alas, all treaties are now at

an end. “ On earth, peace ;” (*Luke* ii. 13 ;) but none in hell. O my soul, consider these things ; let us debate this matter seriously, before we launch into this ocean.

CHAPTER III.

On the Inhabitants of the Deep.

OBSERVATION.

IT WAS an unadvised saying of PLATO, “ The sea produceth nothing memorable.” Surely there is much of the wisdom, power, and goodness of GOD manifested in the inhabitants of the watery region : “ O LORD, how manifold are thy works ! In wisdom hast thou made them all ; the earth is full of thy riches. So is the great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great.” There are creatures of very strange forms and properties ; some resembling a cow, called by the Spaniards *Manates* ; by some supposed to be the sea-monster spoken of by JEREMIAH. In the rivers of Guiana, PURCHAS saith, there are fishes that have four eyes, bearing two above and two beneath the water when they swim ; some resembling a toad, and very poisonous. How strange both in shape and property is the sword-fish and thrasher, that fight with the whale ! Even our own seas produce creatures of strange shapes, but the commonness takes off the wonder.

APPLICATION.

THUS doth the heart of man naturally swarm and abound with strange and monstrous lusts and abominations, “ being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity.” (*Rom.* i. 29, 30, 31.) O what a swarm is here ! And yet there are multitudes more in the depths of the heart. And it is no wonder, considering that with this nature we received the spawn of the blackest and

vilest abominations. This original sin is productive of them all ; which is one and the same, for sort and kind, in all the children of ADAM ; even as the reasonable soul, though every man hath his own soul distinct from another man's, yet is it the same for kind in all men. So that whatever abominations are in the hearts and lives of the vilest Sodomites, and most profligate wretches under heaven, there is the same matter in thy heart out of which they were shaped and formed. In the depths of the heart they are conceived, and thence they crawl out of the eyes, hands, lips, and all the members ; “ those things (saith CHRIST) which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies ;” (*Matt.* xv. 18, 19 ;) even such monsters as would make one tremble to behold. The Apostle, in *1 Cor.* v. 1, tells us of a sin, “ not to be named ;” so monstrous, that nature itself startles at it ; even such monsters are generated in the depths of the heart. Whence come evils ? was a question that much puzzled the philosophers of old. Now here you may see whence they come, and whence they are begotten.

REFLECTION.

! And are there such strange abominations in the heart of man ? Then how is he degenerated from his primitive perfection ! His streams were once as clear as crystal, and there was no unclean creature moving in them. What a stately fabric was the soul at first ! And what holy inhabitants possessed the rooms thereof ! But now, (as GOD speaks of *Idumea*,) “ the line of confusion is stretched out upon it, and the stones of emptiness ; the cormorant and bittern possess it, the owl and the raven dwell in it.” (*Isaiah* xxxiv. 11.) O sad change ! How sadly may we look backwards to our first state and take up the words of JOB, “ O that I were as in months past ! as in the days of my youth ; when the Almighty was with me, when I put on righteous-

ness, and it clothed me, when my glory was fresh in me." (*Job* xxix. 2, 4, 5.)

Again, think, O my soul, what a miserable condition the unregenerate abide in! thus swarmed and over-run with hellish lusts. What a tumultuous sea is such a soul! How do these lusts rage within them! How do they contest for the throne, and usually take it by turns! For as all diseases are contrary to health, yet some contrary to each other; so are lusts. Hence poor creatures are hurried on to different kinds of servitude, according to the nature of that lust that is in the throne, and like the lunatic, (*Matt.* xvii.) are sometimes cast into the water, and sometimes into the fire. Well might the Prophet say, "The wicked is like a troubled sea, that cannot rest." (*Isa.* lvii. 20.) They have no peace now in the service of sin, and less they shall have hereafter, when they receive the wages of sin. "There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God." They indeed cry, "Peace, peace;" but my God doth not say so. The last issue of this is eternal death; no sooner is it delivered of its deceitful pleasures, but presently it falls in travail again, and brings forth death. (*James* i. 15.)

And is the heart such a sea, abounding with monstrous abominations? Then stand astonished, O my soul, at that free grace which hath delivered thee from so sad a condition! O fall down, and kiss the feet of mercy, that moved so freely and seasonably to thy rescue! LORD, what am I, that I should be taken? Reflect, O my soul, upon the conceptions and births of lusts, in the days of vanity, which thou hast blushed to own. O what black imaginations, hellish desires, vile affections, are lodged there! Who made me differ? Or, how came I to be thus wonderfully separated? Surely, it is by thy free grace, and nothing else, that I am what I am: And by that grace I have "escaped (to mine own astonishment) the corruption that is in the world through lust." O that ever the holy God should set his eyes upon such an one, or cast a look of love towards me, in whom were legions of unclean lusts and abominations!

CHAPTER IV

On the Flux and Reflux of the Sea.

OBSERVATION.

SEAS are in a continual motion ; they have flux and reflux, by which they are kept from putrefaction ; like a fountain it cleanses itself, “ it cannot rest, but casts up mire and dirt ; ” (*Isai. lvii. 20* ;) whereas lakes and ponds, whose waters are standing and dead, corrupt and stink : And it is observed by seamen, that in the southern parts of the world, where the sea is more calm and settled, it is more corrupt and unfit for use ; so is the sea of Sodom, called, “ the Dead sea.”

APPLICATION.

Thus do regenerate souls purify themselves, and work out corruption that defiles them ; they cannot suffer it to settle there : “ He purifieth himself, even as He is pure.” (*1 John iii. 3* :) “ Keepeth himself, that the wicked one toucheth him not.” (*1 John v. 18*.) They are doves, delighting in cleanness ; “ he despiseth the gain of oppression, he shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, stoppeth his ears from hearing blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil.” (*Isai. xxxiii. 15*.) See how all senses and members are guarded against sin. But it is quite contrary with the wicked ; there is no principle of holiness in them, to expose or expel corruption. It lies in their hearts, as mud in a lake or well, which settles and corrupts more and more. Hence, “ their hearts are compared to miry places, which cannot be healed : ” (*Ezek. xlvii. 11*.) The meaning is, that the purest streams of the Gospel, which cleanse others, make them worse than before, as abundance of rain will a miry place : It cannot run through them, and be glorified, as it doth in gracious souls : All the means and endeavours used to cleanse them, are in vain ; all the grace of God

they receive in vain : “ They hold fast deceit, they refuse to let it go.” (*Jer.* viii, 5.) Sin is not in them as floating weeds upon the sea, but as spots in the leopard’s skin, (*Jer.* xiii. 21,) or letters engraven in marble or brass, with a pen of iron, and point of a diamond. “ Wickedness is sweet in their mouths ; they roll it under their tongues.” (*Job* xx. 12.) No threats or promises can divorce them from it.

REFLECTION.

LORD ! this is the very frame of my heart, may the graceless soul say : My corruption quietly settles in me, my heart labours not against it : I am a stranger to that conflict which is daily maintained in the regenerate soul. Glorified souls have no such conflict, because grace in them stands alone, and is perfectly triumphant over all its opposites ; and graceless souls have no such conflict, because in them corruption stands alone, and hath no other principle to make opposition to it. And this is my case, O LORD : I am full of vain hopes, indeed ; but had I a living hope to dwell for ever with so holy a GOD, I could not but be daily purifying myself. But, O ! what will the end of this be ? I have cause to tremble at that last and dread-fullest curse in the book of GOD, “ Let him that is filthy, be filthy still.” (*Rev.* xxii. 11.) Is it not as much as if GOD should say, Let them alone, I will spend no more rods upon them, no more means shall be used about them : but I will reckon with them for all things in another world. O my soul, what a dismal reckoning will that be ! Ponder with thyself in the mean time those terrible and awakening texts, that, if possible, this fatal issue may be prevented. See *Isa.* i. 5 ; *Hos.* iv. 14 ; *Jer.* vi. 29, 30 ; *Heb.* vi. 8.

CHAPTER V.

On the Watchfulness of Seamen to prevent danger.

OBSERVATION.

How watchful and quick-sighted are seamen to prevent danger ! If the wind die away, and then fresh up southerly ; or if they see the sky hazy, they provide for a storm : If by the prospective-glass they see a pirate at the greatest distance, they clear the gun-room, prepare for fight, and bear up, if able to deal with him ; if not, they keep close by the wind, make all the sail they can, and bear away. If they suppose themselves, by their reckoning, near land, how often do they sound ! And if by a coast with which they are unacquainted, how careful are they to get a pilot that knows and is acquainted with it !

APPLICATION.

Thus watchful ought we to be in spiritual concernments. We should study, and be acquainted with Satan's wiles : The Apostle takes it for granted, that Christians are not "ignorant of his devices." 'The Serpent's eye (as one saith) would do well in the dove's head.' The devil is a cunning pirate, he puts out false colours, and ordinarily comes up to the Christian in the disguise of a friend.

O the manifold depths and stratagems of SATAN, to destroy souls ! Though he hath no wisdom to do himself good, yet policy enough to do us mischief. He lies in ambush behind our lawful comforts and employments : Yet for the most of men, how careless are they, suspecting no danger ! Their souls, like Laish, dwell carelessly ; their senses unguarded. O what an easy prize doth the Devil make of them !

Indeed, if it were with us, as with ADAM in innocency, or as it was with CHRIST in the days of his flesh, (who by reason of that overflowing fulness of grace that dwelt in him,

was secured from danger,) the case then were otherwise ; but we have a traitor within, (*James* i. 14, 15,) as well as a tempter without. “ Our adversary the devil goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” And like beasts of the forest, poor souls lie down before him, and become his prey.

REFLECTION.

LORD ! how doth the care, wisdom, and vigilancy of men in temporal things, condemn my carelessness in the deep concernments of my soul ! What care and labour is there to secure a perishing life, liberty, or treasure ! When was I thus solicitous for my soul, though its value be inestimable, and its dangers far greater ? Self-preservation is one of the deepest principles in nature. There is not the poorest worm or fly, but will shun danger if it can : Yet I am so far from shunning those dangers to which my soul lies continually exposed, that I often run upon temptations, and voluntarily expose it to its enemies. I see, LORD, how watchful, jealous, and laborious thy people are ; what prayers, tears, and groans, searching of heart, mortification of lusts, guarding of senses, and all accounted too little by them. Have not I a soul to save or lose eternally, as well as they ? Yet I cannot withstand one temptation. Oh, how am I convinced and condemned, not only by others’ care and vigilance, but by my own too, in lower matters !



CHAPTER VI.

On the steering of the Vessel.

OBSERVATION.

It is a just matter of admiration, to see so great a body as a ship is, and when under sail too, before a strong wind, by which it is carried, as the clouds, with marvellous force

and speed, yet to be commanded with ease, by so small a thing as the helm is. The Scripture takes notice of it as a matter worthy our consideration. "Behold also the ships, which though they be great, and driven of fierce winds, yet they are turned about with a small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth." (*James* iii. 4.)

APPLICATION.

To the same use has GOD designed conscience in man, which, being regulated by the WORD and SPIRIT of GOD, is to steer his whole conversation. Conscience is as the oracle of GOD, the Judge and Determiner of our actions, whether they be good or evil; and it lays the strongest obligations upon the creature to obey its dictates. For it binds under the reason and consideration of the sovereign will of the great GOD; so that as often as conscience from the Word convinceth us of any sin or duty, it lays such a bond upon us to obey, as no power under heaven can dispense with. Angels cannot do it, much less man, for that would be to exalt themselves above GOD. Therefore it is an high and dreadful way of sinning, to rebel against conscience, when it convinces of sin or duty. Conscience sometimes reasons it out with men, and shows them the necessity of changing their course, arguing it from the clearest maxims of right reason, as well as from the indisputable sovereignty of GOD.

As for instance: It convinceth their very reason, that things of eternal duration are infinitely to be preferred to all momentary and perishing things. And it is our duty to choose them, and make all temporary concerns to stand aside, and give place to them: Yet, though men be convinced of this, their stubborn will stands out, and will not yield to the conviction.

Further: It argues from this acknowledged truth, that all the delights of this world are but a miserable portion, and that it is the highest folly to adventure an immortal

soul for them. Alas, what remembrance is there of them in hell? They are the waters that pass away: What have they left of all their mirth, but a tormenting sting? It convinceth them clearly also, that in matters of deep concern, it is an high point of wisdom, to apprehend and improve the opportunities of them. "He that gathers in summer is a wise son." (*Prov.* x. 5.) "A wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment." (*Eccles.* viii. 5.) "There is a season to every purpose." (*Eccles.* iii. 1.) Namely, A nick of time, and happy juncture, when, if a man strikes in, he doeth his work effectually, and with much facility. Such seasons conscience convinceth the soul of, and often whispers thus in its ear: Now strike in! Close with this motion of the SPIRIT, and be happy for ever! Thou mayest never have such a gale for heaven any more. Now, though these be allowed maxims of reason, and conscience enforce them strongly on the soul, yet it cannot prevail; the proud stubborn will rebels, and will not be guided by it.

REFLECTION.

AH, LORD! such an heart have I had before thee; thus obstinate, thus rebellious, so uncontrollable by conscience. Many a time hath conscience thus whispered in my ear; many a time hath it stood in my way, as the angel did in BALAAM'S, or the Cherubim that kept the way of the tree of life, with flaming swords turning every way. Thus hath it stood to oppose me in the way of my lusts. How often hath it calmly debated the case with me! And how sweetly hath it expostulated with me! How clearly hath it convinced of sin, danger, and duty, with strong demonstration! How terribly hath it menaced my soul, and set the point of the threatening at my very breast! And yet my headstrong affections will not be remanded by it. I have obeyed the voice of every temptation; but conscience hath lost its authority with me. Ah LORD! what a sad condition am I in, both in respect of sin and misery! My sin receives

dreadful aggravations; for rebellion and presumption are hereby added to it. I have violated the strongest bonds that ever were laid upon a creature. If my conscience had not thus convinced and warned, the sin had not been so great. Ah! this is to sin with an high hand, to come near to the great and unpardonable transgression. (*Psalm* xix. 13.) O how dreadful a way of sinning is this, with open eyes! And as my sin is thus out of measure sinful, so my punishment will be out of measure dreadful, if I persist in this rebellion. LORD, thou hast said, "such shall be beaten with many stripes;" yea, LORD, and if ever my conscience, which by rebellion is now grown silent, should be in judgment awakened in this life, what an hell should I have within me! How would it thunder and roar upon me, and surround me with terrors!

I know no length of time can wear out of its memory what I have done; no violence or force can suppress it; no greatness of power can stifle it; it will take the mightiest monarch by the throat; no music, pleasures, or delights can charm it. O Conscience! thou art the sweetest friend, or the dreadfulest enemy in the world; thy consolations are incomparably sweet, and thy terrors insupportable. Ah, let me stand it out no longer against conscience; the very ship in which I sail is a confutation of my madness, that rush greedily into sin against both reason and conscience, and will not be commanded by it. Surely, O my soul, this will be bitterness in the end!



CHAPTER VII.

On the Waves.

OBSERVATION.

WE have an elegant and lively description in *Psalm* cvii. 25, 26, 27. "He commandeth and raiseth the stormy

wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof: They mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble, they reel to and fro, they stagger like a drunken man, they are at their wit's end." Or, as it is in the Hebrew, "All wisdom is swallowed up." What strange deliverances have many seamen had! How often have they yielded themselves for dead men, and thought the next sea would have swallowed them up! How earnestly then do they ery for merey, and pray in a storm, though they regarded it not at other times!

APPLICATION.

These dreadful storms do at once discover to us the mighty power of God in raising them, and the abundant goodness of God in preserving poor creatures in them.

I. The power of God is graciously manifested in raising them. The wind is one of the LORD's wonders. "They that go down to the sea, see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep; for he commandeth and raiseth the stormy winds." (*Psalms* evii. 24, 25.) Yea, God appropriates it as a peeculiar work of his: "He causeth his wind to blow." (*Ver.* 18.) Hence, he is said in Scripture, "to bring them forth out of his treasury." (*Psalms* cxxxvii. 7.) There they are locked up and reserved; not a gust can break out, till he call for it to go and execute his pleasure. Yea, he is said to "hold them in his fist." (*Prov.* xxx. 4.) What is more incapable of holding than the wind? yet God holds it. And, although it be a strong and terrible creature, he controls and rules it. Yea, the Scripture sets forth God, as "riding upon the wings of the wind." (*Psalms* xviii. 10.) It is a borrowed speech from the manner of men, who, when they would show their pomp and greatness, ride upon some stately horse or chariot; so the LORD, to manifest the greatness of his power, rides upon the wings of the wind, and will be admired in so terrible a creature.

And no less of his glorious power appears in remanding them, than in raising them. The Heathens ascribe this

power to the God *ÆOLUS*; but we know this is the sole prerogative of the true GOD; it is He that makes "the storm a calm." (*Psalms* cvii. 29.) And it is He that changes them from point to point as he pleaseth; for he hath appointed them in their circuits: "The wind goeth towards the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and returneth again according to its circuits." (*Eccles.* i. 6.)

2. And as we should adore his power in the winds, so ought we to admire his goodness in preserving men in the height of all their fury and violence. O what a marvellous work of GOD is here! That men should be kept in a poor, weak vessel, upon the wild and stormy ocean, where the wind hath its full stroke, and they are driven before it as a wreck upon the seas, is a work of infinite goodness and power: That those winds which rend the very earth, mountains and rocks; "break the cedars, yea, the cedars of Lebanon," should not destroy you as in a moment, is an amazing instance of Almighty power, an astonishing work of mercy. O how dreadful is this creature, the wind, sometimes to you! And how doth it make your hearts shake within you! If but a plank spring, or a bolt give way, you are all lost. Sometimes the LORD for the magnifying of the riches of his goodness upon you, drives you to such exigencies, that, as ST. PAUL speaks in a like case, "All hope of being saved is taken away." (*Acts* xvii. 20.) Nothing but death before your eyes. The LORD commands a wind out of his treasury, bids it go and lift up the terrible waves, lock you in upon the shore, and drive you upon the rock, so that no art can save you; and then sends you a piece of wreck, or some other means to land you safe: And all this to give you an experiment of his goodness, that you may learn to fear that GOD, in whose hand your breath is.

And it may be for the present, your hearts are much affected: Conscience works strongly, it smites you for sins formerly committed. Now, saith the conscience, God is come

in this storm to reckon with thee for these things. But, alas, all this is but a morning dew; no sooner is that storm without allayed, but all is quiet within too. How little of the goodness of God abides kindly and effectually upon the heart!

REFLECTION.

How often hath this glorious power and goodness of God passed before me in dreadful storms and tempests at sea! He hath uttered his voice in those stormy winds, and spoken in a terrible manner by them; yet how little have I been affected with it! "The LORD hath his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm." (*Nah.* i. 3.) To some he hath walked in ways of judgment and wrath, sending them down in a moment to hell; but to me in a way of forbearance and mercy. Ah, how often have I been upon the very brink of eternity! Had not God shifted or allayed the wind, in a moment I had gone down into hell. What workings of conscience were then upon me! And what terrible apprehensions had I of my eternal condition! What vows did I make in that distress, and how earnestly did I beg for mercy! But, LORD, though thy vows are upon me, yet have I been the same, yea, added to the measure of my sins. Neither the bonds thou hast laid upon me, nor the sacred vows I have laid upon myself, could restrain me from iniquity.

Ah LORD, what an heart have I! What love, pity and goodness have I sinned against! If God had but respited judgment so long, what a mercy were it! Sure I am, the damned would account it so: But to give me such a space to repent, what an invaluable mercy is this! And do I thus requite the LORD, and pervert and abuse his goodness? Surely, O my soul, if this be the fruit of all thy preservations, they are rather reservations to some further and sorer judgment. How dreadfully will justice at last avenge the quarrel of abused mercy! (*Josh.* xxi. 20.) How grievously did God take it from the Israelites, that they provoked him

at the sea, even at the red sea, (*Psalm cvi. 7.*) where God had wrought their deliverance in such a miraculous way!

Even thus have I sinned, not only against the laws of God, but against the love of God. In the last storm he shot off his warning-piece; in the next he may discharge his murdering-piece against my soul and body. O my soul, hath he given thee “such deliverances as these, and darest thou again break his commandments?” (*Ezra ix. 13, 14.*) O let me pay the vows that my lips have uttered in my distress, lest the LORD recover his glory from me in a way of judgment!



CHAPTER VIII.

On the Mariner's Skill in managing the Sails.

OBSERVATION.

THE Mariner wants no skill and wisdom to improve several winds, and make them serviceable to his end: A bare side-wind, by his skill in shifting and managing the the sails, will serve his turn; he will not lose the advantage of one breath or gale that may be useful to him. I have many times wondered to see two ships sailing in a direct counter-motion, by one and the same wind. Their skill and wisdom herein is admirable.

APPLICATION.

Thus prudent and skilful are men in lower matters, and yet how ignorant and unskilful in the everlasting affairs of their souls! All their invention, judgment, wit, and memory seem to be pressed for the service of the flesh. They can learn an art quickly, and arrive to great exactness in it; but in soul-matters, no knowledge at all; they can understand the equator, meridian, and horizon. And so in other arts and sciences, we find men endowed with

rare abilities, and singular sagacity. Some have piercing apprehensions, solid judgments, rare invention, and excellent elocution : But put them upon any spiritual matter, and the weakest Christian, even a babe in CHRIST, shall excel them therein, and give a far better account of the work of grace, the life of faith, than these can.

REFLECTION.

How inexcusable art thou, O my soul ! and how confounded must thou needs stand before the bar of God, in that great day ! Thou hadst a talent of natural parts committed to thee, but which way have they been improved ? I had an understanding indeed, but it was not sanctified ; a memory, but it was like a sieve, that let go the corn, and retained nothing but chaff ; wit and invention, but alas none to do myself good. Ah, how will these rise in judgment against me, and stop my mouth ! What account shall I give for them in that day ?

Again : Are men (otherwise prudent) such fools in spiritual things ? Then let the poor weak Christian, whose natural parts are blunt and dull, admire the riches of God's free grace to him. O what an astonishing consideration is this ! That God should pass by men of the profoundest natural parts, and choose me, whose natural endowments, compared with theirs, are but as lead to gold ? Thus under the law he passed by the lion and eagle, and chose the lamb and dove. O how should it make me to advance grace, as CHRIST doth upon the same account : " I thank thee, FATHER, LORD of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes." (*Matt. xi. 25.*) And let it be ever an humbling consideration to me : For who made me to differ ? Is not this one principal thing God aims at, in calling such as I am ; that boasting may be excluded, and himself alone exalted ?

CHAPTER IX.

On the Watchfulness of Mariners to take the Wind and Tide.

OBSERVATION.

SEAMEN are very watchful to take their opportunity of wind and tide; and it much concerns them so to be: The neglect of a few hours, sometimes loses them their passage, and proves a great detriment to them. They know the wind is a variable thing; they must take it when they may; they are unwilling to lose one breath, that may be serviceable to them.

APPLICATION.

There are also seasons and gales of grace for our souls; golden opportunities afforded to men, the neglect of which proves the loss and ruin of souls. God hath given unto men a day of visitation, which he hath limited; (*Heb. iv. 7;*) and keeps an exact account of every year, month, and day, that we have enjoyed it. The longest date of it can be but the time of this life. This is our day to work in, and upon this small thread the weight of eternity hangs. But sometimes the season of grace is ended, before the night of death comes; the "accepted time" is gone, men frequently outlive it. (*Luke xix. 44; 2 Cor. vi. 2.*) Or, if the outward means of salvation be continued, yet the SPIRIT many times withdraws from those means, and ceases any more to strive with men; and then the blessing, power, and efficacy is gone from them, and instead thereof, a curse seizeth the soul.

Therefore it is a matter of high importance to apprehend those seasons. How pathetically doth CHRIST bewail Jerusalem upon this account! "O that thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things of thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." (*Luke xix. 42.*) If a company of seamen be set ashore upon some uninhabited island, with this advice, to be aboard again exactly at such an

hour, else they must be left behind: How doth it concern them to be punctual in their time! The lives of those men depend upon a quarter of an hour. Many a soul hath perished eternally, because they knew not the time of their visitation.

REFLECTION.

What golden seasons for salvation hast thou enjoyed, O my soul! What halcyon days of Gospel light and grace hast thou had! How have the precious gales of grace blown to no purpose upon thee, and the SPIRIT waited and striven with thee in vain! "The kingdom of heaven" (being opened in the Gospel dispensations) "hath suffered violence." Multitudes have been pressing into it in my days, and I myself have sometimes been almost persuaded, and not far from the kingdom of God. I have gone as far as conviction of sin; yea, I have been carried by the power of the Gospel, to turn to God; but sin hath been too subtle for me: I see my resolutions were but as an early cloud, or morning dew; and now my heart is cold and dead again, settled upon its lees. Ah! I have cause to fear and tremble, lest God hath left me under that curse: "Let him that is filthy be filthy still." (*Rev.* xx. 11.) I fear I am become as that miry place, (*Ezek.* xlvii. 11,) that shall not be healed by the streams of the Gospel, "but given to salt," and cursed into perpetual barrenness. Ah LORD, wilt thou leave me so? And shall thy SPIRIT strive no more with me? Then it had been good for me that I had never been born. If I have trifled out this season, and irrecoverably lost it, then I may take up that lamentation, and say, "My harvest is past, my summer is ended, and I am not saved." (*Jer.* viii. 20.)

Every creature knows its time, even the turtle, crane, and swallow, know the time of their coming. (*Jer.* viii. 7.) How brutish am I, that have not known the time of my visitation! O thou that art the LORD [of life and time, command one gracious season more, and make it effectual to me, before I go hence, and be seen no more!

CHAPTER X.

On Commerce with other Countries.

OBSERVATION.

THE most wise GOD hath so dispensed his bounty to the several nations of the world, that one standing in need of another's commodities, there might be a commerce and traffic maintained amongst them all, and all combining in a common league, may, by the help of navigation, exhibit mutual succours to each other.

APPLICATION.

Thus hath GOD distributed the more precious gifts and graces of his SPIRIT among his people: Some excelling in one grace, some in another, though every grace, in some degree, be in them all. As in nature, though there be all the faculties in all, yet some faculties are in some more lively and vigorous than in others; some have a more vigorous eye, others a more ready ear, others a more voluble tongue; so it is in spirituals. ABRAHAM excelled in faith, JOB in patience, JOHN in love. These were their peculiar excellences. All the elect vessels are not of one quantity; yet even those that excel others in some particular grace, come short in other respects of those they so excel, and may be much improved by converse with such as in some respects are much below them. The solid, wise, and judicious Christian may want the liveliness of affection, and tenderness of heart, that appear in the weak; and one that excels in gifts and utterance, may learn humility from the very babes in CHRIST.

And one principal reason of this different distribution, is, to maintain a fellowship among them all: "The head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you." (1 Cor. xii. 21.) As in a family, where there is much business to be done, even the little children bear a part, according to their strength: "The children gather wood, the fathers kindle

the fire, the women knead the dough:" (*Jer. vii. 18.*) So in the family of CHRIST, the weakest Christian is serviceable to the strong.

There be precious treasures in these earthen vessels, for which we should trade by mutual communion. The preciousness of the treasure should draw out our desires and endeavours after it; and the consideration of the brittleness of those vessels in which they are kept, should cause us to be the more expeditious in our trading with them, and make the quicker returns: For when those vessels (I mean the bodies of the saints) are broken by death, there is no more to be gotten out of them. That treasure of grace which made them such profitable companions on earth, then ascends with them in heaven: And then, though they be more excellent than on earth, yet we can have no more communion with them till we come to glory ourselves. Now therefore it behoves us to be enriching ourselves by communication of what GOD hath dropped into us, and improvement of them, as one well notes. We should do by saints, as we use to do by some choice book lent us for a few days, we should fix in our memories, or transcribe all the choice notions we meet with in it, that they may be our own when the book is called for, and we can have it no longer by us.

REFLECTION.

LORD, how short do I come of my duty in communicating to, or receiving good by others! My soul is either empty and barren, or if there be any treasure in it, yet it is but as a treasure locked up in some chest, whose key is lost when it should be opened for the use of others. Ah LORD! I have sinned greatly, not only by vain words, but sinful silence. I have been but of little use in the world.

How little also have I gotten by communion with others! Some, it may be, that are of my own size, or judgment, or that I am otherwise obliged to, I can delight to converse with: But O, where is that largeness of heart, and general delight, I should have to, and in all thy people?

How many of my old dear acquaintance are now in heaven, whose tongues were as choice silver while they were here! (*Prov. x. 20.*) And, blessed souls! how communicative were they of what thou gavest them! O what an improvement had I made of my talent this way, had I been diligent! LORD, pardon my neglect of those blessed advantages. O let all my delight be in thy saints, who are the excellent of the earth. Let me never go out of their company, without an heart more warmed, quickened, and enlarged, than when I came amongst them.

CHAPTER XI.

On the Stability of the Rocks.

OBSERVATION.

THE rocks, though situate in the boisterous and tempestuous ocean, yet abide firm and immoveable from age to age: The impetuous waves dash against them with great violence, but cannot remove them out of their place. And although sometimes they wash over them, and make them to disappear, yet there they remain fixed and impregnable.

APPLICATION.

This is a lively emblem of the condition of the church, amidst all dangers and opposition wherewith it is assaulted in this world. These waves roar and beat with violence against it, but with as little success as the sea against the rocks: "Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (*Matt. xvi. 18.*) The gates of hell are the power and policy of hell, an allusion to the gates of the Jews, wherein their ammunition for war was lodged, which also were seats of judicature, where sat the judges: But yet these gates of hell shall not prevail. Nay, this rock is not only invincible in the midst of their violence, but also breaks all that dash against it: "In that day I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for

all people: All that burden themselves with it, shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered against it." (*Zech.* xii. 3.) An allusion to one that attempts to roll some great stone against the hill, which at last returns upon him, and crushes him to pieces.

And the reason why it is thus firm and impregnable, is not from itself; for alas, so considered, it is weak, and obnoxious to ruin; but from the almighty power of God, which guards and preserves it day and night: "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." (*Psalm* xlvi. 5, 6.) And this assiduous succour to his people, and their great security thereby, is set forth in the Scriptures by a pleasant variety of metaphors and emblems. "I," saith the LORD, "will be a wall of fire round about it." (*Zech.* ii. 5.) Some think this phrase alludes to the cherubim, that kept the way of the tree of life with flaming swords: Others, to the fiery chariots round about Dotham, where ELISHA was: But most think it to be an allusion to an ancient custom of travellers in the desarts; who to prevent the assaults of wild beasts in the night, made a circular fire round about them, which was as a wall to them. Thus will God be to his people, "a wall of fire," which none can scale. So *Exod.* iii. 3—5, we have an excellent emblem of the church's low and dangerous condition, and admirable preservation. You have here both a marvel and a mystery: The marvel was to see a bush all on fire, and yet not consumed. The mystery is this; the bush represented the sad condition of the church in Egypt; the fire flaming upon it, the grievous afflictions, troubles, and bondage, it was in there; the remaining of the bush unconsumed, the strange and admirable preservation of the church in those troubles. It lived there as the three noble Jews, untouched in the midst of a burning fiery furnace: And the "angel of the LORD" in a flame of fire in the midst of the bush, was nothing else but the LORD JESUS CHRIST, powerfully and graciously present with his people, amidst all their dangers and sufferings. The LORD is exceeding tender over them, and jealous for

them, as that expression imports : “ He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye.” (*Zech. ii. 8.*) He that strikes at them, strikes at the face of God ; and at the most excellent part of the face, the eye ; and at the most tender and precious part of the eye, the apple of the eye. And yet (as a learned modern observes) this people of whom he uses this tender expression, were none of the best of Israel neither ; but the residue that staid behind in Babylon, when their brethren were gone to rebuild the temple ; and yet over these, is he as tender as man is over his eye.

REFLECTION.

And is the security of the Church so great, and its preservation so admirable, amidst all storms and tempests ? Then why art thou so subject to despond, O my soul, in the day of Sion’s trouble ? Sensible thou wast, and oughtest to be ; but no reason to hang down the head through discouragement, much less to forsake Sion in her distress, for fear of being ruined with her.

What DAVID spake to ABIATHAR, that may Sion speak to all her sons and daughters in all their distresses : “ Though he that seeketh thy life, seeketh mine also, yet with me shalt thou be in safety.” (*1 Sam. xxii. 23.*) God hath entailed great salvation and deliverances upon Sion ; and blessed are all her friends and favourites ; the rock of ages is her defence. Fear not therefore, O my soul, though the hills be removed, and cast into the midst of the sea. O let my faith triumph, my heart rejoice upon this ground of comfort. I see the same rocks now, and in the same place and condition they were many years ago. Though they have endured many storms, yet there they abide ; and so shall Sion, when the proud waves have spent their fury and rage against it.

CHAPTER XII.

On the Adventures of Mariners for Gain.

OBSERVATION.

How exceeding solicitous and adventurous are seamen for a small portion of the world! How prodigal of strength and life for it! They will run to the ends of the earth, engage in a thousand dangers, upon the probability of getting a small estate. Hopes of gain make them willing to adventure their liberty, yea, their life; and encourage them to endure heat, cold, and hunger, and a thousand straits and difficulties, to which they are frequently exposed.

APPLICATION.

How hot and eager are men's affections after the world! And how remiss and cold towards things eternal! They are careful and troubled about many things, but seldom mind the great and necessary matter. (*Luke* x. 40.) They can rise early, go to bed late, eat the bread of carefulness: But when did they so deny themselves for their poor souls? Their heads are full of designs and projects to get or advance an estate: "We will go into such a city, continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain." (*James* iv. 13.) This is the master-design, which engrosseth all their time, studies, and contrivances, the will hath passed a decree for it, the heart and affections are fully let out to it: "They will be rich." (*1 Tim.* vi. 9.) This decree of the will, the SPIRIT OF GOD takes deep notice of, and indeed it is the clearest discovery of a man's condition: For, look what is highest in the estimation, first and last in the thoughts, and upon which we spend our time and strength with delight; certainly, that is our treasure. The heads and hearts of good men are full of solicitous cares and fears about their spiritual condition: The great design they drive on, to

which all other things are but things on the bye, is to make sure their calling and election. This is the weight and bias of their spirit; if their hearts wander after any other thing, this reduces them again.

REFLECTION.

LORD, this hath been my manner from my youth, may the worldly man say; I have been labouring for the meat that perisheth; disquieting myself in vain, full of projects for the world, and unwearied in my endeavours to compass an earthly treasure! Yet therein I have either been checked by Providence; or, if I have obtained, yet I am no sooner come to enjoy that comfort I promised myself in it, but I am ready to leave it all, to be stripped of it by death, and in that day all my thoughts perish. But in the mean time, what have I done for my soul? When did I ever break a night's sleep, or deny myself for it? Ah! fool that I am, to nourish and pamper a vile body, which must shortly lie under the clods, and become a loathsome carcass; and, in the mean time, neglect and undo my poor soul, which partakes of the nature of angels, and must live for ever: I have kept others' vineyards, but mine own I have not kept; I have been a drudge and slave to the world: In a worse condition hath my soul been, than others that are condemned to the mines. LORD, change my treasure, and change my heart! O let it suffice that I have been thus long labouring in the fire, for very vanity. Now gather up my heart and affections in thyself, and let my great design now be, to secure a special interest in thy blessed self, that I may once say, "To me to live is CHRIST."

CHAPTER XIII.

On the Care of Providence over the living Creatures of the Sea.

OBSERVATION.

THERE are multitudes of living creatures in the sea. When GOD blessed the waters, he said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly, both fish and fowl, that move in it, and fly about it. Yet all those multitudes of fish and fowl, both in sea and land, are cared and provided for. “Thou givest them their meat in due season: Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.”

APPLICATION.

IF GOD takes care for the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, much more will he care and provide for those that fear him. “When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst; I the LORD will hear them, I the GOD of Israel will not forsake them.” (*Isa.* xli. 17.) “Take no thought for your life,” saith the LORD, “what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; or for the body, what ye shall put on.” Which he backs with an argument from GOD’s providence over the creatures. GOD would have his people be without carefulness, (that is, anxious care,) and “to cast their care upon him, for he careth for them.” There be two main arguments suggested in the Gospel, to quiet and satisfy our hearts in this particular: The one is, That the gift of JESUS CHRIST amounts to more than all those things come to; yea, in bestowing him he has given that which eminently comprehends all those inferior mercies in it: “He that spared not his own SON, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?” (*Rom.* viii. 32.) And, “All things are yours, and ye are CHRIST’s.

and CHRIST is GOD'S." (1 *Cor* iii. 22.) Another argument is, that GOD gives these temporal things to those he never gave CHRIST unto, and therefore there is no great matter in them: Yea, to those which, in a little while, are to be thrust into hell. (*Psalms* xvii. 14.) Now, if GOD clothe and feed his enemies, if (to allude to that, *Luke* xii. 28,) He clothe this grass, which to-day is in its pride and glory in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, into hell; how much more will he clothe and provide for you that fear him?

This GOD that feeds all the creatures, is your Father, and a Father that never dies; and therefore you shall not be as exposed orphans, that are the children of such a FATHER. For "he hath said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you." (*Heb.* xiii. 3.) I have read of a good woman, that, in all wants and distresses, was wont to encourage herself with that word, "The LORD liveth." But one time being in deep distress, and forgetting that consolation, one of her little children came to her, and said, 'Mother, why weep you so? is GOD dead?' Which words, from a child, shamed her out of her unbelieving fears, and brought her spirit to rest.

How sweet a life might Christians live, could they but bring their hearts to a full subjection to the will of GOD! to be content not only with what he commands and approves, but also with what he allots and appoints! It was a sweet reply, that a woman once made upon her death-bed, to a friend that asked her, 'Whether she was more willing to live or die?' She answered, 'I am pleased with what GOD pleaseth.' 'Yea,' said her friend, 'but if GOD should refer it to you, which would you choose?' 'Truly, saith she, 'if GOD should refer it to me, I would refer it to him again.' Ah, blessed life! when the will is swallowed up in the will of GOD, and the heart at rest in his care and love, and pleased with all his appointments.

REFLECTION.

I remember my fault this day, may many a soul say. Ah how faithless and distrustful have I been, notwithstanding the

great security GOD hath given to my faith, both in his word and works! O my soul, thou hast greatly sinned therein, and dishonoured thy Father! I have been worse to my Father, than my children are to me. They trouble not their thoughts with what they shall eat, or drink, or put on, but trust to my care and provision for that: Yet I cannot trust my Father, though I have ten thousand times more reason so to do, than they have to trust me. Surely, unless I were jealous of my Father's affection, I could not be so dubious of his provision for me. I should rather wonder that I have so much, than repine I have no more. I should rather have been troubled that I have done no more for GOD, than that I have received no more from GOD. I have not proclaimed it to the world by my conversation, that I have found a sufficiency in him alone. How have I debased the faithfulness and all-sufficiency of GOD, and magnified these earthly trifles by my anxiety about them! Had I had more faith, a light purse would not have made such a heavy heart. LORD, how often hast thou convinced me of this folly, and put me to the blush, when thou hast confuted my unbelief; so that I have resolved never to distrust thee more, and yet new exigencies renew this corruption! How contradictory also have my heart and my prayers been! I pray for them conditionally, and with submission to thy will; I dare not say to thee, 'I must have them; yet this hath been the language of my heart and life. O convince me of this folly!



CHAPTER XIV

On the Disagreeableness of the Waters.

OBSERVATION.

THE waters of the sea, in themselves, are brackish and unpleasant, yet being exhaled by the sun, and condensed into clouds, they fall down into pleasant showers; or, if

drained through the earth, their property is thereby altered ; and that which was so salt in the sea, becomes exceeding sweet and pleasant in the springs.

APPLICATION.

Afflictions in themselves are evil, very bitter and unpleasant. Yet not intrinsically evil, as sin is ; for if so, the holy GOD would never own it for his own act, as he doth, *Mic.* iii. 2. But it is evil, as it is the fruit of sin, and grievous unto sense. But though it be thus brackish and unpleasant in itself, yet passing through CHRIST, it loses that ungrateful property, and becomes pleasant in the fruits thereof unto believers.

Yea, such are the blessed fruits thereof, that they are to account it all joy, when they fall into divers afflictions. (*James* i. 2.) DAVID could bless GOD, that he was afflicted ; and many have done the like. A good woman once compared her afflictions to her children ; saith she, ‘ They put me in pain in bearing them ; yet as I know not which child, so neither which affliction I could be without.’

Sometimes the LORD sanctifies affliction to discover the corruption that is in the heart. (*Deut.* viii. 2.) It is a furnace to show the dross. When a sharp affliction comes, then the pride, impatience, and unbelief of the heart appear. When the water is stirred, then the mud and sediment that lay at the bottom rise. Little (saith the afflicted soul) did I think, there had been in me that pride, self-love, distrust of GOD, carnal fear, and unbelief, as I now find. O where is my patience, my faith, my glory in tribulation ? Now what a blessed thing is this, to have the heart thus discovered !

Again : Sanctified afflictions discover the emptiness of the creature. Now the LORD hath stained its pride, and veiled its tempting splendor, by this or that affliction ; and the soul sees what a shallow deceitful thing it is. The world (as one hath truly observed) is then only great ‘ in our eyes, when we are full of sense : But affliction makes us more spiritual, and then it is nothing. It drives us

nearer to GOD, makes us see the necessity of the life of faith, with multitudes of other benefits.

But yet these sweet fruits of affliction do not naturally spring from it: No, we may as well look for grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, as for such fruits from affliction, till CHRIST'S sanctifying hand and art have passed upon them.

The reason why they become thus sweet and pleasant is, because they run now into another channel; JESUS CHRIST hath removed them from mount Ebal to Gerizim; they are no more the effects of vindictive wrath, but paternal chastisement; and as one well notes, 'A teaching affliction is the result of all the offices of JESUS CHRIST. As a King, he chastens; as a Prophet, he teacheth, viz. by chastening; and as a Priest, he hath purchased this grace of the FATHER, that the dry rod might blossom, and bear fruit.' Behold then, a sanctified affliction is a cup, wherinto JESUS CHRIST hath wrung and pressed the juice and virtue of all his mediatory offices. Surely, that must be a cup of generous wine, a cup of blessing to the people of GOD.

REFLECTION.

Hence may the unsanctified soul reflect upon itself; O my soul, what good hast thou gotten by all, or any of thy afflictions; GOD'S rod hath been dumb to thee, or thou deaf to it. I have not learned one holy instruction from it. My troubles have left me the same, or worse than they found me; my heart was proud, earthly and vain before, and so it remains still: They have not purged out, but only given vent to the pride and Atheism of my heart. I have been in my afflictions, as AHAZ was in his, who "in the midst of this distress, yet trespassed more and more against the LORD." (2 Chron. xx. viii. 22.) When I have been in storms at sea, or troubles at home, my soul within me hath been as a raging sea. Surely this rod is not the rod of GOD'S children. I have proved but dross in the furnace, and I fear the LORD will put me away as dross, as he threatens to do the wicked.

Hence also should holy souls draw much encouragement amidst all their troubles. These are the fruits of God's fatherly love to me. Why should I fear in the day of evil? Or tremble any more at affliction? Though they seem as a serpent at a distance, yet are they a rod in hand. Blessed be that skilful and gracious hand, that makes the rod, the dry rod, to blossom, and bear such precious fruit!

LORD, what a mystery of love lies in this dispensation! That sin which first brought afflictions into the world, is now itself carried out of the world by affliction. O what can frustrate my salvation, when those very things that seem most to oppose it, are made subservient to it; and contrary to their own nature, promote and further it!

CHAPTER XV

On the Bounds of the Sea.

OBSERVATION.

IT is a wonderful work of God, to bound such a vast and furious creature, as the sea; which, according to the judgment of many learned men, is higher than the earth; and that it hath a propension to overflow it, is evident, both from its nature and motion; were it not, that the great God had laid his law upon it. And this is a work wherein the Lord glories: "Thou hast set a bound, that they may not pass over, that they turn not again to cover the earth." (*Psalm* civ. 9.) Which it is clear they would do, were they not thus limited. So, "Who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? I brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be staid." (*Job* xxviii. 8, 10, 11.)

APPLICATION.

AND no less is the glorious power and mercy of God dis-

covered in bridling the rage of SATAN and his instruments, that they break not in upon the inheritance of the LORD and destroy it. "Surely, the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath thou shalt restrain." (*Psalm lxxvi. 10.*) By which it is more than hinted, that there is a world of rage and malice in the hearts of wicked men, which fain would, but cannot vent itself, because the LORD restrains, or as the Hebrew, girds it up. SATAN is the envious one, and his rage is great against the people of God. (*Rev. xii. 12.*) But God holds him and all his instruments in a chain; and it is well for God's people that it is so.

They are limited as the sea, and so the LORD in a providential way speaks to them, "Hitherto shall you go, and no further." Sometimes he ties them up so short, that they cannot touch his people, though they have the greatest opportunities and advantages: "When they were but a few men in number, yea, very few, and strangers; when they went from one nation to another; from one kingdom to another people: He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproved Kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my Prophets no harm." (*Psalm cv. 12, 13, 14, 15.*) And sometimes he permits them to trouble his people, but then sets bounds to them, beyond which they must not pass. "Behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days." (*Rev. ii. 10.*)

Here are four remarkable limitations upon SATAN and his agents, in reference to the people of God: A limitation as to the persons, not all, but some: A limitation of the punishment, a prison, not a grave, not hell: A limitation upon them as to the end, for trial, not ruin: And lastly, as to the duration, not as long as they please, but ten days.

REFLECTION.

O MY soul, what comfort and consolation mayest thou suck from the breast of this truth, in the darkest day of

trouble ! Thou seest how the flowing sea drives to overwhelm the earth : Who has arrested it in its course, and stopped its violence ? Who has confined it to its place ? Certainly none other but the LORD. When I see it threaten the shore with its proud, furious and insulting waves, I wonder it doth not swallow up all ; but I see it no sooner touch the sands, which God hath made its bounds, but it retires, and, as it were with submission, respects those limits which God hath set it.

Thus the fiercest element is repressed by the feeblest thing : Thou seest also, how full of wrath and fury wicked men are, how they rage like the troubled sea, and threaten to overwhelm thee, and all the LORD's inheritance : And then the floods of ungodly men make thee afraid, yet are they restrained by an invisible hand, that they cannot execute their purpose, nor perform their enterprize. How full of Devils and deviled men, is this lower world ! Yet in the midst of them all, hast thou hitherto been preserved. O my soul, admire and adore that glorious power of God, by which thou art kept unto salvation. Is not the preservation of us in the midst of such hosts of enemies, as great a miracle, though not so sensible, as the preservation of those three Jews in the midst of the fiery furnace ? For there is as strong a propension in SATAN, and wicked men, to destroy us, as in the fire to burn. O then let me cheerfully address myself to the faithful discharge of my duty, and stand no longer in a slavish fear of creatures, who can have no power against me, but what is given them from above. (*John* xix. 11.) And no more shall be given, than shall turn to the glory of God, (*Psalms* lxxvi. 10,) and the advantage of my soul. (*Rom.* viii. 28.)

CHAPTER XVI.

On the Use and Necessity of the Compass.

OBSERVATION.

OF HOW great use and necessity is the compass to seamen ! Though they can coast a little way, yet they dare not venture far into the ocean without it. It directs and shapes their course for them : And if by the violence of wind and weather they be driven beside their due course, yet by the help of this they are brought to rights again. It is wonderful to consider, how by the help of this guide they can run in a direct line many hundred leagues, and at last fall right with the smallest island ; which is in the ocean, comparatively, but as the head of a small pin upon a table.

APPLICATION.

What the compass and all other instruments are to the navigator, that and much more is the Word of God to us in our course to heaven. This is our compass to steer our course by, and it is truly touched ; he that orders his conversation by it, shall safely arrive in heaven at last. “ As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy.”

This word is as necessary to us in our way to glory, as a lamp or lanthorn in a dark night. This is a “ light shining in a dark place, till the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts.” (2 *Pet.* i. 19.) If any that profess to know it, and own it as a rule, miss heaven at last, let them not blame the word for misguiding them, but their own negligent and deceitful hearts, that shape not their course to its prescriptions.

What blame can you lay upon the compass, if you steer not exactly by it ? How many are there, that, neglecting this rule, will coast it to heaven by their own reason ! No

wonder such fall short, and perish in the way. This is a faithful guide, and brings all that follow it to a blessed end. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory." (*Psalm lxxiii. 24.*) The whole hundred and nineteenth Psalm is spent in commendation of its transcendent excellency and usefulness. LUTHER professed, that he would not take the whole world in exchange for one leaf of it. Lay but this rule before you, and walk accurately by it, and you cannot be out of your way to heaven.

Some, indeed, have opened their blasphemous mouths against it; as JULIAN, that cursed apostate, who feared not to say, 'There was as good matter in PHO CYLIDES as in SOLOMON.' And the Papists generally slight it, making it a lame imperfect rule; yea, making their own traditions the touchstone of doctrines and foundation of faith: They set up their inventions above it. And thus do they make it void, or, as the word signifies, (*Matt. xv. 6.*) unlord it, and take away its authority as a rule. But those that have thus slighted it, and follow bye-paths, take not hold of the paths of life. All other lights to which men pretend, in the neglect of this, are but false fires, that will lead men into the pit of destruction.

REFLECTION.

And is thy word a compass, to direct my course to glory? O where am I then likely to arrive at last, that in all my course have neglected it, and steered according to the counsel of my own heart? LORD, I have not made thy word the man of my counsel, but consulted with flesh and blood: I have not inquired at this oracle, nor studied it, and made it the guide of my way; but walked after the sight of my eyes, and the lust of my heart. Whither, LORD, can I come at last, but to hell, after this way of reckoning? Some have slighted thy word professedly, and I have slighted it practically. I have a poor soul embarked for eternity; it is now floating on a dangerous ocean, rocks and sands on every side, and I go adrift before every wind

of temptation, and know not where I am. Ah LORD, convince me of the danger of this condition. O convince me of my ignorance in thy word, and the fatal consequence thereof. LORD, let me now resolve to study, prize, and to obey it ; hide it in my heart, that I may not sin against it. Open my understanding, that I may understand the Scriptures : Open my heart to entertain it in love. O thou that hast been so gracious as to give a perfect rule, give me also a perfect heart, to walk by that rule to glory !

CHAPTER XVII.

On the Inconstancy of the Motion of the Waves.

OBSERVATION.

THE sea hath its alternate course and motion, its ebbings and flowings : No sooner is it high-water, but it begins to ebb again, and leave the shore naked and dry, which but a little before it covered and overflowed. And as its tide, so also its waves are the emblem of inconstancy, still rolling this way and that, never fixed and quiet. *Instabilis unda* : ‘ As fickle as a wave,’ is common to a proverb. See *James* i. 6. “ He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with winds, and tossed.”

APPLICATION.

Thus mutable and inconstant are all outward things : there is no depending on them ; nothing of substance, or any solid consistence in them. “ The fashion of this world passeth away.” (1 *Cor.* vii. 31.) It is a high point of folly to depend upon such vanities. “ Why wilt thou set,” (or, as it is in the Hebrew,) “ cause thine eyes to fly upon that which is not ? For riches certainly make themselves wings and fly away, as an eagle toward heaven.” (*Prov.* xxiii. 5.) ‘ In flying to us,’ saith AUGUSTINE, ‘ they have *alas vix quidem passerinas*, scarce a sparrow’s wings ; but in flying from us, wings as an eagle. And

those wings they are said to make to themselves, that is, the cause of its transitoriness is in itself; the creature is subjected to vanity by sin; they are sweet flowers, but withered presently: "As the flower of the grass, so shall the rich man fade away." (*James* i. 10.) The man is like the stalk of grass, his riches are the flower of the grass, his glory and outward beauty; the stalk is soon withered, but the flower much sooner. This is either withered upon, or blown off from it, while the stalk abides. Many a man outlives his estate and honour, and stands in the world as a bare dry stalk in the field, whose flower, beauty, and bravery are gone; one puff of wind blows it away, one churlish easterly blast shrivels it up.

How mad a thing is it then, for any man to be lifted up in pride, upon such a vanity as this is; to build so lofty a roof upon such a feeble, tottering foundation! We have seen meadows full of flowers, mown down and withered, men of great estates impoverished suddenly: And when, like a meadow that is mown, they have begun to recover themselves again, (as the phrase is,) the LORD has sent "grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth." (*Amos* vii. 1.) Just as the grasshoppers and other creatures devour the second tender herbage, as soon as the field begins to recover its verdure; so men, after they have been blasted by Providence, begin after a while to flourish again, but then comes some new affliction and blasts all. None have more frequent experience of this, than you that are merchants and seamen, whose estates are floating: And yet such as have had the highest security in the eye of reason, have, notwithstanding, experienced the vanity of these things. GALLIMER, King of the Vandals, was brought so low, that he sent to his friend for a sponge, a loaf of bread, and an harp; a sponge to dry up his tears, a loaf of bread to maintain his life, and an harp to solace himself in his misery. BELISARIUS was a man famous in his time, General of an army; yet having his eyes put out, and stripped of all earthly comforts, was led about, crying, *Date obolum Belisario*, Give one

penny to poor BELISARIUS. Instances in history of this kind are infinite. Men of the greatest estates and honours have nevertheless become the very *ludibria fortunæ*, as one speaks, the very scorn of fortune.

Yea, and not only wicked men, that have gotten their estates by rapine and oppression, have lived to see them thus scattered by Providence; but sometimes good men have had their estates, how justly soever acquired, scattered by Providence also. Who ever had an estate better gotten, or better managed, than JOB? Yet all was overthrown and swept away in a moment, though in mercy to him, as the issue demonstrated.

O then, what a vanity is it to set the heart, and let out the affections on them! You can never depend too much upon GOD, nor too little upon the creature. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, and trust in uncertain riches." (1 *Tim.* vi. 17.)

REFLECTION.

Are all earthly things thus transitory and vain? Then what a reproach and shame is it to me, that the men of this world should be more industrious in the prosecution of such vanities, than I am to enrich my soul with everlasting treasure? O my soul, thou dost not lay out thy strength and earnestness for heaven, with any proportion to what they do for the world. I have indeed higher motives, and a surer reward than they: But as I have an advantage above them herein, so have they an advantage above me in the strength and entireness of the principle by which they are acted. What they do for the world, they do with all their might; they have no contrary principle to oppose them; their thoughts, strength, and affection, are entirely carried in one channel: But I must strive through a thousand difficulties and contradictions. O my God, shall not my heart be more enlarged in zeal, love, and delight in thee, than theirs are after their lusts? O let me once find it so!

Again, is the creature so vain and unstable, then why

are my affections so eager after it? And why am I so apt to dote upon its beauty, especially when GOD is staining all its pride and glory?

O that my spirit were raised above them, and my conversation more in heaven! O that like that angel, (*Rev.* x. 1, 2,) which came down from heaven, and set one foot upon the sea, and another upon the earth, having a crown upon his head, so I might set one foot upon all the cares, fears, and terrors of the world, and another upon all the tempting glory of the world; treading both under foot in the dust, and crowning myself with nothing but spiritual excellences and glory.



CHAPTER XVIII.

Tempests Executioners of GOD's Threatenings.

OBSERVATION.

THE waves of the sea are sometimes raised by God's commission, to be executioners of his threatenings upon sinners. When JONAH fled from the presence of the LORD to Tarshish, the text saith, "The LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest, so that the ship was like to be broken." (*Jonah* i. 4.) These were God's bailiffs, to arrest the run-away Prophet. And (*Psalms* cxlviii. 8) the stormy winds are said to "fulfil his word;" not only his "command," in rising when God bids them, but his word of "threatening" also. And hence it is called "a destroying wind," (*Jer.* li. 1,) and "a stormy wind in God's fury." (*Ezek.* xiii. 13.)

APPLICATION.

If these be the executioners of the LORD's threatenings, how sad then is their condition that put to sea under the guilt of their sins! If GOD should commission the winds to go after and arrest thee for all thou owest him, where art thou then? How dare you put forth under a divine

threat, before all be cleared betwixt GOD and thee? Sins in Scripture are called debts. (*Matt. vi. 12.*) They are debts to GOD; not that we owe them to him, or ought to sin, but because they render the sinner obnoxious to GOD's judgments. All sinners must undergo the curse, either in their own person, according to the letter of the law, (*Gen. ii. 17; Gal. iii. 10.*) or their Surety, according to the tacit intent of the law manifested to be the mind of the Law-giver. (*Gen. iii. 15; Gal. iii. 13, 14.*)

Now, he that by faith hath interest in his Surety, hath his discharge sealed in the blood of CHRIST: But if thou be an impenitent sinner, thy debt remains upon thine own score: "And be sure thy sin will find thee out," wherever thou goest; (*Numb. xxxii 23;*) that is, GOD's revenging hand for sin will be upon thee: Thou mayest lose the sight of thy sins, but they lose not the sight of thee; they follow after, as the hound doth the fleeing game upon the scent, till they have fetched thee up: And then consider, "how fearful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living GOD." How soon may a storm arrest, and bring thee before the bar of GOD!

REFLECTION.

O MY soul, what a case art thou in, if this be so! Are not all thy sins yet upon thine own score? Hast thou not made light of CHRIST, and that precious blood of his, and hitherto persisted in thy rebellion against him? And what can the issue of this be, but ruin? There is abundant mercy indeed for returning sinners; but the Gospel speaks of none for impenitent sinners. And though many who are going on in their sins are overtaken by grace, yet there is no grace promised to such as go on in sin. If GOD should arrest me by the next storm, and call me to an account for all that I owe him, I must then lie in the prison of hell to all eternity; for I can never pay the debt: Nay, all the angels in heaven cannot satisfy for it: Being Christless, I am under all the curses in the book of GOD. LORD, pity and spare me a little longer! O discover thy CHRIST unto

me, and give me faith in his blood, and then thou art fully satisfied, and I discharged, at once. O require not the debt at my hand, for then thou wilt never be satisfied, nor I acquitted. What profit, LORD, is there in my blood! O my soul, make haste to CHRIST, thy city of refuge; thou knowest not how soon the avenger of blood may overtake thee.

CHAPTER XIX.

Merchandise to be thrown overboard in a Storm.

OBSERVATION.

IN storms the richest commodities are cast overboard; they stand not upon it, when life and all is in hazard. *Jonah* i. 5, the mariners cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it. How highly soever men prize such commodities, yet reason tells them, it were better those should perish, than life. SATAN himself could say, “Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life.”

APPLICATION.

AND surely, it is every way as highly reasonable, that men should cast out and cut off their dearest lusts, rather than their immortal souls sink and perish in the storm of God’s wrath. Life indeed is a precious treasure, and highly valued by men: “A living dog is better than a dead lion.” And we find men willing to part with their estates, limbs, or any outward comfort, for the preservation of it. The woman in the Gospel spent all she had on the Physicians for her health, a degree below life.

Some indeed much over-value their lives, and part with CHRIST and peace of conscience for it; but he that thus saves it shall lose it. Now, if life be so much worth, what then is the soul worth?

Life is more worth than all the world, but my soul is more worth than ten thousand lives. Nature teacheth you to value the first so high, and grace should teach you to value the second much higher. Now here is the case: Either you must part with your sins, or with your souls; if these be not cast out, both must sink together. God saith to you in this case, as to AHAB, when he spared BENEHADAD, "Because thou hast let go a man, which God hath appointed to destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life." (1 *Kings* xx. 42.) Guilt will raise a storm of wrath, as JONAH did, if not cast out.

REFLECTION.

AND must sin or the soul perish? Must my life, yea my eternal life go for it, if I spare it? O then let me not be cruel to mine own soul, in sparing my sin. O my soul, this foolish indulgence will be thy ruin: If I spare it God hath said, "he will not spare me." (*Deut.* xxvi. 20.)

It is true, the pains of mortification are sharp, but yet easier than the pains of hell: To cut off a right hand, or pluck out a right eye, is hard; but to have my soul cut off eternally from God, is harder. Is it as easy, O my soul, to burn for them in hell, as to mortify them on earth? Surely it is "profitable for me, that one member perish, rather than that all be cast into hell."

I see the merchant willing to part with rich wares, if embarked with them in a storm: And those that have gangrened legs or arms, willingly stretch them out to be cut off, to preserve life: And shall I be willing to endure no difficulties for my soul? CHRIST reckoned souls worth his blood; and is it not worth my self-denial? LORD, let me not warm a snake in my bosom, that will at last sting me to the heart.

CHAPTER XX.

The Sea not to be appeased.

OBSERVATION.

WHEN the sea works and is tempestuous, it is not in the power of any creature to appease it. When the Egyptians would express an impossibility, they did it by the picture of a man treading upon the waves. It is storied of CANUTE, an ancient Danish King, that when a mighty storm of flattery arose upon him, he appeased it by showing that he could not appease the sea: One of his courtiers told him, as he rode near the seaside, ‘that he was Lord of the sea, as well as land.’ ‘Well,’ said the King, ‘we shall see that by and by.’ And so went to the water-side, and with a loud voice cried, ‘O ye sea and waves, come no farther, touch not my feet.’ But the sea came up, notwithstanding that charge, and confuted the flattery. But JESUS CHRIST hath the command of them indeed: It is said of him, “that he rebuked them:” (*Matt.* viii. 26 :) And he quiets them with a word, “Peace, be still,” (*Mark* iv. 38,) as one would hush a child, and it obeyed him.

APPLICATION.

CONSCIENCE, when awakened by the terrors of the LORD, is like a raging tempestuous sea; so it works, so it roars; and it is not in the power of all the creatures to quiet it. Spiritual terrors, as well as spiritual consolations, are not known till felt. When the arrows of the Almighty are shot into the spirit, and the terrors of GOD set themselves in array against the soul; when the venom of those arrows drinks up the spirits, and those armies of terrors charge violently upon it, (as *Job* vi. 4,) what creature then is able to stand before them! Even GOD’s own children have felt such terrors as have “distracted” them. (*Psalms* lxxxi. 51.) Conscience is the seat of guilt. It is like a burning-glass,

it contracts the beams of the threatenings, twists them together, and reflects them on the soul, until it smoke, seoreh, and flame. If the wrath of a King be like the roaring of a lion, then what is the Almighty's wrath! which is "burning wrath," (*Job* xix. 11,) "tearing wrath," (*Psalms* l. 22,) and "abiding wrath." (*Job* iii. 16.)

In this case no creature can relieve, "all are physicians of no value;" some under these terrors have thought hell more tolerable, and by a violent hand have thrust themselves out of the world into it, to avoid these gnawings: Yet JESUS CHRIST can quickly calm these waves also, and hush them with a word; yea, he is the Physician, and no other. It is the sprinkling of his blood which allays those heats within: That blood of sprinkling speaks peace, when all other have practised upon the soul to no purpose; and the reason is, because he is a person in whom God and man, justice and mercy meet, and kiss each other. And hence faith fetches in peace to the soul.

REFLECTION.

CAN none appease a troubled conscience but CHRIST? Then learn, O my soul, daily more and more to savour that glorious name, even JESUS, that delivers not only from the wrath to come, but that which is felt here also. If the foretaste of hell be so intolerable, if a few drops let fall on the conscience in this life, be so scalding and insufferable, what is it to have all the vials poured out to eternity, when there shall be nothing to divert or allay it?

Here men have somewhat to abate those terrors, some hopes of mercy, at least a possibility; but there is none. O my soul! how art thou loaded with guilt! And what wouldest thou be, should God rouse that sleepy lion in thy bosom! My condition is not at all the better, because my conscience is quiet: The day is coming, when it must awake, and will lighten and thunder terribly within me, if I get not CHRIST first. O LORD, who knows the power of thy wrath? O let me not carry this guilt out of the world with me, to maintain those everlasting flames! Let me

give no sleep to mine eyes, nor slumber to mine eye-lids, till I feel the comfort of that blood of sprinkling, which alone speaketh peace.

CHAPTER XXI.

On the Plenty of Fish in the Sea.

OBSERVATION.

THE Providence of God in furnishing us with such plenty of fish, is not slightly to be passed over. We have not only several sorts of fish in our own seas, which are caught in their seasons; but from several parts, especially the western parts of England, many sail of ships are sent yearly to the American parts of the world: Whence every year is brought home, not only enough to supply our own nation, but many thousand pounds worth also yearly returned from Spain, and other countries; by which trade many thousand families subsist.

APPLICATION.

BUT what return do we make to Heaven for these mercies? What notice is taken of the good hand of Providence, which thus supplies and feeds us with the blessings of the sea; I fear there are but few that own it, and are careful to make return accordingly. Men do not consider, that "their works are in the hand of God." (*Eccles. ix. 1.*) And even those that have the most immediate dependence upon Providence, as merchants and seamen, yet are very prone to undertake designs in the confidence of their own wisdom and industry; not looking higher for the blessing. They often "sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their drag, because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous;" (*Hab. i 16;*) viz. They attribute what is due to God, unto the creature. Now this is a sin highly provoking to the LORD: For look, in what degree the heart

cleaves to any other, in the same degree it departs from the living God.

And how do you think the blessed God will take it, to see himself thus debased, and the creature exalted into his place ; to see you carry yourselves to the creature as to a God, and to the blessed God as to a creature ? Surely, it is a great and common evil, and such as will blast all, if not timely discovered and lamented. If we make flesh our arm, it is just with God to wither and dry up the arm. Do we not, my brethren, look upon second causes, as if they had the main stroke in our business ? And pass by God, as if he came in by the bye ? But certainly, all endeavours will be unsanctified, if not successful, in which God is not eyed.

“ It is in vain for you to rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrows ; for so he giveth his beloved sleep ;” (*Psalms* cxxvii. 2 ;) that is, It is to no purpose for men to beat their brains, tire their spirits, and rack their consciences for an estate. The true way of acquiring and enjoying the creature, is by submitting quietly to the will of God, in a prudent and diligent, yet moderate use of lawful means ; nothing can thrive with us till then.

REFLECTION.

WHY then should I disquiet myself in vain, and rob myself of my peace, by these unbelieving cares and distractions ? This hath been my sin ! I have acted as if my condition had been at my own disposal : I have eyed creatures and means too much, and God too little. How have my hands hanged down with discouragement, when second causes have disappeared, or wrought cross to my designs, ready to transfer the fault on this thing or that ! And again, how apt am I to be vainly lifted up, when I see myself furnished with outward provision ! Oh, what a God-provoking wickedness is this ! How oft hath Providence checked my presumption, and dashed many hopeful projects ? Yet have I not owned it, as I ought, and submitted to it. It is a wonder this hath not closed the hand

of Providence against me, and pulled down a curse upon all: Ah, LORD, let me now learn to “acquaint myself with Thee; then shall I decree a thing, and it shall be established.” (*Job xxii. 28.*)

CHAPTER XXII.

The Mariners' Skill in Fishing.

OBSERVATION.

THERE is skill in fishing: They that go to sea on a fishing voyage, use to go provided with their craft, (as they fitly call it,) without which they can do nothing. They have their lines, hooks of several sizes, and their bait: They carefully observe their seasons; when the fish falls in, then they ply their business day and night.

APPLICATION.

BUT how much more skilful and industrious is SATAN to ensnare and destroy souls! The Devil makes a voyage as well as you; he hath his baits for you, as you for the fish; he hath his devices and wiles to catch souls; he is a serpent, an old serpent; too crafty for man in his perfection, much more in his degenerate state, his understanding being hurt by the fall, and all his faculties poisoned and perverted.

Divines observe four steps or degrees of SATAN's tempting power. 1. He can find out the constitution-evils of men; he knows to what sin their natures are more especially inclinable. 2. He can propound suitable objects to those lusts; he can exactly hit every man's humour: As AGRIPPINA mixed her poison in that meat her husband loved best. 3. He can cast motions into the mind, to close with those tempting objects; as it is said of JUDAS, “The Devil put it into his heart.” (*John xiii. 2.*) 4. He can solicit, irritate, and provoke the heart, and, by those restless solicitations, weary it; and hereby he often draws men to commit such things as startled them in the first motion.

All this he can do, if he find the work stick and meet with difficulties; yet doth he not act to the utmost of his skill and power, at all times and with all persons; neither indeed need he so to do, the very propounding of an object is enough to some without any further solicitation.

And beside all this, his policy much appears in the choice of place, time, and instruments to tempt by: And thus are poor souls caught, as "fishes in an evil net." (*Eccles. ix. 12.*) The carnal man is led by sense, as the beast, and SATAN handles and fits him accordingly. He useth all sorts of motives, not only internal, but external and sensitive also; as the sparkling of the wine, when it gives its colours in the glass: The harlot's beauty, whose eye-lids are snares, hiding always the hook, and concealing the issue from them. He promises them gain and profit, pleasure and delight, and all that is tempting, with assurance of secrecy. By these he fastens the fatal hook in their jaws, and thus they are led captive at his will.

REFLECTION.

AND is SATAN so subtle and industrious to entice souls to sin? Doth he thus cast out his golden baits, and allure souls with pleasure to their ruin? Then how doth it behove thee, O my soul, to be jealous and wary! How strict a guard should I set upon every sense! Ah, let me not so much regard how sin comes towards me in the temptation, as how it goes off at the last. The day in which Sodom was destroyed, began with a pleasant sun-shine, but ended with fire and brimstone.

I may promise myself much content in the satisfaction of my lusts: But O, how certainly will it end in my ruin! AHAB, doubtless, promised himself much content in the vineyard of NABOTH, but his blood paid for it in the portion of JEZREEL. The harlot's bed was perfumed to entice the simple young man: (*Prov. vii. 17.*) But those chambers of delight proved the chambers of death, and her house the way to hell. With what a smiling face doth

sin come on towards me in the temptations! How does it tickle the fancy and please the deceived heart? But what a dreadful upshot hath it? The delight is quickly gone, but the guilt thereof remains to amaze and terrify the soul with ghastly forms, and dreadful representations of the wrath of God.

As sin hath its delights attending it to enter and fasten it, so it hath its horrors and stings to torment and wound: And as certainly as I see those go before it to make way, so certainly shall I find these follow after, and tread upon its heels. No sooner is the conscience awakened, but all those delights vanish as a night-vision, or as a dream when one awakes; and then I shall cry, ‘Here is the hook, but where is the bait? Here is the guilt and horror, but where the delight that was promised? And I, whither shall I now go? Ah, my deceitful lusts! You have enticed and left me in the midst of all miseries.’



CHAPTER XXIII.

On the Dearth of Trade to foreign Countries.

OBSERVATION.

THERE are many sad complaints abroad that trade fails, nothing turns to account. And though all countries be open and free for traffic, yet there seems to be a dearth, a secret curse upon trading. You run from country to country, and come losers home. Men can hardly render a reason of it; few hit the right cause of this judgment.

APPLICATION.

THAT success in trade is from the blessing of God, I suppose few are so atheistical, as to deny or question. The Devil himself acknowledges it: “Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.” (*Job* i. 10.) It is not in the power of man to get riches,

“Thou shalt remember the LORD thy GOD, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.” (*Deut.* viii. 18.) It is his blessing that makes good men rich, and his permission that makes wicked men rich. The maxim came from hell: ‘Every man is the contriver of his own condition.’ Certainly, “The good of man is not in his own hand.” (*Job* xxi. 16.) “Promotion cometh not from the east or west.” (*Psalms* lxxvi. 6. 7.)

This being acknowledged, it is evident, that in all disappointment, and want of success in our callings, we ought not to stick in second causes, but to look higher, even to the hand of GOD: For, whose it is to give blessing, his also it is to withhold it. And this is as clear in Scripture as the other. It is the LORD that taketh away the fishes of the sea. (*Hos.* iv. 3; *Zeph.* i. 3.) It is he that “curseth our blessings.” (*Mal.* ii. 2.)

This GOD doth as a punishment for sin, and the abuse of mercies: And therefore in such cases, we ought not to rest in general complaints of one another, but search what those sins are that provoke the LORD to inflict such judgments.

And here I must request your patience to bear a plain and close word of conviction. My brethren, I am persuaded these are the sins, among many other, that provoke the LORD to blast all your employments:

1. Our undertaking designs without prayer. Alas, how few of us begin with GOD! Interest him in our dealings, and ask counsel and direction at his mouth. Prayer is that which sanctifies all employments. The very Heathen could say, *A Jove principium*,—They must begin with GOD. O that we had more prayers and fewer oaths!

2. Injustice and fraud in our dealings. A sin to which merchants are prone. This is that which will blast all our enjoyments.

3. An over earnest endeavour after the world: Men make this their business; they will be rich: And hence it is, they are not only unmerciful to themselves, in wearing and wasting their own spirits, with carking cares, but to such as they employ; neither regarding the souls nor bodies of men:

Scarce affording them the liberty of the LORD's day ; (as hath been too common in our Newfoundland employments ;) or if they have it, yet they are so worn out with incessant labours, that that precious time is spent either in sleep or idleness. It is no wonder GOD gives you more rest than you would have, since that day of rest hath been no better improved. This over-doing hath not been the least cause of our undoing.

Lastly, Our abuse of prosperity, when GOD gave it ; making GOD's mercies the food and fuel of our lusts. When we had an affluence of outward blessings, this made us kick against GOD : Yea, grow proud of our strength and riches. How few of us, in the days of our prosperity, behave ourselves as good JEHOSHAPHAT did ? " He had silver and gold in abundance, and his heart was lifted in the way of GOD's commandments ; " (2 *Chron.* xvii. 5, 6 ;) not in pride and insolence.

REFLECTION.

ARE these the sins that blast our blessings, and wither our mercies ? O then let me cease to wonder it is no better, and rather admire that it is no worse with me ; that my neglect in prayer, injustice in dealings, earthly-mindedness, and abuse of former mercies, have not provoked GOD to strip me naked of all my enjoyments. Let me humbly accept from the LORD the punishment of my iniquities, and lay my hand upon my mouth. And O that these disappointments might convince me of the creature's vanity, and cause me to drive on another trade for heaven ; then shall I adore thy wisdom in rending from me those idolized enjoyments. Ah LORD, when I had them, my heart was a perpetual drudge to them. How did I then forget GOD, neglect duty, and not mind my eternal concern ! If these had not perished, in all probability I had perished. My GOD, let my soul prosper, and then a small portion of these things shall afford me more comfort than ever I had in their greatest abundance. " A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked."

CHAPTER XXIV.

On the Fishes of Prey.

OBSERVATION.

THERE are fishes of prey in the sea, as well as birds and beasts of prey on the land. Our seamen tell us, how the devouring whales, sharks, and other fishes, follow smaller fish, and devour multitudes of them. It is frequent with us, in our own seas, to find several smaller fishes in the bellies of the greater ones; yea, I have often heard seamen say, that the poor little fry, when pursued, are so sensible of the danger, that they have sometimes seen multitudes of them cast themselves upon the shore, and perish there, to avoid the danger of being devoured.

APPLICATION.

THUS cruel, merciless, and oppressive are wicked men, whose “tender mercies are cruelty.” (*Prov.* xxii. 10.) We see the like cruelty in our extortioners, and over-reaching sharks ashore, who grind the faces of the poor, and regard not the cries of the fatherless and widows, but fill their houses with the gain of oppression. These are, by the HOLY GHOST, compared to the fishes of the sea. (*Hab.* i. 13, 14.) This is a crying sin, yea, it sends up a loud cry to heaven for vengeance: “If thou afflict the widow and the fatherless, and they cry unto me, I will surely hear their cry.” (*Exod.* xxii. 23.) Nay, GOD will not only hear their cry, but avenge their quarrel. That is a remarkable text, “That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because the LORD is the avenger of all such.” (*1 Thess.* iv. 6.) This word, *εκδικος*, Avenger, is but once more used in the New Testament, *Rom.* xiii. 4. And there it is applied to the civil Magistrate, who is to see execution done upon offenders. But this is a sin that sometimes may be out of the reach of man’s justice, and therefore GOD himself will be their avenger. You may overpower the poor in this

world, and it may be they cannot contend with you at man's bar; therefore GOD will bring it before his bar.

It is a sin so provoking to GOD, that he will not let it escape without severe punishment sooner or later. The Prophet HABAKKUK, (*Chap. i. ver. 13,*) wondered how the holy GOD could forbear such till the general day of reckoning, and that he did not take exemplary vengeance on them in this life. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity: Wherefore then lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devours the man that is more righteous than he?" And, "Enter not into the fields of the fatherless, (*Prov. xxiii. 10, 11,*) that is, of the poor and helpless. But why is it more dangerous violently to invade their right, than another's? The reason is added, "For their Redeemer is mighty, and he shall plead their cause with thee." It may be they are not able to retain a counsel to plead their cause here; therefore GOD will plead their cause for them.

REFLECTION.

TURN in upon thyself (O my soul) and consider, hast thou not been guilty of this crying sin? Have I not (when a servant) over-reached and defrauded others, and filled my master's house with violence and deceit? And so brought myself under that dreadful threatening, *Zeph. i. 9.* Or since I came to trade and deal upon mine own account, have not the balances of deceit been in my hand? I have (it may be) kept many in my service and employment; have not I used their labours without reward, and so am under that woe? (*Jer. xxii. 13.*) Or not given them wages proportionable to their work? (*Isa. lviii. 3.*) Or by bad payment, and unjust deductions defrauded them of a part of their due? (*Mal. iii. 5.*) Or at least delayed payment, out of a covetous disposition to gain by it; whilst their necessities in the mean time cried aloud for it; and so sinned against God's express commands? (*Deuteron. xxiv. 14, 15; Levit. xix. 30.*) O my soul, examine thyself upon these particulars: Rest not quiet, until this guilt be removed

by the application of the blood of sprinkling. Hath not the LORD said, "that they shall have judgment without mercy, that have showed no mercy?" (*James* ii. 13.) And is it not a "fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," who hath said, He will take vengeance for these things?

CHAPTER XXV

On Sailing in a Storm.

OBSERVATION.

IN storms at sea, the wise navigator will not spread much sail; that is the way to lose masts and all; they use then to furl up the sails, and lie a hull, when not able to bear a knot of sail; or else to lie a try, or scud before the wind and seas. It is no time then to hoist up the top-gallant, and show their bravery.

APPLICATION.

WHEN the judgments of God are abroad in the earth, it is no time then to make mirth. It is a provoking evil: And commonly God severely punishes it. Of all persons, such speed worst in the common calamity: "Woe to them that are at ease in Sion, that are not grieved for the afflictions of JOSEPH!" (*Amos* vi. 1; as *verse* 4.) It may be (as one observes upon the text) they did not laugh at him, but they did not condole with him. And what shall be their punishment? "Therefore now shall they go captive, with the first that go captive:" (See *verse* 7.) God will begin with them first. That is a terrible text, (*Isa.* xxii. 12.) which should make the heart of such as are guilty in this kind to tremble: "In that day did the LORD of hosts call to mourning, and to girding with sackcloth; and behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen, killing sheep, drinking wine." Well, what is the issue of this? "Surely, this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till you die." O dreadful

word ! Surely (my brethren) sympathy is a debt we owe to CHRIST mystical. Whatever our constitution, or condition be, yet when GOD calls for mourning, we must hear and obey that call. DAVID was a King, an expert musician, a man of a cheerful constitution ; yet who more sensible of the evil of those times, than he ? Rivers of water ran down his eyes at the consideration of them. MELANCTHON was so affected with the miseries of the Church in his days, that he seemed to take little or no notice of the death of his child, whom he entirely loved.

REFLECTION.

BLUSH then, O my soul ! for thy levity and insensibility under GOD's angry dispensations. How many of the precious sons and daughters of Sion, lie in tears abroad, while I have been "nourishing my heart, as in a day of slaughter ! The voice of GOD hath cried to the city, and men of understanding have heard its voice." (*Micah* vi. 9.) But I have been deaf to that cry. How loath (my GOD) have I been to urge my sensual heart to acts of sorrow and mourning : Thou hast bid me weep with them that weep, but my vain heart cannot comply with such commands. Ah LORD ! If I mourn not with Sion, neither shall I rejoice with her.

O ! were mine eyes opened, and my heart sensible and tender, I might see cause enough to melt into tears, and to lie weeping at the feet of CHRIST. LORD, what stupidity is this ! Shall I laugh when thou art angry, and thy children weeping and trembling ? Then I must justly fear, lest "when they shall sing for joy of heart, I shall howl for vexation of spirit." (*Isa.* lxx. 13, 14.) Surely, O my soul ! such laughter will be turned into mourning, either here or hereafter.

CHAPTER XXVI.

On a Leak in a Vessel.

OBSERVATION.

THE smallest leak, if not timely discovered and stopped, is enough to sink a ship of the greatest burden : Therefore seamen are wont frequently to try what water is in the hold ; and if they find it fresh, and increasing upon them, they ply the pump, and presently set the carpenters to search for it and stop it ; and till it be found, they cannot be quiet.

REFLECTION.

WHAT such a leak is to a ship, that is the smallest sin neglected to the soul ; it is enough to ruin it eternally. For as the greatest sin, discovered, lamented and forsaken by a believer, cannot ruin him ; so the least sin indulged, covered and connived at, will certainly prove the destruction of the sinner. No sin, though never so small, is tolerated by the pure and perfect law of God, the “ command is exceeding broad ;” (*Psalm* cxix. 99 ;) not as if it gave men a latitude to walk as they please, but broad, that is, extending itself to all our words, thoughts, actions, and affections. Laying a law upon them all ; conniving at no evil in any man.

And as the word gives no allowance for the least sin, so it is the very nature of sincerity and uprightness, to set the heart against *every* way of wickedness ; and especially against that sin, which was its darling in the days of his vanity. True hatred (as the philosopher observes) is of the whole kind : He that hates sin, as sin, (and so doth every upright soul,) hates all sins as well as some.

Again, the soul that hath had a saving sight of JESUS CHRIST, a true discovery of the evil of sin, in the glass both of the Law and Gospel, can account no sin small. He knows the demerit of the smallest sin is God’s eternal wrath, and that not the least sin can be remitted, without the appli-

cation of the blood of CHRIST, which blood is of infinite value.

REFLECTION.

AND is the smallest sin not only damning in its own nature, but the ruin of that soul that covers it? Then let my spirit accomplish a diligent search. Look to it, O my soul! that no sin be indulged by thee. Set these considerations as so many flaming swords in the way of thy carnal delights: Let me never say of any sin, as Lot did of ZoAR, "It is a little one, spare it." And shall I spare that which cost the blood of JESUS CHRIST? The LORD would not spare him, "when he made his soul an offering for sin." Neither will he spare me, if I defend and hide it: If my heart were right, that lust, whatever it be, that is so favoured by me, would especially be abhorred and hated. Whatever my convictions and reformations have been, yet if there be but one sin retained and delighted in, this keeps the Devil's interest still in my soul: And though, for a time, he seem to depart, yet at last he will return with seven worse spirits, and this sin will open to him, and deliver up my soul. LORD, let me make a thorough work of it: Let me cut it off, and pluck it out, though it be as a right hand or eye. Shall I come so near the kingdom of God, and make such a fair offer for CHRIST, and yet stick at a small matter, and lose all for want of one thing? LORD, let me shed the blood of the dearest sin, for His sake that shed his dearest blood for me.



CHAPTER XXVII.

On the Variation of the Wind.

OBSERVATION.

THOUGH in most parts of the world the winds are variable, and sometimes blow from every point of the compass, by

reason whereof sailing is slow and dangerous ; yet upon the equinoctial, seamen meet with a trade-wind, blowing for the most part one way ; and there they sail jocund before it, and and scarce need to lower a top-sail, for some hundreds of leagues.

APPLICATION.

ALTHOUGH the people of GOD meet with many seeming rubs in their way to heaven, which are like contrary winds to a ship ; yet are they, from the day of their conversion to the day of their complete salvation, never out of a trade-wind's way to heaven : “ We know that all things work together for good, to them that love GOD.” (*Rom. viii. 21.*) This is a most precious scripture, pregnant with consolation to all believers in all conditions. Let us look a little nearer to it.

“ We know.” Mark the certainty and evidence of the proposition, which is not built upon a guess, but upon knowledge. “ We know it,” and that partly by divine revelation, GOD has told us so ; and partly by our own experience, we find it so.

“ That all things.” Not only things that lie in a natural and direct tendency to our good, as ordinances, promises, blessings ; but even such things as have no natural fitness to such an end, as afflictions, temptations. All these help onward : They

“ Work together.” Not all of them directly, and of their own nature, but by being over-ruled to such an issue by the gracious hand of God : Nor yet do they work out such good to us, singly and apart, but as adjuvant causes or helps working in subordination to the supreme cause of our happiness.

Afflictions seem to work against us ; but being once put into the rank and order of causes, they work together with such blessed instruments, as the word and prayer, to an happy issue. And though the face of these things, that thus agree and work together, look contrary ways ; yet there be, as it were, secret chains and connexions of Providence betwixt them ,

to unite them in their issue. There may be many instruments employed about one work, and yet not communicate counsels, or hold intelligence with each other. JOSEPH's brethren, the Midianites, POTIPHAR, knew not one another's mind, nor aimed at one end, much less the end that GOD brought about by them: One acts out of revenge, another for gain, a third out of policy; yet all meet together at last, in that issue GOD had designed to bring about by them, even JOSEPH's advancement. Even so it is here, Christian, there be more instruments at work for thine eternal good, than thou art aware of.

REFLECTION.

CHEER up then, O my soul, and lean upon this pillow of comfort in all distresses. Here is a promise for me, that, like the philosopher's stone, turns all into gold it toucheth. This promise is my security, however things go in the world, "My GOD will do me no hurt." (*Jer. xxv. 6.*) Nay, he will do me good by every dispensation. "O that I had but an heart to make all things work for his glory, that thus causeth every thing for my good." My GOD, dost thou turn every thing to my advantage? O let me return all to thy praise; and if by every thing thou work out my eternal good, then let me in every thing give thanks.

But ah! how foolish and ignorant have I been! Even as a beast before thee. How hath my heart been disquieted at thy dispensations, when they have crossed my will! Not considering that my GOD faithfully pursues my good, even in those things that cross, as well as in that which pleases me.

What a blessed condition are all thy people in! All things friendly and beneficial to them, friends helpful, enemies helpful, every thing conspiring and conducing to their happiness. With others it is not so; nothing works for their good, nay, every thing works against it: Their very mercies are snares, and their prosperity destroys them. (*Prov. i. 32.*) Even the blessed Gospel itself is a savour

of death to them : When evil befalls them, it is “ an only evil ;” (*Ezek.* vii. 5 ;) that is, not turned into good to them ; and as their evils are not turned into good, so all their good is turned into evil. As this promise hath an influence upon all the enjoyments of the wicked, O my soul, bless the LORD, who hath cast thy lot into such a pleasant place, and given thee such a glorious heritage.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

On fair Weather.

OBSERVATION.

IN fair weather, when there is sea-room enough, every common person can guide the ship, the pilot may then lie down and take his rest ; but in great storms and stress of weather, or when near the dangerous shore, then the most skilful pilot is put to it : Then he shows the utmost of his art, and yet sometimes all is too little. They are at their wit's end, know not what to do more, but are forced to commit all to the mercy of GOD and the seas.

APPLICATION,

IN the storms of affliction there are the most evident and full discoveries of the wisdom and power of our GOD ; which are indeed continually active for his people in all conditions. “ He that keepeth Israel, neither slumbereth nor sleepeth.” (*Psalm* cxxi. 4.) His people's dangers are without intermission, therefore his preservations are so too. But, when they come into the straits of deadly dangers, which threaten like rocks on every side ; the wisdom of their GOD rides triumphantly and visibly upon the waves of that stormy sea. And this infinite wisdom is then especially discovered in these particulars.

1. In leaving them still somewhat, in the room of those

comforts that they are deprived of ; so that they see **GOD** doth exchange their comforts, and that for the better ; and this supports them. So (*John* xiv. 1, 2, 3) **CHRIST**'s bodily presence is removed, but the **SPIRIT** was sent in the room of it, which was better.

2. In doubling their strength, as he doubles their burdens. It is observed, that believers have many times very strong and sweet consolations, a little before their greatest trials : And this is so ordinary, that when they have had extraordinary consolations from **GOD**, they have then looked for some eminent trial. The **LORD** appeared to **ABRAHAM**, and sealed the covenant to him, and then put him upon that great trial of his faith. So **PAUL** had first his revelations, then his buffetings.

3. In coming so opportunely in the time of their distress, with relief and comfort. " Then the **SPIRIT** of glory and of **GOD** resteth on them." (*1 Pet.* iv. 14.) As that martyr cried out to his friend **AUSTIN**, at the very stake, ' He is come, He is come !'

4. In appointing and ordering the several kinds of afflictions, and allotting to every one, that very affliction, and no other, which is most suitable to his condition : Which afflictions, like so many potions of physic, are prepared for that very malignant humour that predominates in them. **PETER**'s sin was self-confidence, **GOD** permits him to fall by denying **CHRIST** : Which doubtless was sanctified to his good, in that particular. **HEZEKIAH**'s sin was vain-glory ; therefore spoilers are sent to take away his treasures.

5. In the duration of their troubles ; they shall not lie always upon them. Our **GOD** is a **GOD** of judgment. (*Isa.* xxx. 18.) He knows the due time of removing it, and is therein punctual to a day. (*Rev.* ii. 10.)

REFLECTION.

IF the wisdom of **GOD** do thus triumph in the distresses of his people, then why should I fear in the day of evil ? Why doth my heart faint at the foresight of approaching trouble ? Fear none of those things that thou shalt suffer,

O my soul! If thy GOD will thus be with thee in the fire and water, thou canst not perish. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet let me fear no evil, whilst my GOD is with me. Creatures cannot do what they please, his wisdom limits and over-rules them all, to gracious ends. If my GOD cast me into the furnace, to melt and try me, yet I shall not be consumed there; for he will sit by the furnace himself all the while, observing when it hath done its work, and then will presently withdraw the fire. O my soul, bless and adore this GOD of wisdom! Who himself will see the ordering of all thine afflictions, and not trust it in the hands of men or angels.

CHAPTER XXIX.

On the Depth of the Ocean.

OBSERVATION.

THE ocean is so deep that no eye can discover what lies in the bottom thereof. We use to say proverbially of a thing that is irrecoverably lost, ‘ It is as good it were cast into the sea.’ What lies there, lies obscure from all eyes, but the eye of GOD.

APPLICATION.

THUS are the judgments of GOD, and the ways of his Providence, profound and unsearchable: “ Thy righteousness is like the great mountains, and thy judgments are a great deep;” (*Psalm xxxvi. 16*;) that is, his providences are secret, obscure, and unfathomable; but even then and in those providences his righteousness stands up like the great mountains, visible and apparent to every eye. These wheels of Providence are dreadful for their height. (*Ezek. i. 18.*) There be deep mysteries of Providence, as well as of faith. It may be said of some of them, as of ST. PAUL’S Epistles, that they “ are hard to be understood.” Darkness and clouds are round about the throne of GOD: No man

can say what will be the particular event of some of his dispensations. LUTHER seemed to hear GOD say to him, when he was importunate to know his mind in some particular providence, ‘ I am a GOD not to be traced.’ Some providences, like Hebrew letters, must be read backward. (*Psalm* xcii. 7.) Some providences pose men of the greatest parts and graces. “ His way is in the sea, his paths in the great waters, and his foot-steps are not known.” (*Psalm* lxxvii. 19.) Who can trace foot-steps in the bottom of the sea? There be some of GOD’s works that are such secrets as that they may not be inquired into; they are to be believed and adored, but not pried into. (*Rom.* xi. 33.) Others that may be inquired after, but yet are so profound that few can understand them. When we come to heaven, then all those mysteries, as well in the works, as in the word of GOD, will lie open to our view.

REFLECTION.

THEN why is my heart disquieted, because it cannot sometimes discern the way of the LORD, and the connexion of his providential dispensations? Why art thou so perplexed, O my soul, at the confusions and disorders that are in the world? I know that goodness and wisdom sit at the stern: And though the vessel of the Church be tossed and distressed in storms of trouble, yet it shall not perish. Is it not enough for me, that GOD hath condescended so far for my satisfaction, as to show me plainly the general issue of all these mysterious providences, unless I be able to take the height of every particular? Shall I presume to call the GOD of heaven to account? Must He render a reason of his ways, and give an account of his matters to such a worm as I am? Be silent, O my soul, before the LORD; subscribe to his wisdom, and submit to his will, whatsoever he doeth. However it be, yet GOD is good to ISRAEL; the event will manifest it to be all over a design of love. I know not how to reconcile them to each other, or many of them to the promise; yet are they all

harmonious betwixt themselves, and the certain means of accomplishing the promises. O what a favour is this, that in the midst of the greatest confusions in the world, GOD hath given such abundant security to his people, that it shall be well with them !

CHAPTER XXX.

On the Multitudes of Men devoured by the Sea.

OBSERVATION.

WHAT multitudes of men hath the sea devoured ! Thousands have made their graves in it. What numbers of men have been ingulfed together in sea-fights, or storms, or inundations, whereby whole towns have been swallowed up ! Certainly the dead which are there are innumerable.

APPLICATION.

BUT though the sea hath received so many thousand bodies of men into its devouring throat, yet is it not the absolute lord or proprietor of them, but rather a steward intrusted with them, till the LORD require an account of them ; and then it must deliver up all it hath received. “ And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before GOD : And the books were opened ; and another book was opened, which is the book of life ; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it.” (*Rev.* xx. 11, 12.)

The doctrine of the resurrection of the body, is a doctrine full of consolation to believers, and most clearly asserted in Scripture. And it is well for us this point is so plainly revealed ; because, as it is a most comfortable truth to the people of GOD, so there is scarce any truth that lies under more prejudice as to sense or reason, and is more difficult to receive than this is. And indeed, if men set up

reason as the only judge of supernatural things, it is incredible to think that a body should be restored that hath been burnt to ashes, and those ashes scattered in the wind, as history tells us was frequently done in **DIOCLETIAN'S** reign! Or when drowned in the sea, and there devoured by several fishes, and those again devoured by others. But this is not to be objected to the Almighty power of **GOD**, that gave them their first being. Difficulties and impossibilities are for men, but not for **Him**. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that **GOD** should raise the dead?

REFLECTION.

AND must I rise again, wherever my body fall at death? Then, **LORD**, how am I concerned to know **CHRIST** while I live! By virtue thereof only, my resurrection can be made comfortable to me. Let my body lie where it will, in earth or sea: Let my bones be scattered, and flesh devoured by worms or fish, I know thou canst and wilt reunite my scattered parts; and in this body I must stand before thine awful tribunal, to receive according to what I have done therein. Thou that commandedst me to stand forth amongst the noblest rank of creatures, when I had no being, and sawest my substance, being yet imperfect, canst as easily reduce me to that being again.

What though reason vote this impossible, and sense incredible? Though all these difficulties grow upon my faith, yet I know my body is not lost for ever. The sound of thy trumpet shall awaken me; and thy mighty power, to which all things are possible, shall bring me before thy bar.

O **LORD**, I know that I shall stand in that great assembly, when multitudes, even all the sons and daughters of **ADAM**, shall appear together. O! If I die Christless, it were good for me that there were no resurrection: For then those eyes that have been windows of lusts, must behold **CHRIST** the Judge, not as a Redeemer, but as a Revenger. That tongue that has vented so much of the fil-

thiness of my heart, will then be struck speechless before Him ; and this flesh, which I so pampered, condemned to everlasting flames. O my God, let me make sure work for such a day. If I now am really united with thy SON, I shall awake with singing out of the dust : And then, as thou saidst to JACOB, say to me, when I go down into the sea or grave, “ Fear not to go down into the deep ; for I will surely bring thee up again.” (*Gen.* xlv. 3, 4.)

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Danger of Splitting upon the Rocks.

OBSERVATION.

THOUGH seamen meet with violent storms, yet if they have sea-room enough, they are not much dismayed ; but if they find themselves near the shore, they look upon their condition as very dangerous. The sight of the shore is to them (as SOLOMON speaks of the morning in another case) like the shadow of death, if not able to weather it. For one ship swallowed up in the ocean, many perish upon the coast.

APPLICATION.

THE greatest difficulties that many meet with in all their lives, is when they have almost finished their course. Heaven indeed is a glorious place, the spacious mansion of the great King ; but it hath a strait and narrow entrance. O the difficulty of arriving there ! What earnest contention and striving, even to an agony, as that word imports, *Luke* xiii. 24. Multitudes put forth, and by profession are bound for this fair haven ; but of the multitudes that put out, how few arrive there ! A man may set out by a glorious profession, with much resolution, and continue long therein ; he may offer very fair for it, and not be far from the kingdom of God, and yet not be able to enter at the last.

Yea, and many of those who are sincere in their profession, and do arrive at last, yet come to heaven (as I may say) by the gates of hell; and put in, as a poor weather-beaten vessel comes into the harbour, more like a wreck than a ship, nor mast nor sail left. The righteous themselves are scarcely saved, that is, they are saved with much difficulty: They have not all “an abundant entrance,” as the Apostle speaks. (2 *Pet.* i. 11.)

Some “persons (as one notes) are afar off:” (*Eph.* ii. 23.) That is, touched with no care of religion. Some come near, but never enter; as semi-converts. Others enter, but with great difficulty; they are saved as by fire; make an hard shift. But then there be some that go with full sail before the wind, and have “an abundant entrance;” they go triumphing out of the world. When we come into the narrow channel, at the very point of entrance into life, the soul is then in the most serious frame; all things look with a new face. Conscience scans our evidence most critically; then also SATAN falls upon us, and makes his sorest assaults. It is the last encounter; if they escape him now, they are gone out of his reach for ever: And if he cannot hinder their salvation, yet if he can but cloud their evening, he reaches another end by it, even to confirm and prejudice the wicked, and weaken the hands of others that are looking towards religion.

REFLECTION.

IF this be so, how inevitable is my perdition, may the careless soul say? If they strive so much, and go so far, yet perish at last; and if the righteous themselves are scarcely saved, then where shall such a creature as I appear? O LORD, if they that have made religion their business, and have been many years pursuing a work of mortification, have gone mourning after the LORD JESUS; yea, if some of them have such hard work at last, what will become of such a sensual, careless wretch as I have been?

Again, do true Christians find it so strait an entrance? Then, though I have well-grounded hopes of safe arrival at last; yet let me look to it, that I do not increase the difficulty. They are the things that are now done or omitted, that put conscience into such an agony then; for then it comes to review the life with the most serious eye. O, let me not stick my death-bed full of thorns, against I come to lie down upon it! O that I may turn to the wall in that hour, as HEZEKIAH did, and say, "Remember now, O LORD, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart!" (2 Kings xx. 2, 3.)



CHAPTER XXXII.

The Joy of Mariners on descrying Land.

OBSERVATION.

WHAT joy is there among seamen, when at last, after a tedious and dangerous voyage, they descry land, and see the desired haven! Then they turn out of their cabins and come upon open deck with much joy. Now they can reflect with comfort upon the many dangers they have past: *Olim hæc meminisse juvabit*, It is sweet to recount them.

APPLICATION.

BUT O, what transcendant joy will over-run the hearts of saints, when after so many conflicts, temptations, and afflictions, they arrive in glory, and are harboured in heaven, where they shall rest for ever? The Scripture saith, "They shall sing the song of MOSES, and of the Lamb." (Rev. xv. 3.) The song of MOSES was a triumphant song, composed for the celebration of that glorious deliverance at the Red Sea. We are now fluctuating upon a troublesome and tempestuous sea; our hearts sometimes ready to sink and die within us, at the apprehension of so many and great

dangers and difficulties. Many a hard storm we ride out, and many straits and troubles we here encounter with ; but at last we arrive at the desired and long-expected haven, and then heaven resounds with joyful acclamations. And how can it be otherwise, when as soon as ever we set foot upon that glorious shore, CHRIST himself meets and receives us, with a “ Come, ye blessed of my Father ?” (*Matt.* xxv. 34.) O joyful voice ! O much desired word ! What tribulation would not a man undergo for this word’s sake !

O what a day will this be ! ‘ If (saith a worthy Divine) **DIAGORAS** died away with an excess of joy, whilst he embraced his three sons that were crowned as victors in the Olympic games in one day: And good old **SIMEON**, when he saw CHRIST but in a body subject to the infirmities of our natures, cried out, “ Now let thy servant depart in peace :” What unspeakable joy will it be to the saints, to behold CHRIST in his glory, and see their relations also, (to whose conversion, perhaps, they have been instrumental,) all crowned in one day with everlasting diadems ! And if the stars did (as **IGNATIUS** saith) make a choir, as it were, about that star that appeared at CHRIST’S incarnation, and there be such joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner : No wonder then, “ the morning stars sing together, and the sons of GOD shout for joy, when the general assembly meet in heaven.” O how will the arches of heaven ring and echo, when the high praises of GOD shall be in the mouth of such a congregation ! Then shall the saints be joyful in glory, and sing aloud upon their beds of everlasting rest.’

REFLECTION.

AND is there such a day approaching for the sons of GOD indeed ? And have I authority to call myself one of the number ? O then let me not droop at present difficulties, nor hang down my hands when I meet with hardships in the way. O my soul, what a joyful day will this be ! At present we are tossed upon an ocean of troubles, fears, and temptations ; but these will make heaven the sweeter.

Cheer up then, O my soul, "thy salvation is now nearer than when thou first believdst." (*Rom.* xiii. 11.) And it will not now be long ere I receive "the end of my faith;" and then it will be sweet to reflect even upon these hardships in the way. Yct a few days more, and then comes that blessed day thou hast so long waited and panted for. Oppose the glory of that day, O my soul, to thy present sufferings; and thou shalt see how it will shrink them all up to nothing. Oppose the inheritance thou shalt receive in that day, to thy losses for CHRIST now; and see how joyfully it will make thee bear them. Oppose the honour that will be put upon thee in that day, to thy present reproaches; and see how easy it will make thee. What condition can I be in, wherein the believing thoughts of this blessed day cannot relieve me?

Am I poor? Here is that which answers poverty: "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not GOD chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?" (*James* iii. 5.)

Am I tempted? Here is relief against that: "Now is come salvation and strength; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down." (*Rev.* xii. 10.)

Am I deserted? Here is a remedy for that too: "And there shall be no night there." (*Rev.* xxii. 5.)

Come then, my soul, let us enter upon our inheritance by degrees, and begin the life of heaven upon earth.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE now done, and am looking to heaven for a blessing upon these weak labours: What use you will make of them, I know not; but this I know, that the day is coming, when GOD will reckon with you for this, and all other helps and means afforded to you: And if it be not improved by you, be sure it will be produced as a witness

against you. Sirs, I beg you in the name of CHRIST, before whom both you and I must shortly appear, that you receive not these things in vain. Did I know what other lawful means to use, that might reach your hearts, they should not be in vain to you ; but I cannot do GOD's part of the work, nor yours. Only I request you all, both masters, common men, and all others, into whose hands this shall come, that you will lay to heart what you read ; pray unto Him " that hath the keys of the house of DAVID, that openeth and no man shutteth," to open your hearts to give entertainment to these truths. Alas ! if you apply it not to yourselves, I have laboured to no purpose, the pen of the Scribe is in vain : But GOD may make such an application of them, in one stream or other, as may make your hearts to tremble. O Sirs, when death and eternity look you in the face, conscience may reflect upon these things to your horror and amazement, and make you cry out, " How have I hated knowledge, and my heart despised reproof ! And have not obeyed the voice of my teacher, nor inclined my ears to them that instructed me !" (*Prov.* v. 12, 13.) And O what a dreadful shriek will such souls give, when the LORD opens their eyes, to see that misery that they are here warned of ! But if the LORD shall bless these things to your conversion, then we may say to you, as MOSES said to ZEBULUN, the mariner's tribe, " Rejoice, ZEBULUN, in thy going out." (*Deut.* xxxiii. 12.) The LORD will be with you which way soever you turn yourselves ; and you are safe in the midst of all dangers. O thou that art the Father of spirits, that formedst, and canst easily reform the heart, open thou the blind eye, unstop the deaf ear, let the word take hold upon the heart : If thou wilt but say the word, these weak labours shall prosper, to bring home many lost souls unto thee. Amen.

HUSBANDRY SPIRITUALIZED,

OR, THE

HEAVENLY USE

OF

EARTHLY THINGS.

TO THE READER.

THERE are three things wherein (as it hath been said long ago) the exercise of godliness doth chiefly consist: Prayer, temptation, meditation; meditation is the subject of the following manual. The object of meditation is twofold: 1. The word; 2. The works of GOD. The works of GOD are twofold: 1. Internal; 2. External. The external works of GOD are two-fold: 1. Of Creation; 2. Of Providence. The works of Providence are likewise two-fold: 1. In things civil, the LORD ordering and over-ruling all the affairs and motions of single persons, families and nations, in a subserviency to his own most holy purposes: 2. In things natural, the LORD instructing the husbandman to discretion, and teaching him how to dress and till the earth, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; as also how to breed up and manage beasts of the field, both greater and lesser cattle, for the use and service of man.

Meditation upon this lower part of the works of GOD, and his wonderful Providences about them, may raise our souls very high; and while we wisely consider these natural things, we may grow more and more wise in spirituals and eternal.

The Author of the ensuing discourse hath supplied us with an excellent help for the spiritualizing of the providential works of GOD in natural things: We chiefly want the help of the HOLY SPIRIT (without which all other helps and helpers are altogether insufficient) to frame and wind

up our hearts, for this both profitable and delightful duty ; yet the help which the LORD is pleased to give us for our direction in it, by the ministry of man, is not only not to be refused, but thankfully received and improved ; and all little enough to bring our minds to, or keep them at this work : Even good men (though they are not earthly-minded) have earth in their minds ; which like a heavy clog at their heels, or a weight at their hearts, presses them down when they would mount upward in meditation. We find it no easy matter to keep off earthly thoughts, when we are most seriously engaged in heavenly work ; how hard is it then to be fixed upon heavenly thoughts, while we are engaged about earthly work ? Yea, are (as is the husbandman) working the very earth, and raking in the bowels of it.

It is a great part of our holiness to be spiritually-minded, while we are conversing with GOD through JESUS CHRIST in spiritual duties ; but to be spiritually-minded, and to mind spiritual things, when we are conversing with the clods of the earth, and the furrows of the field, when we have to do with corn and grass, with trees and plants, with sheep and oxen, when we behold the birds and fowls of the air, the worms, and all that creep upon the ground, then (I say) to be spiritually-minded, and thence to have our thoughts ascending and soaring up to GOD, witnesseth an high degree of holiness, and of gracious attainments. To make a ladder out of earthly materials, for the raising of ourselves in spirit up to heaven, is the art of arts. Holy and happy indeed are they, who (being taught of GOD) have learned this art, and live in the daily practice of it ! Earthly objects usually hinder us in our way, sometimes turn us quite out of our way to heaven. Many plough and sow, dig and delve the earth, till their hearts become

as earthly as the earth itself: Many deal about the beasts of the field, till themselves become even brutish. Is it not then a blessed design which this Author aims at, so to spiritualize all sorts, or the whole compass of earthly husbandry, that all sorts of husbandmen may become spiritual and heavenly ?

Let me add one word more to the reader. This book of Husbandry Spiritualized, is not calculated only for the common husbandmen ; persons of any calling or condition, may find the Author working out such searching reflections, and strong convictions, from almost every part of the husbandman's work, as may, if faithfully improved, be very useful to them ; to some for their awakening, to consider the state of their souls, whether in grace or in nature ; to others for their instruction, consolation and encouragement in the ways of grace, as also for their proficiency and growth in those ways. That the blessing of the LORD, and the breathings of his good SPIRIT may go out with it, for all those gracious purposes, is the heart's desire and prayer of him, who is,

Christian Reader,

A sincere well-wisher to thy precious
and immortal soul,

JOSEPH CARYL.

P R E F A C E.

1 COR. iii. 9.

Ye are God's Husbandry.

THE scope and design of the following chapters, being the spiritual improvement of husbandry, it will be necessary to acquaint the reader with the foundation and general rules of this art in the Scripture, thereby to procure greater respect unto, and prevent prejudice against composures of this kind.

To this end I shall entertain the reader a little while upon what this Scripture affords us, which will give a fair introduction to the following discourse.

The Apostle's scope in the context being to check and repress the vain-glory and emulation of the Corinthians, who, instead of thankfulness for, and an humble and diligent improvement of, the excellent blessings of the ministry, turned all into vain ostentation and emulation; one preferring PAUL and another APOLLOS; in the mean time depriving themselves of the choice blessings they might have received by them both.

To cure this growing mischief in the churches, he checks their vanity, and discovers the evil of such practices, by several arguments, amongst which this is one, "Ye are God's husbandry;" as if he had said, What are ye, but a field, or plat of ground, to be manured and cultivated for God? And what are PAUL, APOLLOS, and CEPHAS, but so many workmen and labourers, employed by GOD, the great husbandman, to plant and water you all?

If, then, you shall glory in some, and despise others, you take the ready way to deprive yourselves of the benefits and mercies you might receive from the joint ministry of them all. God hath used me to plant you, and APOLLOS to water you; you are obliged to bless him for the ministry

of both, and it will be your sin if you despise either. If the workmen be discouraged in their labours, it is the field that loses and suffers by it; so that the words are a similitude, serving to illustrate the relation, I. Which the churches have to GOD. II. Which GOD'S Ministers have to the churches.

I. The relation betwixt GOD and them, is like that of an husbandman to his ground or tillage. The Greek word signifies GOD'S arable, or that plot of ground which GOD manures by the ministry of pastors and teachers.

II. It serves to illustrate the relation that the Ministers of CHRIST sustain to the churches, which is like that of the husbandman's servants to him and his fields, which excellent notion carries in it the perpetual necessity of a Gospel ministry. (For what fruit can be expected, where there are none to till the ground?) As also the diligence, accountableness, and rewards, which these labourers are to give to, and receive from GOD, the great Husbandman. All runs into this, That the life and employment of an husbandman, excellently shadows forth the relation betwixt GOD and his church, and the relative duties betwixt its Ministers and members. Or more briefly thus: The church is GOD'S husbandry, about which his Ministers are employed.

I shall not here observe my usual method, (intending no more but a preface to the following discourse,) but only open the particulars wherein the resemblance consists, and then draw some inferences from the whole. The first I shall dispatch in these particulars following:—

I. The husbandman purchases his fields, and gives a valuable consideration for them. (*Jer.* xxxii. 9, 10.)

So hath GOD purchased his church with a full valuable price, even the precious blood of his own Son: "Feed the church of GOD, which he hath purchased [or acquired] with his own blood." (*Acts* xx. 28.) O dear-bought inheritance, how much doth this bespeak its worth! Or rather, the high esteem GOD hath of it, to pay down blood, and such blood for it: Never was any inheritance bought at such a rate. Sin made a forfeiture of all to justice, upon

which SATAN entered and took possession, and, as a strong man armed, still keeps it in them; (*Luke xi. 21*;) but upon payment of this sum to justice, true believers pass over into God's right and propriety, and now are neither SATAN's, (*Acts xxvi. 18*), nor "their own," (*1 Cor. vi. 19*), but the "LORD's peculiar." (*1 Pet. ii. 6*.)

2. Corn-fields are carefully fenced by the husbandmen with hedges and ditches, to preserve their fruits from beasts that would otherwise over-run and destroy them. It is as good husbandry to keep what we have as to acquire more than we had.

My "well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill, and he fenced it." (*Isa. v. 1, 2*.) No inheritance is better defended and secured, than the LORD's inheritance. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people." (*Psalms cxxv. 2*.) So careful is he for their safety, "that he createth upon every dwelling-place of Mount Sion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence." (*Isa. iv. 5*.) Not a particular believer but is hedged about and inclosed in arms of power and love. "Thou hast made a hedge about him." (*Job i. 10*.) The Devil fain would, but, by his own confession, could not break over that hedge to touch JOB, till God's permission made a gap for him: Yea, he not only makes an hedge, but a wall about them, and that of fire, (*Zech. ii. 5*), "sets a guard of angels to encamp round about them that fear him." (*Psalms xxxiv. 7*.) And will not trust them with a single guard of angels neither, though their power be great, and love to the saints as great; but watches over them himself also: "Sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine, I the LORD do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." (*Isa. xxvii. 2, 3*.)

3. Husbandmen grudge not at the cost they are at for their tillage; but as they lay out vast sums upon it, so they do it cheerfully.

And "now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of

Judah, judge I pray you betwixt me and my vineyard, what could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" And as he bestows upon his heritage the choicest mercies, so he doth it with the greatest cheerfulness; for he saith, "I will rejoice over them, to do them good; and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul." (*Jer.* xxxii. 41.) 'It is not the giving out of mercy,' saith one, 'that grieveth God, but the recoiling of his mercies back again upon him by the creature's ingratitude.'

4. Husbandmen are much delighted, to see the success of their labours: It comforts them over all their hard pains, and weary days, to see a good increase.

Much more is God delighted in beholding the flourishing graces of his people; it pleases him to see his plants laden with fruit, and his vallies sing with corn. "My beloved is gone down to the garden, into his beds of spices, to feed in the gardens and to gather lilies." (*Cant.* vi. 2.) These beds of spices (say expositors) are the particular churches, the companies of believers; he goes to feed in these gardens, as men go to their gardens to make merry, or to gather fruit. "He eats his pleasant fruit," (*Cant.* iv. 16.) namely, his people's holy performances, sweeter to him than any ambrosia: Thus he feeds in the gardens, and he gathers lilies when he translates good souls into his kingdom above: "For the LORD taketh pleasure in his saints, and will beautify the meek with salvation."

5. Husbandmen employ many labourers to work in their fields; there is need of many hands for such a multiplicity of business.

God hath diversity of workmen also in the churches, whom he sends forth to labour in his spiritual fields. "He gave some Apostles, some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry." (*Eph.* iv. 12.) "I have sent my servants the Prophets." (*Amos* iii. 7.) It is usual with the Apostles to place this title of servant among their honorary titles, though a profane mouth once called it,

Probrosum artificium, a sordid artifice. CHRIST hath stamped a great deal of dignity upon his Ministers, in retaining them for the nearest service to himself. "Let a man so account of us, as the Ministers of CHRIST;" (1 Cor. iv. 1;) they are "workers together with GOD." The husbandman works in the field among his labourers, and the great GOD disdaineth not to work in and with his poor servants, in the work of the ministry.

6. The work about which husbandmen employ their servants in the field, is toilsome. You see they come home at night as weary as they can draw their legs after them.

But GOD's workmen have a much harder task than they. Hence are they set forth in Scripture by the laborious ox. (1 Cor. ix. 9; Rev. iv. 7.) Some derive the word *Διακονος*, *Deacon*, from *κοις*, a word that signifies *dust*, to shew the laboriousness of their employment, labouring till even choked with dust and sweat. It is said of ΕΡΑΦΗΡΟΔΙΤΗΣ, that "for the work of CHRIST he was sick and nigh unto death; not regarding his life, to supply their lack of service." (*Phil.* ii. 13.) The Apostle's expression is very emphatical, "Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." (*Col.* i. 29.) The word *αγωνιζωμενος*, signifies, such spending labour as puts a man into an agony: And "blessed is that servant, whom his LORD when he cometh shall find so doing."

7. The immediate end of the husbandman's labour, and his servant's labour, is the improvement of his land, to make it more flourishing and fruitful.

The scope and end of the ministry is for the churches' advantage. They must not lord it over GOD's heritage, as if the church were for them, and not they for the church; nor serve themselves of it, but be the churches' "servants for JESUS's sake; the power they have received being for edification, and not for destruction." CHRIST hath given them to the churches: Their gifts, their time, their strength, and all their ministerial talents are not their own, but the churches' stock and treasure.

8. Those that spend their time and strength all their days, in manuring and ploughing the fields, maintain themselves and their families by their labours; their hands are sufficient for themselves and theirs.

Even "so hath God ordained, that they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel." (1 Cor ix. 14.) "The workman is worthy of his meat." (Matt. x. 10.) It is a sad thing, if those who break the bread of life to souls, should be suffered to want bread themselves. God would not have the mouth of the ox muzzled that treads out the corn, but have liberty to eat, as well as work: Yet if any pretender to the ministry be like the heifer that loves not to tread out the corn, that is, cares to do no work, but such as brings in present pay; he therein sufficiently discovers his beast-like disposition. Ministers must be faithful in their Master's work, and if men do not, God will reward them: For, "he is not unrighteous to forget their work, and labour of love." (Heb. vi. 10.)

9. There is a vast difference betwixt those fields which have been well husbanded, and dressed by a skilful and diligent husbandman, and those that have been long out of husbandry. How fragrant is the one! How dry and barren the other!

Thus stands the case betwixt those places which God hath blessed with a faithful, painful ministry, and such as have none, or worse than none: For as the husbandman's cost and pains appear in the verdant and fragrant hue of his fields; so a Minister's pains and diligence are ordinarily seen in the heavenly lives and flourishing graces of the people. The churches of Corinth and Thessalonica, where ST. PAUL and other holy instruments spent much of their time and pains, became famous and flourishing churches. (2 Cor ix. 2.) A special blessing comes along with a godly Minister to the place where Providence assigns him. Such places, like GIDEON'S fleece, have the dew of heaven lying on them, whilst others round about are dry and barren.

10. Husbandmen find low grounds and vallies most fertile. Hills, how loftily soever they over-top the lower

grounds, yet answer not the husbandman's pains as the vallies do. They are best watered and secured from the scorching heat of the sun.

Experience shows us, that the humblest persons are most fruitful under the Gospel. These are they that "receive with meekness the ingrafted word," (*James* i. 21,) whose influences abide in them, as the rain doth in the low vallies. Happy is that Minister, whose lot falls in such a pleasant valley. "Blessed are they that sow beside all such waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass." (*Isaiah* xxxii. 20.) Among these vallies run the pleasant springs and purling brooks, which fertilize the neighbouring ground. Heavenly ordinances there, leave fruitful influences.

11. Lastly, When fields prove barren, and will not quit the husbandman's cost, nor answer the seed he sows in them, he plucks up the hedges, and lays them waste.

So when churches grow formal and fruitless, the LORD removes his Gospel-presence from them, he plucks up the hedge of his protection from about them, and lays them open, as waste ground, to be over-run by their enemies. What is become of those once flourishing churches of Asia? Are they now laid waste, and trodden down by infidels? "Now go to, (saith the great Husbandman,) I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will pull up the hedge thereof, and it shall be laid waste." (*Isa.* v. 5.)

Thus you see the allegory opened in its particulars: From the whole, I shall present you with the ensuing inferences:

(1.) How great then are the dignities and privileges of the church of JESUS CHRIST, whom he hath appropriated to himself, above all the people of the earth, to be his peculiar inheritance! The rest of the world is a waste wilderness; all other places, how pleasant soever in respect of their natural amenity and delights, are truly enough called "the dark places of the earth;" dismal, solitary cells, where bitterns, cormorants, and every doleful creature dwells: But the church is the Paradise of the earth, "a

garden enclosed," (*Cant.* iv. 12,) in whose hedges the gospel birds sing melodiously. (*Cant.* ii. 12.) Its beds are beds of spices, and betwixt its pleasant banks a crystal river of living water runs, the streams whereof make glad the city of GOD, in the midst thereof the LORD himself delights to walk. O Sion, with what pleasures dost thou abound! If BERNARD were so ravished with the delights of his monastery, because of its green banks, shady bowers, herbs, trees, and various objects to feed his eyes, and fragrant smells, and sweet and various tunes of birds, together with the opportunities of devout contemplation, that he cried out admiringly, 'LORD, what delights dost thou provide, even for the poor!' How much more should we be ravished with Sion's glory! For "beautiful for situation is mount Sion." Of whom it may much more truly be said, what a chronieler of our own once said of England, that it is the fortunate island, the paradise of pleasure, the garden of GOD, whose vallies are like Eden, whose hills are as Lebanon, whose springs are as Pisgah, whose rivers are as Jordan, whose wall is the ocean, and whose defence is the LORD JEHOVAH. Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee? Who can count the privileges wherewith CHRIST hath invested his churches? O let it never seem a light thing in our eyes, that we grow within his blessed inclosure! How sweet a promise is that, "Ye shall be to me a peculiar treasure, above all people; for all the earth is mine." (*Exod.* xix. 5.)

(2.) If the church be GOD's husbandry, then there is such a special gracious presence of the LORD in his churches, as is not to be found in all the world beside. Where may you expect to find the husbandman, but in his own fields? There lies his business, and there he delights to be. And where may we expect to find GOD, but in the assemblies of his saints? "He walks among the golden candlesticks." (*Rev.* ii. 1.) "I will walk among you, (saith he,) and be your GOD." (*2 Cor.* vi. 16.) Upon this account the church is called "JEHOVAH Shammah, the LORD is there." (*Ezek.* xlvi. ult.) You may see the footsteps of GOD in his creatures; but the face of GOD is only to be

seen in his ordinances. Hence DAVID “longed for the temple, that he might see the beauty of the LORD.” (*Psalm xxvii. 4.*) Now, what is beauty, but a symmetry and proportion of parts? In the works of creation, you see one attribute manifested in one thing, and another in another; but in the sanctuary you may see beauty, even all the attributes of GOD displayed there. And indeed, we find in Scripture such astonishing expressions about the visions of GOD in his church, that in reading them, a man can see little difference betwixt it and heaven; for as the church is called heaven, (*Matt. xxv. 1.*) so its description is like that of heaven: “You are come to the heavenly Jerusalem, and an innumerable company of angels,” &c. (*Heb. xii. 22, 23.*) And, “They shall see his face, and his name shall be written in their foreheads.” (*Rev. iv. 22.*) And the saints are represented, “standing nearer to the throne of GOD, than the angels themselves.” (*Verse 24.*) Hence also ordinances are called galleries, in which both saints and angels walk, beholding the glory of Him that sits upon the throne: “If you will keep my ways, I will give you galleries to walk in, among them that stand by.” (*Zech. iii. 7.*)

(3.) If the church be GOD’s husbandry, then those that are employed in ministerial work ought to be men of great judgment and experience in soul affairs; for these are the labourers whom GOD, the mystical Husbandman, employs and entrusts about his spiritual husbandry. Should husbandmen employ ignorant persons, that neither understand the rules nor proper seasons of husbandry, how much would such workmen prejudice him! He will not employ such to weed his fields, as know not wheat from tares; or to prune his trees, that think Midsummer as fit for that work as December; much less will GOD. He qualifies all that he sends with wisdom for their work. “His workmen approve themselves workmen indeed, such as need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (*2 Tim. ii. 15.*) As BEZALEEL was furnished with wisdom, before he was employed in tabernacle-work, so CHRIST instructs his servants with skill and insight, before they are employed in ministerial work.

He gives them a mouth and wisdom, “endues them with power from on high.” (*Luke* xxi. 15.) As CHRIST was filled abundantly with the SPIRIT for his work, in proportion are those that are sent by him: “As my Father hath sent me, so send I you.” (*John* xx. 21. 22.) And as for those that run before they are sent, and understand not the mysteries of the Gospel, I shall say no more of them, but this; “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

(4.) To conclude, If the church be God’s husbandry, that is, if husbandry have so many resemblances of God’s work about the church in it; then how inexcusable is the ignorance of husbandmen in the things of God, who, besides the word of the Gospel, have the teachings of the creatures; and can hardly turn their hands to any part of their work, but the SPIRIT hints one spiritual use or other from it! How do the Scriptures abound with parables and lively similitudes taken from husbandry! From the field, the seed, the plough, the barn, from threshing and winnowing; also from planting, grafting and pruning of trees; and not a few from the ordering of cattle! So that to what business soever you turn your hands, in any part of your calling, still God meets you with one heavenly instruction or other. But, alas! how few are able to improve their employments to such excellent ends!

These things are but briefly hinted in the Scriptures, and those hints scattered up and down, that they know not where to find them; and if they could, yet would it be difficult so to methodize them, as it is necessary they should be, in order to their due improvement by meditation.

And therefore I judged it necessary to collect and prepare them for your use, and in this manner to present them to you, as you find them in the following chapters. Read, consider, and apply; and the Lord make you good husbands for your own souls.

HUSBANDRY SPIRITUALIZED.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

Upon the Industry of the Husbandman.

In the laborious husbandman you see
What all true Christians are or ought to be.

OBSERVATION.

THE employment of the husbandman is by all acknowledged to be very laborious ; there is a multiplicity of business incumbent on him. The end of one work, is but the beginning of another. Every season of the year brings its proper work with it : Sometimes you find him in his fields, dressing, ploughing, sowing, harrowing, weeding, or reaping ; and sometimes in his barn, threshing or winnowing ; sometimes in his orchard, planting, grafting, or pruning his trees ; and sometimes among his cattle : So that he hath no time to be idle. And as he hath a multiplicity of business, so every part of it is full of toil : He eats not the bread of idleness, but earns it before he eats it ; and as it were dips it in his own sweat, whereby it becomes the sweeter to him. Though sin brought in the husbandman's sweat, yet now not to sweat would increase his sin.

APPLICATION.

BEHOLD here the life of a serious Christian. As the life of a husbandman, so the life of a Christian is no idle or easy life. They that take up religion for ostentation, that place the business of it in notions and idle speculations, in forms, gestures, and external observances, may think and call it so : But such as devote themselves unto it, and make reli-

gion their business, will find it no easy work, to exercise themselves to godliness. Many there are, that affect the reputation of it, who cannot endure the labour of it. If men might be indulged to divide their hearts betwixt God and the world, or to cull out the cheap and easy duties of it, and neglect the more difficult and costly ones, it were an easy thing to be a Christian: But surely to have respect to all God's commandments, to live the life as well as speak the language of a Christian; to be holy in all manner of conversation, is not so easy. This will be evident, by comparing the life of a Christian, with the life of a husbandman, in these five particulars; wherein it will appear, that the work of a Christian is by much the hardest work of the two.

1. The husbandman hath much to do, many things to look after; but the Christian more: If we respect the extensiveness of his work, he hath a large field indeed to labour in. "The commandment is exceeding broad;" (*Psalm cxix. 96*;) of a vast extent and latitude, comprising not only a multitude of external acts and duties, and guiding the offices of the outward man about them, but also taking in every thought and motion of the inner man.

You find, in the word, a world of work cut out for Christians; there is hearing work, praying work, reading, meditating, and self-examining work; it put him also upon a constant watch over all the corruptions of his heart. O, what a world of work hath a Christian about them! For of them he may say, as the Historian doth of HANNIBAL, They are never quiet, whether conquering or conquered. How many weak languishing graces hath he to recover, improve, and strengthen! There is a weak faith, a languishing love, dull and faint desires, to be quickened and invigorated. And when all this is done, what a multitude of work do his several relations exact from him! He hath a world of business incumbent on him, as a parent, child, husband, wife, master, servant, or friend, yea, not only to friends, but enemies. And besides all this, how many difficult things are there to be borne and suffered for CHRIST!

And yet will not GOD allow his people in the neglect of any one of them: Neither can he be a Christian that hath not respect to every command, and is not holy in all manner of conversation. Every one of these duties, like the several spokes in a wheel, come to bear in the whole round of a Christian's conversation: So that he hath more work upon his hands than the husbandman.

2. The husbandman's work is confessed to be spending work, but not like the Christian's. What AUGUSTUS said of the young Roman, is verified in the true Christian, *Quicquid vult, valde vult*. Whatsoever he doth in religion, he doth to purpose. Under the Law, GOD rejected the snail and the ass. (*Levit. xi. 30; Exod. xiii. 13.*) And under the Gospel, he allows no sluggish, lazy professor. Sleepy duties are utterly unsuitable to the living GOD; he will have the very spirits distilled and offered up to him in every duty. (*John iv. 24.*) He bestows upon his people the very substance and kernel of mercies, and will not accept from them the shells and shadows of duties; not the skin, but the inwards, and the fat that covereth the inwards, was required under the Law. (*Exod. xxix. 30.*) And every sacrifice, under the Gospel, must be a sacrifice full of marrow; observe the manner in which their work is to be performed.

In serving GOD, "fervent in spirit." (*Rom. xii. 11.*) In securing salvation, "diligent;" (*2 Pet. i. 10;*) or doing it thoroughly and enough. In godliness, "exercising," or stripping themselves, as for a race. (*1 Tim. iv. 7.*) In the pursuit of happiness, "striving" even to an agony. (*Luke xiii. 24.*) In prayer, "serving GOD instantly;" (*Acts xxvi. 7;*) or in a stretched out manner; yea, "pouring out their hearts before him," (*Psalms lxii. 8,*) as if the body were left like a dead corpse upon the knees, whilst the spirit is departed from it, and ascended to GOD. This is the manner of his work: Judge then how much harder this work, than to spend the sweat of the brow in manual labour.

3. The husbandman finds his work as he left it; he can begin one day where he left the other; but it is not so with

the Christian ; a bad heart, and a busy Devil, disorder and spoil his work every day. The Christian does not always find his heart in the morning, as he left it at night ; and even when he is about his work, how many set-backs doth he meet with ! SATAN stands at his right hand (the working hand) to resist him : (*Zech.* iii. 1 :) “ When he would do good, evil ” (the evil of his own heart and nature) “ is present with him.”

4. The husbandman hath some resting days, when he throws aside all his work ; but the Christian hath no resting day, till his dying day ; and then he shall rest from his labours. Religion allows no idle days, “ but requires him to be always abounding in the work of the LORD.” (*1 Cor.* xv. 58.) When one duty is done, another calls for him ; the LORD’s day is a day of rest to the husbandman, but no day in the week so laborious to the Christian. When he hath gathered in the crop of one duty, he is not to sit down satisfied therewith, or say, as that rich worldling did, “ Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years ; ” (*Luke* xii. 19 ;) but must to plough again, and count it well if the vintage reach to the seed time : (*Lev.* xxvi. 5 :) I mean, if the strength, influence, and comfort of one duty, hold out to another duty ; and that it may be so, and there be no room left for idleness, God hath appointed ejaculatory prayer, to fill up the intervals, betwixt stated and more solemn duties. These are to keep in the fire, which kindled the morning sacrifice. When can the Christian sit down and say, “ Now all my work is ended, I have nothing to do without doors or within.”

Lastly, There is a time when the labour of the husbandman is ended ; old age and weakness take him off from all employment ; they can only look upon their labourers, but cannot do a stroke of work themselves ; they can tell you what they did in their younger years, but now (say they) we must leave it to younger people ; we cannot be young always ; but the Christian is never superannuated as to the work of religion ; yea, the longer he lives, the more his Master expects from him. When he is full of days, God

expects he should be full of fruits: "They shall bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing." (*Psalms* xcii. 14.)

REFLECTIONS.

1. How hard, may the worldling say, have I laboured for the meat that perisheth, prevented the dawning of the day, and laboured as in the very fire, and yet is the Christian's work harder than mine? Surely then, I never understood the work of Christianity. Alas, my sleepy prayers, and formal duties, even all that I ever performed in my life, never cost me that pains, that one hour at plough hath done. I have either wholly neglected, or at best, so lazily performed religious duties, that I may truly say, I offer to God what cost me nothing. Woe is me, poor wretch! How is the judgment of CORAH spiritually executed upon me! The earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up his body; but it hath opened its mouth, and swallowed up my heart, my time, and all my affections. How far am I from the kingdom of God!

2. And how little better is my case, may the formalist say, who have indeed professed religion, but never made it my business! Will an empty (though splendid) profession save me? How many brave ships have perished in the storms, notwithstanding their fine names, the Prosperous, the Success, the Happy Return! A fine name could not protect them from the rocks, nor will it save me from hell. I have done by religion, as I should have done by the world; prayed, as if I prayed not; and heard, as if I heard not. I have given to God but the shadow of duty, and can never expect from him a real reward.

3. How unlike a Christian dost thou also, O my soul, may a slothful Christian say, go about thy work! Though upright in the main, yet how little zeal and activity dost thou express in thy duties! Awake, love and zeal, seest thou not the toil and pains men take for the world? How do they prevent the dawning of the day, and labour as in the fire till night; and all this for a trifle! Should not every

drop of sweat which I see trickle from their brows, fetch (as it were) a drop of blood from my heart? who am thus convinced and reproved of shameful laziness, by their indefatigable diligence. Do they pant after the dust of the earth? (*Amos ii. 7.*) And shall not I pant after GOD? O, my soul! it was not wont to be so with thee, in the days of my first profession. Should I have had no more communion with GOD in duties then, it would have broken my heart: I should have been weary of my life. Is this a time for one to stand idle, who stands at the door of eternity? What, slack-handed, when so near my everlasting rest! Or hast thou found the work of GOD so unpleasant to thee? Or the trade of godliness so unprofitable? Or knowest thou not, that millions now in hell perished for want of serious diligence in religion? Or doth my diligence for GOD, answer to that which CHRIST hath done and suffered, to purchase my happiness? Or to the preparations he hath made for me in heaven? Or dost thou forget that thy Master's eye is always upon thee, whilst thou art lazying and loitering? Or would the damned live at this rate as I do, if their day of grace might be recalled? For shame, (my soul,) for shame! rouse up thyself, and fall to thy work, with a diligence answerable to the weight thereof; for it is no vain work concerning thee; it is thy life.

CHAPTER II.

Upon the Thriftiness of the Husbandman.

The hardest labourers are the thriving men;—
If you 'll have thriving souls, be active then.

OBSERVATION.

INDUSTRY and diligence is the way to thrive and grow rich in the world. The earth must be manured, or its increase is in vain expected: *Quin fugit molam, fugit farinam*; he that refuses the mill, refuses the meal: (saith the Proverb:) "The diligent soul shall be made fat." SOLOMON

hath two proverbs concerning thriftiness and increase in the world. In *Prov.* x. 4, he saith, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich." And (*verse 22*,) he saith, "The blessing of the LORD maketh rich." These are not contradictory, but confirmatory each of other; one speaks of the principal, the other of the instrumental cause. Diligence without GOD's blessing will not do it; and that blessing cannot be expected without diligence; therefore husbandmen ply their business with unwearied pains, they even lodge in the midst of their labours, as that good husband BOAZ did. (*Ruth* ii. 3.) They are parsimonious of their time, but prodigal of their strength, because they find this to be the thriving way.

APPLICATION.

AS NATURE opens her treasures to none but the diligent, so neither doth grace. He that will be rich, must be a painful Christian; and whosoever will closely ply the trade of godliness, shall comfortably and quickly find, that "in keeping GOD's commandments there is great reward." (*Psalms* xix. 11.) "GOD is a bountiful Rewarder of such as diligently seek him." (*Heb.* xi. 6.) Nor will he suffer their work to go unrewarded; yea, it sufficiently rewards itself. (*1 Tim.* vi. 6.) And its reward is two-fold; (1.) present, and in part; (2.) future, and in full. (*Mark* x. 29, 30.) Now in this time an hundred-fold, even from suffering, which seems the most unprofitable part of the work, and in the world to come life everlasting. If you ask, what present advantage Christians have by their diligence? I answer, as much or more than the husbandman hath from all his toils and labours. Let us compare the particulars, and see what the husbandman gets, that the Christian gets not also.

1. You get credit by your diligence; it is a commendation and honour to you, to be active and stirring men: But how much more honour doth GOD put upon his laborious servants! It is the highest honour of a creature, to be active and useful for his GOD. Saints are called "vessels of honour," as they are fitted for the Master's use. (*2 Tim.* ii. 21.) Wherein consists the honour of angels but in this; that they are ministring spirits, serviceable creatures?

And all the Apostles gloried in the title of servants. The lowest office in which a man can serve GOD, even that of a Nethinim or door-keeper, which was the lowest order or rank of officers, in the house of •GOD, is yet preferred by DAVID before the service of the greatest Prince on earth. It is no small honour to be active for GOD.

2. You have this benefit by your labour, that thereby you avoid loose and evil company, which would draw you into mischief. By diligence for GOD, the Christian also is secured from temptations: “GOD is with them, while they are with him.” (2 Chron xv. 2.) Communion with GOD in the way of duty, is a great preservative against temptations. The school-men put the question, How the angels and glorified saints became impeccant? And resolve it thus, That they are secured from sin, by the beatifical vision; and sure I am that the visions of GOD, not only in glory, but now also in duty, are marvellous defences against sin; and they that are most active for GOD, have the fullest and clearest visions of GOD. (*John* xiv. 21.)

3. You have this benefit by your labour, that it tends much to the health of your bodies. The Christian hath this benefit by his labour, that it tends to a healthful state of soul: “The way of the LORD is strength to the upright.” (*Prov.* x. 29.) As those that follow their daily labours in the field, have much more health than citizens that idle, or scholars that live a sedentary life: So the active Christian enjoys more spiritual health, and is troubled with fewer complaints than others.

4. By diligence in your civil employments, you preserve your estates, and are kept from running behind-hand in the world. And by activity and diligence for GOD, souls are kept from backsliding, and running back in their graces and comforts. Remissions and intermissions in our duties, are the first steps and degrees by which a soul declines and wastes as to his spiritual estate.

5. Your pains and diligence in the fields, makes your beds sweet to you at night: “Rest is sweet to a labouring man, whether he eat little or much.” (*Eccles.* v. 12.) But

the diligent life of a Christian makes the clods of the valley, his grave, sweet unto him. Think, Christian, how sweet it will be for thee, when thou comest to die; to say then, as thy Redeemer did when near his death, "I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do; and now, O FATHER, glorify me with thine own self." (*John* xvii. 4, 5.)

6. You get estates by your diligence and labour; but what are your gains to the gains of Christians? They can get in an hour, that which they will not part with for all the gold and silver on earth.

So that compare these labourers, as to all their advantages, and you shall see, that there is no trade like that which the diligent Christian drives.

REFLECTIONS.

1. BLUSH then, O my soul, at the consideration of thy laziness, which is attended with so many spiritual wants! And can I wonder at it, when I refuse the painful way of my duty, in which the precious fruits of godliness are only to be found? If these fruits lay upon the surface of duty, or could he had with wishes, I should not want them; but to dig deep and take pains, I cannot. My desires, like those of the slothful man, kill me, because my hands refuse to labour. (*Prov.* xxi. 25.) If every duty were to be rewarded presently with gold, would I not have been more assiduous in them? And yet I know that a heart full of the grace and comfort of the HOLY GHOST, is better than a house full of gold and silver. O what a composition of stupidity and sloth am I! I have been all for the short cut to comfort, when constant experience teacheth, that the farther way about, by painful duty, is the nearest way to it. What pains do husbandmen take! What perils do seamen run for a little gain! O sluggish heart! wilt thou do nothing for eternal treasures?

2. If there be such great rewards attending diligence in duty, then why art thou so apt (O my soul) to cast off duty, because thou findest not present comfort in it? How quickly am I discouraged, if I presently find not what I expect

in duty ! Whereas, the well is deep, and much pains must be taken to draw up those waters of joy. There is a golden vein in the mount of duty, but it lies deep ; and because I meet not with it as soon as I expect, my lazy heart throws by the shovel, and cries, Dig I cannot.

3. If this be indeed the rich and thriving trade, may the worldling say, why do I peddle about the poor low things of the world so much, neglecting the rich trade of godliness for it ? O, how much of my time and strength have these things devoured ! Had I employed that time in communion with God, would it not have turned to a better account ? Thinkest thou in earnest, O my soul, that God hath endowed thee with such excellent faculties, capable of the most divine and heavenly employments, or that JESUS CHRIST hath shed his invaluable precious blood, or that he hath sent forth the glorious SPIRIT of holiness, and all this to fit men for no higher or nobler employments than these ?

Is this the end of thy wonderful creation ? Doth God whirl about the heavens in endless revolutions, to beget time for this ? Or doth he not rather expect that the weightiest work should engross thy greatest strength, and choicest hours ? O that I could once consider, what a good Master Christians serve, who will not only abundantly reward them at night, but brings them their food into the field to encourage them in their labour ! What a pity is it, that so good a Master should be so badly served as he hath been by me !

CHAPTER III.

Upon the Cheerfulness of the Husbandman.

The Ploughman sings and whistles though he sweat,
Shall Christians droop because their work is great?

OBSERVATION.

THOUGH the labours of husbandmen are great and toilsome, yet with what cheerfulness do they go through them! Hear the melody they make as they follow the plough; yea, the very horses have their bells, which make a pleasant noise. I have often been delighted with this country music, whereby they sweeten their hard labours with innocent pleasure.

APPLICATION.

BUT how much greater cause have the people of God to address themselves unto his work with all cheerfulness of spirit! And indeed, so far as the heart is spiritual, it delights in its duties. It is true, the work of a Christian is painful, more than the husbandman's, but then it as much exceeds in the delight and pleasures that attend it. What is the Christian's work, but "with joy to draw water out of the wells of salvation?" You may see what a pleasant path the path of duty is, by the cheerfulness of those that have walked in it. "I have rejoiced in the way of thy judgments, as much as in all riches." (*Psalms* cxix. 14.) And by the promises that are made to such, "Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the LORD, for great is the glory of the LORD." (*Psalms* cxxxviii. 5.)

And lastly, by the many commands, whereby joy in the ways of the LORD is made the duty of the saints. "Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; for praise is comely for the upright." (*Psalms* xcvii. 12.) "Rejoice, and again I say rejoice." (*Phil.* iv. 4.) Where the command is doubled; yea, not only simply rejoicing, but the highest degree of that duty comes within the command: "Shout for joy, all

ye that are upright in heart." (*Psalm cxxxii. 2, 16.*) And *Luke vi. 22, 23*, they are bid to leap for joy, when about the difficultest part of the work. And that you may see there is sufficient ground for it, and that it is not like the mad mirth of sinners, be pleased to consider,

1. The nature of the work about which they are employed; it is the most excellent and heavenly employment that ever souls were acquainted with. O what a delightful thing it is to walk with GOD! And yet by this, the whole work of a Christian is expressed. (*Gen. xvii. 1.*) Can any life compare with this for pleasure? Can they be chill, that walk in the sunshine? Or sad, that abide in the fountain of all delights? And walk with Him whose name is the GOD of all comfort, (*2 Cor. i. 3.*) "in whose presence is the fulness of joy?" (*Psalm xvi. 11.*) O what an angelical life doth a Christian then live!

2. If we consider the variety of spiritual employments. Change of employment takes off the tediousness of labour. Variety of voices please the ear; variety of colours please the eye; the same meat prepared several ways pleases the palate more. But O the variety of choice dishes where-with GOD entertains his people in a Sabbath! The word, prayer, sacraments.

3. Lastly, Consider the suitableness of this work to a regenerate soul. Is it any pain for a bird to fly? Or a fish to swim? Is the eye tired with beautiful objects? Or the ear with melodious sounds? As little can a spiritual soul be wearied with spiritual and heavenly exercises. "I delight in the law of GOD after the inner man." (*Rom. vii. 22.*) Weighty things are not heavy in their own element or centre. And surely, GOD is the centre of all gracious spirits. A saint can sit from morning to night to hear discourses of the love and loveliness of JESUS CHRIST. The sight of your thriving flocks, and flourishing fields, cannot yield you that pleasure which an upright soul can find in one quarter of an hour's communion with GOD. "They that are of the flesh, (saith the Apostle, *Rom. viii. 5.*) do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the

SPiRIT, the things that are of the SPiRIT.” But then, look how much heavenly objects transcend earthly ones, and how much the soul is more capable of delight in those objects, than the gross and duller senses are in theirs; so much doth the pleasure arising from duty, excel all sensitive delights on earth.

REFLECTIONS.

How am I cast and condemned by this, may the carnal heart say, who never savoured this spiritual delight in holy duties! When I am about my earthly employments, I can go unweariedly from day to day; all the way is down-hill by nature; and the wheels of my affections, being oiled with delight, run so fast, that they have need most time of triggling. Here I rather need the curb than the spur. O how fleet and nimble are my spirits in these pursuits! But what a sluggard am I in religious duties! Sure if my heart were renewed, I should delight in the law of God. All the world are alive in their ways, every creature enjoys his proper pleasure; and is there no delight to be found in the paths of holiness? Is godliness only a dry root that bears no pleasant fruits? No, no, there are doubtless incomparable pleasures to be found therein; but such an heart as mine savours them not.

I cannot say but I have delight in religious duties, may even the hypocrite say, but they have been such as rather sprang from the ostentation of gifts and applause of men, than any sweet and real communion with God; they have rather proved food and fuel to my pride, than food to my soul. Like the nightingale, I can sing sweetly, when I observe others listen to me, and affected with my music. O deceitful heart, such delight as this will end in howling! Were my spirit right, it would as much delight in retirements for the enjoyment of God, as it doth in those duties that are most exposed to the observation of man. Will such a spring as this maintain a stream of affections, when carnal motives fail? What wilt thou answer, O my

soul, to that question, "Will **God** hear his cry when trouble comes upon him? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon **God**?" (*Job* xxvii. 9, 10.) What wilt thou reply to this question? Deceive not thou thyself, O my soul! Thou wilt doubtless be easily persuaded to let go that thou never delightest in; and from an hypocrite in religion, quickly become an apostate from religion.

From all this, the upright heart takes advantage to rouse up its delight in **God**; and thus it expostulateth with itself: Doth the ploughman sing amidst his drudging labours, and whistle away his weariness in the field, and shall I droop amidst such heavenly employment? O my soul, what wantest thou here to provoke thy delight? If there be such an affection as delight in thee, methinks, such an object as the blessed face of **God** in his ordinances should excite it. Ah, how would this ennoble all my services, and make them angel-like! How glad are those blessed creatures to be employed for **God**! No sooner were they created, but they sang and shouted for joy. (*Job* xxxviii. 7.) How did they fill the air with heavenly melody, when sent to bring the joyful tidings of a **Saviour** to the world! Ascribing glory to **God** in the highest, even to the highest of their powers: Yea, this delight would make all my duties Christ-like; and the nearer that pattern, the more excellent. He delighted to do his **FATHER's** will; it was to him meat and drink.

Yea, it would not only enable, but facilitate all my duties, and be to me as wings to a bird in flying, or sails to a ship in motion. Oiled wheels run freely: "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of **AMINADAB**." What is the reason, my **God**, my delight in thee should be so little? Is it not, because my unbelief is so great? Rouse up my delights, O thou Fountain of pleasure! And let me swim down the stream of holy joys in duty, into the boundless ocean of those immense delights that are in thy presence, and at thy right hand for evermore.

CHAPTER IV

Upon the due Quality of Arable Land.

Corn-land must neither be too fat, nor poor ;
The middle state suits best with Christians sure.

OBSERVATION.

HUSBANDMEN find by experience, that their arable lands may be dressed too much, as well as too little. If the soil be over-rank, the seed shoots up so much into the stalk, that it seldom ears well ; and if too thin and poor, it wants its due nutriment, and comes not to perfection. Therefore their care is to keep it in heart, not to over-dress it or under-dress it. The end of all their cost and pains about it is fruit ; and therefore reason tells them, that such a state of it as best fits it for fruit, is best both for it and them.

APPLICATION.

AND doth not spiritual experience teach Christians, that a competency of the things of this life, best fits them for the fruit of obedience, which is the end and excellency of their being ? The altars of the rich seldom smoke. When our outward enjoyments are by Providence shaped and fitted to our condition, as a suit is to the body, that sits close and neat, we cannot desire a better condition in this world.

This it was that wise AGUR requested of GOD : “ Give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the LORD ? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my GOD in vain.” (*Prov. xxx. 8, 9.*) Against both he prays equally, not absolutely ; that had been his sin ; but submissively to the will of GOD. He had rather, if GOD see it fit, avoid both extremes ; but what would he have then ? Why, food convenient. Or, according to the Hebrew, Give me my prey or statute-bread ; which is a me-

taphor from birds which fly up and down to prey for their young, and what they get they distribute among them; they bring them enough to preserve their lives, but not more than enough, to lie mouldering in the nest. Such a proportion AGUR desired; and the reason why he desired it, is drawn from the danger of both extremes. He measured the conveniency or inconveniency of his estate in the world, by its suitableness or unsuitableness to the end of his being. He accounted the true excellency of his life, to consist in its tendency to the glory of GOD; and he could not see how a redundancy or too great penury could fit him for that; but a middle state, equally removed from both extremes.

And this was all that good JACOB, who was led by the same SPIRIT, looked at: "And JACOB vowed a vow, saying, if GOD will be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my GOD." (*Gen. xxviii. 20.*) JACOB desires no great matters in the world: Food and raiment will satisfy him. In spiritual things his desires are boundless; he is the most greedy and unsatisfied man in the world; (*Hos. xii. 4;*) but in matters of this life, if he can get from GOD but a morsel of meat, and a mouth-full of water, he will not envy the richest CRÆSUS upon earth. Meat and drink are the riches of Christians. *Divitiæ sunt ad legem naturæ composita paupertas*, saith POMPONIUS ATTICUS. Riches are such a poverty or mediocrity, as hath enough for nature's uses; and such a state is best accommodated, both to the condition and to the desires of a saint.

1. To his condition; for what is a saint, but a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth, a man in a strange country travelling homeward? So DAVID professed himself: "I am a stranger in this earth." (*Psaln cxix. 19.*) And so those worthies who are now at home in heaven, (*Heb. xi. 13.*) professed themselves to be strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and to seek a country: A *viaticum* contents a traveller; he will not cumber himself with superfluous things, which rather clog and tire, than help him in his journey.

2. It suits best with his desires, I mean his regular and advised desires. For,

(1.) A gracious soul earnestly desires a free condition in the world: He is sensible he hath much work to do, a race to run, and is loath to be clogged, or have his foot in the snare of the cares or pleasures of this life: He knows that fulness exposes to wantonness and irreligion. (*Deut.* vi. 12; *Hos.* xiii. 6.) It is hard, in the midst of so many tempting objects, to keep the golden bridle of moderation upon the affections. The heart of a Christian, like the moon, commonly suffers an eclipse when it is at the full, and that by the interposition of the earth.

It was SOLOMON'S fulness that drew out and dissolved his spirits, and brought him to such a low ebb in spirituals, that it remains a question with some, Whether he ever recovered it to his dying day. As it is the misery of the poor to be neglected of men, so it is the misery of the rich to neglect God. Who can be poorer, than to have the world, and love it? Or richer, than to enjoy but little of it, and live above it?

And on the other side, extreme poverty is no less exposed to sin and danger. (*Lev.* vi. 2, 3, 4.) As high and lofty trees are subject to storms and tempests, so the lowest shrubs to be browsed on by every beast; and therefore a good man desires a just competency, as the fittest, because the freest state.

(2.) A gracious person desires no more than a competency, because there is most of God's love and care discovered in giving in our daily bread, by a daily Providence. It is betwixt such a condition and a fulness of provision in our hand, as it was betwixt Egypt and Canaan; Egypt was watered with the flood from the river Nilus, and little of God was seen in that mercy; but Canaan depended upon the dews and showers of heaven, and so every shower of rain was a refreshing shower to their souls as well as bodies. Most men that have a stock of comforts in their hands, look upon all as coming in a natural course, and see very little of God in

their mercies. Pope ADRIAN built a college at Louvain, and caused this inscription to be written in letters of gold on the gates thereof: *Trajectum plantavit, Louvanium rigavit, CÆSAR dedit incrementum*; that is, Utrecht planted me, Louvain watered me, and CÆSAR gave the increase. One to reprove his folly, wrote underneath, *Hic Deus nihil fecit*: Here GOD did nothing. Carnal men sow, and reap, and eat, and look no farther.

But when a man sees his mercies come in by the special care of GOD for him, there is double sweetness in those mercies; the natural sweetness which comes from the creature itself, every one, even the beasts can taste that as well as thee; but besides that, there is a spiritual sweetness, far exceeding the former, which none but a believer tastes; and much of that comes from the manner in which he receives it, because it comes (be it never so coarse or little) as a covenant-mercy to him. “He hath given bread to them that fear him, he is ever mindful of his covenant.” (*Psalm cxi. 5.*) LUTHER, who made many a meal upon a broiled her-ring, was wont to say, ‘Let us be content with coarse fare here; have we not the bread that came down from heaven? Do we not feed with angels?’ A pregnant instance of the sweetness of such mercies, is given us by a worthy divine of our own, MR. ISAAC AMBROSE: ‘For mine own part,’ saith he, ‘however the LORD hath seen cause to give me but a poor pittance of outward things; (for which I bless his name;) yet in the income thereof I have many times observed so much of his peculiar Providence, that thereby they have been much sweetened, and my heart hath been raised to admire his grace. When of late, under an hard dispensation, all streams of wonted supplies being stopped, the waters of relief for myself and family did run low; I went to bed with some doubtings of the fountain’s letting out itself for our refreshing; but ere I did awake in the morning, a letter was brought to my bed-side, which reported some unexpected breakings-out of GOD’s goodness for my comfort.’ Whereupon he sweetly concludes, ‘One morsel of GOD’s provision (especially if it come unexpected, and

upon prayer) will be more sweet to a spiritual relish, than all former full enjoyments were.'

Many mercies come unasked for, and they require thankfulness ; but when mercies come in upon prayer, and as a return of prayer, their sweetness more than doubles ; for now it is both God's blessing upon his own institution, and a seal set to his promise at once. (*Psalm lxxvi. 16, 17.*) Doubtless HANNAH found more comfort in her SAMUEL, and RACHEL in her NAPHTHALI, (the one being asked of God, and the other wrestled for with God, as their names import,) than mothers ordinarily do in their children,

REFLECTIONS.

Do the people of God desire only so much of the creatures (may many a one say) as may fit them for the service of God? What a wretch am I, that have desired only so much of religion as may fit me to gain the creatures ! As God's people have subjected all their creature-enjoyments to religion ; so, O my soul, thou hast subjected religion to thy worldly interest. Instead of eating and drinking to serve God, I have served God to eat and drink : Yea, I have not only acted below religion, but below reason also ; for reason dictates plainly, that the means must never be more excellent than the end. Wretch that I am, to make religion a slave to my lust, an artifice to carry on my carnal designs ! Verily I have my reward ; and this is all the good I am ever likely to get by it.

And no less should the worldling tremble, to consider how he has cast off the duties of religion, made them stand aside, and give place to the world. Instead of desiring so much only as might make him serviceable to God, he thrusts aside the service of God, to get as much of the world as he can, who is so far from making godliness the end of his comforts, that he rather looks upon it as an hinderance to them. May not the very Heathens make me blush ? Could ARISTOTLE deliver this as a true rule to prosperity, to make religion our first and chief care ? Could ARISTIPPUS say, He would rather neglect his means than his mind ? His farm than his soul ? Will the very Mahometans, how ur-

gent soever their business be, lay it aside five times in the day to pray? Yea, is it common to a proverb among the very Papists, that mass and meat hinder no man; and yet I that profess myself a Christian, thrust out duty for every trifle? O wretched soul! how hath the God of this world blinded mine eyes! Can the world indeed do that for me, that CHRIST can do? Hath it ever proved true to them that trusted it? Hath it not at last turned them off as men turn off a sumpter horse at night, that hath been a drudge to carry their gold and silver for them all day, and at last is turned out with an empty belly and a galled back? O how righteous will that sentence of GOD be, "Go cry to the Gods whom thou hast served!"

And may not many turn in upon themselves with shame and sorrow, to consider how unsatisfied they have been in that condition that others have preferred and esteemed as the greatest of all outward mercies? I have indeed been fed with food convenient, but not contented: How hath my heart been tortured from day to day with anxious thoughts what I shall eat and drink, and wherewith I and mine shall be clothed? I pretend indeed that I care but for a competency of the world, but sure I am, my cares about it have been incompetent. Come, my distrustful earthly heart, let me propound a few questions to thee about this matter, and answer truly to what I shall now demand.

Question 1. Hast thou here a continuing city? Art thou at home, or upon thy journey, that thou art so solicitous about the world? Thy profession indeed speaks thee a stranger upon earth, but thy conversation a home-dweller. ERASMUS said, 'He desired honours and riches, no more than a weary horse doeth a heavy cloak-bag.' Wouldest thou not account him a fool, that would victual his ship as much to cross the channel to France, as if she were bound for the East Indies? Alas! it will be but a little while, and then there will be no more need of any of these things. It is sad, that a soul which stands at the door of eternity, should be perplexing itself about food and raiment.

Question 2. Whom hast thou known to be the better for much of the world? It hath been some men's utter ruin. Seldom doth GOD suffer men to be their own carvers, but they cut their own fingers. 'To give riches and pleasure to an evil man, (saith ARISTOTLE,) is but to give wine to one that hath a fever.' Where there is no want, there is usually much wantonness. What a sad story was that of PIUS QUINTUS, 'When I was in a low condition, (said he,) I had some comfortable hopes of my salvation; when I came to be a Cardinal, I greatly doubted of it; but since I came to the Popedom, I have no hope at all.' Though this poor undone wretch spake it out, and others keep it in, yet doubtless he hath many thousand fellows in the world that might say as much, would they but speak the truth.

And even those whom the world hath not excluded out of heaven, yet it hath sorely clogged them in the way thither. Many that have been very humble, holy, and heavenly in a low condition, have suffered a sad ebb in a full condition. What a cold blast have they felt coming from the cares and delights of this life, to chill both their graces and comforts! It had been well for some of God's people, if they had never known what prosperity meant.

Question 3. Is not this a sad symptom of a declining state of soul, to be so hot, eager, and anxious about the trifles of this life? Thinkest thou, O my soul, that one who walks in the views of glory, and maintains a conversation in heaven, can be much taken with those vanities? Do not the visions of GOD veil the tempting splendour of the creature? It was the opinion of some of the schoolmen, that the reason why ADAM in Paradise was not sensible of his nakedness, was because he was wholly taken up in conversing with GOD. But this is certain, lively and sweet communion with GOD blunts and dulls the edge of the affections to earthly things; and canst thou be satisfied, my soul, with such gains as are attended with such losses?

Question 4. To conclude. Is it not dishonourable to GOD, and a justification of the way of the world, for me

that profess myself a Christian, to be as eager after riches as other men? "After all these things do the nations seek." (*Matt* vi. 32.) If I had no Father in heaven, nor promise in the word, it were another matter; but since my heavenly FATHER knows what I have need of, and hath charged me to be careful in nothing, but only tell him my wants, (*Phil.* iv. 6,) how unbecoming a thing is it in me to live and act as I have done! Let me henceforth learn to measure my condition, rather by its usefulness to GOD, than its content and ease to my flesh.

CHAPTER V

Upon the Improvement of Bad Ground.

Spent barren land you can restore and nourish,
Decayed Christians GOD can cause to flourish.

OBSERVATION.

WHEN land is spent by tillage, or for want of manuring, the careful husbandman hath many ways to recover it. He lets it lie fallow to give it rest, and time to recover itself, carries out his sand, lime, and compost, to refresh and quicken it again; and in pasture and meadow-ground, will wash it (if possible) with a current of water, or the float of the ways after a fall of rain, which is to the earth as a spring of new blood to a consumptive body. He cuts down and kills the weeds that suck it out, and causes them to make restitution of what they have purloined from, by rotting upon the place where they grew. As careful are they to recover it when it is spent, as an honest Physician is of his patient in a languishing condition; for he knows his field will be as grateful to him, and fully requite his care and cost.

APPLICATION.

As man's, so GOD's husbandry is sometimes out of order, not by yielding too many crops, but too few. The mystical

husbandman hath some fields, (I mean, particular societies and persons,) that were once fragrant and fruitful like a field which GOD had blessed, but are now decayed and grown barren; whose gleanings formerly were more than their vintage now: "The things that are in them are ready to die." It is possible for gracious souls to be reduced to a very low ebb, both of graces and comforts.

One that hath walked in sweet communion with GOD, sunning himself in the light of his countenance, may afterwards "walk in darkness, and see no light." (*Isaiah* l. 10.) He that hath cast anchor within the veil, and rode securely in the peaceful harbour of assurance, may seem to feel his anchor of hope come home to him, and go adrift into the stormy ocean again, crying with the church, "My hope is perished from the LORD." (*Lam.* iii. 18.) His calm and clear air may be overcast and clouded, yea, filled with storms and tempests, lightnings and thunders: His graces, like under-ground flowers in the winter, may all disappear, and hide their heads. To GOD he may say, I am cast out of thy sight; I know thou canst do much, but wilt thou show wonders to the dead? To the promises he may say, You are sweet things, but what have I to do with you? I could once indeed rejoice in you as my portion, but now I doubt I grasped a shadow. To saints he may say, Turn away from me, labour not to comfort me, do not spill your precious ointments of consolation upon my head; for what have I to do with comfort? To former experiences, he may say in his haste, You are all liars. To the light of GOD's countenance, he may say, Farewell, sweet light, I shall behold thee no more. To SATAN he may say, O mine enemy, thou hast at last prevailed against me, thou art stronger than I, and hast overcome. To duties and ordinances, he may say, Where is the sweetness I once found in you? You were once sweeter to me than the honey-comb; but now as tasteless as the white of an egg.

But will GOD leave his poor creatures helpless in such a case as this? Shall their leaf fall, their branches wither, their life depart? Will He see their graces fainting, their

hopes gasping, the things that are in them ready to die, and will He not regard it? Yes, yes, "there is hope of a tree if it be cut down, and the root thereof wax old in the earth, yet by the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant." (*Job* xiv. 8, 9.) This poor declining soul, as sad as it sits at the gates of hell, may rouse up itself at last, and say to SATAN, that stands triumphing over him, "Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy; for though I fall, yet I shall arise; though I sit in darkness, the LORD will be a light unto me." (*Mic.* vii. 8.) He may raise up himself upon his bed of languishing for all this, and say to GOD, "Though thou hast chastened me sore, yet hast thou not given me over unto death." He may turn about to the saints that have mourned for him, and with a lightsome countenance say, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD." He may say to the promises, You are the true and faithful sayings of GOD, my unbelief did belie you; I said in my haste you were liars, but I am ashamed of my folly. Surely, O my soul, there is yet hope in thine end, thou mayest be restored, thou mayest yet recover thy verdure, and thy dew be as the dew of herbs. For,

1. Is He not thy FATHER, and a FATHER full of compassions and bowels? And can a father stand by his dying child, see his fainting fits, hear his melting groans, and pity-begging looks; and not help him; especially having restoratives by him, that can do it? Surely, "As a father pities his own children, so will thy GOD pity thee." (*Psalms* ciii. 12, 13.) "He will spare thee, as a father spareth his own son that serves him." (*Mark* iii. 17.) Hark, how his bowels yearn! "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself: Is not Ephraim my dear son? Is he not a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: I will surely have mercy on him." (*Jer.* xxxi. 20.)

2. Doth he not know thy life would be altogether useless to him, if he should not restore thee? What service art thou fit to perform to him, in such a condition? "Thy

days will consume like smoke, whilst thy heart is smitten and withered like grass. Thy months will be months of vanity, they will fly away, and see no good." (*Job* vii. 3.) If he will but quicken thee again, then thou wilt call upon his name: But in a dead and languishing condition, thou art no more fit for any work of God, than a sick man is for manual labours; and surely he hath not put those excellent graces of his SPIRIT within thee for nothing! They were planted there for fruit and service, and therefore doubtless he will revive thee again.

3. Yea, dost thou not think he sees thine inability to bear such a condition long? He knows "thy spirit would fail before him, and the soul which he hath made." (*Isaiah* lvii. 16.) DAVID told him as much in the like condition, "Hear me speedily, O LORD, for my spirit faileth; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto those that go down into the pit:" (*Psalms* cxliii. 7, 8:) As if he had said, LORD, make haste and recover my languishing soul; otherwise, whereas thou hast now a sick child, thou wilt shortly have a dead child.

And in like manner JOB expostulated with him: "My grief is heavier than the sound of the sea, my words are swallowed up; for the arrows of the Almighty are within me, and the poison thereof drinks up my spirits: The terrors of God do set themselves in array against me: What is my strength that I should hope? Is my strength the strength of stones? Or are my bones of brass?" (*Job* vi. 1—3, 11, 12.) Other troubles a man may, but this he cannot bear; and therefore doubtless seasonable and gracious revivings will come: "He will not stir up all his wrath; for he remembers thou art but flesh, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again." (*Prov.* xviii. 14.) He hath ways enough to do it; if he do but unveil his blessed face, and make it shine again upon thee, thou art saved. The manifestations of his love will be to thy soul as showers to the parched grass: Thy soul, that now droops and hangs the wing, shall then revive and leap for joy. A new face shall come upon thy graces; they shall bud again,

and blossom as the rose: If he do but send a spring of auxiliary grace into thy soul, then shalt thou return to thy first works again, and sing as in the days of thy youth.

REFLECTIONS.

THIS is my very case, saith many a poor Christian; thus my soul languishes and droops from day to day. How unlike am I to what once I was! Surely, as the old men wept, when they saw how short the second temple came of the glory of the first; so may I sit down and weep bitterly, to consider how much my first love and first duties excelled the present. For,

1. Is my heart so much in heaven now, as it was wont to be? Say, O my soul, dost thou not remember, when, like the beloved disciple, thou layest in JESUS'S bosom? How didst thou sweeten communion with him! How restless and impatient wast thou in his absence! Divine withdrawments were to thee as the hell of hell: What a burden was the world to me in those days! Had it not been for conscience of my duty, I could have been willing to let all lie, that communion with CHRIST might suffer no interruption. When I awaked in the night, how was the darkness enlightened by the heavenly glimpses of the countenance of my GOD! How did his company shorten those hours, and beguile the tediousness of the night? Is it now as it was then? No, no; those days are past and gone, and thou art become much a stranger to that heavenly life. Art thou able with truth to deny this charge? When occasionally I pass by those places, which were once to me, as JACOB'S Bethel to him, I sigh at the remembrance of former passages betwixt me and heaven there, and say with JOB, "O that it were with me as in months past, as in the days when GOD preserved me, when his candle shined upon my head, when by his light I walked through darkness, when the Almighty was yet with me, when I put on righteousness and it clothed me, when my glory was fresh in me! When I remember these things, my soul is poured out within me." (*Job xxix.*)

2. Are thy obedience to the commands of CHRIST, and motions to duty, as free and cheerful as they were wont to be? Call to mind, my soul, the times when thou wast borne down the stream of love to every duty; if the SPIRIT did but whisper to thee, "Seek my face," how did my Spirit echo, "Thy face, LORD, will I seek!" If GOD had any work to be done, how readily did I offer my service! Here am I, LORD, send me. My soul made me as the chariots of AMINADAB; love oiled the wheels of my affections, and "his commandments were not grievous." There were no such quarrellings with the command, no such excuses and delays as there are now. No; such was my love to CHRIST, and delight to do his will, that I could no more keep back myself from duty, than a man that is carried away in a crowd.

Or, lastly, tell me, O my soul, dost thou bemoan thyself, or grieve so tenderly for sin, and for grieving the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD, as thou wast wont to do? When formerly I had fallen by the hand of a temptation, how was I wont to lie in tears at the LORD's feet! How did I hasten to my closet, and there cry, like EZRA, "O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to look up unto thee!" (*Ezra ix. 6.*) How did I sigh and weep before him, and like EPHRAIM, smite upon my thigh, saying, "What have I done!" Ah! my soul, how didst thou work, strive, and cast about, to recover thyself again! Hast thou forgotten how thou wouldest sometimes look up and sigh bitterly? Ah! what a GOD have I provoked! What love and goodness have I abused! Sometimes look in and weep. Ah! what motions did I withstand! What a good SPIRIT have I grieved! Ah! my soul, thou wouldest have abhorred thyself, thou couldest never have borne it, had thine heart been as stupid and as relentless then as now. If ever a poor soul had reason to dissolve itself into tears for its sad relapses, I have.

But yet mourn not as one without hope. Remember, "There is hope in Israel concerning this thing." As low as thy condition is, it is not desperate, it is not a disease

that scorns a remedy ; many a man that hath been stretched out for dead, hath revived, and lived many a comfortable day in the world ; many a tree that hath cast both leaf and fruit, by the skill of a prudent husbandman hath been recovered, and made flourishing and fruitful. Is it not easier to recover a languishing man to health, than a dead man to life ? And yet this GOD did for me. (*Eph.* ii. 1.) Is any thing too hard for the LORD ? “ Though my soul draw nigh unto the pit, and my life to the destroyers, yet He can send me a messenger, one among a thousand, that shall declare to me my uprightness ; then shall he deliver me from going down into the pit, my flesh shall be fresher than a child’s, and I shall return to the days of my youth.” (*Job xxxiii. 22.*) Though my flourish, and much of my fruit too, be gone, and I am a withering tree ; yet as long as the root of the matter is in me, there is more hope of such a poor, decayed, withered tree, than of the hypocrite, that wants such a root, in all his glory and bravery. His sun shall set, and never rise again ; but I live in expectation of a sweet morning, after this dark night.

Rouse up therefore, O my soul ; set thy faith to work on CHRIST for quickening grace ; for he hath life in himself, and quickens whomsoever he will. Stir up that little which remains. Hast thou not seen lively flames proceed from dying sparks, when carefully collected and blown up ? Get amongst the most lively Christians : “ As iron sharpens iron, so will these set an edge upon thy dull affections.”

But above all, cry mightily to the LORD for quickening, for He will not despise thy cry. The moans of a distressed child, work upon the bowels of a tender father. And be sure to keep within thy view the great things of eternity, which are ready to be revealed ; live in the believing and serious contemplation of them, and be dead if thou canst. It is true, thou hast reason enough, from thy condition, to be for ever humbled ; but no reason at all from GOD, to be in the least discouraged.

CHAPTER VI.

Upon the Uncurableness of some Bad Ground.

No skill can mend the miry ground, and sure
Some souls the Gospel leaves as past a cure.

OBSERVATION.

ALTHOUGH the industry and skill of the husbandman can make some ground that was useless and bad, good for tillage or pasture; yet such is the nature of some rocky or miry ground, that it never can be made fruitful. The husbandman is fain to let it alone, as an incurable piece of waste and worthless ground; and though the sun and clouds shed their influences on it, as well as upon better land, yet that doth not at all mend it. Nay, the more showers it receives, the worse it proves. For these do no way improve it; nothing thrives there, but worthless flags and rushes.

APPLICATION.

MANY also there are under the Gospel, who are given over by GOD to judicial blindness, hardness of heart, a reprobate sense, and perpetual barrenness; so that how excellent soever the means are which they enjoy, and how efficacious soever to the salvation of others, yet they never do their souls good. "Every thing wheresoever the river comes shall live, but the miry places thereof, and the marshes thereof, shall never be healed, but be given to salt;" (*Ezek.* xlvi. 9, 11;) that is, given to an obstinate and everlasting barrenness. Men that live unfruitfully under all GOD's ordinances, are compared to miry and marshy places in three respects.

1. In miry places the water hath not free passage, but stands and settles there. So it is with these barren souls; therefore the Apostle prays, "that the Gospel may run and be glorified." (*2 Thess.* iii. 1.) The word is said to run, when it meets with no stop, when it is freely propagat-

ed, and runs through the whole man ; when it meets with no stop, either in the mouth of the speaker, or hearts of the hearers, as it doth in these.

2. In a miry place, the earth and water are mixed together ; this mixture makes mire. So it is when the truths of GOD mix with the corruptions of men ; they either hold some truths, and yet live in their lusts ; or else make use of the truths of GOD to justify their sins. Or,

3. In a miry place, the longer the water stands, the worse it grows ; so the longer some men abide under GOD's ordinances, the more filthy and polluted they grow : These are the miry places that cannot be healed, their disease is incurable, desperate.

CHRIST executes by the Gospel that curse upon many souls, which he denounced against the fig-tree, " Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever, and immediately the fig-tree withered away." (*Matt.* xxi. 19.) To be given up to such a condition, is a fearful judgment indeed, the sum of all plagues, miseries, and judgments. To be barren under the Gospel is a sore judgment ; but to have a pertinacious barrenness, this is to be twice dead, and plucked up by the root, as JUDE speaks.

And to show you the miserable state of such men, let the following particulars be weighed.

(1.) It is a stroke at the soul itself, an inward spiritual judgment ; and by how much the more inward and spiritual any judgment is, so much the more dreadful and lamentable. If it were but a temporal stroke upon the body, the loss of an eye, an ear, a hand, a foot, though in itself it would be a considerable loss ; yet it were nothing to this. GOD hath given men double members ; two eyes, if one be lost, the other supplies its wants ; two hands, two ears, two feet, that the failing of one may be supplied by the help of the other ; but one soul, if that perish, there is not another to supply its loss. The soul, saith a Heathen, is the man, that which is not seen is the man. The Apostle calls the body a vile body ; (*Phil.* iii. 21 ;) and so it is, com-

pared with the soul. O it were far better that many bodies perish, than one soul; that every member were made the seat and subject of the most exquisite torture, than such a judgment should fall upon the soul.

(2.) It is the severest stroke GOD can inflict upon the soul in this life, to give it up to barrenness; because it cuts off all hopes, frustrates all means, nothing can be a blessing to him. If one come from the dead, if angels should descend from heaven to preach to him; there is no hope of him. As there was none found in heaven or earth that could open the seals of that book, (*Rev.* v. 5,) so is there no opening, by the hand of the most able ministry, those seals of hardness, blindness, and unbelief, thus impressed upon the spirit. Whom justice so locks up, mercy will never let out.

(3.) It is the most indiscernible stroke to themselves that can be, and by that so much the more desperate. Hence there is said to be poured out upon them the spirit of slumber: "The LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep:" (*Isa.* xxix. 10 :) MONTANUS renders it, The LORD hath mingled upon you the spirit of deep sleep. And so it is an allusion to a soporiferous medicine mingled and made up of opium, and such like stupefactive ingredients, which casts a man into such a dead sleep, that do what you will to him, he feels, he knows it not. For men are not sensible at all of this judgment; they do not in the least suspect it; and that is their misery. Though they be cursed trees which never bear fruit to life, yet many times they bear abundance of other fair and pleasant fruits to the eye, excellent gifts and rare endowments; and these deceive and undo them. "We have prophesied in thy name:" (*Matt.* vii. 22 :) this makes the wound desperate, that there is no finding of it, no probe to search it.

Lastly, It is such a stroke of GOD upon the souls of men, as immediately foreruns hell and damnation: "That which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned." (*Heb.* vi. 8.) So that as the saints in this world have a foretaste of heaven, which the Scripture calls the earnest of the SPIRIT; so this is a pre-

cursor of hell, a sign of wrath at the door. We may say of it, as it is said of the pale horse in the *Revelation*, that hell follows it. "If a man abide not in me, (saith CHRIST,) he is cast forth as a branch and withered;" (*John* xvi. 6;) which is the very state of these barren, cursed souls. And what follows? Why, saith he, "men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned:" lo, this is the vengeance which the Gospel executes upon this barren ground.

REFLECTIONS.

1. WELL then, blessed be GOD, may the sincere soul say, that made me feel the saving power of the Gospel. O, let GOD be exalted for ever for this mercy! that how defective soever I am in other gifts, though I have a dull understanding, a leaking memory, a stammering tongue; yet I have felt and do feel the power of the Gospel upon my heart. I bless thee, my GOD! that although I labour under many spiritual infirmities, yet I am not sick of this incurable disease. I have given thee indeed just cause to inflict this dreadful curse upon me also, but thou hast not dealt with me after my deserts; but according to the riches of thy mercy. Some little fruit I bring forth, and what it is, is by virtue of my union with JESUS CHRIST. And this hath more in it to my comfort, than all the glittering gifts and splendid performances in the world. If I might have my choice (saith one) I would chuse the most despicable and sordid work of a rustic Christian, before all the victories of ALEXANDER, and triumphs of CESAR. "Blessed therefore be the LORD, who hath abounded unto me, in all spiritual blessings, in heavenly things in CHRIST JESUS."

I cannot remember a sermon as another can, but blessed be GOD that I am able to savour it, and feel it; that I have an heart to love, and a will to obey, all that GOD discovers to be my duty.

2. O, then, how little cause have I, may the formalist say, to make my boast of ordinances, and glory in my external privileges, who never bear spiritual fruit under them! If

I well consider my condition, there is matter of trembling, and not of glorying in these things. It may be, while I have been glorying in them, and lifting up my heart upon them, the LORD hath been secretly blasting my soul under them, and insensibly executing this horrible curse. Shall I boast, that with Capernaum "I am lifted up to heaven," since I may with her at last be cast down to hell? And if so, LORD, what a hell will my hell be! It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for me. It drew tears from the eyes of CHRIST, when he was looking upon JERUSALEM, under the same consideration that I doubt I have cause to look upon my own soul. "He wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." (*Luke* xix. 41.) So long I have been a hearer of the Gospel, so many years I have enjoyed its distinguishing ordinances; but have they not been all dry and empty things to me? Hath not the spirit of formality acted me in them? Sad is my condition now; but it would be desperate and irrecoverable, shouldst thou execute this curse upon me.

3. And what may I think of my condition? may the fruitless Christian say. LORD, I acknowledge my unprofitableness under the means hath been shameful; and this hath made my condition doubtful. I have often trembled for fear, lest my root had been blasted by such a curse; but if so, whence is this trembling? Whence these fears and sorrows about it? Doth such fruit grow in that soil which thou hast cursed? LORD, I bless thee for the fruits of fear, sorrow, and holy jealousy, The laws of men spare for the fruits' sake, and wilt not thou spare me also, my GOD, if there be found in me a blessing in the bud? (*Isa.* lxxv. 8.)

4. To conclude: What a serious reflection should this occasion in every dispenser of the Gospel! How should he say, when he goes to preach, I am now going to preach that word, which is to be a savour of life or death to these souls; upon how many of my poor hearers may the curse of perpetual barrenness be executed this day! O how should such a thought melt his heart

into compassion over them, and make him beg hard, and plead earnestly with God for a better issue of the Gospel than this upon them !

CHAPTER VII.

Upon the Ploughing of Corn Land.

The Ploughman guides his plough with care and skill,
So doth the Spirit in sound conviction still.

OBSERVATION.

IT requires not only strength, but skill and judgment, to manage and guide the plough. The Hebrew word which we translate to plough, signifies to be intent, as an artificer is about some curious piece of work. The plough must neither go too shallow nor too deep in the earth ; it must not indent the ground by making crooked furrows, nor leap and make baulks in good ground ; but be guided as to a just depth of earth, so to cast the furrow in a straight line, that the floor or surface of the field may be made plain. And hence that expression, “ He that puts his hand to the plough, and looks back, is not fit for the kingdom of heaven.” (*Luke ix. 62.*) The meaning is, that as he that ploughs must have his eyes always forwards, to guide and direct his hand in casting the furrows straight and even ; (for his hand will be quickly out when his eye is off ;) so he that heartily resolves for heaven, must addict himself wholly and intently to the business of religion, and not have his mind entangled with the things of this world, which he hath left behind him ; whereby it appears, that the right management of the plough requires as much skill as strength.

APPLICATION.

THIS observation in nature serves excellently to shadow forth this proposition in divinity : That the work of the SPIRIT, in convincing and humbling the heart, is a work

wherein much of the wisdom as well as power of GOD is discovered. The work of repentance is set forth in Scripture by this metaphor of ploughing: "Plough up your fallow ground;" (*Jer.* iv. 3; *Hos.* x. 12;) that is, be convinced, humble, and broken-hearted for sin. And the resemblance betwixt both these works appears in the following particulars:

1. It is a hard and difficult work to plough, it is reckoned one of the painfullest manual labours. It is also a hard thing to convince and humble the heart of a secure, stout, and proud sinner. What LUTHER saith of a dejected soul, 'that it is as easy to raise the dead, as to comfort such a one;' the same I may say of the secure, confident sinner. It is as easy to rend the rocks, as to work saving contrition upon such a heart. All the melting language and earnest entreaties of the Gospel, cannot urge such a heart to shed a tear: Therefore it is called a heart of stone, (*Ezek.* xxxvi. 26,) a firm rock. "Shall horses run upon the rocks? Will one plough there with oxen?" (*Amos* vi. 12.) Yet when the LORD comes in the power of his SPIRIT, these rocks rend and yield to the power of the word.

2. The plough pierces deep into the bosom of the earth, makes (as it were) a deep gash or wound in the heart of it, so doth the SPIRIT upon the hearts of sinners; he pierces their very souls by conviction: "When they heard this, they were pricked [or pierced point-blank] to the heart." (*Acts* ii. 37.) Then the word divides the soul and spirit. It comes upon the conscience with such piercing dilemmas, and drives the sword of conviction so deep into their souls, that there is no staunching the blood, no healing this wound, till CHRIST himself come and undertake the cure. This barbed arrow cannot be pulled out of their hearts by any but the hand that shot it in. Discourse with such a soul about his troubles, and he will tell you, that all the sorrows that ever he had in this world, loss of estate, health, children or whatever else, are but flea-bittings to this; this swallows up all our troubles. "Now deep calleth upon deep at the noise of his water-spouts, when the

waves and billows of GOD go over the soul." Spiritual sorrows are deep waters, in which the stoutest soul would sink and drown, did not JESUS CHRIST, by a secret and supporting hand, hold it up by the chin.

3. The plough rends the earth in pieces, which before was united, and makes those parts hang loose, which formerly lay close. Thus doth the Spirit of conviction rend in sunder the heart and its most beloved lusts: "Rend your hearts, and not your garments;" (*Joel* ii. 13;) that is, rather than your garments. And this rending implies not only pain; flesh cannot be rent asunder without anguish; nor yet only force; the heart is stubborn and knotty, and will not easily yield; but it also implies a disunion of parts united: As when a garment or the earth is rent, those parts are separated which formerly cleaved together. Sin and the soul were glued fast together before, there was no parting of them, they would as soon part with their lives as their lusts; but now, when the heart is rent *for* them truly, it is also rent *from* them.

4. The plough discovers such things as lay hid in the bosom of the earth before, and covered under a fair green surface. Thus when the LORD ploughs up the heart of a sinner by conviction, then the secrets of his heart are made manifest; (*2 Cor.* xiv. 24, 25;) the most secret and shameful sins will then out; for "the word of GOD is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (*Heb.* iv. 12.) It makes the fire burn inwardly, so that the soul hath no rest till confession give a vent to trouble. Fain would the sinner conceal and hide his shame, but the word follows him through all his sinful shifts, and brings him at last to be his own, both accuser, witness, and judge.

5. The work of the plough is but a preparative work in order to fruit. Should the husbandman plough his ground never so often, yet, if the seed be not cast in and quickened, in vain is the harvest expected. Thus conviction

also is but preparative to a farther work upon the soul of a sinner. If it go no farther, it proves but an abortive or untimely birth. Many have gone thus far, and there they have stuck; they have been like a field ploughed, but not sowed, which is a matter of trembling consideration; for hereby their sin is greatly aggravated, and their eternal misery so much the more increased. When a poor damned creature shall reflect upon himself in hell, How near was I once under such a sermon to conversion! My sins were set in order before me, my conscience awakened and terrified with the guilt of them; many purposes I had then to turn to GOD, which had they been perfected by answerable executions, I had never come to this place of torment; but there I stuck, and that was my eternal undoing. Many souls have I known so terrified with the guilt of sin, that they have come roaring under horrors of conscience to the Preacher; so that one would think such a breach had been made betwixt them and sin as could never be reconciled; and yet as angry as they were in that fit with sin, they have hugged and embraced it again.

6. It is best ploughing when the earth is prepared and mollified by showers, then the work goes on sweetly and easily. And never doth the heart so kindly melt, as when the Gospel clouds dissolve, and the free grace and love of JESUS CHRIST comes sweetly showering down upon it; then it relents and mourns. That "thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done." (*Ezek.* xvi. 63.) So it was with that poor penitent, (*Luke* vii. 38,) when the LORD JESUS had discovered to her the riches of his grace, in the pardon of her manifold abominations; her heart melted within her, she washed the feet of CHRIST with tears. And indeed, there is as much difference betwixt the tears which are forced by the terrors of the law, and those which are extracted by the grace of the Gospel, as there is betwixt those of a condemned malefactor, who weeps to consider the misery he is under, and those of a pardoned malefactor,

that is melted by the mercy of his gracious Prince towards him.

7. The plough kills those rank weeds which grew in the field, turns them up by the roots, buries and rots them. So doth thorough conviction kill sin at the root, makes the soul sick of it, begets indignation in the heart against it. (2 Cor. vii. 11.) The word *αγανακτησις* there signifies the rising of the stomach, and being angry even unto sickness: Now the soul cannot endure sin, trembles at it. "I find a woman more bitter than death," saith penitent SOLOMON. (Eccles. vii. 26.) Conviction, like a surfeit, makes the soul to loathe what it formerly loved and delighted in.

8. That field is not well ploughed, where the plough jumps, and skips, and makes baulks: It must turn up the whole field alike; and that heart is not savingly convicted, where any lust is spared and left untouched. True conviction extends itself to all sins, not only to sin in general, with this cold confession, *I am a sinner*; but to the particulars of sin; yea, to the particular circumstances and aggravations of time, place, manner, occasions, Thus and thus have I done; to the sin of *nature* as well as *practice*: "Behold I was shapen in iniquity." (Psalm li. 5.) There must be no baulking of any sin; the sparing of one sin, is a sure argument thou art not truly humbled for any sin. So far is the convinced soul from a studious concealment of a beloved sin, that it weeps over that more than over any other actual sin.

9. New ground is much more easily ploughed than that which, by long lying out of tillage, is more clung together by deep-rooted thorns and brambles, which render it difficult to the ploughman. This old ground is like an old sinner, that hath lain a long time hardening under the means of grace. O the difficulty of convincing such a person! Sin hath got such rooting in his heart, he is so habituated to the reproofs and calls of the word, that few such are wrought upon. How many young persons are called, to one obdurate, inveterate sinner! I do not say but God may call home such a soul at the eleventh hour; but

I may say of these, compared with others, as SOLOMON speaks, "One man among a thousand have I found." (*Eccles.* vii. 28.) Few that have long resisted the Gospel, come afterwards to feel the saving efficacy thereof!

REFLECTIONS.

1. O GRACE, for ever to be admired! may the real convert say, that GOD should send forth his word and SPIRIT to plough up my hard and stony heart! O blessed Gospel! Heart-dissolving voice! I have felt thy efficacy, I have experienced thy divine power; thou art indeed sharper than any two-edged sword, and woundest to the heart; but thy wounds are the wounds of a friend. All the wounds thou hast made in my soul, were so many doors opened to let in CHRIST; all the blows thou gavest my conscience, were but to beat off my soul from sin, which I embraced and had retained to my everlasting ruin, hadst not thou separated them and me. O wise and merciful Physician, thou didst indeed bind me with cords of conviction and sorrow; but it was only to cut out that stone in my heart, which had killed me if it had continued there. How did I struggle and oppose thee, as if thou hadst come with the sword of an enemy, rather than the lancet of a skilful and tender-hearted Physician! Blessed be the day wherein my sin was discovered and embittered! Happy sorrows which prepared for such matchless joys! O blessed hand which turned my salt waters into pleasant wine! And after many pangs didst bring forth deliverance and peace!

2. But O, what a rock of adamant is this heart of mine! may the stubborn heart say, that never yet was pierced for sin by the terrors of the law, or melting voice of the Gospel! Long have I sat under the word, but when did I feel a relenting pang? O my soul! thou hast got an *antidote* against repentance, but hast thou any against hell? Thou canst keep out the sense of sin now, but art thou able to keep off the terrors of the LORD hereafter? If thou couldst turn a deaf ear to the sentence of CHRIST in

the day of judgment, as easily as thou dost to the entreaties of CHRIST in the day of grace, it were somewhat; but surely there is no defence against that. Ah, fool that I am, to quench these convictions, unless I knew how to quench those flames they warn me of!

3. And may not I challenge the first place among all the mourners in the world? may the backslider say, who have lost all those convictions which at several times came upon me under the word? I have been often awakened by it, and filled with terrors and tremblings under it; but those troubles have soon worn off again, and my heart (like water removed from the fire) returned to its native coldness. LORD, what a dismal case am I in! Many convictions have I choked and strangled, which it may be shall never more be revived, until thou revive them against me in judgment. I have been in pangs, and brought forth nothing but wind; my troubles have wrought no deliverance; my conscience indeed hath been sick with sin, yea, so sick as to vomit them up by an external, partial reformation; but then with the dog, have I returned again to my vomit, and now I doubt am given over to a heart that cannot repent. O that those travailing pangs could be quickened again! But, alas! they are ceased. I am like a prisoner escaped, and again recovered, whom the jailor loads with double irons. Surely, O my soul! if thy spiritual troubles return not again, they are but gone back to bring eternal troubles. It is with thee, O my soul! as with a man whose bones have been broken, and not well set; who must (how terrible soever it appear to him) endure the pain of breaking and setting them again, if ever he be made a sound man. O that I might rather choose to be the object of thy wounding mercy, than of thy sparing cruelty! If thou plough not up my heart again by compunction, I know it must be rent in pieces at last by desperation.

CHAPTER VIII.

Upon the Seed Corn.

The choicest wheat is still reserv'd for seed :
But gracious principles are choice indeed.

OBSERVATION.

HUSBANDMEN are very careful about their seed-corn, that it may not only be clean and pure, but the best and most excellent in its kind. If any be more full and weighty than other, that is reserved for seed. It is usual with husbandmen to pick their seed-corn by hand, that they may separate the cockle and darnel, and all the lighter and hollow grains from it, wherein they manifest their discretion ; for according to the vigour and goodness of the seed, the fruit and production is like to be.

APPLICATION.

THE choice and principal seed-corn with which the fields are sowed, after they are prepared for it, doth admirably shadow forth those excellent principles of grace infused into the regenerate soul. Their agreement, as they are both seed, is obvious in the following particulars :

1. The earth at first naturally brought forth corn, and every seed yielding fruit, without human industry ; but since the curse came upon it, it must be ploughed and sowed, or no fruit can be expected : So man at first had all the principles of holiness in his nature, but now they must be infused by regeneration, or else his nature is as void of holiness as the barren and untilled desert is of corn.

2. Frosts and snows conduce much to the well-rooting of the seed, and make it spread and take root the better. So do sanctified afflictions, which usually the people of God meet with, and often in their very seed-time.

3. When the seed is cast into the earth, it must be cov-

ered up by the harrow ; the use whereof in husbandry is not only to lay a plain floor, (as they speak,) but to open and let in the corn to the bosom of the earth, and there cover it up for its security, from birds that would devour it. Thus doth the most wise GOD provide for the security of that grace, which he at first disseminated in the hearts of his people. He is as well the Finisher as the Author of their grace.

4. The seed is fruitful in some soils more than in others, prospers much better, and comes sooner to maturity. So doth grace thrive better, and grow faster in some persons than in others. “Your faith groweth exceedingly,” (*2 Thess. i. 3.*) whilst the things that are in others “are ready to die.” (*Rev. iii. 2.*) Though no man’s heart be naturally a kind soil to grace, yet doubtless grace is more advantaged in some dispositions than in others.

5. And lastly, their agreement as seed appears in this, The seed-corn is scattered into all parts of the field, as proportionably and equally as may be. So is grace diffused into all the faculties, the judgment, will ; and all the affections are sowed with these new principles. “The GOD of peace sanctify you wholly.” (*1 Thess. v. 23.*)

And thus you see, why principles of grace are called seed. In the next place, I will show the excellency of these holy principles, which will evidently appear in the following particulars :

(1.) THE most excellent of other gifts come out of the common treasury of GOD’s bounty, and that in a natural way. They are but the improvement of a man’s natural abilities, or (as one calls them) the sparks of nature blown up by the wind of a more benign and liberal education ; but principles of grace are of a divine and heavenly extraction, not raised from nature, but supernaturally infused by the SPIRIT from on high. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the SPIRIT is spirit.” (*John iii. 6.*) When a soul is sanctified by them, “he partakes of the divine nature,” (*2 Pet. i. 4.*) “is born

not of flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God." (*John* i. 13.) In this respect they differ from those, as the manna which rained down from heaven differed from common bread.

(2.) Gifts adorn the person, but do not secure the soul from wrath. A man may be admired for them amongst men, and rejected eternally by God. *Matt.* vii. 22, we read, that many shall say to CHRIST in that day, "LORD, LORD, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out Devils," and yet themselves at last be cast out as a prey to Devils. How divinely did BALAAM speak and prophesy! What rare and excellent parts had the Scribes and Pharisees, who upon that account were styled the Princes of the world. (*1 Cor.* ii. 8.) These things are so far from securing the soul against the wrath to come, that they often expose it unto wrath, and are as oil to increase the eternal burnings; but now gracious principles are, as the Apostle calls them, (*Heb.* vi.) things that accompany and have salvation in them. These are the things on which the promises of salvation run; glory is by promise made over to him that possesses them. There is but a little point of time betwixt him and the glorified spirits above. And how inconsiderable a matter is a little time, which contracts and winds up apace! For "now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." And hence the Scriptures speak of them as already saved: "We are saved by hope." (*Rom.* viii. 24.)

(3.) Gifts may damnify the person that possesses them; and it may be better in respect of a man's own condition he had never had them. "Knowledge (saith the Apostle) puffeth up," (*1 Cor.* viii. 1,) makes the soul proud and flatulent. It is a hard thing to know much, and not to know it too much. The saint's knowledge is better than the scholar's; for he hath his own heart instead of a commentary to help him. ARISTOTLE said, 'A little knowledge about heavenly things, though conjectural, is better than much of earthly things, though certain.' "The world

by wisdom knew not GOD," saith the Apostle. (1 Cor. i. 21.) That is, their learning hanged in their light, they were too wise to submit to the simplicity of the Gospel.

(4.) Sin, in the reign and power of it, may cohabit with the most excellent natural gifts under the same roof, I mean in the same heart. A man may have the tongue of an angel, and the heart of a devil. 'The wisdom of the Philosophers, (saith LACTANTIUS) did not root out, but hide their vices.' The learned Pharisees were but painted sepulchres; gifts are but as a fair glove drawn over a foul hand: But now grace is incompatible with sin in dominion; it purifies the heart; (*Acts xv. 9*;) cleanses the conscience; (*Heb. ix. 14*;) crucifies the affections and lusts of the flesh; (*Gal. v. 24*;) is not content with the concealment, but ruin of corruptions.

(5.) And lastly, gifts must leave us at last. "Whether there be knowledge, that shall cease. All flesh is grass, and the goodliness of it as the flower of grass; the grass withers, the flower fadeth, but the word of the LORD abideth for ever." (*Isa. xl. 6, 8*.) Many times they leave a man before death. One knock may make a wise man a fool: But to be sure, they all leave us at death. "Doth not his excellency which is in him go away?" (*Job iv. 21*;) Yea, then all natural excellency departs. Death strips the soul of all those splendid ornaments, then the rhetorical tongue is struck dumb; the nimble wit and curious fancy shall entertain your ears with no more pleasant discourses. But grace ascends with the soul into eternity, and there receives its perfection and accomplishment. Gifts take their leave of the soul, as ORPHEA did of NAOMI; but grace saith then as RUTH, "Where thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge, and nothing shall separate thee and me." Now put all this together, and then judge whether the Apostle spake hyperboles, when he said, "Covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet I show unto you a more excellent way."

REFLECTIONS.

THE lines are fallen to me in a pleasant place, may the believer say. How defective soever I am in gifts, yet blessed be the LORD, who hath sown the seeds of true grace in my heart. What, though I am not honoured among men, let it suffice that I am precious in the eyes of the LORD. Though He hath not abounded to me in gifts of nature; "yet blessed be the GOD and FATHER of my LORD JESUS CHRIST, who hath abounded to me in all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in CHRIST JESUS." (*Eph. i. 3.*) Is not a true jewel, though spurned in the dirt, more precious than a false one, though set in gold? Why art thou troubled, O my soul, for the want of these things which unbelievers may have? And art not rather admiring and blessing GOD for those things which none but the favourites of heaven can have? Is not an ounce of pure gold more valuable than many pounds of gilded brass? What, though the dews of Helicon descend not upon my head, if in the mean time the sweet influences of Sion fall upon my heart! O my God! how much soever others are elated by the light of their knowledge, I have cause with humility to adore thee for the heavenly heat with which thou hast warmed my affections.

Pause a while my soul upon this point, may the deceiver say. With what seed is my heart sown, and of what kind are those things wherein I excel others? Are they indeed seeds of grace, or natural excellencies? If the latter, little cause have I to pride myself in them, were they ten thousand times more than they are. If these things be indeed the things that accompany salvation, the seed of GOD, the true and real work of grace, then how comes it to pass that I never found any throes or travailing pangs in the production of them? It is generally acknowledged, that a new creature is never brought forth without such pains and compunctions of heart. (*Acts ii. 37.*) I have in-

deed often felt an aching head, whilst I have read and studied to increase my knowledge ; but when did I feel an aching heart for sin ? O, I begin to suspect that it is not right. Yea, and my suspicion increases, while I consider that grace is of an humbling nature. LORD, how have I been elated by my gifts, and valued myself above what was meet ! Say, O my conscience, have I not delighted more in the praise of men, than the approbation of God ? O, how many evidences dost thou produce against me ! Indeed, these are sad symptoms that I have showed thee, but there is yet another which renders thy case more suspicious yet ; yea, that which thou canst make no rational defence against, even the ineffectualness of all thy gifts and knowledge to mortify any one of all thy lusts. It is beyond all dispute, that gifts may, but grace cannot consist without mortification of sin. (*Gal. v. 24.*) Now what lust hath fallen before these excellent parts of mine ? Doth not pride, passion, covetousness, and indeed the whole body of sin, live and thrive in me as much as ever ? LORD, I yield the cause, I can defend it no longer against my conscience, which casts and condemns me by full proof, to be but in a wretched, cursed state, notwithstanding all my knowledge and gifts. O show me a more excellent way ! O that I had the sincerity of the poorest saint ; though I should lose the applause of all my parts : With these I see I may go to hell, but without some better thing, there is no hope of heaven.



CHAPTER IX.

Upon Springing Weather after Seed-time.

By heaven's kind influence, corn and plants do spring ;
 God's showers of grace do make his valleys sing.

OBSERVATION.

THE earth, after it is ploughed and sowed, must be watered and warmed with the dews and influences of heaven,

or no fruit can be expected. If GOD do not open to you his good treasure, the heavens to give rain unto the land in its season, and bless all the work of your hands, the earth cannot yield her increase. The order and dependance of natural causes in the productions of fruit, is excellently described: "I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and wine, and oil, and they shall hear JEZREEL." (*Hosea* ii. 22.) JEZREEL must have corn, and wine, and oil, or they cannot live; they cannot have it, unless the earth bring it forth; the earth cannot bring it forth without the heavens; the heavens cannot yield a drop unless GOD hear them; that is, unlock and open them. Nature and natural causes are nothing else but the order in which GOD works. This some Heathens acknowledged, and therefore when they went to plough in the morning, they did lay one hand upon the plough (to speak their own part to be painfulness) and hold up the other hand to CERES the goddess of corn, to show, that their expectation of plenty was from their supposed deity. I fear many Christians lay both hands to the plough, and seldom lift up heart or hand to GOD, when about that work. There was an husbandman (saith Mr. SMITH) that always sowed good seed, but never had good corn; at last, a neighbour came to him, and said, 'I will tell you what probably may be the cause of it; it may be (said he) you do not steep your seed.' 'No truly,' said the other, 'nor ever did I hear that seed must be steeped.' 'Yes, surely,' said his neighbour, 'and I will tell you how: It must be steeped in prayer.' When the party heard this, he thanked him for his counsel, reformed his fault, and had as good corn as any man whatsoever. Surely, it is not the husbandman's, but GOD's steps that drop fatness. The earth indeed is a fruitful mother, but the rain which fertilizes it, hath no other Father but GOD.

APPLICATION.

As impossible it is (in an ordinary way) for souls to be made fruitful in grace and holiness, without the dews and

influences of ordinances, and the blessing of GOD upon them, as for the earth to yield her fruit without the natural influences of heaven; for what dews, showers, and clear shinings after rain are to the fields, that the word and ordinances of GOD are to the souls of men. "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." (*Deut.* xxxii. 2.) "For as the rain and snow cometh down from heaven, and watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth." (*Isaiah* lv. 10, 11.) And as the doctrine of the Gospel is rain, so Gospel Ministers are the clouds in which those heavenly vapours are bound up. The resemblance lies in the following particulars:

1. The rain comes from heaven: "He gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons." (*Acts* xiv. 17.) The doctrine of the Gospel is also of an heavenly extraction, they are heavenly truths which are brought to you in earthen vessels, things that were hid in GOD, and come from his bosom. What NICODEMUS said of CHRIST, is in a proportion true of every faithful dispenser of the Gospel: "Thou art a Teacher come from GOD." You are not to look upon the truths which Ministers deliver, as the mere fruits of their inventions; they are but the conduits through which those celestial waters are conveyed to you. It is all heavenly, the officers are from heaven. (*Eph.* iv. 12.) Their doctrine is from heaven. (*Eph.* iii. 8, 9.) The efficacy and success of it are from heaven. (*1 Cor.* iii. 3.) "What I received of the LORD, (saith PAUL,) that have I delivered unto you." (*1 Cor.* xi. 23.) The same may every Gospel Minister say too.

2. There is a great deal of difference in the showers of rain that fall upon the earth. Sometimes you have an hasty shower, which makes the streets run, but it is gone presently, the earth hath but little benefit by it; and sometimes you have a sweet, gentle rain, that moderately soaks to the root, and refreshes the earth abundantly. This is called the small rain, and the former, "the great rain of

his strength." So it is in these spiritual showers; the effects of some sermons (like a sudden spout of rain) are transient, that touch the heart a little for the present, by way of conviction or comfort, but it fleets away immediately. At other times the Gospel, like a settled moderate rain, soaks to the root, to the very heart. So did that sweet shower which fell, *Acts* ii. 37. It searched the root, it went to the heart; the influences of it are sometimes abiding, and longer remain in and refresh the heart, than the rain doth the earth. There be effects left in some hearts, by some sermons and duties, that will never be out of it as long as they live.

The rain is most beneficial to the earth, when there come sweet, warm sun-blasts with, or after it. This the Scripture calls, "a clear shining after rain," by which the seminal virtue of the earth is drawn forth; and then the herbs, and flowers, and corn sprout abundantly. So it is with Gospel-showers, when the Sun of Righteousness opens upon poor souls under the word, darting down the beams of grace and love upon them, whilst they are attending on it, just as you sometimes see a sweet shower fall while the sun shines out. O how comfortable is this, and effectual to melt the heart! And as the warm rain is most refreshing, so when the word comes warmly, from the melting affections of the Preacher, who imparts not only the Gospel, but his own soul with it, (1 *Thess.* ii. 8,) this doth abundantly more good than that which drops coldly from the lips of the unaffected speaker.

3. Rain is necessary at seed-time, to make ready the earth, to receive the seed. "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it; thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water; thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it; thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly, thou settest the furrows thereof, thou makest it soft with showers, thou blessest the springing thereof." (*Psalms* lxxv. 9, 10.) And this the Scripture calls "the former rain." And as this is necessary about seed-time, so the latter rain is as needful about earing-time, to disclose

the ear, and to bring it to perfection ; both these are **great** blessings to the earth, and conduce to a plentiful harvest. “ Be glad then, ye children of Sion, and rejoice in the **LORD** your **GOD**, for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former and the latter rain in the first month, and the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fat shall overflow with wine and oil.” (*Joel* ii. 23. 24.)

Thus the Gospel hath a double use and benefit also. It is necessary as the former rain at seed-time ; it causes the first spring of grace in the heart ; and there could be (in an ordinary way) no spring of grace without it. And as this former rain is necessary to cause the first spring of grace, so also it hath the use of the latter rain to ripen those precious fruits of the **SPIRIT** in the souls of believers. “ He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of **CHRIST**, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of **GOD**, to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of **CHRIST**. (*Ephes.* iv. 11—13.)

4. To conclude. The prayers of the saints are the keys that open and shut the natural clouds, and cause them either to give out or withhold their influences. “ **ELIAS** was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months ; and he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth fruit.” (*James* v. 18.) **GOD** hath subjected the works of his hands to the prayers of his saints. (*Isaiah* xlv. 11.)

Prayer is also the golden key which opens these mystical Gospel-clouds, and dissolves them into gracious showers. **GOD** will have the whole work of the ministry carried on by the prayers of his people ; they first obtain their **Ministers** by prayer : “ Pray ye the **LORD** of the harvest, to send

forth labourers into the vineyard." (*Luke* x. 2.) It is by the help of prayer, that they are carried on, and enabled to exercise their ministry. They may tell their people, as a General once told his soldiers, That he flew upon their wings. "Pray for me, (saith the great Apostle,) that utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mysteries of the Gospel." (*Eph.* vi. 19.) Yea, by the saints' prayers it is, that Ministers obtain the success and fruits of their labours. "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the LORD may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you." (2 *Thess.* iii. 1.)

REFLECTIONS.

1. AM I then a cloud?, may the Gospel Minister say. And is my doctrine as rain to water the LORD's inheritance? And yet do I think it much to be tossed up and down by the furious winds and storms of persecution? Do I not see the clouds above me in continual motions and agitations? And shall I dream of a fixed settled state? No; false teachers, who are clouds without rain, are more likely to enjoy that than I. Which of all the Prophets have not been tossed and hurried worse than I? (*Acts* vii. 52.) He that will not let men alone to be quiet in their lusts, must expect but little quiet in this life. But it is enough, LORD, that a rest remaineth for thy servant; let me be so wise to secure a rest to come, and not so vain to expect it on earth.

2. And, O that I might study those instructing clouds, from which, as from the bottles of heaven, God pours down refreshing showers to satisfy the thirsty earth! In this may I resemble them, and come amongst the people of the LORD, "in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of CHRIST." (*Rom.* xv. 29.) O let not those thirsty souls, "that wait for me as for the rain, return like the troops of Tema, ashamed, with their heads covered!" (*Job* vi. 19.) O that my lips may refresh many! Let me never be like those empty clouds, which deceive the hopes of thirsty

souls; but let my doctrine descend as the rain, and distil as the dew, and let that plot of thine inheritance which thou hast assigned to me, be as a field which the LORD hath blessed.

3. Once more, lift up thine eyes to the clouds, and behold to how great an height the sun hath mounted them, for by reason of their sublimity it is that they are called the clouds of heaven. LORD, let me be a cloud of heaven too! Let my heart and conversation be both there! Who is more advantaged for a heavenly life than I? Heavenly truths are the subjects of my daily study, and shall earthly things be the objects of my delight and love? GOD forbid that ever my earthly conversation should contradict my heavenly calling and profession. Shine forth, thou glorious Sun of righteousness, and my heart shall quickly mount above these visible clouds, yea, and above the aspectable heavens.

(1.) Is the Gospel rain, and its Ministers clouds?, may those that want a Gospel ministry say. Woe is me then, that my habitation is upon the mountains of Gilboa, where there are no dews! Ah, sad lot, that I should be like GIDEON'S dry fleece, whilst the ground round about me is wet with the dew of heaven! O Thou that commandest the clouds above, and openest the windows of heaven, remember and refresh this parched wilderness wherein I live, with showers of grace, that we may not be as the heath in the desert, which seeth not when good cometh, nor inhabit the parched places of the wilderness.

(2.) O LORD, thou hast caused the heavens above me to be black with clouds, may those that enjoy a Gospel ministry say: Thou openest the celestial casements from above, and daily sendest down showers of Gospel blessings. O that I might be as the parched earth under them! not for barrenness, but for thirstiness. Let me say, "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD." Doth the spungy earth so greedily suck up the showers, and open as many mouths as there are clefts in it, to receive what the clouds dispense? And shall those pre-

cious soul-enriching showers fleet away unprofitably from me? If so, then,

(3.) What an account have I to make for all those Gospel blessings that I have enjoyed! For all those Gospel dews and showers wherewith I have been watered! Should I be found fruitless at last, it will fare better with the barren and uncultivated wilderness than with me; more tolerable for Indians and Barbarians that never heard the Gospel, than for me that have been so plenteously watered by it. LORD, what a difference wilt thou put in the great day, betwixt simple and pertinacious barrenness! Surely, if my root be not rottenness, such heavenly waterings and influences as these will make it sprout into fruits of obedience.



CHAPTER X.

Upon a Dearth through want of Rain.

If GOD restrain the showers, you mourn and cry;
Shall Saints not mourn when spiritual clouds are dry?

OBSERVATION

IT is deservedly accounted a sad judgment, when God shuts up the heavens over our heads, and makes the earth as brass under our feet. Then the husbandmen are called to mourning; all the fields languish, and the bellowing cattle are pined with thirst. Such a sad state the Prophet rhetorically describes: "The nobles have sent their little ones to the waters; they came to the pits, and found no water; they returned with their vessels empty, they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their heads; because the ground is chapt, for there was no rain in the earth, the ploughmen were ashamed, they covered their heads." (*Jer.* xiv. 3—6.) And that which makes the want of rain so terrible a judgment, is the famine of bread which neces-

sarily follows these extraordinary droughts, and is one of the sorest temporal judgments which God inflicts upon the world.

APPLICATION.

AND surely, as much cause have they to weep and tremble, over whose souls God shuts up the spiritual clouds of the Gospel, thereby sending a spiritual famine upon their souls. Such a judgment the LORD threatens in *Amos* viii. 11: "Behold the days come, saith the LORD, that I will send a famine in the land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the LORD." The meaning is, I will send a more fearful judgment, than that of the famine of bread. Parallel to which is that text, "I will lay it waste, (saith God, of the fruitless church,) it shall not be pruned nor digged, but there shall come up briars and thorns; I will also command the clouds, that they rain not upon it." (*Isa.* v. 6.)

And we find both in human and sacred histories, that when God hath shut up the spiritual clouds, removing or silencing his Ministers, sensible Christians have ever been deeply affected with it, and reckoned it a most tremendous judgment. Thus the Christians of Antioch, when *CHRYSOSTOM*, their Minister, was banished, judged it better to lose the sun out of the firmament, than lose their Minister. When the ark of GOD (which was the symbol of the Divine presence among the JEWS) was taken, "all the city cried out." (*1 Sam.* iv. 13.) The loss of a Gospel ministry is an inestimable loss; not to be repaired but by its own return, or by heaven.

To let you see there is sufficient ground for sorrow, when God restrains the influences of the Gospel, solemnly consider the following particulars:

(1.) That it is a dreadful token of God's great anger against that people from whom he removes the Gospel. The anger of GOD was fearfully incensed against the church of Ephesus, when He did but threaten to come against her, and remove her candlestick out of its place.

(*Rev.* ii. 5.) It is a stroke at the soul, a blow at the root; usually the last, and therefore the worst of judgments.

2. The judgment will appear very heavy, if you consider the loss which God's own people sustain by the removal of the Gospel; for therein they lose,

(1.) Their chief glory. (*Rom.* iii. 2.) The principal thing in which the peculiar glory of Israel consisted, was this, "that unto them were committed the oracles of God." On that account it was called the "glorious land." (*Dan.* xi. 16.) This made them greater than all the nations round about them. (*Deut.* iv. 7, 8.)

(2.) By losing the ordinances, they lose their quickenings, comforts, and refreshments; for all these are sweet streams from the Gospel fountain. (*Psalm* cxix. 50.) No wonder then to hear the people of God complain of dead hearts, when the Gospel is removed.

(3.) In the loss of the Gospel they lose their defence and safety. This is their hedge, their wall of protection. (*Isa.* v. 5.) Walls and hedges (saith *MUSCULUS in loc.*) are the ordinances of God, which serve both to distinguish and to defend them. When God plucks up this hedge, and breaks down this wall, all mischiefs break in upon us presently. "Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching Priest, and without law.—And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries, and nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city; for God did vex them with all adversity." (*2 Chron.* xv. 3, 4, 5, 6.) How long did Jerusalem remain, after that voice was heard in the temple, *Migremus hinc*: 'Let us be gone?'

(4.) With the Gospel, we lose our temporal enjoyments and comforts. These usually come and go with the Gospel. When God had once written *LOAMMI* upon Israel, the next news is this, "I will recover my wool and my flax." (*Hosea* ii. 9.)

(5.) And lastly, To come up to the very case in hand,

they lose with it their spiritual food and subsistence ; for the Gospel is their “ feast of fat things,” (*Isa. xxv. 6,*) their spiritual “ wells,” (*Isa. xii. 3,*) a dole distributed among the LORD’s poor. (*Rom. i. 11.*) In a word, it is as the rain and dews of heaven, which being restrained, a spiritual famine necessarily follows ; a famine of all the most terrible.

Now, to show you the analogy betwixt this and a temporal famine, take it in the following particulars:—

[1.] A famine is caused by the failing of bread, or that which is in the stead, and hath the use of bread. Dainties and rarities may fail, and yet men may subsist comfortably. As long as people have bread and water, they will not famish ; but take away bread once, and the spirit of man faileth. Upon this account bread is called a staff, (*Psalm cv. 16,*) because what a staff is to an aged or feeble man, that bread is to the faint and feeble spirits. And look what bread is to the natural spirits, that, and more than that, the word is to the gracious spirits. “ I have esteemed the words of thy mouth, more than my necessary food.” (*Job xxiii. 12.*) If once GOD break this staff, the inner man, that hidden man of the heart, will quickly begin to fail and falter.

[2.] It is not every scarcity of bread that makes a famine, but a general failing of it ; when no bread is to be had, or that which is, yields no nutriment. For a famine may as well be occasioned by GOD’s taking away the nourishing virtue of bread, as by taking away bread itself. (*Isa. iii. 1.*) And so it is in a spiritual famine, which is occasioned either by GOD’s removing all the ordinances, and making vision utterly fail ; or else, though there be preaching, prayer, and other ordinances left, yet the presence of GOD is not with them. There is no marrow in the bone, no milk in the breast ; and so it is all one, as if there were no such things.

[3.] In a corporeal famine, mean and coarse things become sweet and pleasant. That which before you would have thrown to your dogs, now goes down pleasantly with

yourselves. "To the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." (*Prov.* xxvii. 7.) It is the Dutch proverb, and a very true one, 'Hunger is the best cook.'

It is storied of ARTAXERXES, that when he was flying before his enemies; he fed hungrily upon barley-bread, and said, O what pleasure have I hitherto been ignorant of! When great DARIUS drank the puddled water, that had been defiled with dead carcasses, he professed he never drank more pleasant drink. And famous HUNNIADES said, he never fared more daintily, than when (in a like exigence) he supped upon bread, onions, and water, with a poor shepherd in his cottage.

Just so doth the famine of the word raise the esteem of vulgar and despised truths. O what would we give for one of those sermons, one of those Sabbaths, we formerly enjoyed! "In those days the word of the LORD was precious." When GOD calls to the enemy to take away his contemned, but precious dainties, from his wanton children, and a spiritual famine hath a little pinched them, they will then learn to prize their spiritual food at a higher rate.

[4.] Lastly, In time of famine there is nothing so costly or precious, but people will part with it to purchase bread. "They have given their pleasant things for meat to relieve their souls." (*Lam.* i. 11.) And doubtless when a spiritual famine shall pinch hard, those that have been close-handed to maintain a Gospel-ministry, will account it a choice mercy to enjoy them again at any rate. "Though the LORD feed you with the bread of adversity, and give you the waters of affliction, yet" it will sweeten that bread and water to you, if "your teachers be no more removed into corners." (*Isaiah* xxx. 20.)

REFLECTIONS.

1. Is the famine of the word such a fearful judgment?, may the ungrateful soul say. Then LORD pardon my unthankfulness, for the plentiful and long-continued enjoyment of such an invaluable mercy. How lightly have I esteemed the great things of the Gospel! O that with eyes

and hands lifted up to heaven, I might bless the LORD that ever I was brought forth in an age of so much light ! In a valley of visions ! In a land flowing with Gospel-mercies ! “ Hath not God made of one blood all the nations of men, to dwell on the face of the earth ? And determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation ? ” (*Acts* xvii. 26.) Many of these great and populous nations are involved in gross darkness. Now that of all the several ages of the world, and places in it, God should espy the best place for me, and bring me forth into it, in such a happy time as can hardly be paralleled in history, for the plenty of Gospel-mercies ; that my mother did not bring me forth in the deserts of Arabia, or the wastes of America, but in England, where God hath made the Sun of the Gospel to stand still, as the natural sun did over Gibeon ; and that such a mercy should no more affect my soul ; let shame cover my face for this, and trembling seize my heart !

2. But is the Gospel indeed departed ?, may the deprived Christian say. Its sweet influences restrained ? And a famine worse than that of bread come upon us ? “ Alas ! for the day ; for it is a great day, so that none is like it ; it is even the day of JACOB’S trouble.” Woe is me, that ever I should survive the Gospel, and the precious liberties and mercies of it ! What horrid sins have been harboured amongst us, for which the LORD contends by such an unparalleled judgment ! LORD, let me justify thee even in this severe dispensation. The provocations of thy sons and of thy daughters have been very great, and amongst them none greater than mine. May we not this day read our sin in our punishment ? O what nice and wanton appetites, what curious and itching ears had thy people in the days of plenty ! Methods, tones, and gestures, were more regarded than the excellent treasures of divine truths. Ah, my soul ! I remember my fault this day. Little did I then consider, that sermons work not upon hearts, as they are elegant, but as they are instruments in the hand of God appointed to such an end. Even as AUGUSTINE said of the

conduits of water, though one be in the shape of an angel, another of a beast, yet the water refreshes as it is water, and not as it comes from such a conduit. By this also, O LORD, thou rebukest the supineness and formality of thy people. How drowsy, dull and careless have they been under the most excellent and quickening means! Few more than I. Alas! I have often presented my body before the LORD in ordinances; but my soul hath been wandering abroad. I should have come from under every sermon, as a sheet comes from the press, with all the lively impressions of the truths I heard upon my heart: But alas, if it had been demanded of me, as once it was of ARISTOTLE, after a long and curious oration, how he liked it, I might have answered as he did, Truly I did not hear it; for I was all the while minding another matter. Righteous art thou, O LORD, in all that is come upon us.



CHAPTER XI.

Upon the Corruption of the Seed before it spring.

Seeds die and rot, and then most fresh appear;
Saints' bodies rise more orient than they were.

OBSERVATION.

AFTER the seed is committed to the earth, it seems to perish and die, as our SAVIOUR speaks: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit." (*John* xii. 24.) The death of the corn in the earth is not a total death, but only the alteration of it: For if once the seminal life and virtue of it were quite extinguished, it could never put forth blade or ear without a miracle: Yet, because that alteration is a kind of death, therefore CHRIST uses it as a fit illustration of the resurrection. And indeed there is nothing in nature more apt to illustrate that great mystery. What a fragrant, green and beautiful blade do we see spring up

from a corrupted seed ! How black and mouldy is that !
How beautiful and verdant is this !

APPLICATION.

EVEN thus shall the bodies of the saints arise in beauty and glory at the resurrection. “ They are sown in dishonour, they are raised in glory ; they are sown natural bodies, they are raised spiritual bodies.” The husbandman knows, that though the seed rot in the earth, yet it will rise again. And the believer knows, “ that though after his skin worms destroy his body, yet in his flesh he shall see **GOD.**” And the resemblance betwixt the seed sown, and springing up ; and the bodies of the saints dying, and rising again, lies in these particulars :—

1. The seed is committed to the earth from whence it came ; so is the body of a saint : Earth it was, and to earth it is again resolved. Grace exempts not the body of the best man from seeing corruption. Though **CHRIST** be in him, yet “ the body is dead,” that is, sentenced to death, “ because of sin. It is appointed for all men once to die.”

2. When the time is come for shooting up, the earth that covered it can hide it no longer, it cannot keep it down a day more ; it will find or make a way through the clods : So in that day when the great trump shall sound, bone shall come to his bone, and the graves shall not be able to hold them a minute longer. Both sea and earth must render the dead that are in them.

3. When the seed appears above ground again, it appears much more fresh than when it was cast into the earth. **GOD** clothes it with such beauty, that it is not like what it was before.

Thus rise the bodies of the saints, marvellously improved, beautified, and perfected with spiritual qualities and rich endowments ; in respect whereof they are called “ spiritual bodies :” (1 *Cor.* xv. 43 :) For as spirits subsist without food, raiment, sleep, know no weariness or pain : so our bodies after the resurrection shall be above those necessities and distempers ; for we shall be as the angels of

GOD. Yea, "our vile bodies shall be changed, and made like unto **CHRIST'S** glorious body;" which is the highest pitch and ascent of glory and honour, that a human body is capable of. Indeed the glory of the soul shall be the greatest glory: That is, the invaluable gem; but **GOD** will bestow a distinct glory upon the body, and richly enamel the very case in which that precious jewel shall be kept. In that glorious morning of the resurrection, the saints shall put on their new fresh suits of flesh, richly laid and trimmed with glory. Those bodies which in the grave were but dust and rottenness, when it delivers them back again, shall be shining and excellent, everlastingly freed,

(1.) From all natural infirmities and distempers: Death is their good Physician, which at once frees them of all diseases. It is a great affliction now to many of the **LORD'S** people, to be clogged with so many bodily infirmities. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." A crazy body retorts and shoots back its distempers upon the soul, with which it is so closely conjoined; but though now the soul (as **THEOPHRASTUS** speaks) pays a dear rent for the tabernacle in which it dwells, yet when death dissolves that tabernacle, all the diseases and pains under which it groaned, shall be buried in the rubbish of its mortality; and when they come to be re-united, **GOD** will bestow rich gifts and dowries, even upon the body, in the day of its re-espousals.

(2.) It shall be freed from all deformities; there are no breaches, flaws, monstrosities in glorified bodies; but of them it may much rather be said, what was once said of **ABSALOM**, "That from the crown of his head, to the sole of his foot, there was no blemish in him." (2 *Sam.* xiv. 25.)

(3.) It shall be freed from all natural necessities, to which it is now subjected in this its animal state. How is the soul now disquieted with cares and troubles, to provide for a perishing body! "But meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; **GOD** shall destroy both it and them:" (1 *Cor.* vi. 13:) That is, as to their present office.

(4.) They shall be freed from death, to which henceforth

they can be subject no more ; that formidable adversary of nature shall assault it no more. “ For they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage ; neither can they die any more : For they shall be equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.” (*Luke* xx. 35, 36.) Mark it, (equal to the angels,) not that they shall be single spirits, without bodies ; but equal to them in the way and manner of their living and acting. We shall then live upon God, and act freely, purely, and delightfully for God ; for all kinds of living upon the creatures, seem in that text to be excluded. Nothing but God shall enamour and fill the soul, and the body shall be perfectly subdued to the spirit. LORD, what hast thou prepared for them that love thee !

REFLECTIONS.

1. IF I shall receive my body again so dignified and improved in the world to come, then, LORD, let me never be unwilling to use it now for thy glory, or for my own salvation. Now, O my God, it grieves me to think how many precious opportunities of serving and honouring thee, I have lost under pretence of endangering my health.

I have been more solicitous to live long and healthfully, than to live usefully and fruitfully ; and like enough my life had been more serviceable to thee, if it had not been so fondly over-valued.

Foolish soul, hath God given thee a body for a living instrument ? And art thou afraid to use it ? Wherein is the mercy of having a body, if not in spending it in the service of God ? To have an active vigorous body, and not to employ it for God, for fear of endangering its health, is as if one should give thee a handsome and sprightly horse, upon condition thou shouldst not ride or work him. If some had enjoyed the blessing of such an healthy active body as mine, what excellent services would they have performed to God in it !

Again, 2. If my body shall as surely rise again in glory,

as the seed I sow doth, why should not this comfort me over all the pains, weaknesses, and dulness with which my soul is clogged? Thou knowest, my God, what a grief it hath been to my soul, to be fettered and entangled with the distempers of this vile body. It hath made me sigh and say, with holy ANSELM, when he saw the mountain bird weighed down by the stone hanging at her leg, LORD, thus it fares with the soul of thy servant! Fain would I serve, glorify, and enjoy thee; but a distempered body will not let me. However, it is reviving to think, that though I am now forced to crawl like a worm in the discharge of my duties, I shall shortly fly like a seraph in the execution of thy will. Cheer up, drooping soul, the time is at hand, when thou shalt be made more willing than thou art, and thy flesh not weak as it is now.

3. And is it so indeed? Then let the dying saint, like JACOB, rouse up himself upon his bed, and encourage himself against the fears of death by this refreshing consideration. Let him say, with holy dying MUSCULUS, Why tremblest thou, O my soul, to go forth of this tabernacle, to the land of rest? Hath thy body been such a pleasant habitation to thee, that thou shouldest be loath to part with it; and with assurance of receiving it again with such a glorious improvement? I know, O my soul! that thou hast a natural inclination to this body, resulting from the dear and strict union which God himself hath made betwixt thee and it; but beware thou love it not immoderately; it is but a creature, yea, a fading creature, and that which now stands in thy way to the full enjoyment of God. But say, why are the thoughts of parting with it so burdensome to thee? Why so loath to take death by its cold hand? Is this body thy old and dear friend? True, but yet thou partest not with it upon such sad terms, as should deserve a tear at parting. For mayest thou not say of this departure, as St. PAUL at the departure of ONESIMUS, "It therefore departeth for a season, that thou mayest receive it for ever?" (*Philemon* 15.) The day of re-espousals will quickly come; and in the mean time, as thy body shall not be sensible of the tedious length of interposing time, so

neither shalt thou be solicitous about thine absent friend : For the fruition of God in that thine unbodied state, shall fill thee with infinite satisfaction.

Or is it not so much simply for parting with it, as for the manner of thy parting, either by the slow and lingering approaches of a natural, or the quick and terrible approaches of a violent death? Why, trouble not thyself about that; for if God lead thee through the long dark lane of a tedious sickness, yet at the end of it is thy Father's house. And for a violent death it is not so material, whether friends or enemies stand weeping or triumphing over thy dead body. When thy soul shall be in heaven, it will not be sensible how the body is used on earth.

CHAPTER XII.

Upon the Dangers incident to Corn from Seed-time to Harvest.

Fowls, weeds, and blastings do your corn annoy,
Even so corruptions would your grace destroy.

OBSERVATION.

THERE are (amongst many others) three dangerous periods betwixt the seed-time and harvest. The first, when corn is newly committed to the earth, all that lies uncovered is quickly picked up by the birds; and much of that which is but slightly covered, is destroyed as soon as it begins to sprout, by rooks and other devouring fowls; but if it escapes the fowls and gets root in the earth, yet then it is hazarded by noxious weeds, which suck away its nourishment, whilst it is yet in the tender blade. If by the care of the vigilant husbandman, it be freed from choking weeds; yet lastly, as great a danger as any of the former still attends it; for often, whilst it is blowing in the ear, blastings and mildews smite it in the stalk, which cut off the juice and sap that should ascend to nourish the ear; and so shrivels and dries up the grain whilst it is yet immature, whereby it becomes like those ears of corn in PHARAOH'S vision, which

were thin and blasted with the East wind; or like the ears the Psalmist speaks of upon the house-top, "wherewith the reaper filleth not his arms."

APPLICATION.

TRUE grace from the infancy to the perfection thereof, conflicts with far greater dangers, amongst which it meets with three dangerous periods which marvellously hazard it: So that it is a much greater wonder that it ever arrives at perfection. For,

1. No sooner hath the great Husbandman disseminated these holy seeds in the regenerate heart, but multitudes of impetuous corruptions immediately assault, and would certainly devour them like the fowls of the air, did not the same arm that sowed them, also protect them. It fares with grace, as with CHRISTITS Author, whom HEROD sought to destroy in his very infancy.

As things are in their natures and principles, so they are in their operations and effects; fire and water are of contrary qualities, and when they meet, they effectively oppose each other. Sin and grace are so opposite, that if sin should cease to oppose grace, it would cease to be sin; and if grace should not oppose sin, it would cease to be grace. And this doth much more endanger the work than any other enemy it hath; because it works against it more inwardly, constantly, and advantageously, than any thing else can do.

(1.) More inwardly, for it hath its being in the same soul where grace dwells; yea, in the self-same faculties, so that it not only sets one faculty against another, but the same faculty against itself, the understanding against the understanding, and the will against the will; if it cannot totally hinder the performance of a duty, yet it lames the soul upon the working hand, whereby the performance is not so spiritual, free, and composed, as it desires. (2.) It opposes it more constantly; it is like a continual dropping; a man can no more fly from this enemy, than from himself. There is a time when the Devil leaves tempting; but no time when corruption ceases from working. And lastly, it

opposes grace more advantageously than any other enemy can do, for it is not only always in the same soul with it, but it is there naturally ; it hath the advantage of the soil, which suits with it. • And yet, O the wonder of free grace ! it is not swallowed up in victory, it escapes this hazard. But,

2. It soon meets with another, though it escape this ; even by temptations which strike at the very life of it ; for these, like the weeds, with seemingly loving embraces, clasp about it ; and did not the faithful God now make a way to escape, instead of an harvest, we should have an heap. For, alas, what are we, to wrestle with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places ?

Lastly, Sad relapses like blasts and rustings often fade, and greatly endanger it, when it is even ready for the harvest.

REFLECTIONS.

AND are the corruptions of my heart to grace, may the careless soul say, what fowls, weeds, and mildews are to the corn ? O what need have I then to watch my heart, and keep it with all diligence ; for in the life of that grace is wrapt up the life of my soul. He that carries a candle in his hand in a stormy night, had need to cover it close, lest it be blown out, and he left in darkness. O let me never say, God hath promised it shall persevere, and therefore I need not be so solicitous to preserve it ; for as this inference is quite opposite to the nature of true grace and assurance, which never encourage carelessness, but provoke the soul to an industrious use of means to preserve it : So it is in itself an irrational and senseless conclusion, which will never follow from any Scripture premise.

Let all doubting Christians reflect seriously upon this truth, and suck marrow and fatness out of it to strengthen them against all their fears ; your life, your spiritual life, hath for many years hanged in suspense before you ; and you have often said with DAVID, “ I shall one day fall by the hand of SAUL.” Desponding, trembling soul, lift up thine eyes and look upon the fields, the corn lives still, and grows up ; though birds have watched to devour it, snows

have covered it, beasts have cropped it, weeds have almost choked it, yet it is preserved. And hath not GOD more care of that precious seed of his own SPIRIT in thee, than any husbandman hath of his corn? Hast thou not many times said, and thought of it, as thou dost now, and yet it lives? O what matter of unspeakable joy and comfort is this to upright souls! Well then, be not discouraged, for thou dost not run as uncertainly, nor fight as one that beats the air. Though thy grace be weak, thy GOD is strong; though the stream seem sometimes to fail, yet it is fed by an ever-flowing fountain.

CHAPTER XIII.

Upon the Patience of the Husbandman for the Harvest.

Our husbandmen for harvest wait and stay,
O let not any saint do less than they!

OBSERVATION.

THE expectation of a good harvest at last, makes the husbandman with patience digest all his labours. He that ploughs, ploughs in hope; and they are not so irrational as to think, they shall presently be partakers of their hope, nor so foolish as to anticipate the harvest by cutting down the corn before it be fully ripened, but are content to plough, sow, and weed it; and when it is fully ripe, then they go forth into the fields, and reap it down with joy.

APPLICATION.

CAN a little corn cause men to digest so many labours, and make them wait with patience till the reaping come? Much more should the expectation of eternal glory fortify my spirit against all difficulties. It least of all becomes a Christian to be of an hasty and impatient spirit. “Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright.” (*Psalm xcii. 11.*) “Behold the husbandman waiteth. Be patient therefore, my brethren, for the coming of the LORD draws near.” There are three great arguments to

persuade Christians to a long-suffering and patient frame under sufferings.

1. The example of CHRIST : To think how quietly he suffered all injuries and difficulties with invincible patience, is sufficient to shame the best of Christians, who are of such short spirits. To this purpose it was well noted by BERNARD, Was the LORD of glory thus emptied of his fulness? And shall such a worm as I swell?

2. The desert of sin : “ Why doth a living man complain ?” (*Lam.* iii. 29.) It was a good saying of blessed GREENHAM : When sin lies heavy, affliction lies light. And it is a famous instance which DR. TAYLOR gives of the DUKE of CONDE; when the DUKE of CONDE had voluntarily entered into the incommodities of a religious poverty, he was one day spied and pitied by a Lord of Italy, who out of tenderness wished him to be more careful of his person ; the good Duke answered, ‘ Sir, be not troubled, and think not that I am ill provided of conveniences, for I send a harbinger before me that makes ready my lodgings, and takes care that I be royally entertained.’ The Lord asked him, who was his harbinger? He answered, ‘ The knowledge of myself, and the consideration of what I deserve for my sins; and when with this knowledge I arrive at my lodgings, how unprovided soever I find it, methinks it is ever better than I deserve.’ And as the sense of sin which merits hell, sweetens present difficulties; so (to come home to the present similitude) do the hopes of a blessed harvest and reward in heaven. This made ABRAHAM willing to wander up and down as a stranger in the world ; for he looked for a city that hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is GOD. The hope of such a harvest is encouragement to work hard and wait long ; yet some Christians are so impatient of it, that they would fain be reaping before the time ; but as GOD hath by an unalterable law of nature, appointed both the seasons of seed-time and harvest ; and when we have done all we can on our part, we must wait till GOD send the former and the latter rain, and give every natural cause its effect. So in reference to our spiritual harvest ; we are appointed to use all GOD’s appointments,

and when we have done all, must patiently wait till the time of the promise be fully come: "In due time we shall reap, if we faint not." To which patient expectation, and quiet waiting for glory, the following considerations are of excellent use.

1. As the husbandman knows when the seed-time is past, it will not be long to the harvest; and the longer he waits, the nearer still it is: So the Christian knows, "It is but yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. And that now his salvation is nearer than when he first believed." (*Rom.* xiii. 11.) What a small point of time is our waiting time, compared with eternity! Yet a few days more, and then comes the long-expected and welcome harvest.

2. The husbandman can find other work to do, before the reaping time come; he need not stand idle, though he cannot yet reap: And cannot a Christian find any work to do for God, till he come to heaven? O, there is much work to do, and such work as is only proper to this season. You may now reprove sin, exhort to duty, succour the distressed; this is good work, and this is your only time for such work; the whole of eternity will be taken up in other employments. "I think it meet [saith Peter] as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir up your minds, knowing shortly that I must put off this tabernacle;" (*2 Pet.* i. 13, 14;) as if he had said, I know I have but a little time to work among you, I am almost at heaven; and therefore am willing to husband this present moment as well as I can for you. O Christians! you need not stand idle; look round about you upon the multitude of forlorn sinners; speak now to them for God; speak now to God for them; for shortly you shall so speak no more, you shall see them no more till you see them at CHRIST'S bar; God leaves you here for their sakes, up and be doing: If you had done all you were to do for yourselves and them, he would have you to heaven immediately, you should not wait a moment longer for glory.

3. Husbandmen know, though they cannot yet gather in

the precious fruits of the earth, yet all this while they are ripening for the harvest ; they would not house it green, or take it before its time. And is not this also my preparation-time for glory ? As God prepared heaven for his people, by an act of creation, by the death of CHRIST, which made a purchase of it, and by his ascension into it : So the reason why we are kept here, is in order to our fitting for it. Heaven is ready, but we are not fully ready ; the barn is fit to receive the corn, but the corn is not fit to be gathered into it. “ But for this self-same thing God is now working in us.” (2 *Cor.* v. 5.) He is every day at work, by ordinance and by providences, to perfect his work in us ; and as soon as that is finished, we shall hear a voice like that, “ Come up hither,” and immediately we shall be “ in the SPIRIT ;” (*Rev.* xi. 12 ;) for how ardently soever we long for that day, CHRIST longs for it more than we can do.

4. The husbandman is glad of the first-fruits of that glory. Have you no earnest, pledges, and first-fruits of it ? It is your own fault, if every day you feed not upon such blessed comforts of the SPIRIT. (*Rom.* viii. 23 ; v. 2 ; 1 *Pet.* viii. 9.) O how might the interposing time, even all the days of your patience here, be sweetened with such prelibations of the glory to come !

5. Husbandmen know it is best to reap, when it is fit to reap ; one handful fully ripe is worth many sheaves of green corn. And you know, heaven will be sweetest to you, when you are fittest for it ; the child would pluck the apple while it is green ; but he might gather it easier, and taste it sweeter, by tarrying longer for it. When we have got a taste of heaven, we are all in haste to be gone. Then, “ O that I had wings as a dove ! I would flee away and be at rest.” Then we cry to God for ourselves, as MOSES did for his sister MIRIAM, “ Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.” (*Num.* xii. 13.) Glorify me now, O LORD, I pray thee ! But surely, as God hath contrived thy glory in the best of ways, so he hath appointed for thee the fittest of seasons and whenever thou art gathered unto it, thou shalt come as a shock of corn in its season.

REFLECTIONS.

I HAVE waited for thy salvation, O GOD! Having received thy first-fruits, my soul longs to fill its bosom with the sheaves of glory. "As the hart panteth for the water-brooks, so panteth my soul for thee, O GOD! O, when shall I come and appear before GOD? I desire to be dissolved, and to be with CHRIST." When shall I see that lovely face? When shall I hear his transporting voice? Some need patience to die, I need it to live! Thy sights, O GOD, by faith, have made this world a burden, this body a burden, and this soul to cry like thirsty DAVID, "O that one would give me of the waters of Bethlehem to drink!" The husbandman longs for his harvest, because it is the reward of his toil and labour; but what is his harvest to mine? What is a little corn to the enjoyment of GOD? What is the joy of harvest to the joy of heaven? What are the shoutings of men in the fields, to the acclamations of glorified spirits in the kingdom of GOD? LORD, I have gone forth bearing more precious seed than they; when shall I return rejoicing, bringing my sheaves with me? Their harvest comes when they receive their corn, mine comes when I leave it. O much desired harvest! O day of the gladness of my heart! How long, LORD! How long! Here I wait as the poor man at the pool, looking when my turn will come, but every one steps into heaven before me; yet LORD, I am content to wait till my time be fully come. I would be content to stay for my glorification, till I have finished the work of my generation; and when I have done the will of GOD, then to receive the promise. If thou hast any work on earth to use me in, I am content to abide: Behold the husbandman waiteth, and so will I; for thou art a GOD of judgment, and blessed are they that wait for thee.

But how doth my slothful soul sink down in the flesh, (may some say,) and settle in the love of this animal life! How doth it hug and wrap up itself in the garment of this mortality, not desiring to be removed hence, to the more perfect

and blessed state! The husbandman indeed is content to stay till the appointed weeks of the harvest; but would he be content to wait always? O my sensual heart! Is this life of hope as contentful to thee as the life of vision will be? Why dost thou not groan within thyself, that this mortality might be swallowed up of life? Doth not the Scripture describe the saints by their "earnest looking for the mercy of our LORD JESUS unto eternal life?" (*Jude* 21.) "By their hastening unto the coming of the day of GOD?" (*2 Pet.* iii. 13.) What is the matter that my heart hangs back? Doth guilt lie upon my conscience? Or have I gotten into a pleasant condition in the world, which makes me say as PETER on the mount, "It is good to be here?" Must GOD make all my earthly comforts die, before I shall be willing to die? Awake, faith, awake, my love; beat up the drowsy desires of my soul, that I may say, Make haste, my Beloved, and come away!



CHAPTER XIV

Upon the Harvest Season.

Corn fully ripe is reap'd and gather'd in;
So must your souls, when ripe in grace or sin.

OBSERVATION.

WHEN the fields are white to harvest, then the husbandmen walk through them; and finding the grain full and solid, they presently prepare their sickles, send for their harvest-men, who quickly reap them down, and after these follow the binders, who tie it up; from the field where it grew it is carried to the barn, where it is thrashed out; the good grain gathered into an heap, the chaff separated and burnt, or thrown to the dunghill. How bare and naked do the fields look after harvest, which before were pleasant to behold! When the harvest-men enter into the field, it is

(to allude to that of *Joel* ii. 3) “before them like the Garden of Eden, and behind them a desolate wilderness;” and in some places it is usual to set fire to the dry stubble, when the corn is housed, which rages furiously, and covers all with ashes.

APPLICATION.

THE application of this I find made to my hands by CHRIST himself. “The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the Devil; the harvest is the end of the world; the reapers are the angels.” (*Matt.* xiii. 38, 39.)

The field is the world; there both the godly and ungodly live and grow together, till they be both ripe, and then they shall both be reaped down by death; death is the sickle that reaps down both. I will open this allegory in the following particulars:

1. In a catching harvest, when the husbandman sees the clouds begin to gather and grow black, he hurries in his corn with all possible haste, and houses day and night.

So doth GOD the great Husbandman: He hurries believers into their graves, when judgments are coming upon the world. “The righteous perish, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.” (*Isa.* lvii. 1.) METHUSELAH died the year before the flood; AUGUSTINE, a little before the sacking of Hippo; PARÆUS, just before the taking of Heidelberg; LUTHER, a little before the wars brake out in Germany; but what speak I of single saints? Sometimes the LORD houses great numbers together, before some sweeping judgment comes. How many bright and glorious stars did set almost together, within the compass of a few years, to the astonishment of many wise and tender hearts in England! The LORD sees it better for them to be under ground than above ground, and therefore by a merciful Providence sets them out of harm’s way.

2. Neither the corn, or tares, can possibly resist the keen sickle, when it is applied to them by the reaper's hand; neither can the godly or ungodly resist the stroke of death when God inflicts it. "No man can keep alive his own soul in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that war." (*Eccles. viii. 8.*) The frail body of man is as unable to withstand that stroke, as the feeble stalks of the corn are to resist the sharp sickle.

3. The reapers receive the wheat which they cut down into their arms and bosom. Hence that expression by way of imprecation upon the wicked: "Let them be as the grass upon the house-top, which withers before it grows up, wherewith the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth the sheaves his bosom." (*Psalms exxix. 7.*) Such withered grass are the wicked, who are never taken into the reaper's bosom; but as soon as believers are cut down by death, they fall into the hands and bosoms of the angels of God, who bear them in their arms and bosoms to God their FATHER. For as these blessed spirits did exceedingly rejoice at their conversion, and thought it no dishonour to minister to them whilst they stood in the field, so when they are cut down by death, they will rejoice to be their convoy to heaven.

4. When the corn and weeds are reaped or mowed down, they shall never grow any more in that field; neither shall we ever return to live an animal life any more after death. "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more; he shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more." (*Job vii. 9, 10.*)

Lastly, (to come home to the particular subject of this chapter,) the reapers are never sent to cut down the harvest till it be fully ripe; neither will God reap down saints or sinners, till they are come to a maturity of grace or wickedness. Saints are not reaped down till their grace be ripe. "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, as a shock of corn cometh in its season." (*Job v. 26.*) 'Not that every godly man dies in such a full old age, (saith MR. CARY

on the place,) but yet in one sense it is an universal truth ; for whensoever they die, they die in a good age ; yea, though they die in the spring and flower of their youth, they die in a good old age ; that is, they are ripe for death whenever they die. Whenever the godly man dies, it is harvest time with him ; though in a natural capacity he be cut down while he is green, and cropped in the bud or bloom, yet in his spiritual capacity he never dies before he be ripe. GOD ripens his speedily, when he intends to take them out of the world speedily : He can let out such warm rays and beams of his SPIRIT upon them, as shall soon mature the seeds of grace for glory.'

The wicked also have their ripening-time for hell : " GOD doth with much long-suffering endure the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction." Of their ripeness for judgment the Scripture often speaks. " The sin of the Amorites is not yet full." (*Gen. xv. 16.*) And of Babylon it is said, " O thou that dwellest upon many waters, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness." (*Jer. li. 13.*)

It is worth remarking, that the measure of the sin, and the end of the sinner, come together. So, " Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest of the earth is ripe, for the press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great." (*Joel iii. 13.*) Where note, sinners are not cut down till they be ripe and ready. Indeed, they are never ripe for death, nor ready for the grave ; that is, fit to die : Yet they are always ripe for wrath, and ready for hell before they die. Now as husbandmen judge of the ripeness of the harvest, by the colour and hardness of the grain ; so may we judge of the ripeness both of saints and sinners, for heaven or hell, by these following signs :—

Three Signs of the Maturity of Grace.

1. WHEN the corn is near ripe, it bows the head, and stoops lower than when it was green. When the people of GOD are near ripe for heaven, they grow more humble and self-denying than in the days of their profession. The longer a saint grows in this world, the better he is still acquainted

with his own heart, and his obligations to GOD; both which are very humbling things. PAUL had one foot in heaven, when he called himself the chief of sinners, and least of saints. (1 *Tim.* i. 15; *Eph.* iii. 8.) A Christian, in the progress of his knowledge and grace, is like a vessel cast into the sea, the more it fills, the deeper it sinks. Those that went to study at Athens, (saith PLUTARCH,) at first coming, seemed to themselves to be wise men; afterwards, only lovers of wisdom; and after that, only rhetoricians, such as could speak of wisdom, but knew little of it; and last of all, idiots in their own apprehensions; still with the increase of learning, laying aside their pride and arrogance.

2. When harvest is nigh, the grain is more solid and pithy than ever it was before; green corn is soft and spongy, but ripe corn is substantial and weighty: So it is with Christians; the affections of a young Christian perhaps are more sprightly, but those of a grown Christian are more judicious and solid; their "love to CHRIST abounds more and more in all judgment." (*Phil.* i. 9.) The limbs of a child are more pliable, but as he grows up to a more perfect state, the parts are more consolidated and firmly knit.

3. When corn is dead ripe, it is apt to fall of its own accord to the ground, whereby it doth as it were anticipate the harvestman, and calls upon him to put in the sickle. Not unlike unto which are the lookings and longings, the groanings and hastenings of ready Christians to their expected glory; they hasten to the coming of the LORD, or as MONTANUS more fitly renders it, they hasten the coming of the Lord; that is, they are urgent and instant in their desires and cries to hasten his coming; their desires sally forth to meet the LORD, they willingly take death by the hand; as the corn bends to the earth, so doth these souls to heaven. This shows their harvest to be near.

Six Signs of the Maturity of Sin.

WHEN sinners are even dead ripe for hell, these signs appear upon them, or by these at least, you may conclude those souls not to be far from wrath.

1. When conscience is wasted and grown past feeling, having no remorse for sin ; when it ceases to reprove and smite for sin any more, the day of that sinner is at hand, his harvest is even come. The greatest violation of conscience is the greatest of sins ; this was the case of the forlorn Gentiles, among whom SATAN had such a plentiful harvest ; the patience of GOD suffered them to grow till their consciences were grown seared and past feeling. (*Eph.* iv. 19.) When a member is so mortified, that if you lance and cut it never so much, no fresh blood or quick flesh appears, nor doth the man feel any pain in all this, then it is high time to cut it off.

2. When men give themselves over to the satisfaction of their lusts, to commit sin with greediness, then are they grown to a maturity of sin ; when men have slipped the reins of conscience, and rush headlong into all impiety, then the last sands of GOD'S patience are running down. Thus Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, in like manner gave themselves over to wickedness, and then justice quickly made them an example suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

3. That man is even ripe for hell, that is become a contriver of sin, a designer, a student in wickedness ; one would think it strange, that any man should set his invention on work upon such a subject as sin is ; that any should study to become a dexterous artist this way, and yet the Scripture frequently speaks of such " whose bellies prepare deceit ;" (*Job* xv. 35 ;) " who travail in pain to bring forth" this deformed birth ; (*verse* 20;) " who wink with their eyes" whilst plotting wickedness, as men use to do when they are most intent upon any knotty problem. (*Prov.* vi. 13.) These have so much of hell already in them, that they are more than half in hell already.

4. He that of a forward professor is turned a bitter persecutor, is also within a few rounds of the top of the ladder ; the contempt of their light the LORD hath already punished upon them, in their obduracy and madness against the

light. Reader, if thou be gone thus far, thou art almost gone beyond all hope of recovery. Towards other sinners God usually exercises more patience, but with such He makes short work. When JUDAS turns traitor to his LORD, he is quickly sent to his own place. Such as are again entangled and overcome of those lusts they once had clean escaped, bring upon themselves swift damnation, and their judgment lingers not.

5. He that can endure no reproof or controul in the way of his sin, but derides all counsel, and like a strong current sweeps away all obstacles in his way, will quickly fall into the dead lake. "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." This is a death-spot, a hell-spot, wherever it appears. From this very symptom the Prophet plainly predicted the approaching ruin of AMAZIAH. "I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened to my voice." (*2 Chron.* xxv. 16.) He that will not be timely counselled, shall be quickly destroyed.

6. When a man comes to glory in his sin, and boast of his wickedness, then it is time to cut him down; "whose end is destruction, whose glory is in their shame." (*Phil.* iii. 19.) This is a braving, a daring of God to his face.

You see now what are the signs of a full ripe sinner; and when it comes to this, either with a nation, or with a single person, then ruin is near. It is in the filling up the measure of sin, as in the filling of a vessel cast into the sea, which rolls from side to side, taking in the water by little and little, till it be full, and then sinks to the bottom. Meanwhile, admirable is Divine patience, which bears with these vessels of wrath whilst fitting for destruction.

REFLECTIONS.

1. CHEER thyself, O my soul! with the strengthening bread of this divine meditation. Let faith turn every drop of this truth into a soul-reviving cordial. God hath sown

the precious seed of grace upon my soul ; and though my heart hath been an unkind soil, which hath kept it back and much hindered its growth, yet, blessed be the LORD, it still grows on, though by slow degrees ; and from the springing of the seed, and shootings forth of those gracious habits, I may conclude an approaching harvest. O that every day I were more active for the God of my salvation ! Grow on, my soul, and add to thy faith virtue, to thy virtue knowledge : Grow on, from faith to faith ; keep thyself under the ripening influences of heavenly ordinances ; the faster thou growest in grace, the sooner thou shalt be reaped in mercy, and “ bound up in the bundle of life.” (1 *Sam.* xxv. 29.) I have not yet attained the measure of grace assigned to me, neither am I already perfect, but am reaching forth to the things before me, and pressing towards the mark for the prize of my heavenly calling. O mercy to be admired ! that I who lately had one foot in hell, stand now with one foot in heaven !

2. But the case is far different with me, may a decaying Christian say ; whilst others are ripening apace for heaven, I am withering ; many a soul ploughed up by conviction, and sown by sanctification long after me, hath quite outgrown me ; my sweet and early blossoms are nipped and blown off, my bright morning overcast ; had I kept on according to my first growth, I had now been in heaven, or at least in the suburbs of it on earth ; but my graces wither and languish, my heart cools to heavenly things, the sun and rain of ordinances and providences improve not my graces ; how sad therefore is my soul !

CHAPTER XV

Upon the Care of Husbandmen to provide for Winter

Your winter store in summer you provide:
To Christian prudence this must be applied.

OBSERVATION.

Good husbandmen are careful in summer to provide for winter: Then they gather in their winter store; food and fuel for themselves, and fodder for their cattle. "He that gathers in summer is a wise son; but he that sleeps in harvest is a son of shame." (*Prov. x. 5.*) A well-chosen season is the greatest advantage of any to action, which as it is seldom found in haste, so it is often lost by delay. It is a good proverb which the frugal Dutch have among them: 'A good saver will make a good benefactor.' And it is a good proverb of our own: 'He that neglects the occasion, the occasion will neglect him.' Husbandmen know that summer will not last all the year, neither will trust to a mild winter, but in season provide for the worst.

APPLICATION.

WHAT excellent Christians should we be, were we but as provident for our souls! It is doubtless a singular point of Christian wisdom to foresee a day of spiritual necessities, and during the day of grace to make provision for it. This great Gospel truth is excellently shadowed forth in this natural observation, which I shall branch out into these particulars:—

1. Husbandmen know there is a change of seasons and weather; though it be pleasant weather now, yet winter will tread upon the heels of summer: Frosts, snows, and great falls of rain must be expected. This alternate course of seasons in nature is settled by a firm law of the God of nature, to the end of the world. "Whilst the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, day and night shall not cease." (*Gen. viii. 22.*)

And Christians know, that there are changes in the right hand of the Most High, in reference to their spiritual seasons. If there be a spring-time of the Gospel, there may also be an autumn; if a day of prosperity, it may set in a night of adversity; "for GOD hath set the one over against the other." (*Eccles.* vii. 14.) In heaven there is a day of everlasting serenity, in hell a night of perfect horror and darkness; on earth light and darkness take their turns; prosperity and adversity, even to souls as well as bodies, succeed each other. If there be a Gospel-day, a day of grace now current, it will have its period and determination.

2. The end of GOD's ordaining a summer season, and sending warm and pleasant weather, is to ripen the fruits of the earth, and give the husbandman fit opportunity to gather them in.

And GOD's design in giving men a day of grace, is to furnish them with an opportunity for everlasting happiness. "I gave her a space to repent." (*Rev.* ii. 21.) It is not a mere reprieve of the soul, or only a delay of the execution of wrath, though there be much mercy in that; but the peculiar aim of this patience of GOD is to open for them a way to escape the wrath to come.

3. A proper season neglected and lost is irrecoverable. Many things in husbandry must be done in their season, or cannot be done at all; if he plough not, and sow not in the proper time, he loses the harvest of that year.

It is even so as to spiritual seasons. Grace despised in the season when GOD offers it, is irrecoverably lost: "Then (that is, when the season is over) they shall call upon me, but I will not hear." (*Prov.* i. 28.) O, there is a great deal of time in a short opportunity! that may be done, or prevented, in an hour rightly timed, which cannot be done or prevented in a man's life-time. Our glass runs in heaven, and we cannot see how much or little of the sand of GOD's patience is yet to run down; but this is certain, when that glass is run, there is nothing to be done for our souls. "O that thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace!" (*Luke* xix. 42.)

6. Those husbandmen that are careful and laborious in the summer, have the comfort and benefit of it in winter; he that then provides fuel, shall sit warm in his habitation, when others blow their fingers. He that provides food for his family, and fodder for his cattle in the harvest, shall eat the fruit of it, and enjoy the comfort of his labours, when others shall be exposed to straits: And he that lays up for his soul a good foundation against the time to come, shall eat when others are hungry. A day of death shall come, and that will be a day of straits to all negligent souls; but then the diligent Christian shall enjoy the peace and comfort that shall flow in upon his heart, from his holy care and diligence in duties: "This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in all sincerity and godly simplicity, we have had our conversation in this world." (2 Cor i. 12.)

REFLECTIONS.

1. I HAVE indeed been a good husband for the world, may the careless soul say; with what care have I looked out for myself and family, to provide food to nourish them, and clothes to defend them from the asperities of winter! Meanwhile neglecting to make provision for eternity, or take care for my soul. O my destitute soul! how much have I slighted and undervalued thee! I have taken more care for an horse or an ox, than for thee; a well-stored barn, but an empty soul. Will it not shortly be with me, as with that careless mother, who, when her house was on fire, busily bestirred herself to save the goods, but forgot the child? and then minding her child, ran up and down like one distracted, and crying, 'O my child, my child! I have saved my goods, and lost my child.' Besides, how easy will my conviction be at the bar of CHRIST! Will not my care for the things of this life leave me speechless and self-condemned in that day? What shall I answer when the LORD shall say, Thou couldest foresee a winter, and seasonably provide for it? Yea, thou hadst so much care of the very beasts, to provide for their necessities, and why

tookest thou no care for thy soul? Was that only not worth the caring for?

2. Is it so dangerous to neglect a present season of grace? What then have I done, may the presumptuous soul say, who have suffered many such seasons to die away in my hand, upon a groundless hope of future opportunities! Ah, deluded wretch! what, if that supposition fail? Where am I then? I am not the LORD of time, neither am I sure that He who is, will ever vouchsafe an hour of grace in old age, to him that hath neglected many such hours in his youth.

CHAPTER XVI.

Upon Reaping the same we sow.

When from tare seeds you see choice wheat to grow,
Then from your lusts may joy and comfort flow.

OBSERVATION.

God gives to every seed its own body. (1 Cor. xv. 38.) At first He created every tree and herb of the field, having its seed in itself, for the conservation of the species, and they all inviolably observe the law of their creation. All fruits naturally rise out of the seeds and roots proper to them. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles." Such productions would be monstrous in nature; and although the juice or sap of the earth be the common matter of all kinds of fruits, yet it is specified according to the different sorts of plants and seeds it nourishes. Where wheat is sown, it is turned into wheat; in an apple-tree, it becomes an apple; and so in every sort of plants or seeds, it is concocted into fruit proper to the kind.

APPLICATION.

TRANSLATE this into spiritual, and the proposition shadowed forth by it, is fully expressed by the Apostle:

“What a man sows, that shall he reap; they that sow to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; and they that sow to the SPIRIT, shall of the SPIRIT reap life everlasting.” (*Gal. vi. 7.*) And as sure as the harvest follows the seed-time, so sure shall such fruits result from the seed of such actions. “He that soweth iniquity, shall reap vanity.” (*Prov. xxii. 8.*) “And they that now go forth weeping, and bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them.” (*Psalms cxxvi. 5.*) The sum of all is this, our present actions have the same relation to future rewards and punishments, as the seed we sow in our fields, hath to the harvest we reap from it. Every gracious action is the seed of joy, and every sinful action the seed of sorrow. Two things are sensibly presented to us in this similitude.

1. That as the seed sown is presently covered from our sight under the clods, and for some time after we see no more of it, and yet at last it appears again, by which it is evident to us that it is not finally lost: So our present actions, though transient, and perhaps forgotten, yet are not lost, but after a time shall appear again, in order to a retribution.

If this were not so, all good and holy actions would be to the loss of him that performed them. All the self-denial, spending duties, and sharp sufferings of the people of God, would turn to their damage; and then also, what difference would there be betwixt the actions of a man and a beast, with respect to future good or evil? Yea, man would then be more feared and obeyed than God, and souls be swayed in all their motions, only by the influence of present things; and where then would religion be found in the world? It is an excellent note of DREXELLIUS: ‘Our works (saith he) do not pass away as soon as they are done, but, as seed sown, shall after a time rise up to all eternity; whatever we think, speak, or do, once spoken, thought, or done, is eternal, and abides for ever.’

What ZEUXES, the famous limner, said of his work, may truly be said of all our works: *Eternitati pingo*, I paint for eternity. O, how careful should men be of what

they speak and do, whilst they are commanded so to speak, and so to do, as those that shall be judged by the perfect law of liberty ! What is more transient than a vain word ? And yet, for such words, men shall give an account in the day of judgment. That is the first thing ; actions, like seed, shall rise and appear again in order to a retribution.

2. The other thing held forth in this similitude is, that according to the nature of our actions now, will be the fruit of them. Though the fruit of holy actions, for the present, may seem bitter, and the fruit of sinful actions sweet and pleasant, yet there is nothing more certain, than that their future fruits shall be according to their present nature. Then DIONYSIUS shall retract that saying, ‘ Behold how GOD favours our sacrileges.’ Sometimes also GOD causes sinners to reap in this world, the same that they have sown ; as hath been their sin, so is their punishment. It was openly confessed by ADONIBEZEK, “ As I have done, so hath GOD requited me.” (*Judges* i. 7.)

It is not always so in this world, but so it shall be in that to come ; the table shall then be turned, and the scene altered ; “ for shall not the Judge of all the world do righteously ? ” DIOGENES was tempted to think, that GOD had cast off the government of the world, when he saw the wicked prosper in their wickedness. On the same ground many have been tempted to Atheism ; but then the world shall see justice shine out in its glory. “ Tribulation, anguish, and wrath, to every soul of man that doeth evil ; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good.” (*Rom.* ii. 9, 10.) Then it will appear what seed we sowed, what lives we lived : “ For GOD shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil.”

REFLECTIONS.

1. THIS meditation may be to me (may the profane person say) what the hand-writing upon the wall was to that profane Prince. (*Dan.* v. 5, 6.) For if all the actions of this life be seed sown for the next, LORD, what a dreadful

harvest am I likely to have ! How many oaths and curses, lies and vain words, have I sown with my tongue ! How have I wronged, oppressed, and over-reached in my dealings ! Rushed into all profaneness, drunkenness, uncleanness, "as the horse rusheth into the battle;" and what shall I reap from such seed as this, but vengeance ? These sins seemed pleasant in the commission, but how bitter will they be in their account ! "What shall I do when God riseth up ? and when He visiteth, what shall I answer Him ?" (*Job* xxxi. 14.) Is it not reasonable and just, O my soul, that thou shouldst eat the fruit of thine own planting, and reap what thou hast sown ? I thought nothing but profit and pleasure would spring from my lusts, but now I see it is a root bearing gall and wormwood. Wretched soul, what shall I do ? Surely I am undone. I have been the author of mine own ruin. Let me rather taste the bitterness of sin, by repentance now, than enjoy its present pleasures, which betray the soul to endless wrath !

2. Meanwhile, bless the LORD, O my soul, who enabled thee to sow better seed ! Who kept thee watching, humbling thyself, and praying, whilst others have been swearing, drinking, and blaspheming. This will yield thee fruit of joy in the world to come ; yea, it already yields peace to thy conscience. These revenues are better than gold, sweeter than the honey, and the honey-comb ; not that such fruits are meritoriously contained in these actions : I sow to myself in righteousness, but I reap in mercy. (*Hosea* x. 12.) This is the way in which God will save and glorify me. O then let me be ever abounding in the work of the LORD ! knowing that my labour shall not be in vain in the LORD.

CHAPTER XVII.

Upon the Joy of Harvest-men.

Great is the joy of harvest-men, yet less
Than theirs, whom God doth with his favour bless.

OBSERVATION.

AMONG all earthly joys, these four sorts are noted in Scripture, as the most excellent and remarkable:

1. Nuptial joys; the day of espousals is the day of the gladness of man's heart. (*Cant.* iii. 11.)

2. The joy of children. Though now it seem but a common mercy to most, and a burden to some; yet the people of God were wont to esteem it a choice mercy, and rejoiced greatly in it.

3. The joy of conquest, when men divide the spoil. And,

4. The joy of harvest. These two we find put together. "They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil." (*Isa.* ix. 3.)

APPLICATION.

THUS, and unspeakably more than thus, do saints rejoice and shout for joy, when they reap the favour and love of God, for which they laboured in so many a weary duty. This joy of harvest, as great as it is, and as much as carnal hearts are lifted up with it, is but a trifle, a thing of nought, compared with theirs; after they have sown to themselves in righteousness, and waited for the returns of their duties with patience, and at last come to reap in mercy, either the full harvest in heaven, or but the first fruits of it on earth, they rejoice "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (*1 Pet.* i. 8.) "This puts more gladness into their hearts, than when corn and wine increase." (*Psalms* iv. 7.) There is a great difference betwixt the unnatural inflammations of a feverish body which waste the spirits, and drink up the radical moisture, and that kindly, well-tem-

pered heat of a healthy body; and as much between the sweet, serene, and heavenly joys, which flow from the bosom of CHRIST into the hearts of believers, and those earthly delights which carnal hearts in a sensual way suck out of creature-enjoyments. I will show you the transcendency of spiritual joys, above the joy in harvest, in the particulars following.

1. You that joy with the joy of harvest, are glad, because now you have food for yourselves and families to live upon all the year; but the Christian rejoiceth, because he hath bread to eat that the world knows not of. CHRIST is the food of his soul, and his flesh is meat indeed, his blood drink indeed; that is, the most real and excellent food. You read, (*Psalm lxxviii. 25,*) that man did eat angels' food; that is, manna, which was such excellent bread, that if angels did live upon material food, this would be chosen for them; and yet this is but a type and dark shadow of JESUS CHRIST, the food of believers.

2. You rejoice when you have gotten in your harvest, because now you can pay those debts which you have contracted. It is a comfort to be out of debt, and you may lawfully rejoice that God gives you wherewith to quit your engagements, that you may owe no man any thing but love: But still the joy of harvest falls short of the joy of saints; for you rejoice that you are, or have wherewith to help yourselves out of men's debts. But they rejoice that they are out of God's debt; that his book is cancelled, and their sins pardoned. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in CHRIST JESUS." O, what matter of joy is this!

3. Your joy will have an end; the time is coming, that when you have reaped down your harvests, yourselves must be reaped down by death, and then you shall rejoice in these things no more; but when your joy is ended, then is the joy of saints perfected; they reap their harvest, when you leave your harvest; their consolation is everlasting.

4. God can separate your joy from these enjoyments, even while you have them, as well as when you leave them.

It is one thing for a man to have riches and full barns, and another thing to have comfort in them. (*Eccles.* v. 19, 20.) But the joy of Christians is a thing inseparable from their enjoyment of CHRIST.

The joy of harvest-men, for the most part, is only in their harvest, and in such earthly things; take that away, and their joy ceases. Earthly hearts are acquainted with no higher comforts; but the people of GOD can enjoy Him, and take comfort in their earthly enjoyments too. And what comfort they take in these things, is much more refined and sweet than yours; for they enjoy all these things in GOD, and his love in giving them puts a sweetness into them, that you are unacquainted with. Thus you see, how far your joy falls short of theirs.

REFLECTIONS.

1. How have I rejoiced in a thing of nought, may many a one then say! GOD hath blessed me in my fields, and in my stores; but not with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in CHRIST. My barns are full of corn, but my soul is empty of grace; GOD hath given me a fulness of the things of this life, but what if this be the whole of my portion? For the most part they are poor in this world, who are rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom! Is not this enough to damp all my mirth? A man in a fever hath a lively colour, but a dying heart. I have an appearance, a shadow of comfort, but a sad state of soul.

2. "Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of my LORD JESUS CHRIST," may a believer say, "who hath blessed me with all spiritual blessings in CHRIST." Though he hath not seen fit to give me much of this world, yet it hath pleased him to settle a rich inheritance upon me, the hopes whereof yield my soul more true comfort than all the present enjoyments of this world. Blessed be the LORD, who hath not given me my portion in this life, that by keeping me from the enjoyment, hath also preserved me from the snares of a prosperous estate.

LORD JESUS, I have no bags, I have no barns; but thou

shalt be to me instead of all those things. When others rejoice in the fulness of their earthly comforts, I will rejoice in the fulness of CHRIST; they have that which I shall not want; and I have that which all their riches cannot purchase. Bless the LORD, O my soul!

3. But LORD, how am I obliged, above thousands, to love and praise thee; to bless and admire thee, who hast not only plentifully provided for my soul, but for my body too! Who hast given me both the upper and the nether springs, heaven and earth, things present and things to come: Thou hast not dealt so with all, no, not with all thy own people; many of them are strangers to the mercies which I enjoy. God hath done great things for me, O my soul! What wilt thou do for GOD? The freer the condition is he hath placed me in, the more am I both obliged and advantaged for his service; and yet I doubt it will be found that many a poor Christian that labours to get his bread, redeems more hours for GOD than I do. LORD, make me wise to understand, and answer the double end of this gracious dispensation! Let me bestow the more of my time on GOD, and stand ready to administer to the necessities of his people.



CHAPTER XVIII.

Upon the Thrashing out of Corn.

More solid grain with greater strength you thrash;
The ablest Christians have the hardest lash.

OBSERVATION.

HUSBANDMEN having to do with divers sorts of grain, some more tough and stubborn, others more free and tender, do not beat all alike in the thrashing-floors; but as they have threshals of several sizes, so they bestow on some grain more, on others fewer strokes, according to the different qualities of the grain.

APPLICATION.

God having to do in a way of correction with divers sorts of offenders, doth not use the like severity with all, but proportions his correction to their abilities: “I will not make a full end of thee, but will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished; (*Jer.* xxx. 11;) as if he had said, Afflicted thou must be, my respect to my glory and thy good puts a necessity upon that; but yet I will do it moderately, not without measure or mercy, as I intend to do upon the enemies; but will mete out your sufferings in a due proportion, even as a careful physician in prescribing potions to his patients, hath regard as well to the ability of the patient, as to the nature and quality of the disease; even so thy God, O Israel, will not afflict thee according to the greatness of his power, and his wrath answerable thereunto; that would break thee in pieces; nor yet will he afflict thee according to the demerit of thy sin. I that have instructed the husbandman to proportion his instruments to the quality of the grain before him, will exercise the like wisdom and mildness towards thee. And the similitude betwixt the husbandman’s thrashing his corn, and the Lord’s afflicting his people, stands in these particulars:—

1. The husbandman’s end in thrashing the corn, is to separate it from the husks and chaff; and God’s end in afflicting his people, is to separate them from their sins. God uses afflictions, as we use soap, to cleanse away filthiness, and fetch out spots: He aims not at the destruction of their persons, but of their lusts.

2. If the husbandman has cockle, darnel, or tares before him in the floor among his corn, he little regards whether it be bruised and battered to pieces or no; it is a worthless thing, and he spares it not. Such cockle and tares are the enemies of God; and when these come under his flail, he strikes them without mercy; for these the Lord prepares a new sharp thrashing instrument, having teeth, which shall beat them to dust. And when that time is come, then

(in allusion to the beast that was to tread out the corn) "Zion's horn shall be of iron, and her hoofs brass." (*Mic.* iv. 13.) He smites not his people, according to the stroke of them that smote them; the meaning is, his strokes on them shall be deadly strokes. They shewed no mercy to Zion, and God will shew no mercy to them.

3. When the husks and chaff are perfectly separated from the grain, then the husbandman beats it no more. When God hath perfectly purged and separated the sins of his people, then afflictions shall come to a perpetual end; there is no noise of the thrashing instrument: He that beat them with his flail on earth, will put them into his bosom in heaven.

4. Though the husbandman thrash and beat the corn, yet he will not bruise or hurt it; though some require more and harder strokes, yet none shall have more than it can endure. And though the LORD afflict his servant, yet he will do them no hurt. Some need more rods than others, but none shall have more than they can bear: The LORD knows the measures and degrees of his servants' faith and patience, and accordingly shall their trials be. "Like as a father pities his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him; for he knows their frame, he remembers they are but dust." (*Psalms* ciii. 13, 14.) "He makes a way to escape, that they may be able to bear." (*1 Cor.* x. 13.) This care and tenderness of God over his afflicted, is eminently discovered in three particulars:—

(1.) In not exposing them to, till he has prepared them for, their trials. "Tarry ye at Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." (*Luke* xxiv. 49.) He gives them sometimes eminent discoveries of his love immediately before, and as a preparative to their sufferings; in the strength whereof they are carried through all.

(2.) Or if not so, then he intermixeth supporting comfort with their troubles, as you sometimes see the sun shine out while the rain falls. It was so with ST. PAUL: "This night [and it was a sad night indeed] there stood by me the angel of the LORD, whose I am." (*Acts* xxvii. 23.)

(3.) In taking off the affliction, when they can bear it no

longer. "He makes a way to escape, that they may be able to bear it. The rod is taken off, when the righteous is even ready to put forth his hand to iniquity." It is a Jewish proverb, When the bricks are doubled, then comes **MOSES**. And it is a Christian experience, When the spirit is ready to fail, then comes **JESUS**.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Is the **LORD**'s wheat thus thrashed in the floor of affliction? What then shall I think of my condition, who prosper, and am let alone in the way of sin? Surely, the **LORD** looks on me as on a weed, and not as his corn; and it is too probable, that I am rather reserved for burning than thrashing. Miserable is their condition, notwithstanding their impunity; for what is the interpretation but this? I will come to a reckoning with them for all together in hell. **LORD**, how much better is thy afflicting mercy, than thy sparing severity! Better is the condition of an afflicted child, than of a rejected bastard. O let me rather feel thy rod now, as the rod of a loving father, than feel thy wrath hereafter, as the wrath of an omnipotent avenger.

2. Well then, despond not, O my soul, may an afflicted Christian say. Thou hearest, the husbandman loves his corn, though he thrasheth it; and surely the **LORD** loves thee not the less, because he afflicts thee so much. If affliction then be the way to heaven, blessed be **GOD** for affliction. The thrashing strokes of **GOD** come thick upon me, by which I may see what a stubborn heart I have; if one stroke would have done the work, he would not have lifted up his hand the second time. I have not had a stroke more than I had need of; and by this means he will purge my sin; blessed be **GOD** for that. The damned have infinitely more and harder strokes than I, and yet their sin shall never be separated by their sufferings. Ah, sin, cursed sin, I am willing to endure more than all this to be well rid of thee; all this I suffer for thy sake, but the time is coming when I shall be rid of sin and suffering together.

CHAPTER XIX.

Upon the Winnowing of Corn.

The fan doth cause light chaff' to fly away ;
So shall th' ungodly in God's winnowing day.

OBSERVATION.

WHEN the corn is thrashed out in the floor, where it lies mingled with empty ears, and worthless chaff, the husbandman carries it out all into some open place, where having spread his sheet for the preservation of the grain, he exposes it all to the wind ; the good grain, by reason of its solidity, remains upon the sheet, but the chaff being light and empty, is partly carried quite away by the wind, and all the rest separated from the good grain into a distinct heap, which is carried away, either to the fire or to the dung-hill, as a worthless thing.

APPLICATION.

MEN have their winnowing days, and GOD hath his ; a day to separate the chaff from the wheat, the godly from the ungodly, who shall both be held up to the wind, but only the wicked shall be driven away by it. Such a day GOD hath in this world, wherein he winnows his wheat, and separates the chaff. There is a double fanning or winnowing of men here in this world ; one is *doctrinally*, in which sense I understand that Scripture spoken of CHRIST, when he was entering upon his ministerial work : “ His fan is in his hand, and he shall thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” (*Matt.* iii. 12.) The preaching of the Gospel is as a fan in CHRIST's hand ; and it is as much as if JOHN had told the Jews, that though there were many hypocritical ones among them, that had now a name among the people of GOD, and gloried in their church privileges, yet there was a purging blast of truth coming.

which should make them fly out of the church, as fast as chaff out of the floor. Thus CHRIST winnows or fans the world *doctrinally*. The other is *judicially*, by bringing grievous trials and sufferings upon the churches, for this very end, That those who are but chaff, that is, empty and vain, may by such winds be separated from his people.

The church increases two ways, and by two divers means, in breadth and numbers, and in vigour and power ; peace and prosperity cause the first, sufferings and adversity the last ; and well may a day of persecution be called a winnowing day, for then are the people of GOD tossed to purpose, as corn in the sieve, though nothing but chaff be lost thereby. Of such a winnowing day the Prophet speaks, "I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth ; all the sinners of my people shall die." (*Amos* ix. 9, 10.) As if he had said, I will cause great agitations and tossings among you by the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians, into whose countries you shall be scattered ; yet I will so govern those your dispersions by my providence, that not one good grain, one upright soul, shall perish ; but the sinners of my people, the refuse shall perish.

To the same purpose speaks another Prophet : "Gather yourselves together," or as some read, *fan yourselves*, yea, fan yourselves, "before the decree bring forth, and the day pass as the chaff." (*Zeph.* i. 1, 2.) He doth not mean, that the time shall pass as the chaff, but there is a day of affliction coming, in which the wicked shall pass as the chaff before the wind ; and yet, notwithstanding all these winnowings upon earth, much chaff will still abide among the corn ; therefore GOD hath appointed another day for the winnowing of the world, even the day of judgment, in reference to which it is said, "The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away ; therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners

in the congregation of the righteous ;” (*Psalms* i. 4, 5 ;) that is, GOD hath a day wherein he will sift the world, like corn in a sieve ; and then the wicked shall appear to be but chaff, which GOD will eternally separate from his wheat. I will not strain the similitude, but fairly display it in these particulars :—

1. The chaff and the wheat grow together in the same field, and upon the same root and stalk. In this, wicked men are like chaff, who not only associate with the people of GOD, but often spring up with them in the same families, and from the same root, or immediate parents.

2. The chaff is a very worthless thing ; the husbandman cares not what becomes of it : And of as little worth are wicked men : “ The heart of the wicked is little worth.” (*Prov.* x. 20.) The heart is the principal part of the man, and yet that is but chaff, no worth in it ; his lands, his clothes are worth somewhat, but his heart is worth nothing.

3. Though chaff in itself be nothing worth, yet it is of some use to the corn while it is standing in the field ; the stalk bears up the ear, and the chaff covers the grain, and defends it from the injury of the weather. Thus GOD makes wicked men of use to his people, in outward society ; they help to support and protect them in this world : “ The earth helped the woman ;” (*Rev.* xii. 16 ;) that is, worldly men, for carnal ends, helped the church, when a flood of persecution was poured out. The church often helps the world, it receives many benefits from the people of GOD ; and sometimes GOD over-rules the world to help his church.

4. When the chaff and wheat are both brought forth and held up in one sieve, they fall two ways ; the wheat falls down upon the floor or sheet, the chaff is carried quite away : So although for a time the godly and ungodly abide together, yet when this winnowing time comes, GOD’s wheat shall be gathered into his garner in heaven, the chaff shall go the other way. (*Matt.* iii. 12.)

REFLECTIONS.

Is there such a fanning time coming? Why do not I then sift my heart every day by serious self-examination? No work more important to me, and yet how much have I neglected it! O my soul! thou hadst been better employed, in searching thine own estate in reference to that day, than in prying into the hearts, and censuring the conditions of other men: Judge thyself, and thou shalt not be condemned with the world: The work indeed is difficult, but the neglect dangerous. Were I within a few days to stand at man's bar, there to be tried for my life, how busy should I be every hour of the day in writing to any that I thought could befriend me, and studying every advantage to myself! And yet, what a vast difference is there betwixt man's bar and God's! Betwixt a trial for my life, and for my soul! LORD, rouse up my sluggish heart by awful and solicitous thoughts of that day, lest I be found among that chaff which shall be burnt up with unquenchable fire!

PART II

CHAPTER I.

Upon the Ingrafting of Fruit Trees

Ungrafted trees can never bear good fruit.
Nor we till graffed on a better root.

OBSERVATION.

A WILD tree, naturally springing up in the wood or hedge, and never graffed or removed from its native soil, may bear some fruit, and that fair and beautiful to the eye, but it will give you no content at all in eating, being always harsh, and unpleasant to the taste; but if such a stock be removed into a good soil, and graffed with a better kind, it may become a good tree, and yield store of choice and pleasant fruit.

APPLICATION.

MEN who never were acquainted with the mystery of spiritual union with CHRIST, but still grow upon their natural root, may by the power of natural principles bring forth some fruit, which, like wild hedge-fruit, may indeed be fair and pleasant to the eyes of men, but God takes no pleasure at all in it; it is sour and distasteful to him, because it springs not from the SPIRIT of CHRIST. I shall set before you a parallel betwixt the best fruits of natural men, and those of a wild ungrafted tree.

1. The root that bears this wild fruit, is a degenerate root, and that is the cause of all this sourness and harshness in the fruit: So all the fruits of unregenerate men flow from the first ADAM, a corrupt and degenerate root; he was indeed planted a right seed, but soon turned a wild

and degenerate plant; he being the root from which every man naturally springs, corrupts all the fruit that any man bears from him. “A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.”

2. This corrupt root spoils the fruit, by the transmission of its sour sap into all the branches and fruits that grow on them; they suck no other nourishment, but what the root affords them; and that being bad, spoils all: For the same cause, no mere natural man can ever do one holy or acceptable action, because the corruption of the root is in all those actions. The necessity of our drawing corruption into all our actions, from this cursed root, is expressed by a quick interrogation: “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.” (*Job* xiv. 4.) The sense of it is well delivered us by MR. CARYL: ‘This question (saith he) may undergo a two-fold construction: First, thus: Who can bring a morally clean person, out of a person originally unclean? And so he lays his hand upon his birth-sin. Or, Secondly, It may refer to the action of the same man; man being unclean, cannot bring forth a clean thing; that is, a clean or holy action.’ And that this sour sap of the first stock, I mean ADAM’S sin, is transmitted into all mankind, not only corrupting their fruit, but ruining and withering all the branches; the Apostle shows us in that excellent parallel betwixt the two ADAMS. (*Rom.* v. 12.)

3. Although these wild hedge-fruits be unwholesome and unpleasant to the taste, yet they are fair and beautiful to the eye; a man that looks upon them, and doth not know what fruit it is, would judge it by its show to be excellent fruit; for it makes a fairer show often than the best and most wholesome fruit doth: Even so, those natural gifts which some unregenerate persons have, seem exceeding fair to the eye, and a fruit to be desired. What curious phantasies, nimble wits, solid judgments, tenacious memories, rare elocution, &c., are to be found among mere natural men! By which they are assisted in discoursing, praying, preaching, and writing, to the admiration of such as know them! But “that which is highly esteemed of men, is

abomination to GOD :” It finds no acceptance with him, because it springs from that cursed root of nature, and is not the production of his own SPIRIT.

4. If such a stock were removed into a better soil, and grafted with a better kind, it might bring forth fruit pleasant and grateful to the husbandman ; and if such persons were but regenerated, what excellent and useful persons would they be in the church of GOD ! And then their fruits would be sweet and acceptable to him. One observes of TERTULLIAN, ORIGEN, and JEROM, that they came into Canaan laden with Egyptian gold ; that is, they came into the church full of excellent human learning, which did CHRIST much service.

5. When the husbandman cuts down his woods or hedges, he cuts down these crab-stocks with the rest, because he values them not any more than the thorns and brambles among which they grow : And as little will GOD regard or spare these natural branches, how much soever they are laden with such fruit. The threatening is universal : “ Except you be born again, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.” And again, “ Without holiness, no man [be his natural gifts never so excellent] shall see GOD.” (*Heb.* xii. 14.) Embellished nature, is nature still : “ That which is born of the flesh, is [but] flesh,” however it be set off with advantage to the eye of man.

REFLECTIONS.

To what purpose then, may a natural man say, do I glory in my natural accomplishments ? Though I have a better nature than some others have, yet it is a cursed nature still. These sweet qualities and excellent gifts, do only hide, but not kill the corruption of nature. I am but a rotten post gilded over, and all my duties but hedge-fruit, which GOD makes no account of. O cutting thought ! that the unlearned shall rise and take heaven, when I with all my excellent gifts shall descend into hell. Heaven was not made for scholars, as such, but for believers : As one said, when they comforted him upon his death-bed, that he was

a knowing man, a Doctor of Divinity: ‘O,’ said he, ‘I shall not appear before GOD as a Doctor, but as a man; I shall stand upon a level with the most illiterate in the day of judgment. What doth it avail me, that I have a nimble wit, whilst I have none to do myself good? Will my Judge be charmed with a rhetorical tongue? Things will not be carried in that world as they are in this.’ If I could, with BERENGARIUS, discourse of every thing that is knowable; or, with SOLOMON, unravel nature, from the cedar to the hyssop; what would this advantage me, as long as I am ignorant of CHRIST, and the mystery of regeneration? My head hath often ached with study, but when did my heart ache for sin? Methinks, O my soul, thou trimmest up thyself in these natural ornaments to appear before GOD, as delicate AGAG did, when he was to come before SAMUEL, and fondly conceitest that these things will procure favour, or at least pity from him; but yet; think not for all that, “the bitterness of death is past.” Say not within thyself, ‘Will GOD cast such an one into hell? Shall a man of such parts be damned?’ Alas! Justice will hew thee to pieces, as SAMUEL did that King, and not abate thee the least, for these things: Many thousand branches of nature, as fair and fruitful as thyself, are now blazing in hell, because not transplanted by regeneration into CHRIST; and if he spared not them, neither will he spare thee.



CHAPTER II.

Upon the Union of the Graff with the Stock.

Whene'er you bud or graft, therein you see,
How CHRIST and souls must here united be.

OBSERVATION.

WHEN the husbandman hath prepared his graffs in the season, he carries them, with the tools that are necessary, to the tree or stock he intends to ingraft, and having cut

off the top of the limb, in some straight smooth part, he cleaves it with his knife or chissel a little beside the pith, knocks in his wedge to keep it open, then (having prepared the graff) he carefully sets it into the cleft, joining the inner side of the barks of graff or stock together, (there being the main current of the sap,) then pulls out his wedge, binds both together, and clays it up, to defend the tender graff and wounded stock from the injuries of the sun and rain.

These tender scions quickly take hold of the stock, and, having immediate coalition with it, drink in its sap, connect it into their own nourishment, thrive better, and bear more and better fruits than ever they would have done upon their natural root; yea, the smallest bud being carefully inoculated and bound close to the stock, will in a short time become a flourishing and fruitful limb.

APPLICATION.

THIS carries a lively resemblance of the soul's union with CHRIST by faith: And indeed there is nothing in nature that shadows forth this great Gospel-mystery like it: It is a thousand pities that any who are employed about, or are but spectators of such an action, should terminate their thoughts (as too many do) in that natural object, and not raise up their hearts to these heavenly meditations, which it so fairly offers them.

1. When a twig is to be ingrafted, or a bud inoculated, it is first cut off by a keen knife from the tree on which it naturally grew.

And when the LORD intends to graft a soul into CHRIST, the first work about it is cutting work. Their hearts were cut by conviction and deep compunction, *Acts ii. 37*: no scion is ingrafted without cutting; no soul united with CHRIST without a cutting sense of sin and misery

2. When the graffs are cut off, in order to this work, it is a critical season with them; if they lie too long before they are ingrafted, or take not with the stock, they die, and

are never more to be recovered; they may stand in the stock a while, but are no part of the tree.

So when souls are under a work of conviction, it is a critical time with them: Many a one have I known then to miscarry, and never recovered again; they have indeed for a time stood like dead graffs in the stock, by an external profession, but never came to any thing; and such dead graffs either fall off from the stock, or moulder away upon it, so do these.

3. The husbandman, when he hath cut off graffs or tender buds, makes all the convenient speed he can to close them with the stock; the sooner that is done, the better; they get no good by remaining as they are.

And truly it concerns the servants of the LORD, who are employed in this work of ingraffing souls into CHRIST, to make all the haste they can to bring the convicted sinner to a closure with CHRIST. As soon as ever the trembling jailor cried out, "What shall I do to be saved?" PAUL and SILAS immediately directed him to CHRIST. (*Acts* xvi. 30, 31.) They do not say, It is too soon for thee to have faith in CHRIST, thou art not yet humbled enough; but "Believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved."

4. There must be an incision made in the stock before any bud can be inoculated; or the stock must be cut and cleaved, before the scion can be ingrafted.

Such an incision or wound was made upon CHRIST, in order to our ingraffing into him. (*John* xix. 34.) The opening of that deadly wound gives life to the souls of believers.

5. The graff is intimately united, and closely conjoined with the stock; the conjunction is so close, that they become one tree.

There is also a most close and intimate union betwixt CHRIST and the soul that believeth in him. It is emphatically expressed by the Apostle: "He that is joined to the LORD, is one spirit." (*1 Cor.* vi. 17.) The word imports the nearest, closest, and strictest union. CHRIST and the

soul cleave together in a blessed oneness, as those things do that are glued one to another; so that, look as the graff is really in the stock, and the spirit or sap of the stock is really in the graff, so a believer is really (though mystically) in CHRIST; and the SPIRIT of CHRIST is really communicated to a believer. "I live," saith ST. PAUL, "yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me. He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in GOD, and GOD in him."

6. Though the stock be one and the same, yet all graffs do not thrive and flourish alike in it; some out-grow the rest; and those that grow not so well as the others do, the fault is in them, and not in the stock.

So it is with souls really united to CHRIST; all do not flourish alike in him, the faith of some grows exceedingly; (*2 Thess. i. 3;*) the things that be in others are ready to die; (*Rev. iii. 2;*) and such souls must charge the fault upon themselves. CHRIST sends up living sap enough, not only to make all that are in him living, but fruitful branches.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Is it so indeed betwixt CHRIST and my soul, as it is betwixt the ingrafted scion and the stock? What honour and glory then hath CHRIST conferred upon me, a poor unworthy creature! What! to be made one with him, to be a living branch of him, to be joined thus to the LORD. O what a preferment is this! It is but a little while since I was a wild and cursed plant, growing in the wilderness amongst them that shall shortly be cut down and faggoted up for hell: For me to be taken from amongst them, and planted into CHRIST, O my soul! fall down and kiss the feet of free grace, that moved so freely towards so vile a creature! The dignities and honours of the kings and nobles of the earth, are nothing to mine. It was truly confessed by one of them, that it is a greater honour to be a member of CHRIST, than the head of an empire. Do I say, a greater honour than is put upon the kings of the earth? I might have said, it is a greater honour than is

put upon the angels of heaven: For to which of them said CHRIST at any time, "Thou art bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh? Behold what manner of love is this!"

2. Am I joined to the LORD, as a mystical part or branch of him? How dear art thou then, O my soul, to the God and FATHER of my LORD JESUS CHRIST! What! a branch of his beloved SON! What can GOD withhold from one so ingrafted? (*Eph.* i. 6.) "All is yours," saith my GOD, "for ye are CHRIST's, and CHRIST is GOD's." (*1 Cor.* iii. 23.)



CHAPTER III.

Upon the Cutting down of Dead Trees.

Dead barren trees you for the fire prepare;
In such a case all fruitless persons are.

OBSERVATION.

AFTER many years' patience in the use of all means to recover a fruit tree, if the husbandman see it be quite dead, and that there can be no more expectation of any fruit from it, he brings his axe and hews it down by the root; and from the orchard it is carried to the fire, it being then fit for nothing else; he reckons it imprudent to let such a useless tree abide in good ground, where another might be planted, that will better pay for the ground it stands in. I myself once saw a large orchard of fair, but fruitless trees, all rooted up, riven abroad, and ricked up for the fire.

APPLICATION.

THUS deals the LORD by useless and barren professors, who do but cumber his ground. "And now also the axe is laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that brings not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into

the fire." (*Matt.* iii. 10.) And "then said the Dresser of the vineyard, Behold, these three years I came seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" (*Luke* xiii. 7.) "These three years," alluding to the time of his ministry, he being at that time entering upon his last half year, as one observes: So long he had waited for the fruit of his ministry among those dead-hearted Jews; now his patience is even at an end: "Cut them down," saith he, "why cumber they the ground?" I will plant others (namely, the Gentiles) in their room. This hewing down of the barren tree, doth in a lively manner shadow forth God's judicial proceedings against formal professors under the Gospel; and the resemblance clearly holds in these following particulars:

1. The tree that is to be hewn down for the fire, stands in the orchard among other flourishing trees, where it hath enjoyed the benefit of a good soil, a strong fence, and much culture; but being barren, these privileges secure it not from the fire.

It is not our standing in the visible church, by a powerless profession, among real saints, with whom we have been associated, and enjoyed the excellent waterings of ordinances that can secure us from the wrath of God. "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves, We have ABRAHAM to our father." (*Matt.* iii. 8, 9.) Neither ABRAHAM, nor ABRAHAM'S GOD, will acknowledge such degenerate children: If ABRAHAM'S faith be not in your hearts, it will be no advantage that ABRAHAM'S blood runs in your veins. It will be a poor plea for JUDAS, when he shall stand before CHRIST in judgment, to say, LORD, I was one of thy family, I preached for thee, I did eat and drink in thy presence.

2. The husbandman doth not presently cut down the tree, because it puts not forth as soon as other trees do, but waits as long as there is any hope, and then cuts it down.

Thus doth God wait upon barren persons, from Sabbath to Sabbath, and from year to year; for the LORD is long-

suffering to us ward, "and not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Thus the long-suffering of GOD waited in the days of NOAH upon those dry trees, who are now smoking and flaming in hell. (1 *Pet.* iii. 20.) He waits long on sinners, but keeps exact accounts of every year and day of his patience.

3. When the time is come to cut it down, the dead tree cannot possibly resist the stroke of the axe, but receives the blow, and falls before it.

No more can the stoutest sinner resist the stroke of death, by which the LORD hews it down. "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that war." (*Eccles.* viii. 8.) When the pale horse comes, away you must into the land of darkness: Though thou cry with ADRIAN, 'O my poor soul, whither art thou going!' Die thou must, thou barren professor; though it were better for thee to do any thing else than to die. What a dreadful shriek will thy conscience give, when it sees the axe at thy root! When it is said to thee, "An end is come, the end is come; it watched for thee, behold it is come." (*Ezek.* vii. 6.) 'O,' said HENRY BEAUFORT, (that rich and wretched Cardinal, Bishop of Winchester, and Chancellor of England,) 'wherefore must I die? If the whole realm would save my life, I am able either by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it. Fie, will not death be hired? Will riches do nothing?' No, neither riches nor policy then avail!

4. That side to which the tree leaned most while it stood, that way it will fall when it is cut down; and "as it falls, so it lies, whether to the South or North." (*Eccles.* xi. 3.)

So it fares with these mystical trees, I mean, fruitless professors. Had their hearts and affections bended heavenward whilst they lived, that way no doubt they had fallen at their death; but as their hearts ever bended to the world, so when GOD gives the fatal stroke, they must fall hellward; and how dreadful will such a fall be!

“Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear [or rend] you in pieces.” (*Psalm l. 22.*) O direful day! when the same hand which planted, pruned, and watered thee so long, and so tenderly, shall now strike mortal strokes at thee, and that without pity: “For he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.” (*Isa. xxvii. 11.*) For the day of mercy is over, and the day of his wrath is fully come.

5. And lastly, The fruitless tree is cast into the fire.

This is also the end of formality. “He is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” This is an undoubted truth, that there is no plant in God’s vineyard, but he will have glory from it, by bearing fruit; or glory on it, by burning in the fire. In this fire shall they be gnashing their teeth; and that both in indignation against the saints, whom they shall see in glory, and against JESUS CHRIST, and against themselves, for losing so foolishly the opportunities of salvation. Do you behold when you sit by the fire, the froth that boils out of those flaming logs? O think of that foam and rage of these undone creatures, foaming and “gnashing their teeth in that fire which is not quenched.”

REFLECTIONS.

How often have I passed by such barren trees, may one say, with a more barren heart! As little thinking such a tree to be the emblem of myself, as NEBUCHADNEZZAR did when he saw that tree in a dream which represented himself, and shadowed forth to him his ensuing misery. (*Dan. iv. 13.*) But, O my conscience! my sleepy conscience! wert thou but tender and faithful to me, thou wouldst make as terrible an application of such a spectacle to me, as the faithful prophet did to him. (*Verse 22.*) And thus wouldst thou bemoan thy condition!

Poor wretch, here I grow for a little time, among the trees of righteousness, the plants of renown; but I am none of them: Some green and flourishing leaves indeed I

have, which deceive others, but GOD cannot be deceived; he sees I am fruitless, and rotten at the heart. Poor soul, what will thine end be but burning! Behold the axe lieth by the root; and wonder it is, that there it should lie so long, and I yet standing! Still mercy pleads for a fruitless creature; LORD, spare it one year longer. Alas! he need strike no great blow to ruin me, his very breath blows to destruction. (*Job* iv. 9.) A frown of his face can blast and ruin me. (*Psalms* lxxx. 6.) He is daily solicited by his justice to hew me down, and yet I stand. LORD, cure my barrenness; I know thou hadst rather see fruit than fire upon me.

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

Upon the Husbandman's Care for his Cattle.

More care for horse or oxen many take,
Than for their own, or dearest children's sake.

OBSERVATION.

MANY husbandmen are excessively careful about their cattle, rising themselves early, or causing their servants to rise betimes to feed and dress them. Much time is spent in some countries in adorning their horses with curious trappings and plumes of feathers; and if at any time a beast be sick, what care is taken to recover and heal them! You will be sure they shall want nothing that is necessary for them; yea, many will choose rather to want themselves, than suffer their horses so to do; and take a great deal of comfort to see them thrive and prosper under their hands.

APPLICATION.

WHAT one said of bloody HEROD, who slew so many children at Bethlehem, That it were better to be his swine than his son, may be truly enough applied to some parents and masters, who take less care for the saving the souls of their children and servants, than they do for the bodies of those beasts which daily feed at their stalls. Many there be who do in reference to their souls, as JACOB did, with respect to the preservation of their bodies, when he put all the herds of cattle before, and his wives and little ones behind, as he went to meet his brother ESAU. It is a weighty saying of a grave author, 'It is vile ingratitude to re-

joyce when cattle multiply, and repine when children increase; it is Heathenish distrust to fear, that He who provides for your beasts, will not provide for your children; and it is no less than unnatural cruelty, to be careful for the bodies of beasts, and careless of the souls of children.' Let us but a little compare your care and diligence in both respects, and see in a few particulars, whether you do indeed value your own, or your children and servants' souls, as you do the life and health of a beast.

1. Your care for your very horses is expressed early, whilst they are but colts, and not come to do you any service; you are willing to be at pains and cost to have them broken and brought to their way. This is more than ever many of them did for their children; they can see them wild and profane, naturally taking to wickedness, but yet never were at any pains or cost to break them; these must be cockered up in the natural way of their own corruption and wickedness, and not a rod or reproof used to break them of it. It is observed of the Persians, that they put out their children to school as soon as they could speak, and would not see them in seven years after, lest their indulgence should do them hurt.

2. You keep your constant hour morning and evening, to feed, water, and dress your cattle, and will by no means neglect it once; but how many times have you neglected morning and evening duties in your families! Yea, how many be there, whose very tables, in respect of any worship God hath there, very little differ from the very cribs and mangers at which their horses feed! As soon as you are up in a morning, you are with your beasts before you have been with your God; how little do such differ from beasts! And happy were it, if they were no more accountable to God than their beasts are!

The end of your care, cost, and pains about your cattle is, that they may be strong for labour, and the more serviceable to you; thus you comply with the end of their beings. But how rare a thing is it to find these men as careful to fit their posterity to be serviceable to God in

their generations, which is the end of their beings ! If you can make them rich, and provide good matches for them, you reckon that you have fully discharged the duty of parents ; if they will learn to hold the plough, that you are willing to teach them ; but when did you spend an hour to teach them the way of salvation ?

Now to convince such careless parents of the heinousness of their sin, let these four queries be solemnly considered.

Qu. 1. Whether this be a sufficient discharge of that great duty which God hath laid upon Christian parents, in reference to their families ? That God hath charged them with the souls of their families is undeniable. (*Deut.* vi. 6, 7 ; *Eph.* vi. 4.) If God hath not clothed you with his authority to command them in the way of the LORD, he would never have charged them so strictly to yield you obedience as he hath done. (*Eph.* vi. 1 ; *Col.* iii. 20.) Well, a great trust is reposed in you, look to your duty ; for without dispute you shall answer for it.

Qu. 2. Whether it be likely, if the time of youth (which is the moulding age) be neglected, they will be wrought upon to any good afterwards ? Husbandmen, let me put a sensible case to you : Do you not see your very horses, that whilst they are young you can bring them to any way ; but if once they have got a false stroke, and if, by long custom it be grown natural to them, then there is no breaking them of it ? Yea, you see it in your very orchards ; you may bring a tender twig to grow in what form you please ; but when it is grown to a sturdy limb, there is no bending it afterwards to any other form. Thus it is with children : “ Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” (*Prov.* xxii. 6.)

Qu. 3. Whether, if you neglect to instruct them in the way of the LORD, SATAN, and their own natural corruptions, will not instruct them in the way to hell ? Consider this, ye careless parents ; if you will not teach your children, the Devil will teach them ; if you show them not how to pray, he will show them how to curse and swear, and

take the name of the LORD in vain ; if you grudge time and pains about their souls, the Devil doth not. O, it is a sad consideration, that so many children should be put to school to the Devil !

Qu. 4. What comfort are you like to have from them when they are old, if you bring them not up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD when they are young ? Many parents have lived to reap in their old age, the fruit of their own folly and carelessness, in the loose education of their children. By LYCURGUS's law, no parent was to be relieved by his children in age, if he gave them not good education in their youth ; and it is a law at this day among the Swiss, that if any child be condemned to die for a capital offence, the parents of that child are to be his executioners ; these laws were made to provoke parents to look better to their charge. Believe this as an undoubted truth, that that child which becomes, through thy default, an instrument to dishonour GOD, shall prove, sooner or later, a son or daughter of sorrow to thee.

REFLECTIONS.

1. God hath found out my sin this day, may a careless parent say. This hath been my practice ever since I had a family committed to my charge ; I have spent more time and pains about the bodies of my beasts, than the souls of my children ; beast that I am for so doing ; little have I considered the preciousness of my own, or their immortal souls. How careful have I been to provide fodder to preserve my cattle in the winter, whilst I leave my own and their souls to perish to eternity, and make no provision for them ! Surely my 'children will one day curse the time that ever they were born unto such a cruel father, or of such a merciless mother. Should I bring home the plague into my family, and live to see all my poor children lie dead by the walls, if I had not the heart of a tiger, such a sight would melt my heart ; and yet the death of their

souls by the sin which I propagated to them affects me not ! Ah, that I could say, I had done but as much for them, as I have done for a beast that perisheth !

2. But unhappy wretch* that I am, God cast a better lot for me, (may many a child say,) I am the offspring of religious and tender parents, who have always deeply concerned themselves in the everlasting state of my soul ; many prayers and tears have they poured out to God for me, in my hearing as well as in secret ; many wholesome counsels have they from time to time dropped upon me ; many precious examples have they set in their own practice before me ; many a time, when I have sinned against the LORD, have they stood over me with a rod in their hands, and tears in their eyes, using all means to reclaim me, but like an ungracious wretch I have slighted all their counsels, grieved their hearts, and embittered their lives to them. Ah, my soul ! thou art a degenerate plant ; better will it be with the offspring of Infidels than with thec, if repentance prevent not ; now I live in one family with them, but shortly I shall be separated from them, as far as hell is from heaven ; they now tenderly pity my misery, but then they shall approve and applaud the righteous sentence of CHRIST upon me : So little privilege shall I then have from my relation to them, that they shall be produced as witnesses against me, and all their rejected counsels, reproofs, and examples, charged home upon me, as the aggravations of my wickedness ; and better it will be, when it shall come to that, that I had been brought forth by a beast, than sprung from the loins of such parents.

CHAPTER II.

Upon the hard Labour and cruel Usage of Beasts.

When under loads your beasts do groan, think then
How great a mercy 'tis that you are men.

OBSERVATION.

THOUGH some men be excessively careful and tender over their beasts, yet others are cruel and merciless towards them. How often have I seen them fainting under their loads, wrought off their legs, and turned out with galled backs into the fields or highways! Many times have I heard and pitied them, groaning under unreasonable burdens, and beaten on by merciless drivers, till at last by such cruel usage they have been destroyed, and then cast into a ditch for dog's meat.

APPLICATION.

SUCH sights as these should make men thankful for the mercy of their creation, and bless their bountiful Creator, that they were not made such creatures themselves. Some beasts are made only for food, being no otherwise useful to men, as swine. These are only fed for slaughter, we kill and eat them, and regard not their cries when the knife is thrust to their very hearts; others are only for service, whilst living, but unprofitable when dead, as horses. These we make to drudge and toil for us from day to day, but kill them not; others are both for food when dead, and service whilst alive, as the ox. These we make to plough our fields, draw our carriages, and afterwards prepare them for slaughter.

But man was made for nobler ends, created lord of the lower world; not to serve, but to be served by other creatures; a mercy able to melt the hardest heart into thankfulness. I remember LUTHER, pressing men to be thank-

ful, that they are not brought into the lowest condition of creatures, and to bless God that they can see any creature below themselves, gives us a famous instance in the following story: ‘Two Cardinals; (saith he,) riding in a great deal of pomp to the Council of Constance, by the way heard a man in the field, weeping and wailing bitterly. They rode to him, and asked him, What he ailed? Perceiving his eye intently fixed upon a toad, he told them that his heart was melted with the consideration of this mercy, that God had not made him such a deformed and loathsome creature, though he were formed out of the same clay with it: This is that which makes me weep bitterly. Whereupon one of the Cardinals cries out, Well said the Father, the unlearned will rise and thank heaven, when we, with all our learning, shall be thrust into hell.’ That which melted the heart of this poor man, should melt every heart when we behold the misery to which these poor creatures are subjected. And this will appear a mercy of no slight consideration, if we draw a comparison betwixt ourselves and these irrational creatures.

1. Though they and we were made of the same clay, yet how much better hath God dealt with us, even as to the outward man! The structure of our bodies is much more excellent. The noble structure and symmetry of our bodies invites our souls not only to thankfulness but admiration. DAVID, speaking of the curious frame of the body, saith, “I am wonderfully made;” (*Psalm cxxxix. 14;*) or as the vulgar reads it, painted as with a needle; like some rich piece of needle-work curiously embroidered with nerves and veins. Was any part of the common lump of clay thus fashioned? GALEN gave EPICURUS an hundred years time to imagine a more commodious situation, configuration, or composition of any one part of a human body; and (as one saith) if all the angels in heaven had studied to this day, they could not have cast the body of man into a more curious mould.

2. How little ease or rest have they! They live not many years. and those that do, it is in bondage and misery,

groaning under the effects of sin ; but God hath provided better for us, even as to our outward condition ; we have the more rest, because they have so little. How many refreshments and comforts hath God provided for us, of which they are incapable ! If we be weary with labour, we can take our rest ; but fresh or weary, they must stand to it, or sink under it from day to day.

3. What a narrow capacity hath God given to beasts ! What a large capacity to man ! Alas, they are only capable of a little sensitive pleasure ; this is all they be capable of, and this death puts an end to. But how comprehensive are our souls in their capacities ! We are made in the image of God, we can look beyond present things, and are capable of the highest happiness, and that to all eternity ; the soul of a beast must probably die with the body ; but our souls are a divine spark, and when the body dies, die not with it, but subsist even in its separated state.

REFLECTIONS.

1. How great a sin, may an unthankful sinner say, is ingratitude to God, for such a common, but choice mercy of creation, and provision for me in this world ! There is no creature made worse by kindness, but man. There is a kind of gratitude even in brute beasts ; they do in their way acknowledge their benefactors ; “ the ox knows his owner, and the ass his master’s crib.” How ready are they to serve such as feed and cherish them ! But I have been both unthankful and unserviceable to my Creator and Benefactor, that hath done me good all my days ; those poor creatures that sweat and groan under the loads that I lay upon them, never sinned against God, nor transgressed the laws of their creation, as I have done ; and yet God hath dealt better with me than with them. O that the bounty of God, and his distinguishing mercy between me and the beasts that perish, might move and melt my heart into thankfulness ! O that I might consider seriously what the more excellent end of my creation is, and might more endeavour to answer it ! Or else (O my soul) it will be worse

with thee than with the beasts. It is true, they are under bondage and misery; but it is but for a little time, death will end all their pains, and ease them of all their heavy loads; but I shall groan to all eternity, under a heavier burden than ever they felt; they have no account to give, but I have. What comfort is it that I have a larger capacity than a beast hath! That God hath endowed me with reason, which is denied to them! Alas! this will but augment my misery, and enlarge me to take in a greater measure of anguish.

2. But how many steps, O my soul, mayest thou ascend in the praises of thy God, may a believer say, when thou considerest the mercies that God hath bestowed upon thee! Not only in that he made thee, not a stone or tree without sense, or a horse or dog without reason; but that thou art not an infidel without hope, or an unregenerate person without happiness. What! to have sense, and all the delights of it, which stones have not; reason, with the more noble pleasures of it, which beasts have not; and such a hope of inconceivable glory, which the unsanctified have not! O my soul! how rich! how bountiful hath thy God been to thee! These are the overflowings of his love to thee, who wast moulded out of the same lump with the beasts that groan on earth; yea, with the damned that howl in hell: Well may I say, that God hath been a good God to me.

CHAPTER III.

Upon the Seeking of lost Cattle.

When seeking your lost cattle, keep in mind
That thus CHRIST JESUS seeks your souls to find.

OBSERVATION.

WHEN cattle are strayed from your fields, you use all care and diligence to recover them, tracing their footsteps, sending your servants abroad, and inquiring yourselves of all that you think can give news of them.

APPLICATION.

THE care and pains you take to recover your lost cattle, carry a lively representation of the love of JESUS CHRIST, in the recovery of lost sinners. JESUS CHRIST came on purpose from heaven upon a like errand, "to seek and to save that which was lost." There are several particulars in which this glorious design of CHRIST, in seeking and saving lost man, and the care and pains of husbandmen in recovering their lost cattle, meet, though there be many particulars also in which they differ.

1. We sometimes find, cattle will break out of those very fields where they have been bred, and where they want nothing that is needful for them. Just thus, lost man departed from GOD, brake out of that pleasant enclosure where he was abundantly provided for, both as to soul and body; yet then he brake over the hedge of the command, and went astray. "Lo this only have I found, that GOD made man upright, but he sought out to himself many inventions." (*Eccles. vii. 29.*) He was not satisfied with that blessed state GOD had put him into, but would be trying new conclusions to the ruin both of himself and his posterity.

2. Strayers are evermore sufferers for it; and what did man get by departing from his GOD, but ruin and misery to soul and body! Will you have an abbeviat of his sufferings and losses? (the full account none can give you.) Why? By straying from his GOD, he lost the holiness of his nature; like a true strayer, he is all dirty and miry, besmeared both in soul and body, with the odious filthiness of sin; he lost the liberty of his will to good; a precious jewel of inestimable value: This is a real misery incurred by the fall, though some have so far lost their understandings, as not to own it: He hath lost his GOD, his soul, his happiness, and his very bowels of compassion towards himself in this miserable state.

3. When your cattle are strayed, yea, though it be but one of the flock or herd, you leave all the rest, and go

after that which is lost: So did **JESUS CHRIST**, who in the fore-cited place. (*Matt.* xviii. 12,) compares himself to such a shepherd; He left heaven itself, and all the blessed angels there, to come into this world to seek lost man. O the precious esteem, and dear love that **CHRIST** had to poor man! How did his bowels yearn towards us in our lost state! How did he pity us in our misery! As if he had said, Poor creatures, they have lost themselves, and are become a prey to the Devil; I will seek after them and save them.

But there are some particulars in which **CHRIST**'s seeking lost souls, and your seeking lost cattle, differ.

1. Your cattle sometimes find the way home themselves, and return to you of their own accord; but lost man never did, nor can do so; he was his own destroyer, but can never be his own saviour: It was possible for him not to have lost his **GOD**; but, having once lost him, he can never find him again of himself. Alas! his heart is bent to backsliding, he hath no will to return. Man's recovery begins in **GOD**, not in himself.

2. Your servants can find, and bring back your cattle as well as you; but so cannot **CHRIST**'s servants. Ministers may discover, but cannot recover them; they daily seek, but cannot save them; lament them they can, but help them they cannot; entreat and beg them to return they can, but prevail with them they cannot, **MELANCTHON** thought, when he began to preach, to persuade all; but old **ADAM** was too hard for young **MELANCTHON**.

3. Though you prize your cattle, yet you will not venture your life for the recovery of them; you rather let them go than retain them with such an hazard; but **JESUS CHRIST** not only ventured, but actually laid down, his life to recover and save lost man: He redeemed them at the price of his own blood; He is that good Shepherd that laid down his life for the sheep. O the surpassing love of **CHRIST** to lost souls!

REFLECTIONS.

1. LORD, I am a lost creature, an undone soul; and herein lies my misery, that I have not only lost my God, but have no heart to follow him! Nay, I fly from CHRIST, who is come on purpose to seek and to save me: His messengers are abroad seeking for such as I am; but I avoid them, or at least refuse to obey their call and persuasions to return. Ah, what a miserable state am I in! Every step I go is a step towards hell; my soul, with the prodigal, is ready to perish in a strange country! But I have no mind with him to return home; wretched soul, what will the end of this be? If God hath lost thee, the Devil hath found thee; he takes up all strayers from God: Yea, death and hell will shortly find thee, if CHRIST do not; and then thy recovery will be impossible: Why sit I here perishing and dying? I am not yet as irrecoverably lost as the damned are. O let me delay no longer, lest I be lost for ever.

2. O my soul! (may one say, that was lost, but is found,) for ever bless and admire the love of JESUS CHRIST, who came from heaven to seek and save such a lost soul as I was. LORD, how matchless is thy love! I was lost, and am found. I am found, and did not seek; nay, I am found by Him from whom I fled.

 CHAPTER IV
Upon the Husbandman's Care for Posterity.

Good husbands labour for posterity;
To after-ages saints must have an eye.

OBSERVATION.

CAREFUL husbandmen not only labour to supply their own necessities while living, but to lay up something for their posterity when they are gone. None but bad husbands

and spendthrifts are of the mind with **TIBERIUS**, who having put all into such confusion in the empire, that it might be thought the world would end with him; yet pleased himself with this apprehension, that he should be out of the reach of it; and would often say, ‘Let heaven and earth mingle; if the world will but hold my time, let it break when I am gone.’ But provident men look beyond their own time, and concern themselves in the good or evil of their posterity.

APPLICATION.

WHAT careful husbands do, with respect to the provisions they make for their children, that all prudent Christians do, with respect to the truths committed to them, and by them, to be transmitted to succeeding ages.

In the first ages of the world, even till the Law was given, faithful men were instead of books and records; they did by tradition convey the truths of God to posterity; but since the sacred truth hath been consigned to writing, no such tradition (except agreeing with that written word) is to be received as authentic; but the truths therein delivered to the saints, are by open confessions, and constant sufferings, to be preserved and delivered from age to age. This was the whole cloud of witnesses, both ancient and modern, who have kept the word of God’s patience, and would not accept their lives, liberties, or estates; no, nor the whole world in exchange, for that invaluable treasure; they have carefully practised **SOLOMON**’s counsel, “Buy the truth, but sell it not;” (*Prov. xxiii. 23*;) they would not alienate that fair inheritance for all the inheritances on earth. Upon the same reasons that you refuse to part with your estates, Christians also refuse to part with the truths of God.

1. You will not waste or alienate your inheritance, because it is of great value in your eyes; but much more precious are God’s truths to his people. **LUTHER** professed, he would not take the whole world for one leaf of the Bible. Though some profane persons may say with **PILATE**, What is truth? Yet know, that any one truth of the Gospels is of more worth than all the inheritances upon earth;

they are the great things of God's law, and he that sells them for the greatest things in this world, makes a soul-undoing bargain.

2. You will not waste or part with your inheritance, because you know your posterity will be much wronged by it. They that baffle or drink away an estate, drink the tears of their sad widows, and the blood of their impoverished children. The people of God consider, how much the generations to come are concerned in the conservation of the truth of God for them: It cuts them to the heart, to think, that their children should be brought up to worship dumb idols, and fall down before a wooden or breadden god. The very birds and beasts will expose their own bodies to apparent danger of death to preserve their young. Religion doth much more tender the hearts and bowels than nature doth.

3. You reckon it a foul disgrace to sell your estates, and become bankrupts; it is a word that hears ill among you: And a Christian accounts it the highest reproach in the world to be a traitor to, or an apostate from, the truths of God. When the primitive saints were required to deliver up their Bibles, those that did so were justly branded, under the odious title of *traditores*, or deliverers.

4. You are so loath to part with your estates, because you know it is hard recovering an estate again, when once you have lost it. Christians also know, how difficult it will be for the people of God in times to come to recover the light of the Gospel again, if once it be extinguished. There is no truth of God recovered out of Antichrist's hands, without great wrestlings and much blood. The Church may call every-point of Reformed doctrine and discipline so recovered, her *Naphtalies*; for with great wrestlings she hath wrestled for them.

5. To conclude, rather than you will part with your estates, you will choose to suffer many wants and hardships all your lives; you will fare hard, and go bare, to preserve what you have for your posterity: But the people of God have put themselves upon far greater hardships than these

to preserve truth; they have chosen to suffer reproaches, poverty, prisons, death, and the most cruel torments, rather than the loss of God's truth. All the martyrologies will inform you what their sufferings have been, to keep the word of God's patience; they have boldly told their enemies, that they might pluck their hearts out of their bodies, but should never pluck the truth out of their hearts.

REFLECTIONS.

1. **BASE**, unbelieving heart! may a cowardly professor say: How have I shrunk from truth when it hath been in danger! I have rather chosen to leave it, than my life, liberty, or estate, as a prey to the enemy. I have left truth, and just it is, that the **GOD** of truth should leave me. Cowardly soul, that durst not make a stand for truth! Yea, bold and daring soul, that wouldest rather venture to look a wrathful **GOD**, than an angry man in the face. I would not own and preserve the truth, and the **GOD** of truth will not own me. "If we deny him, he will deny us." (2 *Tim.* ii. 12.)

2. **LORD!** unto me hast thou committed the precious treasure of truth, may such as suffer for truth say; and as I received it, so do I desire to deliver it to the generations to come, that the people which are yet unborn may praise the **LORD**. **GOD** forbid I should ever part with such a fair inheritance, and thereby beggar my own, and thousands of souls! Thou hast given me thy truth, and the world hates me; I well know that it is the ground of the quarrel; would I but throw truth over the walls, how soon would a retreat be sounded to all persecutors! But, **LORD!** thy truth is invaluablely precious; what a vile thing is my blood, compared with the least of all thy truths! Thou hast charged me not to sell it; and in thy strength I resolve never to cut off that golden line, whereby the truths are entailed upon thy people from generation to generation: My friends may go, my liberty go, my blood may go; but as for thee, precious truth, thou shalt never go.

3. How dear hath this inheritance of truth cost some! may

you say. How little hath it cost us! We are entered into their labours; we reap in peace, what they sowed in tears; yea in blood. O the grievous sufferings that they chose to endure, rather than to deprive us of such an inheritance! Those noble souls, heated with the love of CHRIST, and care for our souls, made many bold and brave adventures for it; and yet, at what a low rate do we value what cost them so dear! Like young heirs, that never knew the getting of an estate, we spend it freely. LORD, help us thankfully and diligently to improve thy truths, while we are in quiet possession of them. Such intervals of peace and rest, are usually of no long continuance with thy people.



CHAPTER XI.

Upon the Husbandman's care to prove and preserve his Deeds.

Deeds for your lands you prove, and keep with care;
O that for heaven you but as careful were!

OBSERVATION.

WE generally find men are not more careful in trying gold, or in keeping it, than they are in examining their deeds, and preserving them; these are virtually their whole estate, and therefore it concerns them to be careful of them: If they suspect a flaw in their lease or deed, they repair to the ablest counsel, submit it to his judgment, and query about all the supposable dangers with him; if he tells them their cause is suspicious and hazardous, how much are they perplexed and troubled! They can neither eat, drink, nor sleep in peace, till they have a good settlement; and willing they are to be at much cost and pains to obtain it.

APPLICATION.

THESE cares and fears, with which you are perplexed in such cases, may give you a little glimpse of those troubles

of soul, with which the people of **God** are perplexed about their eternal condition, which perhaps you have been hitherto unacquainted with. Your own fears and troubles, if ever you were engaged by a cunning and powerful adversary in a law-suit for your estate, may give you a little glimpse of spiritual troubles; and indeed it is no more but a glimpse of it: For, as the loss of an earthly (though fair) inheritance, is but a trifle to the loss of **God**, and the soul; so you cannot but imagine, that the cares, fears, and solitudes of souls about these things, are very much beyond yours. Let us compare the cases, and see how they answer each other.

1. You have evidences for your estates, and by them you hold what you have in the world. They also have evidences for their estate in **CHRIST**, and glory to come; they hold all by virtue of their inter-marriage with **CHRIST**; they come to be enstated in that glorious inheritance, contained in the covenant of grace. You have their tenure in that Scripture, "All is yours; for ye are **CHRIST**'s, and **CHRIST** is **God**'s." (1 *Cor.* iii. 22, 23.) Faith unites them to him; and after they believe, they are sealed by the **SPIRIT** of promise. (*Eph.* i. 13.) They can lay claim to no promise upon any other ground; this is their title to all that they own as theirs.

2. It often falls out, that after the executing of deeds or leases, an adversary finds some dubious clause in them, and thereupon commences a suit of law with you. Thus it frequently falls out with the people of **God**, who after their believing, have doubts and scruples raised in them about their title. Nothing is more common, than for the Devil and their own unbelief to start controversies, and raise strong objections against their interest in **CHRIST**. These are cunning and potent adversaries, and maintain long debates, and reason cunningly and sophistically, always alleging, that their title is worth nothing.

3. All the while that a suit in law is depending about your title, you have but little comfort or benefit from your estate; you cannot look upon it as your own, nor lay out

monies in building or dressing, for fear you should lose all at last. Just thus stands the case with doubting Christians, they have little comfort from the most comfortable promises, or little benefit from the sweetest duties and ordinances; they put off their own comforts, and say, If we were sure that all this were ours, we could then rejoice in them; but alas! our title is dubious; CHRIST is a precious CHRIST, the promises are comfortable things, but what if they be none of ours! Ah! how little doth the doubting Christian make of his large and rich inheritance!

4. You dare not trust your own judgments in such cases, but state your case to such as are learned in the laws; and are willing to get the ablest counsel you can to advise you: So are poor doubting Christians; they carry their cases from Christian to Christian, and from Minister to Minister, with such requests as these: Pray tell me, what do you think of my condition? Deal plainly and faithfully with me; these be my grounds of doubting, and these my grounds of hope. O hide nothing from me! And if they all agree that their case is good, yet they cannot be satisfied till God say so too, and confirm the word of his servants; and therefore they carry the case often before Him, in such words as these, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any way of wickedness in me." (*Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24.*)

5. You have little quiet in your spirits, till the case be resolved; you cannot sleep in the night, because these troubled thoughts are ever returning upon you: What, if I should be turned out of all at last? So it is with these: Their eyes are held waking in the night, by reason of the troubles of their hearts. Such fears as these are frequently returning: What, if I should be found a self-deceiver at last? How can this or that consist with grace? Their meat and drink doth them little good; their bodies are often macerated by the trouble of their souls.

Lastly, When your title is cleared, your hearts are eased; yea, not only eased, but overjoyed; though not in

that degree, nor with the same kind of joy, that the hearts of Christians are overflowed, when the LORD speaks peace to their souls. O welcome the sweet morning-light, after a tedious night of darkness; now they can eat their bread with comfort, and drink their wine (yea if it be but water) with a merry heart.

REFLECTIONS.

1. O how hath my spirit been tossed and hurried, may the careless soul say, with troubles and clamours about my estate! But as for these soul-perplexing cases, that Christians speak of, I understand but little of them. I never called my everlasting state in question, nor brake an hour's sleep upon such an account. Ah, my careless soul! little hast thou regarded how matters stand in reference to eternity! I have strongly conceited but never thoroughly examined the validity of my title to CHRIST and his promises; nor am I able to tell, if my own conscience should demand, whereupon my claim is grounded!

O my soul! why art thou so unwilling to examine how matters stand betwixt GOD and thee? Art thou afraid to look into thy condition, lest thou shouldest lose thy peace, or rather thy security? To what purpose will it be to shut thine eyes against the light of conviction, unless thou couldest also find out a way to prevent thy condemnation? Thou seest others, how attentively they wait under the word, for any thing that may speak to their conditions. Doubtless thou hast heard how frequently and seriously they have stated their conditions, and opened their cases to the ministers of CHRIST! But thou, O my soul! hast no such cases to put, no doubts to be resolved; thou wilt leave all to the decision of the great day. and not trouble thyself about it now. Well, GOD will decide it, but little to thy comfort.

2. I have heard how some have been perplexed by litigious adversaries, may others say, but I believe none have been so tossed with fears, and doubts, as I have been about the state of my soul. LORD, what shall I do? I have often carried my doubts and scruples to thine ordi-

nances, waiting for satisfaction to be spoken there. I have carried them to those I have judged skilful and faithful, begging their resolution and help, but nothing will stick. Still my fears are renewed. O my GOD, do thou decide my case ! Tell me how the case stands betwixt thee and me ; my days consume in trouble, I can neither do nor enjoy any good, whilst things are thus with me ; all my earthly enjoyments are dry and uncomfortable ; yea, which is much worse, all my duties and thine ordinances prove so too, by reason of the troubles of my heart ! I am no ornament to my profession, nay, I am a discouragement and stumbling-block to others ! I will hearken and hear what GOD the LORD will speak ; O that it might be peace ! If thou do not speak it, none can ; and when thou dost, keep thy servant from returning to folly, lest I make fresh work for an accusing conscience, and give new matter to the adversary of my soul !

3. But thou, my soul, enjoyest a double mercy from thy bountiful GOD, who hath not only given thee a sound title, but also the clear evidence and knowledge thereof. I am gathering and daily feeding upon the full-ripe fruits of assurance, whilst many of my poor brethren drink their own tears, and have their teeth broken with gravel-stones. LORD, thou hast set my soul upon her high places, but let me not exalt myself, because thou hast exalted me ; nor grow wanton because I walk at liberty, lest for the abuse of such precious liberty, my old chains return upon me, and my soul be again shut up in prison.

A DISCOURSE

OF THE

Causes and Remedies

OF

MENTAL ERRORS.

THE
CAUSES AND CURES
OF
MENTAL ERRORS.

INTRODUCTION.

FINDING, by sad experience, what I before justly feared, that errors would be apt to spring up with liberty, (though the restraint of just liberty, being a practical error in rulers, can never be the cure of Mental Errors in the subjects,) I judged it necessary at this season to give a succinct account of the rise, causes, and remedies of several mistakes and errors, under which even the Reformed churches among us, as well as others, groan at this day.

I will not stay, my reader, long upon the etymology and derivations of the word. Yet, because they cast some light upon the nature of the thing we inquire after, it will not be lost labour to observe, that this word *Error* derives itself from three roots in the Hebrew language.

1. The first word primitively signifies to deviate or decline from the true scope or path, as unskilful marks-men, or ignorant and inadvertent travellers do. The least variation or turning aside from the true rule and line, though it be but an hair's breadth, presently becomes an error. We read of seven hundred Benjamites, "who could every one sling stones at an hair's breadth, and not miss." (*Judges* xx. 16.) This, by a metaphor, is applied to the mind or judgment of man; and denotes the warpings thereof from the straight, perfect, Divine law or rule, and is usually translated by the word, *sin*.

2. It is derived from another word also, which signifies to wander in variable and uncertain motions: You find it in the title of the 7th Psalm, *Shiggaion*, of DAVID, a wandering song, or a song of variable notes and tunes, higher and lower, sharper and flatter. In both the former derivations it seems to note simple error through mere weakness and ignorance. But then,

3. In its derivation from a third root, it signifies not only to err, but to cause others to err also; and so signifies a seducer, or one that is active in leading others into a wrong way; and is applied in that sense to the Prophets in Israel, who seduced the people. (*Ezek. xiii. 10.*) The Greek Verb *πλαναω*, takes in both these senses, both to go astray, and to lead others astray with us. Hence is the word *πλανητης*, *planets*, or wandering stars; the title given by the Apostle (*Jude, verse 13*) to the false teachers and seducers of his time.

An error, then, is any departure or deviation in our judgment from the perfect rule of the divine law: And to this all men by nature are not only liable, but inclinable. Indeed man by nature can do nothing else but err. "He goeth astray as soon as born;" (*Psalm lvii. 3.*) makes not one true step till renewed by grace, and many false ones after his renovation. The life of the holiest man is a book with many erratas; but the whole edition of a wicked man's life is but one continued error; he that thinks he cannot err, manifestly errs in so thinking. The Pope's supposed and pretended infallibility hath made him the great deceiver of the world. A good man may err, but is willing to know his error, and will not obstinately maintain it, when he once plainly discerns it.

Error and heresy among other things differ in this; heresy is accompanied with pertinacy; and therefore the heretic is *αυτοκατακριτος*, self-condemned; his own conscience condemns him, whilst men labour in vain to convince him. He doth not formally and in terms condemn himself, but he doth so equivalently, whilst he continues to own and maintain doctrines and opinions which he finds himself

unable to defend against the evidence of truth. Human frailty may lead a man into the first, but devilish pride fixes him in the last.

Because there are many general and very useful observations about errors, which will not so conveniently come under the laws of that method which governs the main part of this discourse, *viz.* the ‘Causes and Cures of Error:’ I have therefore sorted them by themselves, and premised them to the following part in seventeen observations, next ensuing.

OBSERVATION I.

Truth is the proper Object, the natural and pleasant Food of the Understanding.

NOTHING is more natural to man, than a desire to know: Knowledge never cloy the mind, as food doth the natural appetite; but as the one increaseth, the other is proportionably sharpened. The minds of all (that are not wholly immersed in sensuality) spend their strength in the laborious search and pursuit of truth: Sometimes climbing up from the effects to the causes, and then descending again from the causes to the effects; and all to discover truth. Fervent prayer, sedulous study, fixed meditations, are the labours of inquisitive souls after truth. All the objections and counter-arguments the mind meets in its way, are but the pauses and hesitations of a soul not able to determine whether truth lies upon this side or upon that.

Answerable to the sharpness of the mind’s appetite, is the fine edge of pleasure and delight it feels in the discovery of truth. When it hath tortured itself upon knotty problems, and at last discovered the truth it sought for; with what joy doth the soul dilate itself, and run (as it were with open arms) to clasp and welcome it!

The understanding of man was at first perspicacious and clear, all truths lay obvious in their comely and ravishing beauty before it: “God made man upright:” This recti-

tude of his mind consisted in light and knowledge, as appears by the prescribed method of his recovery, “Renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him.” (*Col.* iii. 10.) Truth in the mind, or the mind’s union with truth, being part of the divine image in man, discovers to us the sin and mischief of error, which is a defacing (so far as it prevails) of the image of God.

No sooner was man created, but by the exercise of knowledge he soon discovered God’s image in him ; and by his ambition after more, lost what he had. So that now there is an haziness or cloud spread over truth by ignorance and error.



OBSERVATION II.

Of Knowledge there are divers sorts ; some are Human, and some Divine, some Speculative and some Practical.

BUT of all knowledge none is like that divine and supernatural knowledge of saving truths revealed by CHRIST in the Scriptures ; from whence arise the different degrees both of the sinfulness and danger of errors ; those errors being always the worst which are committed against the most important truths revealed in the Gospel.

These truths lie infolded either in the plain words, or evident and necessary consequences from the words of the Holy Scriptures ; Scripture consequences are of great use for the refutation of errors ; it was by Scripture-consequence that CHRIST successfully proved the resurrection against the Sadducees. (*Matt.* xii.)

Some think that reason, or natural light, is abundantly sufficient for the direction of life ; but certainly nothing is more necessary to us for that end, than the written word ; for though the remains of natural light have their place and use in directing us about natural and earthly things, “the natural man receiveth not the things of God,” &c. (*1 Cor.* ii. 14.) “Once were ye darkness, now are ye light in the

LORD," (*Eph.* v. 8,) that is, by a beam of heavenly light shining from the SPIRIT of CHRIST, through the written word, into your minds or understandings.

It is the written word which shines upon the path of our duty, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament jointly make the solid foundation of a Christian's faith. Hence, (*Eph.* ii. 20,) we are said to be built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets. We are bound therefore to honour Old Testament Scriptures as well as New, they being part of the divine canon, and must not scruple to admit them as authentic proofs, for the confirmation of truths, and refutation of errors. CHRIST referred the people to them; (*John* v. 39;) and PAUL preached and disputed from them. (*Acts* xxvi. 22.)

OBSERVATION III.

Unto the attainment of Divine Knowledge out of the Scriptures, some things are naturally, yet less principally requisite; and something absolutely and principally necessary.

THE natural qualifications desirable in the mind, are clearness of apprehension, solidity of judgment, and fidelity of retention. These are desirable requisites to make the understanding susceptible of knowledge; but the irradiation of the mind by the SPIRIT of GOD is principally necessary. "He shall guide you into all truth:" (*John* xvi. 13:) The clearest and most comfortable light he giveth to men, is in the way of sanctification, called the teachings of the anointing. (*1 John* ii. 27.)

When this spiritual sanctifying light shines upon a mind qualified with the three fore-mentioned requisites, that mind excels others in the riches of knowledge. And yet the teachings of the SPIRIT in the way of sanctification, very much supply the defects of the fore-mentioned qualifications. Whence two things are highly remarkable:

1. That men of great abilities of nature, clear apprehensions in natural things, strong judgments, and tenacious memories, not only frequently fall into gross error and damnable heresies themselves, but become heresiarchs, or heads of erroneous factions, drawing multitudes into the same sin and misery with themselves; as ARIUS, SOCINUS, BELLARMINE, and multitudes of others have done.

And secondly, it is no less remarkable, that men of weaker parts, but babes in comparison, through the sanctification and direction of the SPIRIT, for which they have humbly waited in prayer, have not only been directed and guided by Him into the truth, but so confirmed and fixed therein, that they have been kept sound in their judgments in times of abounding errors, and firm in their adherence to it in days of fiercest persecution.



OBSERVATION IV

Among the manifold Impediments to the obtaining true Knowledge, and settling the Mind in the Truth and Faith of the Gospel, these three are of special consideration, viz. Ignorance, Curiosity, and Error.

IGNORANCE slights it, or despairs of attaining it. Truth falls into contempt among the ignorant, from sluggishness and apprehension of the difficulties that lie in the way to it. "Wisdom is too high for a fool." (*Prov.* xxiv. 7.)

Curiosity runs beside or beyond it. This pride and wantonness of the mind puffs it up with a vain conceit, that it is not only able to penetrate the deepest mysteries revealed in the Scripture, but even unrevealed secrets also. "Intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." (*Col.* ii. 18.) But,

Error militates directly against it, contradicts and opposeth truth, especially when an error is maintained by pride against inward convictions, or means of better information. It is bad to maintain an error for want of light; but

abundantly worse to maintain it against light. This is such an affront to God, as he usually punishes with penal ignorance, and gives them up to a spirit of error.

OBSERVATION V

Error is binding upon the Conscience, as well as Truth ; and altogether as much, and sometimes more influential upon the affections and passions, as Truth is.

FOR it presents not itself to the soul in its own name, as error ; but in the name and dress of truth ; and under that notion binds the conscience, and vigorously influences the passions and affections ; and then being more indulgent to lust than truth is, it is for that so much the more embraced by the deceived soul. The heat that error puts the soul into, differs from a religious zeal, as a feverish doth from a natural heat, which is not indeed so benign and agreeable, but much more fervent and scorching. A mind under the power of error, is restless and impatient to propagate its errors, and these heats prey upon and eat up the vital spirits and power of religion.

OBSERVATION VI.

It is exceeding difficult to get out Error, when once it is imbibed, and hath rooted itself by an open profession.

ERRORS like some sorts of weeds, having once seeded in a field or garden, it is scarce possible to subdue and destroy them ; especially if they be hereditary errors, or have grown up with us from our youth ; *à teneris assuescere multum est*, saith SENECA ; it is a great advantage to truth or error, to have an early and long possession of the mind. The Pharisees held many erroneous opinions about the Law, as appears by the corruptive Commentaries upon it, refuted by CHRIST ;

(*Matt. v.*;) but did he root them out of their heads and hearts thereby? No, no; they sooner rid him out of the world. The Sadducees held a most dangerous error about the Resurrection; CHRIST disputed with them to the admiration of others; and proved it clearly against them; and yet we find the error remaining long after CHRIST's death. (*2. Tim. ii. 18.*) The Apostles themselves had their minds tinctured with this error, that CHRIST should be outwardly great and magnificent in the world, and raise his followers to great honours and preferments amongst men: CHRIST plainly told them it was their mistake; for the SON of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; yet this did not rid their minds of the error; it stuck fast in them, even till his ascension to heaven. O how hard it is to clear the heart of a good man once leavened with error! and how much more hard to separate it from a wicked man!



OBSERVATION VII.

Men are not so circumspect and jealous of the Corruption of their Minds by Errors, as they are of their Bodies in times of Contagion; or of their Lives with respect to gross Immoralities.

SPIRITUAL dangers affect us less than corporeal; and intellectual evils less than moral. Whether this be the effect of hypocrisy, the errors of the mind being more secret and invisible than those of the conversation.

Or whether it be the effect of ignorance, that men think there is less sin and danger in the one than in the other; not considering that an apoplexy seizing the head, is every way as mortal as a sword piercing the body: The Apostle in *2 Pct. ii. 1*, calls them *αιρεσεις απωλειας*, damnable heresies, or heresies of destruction. An error in the mind may be as destructive to the soul, as an error of immorality or profaneness in the life.

OBSERVATION VIII.

It is a great Judgment of GOD, to be given over to an erroneous Mind.

FOR the understanding being the leading faculty, as that guides, the other powers and affections of the soul follow, as horses in a team follow the fore-horse. Now how sad and dangerous a thing is this, for SATAN to ride the fore-horse, and guide that, that is to guide the life of man! That is a dreadful, judicial stroke of GOD, which we read of *Rom. i. 26*: *παρεδωκεν αυτους ο Θεος εις παθη ατιμιας*; GOD by a penal tradition suffered them to run into the dregs of immorality, and pollutions of life; and that because they abused their light, and became vain in their imaginations. (*Verse 21.*)

Wild whimsies and fancies in the head, usually mislead men into the mire of profaneness, and then it is commonly observed GOD sets some visible mark of his displeasure upon them; especially the Heresiarchs, or ring-leaders in error. NESTORIUS's tongue was consumed by worms. CERINTHUS's brains knocked out by the fall of an house. It were easy to instance in multitudes of others, whom the visible hand of GOD had marked for a warning to others; but usually the errors of the mind are followed by a consumption and decay of religion in the soul. If grace be in the heart, where error sways its sceptre in the head, yet usually there it languishes and withers. They may mistake their drosy for growth and flourishing, and think themselves to be more spiritual, because more airy and notional; but if men would judge themselves impartially, they will certainly find that the seeds of grace thrive not in the heart, when shaded and over-dropped by an erroneous head.

OBSERVATION IX.

It is a pernicious evil, to advance a mere opinion into the place of an Article of Faith; and to lay as great a stress upon it, as they ought to do upon the most clear and fundamental point.

OPINION (as one truly saith) is but reason's projector, and the spy of truth: It makes in its fullest discovery no more than the dawning and twilight of knowledge; and yet I know not how it comes to pass, but so it is, that this idol of the mind holds such a sway and empire over all we hold. Matters of mere opinion are every where cried up by some, for mathematical demonstration, and articles of faith, written with a sun-beam; worshipping the fancies and creatures of their own minds, more than God; and putting more trust in their ill-founded opinions, than in the sure word of prophecy. Much like that humourist that would not trust day-light, but kept his candle still burning by him; because, said he, this is not as subject to eclipses, as the sun is.

And what more frequent, when controversies grow fervent, than for those that maintain the error, to boast every silly argument to be a demonstration; to upbraid and pity the blindness and dulness of their opposers, as men that shut their eyes against sun-beams; yea, sometimes to draw their censures through the very hearts of their opposers, and to insinuate that they must needs hold the truths of God in unrighteousness, sin against their knowledge, and that nothing keeps them from coming over to them, but pride, shame, or some worldly interest! What a complicated evil is here! A proud exalting of our own opinions, an immodest imposing on the minds of others more clear and sound than our own, and a dangerous usurpation of God's prerogative in judging the hearts and ends of our brethren.

OBSERVATION X.

Error being conscious to itself of its own Weakness, and the strong Assaults that will be made upon it, evermore labours to defend and secure itself under the Wings of Antiquity, Reason, or Scripture.

ANTIQUITY is a venerable word, but ill used, when made a cloak for error. Truth must needs be elder than error, as the rule must necessarily be, before the aberration from it. The grey hairs of opinions are then only beauty, and a crown, when found in the way of righteousness. Copper (saith learned DUMOULIN) will never become gold by age. A lie will be a lie, let it be never so ancient. We dispute not by years, but by reasons drawn from Scripture. That which is now called an ancient opinion, if it be not a true opinion, was once but a new error. When you can tell us how many years are required to turn an error into truth, then we will give more heed to antiquity, when pressed by error, than we now think due to it.

If antiquity will not do, reason shall be pressed to serve error's turn at a dead lift; and indeed the pencil of reason can lay curious colours upon rotten timber, and varnish over erroneous principles with fair and plausible pretences. What expert artists have the Socinians proved themselves in this matter! But because men are bound to submit human authority and reason to divine revelation, both must give way and strike sail to the written word.

Hence it comes to pass, that the great patrons and factors for error, do above all things labour to gain countenance from the written word; and to this end, they manifestly wrest the Scriptures to make them subservient to their opinions; not impartially studying the Scriptures first, and forming their opinions according to them; but they bring their erroneous opinions to the Scriptures, and then, with all imaginable art and sophistry, wire-draw and force the Scriptures to countenance and legitimize their opinions.

OBSERVATION XI.

God in all ages in his tender care for his Churches and Truths, hath still qualified and excited his servants for the defence of his precious Truths, against the errors and heresies that have successively assaulted them.

As Providence is observed in every climate and island of the world to have provided antidotes against the poisonous plants and animals of the country ; and the one is never far from the other : So is the care of his providence much more conspicuous in the case now before us. When, or where-soever venomous errors and deadly heresies arise, He hath his servants at hand with antidotes against them.

When **ARIUS**, that deadly enemy to the Deity of **CHRIST**, struck at the very heart of our religion, faith, and comfort ; a man of subtle parts, and blameless life, which made his heresy much the more spreading ; the **LORD** had his well-furnished **ATHANASIUS** in readiness to resist and confound him. And as he had his **ATHANASIUS** to defend the Deity of **CHRIST** ; so he wanted not his **BASIL** to defend the doctrine of the Holy Spirit against **MACEDONIUS**.

So from the beginning and first rise of Popery, that centre and sink of errors, we have a large catalogue of the learned and famous witnesses, which in all ages have faithfully opposed it ; and when, notwithstanding all, it had overrun Europe like a rapid torrent ; and Germany was brought to that pass, that if the Pope had but commanded it, they would have eaten grass or hay *more pecudum* ; then did the **LORD** bring forth invincible **LUTHER**, and with him a troop of learned champions, into the field against him ; since which time the cause of Popery is become desperate.

Thus the care of providence in all ages hath been as much displayed in protecting the church against the dangers that arose from false brethren within it, as from avowed persecuting enemies without it ; and had it not been so, the rank weeds of heresies and errors had long since overtopped and choked the corn, and made the church a barren field.

OBSERVATION XII.

The Want of a modest Suspicion, and just Reflection, gives both Confidence and Growth to erroneous Opinions.

If matters of mere opinion were kept in their proper place, under the careful guard of suspicion, they would not make that bustle and confusion in the churches, they have done, and do at this day.

It is confessed, that all truths are not matters of mere opinion; neither are all opinions of equal weight: And yet it is as true, that matters of opinion ought carefully to be sorted from matters of faith, and to be kept in their own rank, whilst matters of faith, clearly revealed, are to stand upon their sure and firm basis. The former, namely, matters of mere opinion, we are so to hold, as upon clear light to be ready to part with them. The other, namely, matters of faith, we are to hold with resolutions to live and die by them.

What is opinion, but the wavering of the understanding betwixt probable arguments, for and against a point of doctrine? In such cases there should be a due allowance of other men's opinions to them; and why not, whilst they offer as fair for the truth as we? And haply their parts, helps, and industries, are not inferior to ours; it may be beyond them, and we may discern in them as much tenderness of conscience, and fear of sin, as in ourselves. In this case, a little more modest suspicion in our opinions, would do the church a great deal of right; and that which should prevail with all modest persons to exercise it, is the just reflection they may make upon their own former confident mistakes. -

OBSERVATION XIII.

There is a remarkable Involution or Concatenation of Errors, one linking in, and drawing another after it.

AMONGST all erroneous sects, there is still some *πρωτον ψευδος*, some Helena, for whose sake the war against truth is commenced; and the other lesser errors are pressed for the sake and service of this leading darling error. As we see the whole troop of indulgences, bulls, masses, pilgrimages, purgatory, with multitudes more, flow from, and are pressed into the service of the Pope's supremacy and infallibility: So in other sects, men are forced to entertain many other errors, which, in themselves considered, they have no great kindness for; but they are necessitated to entertain them in defence of that great, leading, darling opinion they first espoused.



OBSERVATION XIV

Errors abound most, and spring fastest in the times of the Church's Peace, Liberty, and outward Prosperity, under indulgent Rulers.

CHRISTIAN benevolent rulers are choice mercies and blessings to the Church. Such as rule over men in the fear of GOD, are to the church, as well as civil state, "like the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth, even a morning without clouds, as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." (2 Sam. xxiii. 4.)

But this, as well as other mercies, is liable to abuse; and under the influences of indulgent governors, error as well as truth springs up, flowers, and seeds. Persecution gives check to the wantonness of men's opinions, and finds them other work to do. Caterpillars and locusts are swept away

by the bitter east-winds, but swarm in halcyon days, and fall upon every green thing. So that the church rides in this respect more safely in the stormy sea, than in the calm harbour. Peace and prosperity is apt to cast its watchmen into a sleep, and whilst they sleep, the envious one soweth tares.

The abuse of such an excellent mercy provokes the LORD to cut it short, and cause the clouds to gather again after the rain. We have found it so once and again (alas! that I must say again) in this wanton and foolish nation. Professors could live quietly together, converse, fast, and pray in a Christian manner together, under common calamities and dangers; differences in opinion were suspended by consent: But no sooner do we feel a warm sun-blast of liberty and peace, but it revives and heats our dividing lusts and corruptions, instead of our graces. The sheep of CHRIST fight with each other, though their furious pushing one at another is known to presage a change of weather.

OBSERVATION XV

*Nothing gives more Countenance and Increase to Error,
than a weak and feeble Defence of the Truth against it.*

THE strength of error lieth much in the weakness of the advocates and defendants of truth. Every friend of truth is not fit to make a champion for it. Many love it, and pray for it, that cannot defend and dispute for it. "I can die for the truth, (said the Martyr) but I cannot dispute for it." ZUINGLIUS blamed CAROLOSTADIUS for undertaking the controversy of that age, because (said he) *non habuit satis humerorum*; his shoulders were too weak for the burden.

It can be said of few, as CICERO speaks of one, *Nullam unquam in disputationibus rem defendit, quam non probarit; nullam oppugnavit, quam non everterit*: He undertook no cause in disputation, which he could not defend; he op-

posed no adversary, but he could overthrow him. He is a rare and happy disputant, who can clear and carry every point of truth, of which he undertakes the defence. It were happy for the church, if the abilities and prudence of all her friends were equal to their love and zeal. Every foil, every weak or impertinent answer of a friend to truth, is quickly turned into a weapon to wound it the deeper.

OBSERVATION XVI.

Errors of Judgment are not cured by Compulsion and external Force, but by rational Conviction, and proper spiritual remedies.

BODILY sufferings rather spread than cure intellectual errors. I deny not but fundamental heresies, breaking forth into open blasphemies against God, and seditious in the civil state, ought to be restrained. It is no way fit that men should be permitted to go up and down the world with plague-sores running upon them: Nor do I understand why men should be more cautious to preserve their bodies than their souls. But I speak here of such errors as may consist with the foundations of the Christian faith, and are not destructive to civil government. They take the ready way to spread and perpetuate them, that think to root them out of the world by external force and violence. The wind never causes an earthquake, till it be pent in, and restrained from motion.

We never find, nor can imagine, that those church or state exorcists should ever be able to effect their end, who think to confine all the spirits of error within the circle of a severe uniformity. Fires, prisons, pillories, stigmatizings, mutilations, whippings, banishments, are the Popish topics to confute errors. It is highly remarkable, that the world long ago consented, for the avoiding of dissenting judgment, to enslave themselves and their posterity to the most fatal and destructive heresy that ever it groaned under.

It is a rational and proper observation long since made by LACTANTIUS, *Quis mihi imponat necessitatem credendi, quod nolim, vel non credendi, quod velim?* Who can force me to believe what I will not, or not to believe what I will? The rational and gentle spirit of the Gospel is the only proper and effectual method to cure the diseases of the mind.



OBSERVATION XVII.

If ever errors be cured, and the peace and unity of the church established, men must be convinced of, and acquainted with the occasions and causes both within and without themselves, from whence their errors proceed; and must both know and apply the proper rules and remedies for the prevention or cure of them.

THERE is much difference betwixt an occasion, and a proper cause; these two are heedfully to be distinguished. Critical and exact historians, as POLYBIUS and TACITUS, distinguish between the ἀρχή, and the αἰτία, the beginning occasions, and the real causes of a war; and so we ought in this case of errors. The most excellent and innocent things in the world, such as the Scriptures, the liberty of Christians, the tranquillity and peace of the church, may, by the subtlety of SATAN working in conjunction with the corruptions of men's hearts, become the occasions, but can never be the proper causes of errors.

Accordingly having made the seventeen remarks upon the nature and growth of errors, (which cannot so well be brought within the following rules of method,) I shall in the next place proceed in the discovery both of the mere occasion, as also of the proper culpable causes of errors, together with the proper preventives and most effectual remedies placed together in the following order.

The holy GOD, who is a GOD of truth, and hateth errors,

the GOD of order, and hates confusions and schisms in the church, is yet pleased to permit errors and heresies to arise, without whose permission they could never spring. And this he doth for the trial of his people's faith and constancy, and for a spiritual punishment upon some men for the abuse of his known truths; and by the permission of those evils he advanceth his own glory, and the good of his church and people.

SATAN's design in errors is to cloud and darken God's name and precious truths; to destroy the beauty, strength, and order of the church. But God's ends in permitting and sending errors, are, (1.) To punish men for their abuse of light. (2.) To prove and try the sincerity and constancy of our hearts. (*Deut. xiii. 1, 3; 1 Cor. xi. 19.*) And lastly, By these things the saints are awakened to a more diligent search of the Scriptures, which are the more critically read and examined upon the trial of the spirits and doctrines by them.

But though heresies and errors must (for the reasons assigned) break forth into the world, and God will turn them eventually to his own glory; yet it is a dreadful judgment to be delivered over to a spirit of error, to be the authors and abettors of them; this is a judicial stroke of God: And as ever we hope to escape, and stand clear out of the way of it, let us carefully shun these three following causes and provocations thereof.

1. Want of love to the truth, which God hath made to shine *about* us in the means, or *into* us by actual illumination under the means of knowledge; "because they received not the love of the truth, God gave them up to strong delusions." (*2 Thess. ii. 10, 11.*) They are justly plagued with error that slight truth. False doctrines are fit plagues for false hearts.

2. Beware of pride and wantonness of mind. It is not so much the weakness as the wantonness of the mind, which provokes God to inflict this judgment. None likelier to make seducers, than boasters. (*Jude 16.*) ARIUS gloried

that GOD had revealed some things to him, which were hidden from the Apostles themselves. SIMON MAGUS boasted himself to be the mighty power of GOD.

3. Beware you neglect not prayer, to be kept sound in your judgments, and guided by the SPIRIT into all truth. "With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander [or err] from thy commandments." (*Psalm* cxix. 10.) This do, and you are safe from such a judicial tradition.

We shall next speak of the causes of error found in the evil dispositions of men, which prepare and incline them to receive erroneous opinions, and even catch at the occasions and least sparkles of temptation, as dry tinder; and amongst these is found,

1. A perverse wrangling humour at the pretended *obscurity* of the Scriptures. The Romish party snatch at this occasion, and make it the proper cause, when indeed it is but a picked occasion of the errors and mistakes among men. They tell us, the Scriptures are so difficult, obscure, and perplexed, that if private men will trust to them, as their only guide, they will inevitably run into errors, and their only relief is to give up their souls to the conduct of their church; whereas indeed the true cause of error is not so much in the obscurity of the word, as in the corruption of the mind.

We acknowledge there are in the Scriptures some things hard to be understood, (*2 Pet.* iii. 16,) the sublime and mysterious nature of the matter rendering it so; and some things hard to be interpreted from the manner of expression, as indeed all mystical parts of Scripture and prophetic predictions are. The SPIRIT of GOD this way designedly casts a veil over them, till the proper season of their revelation and accomplishment be come. Besides, (as the learned GLASSIUS observes,) in ST. PAUL's style there are found some peculiar words and forms of speech, which ordinary rules of grammar take no notice, nor give any parallel examples of; as, to be "buried with CHRIST;" to be "baptized into his death;" to which I may add, to be "circumcised in him." There are also multitudes of

words found in Scripture of various and vastly different significations; and accordingly there is a diversity, and sometimes a contrariety of senses given of them by expositors; which to an humourist, or quarrelsome wit, give an occasion to vent his errors with a plausible appearance of Scripture.

But, notwithstanding all this, the great and necessary things are so plainly revealed in the Scriptures, that even babes in CHRIST do apprehend and understand them. (*Matt.* xi. 25; *1 Cor.* i. 27, 28, 29.) And though there be difficulties in other points more remote from the foundation; yet the SPIRIT of GOD is not to be accused, but rather his wisdom to be admired herein. For, (1.) This serves to excite the most intense study and diligence, which by this difficulty is made necessary; the very Prophets, yea, the very angels search into these things. (*1 Pet.* i. 11, 12.) (2.) Hereby a standing ministry in the church is made necessary. (*Neh.* viii. 8; *Eph.* iv. 11—13.) So that to pretend obscurity of Scripture to be the culpable cause of error, when indeed the fault is in ourselves; this is too much like our father ADAM, who would implicitly accuse GOD, to excuse himself; he laid it upon the *woman* which GOD gave him, and we upon the *Scriptures* which GOD hath given us.

The proper remedies and preventives in this case are an heedful attendance to, and practice of these rules.

RULE I.

LET all obscure and difficult texts of Scripture be constantly examined and expounded according to the analogy or proportion of faith, which is ST. PAUL'S own rule. "Let him that prophesieth, [that is, expoundeth the Scripture in the church,] do it according to the proportion of faith." (*Rom.* xii. 6.) The analogy or proportion of faith is what is taught plainly and uniformly in the whole Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as the rule of our faith and obedience. Whilst we carefully and sincerely attend hereunto, we are secured from sinful corrupting the

Word of GOD. Admit of no sense which interfereth with this proportion of faith. If men have no regard to this, but take liberty to rend off a single text from the body of truth to which it belongs, and put a peculiar interpretation upon it which is discordant to other Scriptures, what work will they quickly make!

RULE II.

NEVER put a new sense upon words of Scripture in favour of your pre-conceived notions, nor wrest it from its general and common use and sense. This is not to interpret, but to wrest the Scriptures, as that word *σρεβλσιν* signifies. (2 *Pet.* iii. 16.) We are not to make the Scriptures speak what we think, but what the Prophet or Apostle thought, whom we interpret. In 1 *Cor.* vii. 14, we meet with the word *Holy* applied to the children of believers; that word is above five hundred times used for a state of separation to GOD: Therefore to make it signify in that place nothing but legitimacy, is a bold and daring practising upon the Scripture.

RULE III.

WHENEVER you meet with an obscure place of Scripture, let the context of that Scripture be thoroughly searched; for it is usual with GOD to set up light there to guide us through the obscurity of a particular text. And there is much truth in the observation of the Rabbins, *Nulla est objectio in lege, quæ non habet solutionem in latere.* There is no scruple or objection in the law, but it hath a solution at the side of it.

RULE IV.

LET one Testament freely cast its light upon the other; and let not men undervalue or reject an Old Testament text, as no way useful to clear and establish a New Testament point of faith or duty. Each Testament reflects light upon the other. The Jews reject the New Testament, and many among us sinfully slight the Old: But without the

help of both, we can never understand the mind of God in either. It is a good rule in the civil law, *Turpe est de lege judicare, totâ lege nondum inspectâ*. We must inspect the whole law, to know the sense of any particular law.

RULE V.

HAVE a due regard to that sense given of obscure places of Scripture, which hath not only the current sense of learned expositors, but also naturally agrees with the scope of the place. A careless neglect and disregard to this, is justly blamed by the Apostle. (1 *Tim.* i. 7.)

A second evil temper disposing and inclining men to suck in erroneous doctrines and opinions, is the abuse of that just and due Christian liberty allowed by CHRIST to all his people to read, examine, and judge the sense of Scriptures with a private judgment of discretion.

This is a glorious acquisition, and blessed fruit of Reformation, to vindicate and recover that just right, and gracious grant made to us by CHRIST and the Apostles, out of the hands of our Popish enemies, who had usurped it. The exercise of this liberty, is at once a duty commanded by CHRIST, and commended in Scripture. It is commanded by CHRIST: "Search the Scriptures," saith CHRIST to the people. (*John* v. 39.) "I speak as to wise men, judge you what I say." (1 *Cor.* x. 15.) And the exercise of this private judgment of discretion by the people, is highly commended by ST. PAUL in the Bereans. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so." (*Acts* xvii. 11.) This liberty is not allowed in any religion, as it is in the Christian religion, nor enjoyed in its fulness, as it is in the Reformed religion, whose glory it is that it allows its principles and doctrines to be critically examined and tried of all men by the rule of the word, as well knowing, the more it is sifted and searched by its professors, the more they will be confirmed and satisfied in the truth of it.

But yet this just liberty of Christians, suffers a double

abuse: One from the Popish enemies, who injuriously deny it to the people: Another, by Protestants themselves, who sinfully stretch it beyond the just degree and measure in which CHRIST allows it to them.

The Pope injuriously restrains it, discerning the danger that must necessarily follow the concession of such a liberty to the people, to compare his superstitious and erroneous doctrines with the rule of the word.

2. And Secondly, It is frequently abused, by stretching it beyond CHRIST's allowance; when every ignorant and confident person shall, under pretence of liberty granted by CHRIST, rudely break in upon the sacred text, distort, violate, and abuse the Scriptures at pleasure, by putting such strange and foreign senses upon them, as the SPIRIT of GOD never intended.

The proper way to prevent and remedy this mischief, is not by depriving any man of his just liberty, either to read, or judge for himself what GOD speaks in his word; that were the same thing as to cut off a head to cure a head-ache. Leave that sinful policy with the false religion. Let those only that know they do evil, be afraid of coming to the light. But the proper course of preventing the mischiefs that come this way, is by labouring to contain Christians within those limits CHRIST himself hath set unto this liberty which he hath granted them. And these are such as follow:—

(1.) Though CHRIST have indulged to the meanest and weakest Christian a liberty to read and judge of the Scriptures for himself; yet he hath neither thereby, nor therewith granted him a liberty, publicly to expound and preach the word to others: That is quite another thing.

Christians may privately edify one another by reading the Scriptures, communicating their sense one to another of them, admonishing, counselling, reprovng one another in a private fraternal way, at seasons wherein they interfere not with more public duties: But for every one that hath confidence enough, (and the ignorant are usually best stocked with it,) to assume a liberty to expound and give

the sense of Scriptures, and pour forth his own wild notions, as the pure sense and meaning of GOD'S SPIRIT in the Scriptures; this is what CHRIST never allowed, and through this flood-gate, errors have broken in, and overflowed the Church of GOD, to the great scandal of religion, and confirmation of Popish enemies.

(2.) Though there be no part of Scripture shut up or restrained from the knowledge or use of any Christian; yet CHRIST hath recommended to Christians of different abilities, the study of some parts of Scripture rather than others; as more proper and agreeable to their age and stature in religion.

Christians are by the Apostle ranked into three classes,—“Fathers, young men, and little children;” (1 John ii. 13;) and accordingly the wisdom of CHRIST hath directed to that sort of food which is proper to each: For there is in the word all sorts of food suitable to all ages in CHRIST; there is both “milk for babes, and strong meat for grown Christians.” (Heb. v. 13, 14.) Those that are unskilful in the word of righteousness, should feed upon milk; that is, the easy, plain, but most nutritive practical doctrines of the Gospel. But “strong meat,” saith he; that is, the most abstruse, deep, and mysterious truths; belongeth “to them that are of full age, even those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil;” that is, truth and error. To the same purpose he speaks, “I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it.” (1 Cor. iii. 2.)

Art thou a weak unstudied Christian? a babe in CHRIST? Then the easier, and more nutritive milk of plain Gospel-doctrine is fitter for thee, and will do thee more good, than the stronger meat of profound and more mysterious points; or the bones of controversy, which are too hard for thee to deal with.

3. There is another evil disposition in the mind, rendering it easily receptive of errors, and that is spiritual *slothfulness* and carelessness in a due and serious search of the whole Scripture, with a sedate and rational consideration of every part and particle therein, which may give us any, though

the least light to understand the mind of God in those difficult points we search after the knowledge of.

Truth lies deep, as the rich veins of gold do. (*Prov.* ii.) If we will get the treasure, we must not only “beg,” as he directs, (*verse 3,*) but “dig” also: (*verse 4:*) Else as he speaks, “the talk of the lips tends only to poverty.” (*Prov.* xiv. 23.) We are not to take up with that which lies uppermost, and next at hand upon the surface of the text; but to search with the most sedate and considerative mind into all parts of the written word, examining every text which hath any respect to the truth we are searching for, heedfully to observe the scope, antecedents, and consequents, and to value every tittle and iota; for each of these are of Divine authority. And sometimes great weight is laid upon a word, as appears in the names of ABRAHAM and SARAI.

It will require some strength of mind, and great sedulity, to lay all parts of Scripture before us, and to compare words with words, and things with things, as the Apostle speaks, “comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” (*1 Cor.* ii. 13.) And though it be true that some important doctrines, as that of justification by faith, are methodically disposed, and throughly cleared and settled in one and the same context; yet it is as true, that many other points of faith and duty are not so digested, but are delivered here a little, and there a little. You must not think to find all that belongs to one head or point of faith or duty, laid together in a system, or common-place in Scripture; but scattered abroad in several pieces, some in the Old Testament, and some in the New, at a great distance one from another.

Now in our searches and inquiries after the full and satisfying knowledge of the will of God in such points, it is necessary that the whole Word of God be throughly searched, and all those parcels brought together to an interview. As for example,

If a man would see the entire discovery that was made of CHRIST, to the Fathers, under the Old Testament, he shall

not find it laid together in any one Prophet; but shall find that one speaks to one part of it, and another to another.

MOSES gives the first general hint of it. "The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head." (*Gen.* iii. 15.) But then if you would know more particularly of whose seed, according to the flesh, he should come, you must turn to *Gen.* xxii. 18. "In thy seed (saith GOD to ABRAHAM) shall all nations of the earth be blessed." And if you yet doubt what seed GOD means there, you must turn to the Apostle, "To thy seed, which is CHRIST" (*Gal.* iii. 16,) If you would further know the place of his nativity, the Prophet MICAH must inform you of that; it should be Bethlehem-Ephratah. (*Micah* v. 2,) If you inquire of the quality of his parent, another Prophet gives you that: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and call his name IMMANUEL." (*Isa.* vii. 14.) If the time of his birth be inquired after, MOSES and DANIEL must inform you of that. (*Gen.* xlix. 10; *Dan.* ix. 24.)

So under the New Testament, if a man inquire about the change of the sabbath, he must not expect to find a formal repeal of the seventh day, and an express institution of the first day in its room; but he is to consider,

(1.) What the Evangelist speaks, that CHRIST is LORD of the sabbath; (*Mark* ii. 28;) and so had power, not only to dispense with it, but to change it.

(2.) That on the first day of the week, CHRIST rose from the dead. (*Matt.* xxviii. 1, 2.) And this is that great day, foretold to be the day, to be solemnized upon that account. (*Psalms* cxviii. 24.)

(3.) That accordingly the first day of the week is emphatically styled the LORD'S day, (*Rev.* i. 10,) where you find his own name written upon it.

(4.) You shall find this was the day on which the Apostles and primitive Christians assembled together for the stated and solemn performance of public worship, (*John* xx. 19,) and other public Church-acts and duties. (*1 Cor.* xvi. 1, 2.) And so putting together, and considering all these particu-

lars, we draw a just conclusion, That it is the will of GOD, that since the resurrection of CHRIST, the first day of the week should be observed as the Christian sabbath.

In like manner as for the baptizing of believers' infants: We are not to expect it in the express words of a New Testament institution or command, that infants under the Gospel should be baptized; but GOD hath left us to gather satisfaction about his will and our duty in that point, by comparing and considering the several Scriptures of the Old and New Testament which relate to that matter; which, if we be impartial, we may do.

(1.) By considering, that by GOD's express command, the infant seed of his people were taken into covenant with their parents, and the then sign of that covenant commanded to be applied to them. (*Gen.* xvii. 9, 10.)

(2.) That though the sign be altered, the promise and covenant is still the same, and runs as it did before, to believers and their children. (*Acts* ii. 38, 39.)

(3.) That the federal holiness of our children is plainly asserted under the New Testament. (*1 Cor.* vii. 14; *Rom* xi. 16.)

(4.) We shall further find, that baptism succeeds in the room of circumcision, and that by an argument drawn from the completeness of our privileges under the New Testament, no way inferior, but rather more extensive than those of the Jews. (*Col.* ii. 10—12.)

(5.) We shall find that upon the conversion of any master or parent, the whole household were baptized. By putting all these things, with some others, together, we may arrive to the desired satisfaction about the will of GOD in this matter.

But some men want abilities, and others are too lazy to gather together, compare and weigh all these and many more hints and discoveries of the mind of GOD, which would give much light unto this point; but they take an easier and cheaper way to satisfy themselves with what lies uppermost upon the surface of Scripture, and so, as it were by consent, let go, and lose their own, and their children's

blessed and invaluable privileges, for want of a little labour and patience to search the Scriptures; a folly which few would be guilty of, if but a small earthly inheritance were concerned therein.

To cure this spiritual sluggishness, and awaken us to the most serious and diligent search after the will of God in difficult points, that we may not neglect the smallest hint given us about it, the following considerations will be found of great use.

(1.) The most sedate, impartial, and diligent inquiries after the will of God revealed in his word, is a duty expressly enjoined by his sovereign command, which immediately and indispensably binds the conscience of every Christian to the practice of it.

Remarkable is that text to this purpose: "And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (*Rom.* xii. 2.) Here you find this duty, not only associated with, but made the very end of our non-conformity to the world, and renovation of our minds; the very things which constitute a Christian.

And to sweeten our pains in this work, that will of God, for the discovery whereof we search, is presented to us under three illustrious and alluring properties, viz. "good, acceptable, and perfect." *Good* it must needs be, because the will and essence of God, the Chief Good, are not two things, but one and the same. And *perfect* it must needs be, because it is the standard, by which the actions of all reasonable creatures ought to be weighed, as to the moral good or evil of them; and being both *good* and *perfect*, how can it choose but, upon both accounts, be highly *acceptable* and grateful to an upright soul? "Search the Scriptures," saith CHRIST. (*John* v. 39.) "To the law and to the testimony," saith the Prophet. (*Isa.* viii. 20.) This is not matter of mere Christian liberty, but commanded duty; and at our peril be it if we neglect it.

(2.) No act of ours can be good and acceptable to the LORD, further than it is agreeable to his will revealed in the word.

No man can be a rule to himself. He can be no more his own rule than his own end. One man cannot be a rule to another. The best of men, and their actions, and examples, are only so far a rule of imitation to us, as they themselves are ruled by the divine revealed will. (1 Cor. xi. 1.) Uncommanded acts of worship are abominable to God, and highly dangerous to ourselves; they kindle the fire of his jealousy to the ruin and destruction, of the presumptuous sinner. So that if the beauty and excellency of the will of God be not enough to allure us, the danger of acting without the knowledge of it may justly terrify us.

(3.) In this duty we tread in the footsteps of the wisest and holiest men that ever went to heaven before us.

It is not only the characteristic note of a good man, (*Psaln* i. 2,) but it has been the constant practice of the most eminent believers in all ages. The greatest Prophets that had this advantage of us, that they were the organs or inspired instruments of discovering the will of God to others, yet were not excused from, neither did they neglect to search it diligently themselves. (1 *Pet.* i. 10, 11.) DANIEL, that great favourite of heaven, who had the visions and revelations of God; yet himself diligently searched the written word, in order to the discovery of the mind of God. (*Dan.* ix. 2.)

(4.) Every discovery of the will of God by fervent prayer, diligent and impartial search of the Scriptures, and all other allowed helps, gives the highest pleasure the mind of man is capable of in this world.

If ARCHIMEDES, upon the discovery of a mathematical truth, was so transported and ravished, that he cried out, *Ευρηκα, ευρηκα, I have found it, I have found it*; what pleasure then must the investigation and discovery of a divine truth give to a sanctified soul! “Thy words were found of me, (saith JEREMIAH,) and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my

heart, (*Jer xv. 16,*) as pleasant food to a famishing man; for now conscience is quieted, comforted, and cheered in the way of duty. A man walks not at adventure with God, as that word signifies; (*Levit. xxvi. 40, 41;*) but hath a pleasant directive light of the word and will of God, shining sweetly upon the path of his duty.

(5.) By this means you shall find your faith greatly confirmed in the truth of the Scriptures.

The sweet consent and beautiful harmony of all the parts of the written word, is a great argument of its divinity; and this you will clearly discern, when by a due search you shall find things that lie at the remotest distance, to conspire and consent in one, and one part casting light, as well as adding strength to another. Thus you shall find the New Testament veiled in the Old, and the Old revealed in the New: And that such a consent of things, so distant in time and place, can never be the project and invention of man.

(6.) The diligent and impartial search and inquiry after the will of God, out of no other design than to please him in the whole course of our duties, will return to us for a testimony of the integrity and sincerity of our hearts.

“Thy word (said DAVID) have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee:” And God will not hide his will from those that thus seek to know it. If men would apply themselves to search the word by fervent prayer, and fixed meditations, upon so pure a design, not bringing their prejudiced or prepossessed minds unto it; the SPIRIT of the Lord would guide them into all truth, and keep them out of dangerous and destructive errors.

1. Besides slothfulness, there is found in many persons another evil disposition preparing them easily to receive erroneous impressions; namely *instability* and fickleness of judgment, and unsettledness of mind about the truth of the Gospel.

Of this the Apostle warns us, “that we henceforth be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning

craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (*Eph.* iv. 14.) None are so constant and steady in the profession of the truth, as those that are fully convinced of, and well satisfied with the grounds of it. Every professor, like every ship at sea, should have an *ιδιον σιγηγμον*, a ballast and steadiness of his own, (*2 Pet.* iii. 3, 17,) ready and prepared to render a reason of the hope that is in him; (*1 Pet.* iii. 15;) able upon all occasions to give an account of those inward motives which constrained his assent to the truth.

He that professeth a truth ignorantly, cannot be rationally supposed to adhere to it constantly. He that is but half convinced of a truth, when he engages in the profession of it, must needs be a double-minded man, as the Apostle calls him; (*James* i. 8;) half the mind hangs one way, and half another, and so it is easily moved this way or that with the least breath of temptation. And hence it comes to pass they are so often at a loss about their duty and their practice; for a doubtful mind must needs make a staggering and uncertain practice.

Erroneous teachers are called "wandering stars," (*Jude* 13,) which keep no certain course as the fixed stars do, but are sometimes nearer and sometimes remoter one from another. Thus errorists first imbibe unsettling opinions, and then discover them in their inconstant practises.

And this instability of judgment proceeds either from hypocrisy or weakness. Sometimes from hypocrisy; all hypocrites are double-minded men: "The double-minded man [that is, the hypocrite] is unstable in all his ways." (*Jer.* iv. 8.) One of that number was not ashamed to say, 'That he had two souls in one body, one for God, and another for whosoever would have it.'

Sometimes instability of mind is the effect only of weakness in the judgment, proceeding merely from want of age and growth in CHRIST, not having as yet attained senses exercised to discern both good and evil; they are but children in CHRIST, and children are easy and credulous creatures, presently taken away with a new toy, and as soon

weary of it; such a wavering and unstable temper invites temptation, and falls an easy prey into its hands.

I confess some cases may happen, where the pretences on both sides may be so fair, as to put a judicious Christian to a stand which to choose; but then their deliberation will be answerable, and they will not change their opinions every month, as sceptics do. Wherever error finds such a mutable disposition, its work is half done before it makes one assault. The giddy-headed multitude have more regard to novelty, than truth.

How necessary and desirable are some effectual rules and remedies in this case! O what a mercy would it be to the professors of these days, to have their minds fixed, and their judgments settled in the truths of CHRIST! Happy is that man whose judgment is so guarded, that no dangerous error or heresy can commit a rape upon it. To this end I shall here commend the four following rules to prevent this vertiginous malady in the heads of Christians.

(1.) Look warily to it that you get a real inward implantation into CHRIST, and lay the foundation deep and firm in a due and serious deliberation of religion whenever you engage in the public profession of it.

To this sense sound the Apostle's words, "As you have therefore received CHRIST JESUS the LORD, so walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as you have been taught." (*Col. ii. 6, 7.*) Fertility and stability in CHRIST, a pair of inestimable blessings, depend upon a good rooting of the soul in Him at first. He that thrusts a dead stick into the ground, may easily pull it up again; but so he cannot do by a well-rooted tree. A colour raised by violent action, or a great fire, soon dies away, but that which is natural or constitutional will hold. Every thing is as its foundation is. It was want of a good root and due depth of earth, which soon turned the green corn into dry stubble. (*Matt. xiii. 21.*)

(2.) Labour after an inward experimental taste of those truths which you profess.

This will preserve your minds from wavering and hesi-

tation about the certainty and reality of them. We will not easily part with those truths which have sensibly shed down their sweet influences upon our hearts. No sophister can easily persuade a man that hath tasted the sweetness of honey, that it is a bitter and unpleasant thing: You cannot easily persuade a man out of his senses.

(3.) Study hard and pray earnestly for satisfaction in the present truths; “That you may be established *εν τη παρῶσῃ αληθείᾳ*, in the truth that now is under opposition and controversy.” (2 *Pet.* i. 12,) Be not ignorant of the truths that lie in present hazard.

Antiquated opinions that are more abstracted from our present interest, are no trials of the soundness of our judgments, and integrity of our hearts, as the controversies and conflicts of the present times are. Every truth hath its time to come upon the stage, and enter the lists, some in one age, and some in another; but Providence seems to have cast the lot of your nativity for the honour and defence of those truths with which error is struggling and conflicting in your time.

Lastly. Be thoroughly sensible of the benefit and good of establishment, and of the evil and danger of a wavering mind and judgment.

“Be not carried away with divers and strange doctrines,” saith the Apostle, “for it is a good thing that the heart be established.” (*Heb.* xiii. 9.) Established souls are the honour of truth. It was the honour of religion in the primitive days, that when the Heathens would proverbially express an impossibility, they used to say, ‘You may as soon turn a Christian from CHRIST, as do it.’

The fickleness of professors is a stumbling-block to the world. They will say as CATO of the civil wars betwixt CÆSAR and POMPEY, *Quem fugiam video, quem sequar non video*: They know whom to avoid, but not whom to follow. And as the honour of truth, so the flourishing of your own souls depends on it. A tree often removed from one soil to another, can never be expected to be fruitful; it is well if it make a shift to live.

(5.) Another inward cause disposing men to receive erroneous impressions, is an unreasonable eagerness to snatch at any doctrine or opinion that promiseth ease to an anxious conscience.

Men that are under terrors of conscience, are willing to listen to any thing that offers present relief. Of all the troubles in the world, those of the conscience are most intolerable. And those that are in pain are glad of ease, and readily catch at any thing that seems to offer it.

This seems to be the thing which led those poor distressed wretches, intimated *Micah* vi. 6, into their gross mistakes about the method of the remission of their sins. "Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" They were ready to purchase inward peace, and buy their pardon at any rate: Nothing but the pangs of conscience could have extorted these things from them. Great is the efficacy and torment of a guilty conscience.

SATAN, who feels more of this in himself than any other creature in the world, and knows how ready poor ignorant, but distressed sinners are to catch at any thing that looks like ease or comfort, and being jealous what these troubles of conscience may issue in, prepares for them such erroneous doctrines and opinions under the names Anodynes and Quieting Recipes, by swallowing of which they feel some present ease, but their disease is thereby made so much the more incurable.

It is upon this account he hath found such vent in the world for his penances, pilgrimages, and indulgences, among the Papists. But seing this ware will not go off among the more enlightened professors of Christianity, he changeth his hand, and fitteth other doses under other names, to quiet sick and distressed souls, before ever their frights of conscience come to settle into true repentance and faith in the

blood of CHRIST, by dressing up and presenting to them such opinions as these, namely, That the covenant of grace is in all respects absolute, and is made to sinners as sinners, without any regard to their faith or repentance ; and whatever sins there be in them, God sees them not.

To such a charm of troubles as this, how earnestly doth the ear of a distressed conscience listen ! How greedily doth it suck in such pleasing words ! Are all sins that are pardoned, pardoned before they are committed ? And does the covenant of grace require neither repentance nor faith antecedently to the application of the promises ? How groundless then are all my fears and troubles ! This, like a dose of opium, quiets, or rather stupefies, the raging conscience : For even an error in judgment, till it be detected and discovered to be so, quiets the heart, as well as principles of truth ; but whenever the fallacy shall be detected, whether here or hereafter, the anguish of conscience must be increased, or (which is worse) left desperate.

To prevent and cure this mistake in the soul, by which it is fitted and prepared to catch any erroneous principle (which is but plausible) for its present relief and ease, I shall desire my reader, seriously to ponder and consider the following queries upon this case :

(1.) Whether by the vote of the whole rational world, a good trouble be not better than a false peace ? Present ease is desirable, but eternal safety is much more so : And if these two cannot consist under the present circumstances of the soul, whether it be not better to endure for a time these painful pangs, than feel more acute and eternal ones, by quieting conscience with false remedies before the time ?

It is bad to lie tossing a few days under a laborious fever ; but far worse to have that fever turned into a lethargy or apoplexy. Erroneous principles may rid the soul of its present pain, and eternal hopes and safety together. Acute pains are better than a senseless stupidity. Though the present rage of conscience be not a right and kindly conviction, yet it may lead to it, and terminate in faith and

union with CHRIST at last, if SATAN do not this way practise upon it, and quench it before its time.

(2.) Bethink yourselves seriously, Whether troubles so quieted and laid asleep, will not revive and turn again upon thee with a double force, as soon as the virtue of the drug (I mean the erroneous principle) hath spent itself?

The efficacy of truth is eternal, and will maintain the peace it gives for ever; but all delusions must vanish, and the troubles which they dammed up for a time, break out with a greater force.

Such are the cures of inward troubles by erroneous principles. I lament the case of blinded Papists, who, by pilgrimages and offerings to the shrines of titular saints, attempt the cure of a lesser sin by committing a greater. Is it because there is not a GOD in Israel, who is able in due season to pacify conscience with proper and durable Gospel remedies, that we suffer our troubles thus to precipitate us into the snares of SATAN for the sake of present ease?

(3.) Read the Scriptures, and inquire whether GOD's people, who have lain long under sharp inward terrors, have not at last found settlement and inward peace by those very methods which the principles that quiet you do utterly exclude.

If you will fetch your peace from a groundless notion, that you may apply boldly and confidently to yourselves the choicest promises in the Gospel, without any regard to faith or repentance wrought by the SPIRIT in your souls: I am sure holy DAVID took another course for the settlement of his conscience. (*Psalm* li. 6—10.) And it hath been the constant practice of the saints in all ages, to clear their title to the righteousness of CHRIST wrought without them, by the works of his SPIRIT wrought within them.

6. The next evil temper in the mind preparing and disposing it for error, is an easy credulity, or sequacious humour in men, rendering them apt to receive things upon trust, without due and thorough examination of the grounds and reasons of them.

This is a disposition fitted to receive any impression seducers please to make upon them: They are said to deceive the hearts of the simple, *αλαλων*, that is, credulous, but well-meaning people that suspect no harm. It is said, “The simple believeth every word.” (*Prov.* xiv. 15.) Through this flood-gate what a multitude of errors in Popery have overflowed the people! They are told, they are not able to judge for themselves, but must take the matters of their salvation upon trust from their spiritual guides; and so the silly people are easily seduced, and made easily receptive of the grossest absurdities their ignorant leaders please to impose upon them.

And it were to be wished that those two points, the dumb services of their ministers, and the blind obedience of the people, had stayed within the Popish confine. But, alas! how many simple Protestants are there, who may be said to carry their brain in other men’s heads! and like silly sheep follow the next in the tract before them; especially if their leaders have but wit and art enough to hide their errors under specious and plausible pretences. How many poisonous drugs hath SATAN put off under the gilded titles of antiquity, or zeal for GOD! How natural is it for men to follow in the tract, and be tenacious of the principles and practices of their progenitors! Multitudes seem to hold their opinions by an hereditary right, as if their faith descended to them the same way their estates do.

The emperor of Morocco told King John’s ambassador, ‘that he had lately read St. PAUL’s Epistles; and truly, (said he,) were I now to choose my religion, I would embrace Christianity before any religion in the world; but every man ought to die in that religion he received from his ancestors.’

The remedies and preventions in this case are such as follow:—

(1.) It is beneath a man to profess any opinion to be his own, whilst the grounds and reasons of it are in other men’s keeping, and wholly unknown to himself.

If a man may tell gold after his father, then sure he may

and ought to try and examine doctrines and points of faith after him. We are commanded to "be ready to give an account of the hope that is in us," and not to say, This or that is my judgment or opinion, but let others give an account of the ground and reason of it.

I confess, if he that leads me into an error were alone exposed to the hazard, and I quit and free, whatever become of him, it were quite another thing. But when our SAVIOUR tells us, that "both [that is, the follower as well as the leader] shall fall into the ditch;" (*Matt. xv. 14*;) at my peril be it if I follow without eyes of my own. That is but a weak building that is shored up by a prop from a neighbour's wall. How many men have ruined their estates by suretyship for others! But of all suretyships none so dangerous as spiritual suretyship. 'We neither ought (as a late worthy speaks) to deify the judgment of the weakest, nor on the other side to defy the judgment of the strongest Christian.' He that pins his faith upon another man's sleeve, knows not whither he will carry it.

(2.) As you ought not to abuse your Christian privilege and liberty, to try all things; so neither, on the other side, to undervalue or part with it. See the things that so much concern your eternal peace with your own eyes.

I showed you before, this liberty is abused by extending it too far; and under the notion of proving all things, many embolden themselves to innovate and entertain any thing; yet beware of bartering such a precious privilege for the fairest promises others can make in lieu of it. I would not slight nor undervalue the piety and learning of others, nor yet put out my own eyes to see by theirs.

(3.) Before you adventure to espouse the opinions of others, diligently observe the fruits and consequences of those opinions in the lives of the zealous abettors and propagators of them: "By their fruits (saith CHRIST) ye shall know them."

When the opinion or doctrine naturally tends to looseness, or when it sucks and draws away all a man's zeal to maintain and diffuse it, and practical religion thereby vi-

sibly languishes in their conversations, it is time for you to make a pause, before you advance one step farther towards it.

7. The next evil disposition that I shall note, is a vain *curiosity*, or an itching desire to pry into things unrevealed, at least above our ability to search out and discover.

It is an observation as true as ancient, *Pruritus aurium scabies ecclesie*, itching ears come to a scab upon the face of the church. The itch of novelty produceth the scab of error. Of this disease the Apostle warns us: "For the time will come, when they shall not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." (2 *Tim.* iv. 3.) Nothing will please them but new notions, and new modes of language and method, tone, and gesture.

Sound doctrine is the only substantial and solid food that nourishes and strengthens the heart of real Christians: But vain sceptics nauseate and despise this as trite, vulgar, cheap and low. Nothing humours them but novelties and rarities: Their unsettled brains must be wheeled about, with "divers and strange doctrines." (*Heb.* xiii. 9.) Novelty and variety are the only properties that commend doctrines to wanton palates. Hence it is they so boldly intrude into things they have not seen. (*Col.* ii. 18.)

The schoolmen have filled the world with a thousand ungrounded fancies, as to the distinct offices and orders of angels; and higher flights of fancy than these, which seem to be invented for no other end or use, but to please the itching ears of the curious.

There is not only a *vesana temeritas genethliacorum*, a wild and daring rashness of astrologers, presuming to foretel futurities, and the fates of kingdoms, as well as particular persons, from the conjunctions and influences of the stars; but there is also found as high a presumption and boldness among men in matters of religion.

SATAN is well aware of this humour in men, and how exceeding serviceable it is to his design; and therefore, having the very knack of clawing and pleasing itching ears

with taking novelties, he is never wanting to feed their minds with a pleasing variety, and fresh succession of them: New opinions are still invented and minted, in which the dangerous hooks of error are hid. If men were once cured of this spiritual itch, and their minds reduced to that temper and sobriety, as to be pleased with, and bless God for the plain revealed truths of the Gospel; SATAN would drive but a poor trade, and find but few customers for his erroneous novelties.

The proper remedies to cure this itch after novelty, or dangerous curiosity of the mind, are,

(1.) Due recollection upon the manifold mischiefs that have entered into the world this way.

It was this curiosity and desire to know, that overthrew our first parents. "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof." (*Gen. iii. 6.*) The very same way by which he let in the first error, he hath let thousands into the world since that day. Nothing is more common in the world, than for an old error to obtain afresh under the name of new light. SATAN hath the very art of shaping stale errors after the mode of the present times, and make them current and passable, as new discoveries and rare novelties.

Thus he puts off libertinism, the old sin of the world, under the title of Christian liberty. What a troop of pagan idolatrous rites were by this means introduced among the Papists! A great part of Popery is but *Ethnicismus Redivivus*, heathenism revived. The Pagans' *Pontifex Maximus* was revived under the title of Pope. The Gentiles' lustrations, in the Popish holy water. Their *Nocturnale sacrum*, or sacrifice nine days after the burial of the party, in the Popish masses for the dead. Their *Alvearium Fratrum*, in cloisters of monks and friars. Their enchanters, in Popish exorcists. Their *Asyla*, in Popish sanctuaries. With multitudes more of Pagan rites quite out of date in Christendom, introduced again un-

der new names in Popery ; as was intimated, *Rev.* xi. 2 ; xiii. 15.

(2.) Be satisfied that God hath not left his people to seek their salvation, or spiritual subsistence, among curious, abstruse and doubtful notions ; but in the great, solid, and plainly revealed truths of the Gospel. “ This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom thou hast sent.” (*John* xvii, 3.) *In facili et absoluto stat æternitas*: The great concerns of our salvation are plain and easy to be understood.

(3.) Vain curiosity is a dangerous snare of SATAN. By such trifles as these, he devours our time, eats up our strength, and diverts our minds from the necessary and most important business of religion. Whilst we immerse our thoughts in these pleasing, but barren contemplations, heart-work, closet-work, family-work, lie by neglected. Whilst we are employed in garnishing the dish with flowers, and curious figures, the cunning cheat takes away the meat our souls should subsist by.

8. *Pride* and arrogancy of human reason, is another evil disposition, moulding and preparing the mind for errors. When men are once conceited of the strength and perspicacity of their own reason, nothing is more usual than for such men to run mad with reason into a thousand mistakes and errors.

Reason indeed is the highest excellency of man ; it exalts him above all earthly creatures, and in its primitive perfection almost equalized him with angels. The pleasures which result from its exercise and experiments, transcend all the pleasures of sense. And though the reason of fallen man is greatly wounded and weakened by sin ; yet it conceits itself to be as strong and clear as ever ; and with SAMSON, when his locks were shorn, goes forth as before-time, being neither sensible of his own weakness, nor of the mysterious and unsearchable depths of Scripture.

Reason is our guide by the institution and law of nature, in civil and natural affairs : It is the standard at which we weigh them : It is an home-born judge and king in the soul.

Faith comes in as a stranger to nature, and so it is dealt with, even as an intruder into reason's province, just as the Sodomites dealt with Lot. It refuseth to be an underling to faith. Out of this arrogance of carnal reason, as from PANDORA'S BOX, swarms of errors are flown abroad into the world.

By this means Socinianism was first started, and hath since propagated itself. They look upon it as a ridiculous and unaccountable thing to reason, that the SON should be co-equal and co-eternal with the FATHER; that GOD should forgive sins freely, and yet forgive none but upon full satisfaction; that CHRIST should make that satisfaction by his sufferings, and yet be the party offended, and so make satisfaction to himself: With many more of the like stamp.

To take down the arrogance, and prevent the mischief of carnal reasonings, let us be convinced,

(1.) That it is the will of GOD, that reason in all believers should resign to faith, and all ratiocination submit to revelation.

Reason is no better than an usurper, when it presumes to arbitrate matters belonging to faith and revelation. Reason's proper place is to sit at the feet of faith, and instead of searching the secret grounds and reasons, to adore and admire the great and unsearchable mysteries of the Gospel. None of GOD's works are unreasonable, but many of them are above reason. It was as truly as ingeniously said by one; 'Never doth reason shew itself more reasonable, than when it ceaseth to reason about things that are above reason.' "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not GOD made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of GOD, the world by wisdom knew not GOD, it pleased GOD by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Cor. i. 20, 21.) It is not reason, but faith that must save us.

The wisdom of GOD in the Gospel, is "Wisdom in a mystery, even hidden wisdom, which GOD ordained before the world unto our glory." (1 Cor. ii. 7.) Such wisdom as

the most eagle-eyed Philosophers of the world understood not. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him: But God hath revealed them to us by his Spirit." (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10.)

(2.) Be convinced of the weakness and deep corruption of natural reason, and this will restrain its arrogance, and make it modest and wary.

A convinced and renewed soul is conscious to itself of its own weakness and blindness, and therefore dares not pry audaciously into the *Arcana Cæli*, nor summon the great God to its bar. It finds itself posed by the mysteries of nature, and therefore concludes itself an incompetent judge of the mysteries of faith.

The arrogance of reason is the reigning sin of the unregenerate, though it be a disease with which the regenerate themselves are infected. When conviction shall do its work upon the soul, the plumes of spiritual pride quickly fall; and it saith with Job; "Once I have spoken, but I will speak no more; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further; [as if he had said, I have done, Father, I have done;] I have uttered things that I understood not." (Job xlii. 3.) Spiritual illumination cures this ambition.

(3.) Consider the manifold mischiefs and evils flowing from the pride of reason.

It doth not only fill the world with errors and distractions; but it also invades the rights of heaven, and casts a vile reflection upon the wisdom, sovereignty and veracity of God. It lifts up itself against his wisdom, not considering that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men." (1 Cor. i. 25.) It spurns at his glorious sovereignty, not considering that "He giveth no account of his matters." (Job xxxiii. 13.) It questions his veracity, in saying with NICODEMUS, "How can these things be?"

9. The last evil disposition I shall here take notice of, is rash and ignorant *zeal*; a temper preparing the mind both to propagate furiously, and receive easily erroneous doctrines and opinions.

When there is in the soul more heat than light; when a fervent spirit is governed by a weak head, such a temper of spirit SATAN desires, and singles out as fittest for his purpose, especially when the heart is full of sin, as well as the understanding weak. A blind horse of a high mettle will carry the rider into any pit, and venture over the most dangerous precipices.

Such were the superstitious Jewish zealots, they had a zeal for GOD, but not according to knowledge. This blind zeal, St. PAUL charges justly upon the Jewish bigots, (*Rom. x. 2.*) as the proper cause of their dangerous errors about the great point of Justification: And surely no man understood the evil of it more than he, who in his unregenerate state was transported by it to the most furious persecution of the saints; and even to dotage, and extreme fondness upon the erroneous traditions of his fathers. (*Gal. i. 14.*)

Blind zeal is a sword in a madman's hand. No persecutor is like a conscientious one, whose erroneous conscience offers up the blood of the saints to the glory of GOD. The blind, but zealous Pharisees "would compass sea and land to make one proselyte," (*Matt. xxiii. 15.*) as our modern Pharisees, the Jesuits, have since done, who have mingled themselves with the remotest and most barbarous nations, to draw them to the Romish error. Of the same temper were the false teachers taxed by the Apostle: "They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you [namely, from our society and ordinances] that you might affect them." (*Gal. iv. 17.*)

And as it is the great instrument by which SATAN propagates errors; so it makes a fit temper in the souls of the people to receive them. For by this means error gains the possession of the affections, without passing a previous and due test by the understanding, and so gains the soul by the advantage of a surprize. Error cares not to endure the due examination of reason; and therefore seeks to gain by surprisal, what it despairs of ever gaining by a plain and fair trial.

The best defensatives against erroneous contagions in this case, are to be found in the following particulars:—

(1.) Reflect seriously and sadly upon the manifold mischiefs occasioned every where, and in all ages of the world, by rash zeal.

Revolve church histories, and you shall find that scarce any cruel persecution hath flamed in the world, which hath not been kindled by blind zeal. Turn over all the records, both of Pagan and Popish persecutions, and you shall still find these two observations confirmed and verified: [1.] That ignorant zeal hath kindled the fires of persecution: And, [2.] That the more zealous any have been for the ways of error, still the more implacably fierce they have been to the sincere servants of God. None like a superstitious *Devoto* to manage the Devil's work of persecution throughly, and to purpose. They will rush violently and headlong into the blood of their dearest relations, to whose sides the Devil sets this sharp spur. Superstitious zeal draws all the strength and power of the soul into that one design; and woe to him that stands in the way of such a man, if God interpose not betwixt him and the stroke!

Now consider, reader, if thy judgment be weak, and thy affections warm, how much thou liest exposed, not only to errors which may ruin thyself, but also to persecution, wherein SATAN may manage thy zeal for the injury or ruin of those that are better than thyself: And withal consider, how many dreadful threatenings are found in Scripture against the instruments of persecution, so employed and managed by SATAN.

Certainly, it were better for thee to stand with thy naked breast before the mouth of a discharging cannon, than that thy soul should stand under this guilt, before such a scripture threatening as that, "He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors." (*Psalm* vii. 13.) And none are more likely to become such, than those of thine own temper, especially if grace be wanting in the heart, whilst zeal for erroneous principles eats up the affections.

(2.) Consider what mischief zeal for an error will do thine own soul, as well as others.

It will wholly engross thy time, thoughts, and strength ; so that if there be any gracious principle in thee, it shall not be able to thrive and prosper : For as a fever takes off the natural appetite from food, so will erroneous zeal take off thy spiritual appetite from meditation, prayer, heart-examination, and all other the most necessary and nourishing duties of religion, by reason whereof thy grace must languish.

When thy soul, with DAVID'S, should be filled as with marrow and fatness, by delightful meditations of GOD upon thy bed, thou wilt be rolling in thy mind thy barren and insipid notions, which yield no food or spiritual strength to thy soul ; thou wilt lie musing how to resolve the arguments and objections against thine errors, when thou shouldst rather be employed in solving the just and weighty objections that lie against thy interest in CHRIST, which were time far better improved.

(3.) Consider how baneful this inordinate zeal hath been to Christian society, lamentably defacing and almost dissolving it every where, to the unspeakable detriment of the churches.

We read of a blessed time, when " they that feared the LORD spake often one to another, and the LORD hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the LORD, and thought upon his name." (*Mal.* iii. 16.) O happy time ! halcyon days ! I myself remember the time when the zeal of the saints spent itself in provoking one another to love and good works, in joint and fervent prayer, in inward, experimental, and edifying communion ; my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is cast down within me ; for alas ! how do I see every where Christian communion turned into vain janglings ! Churches and families into mere cock-pits ! Men's discoursings falling as naturally into contentions about trifles, as they were wont to do into heavenly and experimental subjects, to the unspeakable discharge and damage of religion !

(4.) That opinion is justly to be suspected for erroneous, which comes in at the postern-door of the affections; and not openly and fairly at the right gate of an enlightened and well-satisfied judgment. It is a thief that cometh in at the back-door, at least strongly to be suspected for one. Truth courts the mistress, makes its first and fair addresses to the understanding. Error bribes the handmaid, and labours first to win the affections, that by their influence it may corrupt the judgment.

And thus you see, besides the innocent occasion, namely, GOD's permission of errors in the world, for the trial of his people, nine proper causes of errors found in the evil dispositions of men, which prepare them to receive erroneous doctrines, namely, 1. A wrangling humour at the pretended obscurity of Scripture. 2. The abuse of that Christian liberty purchased by CHRIST. 3. Slothfulness in searching the whole word of GOD. 4. Fickleness and instability of judgment. 5. Eagerness after anodynes to ease a distressed conscience. 6. An easy credulity in following the judgments and examples of others. 7. Vain curiosity, and prying into unrevealed secrets. 8. The pride and arrogancy of human reason. 9. Blind zeal, which spurs on the soul, and runs it upon dangerous precipices.

We come next to consider the principal impulsive cause of errors, which is SATAN working upon the predisposed matter he finds in the corrupt nature of man.

SATAN is a liar from the beginning, and abode not in the truth: He hates it with a deadly hatred, and all the children and friends of truth. And this hatred he manifesteth sometimes by raising furious storms of persecution against the sincere professors of it, (*Rev.* iii. 10,) and sometimes by clouds of heresies and errors, with design to darken it. In the former he acts as a roaring lion; in the latter as a subtle serpent. "I fear lest as the serpent beguiled EVE through his subtilty; so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in CHRIST." (*2 Cor.* xi. 3.)

He is exceeding skilful and dexterous in citing and wresting the Scriptures to serve his vile designs; and as impu-

dently daring, as he is crafty and cunning; as appears in the history of CHRIST'S temptation in the desert, (*Matt.* iv. 6,) where he cites one part of that promise, (*Psalms* xci. 11,) and suppresseth the rest; shows the encouragement, namely, "He shall give his angels charge over thee;" but elips off the limitation of it, namely, "to keep thee in all thy ways:" *In viis, non in precipitiis*, in our lawful ways, not in rash and dangerous precipices; as BERNARD well glosseth.

And it is worth observation, that he introduceth multitudes of errors into the world, under the unsuspected notion of approved preservatives from all mischiefs and dangers from himself. Under this notion, he hath neatly and covertly slid into the world, *holy water, crossings, reliques of saints*, and almost innumerable other superstitious rites.

Erroneous teachers are the ministers of SATAN, however they transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, and the subtle dangerous errors they broach, are fitly styled by the SPIRIT OF GOD, *τα βαθη της Σατανα*, *the depths of SATAN.* (*Rev.* ii. 24.) The corrupt teachers, the Gnostics, &c., called them depths, that is, great mysteries, high and marvellous attainments in knowledge; but the SPIRIT OF GOD fits a very proper epithet to them, they are satanical depths, and mysteries of iniquity. Now the design of SATAN herein is double:—

1. He aims at the ruin and damnation of those that vent and propagate them; upon which account the Apostle calls them, destructive, or (as we render it) damnable heresies. (*2 Pet.* ii. 2.) And because GOD will preserve the souls of his own from this mortal contagion, therefore,

2. He endeavours by lesser errors to busy the minds, and check the growth of grace in the souls of the saints, by employing them about things so foreign to true godliness, and the power thereof.

The rules for prevention and recovery, are these that follow:—

(1.) Pray earnestly for a thorough change of the state

and temper of thy soul, by sound conversion and regeneration. Conversion turns us from darkness to light, and from the power of SATAN to GOD. They are his own slaves and vassals that are taken captive by him at his will. A sanctified heart is a sovereign defensative against erroneous doctrines; it furnishes the soul with spiritual eyes, judicious ears, and a distinguishing taste, by which it may discern both good and evil, truth and error; yea, it puts the soul at once under the conduct of the SPIRIT, and protection of the promise; (*Job* xvi. 13;) and though this doth not secure a man from all lesser mistakes, yet it effectually secures him from those greater ones, which are inconsistent with salvation.

(2.) Acquaint yourselves with the wiles and methods of SATAN, and be not ignorant of his devices. When once you understand the paint with which he sets off the ugly face of error, you will not easily be enamoured with it. Pretences of devotion upon one side, and of purity, zeal, and reformation upon the other; are pleasant sounds to both ears; yet the wary soul will examine, before it receive doctrinal points under these gilded titles. Those that have made their observations upon the stratagems of SATAN, will heedfully observe both the tendency of doctrines, and the lives of their teachers; and if they find looseness, pride, wantonness in them, it is not a glorious title, or magnificent name that shall charm them. They know SATAN can transform himself into an angel of light; and no wonder if his ministers also be transformed into ministers of righteousness.

(3.) Resign your minds and judgments in fervent prayer to the government of CHRIST, and conduct of the SPIRIT; and in all your addresses to GOD, pray that he would keep them chaste and pure, and not suffer SATAN to commit a rape upon them. Plead with GOD that part of CHRIST's prayer: "Sanctify them through thy truth: Thy word is truth." (*John* xvii. 17.)

(4.) Live in the conscientious and constant practice of all those truths and duties GOD hath already manifested to you.

This will bring you under that blessed promise of CHRIST: "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." (*John* vii. 17.) SATAN's greatest successes are amongst idle, notional, and vain professors; not humble, serious, and practical Christians.

Having considered the several internal causes of error, found in the evil dispositions of the seduced, as also the impulsive cause, namely, SATAN, who fits suitable baits to all these evil tempers; we come next to consider the instrumental cause employed by SATAN in this work, namely, the *false teacher*, whom SATAN makes use of as his seeds-man, to scatter erroneous doctrines into the minds of men, ploughed up and prepared by those evil tempers, as a fit soil to receive them.

The choice of instruments is a principal part of SATAN's policy. Every one is not fit to be employed in such a service as this. All are not fit to be of the council of war, who yet take their places of service in the field. A rustic carried out of the field, on board a ship at sea, though he never learned his compass, nor saw a ship before, can by another's direction, tug lustily at a rope; but he had need be an expert artist, that sits at the helm, and steers the course. The worst causes need the smoothest orators; and a bad ware, a cunning merchant to put it off.

Deep men are coveted by SATAN to manage this design. None like an eloquent TERTULLUS to confront a PAUL. A subtle ECCIUS to enter the list in defence of the Popish cause, against the learned and zealous Reformers. When the DUKE of BUCKINGHAM undertook to plead the bad cause of King RICHARD the Third, the Londoners said, They never thought it had been possible for any man to deliver so much bad matter, in such good words.

The first instrument chosen by SATAN to deceive man, was the serpent; because that creature was more subtle than any beast of the field. There is not a man of eminent parts, but SATAN courts and solicits him for his service. ST. AUSTIN told an ingenious scholar, 'The Devil courts thy parts to adorn his cause.' He surveys the world, and

wherever he finds more than ordinary strength of reason, pregnancy of wit, depth of learning, and elegancy of language, that is the man he looks for.

‘There is,’ saith a late worthy, ‘an *erudita nequitia*, a learned kind of wickedness, a subtle art of deceiving the minds of others.’ Upon which account the SPIRIT of GOD sometimes compares them to cunning and cheating tradesmen, who have the art to set a gloss upon their bad wares with fine words, *πλαστοις λογοις υμας εμπορευονται*, they buy and sell the people with their ensnaring and feigned words. (2 *Pet.* ii. 3.) And sometimes he compares them to cunning gamblers, that have the art and sleight-of-hand to cog the die, to deceive the unskilful, and win their game, *εν τη κυβεια.* (*Eph.* iv. 14.)

And sometimes the SPIRIT of GOD compares them to witches themselves: “Foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?” (*Gal.* iii. 1.) How many strange feats have been done upon the bodies of men and women by witchcraft! But far more and more strange upon the souls of men by the magic of error. JANNES and JAMBRES performed wonderful things in the sight of PHAROAH, by which they deceived and hardened him; and unto these, false teachers are compared.

The proper remedies in this case are principally two.

(1.) Pray fervently, and labour diligently in the use of all GOD’s appointed means to get more solidity of judgment, and strength of grace to establish you in the truth, and secure your souls against the craftiness of men that lie in wait to deceive.

It is the ignorance and weakness of the people, which makes the factors for errors so successful as they are. Consult the Scripture, and you shall find these cunning merchants drive the quickest and gainfullest trade among the weak and injudicious. So speaks the Apostle, “With good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple;” harmless, weak, easy souls, who have a desire to do well, but want wisdom to discern the subtleties of them that mean ill; who are void both of fraud in themselves,

and suspicion of others. O what success have the deceivers, *χρησολογιας και ευλογιας*, their fair words and sugared speeches, sweet and taking expressions, among such innocent ones!

And who are they among whom SATAN'S cunning gamesters commonly win, but weak Christians, credulous souls, whom for that reason the Apostle calls *νηπιοι*, children? The word properly signifies an infant, when it is referred to the age; but unskilful and unlearned, when referred (as it is here) to the mind. So again, they (that is, the false teachers there spoken of) beguile *ψυχας ασηρικτας*, unstable souls, souls that are not confirmed and grounded in the principles of religion. (*2 Pet.* ii. 14.) Whence by the way, take notice of the unspeakable advantage and necessity of being well catechized in our youth: The more judicious, the more secure.

(2.) Labour to acquaint yourselves with the sleights and artifices SATAN'S factors and instruments generally make use of, to seduce and draw men from the truth. The knowledge of them is a good defensative against them.

Now there are two common artifices of seducers, which it is not safe for Christians to be ignorant of:—

[1.] They usually seek to disgrace and blast the reputations of those truths, and ministers set for their defence, which they design afterwards to overthrow; and to beget a reputation to those errors which they have a mind to introduce. How many precious truths of GOD are this day, and with this design defamed as legal and carnal doctrines; and those that defend them as men of an Old Testament spirit!

Humiliation for sin, and contrition of spirit, fall under disgrace with many, and indeed all qualifications and prerequisites unto coming to CHRIST, as things not only needless, but pernicious unto the souls of men, although they have not the least dependence upon them.

And so for the persons of orthodox Ministers; you see into what contempt the false teachers would have brought both the person and preaching of PAUL himself: "His

bodily presence," say they, "is weak, and his speech contemptible." (2 Cor. x. 10.)

[2.] Their other common artifice is, to insinuate their false doctrines among many acknowledged and precious truths, which only serve as a convenient vehicle to them; and besides that, to make their errors as palatable as they can to the vitiated appetite of corrupt nature.

Having considered the several causes of errors, found in the evil dispositions of the seduced, as also the impulsive and instrumental causes, namely, SATAN, and false teachers employed by him; I shall next proceed to discover some special, and most successful methods frequently used by them, to draw the minds of men from the truth. Amongst which, one is the great skill they have in representing the abuses of the ordinances of GOD, and duties of religion, by wicked men, to scare tender and weak consciences from the due use of them.

The abuse of CHRIST's holy appointments are so cunningly improved to serve this design, that the minds of many well-meaning persons receive such deep disgust at them, that they are scarce ever to be reconciled to them again. A strong prejudice is apt to drive men from one extreme to another, as thinking, they can never get far enough off from that which hath been so represented to them. Thus making good the old observation, *Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt*; they run from the troublesome smoke of superstition, into the fire of an irreligious contempt of GOD's ordinances, split themselves upon Charybdis to avoid Scylla.

Thus the Papists have deeply abused the ordinance of Baptism, by their corrupt mixtures and additions: And multitudes of carnal Protestants dangerously resting upon their supposed baptismal regeneration, to the great hazard of their salvation. They take from hence such deep offence at the administration of it to any infants at all, (though the seed of GOD's covenanted people,) that they think they can never be sharp enough in their invectives against it; nor

have they any patience to hear the most rational defences of that practice.

So, for that scriptural heavenly duty of singing: What more commonly alleged against it, than the abuse of that precious ordinance? How often is the nonsense of the common translation, the rudeness and dulness of the metre of some Psalms, as also the formality with which that ordinance is performed by many,—I say, how often are these things buzzed into the ears of the people, to alienate their hearts from so sweet and beneficial a duty!

IF SATAN can prevail first with wicked men, to corrupt and abuse GOD's ordinances; and then with good men to renounce and slight them for the sake of those abuses; he fully obtains his design, and gives CHRIST a double wound at once; one by the hand of his avowed enemies, the other by the hands of his friends. First, wicked men corrupt CHRIST's ordinances; and then good men nauseate them.

The proper remedies against errors, grounded on the abuses of duties and ordinances, are such as follow:—

1. Let men consider, that there is nothing in religion so great, so sacred and excellent, but some or other have greatly corrupted or vilely abused them.

What is there in the whole world more precious and excellent than the free-grace of GOD? And yet you read of some that turned this grace into lasciviousness. (*Jude* 4.) What more desirable to Christians, than the glorious liberty CHRIST hath purchased for them by his blood, and settled upon them in the Gospel-charter! A liberty from SATAN, sin, and the curse of the law; and you read of them that used this liberty for a cloak of maliciousness. (*1 Pet.* ii. 16.) It is true, CHRIST came to be a sacrifice for sin; to set us at liberty from the bondage of our lusts, not from the ties and duties of our obedience. Under the pretence of this liberty it was, that the Gnostics and Menandrians of old, did not only connive at, but openly taught and practised all manner of lewdness and uncleanness.

ST. AUGUSTINE, in his book of heresy, makes this sad

complaint: The Menandrians willingly embrace all uncleanness as the fruit of the grace of GOD towards men. And not only the liberty purchased by CHRIST, but the very person and Gospel of CHRIST are liable to abuses; and often through the corruptions of men's hearts, become stones of stumbling, and rocks of offence. What then? Shall we renounce the grace of GOD, our Christian liberty, the very Gospel, yea, and person of CHRIST himself, because each of them has been thus vilely abused by wicked wretches? At the peril of our eternal damnation be it, if we do so. "Blessed is he (saith our LORD) that is not offended in me." Beware, lest by this means SATAN at once wound the LORD JESUS CHRIST by scandal, and thy soul by prejudice.

2. Consider also, that it is the nature and temper of a gracious soul, to raise his esteem, and heighten his love to those ordinances which are most abused and disgraced by men.

The more they are abused and opposed by others, the higher they should be valued and honoured by us: "It is time for Thee, O LORD, to work, for they have made void thy law; therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold." (*Psalm cxix. 126, 127.*) As if he had said, the more they are disgraced and abused by wicked men, the more do I honour and prize them. A like spirit, with DAVID's, was found in ELIJAH: "I have been very jealous for the LORD GOD of hosts; because the children of ISRAEL have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy Prophets with the sword." (*1 Kings xix. 14.*)

A good man will strive to honour and secure those truths and duties most, which he finds under most disgrace or danger. He loves the truth sincerely, who cleaves to it, and stands by it under all opposition. This is a good trial of the soundness of thy heart, and purity of thine ends in religion: Such a proof, as the honour and reputation of religion in the world can never give thee.

3. Before you part with any ordinance or practice in religion, think whether you never found any spiritual blessings or advantages in that path which you are now tempted to forsake.

Had you never any spiritual meltings of your hearts and affections in that heavenly ordinance of singing? And may there not be now thousands of mercies in your possession in consequence and as the fruit of your solemn dedication to God in baptism by your covenanted parents? For my own part, I do heartily and solemnly bless God for it upon this account; and so I hope thousands besides myself have cause to do. However, such a practice may by no means be deserted by you, because abused by others.

1. From all that hath been said about errors, we see in the First place, the great necessity of an able, faithful, standing ministry in the Church.

One special end of the ministry, is the establishment of the people's souls against the errors of the times. "He gave some Apostles, &c., that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men." (*Eph.* iv. 11, 14.) Ministers are shepherds, and without a shepherd, how soon will the flock go astray! MOSES was absent but a few days from the Israelites, and at his return found them all run into the snares of idolatry. A sheep is *animal sequax*, a creature that follows a leader. One straggler may mislead a whole flock. A Minister's work is not only to feed, but to defend the flock. "I am set (saith PAUL) for the defence of the Gospel." (*Phil.* i. 17.) An orthodox and faithful Minister is a double blessing to the people; but woe to that people, whose Ministers, instead of securing them against errors, cause them to err; they are the dogs of the flock. (*Isaiah* ix. 16.) Some in Scripture are called dumb dogs, who, instead of barking at the thief, bite the children: But faithful Ministers give warning of spiritual dangers.

2. From the manifold causes and mischiefs of errors before-mentioned, we may also see what a choice mercy it is to be kept sound in judgment, steadfast and unmoveable in the truths and ways of CHRIST. A sound and steadfast Christian is a blessing in his generation, and a glory to his profession. It was an high encomium of ATHANASIUS, *Sedem maluit mutare, quam syllabum*: He would rather lose his seat, than a syllable of GOD'S truth. Soundness of judgment must needs be a choice blessing; because the understanding is that leading faculty which directs the will and conscience of man, and they his whole life and practice. How often and how earnestly doth CHRIST pray for his people, that they may be kept in the truth! It is true, orthodoxy in itself is not sufficient to any man's salvation; but the conjunction of an orthodox head, with an honest heart, does constitute an excellent Christian.

3. By this discourse we may further discover one great and special cause and reason of the lamentable decay of the spirit and power of religion amongst the professors of the present age.

It is a complaint more just than common, that we do all fade as a leaf. And what may be the cause? Nothing more probable than the wasting of our time and spirits in vain janglings and fruitless controversies, which, the Apostle tells us, have not profited; (*Heb* xiii. 9;) that is, they have greatly injured them that have been occupied therein. Many controversies of these times grow up about religion, as suckers from the root and limbs of a fruit tree, which spend the vital sap that should make it fruitful.

It is a great and sad observation made upon the state of England by some judicious persons, after the greatest increase of religion, both intensively in the power of it, and extensively in the number of converts, what a remarkable decay it suffered both ways, when, about the year forty-four, controversies and disputations grew fervent among professors. Since that time our strength and glory have very much abated.

4. From this discourse we may also gather, the true grounds and reasons of those frequent persecutions which God lets in upon his churches and people: These rank weeds call for snowy and frosty weather to subdue and kill them.

I know the enemies of God's people aim at something else: They strike at religion itself; and according to their intention, without timely repentance, will their reward be. The issues of persecution are upon this account greatly beneficial to the Church; that the wisdom of God makes them excellently useful, both to prevent and cure the mischiefs and dangers of errors. If enemies were not, friends and brethren would be injurious to each other. Persecution, if it kills not, yet at least it gives check to the rise and growth of errors: And if it do not perfectly unite the hearts of Christians, yet to be sure it cools and allays their sinful heats; and that two ways: (1.) By cutting out for them far better and more necessary work. Now instead of racking their brains about unnecessary controversies, they find it high time to be searching their hearts, and examining the foundations of their faith and hope, with respect to the other world. (2.) Moreover, such times and straits discover the sincerity, zeal, and constancy of them we were jealous of, or prejudiced against before, because they followed not us.

Lastly, Let us learn hence, both the duty and necessity of charity and mutual forbearance; we have all our mistakes one way or other, and therefore must maintain mutual charity under dissents in judgment.

And yet an erring brother must be reduced if possible, and that by sharp rebukes too, if gentler essays be ineffectual; (*Tit.* i. 13;) and the wounds of a friend have more faithful love in them, than the kisses of an enemy: And if God make us instrumental by that or any other method, to recover a brother from the error of his way, he will have great cause, both to bless God, and thank the instrument, who thereby saves a soul from death, and hides a multitude of sins. (*James* v. 20.)

E X T R A C T S

FROM

The Lives

OF

SUNDRY EMINENT PERSONS.

THE
LIFE OF
DR. H. HAMMOND:

WRITTEN BY

JOHN FELL, D. D.

Dean of Christ Church, Oxford.

DR. HENRY HAMMOND was born the 18th of August, 1605, at Chertsey in Surrey. He was the youngest son of Dr. JOHN HAMMOND, Physician to Prince HENRY, and from that great favourer of meriting servants and their relations, had the honor at the font to receive his Christian name.

Being yet in his long coats, (which heretofore were usually worn beyond the years of infancy,) he was sent to Eton school; where his pregnancy having been advantaged by the more than paternal care and industry of his father, (who was an exact critic in the learned languages, especially the Greek,) became the observation of those that knew him: For in that tenderness of age he was not only a proficient in Greek and Latin, but had also some knowledge in the elements of Hebrew; in which tongue, being then rarely heard of, even out of grammar schools, he grew the tutor of those who began to write themselves men, but thought it no shame to learn of one, in whom the learned languages might be thought to be the mother-tongue.

His sweetness of carriage is very particularly remembered by his contemporaries, who observed that he was never engaged (upon any occasion) in any fight or quarrel; as

also that at times allowed for play, he would steal from his fellows into places of privacy, to say his prayers; omens of his future pacific temper and eminent devotion.

Which softness of temper, his schoolmaster, MR. BUSH, who upon his father's account had a tender kindness for him, looked upon with some jealousy; for he, building upon the general observation, that gravity and passiveness in children is not from discretion but phlegm, suspected that his scholar's faculties would desert his industry; but the event gave a full and speedy defeat to those well-meant misgivings; for he so improved, that at thirteen years old he was indeed ripe for the university, and accordingly sent to Magdalen College in Oxford, where not long after he was chosen Demy, and as soon as capable Fellow.

Having taken his degree, he bought a system of Divinity, with design to apply himself straightway to that study: But upon second thoughts, he returned for a time to human learning, and afterwards, when he resumed his purpose, took a quite different course, beginning at the upper end, as conceiving it most reasonable to search for primitive truth in the primitive writers, and not to suffer his understanding to be prepossessed by the schemes of modern authors.

In the year 1629, being twenty-four years of age, the statutes of his house directing it, he entered into holy orders, and upon the same grounds not long after took the degree of Bachelor in Divinity, giving as happy proof of his proficiency in sacred, as before he had done in secular knowledge.

During the whole time of his abode in the University, he generally spent thirteen hours of the day in study; by which, besides an exact dispatch of the whole course of philosophy, he read over all classic authors that are extant, and upon the more considerable wrote, as he passed, scholia and critical emendations, and drew up indexes for his private use at the beginning and end of each book; all which remain at this time, and testify his indefatigable pains.

In the year 1633, the REV. DR. FREWEN, then President of his College, gave him the honour to supply one of his courses at the Court ; where the EARL of LEICESTER happening to be an auditor, was so deeply affected with the sermon, that the rectory of Pensehurst being at that time void, and in his gift, he immediately offered him the presentation ; which being accepted, he was inducted on the 22nd of August in the same year ; and thenceforth, from the retirements of an University, applied himself to the more busy entertainments of a rural privacy.

In the discharge of his ministerial function, he satisfied not himself in diligent and constant preaching only, but conceived himself obliged to the offering up the solemn daily sacrifice of prayer for his people, administering the sacraments, relieving the poor, keeping hospitality, reconciling differences amongst neighbours, visiting the sick, catechising the youth.

As to the first of these, his preaching, it was not at the ordinary rate of the times, an effusion of shallow and crude conceptions, but a rational and just discourse, that was to teach the priest as well as the lay-hearer. His method was (which likewise he recommended to his friends) after every sermon to resolve upon the ensuing subject ; that being done, to pursue the course of study which he was then in hand with, reserving the close of the week for the provision for the next LORD'S day : Whereby, not only a constant progress was made in science, but materials were gained unto the immediate future work ; for, he said, be the subjects treated of never so distant, somewhat will infallibly fall in conducive to the present purpose.

The offices of prayer he had in his church, not only upon Sundays, and festivals, and their eves, as also Wednesdays and Fridays, but every day in the week, and twice on Saturdays and holiday eves. For his assistance wherein he kept a curate, and allowed him a comfortable salary. And at those devotions he took order that his family should give diligent and exemplary attendance ; which was the easilier performed, it being guided by his mother, a wo-

man of ancient virtue, and one to whom he paid a more than filial obedience.

As to the administration of the sacrament, he reduced it to an imitation, though a distant one, of primitive frequency, to once a month, and therewith its anciently inseparable appendant, the offertory; wherein his instruction and example so far prevailed, that there was thenceforth little need of making any tax for the poor. Nay, in a short time a stock was raised to be always ready for the apprenticing of young children, whose parents' condition made the provision for them an equal clarity to both the child and parent.

For the relief of the poor, besides the forementioned expedient, wherein others were sharers with him, for his private charity, besides dedicating the tenth of all receipts, and the daily alms given at the door, he constantly set apart over and above every week a certain rate in money; and however rarely his own rent-days occurred, the indigent had two and fifty quarter days returning in his year.

Yet farther, another act of charity he had, the selling corn to his poor neighbours below market-price; which was a great benefit to them, who, besides the abatement of price, and possibly forbearance, saved thereby a day's work.

He that was thus liberal to the necessitous poor, was no less hospitable to those of better quality; and as at other times he frequently invited his neighbours to his table, so more especially on Sundays; but beyond the weekly treatments, the Christmas festival had a peculiar allowance to support it. He knew well how much the application at the table enforced the doctrines of the pulpit, and how subservient the endearing of his person was to the recommending his instructions.

In accordance to which his generous freedom in alms and hospitality, he farther obliged his parishioners in the setting of their tithes and dues belonging to him: For though he understood how little obligation there is on him that lets a bargain to consider the casual loss, who is sure never to share in a like surplusage of gain; yet herein he frequently departed from his right: Insomuch that having

set the tithes of a large meadow, and upon agreement received part of the money at the beginning of the year ; it happening that the profits were afterwards spoiled and carried away by a flood, he, when the tenant came to make the last payment, not only refused it, but returned the former sum, saying to the poor man, ‘ God forbid I should take the tenth, where you have not the nine parts.’

As by public admonition he most diligently instilled that great doctrine of peace and love, so did he likewise in his private address and conversation, being never at peace in himself, till he had procured it amongst his neighbours ; wherein God so blessed him, that he not only attained his purpose of uniting distant parties unto each other, but, contrary to the usual fate of reconcilers, gained them to himself : There having been no person of his function better beloved than he when present, or lamented more when absent, by his flock : Of which tender affection, instead of more, we may take two instances : The one, that he being driven away, and his books plundered, one of his neighbours bought them in his behalf, and preserved them for him till the end of the war : The other, that during his abode at Pensehurst, he never had any dispute about his dues, but had his tithes fully paid, and not of the most refuse parts, but generally the very best.

Though he judged the time of sickness an improper season for the great work of repentance ; yet he esteemed it a most useful preparative, the voice of God himself exhorting to it ; and therefore he not only, when desired, made his visits to all such as stood in need of this charity, but prevented their requests by early and by frequent coming to them. And this he was so careful of, that after his remove from Pensehurst, being at Oxford, and hearing of the sickness of one of his parishioners, he from thence sent to him those instructions which he judged useful, and which he could not give at nearer distance.

For the institution of youth in the rudiments of piety, his custom was, during the warmer season of the year, to spend an hour before evening prayer in catechising, whereat

the parents and older sort were wont to be present, and from whence (as he with comfort was used to say) they reaped more benefit than from his sermons.

Besides all this, that there might be no imaginable assistance wanting, he took care for the providing an able schoolmaster in the parish, which he continued during the whole time of his abode.

And as he thus laboured in the spiritual building up of souls, he was not negligent of the material fabrick committed to his trust; but repaired with a very great expense (the annual charge of one hundred pounds) his Parsonage-house, till from an incommodious ruin he had rendered it a fair and pleasant dwelling, with the adherent conveniences of gardens and orchards.

While he was thus busy on his charge, though he so prodigally laid out himself upon the interests of his flock, yet when the uses of the public called him forth, he readily obeyed the summons, and frequently preached both at ST. PAUL'S Cross, and the Visitations of his brethren the Clergy, as also at the cathedral Church of Chichester, where he had the dignity of Archdeacon; which at the beginning of the late troubles falling to him, he managed with great zeal and prudence; not only by the charms of Christian rhetorick, persuading to obedience and union, but by the force of demonstration, charging it as a most indispensable duty; wherein the eminent importance of the truths he would enforce so prevailed over his otherwise insuperable modesty, that in a full assembly of the clergy, he broke off from what he had premeditated, and out of the abundance of his heart spoke to his auditory; and by the blessing of God, to which he attributed it, found a very signal reception.

In the year 1639, he proceeded Doctor in Divinity. About this time he became a member of the Convocation called with the short Parliament in 1640; as after this he was named to be of the Assembly of Divines; his invincible loyalty to his prince not being so valid an argument against his nomination, as the repute of his learning and virtue were, on the other part, to have some title to him.

And now that conformity became a crime, though the Committee of the country summoned him before them, and used their best arguments, he still went on in his regular practice, and continued it till the middle of July, 1643. At which time there being in his neighbourhood about Tunbridge an attempt in behalf of the King, it being defeated, the good doctor was forced to secure himself by retirement; withdrawing himself to his old tutor, Dr. BUCKNER, to whom he came about the 25th of July, early in the morning, in such an habit as that exigence made necessary for him, and whither not many days before his old friend and fellow-pupil, Dr. OLIVER, came upon the same errand. The necessity to leave his flock, as the doctor afterwards acknowledged, was that which most affected him of any he felt in his whole life; amidst which, though he was no valuer of trifles, he had so extraordinary a dream, that he could not then despise, nor ever afterwards forget it.

It was thus: 'He thought himself and a multitude of others to have been abroad in a bright and cheerful day, when on a sudden there seemed a separation to be made, and he with the far less number to be placed at a distance from the rest; and then the clouds gathering, a most tempestuous storm arose, with thundering and lightnings, with spouts of impetuous rain, and violent gusts of wind, and whatever else might add unto a scene of horror; particularly balls of fire that shot themselves amongst the ranks of those that stood in the lesser party; when a gentle whisper seemed to interrupt those louder noises, saying, Be still, and ye shall receive no harm. Amidst these terrors the doctor falling to his prayers, soon after the tempest ceased, and that known anthem begun, Come, LORD JESUS, come away; with which he awoke.' The correspondent event of all which he found verified signally in the preservation both of himself and his friends. Beside, being himself taken to the choirs of angels at the close of that land-hurricane of ours, whereof that dismal apparition was only a faint emblem: He gave thereby too literal a completion to

his dream, and the unhappy credit of bordering upon prophecy.

In this retirement the two doctors remained about three weeks, till an alarm was brought, that a strict inquiry was made for Dr. HAMMOND, and one hundred pounds promised as a reward for him that should produce him: Which they concluded a necessary ground for their remove.

Upon this they resolve to be gone; and Dr. OLIVER having an interest in Winchester, which was then in the King's quarters, they chose that as the next place of their retreat. But being on the way thither, Dr. OLIVER was met and saluted with the news that Dr. FREWEN, President of Magdalen College, was made Bishop of Lichfield, and that the College had pitched upon him as successor. This put Dr. OLIVER to new counsels; and since providence had found out so seasonable a relief, inclined him not to desert it, but to divert to Oxford.

To this Dr. HAMMOND made much difficulty to assent, thinking it too far from his living, whither he had hopes to return; and to that purpose had wrote to such of his friends as were in power: But his letters meeting a cold reception, he was at last persuaded, and came to Oxford; where procuring an apartment in his old College, he sought that peace in his study, which was no where else to be met with; taking no other diversion than the giving instruction to young students, and the satisfaction he received from the conversation of learned men.

In the interim a treaty being laboured by his Majesty, to compose (if it were possible) the unhappy differences in Church and State; and in order thereunto the DUKE of RICHMOND and EARL of SOUTHAMPTON being sent to London, Dr. HAMMOND went along as Chaplain to them; where, with great zeal and prudence, he laboured to undeceive those seduced persons whom he had opportunity to converse with: And when the treaty was solemnly appointed at Uxbridge, several divines being sent thither in behalf of the different parties, he, among other excellent

men that adhered to the King, was made choice of to assist in that employment.

He was soon after made Canon of Christ-Church, and Chaplain in ordinary to his Majesty. But now the King's affairs declining every where, and Oxford being forced upon articles to surrender; though he foresaw a second and more fatal siege approaching, a leaguer of encamped inevitable mischiefs; yet he remitted nothing of his wonted industry.

In the mean time his sacred Majesty, sold by his Scottish into the hands of his English subjects, and brought a prisoner to Holdenby, being taken from the Parliament Commissioners into the possession of the army, obtained that kindness from them, the service of some few of his Chaplains, whom he by name had sent for, and among them of
DR. HAMMOND.

Accordingly the good Doctor attended on his master in the several removes of Woburn, Cavesham, and Hampton-Court, as also thence into the Isle of Wight, where he continued till Christmas, 1647; at which time his Majesty's attendants were again put from him.

Sequestered from this his melancholy, but desired employment, he returned again to Oxford; where being chosen Sub-Dean, an office to which belongs much of the government of the College, and soon after the whole, (the Dean being made a prisoner,) he undertook the entire management of all affairs, and discharged it with great sufficiency and admirable diligence, leaving his beloved studies to interest himself not only in moderating at Divinity disputations, but in presiding at the more youthful exercises of themes and declamations; redeeming still at night these vacuities of the day, scarce ever going to bed till after midnight, sometimes not till three in the morning, and yet certainly rising to prayers at five.

Nor did his inspection content itself in looking to the general performances of duty, but descended to an accurate survey of every one's both practice and ability; so that this large society of scholars appeared his private family, he scarce leaving any single person without some mark of both his

charity and care, relieving the necessitous in their several wants of money and of books, shaming the vicious to sobriety, encouraging the ingenuous to diligence, and finding stratagems to ensnare the idle to a love of study. But above all, he endeavoured to prepare his charge for the impending persecution; that they might adorn their profession, and not at the same time suffer for the cause of righteousness, and as evil-doers.

To this end he both admitted and solemnly invited all sober persons to his familiarity and converse; and beside that, received them to his weekly private office of fasting and humiliation.

But now the long-expected ruin breaking in with its full weight, the Doctor became involved in the general calamity. And whereas the then usual law of expulsion was immediately to banish, enjoining to quit the town within twenty-four hours, DR. SHELDON and DR. HAMMOND were submitted to a contrary fate, and voted to be prisoners in that place, from which all else were driven. But such was the authority of exemplary virtue, that the person designed to succeed in the Canonry of Christ-church, though he had accepted of the place at London, yet had not courage to pursue his undertaking, but voluntarily relinquished it. And the officer who was commanded to take DR. SHELDON and him into custody, COLONEL EVELIN, Governor of Wallingford Castle, (though a man of as opposite principles to Churchmen as any of the adverse party,) wholly declined the employment, solemnly protesting that if they came to him, they should be entertained as friends, and not as prisoners.

But these remorses proved of little effect; the Prebend of Christ-Church being suddenly supplied by a second choice, and Oxford itself being continued the place of their confinement.

DR. HAMMOND having continued about ten weeks in his restraint in Oxford, by the interposition of his brother-in-law, SIR JOHN TEMPLE, had licence granted to be removed to a more acceptable confinement, Clapham in Bedford-

shire, the house in which his worthy friend SIR PHILIP WARWICK lived. Where soon after his arrival, that horrid mockery of justice, the trial of the King drew on. After whose death, he gave not up himself to an inactive dull amazement, but with the redoubled use of fasting, tears, and solemn prayer, resumed his wonted studies.

About this time, that strength of body which before had faithfully attended his indefatigable mind began to fail him, and those four torments of disease, which single have been judged a competent trial of human sufferance, the stone, the gout, the cholic, and the cramp, (the last of which was to him as tyrannous as any of the former,) became in a manner the constant exercise of his Christian fortitude and patience; affording him from this time to the end of his life very rare and short intervals of health.

But among all his labours, his Parænesis, a persuasive and practical Tract, cost him most throes and pangs of birth, as having being penned first in tears, and then in ink. For, however, with great serenity he entertained all other accidents, having habituated himself to his beloved doctrine of submitting, not to the will of God alone, but to his wisdom, both which, he used to say, were perfectly one thing in that blessed Agent; (and accordingly, in the most dismal appearance he made this constant motto, *גם זו לטוב* *Even this for good*;) yet in this instance the tenderness of his soul seemed to have melted his resolution; the occasion of that treatise being the interdict of January 1655, which disabled the loyal suffering clergy from doing any ministerial act; which he resented with the highest passion, not only upon the general account of God's more immediate displeasure to the nation legible therein, but (what he had much less reason to do) in reference to his own particular; he looking on this dispensation of Providence as God's pronouncing him unworthy to do him service: 'The reproaching (to use his own words) his former unprofitableness by casting him out as straw to the dunghill.' Nor should any consideration that terminated on himself have persuaded him at all to

regard that tyrannous injunction, had not charity to the family where he was, made him content to admit of an expedient that secured all real duties, whilst he for some short time forbore that attendance on the altar which was the very joy of his life.

And now, though his physicians had earnestly forbidden his accustomed fastings, yet he resumed his rigours, esteeming this calamity such an one as admitted no exception, which should not be outlived.

And when the loyal sufferers abroad became subjected to the worst effect of banishment and want, the Doctor, to whose diffusive virtue the limits of the nation were too strait a circle, thought this a season to exert his charity; accordingly, though this great duty were solemnly declared treason, he continued to send over several sums for their relief.

Which practice of his, by the surprise of the person interested, being discovered to CROMWELL, he was alarmed with the expectation of that usage which was then a certain consequent of such meritorious acts. But this adventure brought no disturbance to the Doctor. Nay, he seemed to have gained an opportunity of saying something very home to him, which he purposed within himself to press to the highest advantage: And, indeed, this was the only issue of that threatening accident, God's restraining power interposing here, and exemplifying upon him what in others he was wont to observe, that they who least considered hazard in the doing of their duties, fared still best.

Nor did this danger being over, as with others in all likelihood it would have done, persuade to caution for the future; but with his wonted diligence, he immediately went on in the pursuit of his charity.

He was enterprising a Comment on the Old Testament, and begun on the book of *Proverbs*, and finished the third part of it: But the completion of this, and all his other great intendments, received here a full period; it pleasing the Divine Providence now to take him to himself.

The reader will not be disobliged, if we a while divert

from this sadder part of the narrative, and entertain him with a survey of the personal accomplishments of the Doctor.

The frame of his body was such as suited with the noble use to which it was designed, the entertaining a most pure and active soul, but equally to the advantages of strength and comeliness. His stature was of just height and proportion, avoiding the extremes of gross and meagre, advantaged by a graceful carriage, at once most grave, and yet as much obliging. His face carried dignity and attractiveness in it, scarce ever clouded with a frown, or so much as darkened by reservedness. His eye was quick and sprightly, his complexion clear and florid, so that (especially in his youth) he had the esteem of a very beautiful person.

To this outward structure was joined that strength of constitution, patient of severest toil and hardship; insomuch that for the most part of his life, in the fiercest extremity of cold, he took no other advantage of a fire, than at the greatest distance he could to look upon it. As to diseases (till immoderate study had wrought a change) he was in a manner only liable to fevers, which too constant temperance did in a great measure prevent, and still assisted to relieve and cure.

Next to his frame of body, if we survey his inward faculties, we shall find them just to the promises of his outward shape. His sight was quick to an unusual degree; insomuch, that if by chance he saw a knot of men, a flock of sheep, or herd of cattle, being engaged in discourse, and not at all thinking of it, he would involuntarily cast up their number, which others after long delays could hardly reckon. His ear was accurate and tuned to his harmonious soul, so that having never learned to sing by book or study, he would exactly perform his part of many things to an harpsichord or theorbo; and frequently did so in his more vigorous years after the toil and labour of the day, and before the remaining studies of the night. His elocution was free and graceful, prepared at once to charm and to command his audience: And when, with preaching at his country charge, he had, in some degree, lost the due manage of his voice, his

late sacred Majesty, by taking notice of the change, became his master of music, and reduced him to his ancient decent modulation; a kindness which the Doctor very gratefully acknowledged to his dying day, and reported not only as an instance of the meek and tender condescensions of that gracious Prince, but improved to persuade others by so great an example to that most friendly office of telling persons of their faults, without which, very commonly, men must be so far from amending their errors, that it is morally impossible they should know them.

As to his more inferior faculties, we must allow the first place to his invention, an altogether unexhausted treasure, whose flowings were with that full torrent, that for several years, after his choice of subject, which generally he had in prospect beforehand, a little meditation on the Saturday night made up his sermon: But in the last twelve years of his life, finding the recollection of his thoughts disturb his sleep, he remitted the particular care of the composition and method of his future discourse to the Sunday morning, wherein an hour's consideration fitted him to the office of the day. With the like swiftness he dispatched his writings, usually composing faster than his amanuensis, though a very dextrous person, could transcribe after him. His 'Considerations of present Necessity concerning Episcopacy,' were drawn up after ten o'clock at night in a friend's chamber, who professes, that, sitting by all the while, he remembers not that he took off pen from paper till he had done; and the very next morning, it being fully approved by the BISHOP of SALISBURY, he sent it to the press; to which work he could have no premeditation or second thoughts, he being that very night after supper employed by the before-mentioned BISHOP of SALISBURY, on that task. So likewise he began his Tract of Scandal at eleven at night, and finished it before he went to bed. Nor was this an extraordinary thing with him, but most customary; five sheets having amidst his other diversions been sundry times his one day's work; adding to it so much of the night as frequently borrowed from sleep and supper. And indeed

such were his diversions, so many and so importunate, that notwithstanding this incredible ease of writing, it is hardly imaginable how he could compass the tithe of what he did. For he that shall consider his laborious way, immersed in almost infinite quotations; his perusal of the writings of his friends and strangers intended to be public; his review of his own works, and correcting them with his own hand, sheet by sheet, as they came forth, which he did to all his later tracts; his reception of visits, whether of civility, or for resolution of conscience, or information in points of difficulty, which were numerous, and great devourers of his time; his agency for men of quality, providing them schoolmasters for their children, and chaplains in their houses, in which affair he had set up a kind of office of address; his general correspondencies by letter, which ever took up two days of the week entirely; the time exhausted by his sickness, which, in the latter years of his life, gave him but short and seldom truce, and always made it necessary for him not to stir from his chair, or so much as read a letter for two hours after every meal; his not only constant preaching and instructing the family where he was, and his visiting the sick both there and in the neighbourhood, but amidst all, his sure returns of prayer, so frequent and so constant as certainly to challenge to themselves a great portion of the day: He, I say, that shall sum up this, the particulars whereof are nakedly set down, must be to seek what point of vacant time remained yet undisposed; I do not say to write books, but even to breathe and rest a little in.

After a serious reflection on the premises, the account given by that excellent person, who had the happiness of being the nearest and most constant witness of all, seems the best that can be made; that he gained time for his writing books by the time he spent in prayer, whilst (a more than ordinary assistance attending his devotions) his closet proved his library, and he studied most upon his knees.

As to his memory, it was serviceable, but not officious;

faithful to things and business, but unwillingly retaining the contexture and punctualities of words; which defect he frequently lamented, it being harder with him to get one sermon by heart than to pen twenty.

His way of speech and faculty of communicating notions was sufficiently happy, having only this best kind of defect, exuberance, the torrent of his matter being not easily confined by periods; whereby his style, though round and comprehensive, was encumbered sometimes by parentheses, and became difficult to vulgar understandings: But by the use of writing, and his desire to accommodate himself to all capacities, he in his latter years had mastered that defect.

His judgment, as in itself the highest faculty, so was it the most eminent among his natural endowments: For though the finding out the similitudes of different things, wherein the fancy is conversant, is usually a bar to the discerning the disparities of similar appearances, which is the business of discretion: He had, to his sufficient memory and incomparable invention, a clear discerning judgment; and that not only in scholastic affairs and points of learning, which his writings manifest beyond dispute; but in the concerns of public nature, both of Church and State.

As to acquired learning, there remains only to observe, that the range and compass of his knowledge filled the whole circle of the arts, and reached those severals which single do exact an entire man unto themselves. To be accurate in the grammar and idioms of tongues, and then as a rhetorician to make all their graces serve his eloquence; to have traversed ancient, and yet be no stranger in modern writers; to be studied in philosophy, and familiarly versed in all the classic authors; to be learned in school-divinity, and a master in Church-antiquity, perfect and ready in the sense of fathers, councils, ecclesiastical historians and liturgics; to have devoured so much and yet digested it, is a rarity in nature and in diligence, which has but few examples.

But after all we must take leave to say, that the Doctor's

learning was the least thing in him ; the scholar was less eminent than the Christian : His speculative knowledge, that gave light to the most difficult proposals, became eclipsed by the most dazzling lustre of his practice.

And first, his chaste thoughts, words and carriage so disciplined his lower faculties, as not only restrained through all the heats of youth, made more than usually importunate by the full vigour of a high and sanguine constitution, but gave a detestation of all those verbal follies, that have not only the allowance of being harmless mirth, but the repute of wit and gaiety of humour : So that the scurrilous jest could sooner obtain his tears in penance for it, than the approbation of a smile ; and all approaches to this sin he looked upon not only with an utter disallowance in his will, but a kind of natural abhorrence.

His appetite was good, but the restraint of it was very eminent and extraordinary ; for his diet was of the plainest meats, and commonly not only his dishes, but the parts of them were such as most others would refuse. Sauces he scarce ever tasted of, but often expressed it his wonder ‘how rational creatures should eat for any thing but health ; since he that did eat or drink that which might cause a fit of the stone or gout, though a year after, therein unmanned himself, and acted as a beast.’ So that his self-denials were quite contrary to the usual ones ; for considering the time lost in eating, and the vacancy succeeding it, his meals were the greatest pressure, and his fasting-day the most sensual part of his week.

In the time of his full and more vigorous health, he seldom did eat or drink more than once in twenty-four hours, and some fruit towards night ; and two days in every week, and in Lent and Ember-week three days, he eat but once in thirty-six. Nor did he ever with so much regret submit to any prescript, as when his Physicians, after his great fever in Oxford, required him to eat suppers. Which injunction he soon shook off, and returned to his beloved abstinence, until renewed infirmities brought him back unto the penance of more indulgence to himself.

As he had the greatest indifference to what he ate, so had he the greatest observation too, especially when it came to be made a point of prescription ; for in this case he was most exact, never tasting of any prohibited meats, though some of them had before the advantage of being customary towards their seeming necessary. And herein his palate was so tractable and subdued to the dictates of an higher choice, that he really thought no meat pleasant, but in proportion to its wholesomeness: Even his beloved apples he would oft say he would totally abandon, as soon as they should appear to be no more than barely innocent, and not of use.

The carving at the table he always made his province, which he said he did as a diversion to keep him from eating too much ; but certainly that practice had another more immediate cause, a natural distributiveness of humour, and a desire to be employed in the relief of every kind of want of every person.

His temperance in sleep resembled that of his meats ; midnight being the usual time of his going to rest, and four or five, and very rarely six, the hour of his rising. There was scarce any thing he resented so much in his multiplied diseases as their having abridged him of his night-studies, professing thereby he lost not only his greatest pleasure, but highest advantage in reference to business. And in his later time of weakness, when to take benefit of a gentle breathing sweat, which usually came in the morning, he had been engaged by his Physician to continue in bed till it was over ; and upon complaint of costiveness he was on the other side directed to rise somewhat early in the morning ; this later injunction he looked upon as a mere rescue and deliverance, often mentioning it with thanks, as if it had been an eminent favour done him.

His disposal of himself in the other parts of time, was to perpetual industry and diligence : He not only avoided, but bore a perfect hate to idleness, and scarcely recommended any thing with that concern and vigour, as to be furnished always with somewhat to do. This he proposed

as the best expedient both for innocence and pleasure ; assuring, that ‘no burden is more heavy or temptation more dangerous, than to have time lie on one’s hand ; the idle man’s brain being not only (as he worded it) the Devil’s shop, but his kingdom too, a model of an appendage unto hell, a place given up to torment and to mischief.’

Besides those portions of time which the necessities of nature and of civil life extorted from him, there was not a minute of the day which he left vacant. When he walked abroad, which he did not so much to recreate himself, as to obey his Physician, he never failed to take a book with him, and read all the while ; and in his chamber also he had one lying constantly open, out of which his servant read to him while he was dressing and undressing ; by which one piece of husbandry in short space he dispatched several considerable volumes.

His way was still to cast into paper all his observations, and direct them to his present purposes ; wherein he had an incredible dexterity, scarce ever reading any thing which he did not make subservient in one kind or other. In his sicknesses, if they were not so violent as to make the recollection of thoughts impossible, he never intermitted study, but rather re-inforced it as the most proper diversion of pain. The gout by its most frequent and importunate returns exceeded his other maladies ; in which although the first most furious assaults were sure to beat him from his study, and for a time confine him to his bed, yet as soon as he had recovered his chair, he resumed his pen too, and applied it as hard as though he had ailed nothing.

Next to downright idleness he disliked slow and dilatory undertakings, thinking it a great folly to spend that time in gazing upon business which should have served for the doing of it. In his own practice he never considered longer than till he could discern whether the thing proposed was fit or not ; when that was seen, he immediately set to work. When he had perfected one business, he could not endure to have his thoughts lie fallow, but was presently consulting what next to set about.

But when we reckon up the expenses of the Doctor's time, we cannot pass his constant tribute of it paid by him to heaven in the offices of prayer ; which took up so liberal proportions of each day unto itself for the ten last years of his life, and probably the preceding. Besides occasional and supernumerary addresses, his certain perpetual returns exceeded DAVID's seven times a-day. As soon as he was ready (which was usually early) he prayed in his chamber with his servant. After this he retired to his own more secret devotions. Betwixt ten and eleven in the morning, he had solemn intercession in reference to the national calamities : To this, after a little distance, succeeded the morning office of the Church, which he particularly desired to perform in his own person, and would by no means accept the ease of having it read by any other. In the afternoon he had another hour of private prayer, which on Sundays he enlarged, and so religiously observed, that if any necessary business or charity had diverted him at the usual time, he repaired his soul at the cost of his body ; and, notwithstanding the injunctions of his physicians, which in other cases he was careful to obey, spent the supper time therein. About five o'clock, the solemn private prayers for the nation, and the evening service of the Church returned. At bed-time his private prayers closed the day ; and after all, even the night was not without its office, the fifty-first Psalm being his designed midnight entertainment.

In his prayers, as his attention was fixed and steady, so was it inflamed with passionate fervours, insomuch that very frequently his transport threw him prostrate on the earth ; his tears also would interrupt his words ; the latter happening not only upon the exigencies of present or impending judgments, but in the common service of the Church ; which shows it is the coldness of the votary, and not the prayer, that is in fault, when fervour is deficient at the public office of the Church.

The charity and extent of his prayers was as exuberant as the zeal and fervour : He thought it very unreasonable that our intercessions should not be as universal as our SA-

VIOUR'S redemption was ; and would complain of that narrowness of mind to which we are so prone, confining our care either to ourselves and relatives, or at most to those little corners of the world that most immediately concerned us, and which on due account bear very low proportions to the whole. There was no emergent distress, however remote, but it enlarged his Litany ; every year's harvest and new birth of mischiefs, was transcribed into pathetic Office of Devotion.

Nor did he only take to heart general national concerns, but even the more private exigencies of the sick and weak. Among all which, none had so liberal a part in his prayers, as they that merited them least, yet wanted them most ; his and (what was usually the same thing) the Church's and God's enemies. He never thought he had assured his forgiveness of injuries, unless he returned good for them ; and though other opportunities of this best kind of retaliation might fail him, that of his intercessions never did.

Three persons there were who above all men, by unworthy malice and impotent virulence, had highly disoblged him ; but he in recompence of their guilt, he had a peculiar daily prayer purposely in their behalf ; and though in the openness of his conversation with his most intimate acquaintance he confessed thus much, yet he never named the persons, though probably that was the only thing which he concealed ; it being his method to withhold nothing, especially of confidence or privacy, from one he owned as his friend.

And having mentioned the name of friend, however incidentally, we must not leave it without homage ; friendship being the next sacred thing unto religion in the apprehensions of our excellent Doctor, a virtue of which he was a passionate lover, and with which he ever seemed to have contracted friendship. The union of minds thereby produced, he judged, the utmost point of human happiness : so that with compassion he reflected on their ignorance

who were strangers to it, saying, that 'such must needs lead a pitiful, insipid Herb-John-like life.'

Upon this ground he used with all industrious art to recommend and propagate friendship unto others; and where he saw several persons that he judged capable of being made acquainted to mutual advantage, he would contrive that they might; and where himself had kindness unto any so allied, he would still enjoin them to be kinder to each other than to him; besides, he still laboured to make all his friends endeared to each of them; resolving it to be an error bot-tomed on the common narrowness of soul which represented amity like sensual love, confined unto two persons.

When he ever happened to see or be in company with such as had an intimate hearty kindness for each other, he would be much transported in the contemplation of it, and where it was seasonable, would openly acknowledge his satisfaction.

In the number of his friends there chanced to be three persons, who having in their youth contracted a strict inti-macy, had undertaken the same profession; and accordingly had the same common studies and designs; and with these the opportunity through the late troubles to live in view of each other: Whom for that reason he was used with an obliging envy to pronounce the most happy men the nation had.

Accordingly he professed, that for his particular, he had no such way of enjoying any thing as by reflection from the person whom he loved; so that his friends being happy, was the readiest way to make him so. Therefore when one eminently near him in that relation was careless of health, his most pressing argument was his complaint of unkind-ness to him. And this way of measuring felicities was so natural to him, that it would occur even in the most trivial instances: When there has been any thing at the table pec-uliarly wholesome, in relation to his infirmities, if his friend, who was in a like weak condition, forbore to eat it in civility to him, he would with vehemence of grief resent

it as his singular unhappiness, after so many professions, not to be believed, that he had a thousand times rather that his friend should have that which was conducive to health, than himself; and then assumed, that if this were believed, it were impossible any one should attempt to express kindness by robbing him of his greatest pleasure.

The principal thing he contracted for in friendship was a free use of mutual admonition; which he confined not to the grosser guilts which enemies and common fame were likely to observe, but extended it to prudential failings, indecencies, and even suspicious and barely doubtful actions; nay beyond that, unto those virtuous ones which might have been improved and rendered better. He was used to say, 'It was a poor design of friendship to keep the person he admitted to his breast only from being scandalous, as if the physician should endeavour only to secure his patient from the plague.' And what he thus articulated for, he punctually himself performed, and exacted to be returned unto himself.

And if for any while he observed that no remembrance had been offered to him, he grew almost jealous, suspecting that the courtier had supplanted the friend, and therefore earnestly enforced the obligation of being faithful in this point: And when with much ado something was picked up, he received it always as huge kindness; and though the whole ground of it happened to be mistake, yet he still returned most affectionate thanks.

His good-will, when placed on any, was so fixed and rooted, that even supervening vice, to which he had the greatest detestation imaginable, could not easily remove it, the abhorrence of their guilt leaving not only a charity but tenderness to their persons; and, as he has professed, his concern rather increased than lessened by this means, compassion being in that instance added to love.

There were but two things which (he would say) were apt to give check to his affections, *pride* and *fulseness*; where he saw these predominant, he thought he could never be a friend to any purpose, because he could never

hope to do any good ; yet even there he would use prayer, the more, the less he could do besides. But where he saw an honest temper, a JACOB'S plain simplicity, nothing could discourage him ; and however inadvertency or passion, or haply some worse ingredient, might frustrate his design, he would attend the *mollia tempora*, those gentle and more treatable opportunities which might at last be offered. He so much abhorred artifice and cunning, that he had prejudice to all concealments and pretensions. He used to say he hated a NON CAUSA, and he had a strange sagacity in discovering it. When any with much circumlocution had endeavoured to shadow their main purpose, he would immediately look through all those mists, and where it was in any degree seasonable, would make it appear he did so : His charity of fraternal correction having only this restraint, the hearer's interest, of which he judged, that when advice did not do good, it was hardly separable from doing harm. But wheresoever he gave an admonition, he prefaced it always with such demonstrations of tenderness and good-will as could not fail to convince of the kindness with which it was sent, if not of the convenience or necessity to embrace it. And this he gave as a general rule, and enforced by his example, *never to reprove in anger*, or with the least appearance of it. If the passion were real, that was evidently a fault, and the guilty person unfit to be a judge : If it were resemblance only, yet even that would probably divert the offender from the consideration of his failing, to fasten on his monitor ; and make him think he was chid, not because he was in fault, but because the other was angry.

Though his exhortations had as much weight as words could give them, he had over and above a great advantage in his manner of speaking : His little phrase, *Don't be simple*, had more power to charm a passion, than long harangues from others ; and very many who loved not piety in itself, would be well pleased to be advised by him, and venerated the same matter in his language, which they derided in others.

He would say, he delighted to be loved, not revered; thinking that where there was much of the latter, there could not be enough of the former; somewhat of restraint and distance attending on the one, which was not well consistent with the freedom of the other. But as he was no friend to ceremonious respect, he was an open enemy to flattery, especially from a friend, from whom he started at the slightest appearance of that servile kindness.

Having, upon occasion, communicated a purpose against which there happened to lie some objections, they being by a friend of his represented to him, he immediately was convinced, and assumed other counsels. But in process of discourse something fell in that brought to mind a passage of a late sermon of the Doctor's, which that person having been affected with, innocently mentioned such apprehensions of it, and so passed on to talk of other matters. The next day the Doctor having recollected that probably the approbation given to the sermon might be an after-design to allay the plain dealing which preceded it, protested, that 'nothing in the world could more deeply disoblige him, than such unfaithfulness.' But being assured there was no such contrivance meant, he gladly yielded himself to have been mistaken.

In other cases he was no way inclinable to entertain doubts of his friends' kindness: But if any thing chanced to intervene, and cause misapprehensions, he gave them not leave to take root by concealment, but immediately produced his ground of jealousy; and exacted the like measure back again, if his own proceedings fell at any time under a doubtful or unkind appearance. This he thought a justice essential to friendship, without which it could not possibly subsist: For we think not fit to condemn the most notorious malefactor before he hath had licence to propose his plea; and sure it is strangely barbarous to treat a friend, or rather friendship itself, with less regard.

To the performances of friendship he hated all mercenary returns, whereof he was so jealous, as hardly to leave place for gratitude. Love, he said, was built upon the union

and similitude of minds, and not the bribery of gifts and benefits.

Misery and want, wherever he met with them, sufficiently endeared the object. His alms was as exuberant as his love; and, in calamities, to the exigence he never was a stranger, whatever he might be to the man that suffered.

And here the first preparative was to leave himself no motive to resist or slight the opportunities of giving; which he compassed by being a steward to himself as well as to God, and parting still with a set portion of his estate, that when he relieved any, he might become no whit the poorer by his gift, have only the content of giving, and the ease of being rid of another's money. What he thus devoted was the tenth of all his income; wherein he was so strictly punctual, that commonly the first thing he did was to compute and separate the poor man's share. To this he added every week five shillings, which had been his lowest proportion in the heat of the war in Oxford, when he lived upon his Penshurst stock, and no visible means or almost possibility of supply. Over and above this he completed the devotions of his weekly fast by joining alms thereto, and adding twenty shillings to the poor man's heap.

These were his debts to charity, the fixed revenue of the indigent; in the dispensation of which he was so religiously careful, that if at any time he happened to be in doubt whether he had set apart his charitable proportions, he always passed sentence against himself. But beyond these he had his free-will offerings, and those proportioned more by the occasion of giving, than the surplusage he had to give. His poor man's bag had so many mouths, that it frequently became quite empty: But it being so, never diverted him from relieving any that appeared in need; for in such seasons he chose to give in more liberal proportions than at others.

Instead of hiding his face from the poor, it was his practice still to seek for theirs. Those persons whom he trusted with (his greatest secret and greatest business) his charity, seldom had recourse to him, but he would make

inquiry for new pensioners: And though he had in several parts of the nation those whom he employed to find out indigent persons, and dispose his largesses to them, his covetous bounty still grasped for more.

Besides his ordinary provision for the neighbouring poor, and those that came to look him out in his retirement, (which were not few, for the liberal man dwells always in the road,) his catalogue had an especial place for sequestered Divines, their wives and orphans, for young students in the Universities, and those Divines that were abroad in banishment: Where over and above his frequent occasional reliefs to the last of these, the exiled Clergy, besides what he procured from others, he sent constantly over year by year a very considerable sum, such a one as men of far greater revenues do not use upon any occasion to give away, much less as a troublesome excrescence every year prune off from their estates.

To a friend, who by the falseness of one whom he trusted was reduced to some extremity, and inquired what course he took to escape such usage, the Doctor wrote as follows:—

‘To your doubt concerning myself, I thank GOD I am able to answer you, that I never suffered in my life for want of hand or seal, but think I have fared much better than they that have always been careful to secure themselves by these cautions. I remember I was wont to reproach an honest fellow-prebend of mine, that whensoever a siege was near, always sent away what he most valued to some other garrison or friend, and seldom ever met with any thing again: Whereas I venturing myself and my cabinet in the same bottom, never lost any thing. And the like I have practised in this other instance. Whom I trusted to be my friend, all I had was in his power, and by GOD’s blessing I was never deceived in my trust.’

And here amidst all these seeming impossibilities, riches thrust themselves upon him: It pleasing GOD, since he had exemplified the advices of his ‘Practical Catechism’ to the duties of alms and charitable distributions, in him also to

make good the assurance he there made in the behalf of God upon such performance. Nor was he the single instance of this truth. About four years since a person of good estate coming to see the Doctor, among other discourse happened to speak of the late Dean of Worcester, DR. POTTER: This gentleman related, that formerly inquiring of the Dean how it was possible for one that had so great a charge of children, was so hospitable in his entertainment, and profuse in liberality, not only to subsist, but to grow rich; he answered, that several years before he happened to be present at a sermon at ST. PAUL'S CROSS, where the Preacher recommending the duty of plentiful giving, assured his auditory that *that* was the certain way to compass riches: He, moved therewith, resolved diligently to follow the counsel, and expect the issue; which was such as now created so much wonder. At that time when this was telling, the Doctor's sermon of 'The Poor Man's Tithing,' was just come out. He, therefore, willing to improve the opportunity, confessed that he himself was that Preacher which DR. POTTER referred to, and that there was the very sermon; which immediately giving to this visitant, he desired Almighty God it might have the like effect on him.

As to the way and very manner of his charity, even that was a part of it. One great care of his was to dispose of his reliefs so as to be most seasonable; to which purpose he had his agents still employed to give him punctual notice of occurments in their several stations. His next endeavour was to dispense them so as to be most endearing. To persons of quality he consulted to relieve their modesty as well as needs; taking order they should rather find than receive alms; and knowing they were provided for, should not guess by what means they were so. To those who were assisted immediately from his hand, he over and above bestowed the charities of hearty kindness; in the expression of which he was not only assisted by his humility, but much more by the pleasure which the very act of giving transfused into him.

Another circumstance in the Doctor's liberality not to be passed over was, his choice of what he gave; his care that it should not be of things vile and refuse, but of the very best he had. It happened that a servant in the family being troubled with the gout, the Doctor gave order that he should have some of the plaister which he used in the like extremity: But the store of that being almost spent, the person entrusted with this office gave of another sort, which was of somewhat less reputation. Which practice the Doctor within a while coming to know, was extremely troubled at it, and complained of that unseasonable kindness to him, which disregarded the pressing wants of another, and thereby gave him a disquiet parallel to that which a fit of the gout would have done.

But besides this of giving, the alms of lending had an eminent place in the practice of the Doctor. When he saw a man honest and industrious, he would trust him with a sum, and let him pay it again, at such times, and in such proportions, as he found himself able: Withal when he did so, he would add his counsel too, examine the person's condition, and contrive with him how the present sum might be most advantageously disposed; still closing the discourse with prayer for God's blessing, and after that dismissing him with infinite affability and kindness. In which performance, as he was exuberant to all, so most especially to such as were of an inferior degree; giving this for a rule to those of his friends that were of estate and quality, to 'treat their poor neighbours with such a cheerfulness, that they may be glad to have met with them.' And as upon the grounds of humanity he never suffered any body to wait that came to speak with him, though upon a mere visit, but broke off his beloved studies; so with a more exceeding alacrity he came down when a poor body would speak with him. Such of all others he loved not to delay; and so much he desired that others should do the same, that when the lady of the house, diverted either by his discourse, or some other occasion, delayed the clients of her charity in alms, or that other most commendable one in

surgery, he in his friendly way would chide her out of the room.

As poverty thus recommended to the Doctor's kindness, in an especial manner it did, so when piety was added to it : Upon which score a mean person in the neighbourhood, one HOUSEMAN, a weaver by trade, but by weakness unable to follow any employment, was extremely his favourite. Him he used with a most affectionate freedom, gave him several of his books, and examined his progress in them ; invited him, nay importuned him, still to come to him for whatever he needed, and at his death left him ten pounds. A little before which, he and the Lady P. being walking, HOUSEMAN happened to come by, to whom after the Doctor had talked a while, he let him pass, ; yet soon after called him with these words, 'HOUSEMAN, if it should please GOD that I should be taken from this place, let me make a bargain between my lady and you, that you be sure to come to her with the same freedom you would to me for any thing you want.'

Nor will this treatment from the Doctor seem any thing strange to them that shall consider how low a rate he put upon those usual distinctions, birth or riches, and withal how high a value on the souls of men ; for them he had so unmanageable a passion, that it often broke out into words of this effect ; 'O what a glorious thing, how rich a prize for the expense of a man's whole life, were it to be the instrument of rescuing one soul !' Accordingly in the pursuit of this design he not only wasted himself in perpetual toil of study, but most diligently attended the offices of his calling, and that many times when he was in so ill a condition of health, that all besides himself thought it impossible, at least very unfit, for him to do it. His subjects were such as had greatest influence, which he pressed with most affectionate tenderness, making tears part of his oratory. And if he observed his sermons to have failed of the desired effect, it was a matter of great sadness to him ; where instead of accusing the parties concerned, he charged himself that his performances were incompetent, and would solicit-

ously inquire what he might do to speak more plainly or more movingly; and whether his extemporary wording might not be a defect?

Besides this he liberally dispensed all other spiritual aids: From the time that the children of the family became capable of it, till his death, he made it a part of his daily business to instruct them, allotting the interval betwixt prayers and dinner to that work, observing diligently the little deviations of their manners, and applying remedies unto them. In like sort, that he might ensnare the servants also to their benefit, on Sundays in the afternoon he catechised the children in his chamber, giving liberty, nay invitation, to as many as would to come and hear, hoping they might admit the truths obliquely levelled, which bashfulness persuaded not to inquire for, lest they thereby should own the fault of former inadvertence. Besides he publicly declared himself ready and desirous to assist any person single, and to that purpose having particularly invited such to come at their leisure hours, when any did so, he used all arts of encouragement and obliging condescension; inso-much that having once got the scullion in his chamber upon that errand, he would not give him the uneasiness of standing, but made him sit down by his side: Though in other cases, amidst his infinite humility, he knew well how to assert the dignity of his place and function.

Upon this ground of ardent love to souls, a very disconsolate and almost desponding person happening some years since to come to him to unload the burden of his mind, he kept him privately in his chamber for several days, answering every scruple which that unhappy temper of mind suggested, and with unwearied patience attending for those little arguments which in him were much more easily silenced than satisfied. This practice continued till he at last discovered his impressions had the desired effect, which proceeded carefully in this method, that duty still preceded promise, and strict endeavour made way for comfort.

On the same motive, when some years since a young man, (who by the encouragement of an uncle, formerly the head

of a house in Oxford, had been bred up to learning, but by his ejection was diverted from that course to a country life, and being so, was also married and had children,) amidst his avocations continued to employ his vacant hours in study, and happening on some of the Doctor's writings, was so affected with them, as to leave his wife and family, and employment, to seek out the Doctor himself; the Doctor met this unknown romantic undertaker with his accustomed kindness, and most readily received him into his care for several years, affording him all assistance both in studies and temporal support, till he at last arrived at good proficiency in knowledge, and is at present a very useful person in the church.

Nor could this zeal to the eternal interest of souls be superseded by any sight of danger. The last year, one in the neighbourhood mortally sick of the small-pox, desiring the Doctor to come to him, as soon as he heard of it, though the disease did then prove more than usually fatal, and the Doctor's age and complexion threatened it particularly so to him, he stayed only so long as to be satisfied whether the party was so sensible that a visit might be of use, and then cheerfully went, telling the person that happened to be present, that 'he should be as much in God's hands in the sick man's chamber as in his own.' And not content with going once, he appointed the next day to have returned again; which he had done, had not the patient's death absolved him of his promise.

But though to advance the spiritual concerns of all was his unlimited design and endeavour, yet to nourish and advance the early virtue of young persons was his more chosen study: When he saw such an one, he would contrive ways to insinuate and endear himself, lay hold of every opportunity to represent the beauty, pleasure, and advantage of a pious life; and on the other side, the toil, the danger and the mischief of brutal sensuality: Withal he would be still performing courtesies, thereby to oblige, out of very gratitude to him, obedience and duty to God.

And as the Doctor laboured in the rescue of single per-

sons, he had an eye therein to multitudes; for wherever he had planted the seeds of piety, he presently cast about to propagate them thereby to others; engaging all his converts not to be ashamed of religion, but own the seducing men to God with as much confidence as others use when they are factors for the Devil; and instead of lying on the defensive part, he gave in charge to choose the other of the assailant. This method he commended not only as the greatest service to his neighbour, but as the greatest security to ourselves; it being like the not expecting a war at home, but carrying it abroad into the enemy's country. And nothing in the Christian's warfare he judged so dangerous as a truce, and the cessation of hostility. And whereas young people are used to varnish their forbearance of good actions, by a pretence to humility, saying, they are ashamed to do this or that, as not being able to do it well; he assured them this was arrant pride, and nothing else.

His meekness to those that slighted him, and disparaged his abilities, was almost incredible. As he was never angry with his pertinacious dissenters for not being of his mind; no more was he in the least with his scornful opposites. Such was the habitual mastery he had gained over himself, that the strictest considerers of his actions have not in ten years' perpetual conversation seen his passion betray him to an indecent speech.

Nor was his sufferance of other kinds less exemplary than that he evidenced in the reception of calumny and reproach: For though pain were that to which he was used to say he was of all things most a coward, yet being under it, he showed an eminent constancy and perfect resignation.

At the approach of sickness his first consideration was, what failing had provoked the present chastisement, and to that purpose he made his earnest prayer to God (and enjoined his friends to do the like) to convince him of it; nor only so, but tear and rend away, though by the greatest violence and sharpest discipline, whatever was displeasing in his eyes, and grant not only patience, but fruitfulness

under the rod. Then by repeated acts of submission would he deliver himself up into God's hands to do with him as seemed him good; amidst the sharpest pains meekly invoking him, and saying, "God's holy will be done." And even then when on the rack of torture, he would be observing every circumstance of allay: When it was the gout, he would give thanks it was not the stone or cramp; when it was the stone, he would say it was not so sharp as others felt, accusing his impatience that it appeared so bad to him as it did. And when some degree of health was given, he exerted all his strength in a return of thanks to the Author of it, which he performed with most cheerful piety, frequently reflecting on the Psalmist's phrase, that it was "a joyful thing to be thankful."

He was a most diligent observer of every blessing he received, and had them still in readiness to confront with those pressures he at any time lay under. In the intermissions of his importunate maladies he would with full acknowledgment mention the great indulgence, that he who had in his constitution the cause of so much pain still dwelling with him, should yet by God's immediate interposing be rescued from the effect.

To facilitate yet more this his serenity and calm of mind, he laid this rule before him, 'Never to trouble himself with future events, being resolved of our SAVIOUR's maxim, that "sufficient to the day is the evil thereof:" and that it were the greatest folly in the world to perplex one's self with that which perchance will never come, but if it should, then God who sent it will dispose it to the best, most certainly to his glory, which should satisfy us; and, unless it be our fault, as certainly to our good, which, if we be not strangely unreasonable, must satisfy in reference to ourselves. Besides all this, in the very dispensation God will not fail to give such allay as (like the cool gales under the line) will make the greatest heats of suffering very supportable.' In such occasions he usually subjoined EPICURETUS's dilemma, 'Either the thing before us is in our power, or it is not; if it be, let us apply the remedy, and there will be

no motive for complaint; if it be not, the grief is utterly impertinent, since it can do no good.' From the same author he annexed this consideration, that 'every thing has two handles; if the one prove hot, and not to be touched, we may take the other that is more temperate.' And in every occurrent he would be sure to find some cool handle that he might lay hold of.

To enforce all this, he made a constant recourse to the experience of God's dealing with him in preceding accidents, which, however dreadful at a distance, at a nearer view lost much of their terror. And for others that he saw perplexed about the management of their difficult affairs, he was wont to ask them, When they would begin to trust God, or permit him to govern the world? Besides, unto himself and friends he was wont solemnly to give this mandate, *Quod sis esse velis, nihilque malis*; in his English, *To rather nothing*; not only to be content or acquiesce, but know the present state to be the very best that could be wished or fancied.

And thus all private concernments he passed over with perfect indifference; the world and its appendages hanging so loose about him, that he never took notice when any part dropped off, or sate uneasily. Herein indeed he was thoughtful, if somewhat intervened that had duty appendant to it; in which case he would be solicitous to discern where the obligation lay, but he presently rescued himself from that disquiet by his addresses unto God in prayer and fasting: And if the thing in question were of moment, he called in the devotions of his friends.

Of all other things he most disliked the being left to make a choice; and hugely applauded the state of subjection to a superior, where an obsequious diligence was the main ingredient of duty; as also he did the state of subjection to pressure, as a privilege and blessing. And though he prayed as heartily as any person for the return of the nation from captivity, he always first premised the being made receptive of such mercy by repentance. He would often both publicly and privately assert, 'that prosperous

iniquity would not be deliverance, but judgment; that the nation during its pressures was under the discipline of God, and should the Almighty dismiss us from his hands, and put us into our own, give us up to ourselves, with “Why should ye be smitten any more?” this were of all inflictions the most dreadful.’ Though with admirable equanimity he could run over the black annals of the nation, while its calamities were reckoned up, he could scarce hear the slightest mention of its incorrigible guilt, without dissolving into tears.

During the current of that tyranny which for so many years we all groaned under, he kept a constant serenity and unthoughtfulness in outward accidents; but the approaching change gave him somewhat of pensive recollection, insomuch that he broke forth into these words, ‘I must confess I never saw that time in all my life wherein I could so cheerfully say my *Nunc dimittis* as now. Indeed I do dread prosperity, I do really dread it. For the little good I am now able to do, I can do it with deliberation and advice; but if it should please God I should live and be called to any higher office in the Church, I must then do many things in a hurry, and shall not have time to consult with others, and I sufficiently apprehend the danger of relying on my own judgment.’ Which words he spake with the greatest concern of earnest melting passion imaginable. Accordingly it pleased Almighty God to deal; having granted to his servant a gracious answer to his prayer in the then every day expected reception of his sacred Majesty, to remove him to solid and unmixed rewards.

At the opening of the year 1660, when every thing visibly tended to the reduction of his Majesty, the Doctor was by the fathers of the Church desired to repair to London, to assist in the composure of breaches in the Church: which summons as he resolved not to disobey, so could he not without much violence to his inclinations submit to. But finding it his duty, he diverted all uneasiness, and prepared himself for this new theatre of affairs. His first care was to fortify his mind against the usual temptations of

business, place, and power. And to this purpose, besides his earnest prayers to God for his assistance, and disposal of him entirely to his glory, and a diligent survey of all his inclinations, and of his more open and less defensible parts, he farther solemnly adjured that friend of his with whom he had then the nearest opportunity of commerce, to study and examine the last ten years of his life, and with the justice due to a Christian friendship to observe his failings of all kinds, and show them to him.

And now considering the nation was under its great crisis, and that its cure, if imperfect, would only make way to more fatal sickness, he fell to his devotions on that behalf, and made those two excellent prayers which were published immediately after his death, and were almost the last thing he wrote.

Being in this state of mind, fully prepared for that new course of life, which had nothing to recommend it to his taste but its unpleasantness, he expected hourly the peremptory mandate which was to call him forth out of his beloved retirements.

But in the instant, a more importunate, though infinitely more welcome summons engaged him on his last journey. For on the 4th of April he was seized by a sharp fit of the stone, with those symptoms that are usual in such cases; which yet upon the voidance of a stone ceased for that time. However, on the 8th of the same month, it returned again with greater violence; and though after two days the pain decreased, the suppression of urine yet continued, with frequent vomitings, and a distension of the whole body, and likewise shortness of breath, upon any little motion. He seemed to have a certain knowledge of the issue of his sickness; and whereas at other times, when he saw his friends fearful, he was used to reply, 'that he was not dying yet:' Now in the whole current of his disease, he never said any thing to avert suspicion, but told his friends, 'he should leave them in God's hands, who could supply abundantly all the assistance they could either expect or desire from him.' And when he observed one of them with some

earnestness pray for his health, he with tender passion replied, 'I observe your zeal spends itself all in that one petition for my recovery ; in the interim you have no care of me in my greatest interest, which is, that I may be perfectly fitted for my change: I pray that some of your fervour be employed that way.' And being pressed to make it his own request to God to be continued longer in the world, to the service of the Church, he immediately began a solemn prayer, which contained first a very humble and melting acknowledgment of sin, and a most earnest intercession for mercy and forgiveness through the merits of his SAVIOUR: Next resigning himself entirely into his Maker's hands, he begged 'that if the Divine Wisdom intended him for death, he might have a due preparation for it ; but if his life might be in any degree useful to the Church, even to one single soul, then God would continue him, and by his grace enable him to employ that life industriously and successfully.' After this he with great affection interceded for this Church and nation, and with particular vigour prayed for 'sincere performance of Christian duty now so much decayed, to the equal supplanting and scandal of that holy calling; that those who professed that faith might live according to the rules of it, and to the form of godliness superadd the power.' This with some repetitions and more tears he pursued, and at last closed all in a prayer for the family where he was. With this he frequently blessed God for so far indulging his infirmity, as to make his disease so painless to him; withal to send it before he took his journey, whereas it might have taken him in the way, with far greater disadvantages.

Nor did he in this exigence desist from the exercise of his accustomed candour and sweetness, whereby he used to entertain the addresses of the greatest strangers. For two scholars coming at this time to see him, when it appeared they were such as he had no acquaintance with, though they that were about the Doctor proposed that a civil excuse might be made, and the visitants dismissed, he resisted the advice with great earnestness, saying, 'I will by no means

have them sent away; for I know not how much they may be concerned in the errand they come about.' And when upon trial it appeared that a compliment was the whole affair, yet the Doctor seemed much satisfied.

Likewise his own necessities, however pressing, diverted not his concern for those of others. A neighbouring lady languishing under a long weakness, he took care that the church-office for the sick should be daily said in her behalf. At the beginning of the Doctor's illness the chaplain made no other variation, than to change the singular into the plural: But when his danger increased, he thought fit to pray peculiarly for him; which he would by no means admit, but said, 'O no, poor soul, let not me be the cause of excluding her;' and accordingly had those prayers continued in the more comprehensive latitude.

On the 20th of April, being Good-Friday, he solemnly received the sacrament; and again on the 22d of April, Easter-day. At which time when the number of communicants was too great to have place in his bed-chamber, and the whole office was too long for him to go through with, it was ordered, that the service being performed in the usual apartment, a competent number should afterwards come up and communicate with him: Which though he allowed as most fitting, yet he did so with grief, breaking out into this passionate complaint, 'Alas! must I be excommunicated?' To be absent from any part of public worship he thus deeply resented: So far was he from their opinion, who in their most healthful days make this not their penance, but choice.

Amidst his indisposition of all parts, in the act of celebration, his devotion only was not faint, but most vigorous; yet equalled by his infinite humility, which discovered itself as in his deportment, so particularly in that his pathetic ejaculation, which brake forth at the hearing of those words of the Apostle, "JESUS CHRIST came into the world to save sinners;" unto which he rejoined, "Of whom I am the chief."

But now through the long suppression of urine the blood

being grown thin and serous, the Doctor fell into a violent bleeding at the nose ; at which the by-standers being in astonishment, he cheerfully admonished ‘ to lay aside impatience in his behalf, and to wait God’s leisure, whose seasons were still the best ;’ withal thankfully acknowledged God’s mercy in the dispensation, alleging, ‘ that to bleed to death was one of the most desirable passages out of this world.’

And he very justly made this observation ; for it pleased the Divine Providence strangely to balance the symptoms of the Doctor’s disease to his advantage : For the sharp pains of the stone were allayed by that heaviness of sense which the recoiling of serous moisture into the habit of the body occasioned ; and when that oppression endangered a lethargic torpor, he was retained from that by the flux of blood. Which several accidents succeeded one the other, inasmuch that in this whole time of sickness he neither had long violence of torment, nor diminution of his intellectual faculties. And here this violent bleeding being of itself even miraculously stopped, when all applications were ineffectual, a drowsiness succeeding, at the time of prayers, though he returned every response, he sadly resented it, saying, ‘ Alas ! this is all the return I shall make to His mercy, to sleep at prayers.’

When he was in pain he often prayed for patience, and while he did so, evidenced that his prayer was heard ; for he exercised not only that, but thankfulness too, in his greatest extremity crying out, ‘ Blessed be God, blessed be God !’

Nor did he, according to the usual method, inflict his sickness upon those about him, by peevishness disquieting his attendants ; but was pleased with every thing that was done, and liked every thing that was brought, condescending to all proposals, and obeying with all readiness every advice of his physicians. Nor was it wonder he should so accept the endeavours of his friends, who had tender kindness for his enemies, even the most inveterate and bloody. When the defeat of LAMBERT and his party

was told him, his only triumph was that of his charity, saying with tears in his eyes, 'Poor souls! I beseech God to forgive them.' So habitual was compassion to his soul, that all representations centred there: Virtue had still his prayers, because he loved it; and vice enjoyed them too, because it wanted them.

All this time he administered reliefs to those about him, mixing advices with his prayers, and twisting the tenderness of a friend to that of the Christian. He dispensed his best of legacies, his blessings; most passionately exhorting the young growing hopes of the family, whose first innocence and shame of doing ill he above all things laboured to have preserved, to be just to the advantage of their education, and maintain inviolate their first baptismal vows: Then he more generally commended to all the great advantage of mutual friendly admonitions. On which occasion when the good lady asked him what more special thing he would recommend to her for her whole life, he briefly replied, 'Uniform obedience:'. Whereby he meant not only a sincere reception of duty, because commanded, and not because it is pleasant or honourable, or perchance cheap or easy; but withal the very condition of obeying, of not being to choose for one's self; the being determined in all proposals by human or divine command; and where those left us at large, by the guidance of God's providence, or the assistance of a friend.

But amidst these happiest Anodynes of sickness, the 25th of April drew on, wherein his flux of blood breaking forth again with greater violence, was not to be stopped by outward applications, nor revulsives of any kind; till at last the fountain being exhausted, the torrent ceased its course; for the Doctor leaving off to bleed about three in the afternoon, became weak and dispirited, and cold in the extreme parts, having strength only to persevere in his devotions, which he did to the last moment of his life, a few minutes before his death breathing out those words, 'LORD, make haste.'

And so upon that very day on which the Parliament convened, which laid the foundation of our liberty, this great champion of religion, as if reserved for masteries and combats, for persecution and sufferings, was taken hence.

The dead body being opened, the principal and vital parts appeared sound: only the right kidney, or rather its remainder, was hard and knotty, and in its cavity, besides several little ones, was a large stone of the figure of an almond, though much bigger, whose lesser end was fallen into the Ureter, and as a stopple closed it up; so that it is probable that kidney had for divers years been in a manner useless. The other kidney was swoln beyond the natural proportion, otherwise not much decayed; but within the Ureter four fingers' breadth a round white stone was lodged, which was so fastened in the part, that the physician with his probe could not stir it, and was fain at last to cut it out; and so exactly it stopped the passage, that upon the dissection the water before enclosed gushed forth in great abundance: From whence it appeared perfectly impossible for art to have ennobled itself in the preservation of this great person; as it was also manifest, that nothing but the consequences of his indefatigable study took him from us, in the 55th year of his life.

On the morrow in the evening, the 26th day of the same month, he was, according to his desire, without ostentation or pomp, though with becoming decency, buried at the neighbour-church of Hampton, with the usual rites of the Church of England, several of the Gentry and Clergy of the County, and affectionate multitudes of persons of less quality attending on his obsequies, the Clergy with ambition offering themselves to bear him on their shoulders; which accordingly they did, and laid that sacred burden in the burial place of the generous family which with such friendship had entertained him when alive; where now he rests in peace, and full assurance of a glorious resurrection.

Having thus given a faithful, though imperfect draught of this excellent person, it may possibly be neither useless nor unacceptable to offer a request to the reader in his be-

half, and show him an expedient whereby he may pay his debt of gratitude, and eminently oblige this holy Saint though now with God.

It is this, to add unto his account in the day of retribution by taking benefit by his performances; and as he being dead yet speaks, so let him persuade likewise,

That the covetous reader would now put off his sordid vice, and take courage to be liberal, assured by his example, that if in the worst of times profuseness could make rich, charity shall never bring to beggary.

That the proud would descend from his fond heights, instructed here that lowly meekness shall compass respect, and instead of hate or flattery be waited on with love and veneration.

That the debauched or idle would leave his lewd unwarrentable joys, convinced that strict and rugged virtue made an age of sunshine, a life of constant smiles, amidst the dreadfulest tempests; taught the gout, the stone, the cramp, the cholic, to be treatable companions, and made it eligible to live in bad times and die in flourishing.

That the angry man, who calls passion at least justice, possibly zeal and duty, would believe that arguments may be answered by saying reason, calumnies by saying No, and railings by saying nothing.

That the employed in business would from hence dismiss their fears of regular piety, their suspicion that devotion would hinder dispatch of affairs; since his constant office (like the prayer of JOSHUA, which made the sun stand still) seemed to render unto him each day as long as two.

That the ambitious person, especially the ecclesiastic, would think employment and high place a stewardship, that renders debtors both to God and man; a residence at once of constant labour and attendance too; a precipice that equally exposes to envy and to ruin; and consequently that which should be our greatest fear and terror, but at no hand our choice; since it was that which this heroic constancy was not ashamed to own a dread of, and whose appearance rendered death itself a rescue.

Lastly, That the narrow self-designing person, who understands no kindness but advantage; the sensual, that knows no love but lust; the intemperate, that owns no companion but drink, may all at once from him reform their brutish errors; since he has made it evident, that a friend does fully satisfy these distant and importunate desires, being as the most innocent and certainly ingenuous entertainment, so besides that the highest mirth, the greatest interest and surest pleasure in the world.

Persuasions to piety are now usually in scorn called preaching; but it is to be hoped that this, how contemptible soever it be grown, will be no indecency in this instance that it will not be absurd if his history, who deservedly was reckoned among the best of preachers, should bear a correspondence to its subject, and close with an application That it adjures all persons to be what they promised Go Almighty they would be in their baptismal vows, what they see the glorious Saints, and Martyrs, and Confessors, and in particular this holy man has been before them; be what most honourable, most easy and advantageous at present and, in a word, to render themselves such as they desire to be upon their death-beds, and then would be for ever.

THE
LIFE OF
GREGORY LOPEZ:

WRITTEN ORIGINALLY IN SPANISH.

CHAPTER I.

His Birth, and Employment till he was Twenty Years of Age.

GREGORY LOPEZ was born at Madrid: He seemed as one without father, without mother; for no one ever heard him mention his family, or knew him write to his relations, or inquire concerning them. This made many believe, that he was the son of some persons of great quality. What confirmed them in that opinion was, the manner of his behaviour; genteel, noble, and full of an humble gravity; particularly when he had to do with men of rank and eminence; for they admired the freedom and firmness with which he spoke to them, yet without violating the respect which he owed them.

2. One having pressed him to tell of what family he was, and what was the name of his father, he appeared somewhat moved, and replied with a countenance full of gravity quite extraordinary, ‘My country is heaven, and my father is God, who has taught me to call no one father upon earth.’ Father JUAN OZORIO having asked, ‘Of what country he was?’ he replied only, ‘Of the same country with your Reverence.’ A few days before his death, when I was resolved to know the name of his parents, in order to send them an account of his life and of his death, he told me,

‘ Ever since I left all, to live wholly to GOD, I have considered GOD alone as my Father. And as to my brothers, I do not doubt but they are dead ; for I was the youngest of all.’ Behold how this servant of GOD had forgot the advantages which he drew from his birth ; he considered the nobleness of his family as baseness, and esteemed only the honour which GOD has done us, of being his spiritual children.

3. He was born the 4th of July, 1542, in the reign of the Emperor, CHARLES the Fifth. At his baptism, he was named GREGORY : As to the surname of LOPEZ, I do not believe it was the name of his family, but rather that he endeavoured to conceal himself under that borrowed name.

4. GOD favoured him with uncommon grace, even from his tender years. Having once asked him, ‘ Whether he had begun to serve GOD, as soon as he had the use of reason ?’ He replied, ‘ He was not sure, whether he had begun then, or a little after :’ But it is true, GOD had blessed him very early with different sentiments from those which children use to have. And he was accustomed to say, as from experience, “ Happy is he who bears the yoke of the LORD from his youth.”

5. With a wonderful facility he learned to read, and to write so well, that he surpassed his masters ; as one may still judge, by the things written by him, with such elegance, such strength, and in so beautiful a character, that one cannot look upon them without admiration.

It is certain, and he owned it freely, that he never learned either Latin, nor any of the liberal arts or sciences ; so that there is no room to doubt, but it was GOD who was his master in several things, and who taught him many truths divine and human, which others hardly attain by much labour.

6. Being as yet very young, he went, without saying any thing to his parents, into the kingdom of Navarre, where he remained in a religious retirement upwards of six years. It was here that his soul, as a fruitful soil watered

with the dew of heaven, received the seeds of that holiness which afterwards produced excellent fruits in great abundance.

His father having carefully sought, at length found him there. He brought him to Valladolid, where the court then was, and by a surprising change, he was made page to the Emperor; God ordering thus, that even in the retinue of a Prince, there should be one that was a saint.

7. The fear of God was so rooted in the heart of young LOPEZ, that even a court-life, and all those various agitations, which, like impetuous winds, are apt to ruffle the calmest souls, made no impression on his. God so powerfully assisted him, that he was always recollected; and he has told me, 'That when his master sent him with any message, he had such an attention to God, that neither persons of the highest quality with whom he had to do, nor all the other occasions of distracting the mind which are found in the courts of Princes, interrupted his thinking of God.' And by this means, he preserved the same peace and devotion, as if he had still been in the desert of Navarre.

Thus even in the heat of youth, and in the dangerous snares of a court, he passed two or three years, with a mind as unmoved, and a judgment as solid, as if he had been ever so far advanced in years.

8. Being one day in prayer, in a church at Toledo, God gave him a fuller and stronger resolution than he had ever yet had, of executing his design to live wholly to him.

But as resolutions of importance ought not to be made, but in consequence of much prayer, he passed several days in prayer and watching in the Church of Guadaloupe, to obtain light how to proceed in what he purposed; and hereby he was more and more determined, to quit both the court, and his friends, and native country, that there might be no obstruction to that entire devotion of himself to God, which his soul continually panted after.

CHAPTER II.

His Voyage to New Spain.

1. HE arrived at New Spain in the year 1562, and landed at Vera Cruz, being then just twenty years of age. He distributed among the poor stuffs which he brought with him, to the value of eight thousand four hundred reals, showing how little he esteemed the riches of this new world; while instead of seeking them there, he gave away what he had brought thither, without reserving any thing for himself.

2. From Vera Cruz he went to Mexico; where he stayed some days at a notary's named ST. ROMAIN, to earn by writing as much as would carry him to Zacaticas, where he hoped more commodiously to execute his design. But during the few days he was at Zacaticas, being at the market-place, when the chariots went thence to carry the gold to Mexico, he heard so many quarrels, disputes, oaths, and perjuries, as much increased his desire to quit all commerce with men, whom things of no worth could carry to such extremities.

3. He changed his dress for one suitable to his design, and went eight leagues thence to the valley of Amajac, inhabited by Chichimeque Indians, who for their cruelty and fierceness were then terrible to the Spaniards. But this servant of God having not been afraid to declare war against all the invisible powers of hell, was under no apprehension from visible enemies; not doubting, with the assistance of God, to conquer their savageness and fierceness, by his patience, sweetness, and humanity. The effect answered his expectation; for after he had spent but a few days in the valley, and conversed with the Indians, their fierceness was gone, and he had gained the affection of all that were near him.

4. Seeking for a place proper for the execution of his design, he found, seven leagues from Zacaticas, a farm named

Temaxeco, belonging to CAPTAIN PEDRO CARRILLO DE AVILA. This Captain seeing him so young, so well made, and of so fine a carriage, bare-footed, without shirt or hat, and clothed only in a coat of coarse cloth, which reached down to his heels, and was girt round him with a rope, asked him, whither he was going, and what it was that had brought him to that country? He answered, 'That he was come from Castile with the last flota, and that he was seeking for a hermitage,* to pass his life there in the service of GOD; but that he had not till now found a proper place.' He then gave him the reasons which induced him to retire from the world, with which he was entirely satisfied. CARRILLO offered him his men to build him a little house in the place which he had chosen. He thanked him, but without accepting his offer, only desiring leave to work himself. He then, with his own hands built a little cell, only the Indians assisting him therein.

5. He entered into the twenty-first year of his age when he entered on his solitary life; and seeing himself engaged in a war, wherein he had so powerful enemies to combat, the first thing which he did, was to throw himself wholly into the hands of GOD, and to implore his succour in these words, 'LORD, I here engage myself altogether in thy service, and renounce myself. If I perish, it will not be my business, but thine to answer for it.' Words that expressed the absolute confidence he had in the power and mercy of GOD, and his full assurance that GOD would not suffer him to perish, while he cast himself wholly upon him.

6. From the moment that LOPEZ had thus abandoned himself in fervent love to whatever it should please GOD to order concerning him, he felt the sensible effects of his assistance, and began to walk valiantly and with a great pace, in the narrow way of penitence; without ever looking back, without ever stopping, without ever losing sight of that light, by which it pleased GOD to guide him. He lay upon the

* It is absolutely certain, that this resolution is not to be justified on Scripture principles: And, consequently, LOPEZ is not to be imitated in this; however GOD might wink at the times of ignorance.

ground; and to keep him from the cold, he had but one bad quilt, and a stone for his pillow; these were all the moveables of his cell:* And all the ornaments of it, were some sentences he had wrote upon the walls, exhorting to go on to perfection. His abstinence was not only very great, but continual; he ate only once a day, and then very little, and of the coarsest food; for generally it was nothing but parched corn. And this he so rigorously observed, that he could not be persuaded to dispense with himself, even in violent sickness. He never tasted flesh; and when any happened to be given him, he received it with thanks, but touched it not.

7. CAPTAIN CARRILLO had two sons, SEBASTIAN and PEDRO. The latter has often mentioned, that LOPEZ living near them, his father used to send them to him to learn to read and write; and that often he found him on his knees, in deep prayer, with his arms extended, and his eyes fixed on the earth. The two brothers, in return for the pains he took with them, brought him cakes made of Indian corn, the only thing, as we observed, on which he lived, unless he sometimes ate a raw lettuce or turnip. And if they happened to bring him two or three cakes at once, it gave him dissatisfaction; he told them one served him for eight days, and he ate them hard and dry as they were. If their father or mother sent him any thing else, he sent it back again. They sometimes found in his cell, rabbits, quails, and figs, which in this country were accounted delicious food: These, after telling them they were the presents of his good friends, the Chichimeques, he gave them to carry to their mother.

8. He never made use of any candle, saying, he had no business which required it. As the nights here are exceeding cold, the Captain offered him a better quilt; but he did not accept of it.

9. When there came any Minister, who performed divine service at the Captain's, he sent word to LOPEZ; who came to hear it with the greatest devotion, and immediate-

* Neither are these particular instances of self-denial necessary for our imitation.

ly after returned home, without staying to eat, however pressed thereto, or speaking to any person whatever. He never went out of his cell to divert himself, or even to entertain himself with so good a neighbour. Thus it was this holy giant went on amain, in the way wherein the love of God had constrained him to enter.



CHAPTER III.

The Conflicts he sustained, and the Assistances he received, whereby he was more than Conqueror.

1. THOSE uncommon temptations of the Devil which God permits to come upon his saints in their solitude,* arise from the shame of that proud spirit, when he sees himself vanquished by them. Accordingly, though the extreme austerity of his life, and his want of almost all necessaries, occasioned LOPEZ to suffer so much, yet these sufferings appeared inconsiderable to him, compared to the inward pains which he endured.

2. In one rencounter, he owned to a friend, he had such a conflict with the grand enemy, and was obliged to use so violent efforts in resisting him, that the blood gushed out of his nose and ears. He was experienced in all sorts of spiritual weapons, long before this combat; such a symptom therefore, in one that was accustomed to conquer, showed how obstinate that fight must have been.

Once the Devil attacked him in a visible shape. Being asked, what he had done to defend himself, he replied, 'Believing I could not do better than continue in the design God had put in my heart, I resolved to labour therein with all my strength: On which SATAN disappeared and never tempted me again in that manner.'

3. It is certain that during the whole time of his solitude

* No; but from their going out of the way which God has prescribed therefore he permits SATAN thus to buffet them.

the Devil strove to affright him by all means possible : Sometimes by the roaring and rushing of wild beasts ; sometimes by the cruelty wherewith he saw the Indians massacre the Spaniards, at a small distance from him ; sometimes by various inward temptations ; and by the artifices he used to deceive him. Continual prayer, both day and night, was the remedy he used in these encounters ; in which that he might not faint, there was no kind of effort, which he was not obliged to use.

4. Among the sentiments from which he drew the most strength, and the greatest consolations, were these words, “Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” Amen, Jesus ! For the space of three years, he repeated them without ceasing, so that he scarce ever took his breath, without saying them mentally, even while he was eating or drinking, or speaking to any person whatever. I asked, If it was possible that every time he waked out of sleep, they should be present to his mind ? He answered, ‘It is ; I never breathe twice, after walking, before they are brought to my remembrance.’

This application to conform himself to the will of God was so necessary to him, in order to resist these temptations, that although he never discontinued it, yet if instead of being as exact as usual, he slackened therein ever so little, he presently perceived the Devil drew such advantage therefrom, and so redoubled his temptations, that it was not possible for him then so much as to look into a book. But these words, “Thy will be done,” served him for a book ; he found in them all the instruction he could wish for ; they were as arms of proof, which not only defended him from the assaults of his enemies, but gave him means of conquering all by his entire resignation, whereby he threw himself absolutely into the hands of God, to dispose of him in what manner he pleased, and prostrating himself on the earth, he said, ‘LORD, thou art my Father ; and nothing is done, but in thy presence and according to thy will.’ With this he recovered new strength, to run the race set before him.

5. These temptations were so violent and so frequent, that he has many times said to me, ‘He was astonished that he had been able to persevere in his design; and that he could not think of them, without making his hair stand an end upon his head.’ When he related this to me, he was an old soldier of CHRIST, of deep experience in this spiritual warfare. There needs therefore no better proof of the greatness of his courage, and the fury of his enemy; for if the bare remembrance of it produced such an effect, it is no wonder that the combat itself cost both pains and blood.

CHAPTER IV

GOD exercises LOPEZ in another manner. He removes from the Valley of Amajac.

1. THE conflicts of LOPEZ were not with the Devil only, he suffered from men also. As the Spanish soldiers passed by his cell, to make war upon the Indians, some called him heretic and Lutheran; others said, he was a fool or madman. But this servant of GOD had nothing to fear: He remained unhurt, either by one side or the other; and in the midst of the dangers to which he was daily exposed, he continued, without any interruption, in his ordinary exercise of conformity to the will of GOD.

2. After he had continued for three years to repeat without ceasing, “Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven,” he found himself strengthened, that he had no longer any will but that of GOD. He then entered upon another exercise, which consisted not so much in words as in actions: And this was, an ardent love for GOD, and for his neighbour. This he practised in so excellent a manner, that he was daily going on from strength to strength, without ever relaxing or abating any thing in this exercise of perfect love.

3. He was so advantageously situated at Amajac, that he would never have quitted that place, had he not thought himself obliged so to do, by the love of his neighbour, whom he earnestly desired to serve. Several, who had heard of his manner of life, were offended that he did not attend the service of the church; although he had no opportunity of so doing, the nearest church being seven leagues off. In condescension to their weakness, he resolved, after having staid at Amajac between three and four years, to remove thence, and settle in one of the villages of ALPHONSO D'AVALOS. He received him with much humanity and affection, and offered him a lodging in a place planted with trees. He accepted it gladly, but not the food provided for him: For he lived wholly on milk and cheese.

4. After he had spent two years here, God put it into his heart to return to his little cell. The night before his journey, that great earthquake happened, in the year 1567; and opening his window, he saw the joists of his chamber fall, without receiving any harm.

He stopped in the way at SEBASTIAN MEXIA'S, who entertained him gladly. He recompensed him by his good example, and the excellent counsels which he gave him. These made so deep an impression upon him, that instead of the fine rich clothes, of which he was so extravagantly fond before, he wore from that time only coarse brown cloth, like LOPEZ.

MEXIA conceived so strong an affection for him, and so great an esteem for his wisdom, that he resolved to leave all his estate to his disposal. But LOPEZ being apprized of this, and not judging it proper, after he had renounced all his own goods, to embarrass himself with those of another man, resolved immediately to proceed in his journey, whatever instances could be used to detain him.

5. Father DOMINIC SALAZAR, a Dominican, was then preaching to those who were working in the mines round about Zacatecar. He was a man of great virtue, and the converse he had with LOPEZ made him conceive such an esteem and love for him, that he pressed him extremely to

go to the monastery of **ST. DOMINIC** at Mexico ; where he would give him a little cell, saying, That by this means, he might, without danger or hinderance, pass his life in retirement and prayer ; and yet without being deprived of the advantages that may be received in a religious society ; **LOPEZ** yielding to his reasons, accepted his offer, and resolved to return to Mexico.

6. He had passed near seven years in the valley of Amajac, in the village of Alphonso d'Avalos, and with **SEBASTIAN MEXIA**, living every where with the same austerity. His habit was then so worn, that it was absolutely necessary for him to have a new one. He might easily have had it, for a word speaking, from any of the persons above mentioned : But he chose rather to gain by the sweat of his brow, as much coarse cloth as he had need of ; not so much to keep him from the cold, as to cover his nakedness. He went therefore to a rich innkeeper, who gladly entrusted him with the management of his family. He acquitted himself with so much care, tenderness, and humility, that they were all struck with admiration. After having earned in two months, as much as he wanted, he took his leave of them ; nor could all their prayers or tears, or the money they offered, prevail upon him to stay.

How poor soever he was at any time, he never asked an alms of any one ; but entirely abandoned himself to the providence of **God**, having nothing to live on, but what was given him without asking. And if nothing of this was left, he laboured with his hands till he had gained more.

7. For a long time, as we observed, he lived wholly on parched corn, and, during Lent, upon herbs. But hence he contracted such a weakness of stomach, as continued all the rest of his life. He often worked in his little garden ; but what grew there he gave in charity to those that passed by. Some time every day he spent in reading the Holy Scriptures, and particularly the Epistles of **ST. PAUL**.

During all the years he spent in solitude, the fore-mentioned assaults and temptations of the Devil continued.*

* What wonder, while he was out of God's way ?

But these in a great measure ceased when he quitted his retirement; yet others arose in their place: Many highly condemned his manner of living; others raised numberless calumnies against him; so that he did not want enemies in the world, any more than in solitude: But in all these things he was "more than conqueror."



CHAPTER V

He goes to Mexico; thence to Guasteca, and falls sick.

1. COMING to Mexico, he was informed, that Father DOMINIC DE SALAZAR was not yet returned: After waiting for him some time, he believed the providence of GOD called him to resume his solitary life; for which purpose he went into the country of Guasteca, which he judged to be most proper for his design, as being wide and thinly inhabited, and abounding in wild fruits. Here he fixed his abode, resolving not to remove till the Providence of GOD should plainly call him to it. He fed on the fruits, roots, and herbs which the earth brought forth of itself, and valiantly fought the battles of the LORD, continuing his exercise of the love of GOD and his neighbour.

2. He had had from his early youth an ardent desire of reading the Holy Scriptures: And he now more fervently than ever besought GOD to enlighten his understanding, and to nourish his soul with the important truths which are contained therein. That he might neglect nothing in his power in order thereto, he resolved to learn all the Bible by heart; and he had so happy a memory, that he never forgot any thing which he once knew. In this he spent four hours a day for four years: And during this time GOD gave him the understanding thereof.

3. At the same time, and all his life after, he read several books, both of ecclesiastical and profane history. Many were glad to lend them to him, and he read entire volumes

in three or four days. His manner of reading was so extraordinary, that it might be thought even supernatural, for he frequently read over in ten hours, a book which another would scarce have read in a month. In twenty hours he read the works of TERESA, and that so effectually, that hardly could any one give a better account of all that is contained in them.

But he did not give himself the trouble to read over any but spiritual books. With regard to others, his manner was, to read the contents of the chapters; and such as contained any thing which he did not know, he read through; the rest he entirely passed over.

4. He would have spent all the rest of his life at Guasteca, had he believed it to be the will of GOD. But GOD showed him, that was not his will, by sending him a violent bloody flux. He bore it for several days in the midst of all inconveniences imaginable, through the want of all things necessary for a sick man, and even of food. While he was in this condition, the Providence of GOD, which is never wanting to them that fear Him, sent to his relief a Priest, named JUAN DE MESA Minister of a town in Guasteca; a man of an exemplary life, who merely out of charity instructed the people of the country, and assisted them with his substance. He not sooner learned the extremity to which LOPEZ was reduced, than he sent to seek him, and entertained him at his own house, with all possible care.

As he had passed several days without any sustenance after the disorder ceased he was still extremely weak. But he recovered his appetite in a short time, and then, by degrees, his strength. As soon as he found this, he would have returned to his solitude, if his host had not hindered him; but he kept him in his house for near four years, to the unspeakable comfort and edification of all around him.

5. MESA provided him a chamber, where he spent all his time, except when he was at church. He was commonly in an upright posture, or leaning against the wall, with his eyes fixed. In this retreat he continued day and night

never going out, but when he took his sober repast with his host, whom he abundantly paid for his hospitality, by the inestimable blessing of his conversation. All the furniture of his chamber was a Bible, a terrestrial globe, and a pair of compasses.

6. During his stay here, one who came from those parts to Mexico was saying, there was a man at Guasteca, who was suspected to be a heretic, because he used no beads, nor gave any of those marks by which good Christians are wont to be known. I asked, whether he spoke well on matters of faith? And if his life was unblamable? He said, ‘As to his faith, there is no fault to be found: He has all the Bible by heart; and his manners are unreprouvable: He is almost always alone; he spends much time in the church; and no one can learn who are his parents, what is his country, nor hear him speak about any thing in this world.’ I replied mildly, ‘I was sorry, that in this he resembled ELI, who seeing HANNAH move her lips in prayer, concluded she was drunk.’ I added, ‘Why should you so hastily conclude, that such a person as this is a heretic; one so knowing in the Scriptures, so holy in his carriage, who spends his life in conversing with God?’ He was so moved by what I spoke, that he thought no more of the design he had had of putting him in the Inquisition.

Till this time I had never heard any mention of GREGORY LOPEZ, nor did I know what was his name. But from this very relation I conceived such an esteem for him, as nothing could ever efface.

CHAPTER VI.

He goes to Atrisco, and thence to Mexico.

1. THE design of not being known and esteemed of men, occasioned LOPEZ to change his abode. Accordingly, perceiving that after he had been here four years, he was much

known and honoured both by Spaniards and Indians, he set out for Atrisco. When he was within a league of it, he met a gentleman named JUAN PEREZ ROMERO, who gave him a room in his house, and all that he wanted. His habit being worn out, his charitable host gave him another, made of coarse brown cloth, in the form of a cassoc, with breeches and stockings of the same. He wore the same sort all the rest of his life. He was situated much to his satisfaction here; his hosts living a truly Christian life, and profiting both by his advice and example, the only recompense he had to make them. But GOD did not permit him to remain here any more than two years. Some who lived near ROMERO, seeing in so young a man, and one who was of no religious order, so great mortification, and such admirable wisdom and knowledge, even without a learned education, were afraid where no fear was, and accused him with so much warmth before the Archbishop of Mexico, that he believed a judicial information ought to be taken concerning him. This information taken in due form of law, and the sentence which the Archbishop gave thereupon, made not only the innocence of LOPEZ appear, but likewise his eminent virtue and piety.

2. He then took his leave of ROMERO, leaving both him, his family, and his neighbours, swallowed up of sorrow. Being in the way to Mexico, he observed a church near Testuco, where he imagined he might find some small lodging, fit for a religious retreat: And so he did in his return from Mexico. During the first seven months of his abode there, none knew what he was, or took any notice of him. As he appeared like a simple man, of little spirit or understanding, no one was forward to accost him; nor did any one perceive the immense treasure which GOD had hid in his soul. By this means, he was in so great necessity, as was afterwards known, that sometimes he passed several days without eating any thing but wild quinces. But afterwards people began to observe him more, and devout persons invited him to eat with them. His very uncommon abstinence and manner of life was then matter of edification

to some ; others suspected all was not well ; and others concluded, he was a secret heretic.

3. These could not be at rest until they had applied again to the Archbishop, DON PEDRO MOYA DE CONTURAS, who then determined to be more exactly informed of the life, manners, and sentiments of LOPEZ. To this end I went to Testuco; where, after I had conversed with him for a long time, I was thoroughly satisfied. Of this I gave an account to the Archbishop, who in order to remove all future objections, commissioned FATHER ALPHONSO SANCHEZ, a person of eminent piety and knowledge, to inquire more fully into his employments, exercises, and sentiments. He accordingly went, and asked him many questions, which he answered with much modesty and humility ; but exceeding briefly, until SANCHEZ said, ‘ I will declare to you frankly, it is my Lord Archbishop has sent me ; and therefore, as you are one of his sheep, you are obliged to answer me with all plainness.’ He then began to interrogate him anew, and to ask the most difficult questions concerning the faith. LOPEZ answered him with the utmost clearness, and supported all his answers with Scripture ; recounted all the heresies which had arisen against the truth, marked the times and authors of them, as also the Fathers and Doctors who had opposed them, either *vivá voce* or by writing ; and all his answers were so judicious and solid, that the Father stood in admiration of him ; and much more at the manner wherein he answered all objections, either to his inward or outward conduct, which convinced him, he acted with a prudence that was rather divine than human.

He gave an account of all that had passed to the Archbishop, in a manner so advantageous to LOPEZ, that this good Bishop testified much satisfaction at having a man of so great virtue joined to his flock.

4. The first time I spoke to his Grace after this, he said,—FATHER SANCHEZ, in giving him an account of LOPEZ, had used these very words, ‘ In truth, my Lord, I am obliged to acknowledge, that in comparison of this man, I have not yet begun to learn my spiritual A, B, C.’

While he was yet at Testuco, several persons of all ranks coming from Mexico to consult him touching their spiritual distresses, they all returned much enlightened and comforted: And people then began to take knowledge, that he had a peculiar gift from God of easing and comforting the afflicted.

CHAPTER VII.

He goes to the Hospital at Guastepea. His inward and outward Exercises there.

1. AFTER this servant of God had spent two years at Testuco, he fell into so severe an illness, being attacked by so violent cholics and pains in the stomach, that he was constrained to remove from thence. He then went to the hospital at Guastepea, twelve leagues from Mexico, in the year 1580.

2. He was received there by Brother STEPHANO DE HERRERA, in the best manner he was able, considering the poor condition the hospital was then in, being but newly founded. He lodged him in his own chamber, and treated him with abundance of tenderness. The same he used towards all the poor that came to the hospital, although he had not then a revenue to feed them, or a building to lodge them in. Indeed it appeared impossible that he should, if things were but humanly considered. But the zeal of BERNARDIN ALVAREZ, the founder, and the blessing of God, conquered all things.

3. I remember, that when I asked ALVAREZ, Whether he was willing to receive LOPEZ into his hospital, he replied, 'Would to God there were room in my hospital to lodge all the poor that are in the world; for I have such confidence in the goodness of JESUS CHRIST, that I cannot doubt but he would provide for them all.' And how pleasing to God this his faith was, soon appeared; for in less than two years, after the hospital was founded, they

gave away there every day sixty-five measures of bread. Neither did they refuse to entertain any poor of any sort, men or women, Spaniards or Indians; not only those that came from New Spain, but from Guatemala and Peru. And they were so well received, so well attended, and treated with so much care and love, that almost all these patients were in a short time restored to perfect health.

4. AS LOPEZ was discharged from all outward care, he employed himself wholly in contemplation, in order to confirm himself still more in the love of God and of his neighbour; of which he had so long before begun to lay the foundation. But although this was only the continuation of the same spiritual exercise, yet the growth which he received day by day was such, that it appeared to be entirely new.

He used to spend all the morning alone in his chamber. At noon, when the clock struck, he went to the refectory, having always his head bare, with an admirable modesty and gravity. He brought his pot of water, covered with a little napkin, and eat his portion, as the rest of the patients; but did not speak at all, while he was eating, although others were talking round about him. After his meal he drank of the water, which he had set to warm in the sun, because of the extreme weakness of his stomach: When grace was said, he remained some time, talking of spiritual things with the Brothers of the hospital. But when any men of learning, or of a religious order were there, he conversed with them on things of the most elevated nature: And that with so much moderation and wisdom, that one would rather have taken him for an angel than a man. No sooner was the conversation ended, than he retired with a cheerful countenance, with much civility, and a remarkable humility, carrying his pot and his little napkin into his chamber, where he remained in his ordinary recollection of mind until noon the next day.

5. FATHER HERNANDO DE RIBERA relates, that being then very young, and Father HERRERA sending him to call LOPEZ to dinner, he sometimes found him in a kind of

trance, so that he did not answer when he was called. But when he continued to call, he answered at length, ‘What do you want, my son?’ ‘I come to call you to dinner,’ replied the child; on which he followed him, saying, ‘Praised be **God**.’

He went on Sundays and holidays, and some other days, with a mantle of the same cloth as his habit, to the public service in the hospital-chapel; or, if there was none there, in a neighbouring monastery.

6. Those who were sick of any contagious distempers he could not visit, his own extreme weakness not allowing of it. He therefore the more earnestly exhorted the Brothers to supply his lack of service: On which he spoke to them with such force, as redoubled their fervour in that holy exercise. Thus he performed by them what he could not do in person, and seconded his advice by his continual prayers. As to the other sick, he comforted and encouraged them in so touching and affectionate a manner, that they were unspeakably edified, and knew not how to praise **God** enough for all his mercies. He was particularly assisted to calm the spirits of those, whom either their own natural impatience, or the greatness of their pains, rendered so fretful and outrageous, that none else were able to bear them.

7. As much as he loved solitude, he never shut his door against any who came for spiritual relief or comfort. And many declared their troubles to him, and opened their whole hearts. He administered comfort and counsel to them all, without ever refusing it to any: And, indeed, he did it in so persuasive a manner, that few went from him without much joy and satisfaction. Many persons of learning also went on purpose to confer with him concerning several passages of Scripture; and were as much amazed at his knowledge of divine things, as his sanctity of manners.

8. About this time, **Father PEDRO DE PRAVIA**, first Professor of Divinity at Mexico, who had refused a Bishoprick, and was eminent for his humility, piety, and knowledge, went privately to Guastepea, talked with **LOPEZ** a whole

evening, and said at parting, ‘ You will come to me to-morrow morning.’ LOPEZ went to him in the morning, conversed with him until noon, and after dinner continued the conversation until night. • Father PRAVIA afterwards said, ‘ I had heard great things of LOPEZ, but I have found far more than ever I heard.’

9. While I was in the hospital he compiled, for the sake of the sick, a book of receipts, containing simple remedies for most diseases. He wrote it all with his own hand, and so well, that it looked as if it was printed. With these remedies almost incredible cures were wrought; so that one would have thought the author of that treatise had made physic his study for several years: But indeed he had not studied it all; nor had ever learned that science but in one book, that of the love of GOD and of his neighbour.

10. He sometimes employed himself in mending his poor habit, which he did with great address; and he made himself a little brown cloak to cover him. As for a hat, he did not make use of any, unless he was abroad, when the sun shone very hot. He was not skilled in making shoes; but he mended his own so dexterously, than one pair served him more than three years.



CHAPTER VIII.

A severe Illness obliges him to return to Mexico; whence he retires to St. Foy.

1. GOD, whose will it was that the light of his servant should now shine in other places also, sent him a disease which was not known at first, but which proved to be a purple fever. His great courage, his mortification and patience, made him pass thirteen days without taking his bed. But then the violence of his distemper constrained him to suffer himself to be treated like a sick man. Being so weak as he was, the being blooded fourteen times must needs have cost him his life, had not GOD preserved it for

his own glory and the profit of many souls. He recovered from that extremity, but there still remained an inflammation of the liver, attended with a slow fever. So that he was constrained to change the air for that of St. Augustine; a village three leagues from Mexico. He no sooner came hither than he sent me word, just as I was taking horse to go and see him at Guastepea. I went to St. Augustine; but found him so weak that it was absolutely necessary he should have more help than could be had there: So I removed him to Mexico, to my own lodging. He remained there some months, and several persons during that time coming to consult him, in points of the highest concern, were so profited thereby, that it clearly appeared God had brought him thither for that very purpose.

All the time he staid here, he never went abroad but to hear divine service. And though the MARCHIONESS DE VILLA MANRICO sent three times, desiring me to bring him to her, he excused himself, saying, ‘I have no need of seeing her, nor she of seeing me:’ Which was the more remarkable, because the Viceroy, her husband, was greatly feared, and she had an absolute power over him. But some years after, hearing the Marquiss was deeply afflicted at the coming of a Commissary from Spain, to take information of his actions, he told me, ‘If the Marchioness desires to see me, I will go to her now.’

But to return. He did not recover his health at Mexico: His fever continued; he had no appetite, and was as weak as ever: So I sought for some country place near Mexico, which might be better for his health than we found the city to be.

2. With this design, we went together to see St. Foy; a town two leagues from the city. We judged it to be an extremely proper place, and he pitched on a little house, separate from the town. He settled at St. Foy on the 22nd of May, 1589, and passed the rest of his life there in contemplation and prayer, without ever going out of it but twice, to a church which is a small half league from St. Foy. Before he communicated there, he fell on his knees before

Father VINCENT CALBA, and striking his breast said, ‘Through the mercy of GOD, I do not remember to have offended him in any thing. Give me, if you please, the most holy sacraments;’ which FATHER CALBA repeating with amazement, said, ‘Is it possible a man should have attained so high a degree of virtue, as not to be conscious to himself of even an idle word?’

3. In his little lodging here, he employed himself in the same spiritual exercises as before. Having for seven months scarce any company at all; only that I visited him as often as I was able, in doing which, I observed continually, more and more, so great a depth of piety in him, that my affection for him, and my desire of living wholly with him, increased in the same proportion. I recommended this to GOD in fervent prayer, and desired several persons to do the same, begging that he would be pleased to show me clearly what was his will concerning me. For I had the care of the great church in Mexico for more than twenty years, and some judged that I had done some good in my charge, were it only with regard to the poor who were ashamed to ask relief, for whom I had provided above ten years, by means of the alms which I procured for them. At length I was convinced it was my duty to retire: My superiors consented to it; so I went to LOPEZ on Christmas-day the same year, and staid with him till his death. I then observed, both day and night, all his actions and words, with all possible attention, to see if I could discover any thing contrary to the high opinion which I had of his virtue. But far from this, his behaviour appeared every day more admirable than before, his virtues more sublime, and his whole conversation rather divine than human.

4. His life was so uniform, that by one day you may judge how he employed whole months and years. As soon as the day began to dawn, he opened the window of his chamber, washed his hands and face, and spent a quarter of an hour, or a little more, in reading the Bible, in consideration of its being the Word of GOD, who ordered him to read it; likewise to the end, that what he did not well

understand at one time, he might understand at another ; but chiefly because he had such a reverence for the Holy Scripture, that he took it for the rule of his conduct every day.

After this reading, he entered into so deep a recollection, that one could not judge by any outward mark, whether he was active or passive, whether he was speaking to God, or God was speaking to him. All one could conjecture from the tranquillity and devotion which appeared in his countenance was, that he was in the continual presence of God. But that presence of God wherein he lived was not barren or unfruitful ; seeing it daily produced more and more acts of love to God and his neighbour : That love which is the end of the commandment, and the sum of all perfection.

5. Behold how this servant of God passed all the morning, all the evening, and great part of the night ! Behold the bread with which he nourished his soul every day ! But although this was in his mind continually, yet I have observed, it was in the morning chiefly that he was, as it were, transported out of himself. He had not herein any determinate place, nor any fixed posture of body ; but commonly he was standing, or sitting ; sometimes walking in his chamber ; and sometimes he went for a few moments into the sunshine, in a little gallery, which was near it. As for kneeling, he could not, during the last years of his life, by reason of his extreme weakness.

6. At eleven he quitted his posture of recollection, took his cup of water and his little napkin, and we two dined by ourselves, unless it fell out that any stranger came in ; for he never sent any away ; much less any person of piety. While we were at dinner, we talked on religious subjects, and sometimes of natural things, and even from these he would take occasion to speak truths of the sublimest nature.

7. After dinner we continued for a while to entertain each other in the same manner ; and if any person of a religious order came, it was a pleasure to hear LOPEZ talk

with him : But it was only by answering questions, or when occasion was given ; for he never began the discourse.* At other times I read to him at this hour the Lives of the Saints, the Spiritual Combat, or some such book ; after this reading, which was a kind of recreation to us, he retired into his chamber, where he continued in his union with God, which neither eating, nor conversation, nor business, nor any thing whatever could interrupt. And, as he never slept in the day, he had a great deal of time to converse with God ; he had seldom any visitant in the morning, but in the afternoon, his gate was open to all the world : He advised them, comforted them, and promised to pray to God for them. Accordingly, in the last years of his life, he was perpetually visited not only by people of the common rank, but by ecclesiastics, by men of learning and of authority, by gentlemen and noblemen, who either came to him themselves, or wrote to him to desire his advice, and to recommend themselves to his prayers.

Among these DON LEWIS DE VELASCO, Marquis of Salinas, who had been twice Viceroy of New Spain, then Viceroy of Peru, and afterwards President of the Royal Council of the Indies, had such an esteem and affection for him, that he came several times to see him, and remained shut up with him for two or three hours : Such a capacity did he find in him, not only for things relating to conscience, but also for secular affairs, even those which concerned the government of a kingdom.

8. Thus did he employ the afternoon. Before sun-set he returned to his chamber, whence he went out no more until the morning.

He never used any candle ; upon which several inquiring, what he could be doing all that time he spent without light ? I replied only, ‘ They did not comprehend that his employ being wholly interior, he had no need of a material light, but only of that spiritual one which enlightened the eyes of his understanding no less by night than by day.’

9. As he never ate in the evening, he remained alone

* Neither is this to be imitated.

until half an hour after nine o'clock, and then wrapped himself up in his bed-quilt, which was the most delicate bed he had had from his youth. For many years he lay on the bare ground; afterwards on some sheep-skins; but a few years before his death, I constrained him to have a thin quilt besides his coverlet. I do not think he slept in the whole night above two or three hours; the rest he spent in contemplation until break of day; and this he continued until God called him to an eternal repose.

Before I speak of the time which he spent at St. Foy, it may be proper to give a more particular account, both of the graces and supernatural gifts, with which it pleased God to enrich his soul.

CHAPTER IX.

The Knowledge which God infused into his Mind.

1. HE has sometimes owned, that God himself had given him to understand the Scriptures. And so it appeared; for though he had never learned Latin, he translated the Scripture from Latin into Spanish, in terms so proper, as if he had been equally acquainted with that and with his native tongue. It seemed, that the whole Bible was continually before him: When men of learning asked him, where such and such texts were? he not only told them without hesitation, but showed them the sense of them with such clearness, however obscure they were, that there remained no difficulty or obscurity in them.

2. Twenty years before his death, Father DOMINIC DE SALAZAR, afterwards Archbishop of the Philippines, said before several persons of learning, ‘What is this, my Fathers, that after we have studied so closely all our lives, we know nothing near so much of divine things as this young layman?’

Many persons of eminent knowledge came to him to resolve their doubts concerning passages of Scripture; and they all returned not barely satisfied, but amazed at the understanding which God had given him.

3. Indeed he had a vast and comprehensive knowledge of things, even of the speculative sciences. And what he knew, he knew so well, that he spoke on any of these subjects with as great clearness and accuracy as any of those who had made it their particular study.

When he was at Guastepea, Father JUAN COBUS, an eminent Divine, was astonished in conversing with him on the Revelation, at the admirable observations which he made. The Father prayed him to give them in writing. He did so in less than eight hours, and sent them immediately to him at Mexico, without any erasure in them; who was then no less surprised at his diligence, than he had been before at his knowledge and piety. This tract has been admired by all the learned who have seen it, as the most excellent that was ever written on the subject.

Yet was he exceeding far from taking any superiority upon him, from needlessly engaging in any dispute, and from setting himself up as a judge over others, or desiring that they should follow his sentiments.

Father ANTONIO ARIAS, and some others, disputing one day concerning those words in the Revelation: (*Chap. xxi. verse 1*;) "I saw a new heaven and a new earth," whether they were to be taken literally or not? When all had spoken, LOPEZ only said, 'When we are there, we shall see what will be here.'

4. He knew, with all the clearness which could be drawn from the Scripture and other histories, all that passed from the Creation to Noah; and he recited all the generations, their degrees of kindred to each other, their several ages, and the times when they lived, with as much exactness as if he had had the Bible before him, and were reading them out of the book.

Nor was he ignorant of the history of other people; but

if occasion offered, he could tell with the utmost accuracy, so far as any records remain, what were their manners, their customs, and the arts which they had invented.

The same knowledge he had of what passed from NOAH to CHRIST, and spake of these times as if they had been present to him. He referred all profane histories to the sacred ; knew the wars and events which had occurred in any nation to the birth of JESUS CHRIST, and spoke of them as clearly as he could have done of the things of his own time.

5. He was a thorough master of all ecclesiastical history, since the birth of CHRIST ; as likewise of all the Emperors, to PHILIP the Second, in whose reign he died.

He was equally skilled in profane history, ancient, as well as modern. He drew up a chronology from the Creation of the world, to the Pontificate of CLEMENT the Eighth, so exact, though short, that all remarkable incidents, whether ecclesiastical or secular, were set down therein.

6. But his knowledge was not limited to history. He was so knowing in Astronomy, Cosmography, and Geography, that it seemed as if he had himself measured the heavens, the earth, and the sea. He had a globe and a general map of the world, made by his own hand, so just that I have seen it admired by persons deeply skilled in this science ; and he was so ready herein, that the MARQUIS of SALINAS having sent him a very large one, he observed in it several mistakes, corrected them, gave his reasons for it, and then sent it back.

He had so particular a knowledge of nations, provinces, and the customs of them, that he could tell punctually where every country was, and in what degree of latitude their cities, their rivers, their isles, the plants and animals which were peculiar to them ; of all which he spoke a knowing what he said ; yet without any of that arrogance which usually attends knowledge ; because his, coming from heaven, was not sullied with the defects of that which is acquired in the world.

7. He was well acquainted with Anatomy, and severa

times made very curious remarks in that kind, which gave me room to admire the wisdom of GOD in the human frame, and to own “ we are fearfully and wonderfully made.”

He was no less acquainted with the art of Medicine ; in-somuch that he wrote (as we mentioned before) a book of excellent recipes, cheap, and easy to be procured ; and GOD blessed them with remarkable success.

He was an excellent Botanist : He not only knew the quality of plants, and for what diseases they were proper, but likewise, how those qualities might be altered, by mixing or infusing them with various liquors. I have seen and proved that he hath by this means made them quite different from what they were before. He told me, if he knew any good and skilful man, he would willingly have given him these recipes : But that otherwise, they must die with him ; lest they should be applied to a bad use.

He wrote several hands perfectly well, as may still be seen, particularly in the map of the world ; all the writing whereof one would imagine to be print, the strokes are so elegant, bold, and strong.

8. But all this knowledge did not for a moment divert his mind from “ the one thing needful.” When I asked him one day, whether none of these things ever gave him any distraction ? he replied, ‘ I find GOD alike in little things and in great.’ GOD being the continual object of his attention, he saw all things only in GOD.

CHAPTER X.

His Skill in directing Others.

1. AS GOD had given LOPEZ a peculiar knowledge in the Holy Scriptures, so he instructed him likewise in an admirable manner both to walk in the strait path to heaven himself, and to guide others therein.

He saw spiritual things with the eyes of his soul, as

clearly as outward things with his bodily eyes ; and had an amazing accuracy in distinguishing what was of grace from what was of nature ; and that not only with regard to himself, but those also who consulted him in their doubts and difficulties.

2. Several persons speaking before him of helps to prayer, one said, ‘ That the best help of all was music ; and that he had never found so much sweetness and peace in prayer, as in the cathedral service at Mexico.’ Another said, ‘ It was much better to pray with others, and much easier than to pray alone.’ To which LOPEZ said not one word. When they were gone, I asked, why he said nothing to them ? He answered, ‘ I would not condemn that conduct of theirs, which serves them as a staff to walk a little ; if you was to take it away now, they would not walk at all.’

3. GOD had given him so clear a discernment of words and thoughts, that he readily distinguished those that were useful and those that were not ; such as came from GOD, and such as came from nature. Upon which he was accustomed to say, ‘ It was not the love of GOD, but the love of themselves, which makes many speak of GOD :’ He said also, ‘ As the love of GOD is all action, it talks little, and often not at all.’ It was from this light and this quick discernment, his extreme circumspection in all his words proceeded.

The same light freed him from all scruple, and kept his soul in admirable tranquillity ; so that whatsoever attempts SATAN made upon his soul, he never had any doubts of any kind.

4. Many knowing and spiritual men came to ST. FOY, to consult him touching their inward conduct : And he cleared all their doubts with so much ease that they returned entirely satisfied. That which I particularly admired was, the incredible brevity with which he answered them ; and that those few words were sufficient to remove so great difficulties, so that they seemed to be as it were rays of light, which penetrated and enlightened their spirit ; sparks which,

proceeding from the love which burned in his heart, inflamed their hearts with the same love of God.

One consulting him, who was in great trouble of mind, was eased at once by his speaking those words, "I counsel thee to buy gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich."

Another, under strong temptation, was delivered by his uttering only that text, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

To many who inquired, what they should do to please God, he gave only this answer, 'Do what you do now, out of love to God, and it will be sufficient.'

To persons of letters, judges, and men of business, he often said, 'Change your intention, and you will do well enough.'

One desiring of him a rule for prayer, he gave him this answer in writing: 'JESUS CHRIST, our LORD, is an admirable Master, who can instruct you how to pray; and all prayer is included in his prayer. But that you may not complain I refuse your request; I will tell you, you need only say these few words: O LORD, my GOD, enlighten my soul, that I may know thee, and that I may love thee with all my heart.'

5. But when persons came to him out of curiosity, not a real desire to serve God, he gave them no other answer than this: 'There are teachers in the Church.'

ANTONIO DE AVILA coming out of curiosity, and with a design to dispute with him, LOPEZ, as if seeing his heart, answered him at the first word, 'I do not dispute; neither do I know any thing but what God teaches me. Therefore you are come hither in vain.'

6. After it pleased our LORD to make known the graces which he had given his servant, men saw clearly what gift he had received, for guiding those who came to him in their doubts and troubles. They were ravished to see the light which he had received from God; they were charmed with the sweetness of his carriage; they respected him as a

Divine Spirit, enclosed in a mortal body; they were persuaded that God himself instructed him, in all his actions, and all the answers he gave: They came to consult him, as an oracle from heaven, as a prodigy of holiness. He fully satisfied all the doubts that were proposed to him; he instructed every one in the manner wherein he should behave in his profession. None were so afflicted, but he comforted them; he imprinted on the spirit of all to whom he spake, an ardent desire of holiness. His words were all words of fire, and inflamed the heart with the love of God. None went from him, without feeling himself comforted and strengthened.

In the year 1579, Father FRANCIS LOSA, (who wrote the preceding and following parts of this life,) being then Rector of the largest parish in Mexico, asked LOPEZ, whether he should not retire from the city, and live in some solitude as an hermit? He answered, 'Remain this year a hermit at Mexico.' LOSA returned thither, and his whole manner of life was entirely changed. Whenever he went through the city, whether to collect or distribute charity, he felt an inward recollection and prayer, which not all the noise and hurry of the city could interrupt; as if he had been fifty years in that holy exercise, he found himself a new man, having lost in a moment all thoughts of earth, and being filled with heaven alone; he renounced all compliments, visits of form, and needless conversation; and his only joy was, to retire into himself, and treat with God upon the affairs of salvation. He began to walk alone, unless when he was obliged to go with any one on a work of charity; and the multitude of people whom he met, no more disturbed his attention to God, than if they had been rocks and trees. He immediately gave to the poor all his goods; he renounced all the pleasures of life; he dismissed all his servants, and employed all the rest of his days in serving God and his neighbour; he gave away upwards of 60,000 ducats, and resolved to give up 2000 of yearly income. He entered upon a course of rigorous fasting; mean time he was exercised with more violent temptations, both inward and out-

ward, than ever he had had ; but in all he was “ more than conqueror.”

7. At the end of the year, he went to LOPEZ again ; and after having given him an account of all his life, he said, The year is expired ; what shall I do now ? LOPEZ replied, ‘ Love GOD and your neighbour.’

In returning to Mexico, LOSA began to think on these words ; but he thought he had thoroughly practised this already ; and, accordingly, found some repugnance in himself to the advice which LOPEZ had now given him. But remembering what advantage he had reaped from his first advice, he presently humbled himself, believing these few words contained much more than he had at first imagined ; and he besought GOD to show him the full meaning of them, and to pardon his pride. Immediately he heard a voice in his inmost soul : ‘ Before thou canst love GOD, thou must renounce thyself, and die to all the things of the world.’ He offered himself to GOD for this with all his heart, and prayed the Divine Majesty to work this in him ; and in the instant he found it in himself, and was so penetrated with his love, that his understanding not being able to comprehend, nor his heart to contain so great a favour, he felt his bodily strength taken away, and thought he should have fallen from his horse. Thus he found the excellence of the advice LOPEZ had given him, and the efficacy of his prayers.

So great a favour produced great effects ; for he continued six years in this same fervour of love, experiencing all the Christian graces, and enjoying all the fruits of the SPIRIT. And these were his support for forty years after, in all the labours and pains which he had to suffer ; so that nothing could move him from his resolution of following in all things the will and guidance of GOD.

8. It was in pursuance of this that he quitted Mexico, and came to live wholly with LOPEZ. The first night he spent there, he was in violent temptations, which he mentioned to LOPEZ in the morning ; who replied, ‘ I forgot you last night ; it shall not be so any more.’ And in fact, the fol-

lowing nights he had no such trouble, but found his heart calmly stayed on God.

He remained with LOPEZ seven years, in the little house at St. Foy, whom he eased of all care concerning temporals; having a small salary for taking care of a chapel in the hospital, which was sufficient for them both. After his death, he continued there twenty years, employed in the same private exercises, and in assisting the poor Indians, who had received the faith, in all things pertaining to conscience.

In the year 1612, sixteen years after the death of LOPEZ, he wrote his life, and dedicated it to the MARQUIS of SALINAS; being himself at that time eighty-four years old, as appears by the deposition which he made in 1620.

CHAPTER XI.

His Government of his Tongue, and his Prudence.

1. "IF any man offend not in word," saith ST. JAMES, "the same is a perfect man." We may then pronounce LOPEZ a perfect man; for in all the eighteen years that I lived in the strictest intimacy with him, though I narrowly observed him, I never heard him speak one single word that could be reproved.

He never spoke evil of any person; no, not of an heretic or a Pagan. He was occasionally speaking one day of an Emperor who would 'eat meat fresh killed, when he was in the midst of the sea, and fishes which had been alive just before, when he was in the most inland country.' I said, 'That was HELIOGABALUS;' he replied, 'It is enough to condemn the action, without naming him that did it.'

2. When he was told, that certain persons spoke evil of him, he heard it without any emotion, and said first, 'We ought to believe, they had a good intention;' and after a while, 'According to what they have heard said of me, they have reason to judge of me as they do.' He strove not

only to excuse the persons, but likewise (as far as truth would bear) the action, without ever attempting to justify himself: And when he could not excuse them, he readily shifted the discourse to another subject.

3. His conversation was always of things useful and spiritual, meet to minister grace to the hearers. His manner of speaking was sweet, civil, and invariably serious and equal. The tone of his voice was not high, but very agreeable; he was a perfect master of pronunciation; his discourses continually gained the hearts of those that heard them; and were delivered with such modesty as well as majesty, as made him appear a kind of heavenly man.

I never observed, that either the beauty of heaven, the stars, or of the most green or flowery fields, or of the clearest fountains and streams, or the visits of any person whatever, whether at table or after, occasioned his speaking one idle word: I do not mean, a light or trifling word, this would have been an utter contradiction to his whole manner of life, but even an unnecessary word; for he measured his words so well, that he spoke no more than was needful to make himself understood; and he never exaggerated any thing.

4. As excellently skilled as he was in all the arts and sciences, yet even when he was among men of learning, and they were talking on those heads, he never opened his mouth, unless the discourse was addressed to him. And even when he spoke of the things of God, as deep as his answers were, they were expressed in the most simple terms; because he retrenched whatever would have been superfluous in them, and was content with satisfying the demands and needs of his neighbours.

One day, standing at the window, I said to him, ‘See how hard it rains!’ Instantly a flash of lightning struck my hand, and made it smart exceedingly; I told him of it, and he replied, ‘You are paid as you deserve for your idle words; did not I see myself how hard it rained?’

Upon his telling me one day a thing of great importance,

I asked, 'If you knew this, why did you not tell it me before?' He answered, 'I do not speak all that I know; but only all that is necessary.'

5. He was as sparing of words in writing as in speaking: He never wrote first to any one, nor did he answer others, but when either necessity or charity obliged him to it; and then so precisely, and in so few words, that nothing could be retrenched. I have several of his letters in my hands, of five or six lines each, or less: Some of them were written to DON LEWIS DE VELASCO, our Viceroy, in answer to those he had received from him; one of them contained only these words: 'I will do what you command me.' And although this manner of writing might seem disrespectful to persons of so high quality; yet it gave no offence from one who was so far from all compliment, and who never spoke any thing superfluous.

6. But when the honour of GOD was concerned, the truth of Scripture, or the good of his neighbour, if others did not, he spoke without asking; and that largely, if the cause so required. For example: If any one in temptation or great affliction, began to complain of GOD; it was amazing to hear with what strength and piety he spoke, to convince them of their mistake, ignorance, and weakness; of the depth of the wisdom and mercy of GOD, hid from the eyes of men in their afflictions, and of their obligation to abandon themselves to his conduct, and to throw themselves wholly into his hands.

7. He heard at all times with attention whatever questions were proposed to him; and he either answered them or not, as he judged it his duty. One of a religious order came to see him, and desired me to bring it about, that he might talk of GOD. I did; and he began a large, pompous discourse. Observing LOPEZ to make no answer, I desired him, by a private sign, to say something on the head; he answered me softly, so that the Doctor did not hear: 'My silence will edify him more than my words.' When he went away, I asked him what he thought of LOPEZ? He answered, 'I esteem his silence much.'

LOPEZ said to me after, ‘ I see that many talk well: But let us live well.’

8. He was used with much earnestness to plead the cause of Princes, Governors, and Magistrates. To those who found fault with them, he often said, ‘ If you was in their place, perhaps you would not do so well as they; and who gave you authority to judge them?’ If they still insisted, ‘ they were to blame;’ he answered, ‘ Then you ought to speak it to them; it is useless to speak of it here.’

If persons who passed for religious, spoke evil of any one, he told them, ‘ I cannot believe that any can be truly religious, who set themselves up for judges of the actions of others, and who speak to their disadvantage.’ On these occasions his usual word was, ‘ This is not the place to remedy this; it is not the business here.’

A person of authority speaking of the King’s manner of governing, he said, ‘ There is not a man in Spain of more ability than the King; and are you more able than he?’ He stood reproved and spoke no more.

CHAPTER XII.

His Patience and Humility.

1. HE never mentioned to any one the pains which he endured, nor sought consolation in any creature: Only sometimes when he believed it might be of use to his neighbour, to tell what had befallen himself; but nothing that befel him could ever disturb his recollection of mind. And that equality of spirit which he continually preserved, plainly showed, that he was raised above all human things, and entirely possessed with the thoughts of things above, without ever losing sight of them.

2. Although he frequently suffered great pain at his stomach, and violent cholics, he never made any complaint, nor indeed any show of them; I found it out only from

his unusual weakness, and not being able to eat. Observing this one day in particular, I asked him, 'What was the matter?' He answered, 'That he had had a violent cholic for fifteen days, without any intermission.'

He had a fever often; and he cured it by fasting for three, four, or five days. But how ill soever he was of any of these disorders, he never would keep his bed.

3. While he was at St. Foy, he had the tooth-ache for almost a year together: But I did not perceive it by any outward sign, only that twice he used some herbs, which he knew to be good for it, and that sometimes it was so violent he could not eat.

He was accustomed to say on this occasion, 'We ought not to desire sufferings, but to endure them valiantly when they come.' And this he so steadily practised, that one might have imagined, he did not feel them; as I remarked from the very day that I saw him first.

4. Men naturally desire to be thought better than they are; but LOPEZ was so far from this, that he always esteemed himself less than others; and I have heard him say more than once, 'For many years I have judged no man; I have believed all to be wiser and better than I; I have not pretended to set myself up above any one, or to assume any authority over others.' And hence he easily excused them who judged ill of himself. When I told him one day, that many had spoken evil of him, he answered, 'I excuse them not only with my lips, but with all my heart.'

Hence also it was, that he did not desire that others should embrace his sentiments, and that he did not study to express them in such a manner, as might recommend them to others. On which he told me one day, 'I knew a man once, who diligently studied what he had to say; and he had no opportunity of saying it at all: Which taught him not to spend time so uselessly, but to trust in God, who will not fail to give help in time of need.'

5. He was also far from those inquietudes which arise from the uncertainty of success in our undertakings; inasmuch as, seeking only to please God, he considered those

cares as obstacles to his design. Accordingly, he was never in pain for the event of things; nor did he ever lay great designs before-hand, even touching the service of God and his neighbour: He looked upon this as a useless way of spending time, and was always for employing the present moment.

As he was always on his guard, if a thought of this kind came at any time into his mind, he checked it immediately by saying, 'I am nothing, I am good for nothing.' He was content to observe the law of God, without thinking himself worthy to see into futurity; although he was always prepared to do whatever the divine Majesty should call him to.

6. He was so free from all desire, that he has sometimes said to me, 'Ever since I came to New Spain, I have never desired to see any thing in this world, not even my relations, friends, or country.' He never desired to see angels or visions: 'I only desire,' said he, 'to see God.' And even in this, he was wholly resigned to his will, as to the time and the manner of it. To which he added, 'That the raptures and ecstasies which he desired to have in this life, were only to unite him to God, and to conform him more and more to his holy will, that he might obey him in all things.'

7. The moment he came to the valley of Amajac, he kneeled down upon the ground, and taking his discipline, began to chastise his body; but his divine CAPTAIN, whose wisdom is infinite, suffered him not to go on: He spoke these words to his heart: "Another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not:" Giving him to understand that he was not to choose for himself, but God would discipline him according to his own pleasure.

He began by exercising him with inward trials; and those so painful, that he had need of all his patience to suffer them. He has told me, 'He could not think of them without trembling; but that he had never told the particulars to any one.' Yet it was easy to judge from his advices to others in their trials, that he had experienced

the same himself; he answered them so exactly, as he could not have done, if he had not spoken by experience.

Other sufferings he had from the Prince of Darkness; who knowing faith to be the foundation of all graces, was continually striving to throw doubts or blasphemous thoughts into his soul: But his lowliness and firm confidence in God, as often as they returned, put them to flight.

8. And he was no less eminent in denying himself, than in taking up and bearing his cross. From his first retiring, he had resolved to eat nothing to please his taste, but only to sustain life: And this he observed so religiously, even to his death, that when he was pressed to eat either some melon, or raisins, or figs, he only smelt the melon, and said, 'This is enough for this year.'

On my telling him once, 'You take no rest, and you can take none in the way wherein you go;' he replied, with a calm and cheerful countenance, 'It is true I cannot take any rest, while my brethren are engaged in so many labours and dangers; because it is not just that I should think of rest, as long as they are exposed to those hazards. God keep me from giving way to such sloth. If but one of them is in danger, that is enough to make me continue to pray without ceasing for him.'

9. But what cost him the most pain of any thing in his whole life, was, always to follow the grace of God: As none can follow this without renouncing himself, (grace so often demanding just the contrary to nature,) accordingly it was his continual endeavour to die to all created things, and to combat nature; which loves to enjoy them, to live in pleasure, and ease, and honour. He desired to be despised, like his Master: He studied to forget all temporal things, and thought only of seeking God, and serving him. He received with constant patience, all that could befall him, without seeking any satisfaction, or finding any, even in his virtues, but as they contributed to the glory of God, to whom alone his heart was attached, forgetting all things else. He had so great a hunger and thirst for God, that no creature could satisfy him. After this Sovereign Good

he ran without ceasing, in spite of all his natural inclinations: And this agonizing after God is a greater cross, and a heavier self-denial, than any who have not felt it can conceive.

CHAPTER XIII.

His Prayer.

1. SEVERAL things gave me reason to believe, that LOPEZ began to pray from the time he began to reason. He has occasionally told me, 'That he had never been a child; and that he had never cast one look backward.' Whence one may easily infer, he had never been without prayer, even from his tender years. I have likewise heard him say, 'That from the time he came to court, he prayed continually, and went through his business with the same inward peace, as he could have done twenty years after: And that neither the noblemen he met in the way, nor the noise and distractions of the court, any more interrupted his inward prayer, than if he had been in a cavern.' And to this he was brought at first, not by the fear of hell; but God always led him by love. The foundation of all his devotion was JESUS CHRIST, the only door whereby we can come to God. This he has often told us, while he has spoken in so affecting a manner of the life and death of our REDEEMER, as made it clearly appear, how well he was exercised in this kind of meditation.

2. The first prayer, wherein he was employed in his little cell, (as was before observed,) was contained in those words: "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven:" Words that contain the most sublime and the most difficult doctrine in the whole spiritual life: For they contain a fixed resolution, to do all that God requires, whether in temporal or spiritual things, the observation of his law in all things, and an entire submission to his orders by receiving at his hand with tranquillity of spirit, whatever he pleases, how

rough soever it be : Because the will of GOD, being our sanctification, we ought to embrace whatever conduces to it ; and to this end to obey him without reluctance, and the creatures for his sake.

This is the way to be always in his presence, and to show our love to him by our obedience.

This includes also true mortification in all our works, all our affections, all our desires : For it is to make a continual sacrifice to GOD of our own will, and to have no end but to fulfil his in all our actions.

By this exercise one arrives at a state of uniformity, that is, so strict an union of our will with that of GOD, that ours disappearing, we have no will but his, which actuates, guides, and governs us.

3. LOPEZ has told me, that after the first year, he had no need to put himself in remembrance of this prayer, because his very drawing his breath reminded him of it every moment. The effect of which was, that he was continually raised above himself, without ever having a thought about worldly things, and that his understanding, memory, and will, were all so fully taken up with this divine exercise, that, as great as his temptations were, they had no sooner passed than he had forgotten them.

After three years, GOD led him to practise another lesson, namely, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength ; and thy neighbour as thyself.” And he now employed himself with the same application in these acts of love, as he had done before in those of resignation ; inso-much that I have heard him say, ‘ It would be very difficult to discontinue this exercise for a moment, even in eating, in talking, or in any other employment, whether of body or mind.

4. His soul being in this situation, he applied himself to the Holy Scriptures with more application than ever. In this he spent three or four hours every day ; and the love which filled his heart, gave him understanding therein.

By this means he acquired also that wonderful discretion

in his words, that prudence and wisdom in his answers and counsels, and that evenness with which he loved his neighbour as himself, and sought his happiness no less than his own.

Hence likewise proceeded that great purity of heart, that readiness in all kinds of prayer, that entire mortification of all his senses, and that constant power over all the powers of darkness.

5. 'I have talked with LOPEZ, (says a person of eminent piety,) sometimes for four hours together, upon spiritual things, and from what I saw and remarked in him, I judged him to be a man highly favoured. His soul appeared to be disengaged from all things else, by a pure union with God. Him he always enjoyed in the essence of his soul, where the supreme Majesty delights to dwell. This I could easily learn, during an acquaintance of seven years, from many things which he communicated to me. Hence, I found, that he was in a continual act of the love of God; in which his soul, freed from all created things, was so intimately united to God, that from this fountain flowed all the graces which it pleased our Lord to bestow upon him. For at the same time that he received this pure uninterrupted love, he made an admirable use of it on all occasions, as knowing that love is the source, the origin, and the mother of all the other virtues; which God continually communicated to him, that he might communicate them to others, and enrich their poverty with his abundance.'

I asked him once, 'If he had any particular hours, wherein he prayed more than at other times? And if he did not abate something of his prayer in his employments and conversations with his neighbour?' He answered, 'That he had no particular hours, and that he had no necessity for them; since no created thing was capable of either interrupting or abating his continual love of God and his neighbour: That so far from ever drawing back in this his union with God, he advanced in it continually, referring to God by this simple act of pure love, all the graces which he was pleased to give him, without assuming any thing to

himself; that this union was the source of all his knowledge; and that, accordingly, God himself was his Teacher, and not his books; through which indeed he was sometimes taught.'

He told me likewise, 'God had showed him, there was then the greatest union between God and the soul, when it was such that there was nothing interposed between them; and that he had given him to comprehend what sort of union this was, from that which is between the light and the air: For these being two distinct things, and which have each its separate subsistence, are nevertheless so united, that God alone is able to divide them. How much closer is the union between the pure essence of the soul, and Him who is an infinitely pure SPIRIT!'

Asking him one day, 'What would you have done if you had been a Priest?' He replied, 'What I do now.' 'And how,' said I, 'would you have prepared yourself to celebrate the blessed sacrament?' He answered, 'As I now prepare myself to receive it. And if I were assured of dying in a few hours, I would do no other thing than I do now: For I do actually offer up to God all that is in my power by a continual act of love; and I can do nothing more until he shall enable me himself.'

He told me farther, 'Perfection does not consist in visions, revelations, ravishments, and ecstasies; although God often favours his servants therewith, because he acts towards every one according to his capacity, his need, and the disposition wherein he is. But souls accustomed to acts of pure love, do not need the suspension of their senses, in order to have deep communion with God, because these do not hinder them therein.' He added, 'That he had never had any revelations, ecstasies or ravishments, which had deprived him of his senses; nor had his senses ever occasioned in him any distraction of mind, because they were perfectly spiritualized, entirely subject to his reason, and conformable to the will of God.'

Continuing the discourse, 'I knew a man,' said he, (by whom I was assured he meant himself,) 'who for six and

thirty years never discontinued, for one single moment, to make, with all his strength, an act of pure love to God.'

At another time I spoke to him of some who acquired great inward peace by a passive union with God, and by a love which made them continually taste the grace which God communicated to them. He answered, 'Such souls are happy, and walk in a good path. But yet the perfection is not so great in this state wherein one enjoys these sweetnesses, as in that wherein we labour with all our might to love God in the most perfect manner we can possibly; because in the latter state we act, rather than enjoy; whereas in the former, we rather enjoy than act: For a soul that perfectly loves God, can only give him what he gives first; and he requires no more, inasmuch as this is all the Law and the Prophets.'

CHAPTER XIV.

His Union with God, and the Fruits thereof.

1. I ASKED him one day, 'Whether his not using a hat, was because he was always in the presence of God?' He answered, 'No: my union with God being in my inmost soul, does not require me to be either covered or uncovered; but it is, that I may want as few things as possible, and that I may not make my body delicate.'

Hence proceeded that humility which he possessed in so eminent a degree. Being always so intimately united with God, he had a full knowledge of God's infinity and his own nothingness, and earnestly desired that every one should consider him as nothing, and God as all.

Hence also it was, that he received whatever befel him from men, with such peace and tranquillity of spirit, that he readily excused those who despised or spoke evil of him, and that he never complained of any one.

2. From the same fountain proceeded the perfect purity both of his soul and body; for the rays of the Divinity fell

continually on his soul, as those of the sun on a crystal mirror. By this act of pure love, his soul was transformed into the same image. And what purity was thereby communicated even to the body, can hardly be conceived in this life.

Hence sprung that purity of conscience also, which astonished the most spiritual, as one sees by his own words: ‘Through the mercy of GOD, I do not know that I have sinned in any thing:’ And upon my asking, Is it possible for any one to remain for any time without committing sin? He answered, ‘When those whom GOD has enabled to love him with all their soul, do with his assistance all that is in their power, and that with deep humility, it is possible for them to remain without committing sin; as clearly appears, in that our LORD, who commanded nothing which was impossible to be performed, commanded this: “Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD, with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength.” But he who does this, not only does not sin, but grows daily in all holiness.’

I replied, But how can this be, when the * Scripture says, “The just man sins seven times a day?” He answered, ‘This could not be taken literally; since we see some who spend not only one day, but many, in uninterrupted prayer, and in one continued act of love to GOD.’

3. But although this servant of GOD was continually employed in this act of love to GOD and his neighbour, yet he had likewise other ways of praying, which did not hinder, but increase his union with GOD.

When he had any great inward conflicts, he rejoiced to sustain them for the love of GOD: And after he had conquered, he offered all that he had suffered as a sacrifice to him.

He offered him not only the spoils won from his enemies, but the gifts and graces which he had given him, joined with fervent prayer, and an unspeakable sense of his obli-

* Observe what kind of perfection the Papists hold! The true answer is, There is no such word in the Bible. SOLOMON’S words are, “The just man” falleth “seven times;” not into sin, but trouble.

gations to the Giver of every good gift: So that when he received any new grace or gift, his understanding being more enlightened, and his heart still more inflamed with love, instead of resting on these gifts or graces, he offered them to GOD, for whom alone he loved all that he received from him.

4. He was likewise accustomed to offer to GOD the life, passion, and death of our blessed LORD, sometimes in behalf of all the world; sometimes of particular persons. He told me one day, 'That he frequently practised two sorts of spiritual communion; the one, by an ardent desire of receiving JESUS CHRIST in the LORD'S Supper; the other, by receiving into his soul, the FATHER, SON, and the HOLY SPIRIT, thus becoming a living and pure temple of the ever-blessed Trinity, actually giving them an abode in his heart, to dwell and rest there for ever.'

5. He prayed earnestly for the Church, for its increase, and for the propagation of the true faith through all nations; and for all sinners, that they might offend GOD no more, but might all love him and keep his commandments. What he asked for his neighbour with the greatest fervour, was, that they might do the will of GOD as it is in heaven. And this he did on all occasions: So when he heard one say, 'That the King was extremely revered, because of his power and justice, and that he possessed his realms in peace;' he immediately broke out, 'LORD, thou hast all justice, and all power; let all men reverence thee! And possess thou thy kingdom over all the earth in peace throughout all ages!' If he heard of a father whom his children loved for his goodness, he would presently say to GOD, 'Eternal FATHER, thou art the source of all good; let all thy children love thee.' When one mentioned a gardener, who took great care to make his trees bear good fruit, he said, 'Suffer not, LORD, any of thy creatures to perish, but make them all bring forth good fruit.' If he heard of great wars, and many deaths, he lifted up his heart to GOD, saying, 'See, LORD, the miserable state of thy children, and my brethren, whom thou commandest me

to love as my own soul.' In a word, there was nothing, either good or evil, which did not furnish him with matter for prayer. He told me sometimes, that he saw at one glance in GOD, all that was in the world. Hence one may judge how sublime his prayer was, and how near a resemblance he bore to GOD: Seeing all the world was present, as it were, in epitome, in his understanding; and by so peculiar a gift, he reduced all to one point, to offer it to GOD.

6. He was extremely desirous, that every Christian should continue to pray, even in outward works. And this he practised, not only in all he did, but likewise in all he spoke; for whenever he spoke, either in answering or asking any thing, he lifted up his heart to GOD, and prayed for his assistance and blessing. Particularly, whenever he had a desire to assist any that was in distress, he had recourse to GOD by prayer. By this it was that he did so many surprising things; saying often, 'It is much better to treat with GOD than with man.'

7. By this means he could say, with the strictest truth, "I live not, but CHRIST liveth in me." For he appeared to all who observed him with attention, to be a real portraiture of JESUS CHRIST, truly crucified with him, and having no affection but for a life wholly divine. Being in a manner transformed into the image of CHRIST, he had an ardent desire to follow him, in his life, in his labours, and in his sufferings, as the most perfect pattern that can ever be set before us. Therefore he had no rest during his whole life, but was labouring and suffering incessantly.

He could continually testify, "To me to live is CHRIST, and to die is gain." For it was his chief joy, to suffer for JESUS CHRIST: In this he gloried, and in this alone; saying, with the Apostle, "GOD forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST." Him he regarded in all things, as the only model by which he was to form himself. He said, with DAVID, "My eyes are always lifted up unto thee, O LORD." He was accustomed to say, 'The eyes of a wise man are always fixed on CHRIST, who is his

head: And the soul that is touched with the love of God, is like the needle that is touched with the loadstone, which always points to the north. Thus in whatever place a truly spiritual man is, and in whatever he is employed, his eyes and his heart are always fixed on JESUS CHRIST.'

CHAPTER XV

His last Sickness and Death.

1. In May 1596 he began to find himself out of order: He lost his appetite entirely; nor could he swallow any thing but liquids, and that not without much difficulty. A few days after he fell into a bloody flux, which was the more dangerous, because he was so extremely weak. Seeing the concern I was under, he said, 'My father, now is God's time:' Meaning the time of showing by facts his resignation and conformity to the Divine will; according to his common saying, 'True resignation consists wholly in doing, and not in talking.'

As soon as his sickness was known at the hospital in Mexico, the Superior of the Hospital came to visit him; and believing he might want one to attend upon him, he brought with him Brother PEDRO DE SARMIENTO. When he was come, he could not but admire his patience and tranquillity of spirit. He asked, 'If he should not leave this Brother to tend him?' He replied with his usual gravity and sweetness, 'He was not willing to deprive the hospital of a help which perhaps they could not spare;' but being assured they could spare him, he willingly accepted of his service. He bore his illness many days with his accustomed courage and patience, never complaining, were his pains ever so great.

2. On the 24th of June I thought it would be well to give him the Sacrament. I asked him, if he was willing to receive it? He answered, 'Yes; and particularly on ST. JOHN the Baptist's day; for whom he had always had a

peculiar veneration.' I then gave it him without delay, fearing lest death should prevent, as he was exceeding weak, and received scarce any nourishment; besides that he had an extremely troublesome hickup, and his pulse began to intermit.

His hickup continuing, he said to Brother PEDRO, 'My Brother, you know what this hickup means;' intimating thereby that his death was near.

This day, and the following days, his illness increased continually: Notwithstanding which he would rise, even to the day of his death, and dress himself as often as his distemper required; although he might have avoided that extreme fatigue, by accepting the services of others.

3. He grew weaker and weaker every day, not being able to eat any thing, unless some sweatmeats, which certain persons of quality sent him from Mexico. Upon which he said, 'Thou art wonderful, my God, in that a man who possesses nothing in the world, having need of such food as belongs only to Noblemen, has it provided for him.'

I never perceived in him, during his whole illness, any repugnance to the order of God, but an admirable peace and tranquillity, with an entire conformity to his will. All his virtues shone marvellously in this sickness, and particularly his humility. A few days before his death an Indian of St. Foy came to see him, and as he did not understand the Indian tongue, he said to me, 'If you please, my Father, hear him; perhaps he would give me some good advice.' Such was his spirit, to believe he might learn from an Indian, in the state wherein he then was.

4. All this time his pains of body were so great, that when I asked him, how he found himself, and in what part his sharpest pain lay? he answered, 'From my head to my foot.' It was then that a lady of quality came from Mexico to visit him: But as she had not profited by his former advices, but still continued passionately fond of dress, and of gaming, I sent her word, 'She might go back, for she could not see him, nor would he receive any thing from her.' As she earnestly begged she might see him, three or four hours

passed in messages to and fro. At length, hoping it might have a good effect, I consented. When she was admitted, she kneeled down by his bed, served him herself, and prepared his food with her own hands, with the utmost tenderness and humility. She was then dressed plain, without any ornaments at all. During the time she staid at St. Foy, she had much conversation with him every morning and evening, and with many tears recommended herself to his prayers.

5. From that hour she felt an entire change in her heart, abhorring the things of which she was so fond before. And some days before she returned to Mexico, she told me with great joy, ‘My father, you shall be a witness, that GREGORY LOPEZ has taken a charge of my soul.’ He replied, ‘I have so.’ Immediately his pains redoubled, and she on her part felt herself struck with the same illness which he had. Nevertheless she continued two days serving him on her knees, and shedding abundance of tears. But her illness increasing daily, she was constrained to return to Mexico. LOPEZ said to her at parting, ‘Madam, farewell: We shall see each other here no more.’

As her illness increased, in the same proportion increased her shame and sorrow for her sins: And so did his pains. When she was in extremity, one came from her, to beg he would remember her. He answered, to my astonishment, ‘Yes, I do; and I carry this weight on my shoulders.’ In fine, the lady died, giving all the proof which was possible of a saving change. I heard of it a few hours after. When I mentioned it to LOPEZ, he expressed his joy in these few words: ‘God has all power.’

I have related this to show, how deeply the love of his neighbour was rooted in his heart, and with what ardour he assisted, even in his utmost weakness, the souls that were in danger, and even taking as it were to himself the punishment of their sins, as he seems to have done on this occasion. Seeing, beside the excessive pain of body which he felt, the inward cross which he bore from the time that he charged himself with this soul was so extremely heavy,

that he was astonished at it himself; and that not knowing before what it was to complain, he then cried out with the strongest emotion, 'JESUS assist me: My God, how severe is this refining fire!' And one time, when I was going out, he stopped me, saying, 'My Father, do not leave me. Alas, it was not without great reason that CHRIST bade his Apostles stay and watch with him:' Such a word as never fell from him before in the severest trials either of body or soul.

6. Yet in the midst of all his inward and outward pains, his courage and faith were unshaken. I frequently asked, during all these storms, 'Do you continue that act of pure love?' He answered, 'That is always the same.' To set which in the clearest light, I will repeat the several questions which I proposed, when I saw him at the lowest ebb, and his answers.

One time I asked, 'If so great pain did not a little divert him from thinking on God?' He answered, 'Not in the least.' Another time, seeing him suffer extremely, I said, 'Now is the time to think upon God.' 'And of whom should I ever think?' was his reply. When he was in the very pangs of death, I said, 'Are you now thoroughly united to God?' He answered, 'Yes, thoroughly.'

Another time he turned to me, and said, 'Perseverance, joined with peace, is of great price.' And when I comforted him by saying, 'God led him in the way of the cross, as he had done his own SON;' he replied, 'I cannot be too thankful for it, nor rejoice in it too much. His holy will be accomplished in me.' In fine, when it appeared to me time to give him the parting blessing, I said, 'Behold the time of going to see the secret of the LORD.' He answered, 'All is clear; there is no longer any thing hid; it is full noon with me.' Plainly declaring, that the light which then shone on his soul, far surpassed that of the noon-day sun. And in this marvellous confidence, full of faith, hope, and love, he gave up his spirit to God.

7. This was on Saturday noon, on the 20th of July. He lived fifty-four years, thirty-four of them in America. His face appeared as if he had been still alive; his flesh all

over his body was as soft as that of a little child; and many who touched him, even for twenty-four hours after, found all the parts of his body full as flexible as those of a living man. His corpse was carried into the church, where it remained all the night. The Indians covered it with roses, and abundance of other flowers, as a testimony of their love.

As soon as his death was known at Mexico, many persons of quality, as well as people of all ranks, ran to St. Foy, that they might be present at his burial, bringing tapers, and all things necessary for the funeral. All appeared full of joy and consolation; believing there was no occasion for tears here, as at the death of other persons, but of rejoicing with him, who was now triumphing in his own country.

His body was interred near the high altar, the Dean of Mexico performing the office, and Brother HERNANDO HORTEZ, one of the Canons, preaching his funeral sermon.

8. He was of a middle size, and so exactly proportioned, that no blemish could be found in him. But his constitution was tender: His hair was chesnut, he had a large and high forehead, his eye-brows were arched, his ears small, his eyes black, and his sight so strong that he read the smallest print or writing without any spectacles. His nose was inclining to large; his lips small, though his under lip somewhat thicker than the other. His teeth were even and white; his face and hands of a dead wan colour, through his extreme abstinence. But the beauty of his soul so shone through his face, and wrought such a reverence in all who beheld him, that they considered him rather as one just come from heaven, than as a mortal creature.

THE LIFE
OF
MR. THOMAS CAWTON,

Late Minister of the Gospel at Rotterdam, in Holland.

THOMAS CAWTON was born at Rainham in Norfolk, in the year 1605, of honest parents, under whose tuition he remained till he was capable of being improved for higher designs than those of his infancy. From a child he had so strong an inclination to the ministry, that nothing could divert him from following that employment.

His parents seeing him endued with so good a principle, were very solicitous how to bring him up in learning; but being much discouraged by the smallness of their estate, they were in suspence, having their eyes towards God, whose good hand favouring their intended enterprize, stirred up friends above expectation, and particularly procured the patronage of SIR ROGER TOWNSEND, a Knight of Norfolk, eminent for parts and piety.

When he came a little to understand himself and the use of learning, he was so unwearied in the pursuit of it, that to out-strip others, he did constantly rise very early summer and winter; insomuch that though he had a great way to go to school, yet he would be there before his master was stirring, and had admittance into his master's chamber, where he did every morning construe a chapter in the Greek Testament at his bed-side: By this means he got an exact skill in the Greek text, insomuch that he could at the first sight explain chapter or verse in the whole Testament; and this he would often say he got by the by, while others got

nothing: Thus industrious he was even then to improve the very shavings of time.

Having for a while manifested his affectionate love to learning, as also given many demonstrations of his proficiency, he was judged fit for the University, and was accordingly sent thither, and admitted in Queen's College in Cambridge.

During his residence in the College, he did most exquisitely perfect and polish his natural parts (which were very good) by art and grace: As he had begun at school, so here he was an excellent husband of his time, so frugal that he highly valued the shreds and odd ends of it, and would gather up the fragments of this also, that nothing might be lost: He presently embraced the present occasion; those that were intimately acquainted with him give him this character, that he was the greatest enemy in the world to delays, and would not only speak for, but himself laid hold on the forelock of opportunity: He accounted more of one hour present, than of the hopes of many to come, and was much for the season for every study, knowing there was *πολυς χρονος εν τω καιρω*, much time in an opportunity: And that time might be kept with bit and bridle (not from fleeing away, but) from perishing. He was so industrious that he had no leisure to be idle, but was most glad of leisure to employ himself; for he esteemed an unemployed life a burden to itself, and thought that man unworthy of the world that never did any thing in the world but lived and died.

He was observed in matters of learning to aim very high: He would never set himself bounds, Thus far will I go, and no farther; but was aspiring to the highest pinnacle of knowledge, never setting himself any task, but that of perfection: Yet this generosity of mind was veiled with so much modesty, that his demeanour seemed a continued repetition of that divine precept, "That no man should think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think soberly:" Sobriety was woven into and twisted

with the whole course of his studies ; it was the frame he made to the picture of the Muses : Though he were not so modest as to let every one get above and before him, yet he was so modest as to prefer every one before himself, and to slight his own excellency ; he was, as NAZIANZEN speaks of ATHANASIUS, ‘lofty in worth, but low in heart ;’ knowing, that he that is proud of his virtue, kills himself not with a sword, but with a medicine : He could bear any thing but his own commendation ; he had learned how to possess learning, rather than be possessed of it, and that by ballasting his mind, lest knowledge should puff him up.

To instance in particulars : He being naturally of a deep judgment, made a famous logician, and would handle an argument with extraordinary dexterity : For the arts and sciences he was well skilled in them too, especially in those of them that concern a Divine.

He was an incomparable linguist, for the oriental tongues ; few in those times (none almost) of his standing went beyond him : He took much delight in the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic ; and to gain more and more skill in them, he got acquaintance with the famous WHELLOCK, then Arabic Professor : But his chief endeavours were spent upon the Hebrew, in the study of which (as the most profitable) he quickly conquered the difficulties of the tongue, and was master of it, insomuch that he was a great help to others : For that was his manner, when he intended to be excellent at any thing, he taught others what he himself had learned ; thinking it the best way to get learning, to give learning : He was even in his youth apt to teach ; and many eminent in God’s church at this day owe all the Hebrew they have to his instructions.

He learned and understood the Saxon, High and Low Dutch, the Italian, Spanish, and French tongues perfectly, and read many books in them all, after he left the University.

And it is worth the taking notice, that he got the skill

he had in languages most by his own industry, having little or no assistance or encouragement but his love to tongues, which put him upon turning every stone, and using every means to obtain his end; which labour of his was crowned with success, and he without a master made master of the tongues, which to his dying day he kept as perpetual servants, subservient to their mistress, Divinity.

As his profound reasoning showed the depth of his judgment, so his readiness in languages, in understanding so many, and that so well as he did, does evince the strength of his memory: Judgment and memory seldom meet together in one and the same person; but in him they kissed and embraced each other, and dwelt together in unity, helping one another, and both conspiring to make him thoroughly furnished to every good word and work.

But that which made his parts so eminent was his exalted piety; his holy, strict conversation: He never thought much of doing or suffering much for God: He was a noted professor both in the town and college, and went through much opposition, though but a young disciple; yet he was truly conformed to his Master in enduring the contradictions of sinners: He was an early champion for holiness, and could better bear the reproaches of men for his holiness, than the wrath of God for his unholiness; behaving himself so that none could speak truly and reproachfully of him at the same time.

He was naturally inclined to solitude, and “having through desire separated himself, he intermeddled with all wisdom;” he loved to withdraw from the world, giving himself to meditation and prayer, thinking he had studied well when he had prayed well: In this solitude he entertained his SAVIOUR, and by his refreshing society was more and more in love with his solitary (as I may say) society; he could say with CYPRIAN, *Solus non est cui CHRISTI comes est*; he wants no company that hath CHRIST for his companion: And indeed though solitude be to some hateful, to others hurtful; yet he that knows not how to be alone,

knows not how to be in company with profit : This I know, the less wisdom a man has, the more he complains of the want of company.

The society he conversed with was of those that were painful and pious ; such as loved GOD were his friends ; such as would come together to pray, and confer about religion, and strengthen one another's hands against profaneness and ungodliness, such were his delight, and with such he would be very familiar and open-hearted.

Meantime the LORD being merciful to him preserved him blameless and spotless in the midst of a wicked generation of scholars ; his righteous soul being vexed for the unlawful deeds of those amongst whom he dwelt. The stream of example was never strong enough to make him stir along with it, when a gale of custom would carry others with full sails to the port of endless and caseless misery. He took up no employment, followed no company, but what he had the broad seal of heaven to confirm, and what the narrow way to heaven did warrant as useful to travel with up the hill to happiness.

As he was careful of himself, lest he should at any time fall into bad company, so he was very desirous to keep others out of it. Hence when any youths came to the University either from his own country, or elsewhere, such as he knew, or was informed were well educated, he would be sure to get acquaintance with them at their first coming, before they were entangled or infected with bad company, and would bring them into the society of some pious scholars of which he himself was ; and he was very successful therein : Many had great cause to bless GOD for their first acquaintance with him, for his bringing them to DR. PRESTON'S and DR. SIBBS'S lectures ; and some that are yet alive have blessed GOD for their acquaintance with him : This his unwearied diligence was so generally observed in the College, that it grew almost into a proverb among the profane scholars, 'Such a youth was poisoned by CAWTON'S faction ;' which nevertheless could not in the least deter him from prosecuting the work of the LORD, or from abiding and abounding in it.

He remained faithful in this good employment, as also in following his private studies in the University, till he took his degree of Master of Arts.

Then in order to his study of Divinity, he removed for a time from the University to a place called Ashwell, twelve miles from Cambridge, to live in the house of that holy man of GOD, MR. HERBERT PALMER, then Minister of that place, from whom (as he himself would often say) he reaped no small benefit in his first setting upon the study of Divinity: He followed his business closely, and with much delight; and, which is most and best, he studied divine truths with a divine heart; and indeed they are divine affections and a divine conversation which make the Divine. Having grafted his divinity-knowledge upon a divine heart, and watered it with his tears in his frequent and fervent addresses to the fountain of saving wisdom, GOD speedily gave an increase; so that he in that place began his Ministry, sometimes assisting MR. PALMER in preaching, always exercising himself unto godliness, giving attendance to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine; not neglecting, but stirring up the gift of GOD that was in him, and in studying to approve himself to GOD “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.”

After he had thus prepared himself for the Ministry, though he were fit, yet he apprehended it not so safe to enter upon a pastoral charge, for his singular modesty made him suspect his own abilities: Wherefore he still continued assistant to MR. PALMER, till at length he was called to live in the house of SIR WILLIAM ARMIN, of Orton, in Huntingdonshire. While he was there he was well beloved both in the family and country, for his abilities, faithfulness, and plain dealing with that family, from the highest to the lowest: A Papist could say, ‘That few rich men’s Confessors should be saved; that is, that few great men’s Chaplains should go to heaven, because they were so apt to flatter their masters:’ But he could neither smother faults, nor smooth them over in the greatest; but would so sweetly reprove and admonish all sorts according

to their qualities, that though he were so honest as to be plain, yet he was so discreet as to be pleasing in his representations : This his faithfulness, joined with a grave familiarity, gained him the affections of all.

He was ever taking occasion to do good in that family ; more especially in his sound and plain exposition of Scripture, in his profitable and clear way of catechising and building them up in their most holy faith : And in his family and private prayers with and for them : Thus he spent and was spent for GOD ; laying himself out for his LORD and Master, and imitating Him in his readiness to instruct the meanest and lowest capacities, suiting himself to them, and becoming all things to all, that he might win some ; by which means, backed with a serious godly conversation, he so effectually wrought upon that family, that many have cause to be thankful they ever were of that family, for his sake.

He often preached for the Ministers round about him in that country, which province he so zealously, piously, and learnedly performed, that he generally gained the hearts of all the godly in that country, especially of the Ministers : Witness that large testimonial given him under the hands of the chief Ministers in that country at his departure ; in which they much bewail their great loss in parting with him. He was with SIR WILLIAM ARMIN four years, painfully following his private studies, family duties, and public preaching : And now he was persuaded to venture into the world, and to serve GOD more publicly in his Church, to which, by the advice of some able Divines, he was persuaded, resolving that when GOD should make way for him, he would cheerfully embrace the offer of a living.

About this time, SIR ROGER TOWNSEND being sick unto death, sent for him, but he could not come (though he made all possible haste) soon enough to see him living : Yet SIR ROGER had not forgotten him ; for just before his death, he sealed a presentation of him to a living in Essex, called Wivenho, not far from Colchester, being then void.

He found the town notorious for all manner of wicked-

ness ; drunkenness, and swearing abounded among them, but especially sabbath-breaking. It was their common practice, (it being a sea town,) to bring up their fish and sell it on the LORD'S Day, almost at the church doors.

He was instant in season and out of season, preaching against that sin, reprovng them with zeal, meekness, and compassion ; persuading them not to go to sea on Saturday, which they mostly did in regard of a market near by, kept on Monday.

But notwithstanding his public preaching, and private admonishing, he found it a very difficult work to bring them off from that sinful practice. Yet he gave not over, he was not short-breathed in the work of the LORD ; but still was importunate with them to look to eternity, and proceeded to sharp rebukes, plainly stating their case here, and their case hereafter. Many of his parish would send him fish in the evening of the LORD'S Day, but he never would receive any. He would not be bribed to stop his mouth, but more vehemently declaimed against their sin, and gave them no rest, till there was such a reformation wrought in the place, as caused the admiration of all who knew that people.

Thus it pleased GOD to give a blessing to his unwearied labours in a plentiful harvest of converts, many seeing the evil of their sins, were savingly wrought upon, and given him as the seals of the Ministry : Others were restrained to an astonishment : The power of godliness did so shine in his doctrine and life, that it had a commanding authority over the consciences of those with whom he conversed.

No man was ever more beloved of his people than he was ; all sorts, rich and poor, did manifest a great deal of respect and affection to him : The very children were so taken with his winning way of catechizing them, that they loved him and their catechism the better for it : A great many of them would every Sabbath day go together to meet him between his house and the church, showing their readiness to be catechized by him. Thus he that at first was counted so severe, was esteemed worthy of all love

and honour, and that not only among the good, but the bad; such a majesty there is in grace, and such amiableness in holiness.

This their love was not ill bestowed, there was none of it lost, there being an ardent love in his breast to them again; insomuch that he would often say, Wivenho was his first love. All the profits of his living for three years together, (being about an hundred pounds per annum,) he laid out upon the parsonage house, which was old, and ready to drop down: He built it with brick from the ground, a very good house, with orchards of his own planting.

Having finished the house, and enjoying some content in seeing his spiritual children walking in the the truth, God inclined his heart to marriage; which was after the thirtieth year of his life: He pitched upon MRS. ELIZABETH JENKIN, daughter to the REV. MR. WILLIAM JENKIN, a renowned Preacher in Sudbury, and grandchild to the famous MR. RICHARD ROGERS, of Wethersfield: He preferred the stock she came of, her religious education, and eminent piety, before a great portion which he might have had with others.

Being married, he returned again to his charge of souls in Wivenho, where he went on in his ministerial function with much delight and diligence: He preached with a great deal of vigour and life, and his life was a continued commentary on his sermons: He went up and down doing good, and did not think all his work was to be done in the pulpit, but discharged his trust with much fidelity; visiting the sick, admonishing the wicked, strengthening the weak, quickening the strong, and counselling all.

Thus this man of God continued among them for seven years, during which time he was very sickly, and not likely to live long, being naturally of an infirm constitution; the badness of the air at Wivenho did not a little add to his distempers. At the end of the seventh year of his abode in Wivenho, he had a very great fit of sickness, insomuch

that his physicians and friends did even despair of his recovery: But it pleased the great Physician, as He had built the cottage of his body, so to shore up the building, and he was in some measure restored to health: Whereupon the advice of his physicians was, he should change the air, and the more because he constantly was troubled with an ague twice a year. London was the place which was thought might best agree with his thin body: A great many arguments were used to persuade him to leave Wivenho, but none could prevail but that of necessity, by reason of the entire love he bore to his people, and the great blessing he saw God gave to his Ministry. Necessity urging him more and more to look after his health, he was at length brought to hearken after a place to serve God's Church in at London: And his intentions being made known, he was quickly called to the Parish of ST. BARTHOLOMEW, behind the Royal Exchange: The main instrument of his settlement in that living was SIR HARBOTTLE GRIMSTONE, who at that time dwelt in the same Parish, and was his exceeding good friend. In London it pleased God he had his health far better than at Wivenho.

His health did not a little encourage him to his former painfulness in the work of the ministry, in which he now laboured more abundantly than ever; he was more careful of himself than ever, knowing he had more eyes observing him, and 'that the sins of teachers were the teachers of sins.' He was well acquainted with the meaning of the ceremony, (*Lev. viii. 24,*) where MOSES put the blood on the lap of the Priests' right ear, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the great toe of their right foot; Ministers must hear, work, and walk right: And therefore he daily went out and in before his people, as an ensample to the flock: The very profane of the parish would say, they believed MR. CAWTON did really believe what he preached, when they were ready to snarl at others, and say of them (as one said of vicious Ministers) that when they are in the pulpit it is pity they should ever come out.

In the year 1648, the February after King CHARLES the First was inhumanly beheaded; he was desired by the Mayor of the city to preach before him and his brethren the Aldermen of London, at Mercers' Chapel on the 25th of that month; which he undertook, and accordingly performed.

For that time he escaped the hands of unreasonable men, or rather the paws of roaring lions; but not long after having a fast at his own church, there was a warrant procured by some malicious soldiers, that had given information of what they had heard at Mercers' Chapel, (styling his preaching there seditious,) summoning him to appear before the Council of State: When he had concluded the fast, the warrant was presented to him in the very church, so greedy were they of their prey. It ran thus:

'These are to will and require you forthwith upon sight hereof to make speedy repair into any such place where you shall understand the person of MR. THOMAS CAWTON to be, who preached before the Lord Mayor yesterday, and him you are to apprehend and bring in safe custody before the Council of State for seditious preaching, hereof you are not to fail, and for so doing this shall be your sufficient warrant. Given at Derby House, the twenty-sixth day of February 1648.

'Signed in the name and by the order of the Council of State appointed by the authority of Parliament.

ARTHUR HESILRIGGE, President.'

'To ROWLAND HAWKARD and RICHARD FREEMAN, Messengers attending the Council of State, and to all the rest of the Messengers attending the said Council.'

When he had looked on it, he told them (without any alteration in countenance) he would go along with them, only desired them to go with him to his house, that he might take something to refresh himself, having fasted all the day: They were followed with multitudes of people, which thronged about the house to see him go with the soldiers: Having refreshed himself and prayed, he sent for a coach, and taking a friend or two with him, went to the

Council of State, and though the warrant was only for seditious preaching, yet when he came before them they had nothing to lay to his charge but these words in his prayer, ‘ For our legal Sovereign and the Royal Family.’ He told them he came to answer for a seditious sermon, not for his prayer, according to their warrant ; but they satisfied him no other way, than by telling him he had proclaimed the King, and that was high treason according to an Act of their own making.

They ordered that he should be kept in custody that night. The next day, he was again brought before them, and asked whether he was not sorry for what he had said ; he replied he had done nothing but what did become a Minister of the Gospel, and more they could not wring from him by all their menaces : Wherefore they agreed to send him to the Gate-house in Westminster, and immediately drew up a commitment.

Hereupon he was carried to the Gate-house : During the time he was there, his confinement did not in the least abate his confidence, which had great reward : One affliction had fitted him for another. Yet many temptations he had to spare himself, as a sorrowful wife big with child, six small children to provide for, a good living in danger of being lost ; but he denied them all, that he might deny God nothing. He spent almost half a year in prison so exemplary, that his life seemed to those that came to him no less than a miracle ; it was a heaven on earth (nay heaven in a prison) to be in his company. It will be worth my pains and thy patience to take a view of those graces that did shine most in his sufferings.

1. His Sincerity, was the corner-stone of all his other graces : He gave so many evident demonstrations of this, that it was as visible as if he had had a casement in his breast opened for every one to gaze into his heart : “ He that ran might read” truth in the inward parts, it was written in so legible a character in his outward practice. A reverend Minister of London lately deceased, said on his death-bed, ‘ Mr. CAWTON’s crown was his sincerity.’ In-

deed he walked in a plain path, and made straight steps in that plain path: He abhorred crooked ways: He had his loins girt about with truth, and his heart armed as well as adorned with uprightness: Sincerity was an ingredient in every one of his actions and sufferings, and the chief cordial that comforted his spirits, and kept them from drooping: His conscience bore witness that his sufferings were purely for GOD and his cause, and that kept him from fainting in his work. He would speak much against half-Christians, that served GOD with a secret reserve. He could serve GOD for nought, and thought his sincerity was nought that could not serve GOD for nought. He was so far from having any design of his own in his suffering, that he was of NAZIANZEN'S excellent temper, to thank GOD he had any thing to lose for CHRIST: In a word, "his rejoicing was this, the testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of GOD he had his conversation in the world."

2. He acted Faith to the uttermost, and GOD did try the strength of his faith, as well as the truth of it, and found him a faithful servant, that could depend on the bare word of GOD, and think that security enough: He would say, they that will not believe unless they see a reason, tacitly imply that GOD does not speak truth unless he prove it, or at least that their faith is more in reason than in GOD. He could confute an eye of sense by an eye of faith, and trust Providence where he could not trace it. Indeed it were nothing to be a believer if every thing were seen here, but to put a holy confidence in that unseen Power that does so mightily support us, that is to believe. He promised himself but little from the creature, and so was never much deceived by it. He could ask himself that question, and answer it with the advice of the wise Hebrew: 'Why shouldest thou beg of a beggar? Beg of GOD: Are not all things in the hand of GOD?' He knew the world could not give that which it had not, and therefore would not be a friend to that which was never true to any that trusted it. He was one that thought he could not expect too much

from GOD, nor too little from man: It was a note of his own, 'That CHRIST is more jealous of our faith than of our love, for he will let us believe in nothing but himself, though he will let us love something besides him, so it be in subordination to him.' He was a second GAMZU, whose speech was, whatever befel him, 'Also this shall be for good.'

He believed that a good GOD made evils good to believers, in making good his promise, "that all things should work together for good to them that love GOD." By faith this man of GOD cheerfully endured imprisonment. By faith he left his wife and children, and friends, and living, and all; (as shall be related in its place;) he forsook the land of his nativity, not fearing the wrath of the usurper. By faith he sojourned in a strange country, he staggered not at the promise of GOD through unbelief, but was strong in faith giving glory to GOD, and would often say, 'None but believers make GOD to be GOD.'

3. He was a pattern of Self-denial, he durst not look after great matters in the world, either for himself or children, but would often say to his dear wife, 'I would have thee to rejoice more at a little grace in thy children's hearts, than if I had thousands to leave them. Self-denial (it was one of his speeches) is in many men's mouths, but hardly to be found in any man's practice.' It is a rare thing to see self-denial take place of self-love; yet he could say, he loves GOD but little that loves any thing with GOD which he does not love for GOD. He esteemed all the greatness of the world unable to make him great; otherwise than by his contempt of it. He would often say, 'I observe some professors give a great deal of scope to the flesh, which they of all men should not do, but should tie up their affections shorter, and if GOD be GOD, live as those that believe it.' It was (as one observes) ERASMUS's speech, that since men could not bring the world to Christianity, they have brought Christianity to the world. Those precepts that have been too strict to give us liberty to follow the world's vanity, we have found vain distinctions and expositions for to

make them signify no more than we practise. For his own particular, he was one that could not look for much elbow-room in the way that leads to heaven. He could strip himself of all his abilities and enjoyments, and lay himself and them at the foot of his SAVIOUR: He was so much above himself, that all things were below him: He thought he was never perfectly himself, till he had put off himself, his interest, his judgment, his will, his affections, his relations; his all went at a word from CHRIST, he denied himself, and denied all.

4. His Patience was singular, which was shown not only in bearing, but in willingly bearing any burden laid on his shoulders: To bear is the patience of necessity, to love to bear is the patience of virtue: He was not so unhappy in his afflictions, as he was happy in his patience. When at any time he was told of his patience, he would reply, 'I thank GOD I never am so much impatient as to see religion abused to base and private ends.' All the while he was in prison, and afterwards in all the tribulations he went through he never charged GOD foolishly, not discovering the least discontent, but when his visitants wished his releasement, he would say, 'He that believeth makes no haste, and, in our afflictions we should neither faint nor fret.' He fainted not by despair, knowing that GOD was all-sufficient; he fretted not by passion, knowing that GOD's cause might often need his patience, never his passion. He was ever contented with a little of the creature; but when GOD called him to it he cared not for any thing of it, thinking those wants well supplied that were supplied with contentedness.

5. For Resolution, and execution of his resolutions none went ever beyond him, he was almost to a proverb called, 'The resolved man:'. He chose with ATHANASIUS rather to lose his whole See than one syllable of truth; and was observed by many to act more according to the willingness of his spirit, than according to the strength of his body: He would say, 'I am confident GOD will have me to do as well as say.' But GOD had steeled his breast with un-

daunted fortitude, and through the power of his might he could defy every thing below God ; the joy of the LORD was his strength. His Christian generosity and magnanimity fitted him for any encounter, and put him upon something more than other Christians could do : Come of it what would, his heart was fixed and resolved for high and noble exploits : He was (as NAZIANZEN speaks of ATHANASIU) both *Magnes* and *Adamas*, a loadstone in his sweet gentle drawing nature, and yet an adamant in his constant, resolute, unbroken, invincible carriage ; he was a wall of brass, nothing could enter though every thing assaulted : He was of an heroic spirit, as bold as a lion, as a good soldier enduring hardship for CHRIST without any hard thoughts of his Master ; nay, thinking light of his sufferings, knowing that it was not the hardness of affliction so much as the tenderness and softness of our nature that makes us fear suffering.

Lastly, he persevered in Well-doing ; he was not for God when the fit took him, but went on in an even temper, and kept his pace : He was jealous of his own heart, and would say, ‘SATAN may take occasion, because I have done something more for God than others, to make me secure, which is the way to fall.’ Which consideration made him so suspect himself, that with all diligence he scanned every passage of his life, and as he had begun well so he laboured to end well : When he saw any good men miscarry he would say, ‘If God should leave me to do so, my life would be a burden to me :’ And indeed he was so tender of God’s glory, that he would rather have burned at a stake, than have been a shame to, or ashamed of his profession : He was “faithful to death,” and said often, ‘That perseverance would set on the “crown of life,”’ which in trouble and persecution he had laboured for.

These graces were his fellow-prisoners which welcomed all his visitants, besides the prayers which were made by him, and with him without ceasing, which were the messengers he sent abroad when he could not go forth himself.

In the midst of the tears, and sorrowful sighs of his relations, and hundreds of God's people looking for nothing but his sudden execution, it pleased God to create him a deliverance, the occasion whereof was a victory Parliament had obtained in Ireland; whereupon it was moved in the House, that some acts of grace might be done in testimony of their thankfulness, and it was resolved that some prisoners should be set at liberty. Among others, some moved that MR. CAWTON might have his freedom, and by their votes carried it beyond all expectation.

The joy that was among all that knew him is inexpressible; that which himself most rejoiced at was, that God had delivered him, and not he himself; that he had kept a good conscience while he was in prison, and that he kept the same now released; that he was not only free from his confinement, but also free to declare to the world that he was of the same mind he was before, and that a prison and death were but poor arguments with him to deter him from his duty.

For some short time he enjoyed respite, in which being returned to his Parish, he followed his ministerial function with his wonted painfulness and alacrity; not omitting to declaim against the sins of the times, nor ceasing to pray for our dread Sovereign.

About which time there was a plot, as they called it, discovered, the design of which was to send a sum of money into Scotland to MAJOR GENERAL MASSIE in the King's service: Sundry Ministers were hereupon clapped up in the Tower, and MR. CAWTON being conscious of the design, and a helper by his own contribution, rumours were spread abroad that he had abused the Parliament's mercy, and should be sent for speedily: This made him take advice of his friends what to do. He was counselled to keep himself secret in the country till it were seen what the Parliament intended; which he did, and was hid in the house of MR. WHITAKER, at Horn-Church in Essex: No sooner was he departed, but there came a warrant to fetch him away.

He continued for some time at MR. WHITAKER'S, and

spent it most in prayer; every week one day was set apart for it: And indeed his case was so full of labyrinths, that he knew not what to do, only his eyes were towards **God** to extricate him, and to lead him in a plain path because of his enemies. It was thought dangerous to lie long hid for fear of his being discovered; and therefore, having asked counsel of the **Lord**, and his judicious friends, they agreed he should be conveyed away into **Holland**; in which voyage **Mr. NALTON**, being much threatened for the same crime, was his companion and fellow-sufferer.

A little before they set upon their voyage, he most solemnly takes his leave of his dear wife in two letters, sent speedily one after another; which, because they show his faith, patience, and resolution in suffering, I think it will not be amiss to insert. The first was this:—

‘ Dear Heart,

‘ I AM joyful that **God** hath assisted thee in the midst of thy sorrows and sufferings, so that thou art enabled to bear up and to encourage thyself in **God**, and look upon his hand as the work of a Father towards his child. I do not fear but **God** will be thy Husband in my absence, and the Father of my fatherless children; let them be taught the fear of the **Lord**, and then they shall not want any good thing; and then He that leaves not his, will be their portion and **God** all-sufficient. I shall endeavour to lay up a stock of prayers in heaven for them; I hope I shall pray and not faint, both for thee and them; the **Lord** increase our faith, and then be it unto us according to **God**’s promises and our faith. The wicked have their portion in this life, we in another; rejoice more to see grace in thy childrens’ hearts, than if thou hadst thousands to give them. Know that our **God** is the **God** of our seed; and remember what the man of **God** said, “ I never saw the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” Train up your children in their catechism, and in frequent reading of the Scriptures, let them know the Scriptures from their infancy, and they will make them wise unto salvation, let me and them enjoy

thy prayers, and the fervent prayers of all our sincere friends: Whatever is laid aside, let not the work of prayer be forgotten. Mind my friends of my condition, that they may beg a way of the LORD for me; and that I may be counselled from heaven how to employ myself, and that I may not be wholly laid aside as useless: And that if God will give me my life this time also, I may lay it out more than ever for his glory; and that God would keep me from the snares of the place where He may dispose of me. I have lost much time, and now would fain redeem some of it, if God will give an opportunity; when God has brought me to a place of rest, I shall, I hope, not loiter in my studies as I have done. If I have an opportunity, my friends, of the ministry, and others shall hear from me; the LORD help us to keep the word of his patience, that he may keep us in the hour of temptation. Whatsoever my brethren can lawfully do, I desire (if it may advantage me for my true and safe liberty) that I may not be left out. Remember me to all our friends that love the LORD JESUS CHRIST in sincerity. Improve thine interest for me in heaven, that as the Church had "two wings of a great eagle given her, that she might fly from the dragon into the wilderness," so God would make me a member of that Church, and give me the benefit of those wings. What shall I say more to thee, the LORD bless thee; the "peace of God that passeth understanding" guard thy heart; the joys of the HOLY GHOST, that are unspeakable, fill thy soul: I wish thy perfection. Thou art mine and I am thine; the great sea shall not quench our love; the blessings of heaven and earth be upon thee. Farewell, farewell in the LORD; the LORD in his good time bring us together again. Adieu in CHRIST.

Thine, through CHRIST really, cordially,

A SYMPATHIZING HUSBAND.'

The other letter written upon the receipt of a letter from his wife, in which she testified her willingness to submit to God, and to follow him wherever God should place him, was this:—

‘ DEAR HEART,

‘ I HAVE read thy sweet and gracious letter with tears, and great joy : The LORD make way for our happy meeting ; at the throne of grace we shall meet I hope every day. I know GOD will appear for thee and me, and stir us up friends. Let us labour to act in faith, and say daily, LORD, increase our faith. It is a very great mercy that the LORD was pleased to deliver me this time, as I hope he will. I grieve at the very heart to hear what ——— have done, not only to accuse themselves, but to betray the lives of their brethren ; yet I will not boast, I do not know what my vile heart might have done, I will rather judge myself, I know my own great unbelief and base fear, the LORD help me against them. I do not fear but that CHRIST will be thy husband, and make up all in my absence. If GOD make my way plain before me, I shall look upon it (as things now stand) as the greatest mercy that ever befel me in the matter of deliverance ; and that if he give me my life this second time, I hope I shall improve it better for his glory than ever I have done. I see I could not be without this trial, and yet I think I was not fit for the greatest of this affliction ; and therefore I hope GOD will lay no more upon me than I am well able to bear, and will make a way to escape. I hope that I shall at last learn to live to that which I have preached unto others. I grieve for my dear friends in the Parish that will be left as sheep without a shepherd ; but GOD will provide for them : Remember my dear affection to them all ; they shall have my prayers ; and I hope I shall have theirs. I hope GOD will make way for the employment of that poor talent he hath given me, if not in my native country, yet some other where. I have been unprofitable, and therefore GOD may lay me aside ; but I hope he will still make use of me. But, sweet soul, how shall I leave thee and my little ones behind me ? Yet we shall only in body and place be separated, not in mind and affection. For directions I know not what to give thee, only be thankful, if GOD hath left this back-door for thy husband, and hath not shut him up in the Tower, from

whence no redemption but upon sad terms, which would have been worse than death. Remember what I preached, "Troubled on every side, yet not distressed:" God hath troubled thee and me on every side, yet hitherto we never were so distressed as that there was not some way to escape.

'My heart cannot express its love to thee, much less my pen; be assured I shall be the same I ever was; when God shall bring us together, it will be a resurrection from the dead: What shall I say? I shall now leave thee, but not lose thee; and when I leave thee, thou hast One that will "never leave thee nor forsake thee;" my heart will be with thee, wheresoever my body shall be. Speak to all my dear friends, that they would pray for me more than ever, that I may not fall into the hands of unreasonable men, and that God would make my way plain before me, and that He, who is the God of the sea and dry land, would bring me to my desired haven. What can I say more unto thee? but the LORD bless thee, and make his face to shine upon thee; the LORD fill thy heart with joy and gladness by believing. Be of good cheer, my sweet soul; it is better thy husband should be taken from thee, than not be. Learn to walk without such a poor arm of flesh: Remember how long thou hast enjoyed me beyond expectation.

'My serious blessing to my poor babes; I shall pray for all of them. Farewell, my dearly beloved in the LORD, farewell. The grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST be with thee, Amen, Amen.

Thy sincere, cordial, and truly
LOVING HUSBAND.

Presently after the writing of these letters, he made preparation for his voyage, and secretly departed by ship to Rotterdam; from whence he and MR. NALTON went to the University of Leyden, intending to sit down a while there, till the storm in England was blown over: Yet God's providence so ordered it, that though they came under a disguise, yet they were quickly known, and speedily messengers were sent from the English congregation at Rotterdam

to find them out, and bring them thither; the place being at that time destitute of a Minister. The English messengers found them at Leyden, and saluted them with the speech of the Macedonian man, "Come and help us." They did not a little wonder how they should be known to be Ministers, seeing they kept themselves so private, and were not at all to be discerned by their garb. But turning their admiration into adoration, they praised God for the door he had opened to let them into their former employment, and went along with the messengers to Rotterdam, where they were joyfully entertained by the English, particularly by MR. HARRIS and MR. SHEPHEARD, and were received into MR. SHEPHEARD'S house. The Sabbath-day came wherein MR. CAWTON preached in the forenoon, and MR. NALTON in the afternoon, with general approbation: Thus these Prophets were not without honour save in their own country.

MR. CAWTON'S wife followed her husband with some of her children, and safely came to him at Rotterdam, where they most joyfully met together and remained. MR. NALTON having staid about half a year there, had leave to come home again, and so returned into England: But no pardon for MR. CAWTON, but upon unworthy terms, which kept him where he was, to supply the place of Minister to the English congregation. That which he most rejoiced at was, that he was out of the reach of temptations; he would say, 'It is a blessed thing for those that have not strong grace, to be out of temptations.'

He did not at all hanker after his native country, but was weaned from it to admiration. When his wife spake of coming to England, he would say, 'It may be, God will call me to exercise more and greater resolution and sincerity than ever I have.' He exactly verified that which a reverend Minister of London said in a letter to him, 'A godly man is a plant that will thrive in any soil: Any place is a country to him who makes no place here below his country, but as a pilgrim and stranger seeks a better country, that is an heavenly.' A citizen of heaven is a citizen of

any place on earth ; it is all one to him where he is. He took extraordinary pains in preaching to his congregation, and spent himself by reason of the want of help, there being few or none that could preach in the English tongue ; yet he persisted, though he were not assisted by any but God ; by which he was able to say often, “ When I am weak, then am I strong.”

It will be superfluous to tell you he was an experienced Preacher ; he felt what he spoke, and then spoke what he felt : He was not over curious in his words, but used such as were very significant : He used so much art as rightly to divide, not to rend the Word of Truth ; he preached not to show his learning, but that the ignorant might learn. I need not tell you of his trials, his whole life was but one continued series of temptation : He was given to prayer and meditation, to which if you add his sufferings for a good conscience, you may behold the character of a complete Divine, whose three notes are, prayer, meditation, and temptation. But these are generals, to descend to a few particulars :—

1. He was an excellent textuary, well read in the sacred pages ; he was an ark of Scripture, and would often say, ‘ That sermon is no sermon to me, that is not full of rightly applied Scriptures.’ He never rose in a morning but the first thing he did was to take his Bible into his hand, and so lifting up his eyes to heaven in a most serious manner, he prayed shortly, and then read some portion of Scripture, which being observed by his loving consort, she asked him why he used that practice ? And he told her, ‘ It was my custom ever since God made me a Minister.’ Neither did he only delight in God’s law, but was very clear and plain in expounding it ; he could fit his discourses on it to every necessity and capacity.

2. He was Minister (as hath been declared) in three places, Wivenho, London, and Rotterdam ; and in every one of these he preached over the whole body of Divinity very methodically and exactly ; and though it were in dif

ferent places, yet he never preached one old sermon, but has left three bodies of Divinity, on several texts, and differently handled, behind him as witnesses of his laboriousness in his function; nay, all the while he was in Holland he never preached one old sermon. By going through a system of Divinity he laid a foundation for his people to build on, and successively held forth in one head after another all they were to believe or do.

3. He was eminent for the study of the Sacraments, especially the LORD'S Supper; he was noted by many to be singularly well versed in the doctrine of this Sacrament, particularly in that great work of self-examination, and self-judging, but in the practice of it he was most divine and seraphic; whether he received from another or administered it himself, he did it with so much reverence and affection, that he was almost transported on a Sacrament-day. The first time he ever received, he was so deeply affected with the love of his SAVIOUR, that he swooned away as soon as he had received the bread, and not coming to himself till the Sacrament was ended, he had the cup administered to himself alone. Ever since he was Minister he celebrated the LORD'S Supper with so much heavenliness and seriousness, that all his communicants could not choose but observe him, as if they had received angel's food from the hand of an angel; for at that work he showed himself more than man.

4. In writing his sermons he used to set down nothing but his heads and places of Scripture, so that his notes are very short: He never read any thing, but always laid his notes behind him, and would dehort young men from reading, telling them that memory loved to be trusted.

5. He himself observed, that Providence kept him about seven years in every place he was in: GOD so ordered his affairs, that he was seven years at Cambridge, seven at Wivenho, seven at London, and as many at Rotterdam: He would often say towards the end of the seventh year in Holland, 'Where shall I be next?' But GOD had no more

apprenticeships for him to serve: The good and faithful servant is now entered into his Master's joy. Thus as a Minister.

As a master, he was a Prophet, Priest, and King in his family, a Prophet to teach, a Priest to pray for, and a King to govern it; he was not so much a master as a father of a family; though he could trust God when God's cause required it, with his family, yet he did not provide for it (God enabling him) in a plentiful manner, though he thought him worse than an infidel that provides not for his own house, yet he counted him no better than an infidel that does it by any unwarrantable means. He could not abide to trouble himself with worldly affairs, but committed all to his second self: He thought it below a man, much more below a Minister, to be at leisure to take account of what was spent in his house: He was given to hospitality, even in Holland, where his means were small in comparison of his charge: He never dined on a Sabbath-day without some of the poorer sort of his congregation, and he would be sure not to forget to call upon them when he came out of the church, to come and take part of what God had given him. He was so mild and meek to his servants, that he did seem rather to love, than to rule them; to desire, than command them: By which sweet disposition he wrought so deeply upon them, that they could not but love and speak well of him; nay, some of his servants, next to God, owe their salvation to his ministry and conversation: He was the same at home as he was abroad, and the same in his heart as he was in his house: He kept a constant hour, morning and evening, for reading the Scripture to, and praying with, his family, thinking that they that kept no set time were in danger to keep no time.

As an husband, he was loving and tender; he chose a wife for her lovely virtues, and loved her with the greatest affection; they wedded one another's humours as well as persons, and so went the shortest way to perfection. He never denied her any thing in all his life that was consistent with his ministry, and she never desired any thing but what

was becoming the Gospel. He would be stirring her up to resolution for God, not that he thought her backward, but to make her more forward. He would communicate his secrets to her, whom he knew to be faithful, and of his mind. He would not slight her advice in any business, but if good, embrace and execute it. As for temporals, he gave her the disposing of all, himself seldom meddling with any such affairs, unless they were too hard for her to do. In all things he behaved so as in the twenty years they were married, there was not the least jar or discord, but a perfect sympathy and union of affections.

As a father, he was very careful for his children's good, training them up in the way they should go; he took a great deal of pains to instruct and catechise them, to bring them up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." He was very exemplary to his children, and did sweetly command by his example; with a welcome violence, and free necessity, he insinuated into their hearts; they were constrained, and yet consented; there was so powerful and attractive a virtue in his carriage, it would have forced love from a marble breast.

To his example he added many encouragements both by speeches and gifts; he never let any sparks go out for want of blowing up either by commendation or reward: He was wisely indulgent, and would dispense with any slip but breaking of God's laws. If he came to correct his children, he did it with so much love, that his sweet admonitions and pathetical instructions, showing the evil they had done, and his loathness to correct, but that it was God's ordinance, did more break their hearts than the correction itself: He was often so moved with compassion, his fatherly bowels did so yearn over them, that the tears would trickle apace from his eyes when he was correcting them: Nothing ever wrought upon me like this sight, which did plainly convince his children of his unwillingness to chastise, but that he was forced to it; his tears did sink so deep into their hearts, that they could not but be softened at least for that time; for, believe me, to see one's parents weep, cannot

but be a grief to dutiful children. He had his children in subjection with all gravity; and yet I may say, that never was father so little feared as he, because so much loved. In a word, he left his children GOD for a Father, when he left them; and they count it no small privilege, that they can call GOD the GOD of their father.

This man of GOD had not been long at Rotterdam, but his fame was spread abroad through all the United Provinces. He was highly esteemed by the Dutch, French, and English Ministers round about. He had correspondence with most of the famous Professors, particularly with DR. GISEBERTUS VOETIUS, Divinity Professor, and Mr. LEUSDEN, Professor of the Oriental languages at Utrecht, with MR. UCHTMAN and MR. HULSIUS, both Hebrew Professors, the one of Leyden, the other of Breda.

Though Rotterdam was a place very waterish and cold, yet he took notice of GOD's great goodness in reference to his health, which was better the first five years, than ever it had been in any place in his own country. It is not an healthful climate, but a good Physician, even the LORD, that makes us healthful.

But the two or three last years he was weak, and for half a year together had a continual pain at his stomach, so that it was a very difficult thing for him to preach; yet he left not off, but cheerfully and constantly preached, as at other times: Though he never went up into the pulpit, but every one thought he would either faint or die before he came down: He was indeed weary in his work, but never weary of his work. Once he did faint in the pulpit, insomuch that his voice failed him, and he was taken down, being unable to proceed; but by the means of cordial waters given him he recovered his spirits in some measure, yet not so as to preach in the afternoon: When his friends came about him in the evening, he told them, 'The pulpit is a good place to die in.' By the next Sabbath he was (by GOD's blessing) recruited, and preached forenoon and afternoon with much vigour: But from that time till within half a year of his death he visibly decayed.

About this time he had an only son almost fit for the University, whom he did always, but especially now, much instruct and forward in his studies. MR. ROBERT SHERINGHAM being then in exile at Rotterdam, he sent his son to him to learn the Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic tongues; and would every morning call him to his bed-side, to expound a Greek or Hebrew chapter: He spent much time in catechising him in particular, seasoning him with the knowledge of GOD, and charging him to walk as in GOD'S sight, when he was from under his father's eye. The time coming, he went with him to the University of Utrecht, and there bestowed him, committing him to the care of DR. GISBERTUS VOETIUS, and his son MR. DANIEL VOETIUS, both Professors in that University, and eminent for learning and piety.

His son thought good to communicate a letter of advice, written to him by his father, which is as followeth:

‘SON THOMAS,

‘I AM glad to hear of your welfare and studies: My directions at present in order to your happy and safe progress in learning are,

‘That you would take what counsel you can to get a fixed and regular method in your studies, that they may neither be confused nor troublesome. I send you here a little book, *Bisterfeldii Logica*, in the end of which are two little treatises, which I would have you read over a thousand times, and to have them perfect at your finger's end: The one he calls *Phosphorous Catholicus*, or the Art of Meditation; the other *Consilium de studiis feliciter instituendis*. You must now begin to settle yourself in an unchangeable method of studies, that you must hold all your life, you must always be noting of what you hear, read, and observe. I think you cannot be better advised by any, than by this little Treatise; yet something may be added to it in the matter of taking notes, and about paper books; you must inquire what method others follow, and compare their's with this,

and what you find excellent in their's add to this. I do intend to consider what paper books you must have for all sorts of learning: In the mean time I would have you note things in a quire of paper, that you may transcribe them when you have settled your method: You may call your book of daily notes your Diary, and here there must be *nulla dies sine linea*. This method of your studies must be long deliberated on, because it is but once to be done.

‘As you frame your elocution and gesture now while you are young, such they will be when you are come to age. I would have you write all your letters to me in Latin, for exercise sake: Exercises are the very spirit of studies. Learn to make your sentences more short and quick.

‘You have your time before you, and you may say with the ancient, *Si non nunc, quando?* Therefore, be careful you lose it not, for it is short, that which is past you can never recover, and what is to come you know not whether you may live to come to it; and for the present time, it is but a moment that soon passeth away: Now is the time while you are young to perfect yourself in philosophy, languages, and all other divine and human learning: Now your parts are vigorous, and now you have nothing else to do, or to molest you. Be constant in reading over the Old and New Testaments in their originals, that you may be very ready in the texts of Hebrew and Greek. I have heretofore counselled you to read often ST. PAUL’S Epistles to TIMOTHY and TITUS, and can do no other than put you in mind again. Pray to GOD daily for a blessing on your studies: LUTHER got more learning by prayer than by study: Follow ST. PAUL’S rule, “Keep yourself pure,” that the sins of your youth may not be a trouble to you in your old age. Add God’s fear to all your studies, knowing that “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of (true) wisdom.”

‘My desire is not only to have you a scholar, but an excellent scholar; let therefore your resolutions and endeavours be to excel; get as far on as may be, and let not others overtake you; let that noble spirit be in you to get

above others, and to put out your parts. "I desire nothing but (as ST. PAUL saith) your perfection;" and, with PETER, "that you may daily grow in grace and knowledge; give yourself wholly to these things, that your profiting may appear to all, that you may be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." I send you RINGELSBURG, and desire you to read every day one chapter in it; it is a book that will put life into a scholar: I hope the excellency of ANNA MARIA SCHURMAN will provoke you young scholars, not only to do as well as she hath done, but also to go beyond her.

'Let us know what you do in French, for which I would have you spare one hour in a day, that when you are master of that, you may begin with Italian, and so with Spanish; in these languages there are many excellent books: If you could converse with some scholar that hath the French tongue perfect, you might get it with ease; when you understand a little, go to the French church; always be speaking that little you have; it may be hereafter you may go into France, and study some time there.

'I very well approve of your following the Chaldee Paraphrase, and the being exact in the punctuation. I will send you CLENARD'S Epistles, which I hope will stir up your zeal towards the Arabic tongue; they were commended to me by the learned Arabic Professor, MR. ABRAHAM WHEELLOCK, when I began to study Arabic; they are very good epistolary Latin, and there are many things in them worth the taking notice of.

'I see you have much work upon your hands; the good GOD of heaven help you to go through it to his glory, to your parents' comfort, and to your own comfort and benefit. The GOD of wisdom breathe upon your studies: Be sure to get what learning you can, while your father lives. Your father grows ancient and infirm, and you know not how soon GOD may call him from you: You are he that I hope to see come up to something before I die; and if it shall please GOD to let me live so long as to see you thoroughly furnished for the work of the Ministry, it will be a great blessing to me.

tisfaction to me, and above all to see you endued from heaven with grace as well as abilities.

‘Believe that your father and mother both will be so careful of you, that you shall have all the encouragements we are able to give you, even to the uttermost, that you may proceed cheerfully and with courage in your studies: Do all that is of good report, want nothing.

‘Have a care of your health, and use some scholar-like exercise, that will stand without loss of time; read, note, write, meditate, pray much, lose not the least inches of time. The reason I press you to so many things is, that when you are dulled with one, you may refresh yourself with another.

‘Your mother and myself send you our blessing, counting it our only blessing here, to see our children walking in the truth. That good man old DR. VOËTIUS will endeavour to season your heart in the matter of religion, without which, learning is but a sword in a madman’s hand. CHRIST JESUS dwell in your heart, and keep you, and open your understanding to understand the Scripture. I have nothing else, but to believe that GOD will make you an instrument of his glory and our comfort. To his grace I commend you, and rest,

Your loving Father,
THOMAS CAWTON.’

Having settled his son at Utrecht, it pleased GOD to give him another son, which was his third child in Holland, and the last he had. He named him GERSHOM, for he said, “I have been a stranger in a strange land;” and devoted him, like another SAMUEL, to the LORD and the Ministry from his cradle: But GOD’S Providence hath taken him away from us, to be a companion to his father in glory as well as in sufferings.

A little after, in the year 1658, the King’s Majesty being at Brussels, and calumniated as being a Papist, his Majesty was pleased to send a letter to MR. CAWTON testifying his

constancy in the Protestant religion, and desiring him to wipe off that unjust aspersion by satisfying all of his steadfastness in that religion; the letter was printed a little before his Majesty's return to this kingdom, to clear him then; and deserves here to be inserted: It is this:

‘ CHARLES R.

‘ TRUSTY and well-beloved, we greet you well; we have received so full a testimony from persons (to whom we give entire credit) of your good affection to our person, and zeal to our service, that we are willing to recommend an affair to you, in which we are very much concerned. We do not wonder that the malice of our enemies should continue to lay all manner of scandals upon us, which might take away our reputation; but that they should find credit with any to make our affection to the Protestant religion in any degree suspected, is very strange, since the world cannot but take notice of our constant and uninterrupted profession and exercise of it, in those places where the contrary religion is only practised and allowed. And though we do not boast of doing that, which we should be heartily ashamed if we did not do; we may reasonably believe that no man hath, or can more manifest his affection to, and zeal for, the Protestant religion, than we have done; or in some respects hath more suffered for it. And therefore we are the more sensibly affected, that those calumnies can make impression to our disadvantage, in the minds of honest and pious men, as we are informed they have done. And we do the rather impart the sense we have of our suffering in this particular to you, because, as you have the charge of the English congregation in Rotterdam; so you cannot but have much conversation and acquaintance with the Ministers of the Dutch Church, and others in that populous place, with whom we would not suffer under so unjust and scandalous an imputation. And we presume and expect from you, that you will use your utmost diligence and dexterity, to root out those unworthy aspersions, so maliciously and groundlessly laid

upon us by wicked men ; and that you assure all who will give credit to you, that we value ourself so much upon that part of our title of being Defender of the Faith, that no worldly temptations can ever prevail with us to swerve from it, and the Protestant religion, in which we have been bred : The propagation whereof we shall endeavour with our utmost power. And as we shall never fail in the performance of our duty herein, so we shall take the offices you shall do, in vindicating us from these reproaches, very well from you. In which we promise ourself you will serve us effectually. And so we bid you farewell. Given at our Court at Brussels, the seventh day of November, in the tenth year of our reign.

By his Majesty's command,

EDWARD NICHOLAS.

The last half year he was observed to look better than ever before, insomuch that many of his friends were not a little deceived ; the truth is, he himself found himself better than ever, yet did many time cast out speeches, as if he could not live long.

The last Sabbath he ever preached was the third of August, 1659. That day he administered the Sacrament of the LORD'S Supper with his wonted heavenliness, and preached forenoon and afternoon, with as much zeal as ever he was known to do : His text was that of our SAVIOUR to his disciples : " Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you ; " showing, that the usual means whereby men are made clean, was the preaching of the Gospel. He made two excellent sermons on those words ; and if he had known he should have concluded his ministry that day, he could not have chosen a fitter text.

Having spent himself much with preaching, and being wearied by the great pains he had taken that day, after the afternoon sermon (according to his usual manner) he laid himself down upon his bed to rest a little : After he had slumbered about half an hour, he awaked, and having some

warm thing brought him to drink, he drank heartily, but said not any thing, being a little sleepy. He laid down again about a quarter of an hour, and had another little slumber, and then rising, got up alone, and sat upon his bed side : His wife perceiving him to look very ill, (though she did not in the least suspect more danger than formerly,) asked him how he did ? He answered, ‘ I cannot tell how : ’ She leading him to a chair two or three steps off, he sat down and suddenly fainted. He was a good while rubbed and chafed, having his mouth opened by force to pour in strong waters ; and coming a little to himself, he lifted up his eyes and said, ‘ I shall never come to myself again ’ Whereupon his wife said to his son, Fetch the Doctor quickly, but he said ‘ No, no.’ The Doctor was just gone by his door, and coming back, gave him some little physic, which wrought well ; but he was very sick and faint, and not able to speak, so that about seven o’clock he was had to bed, and continued slumbering all night, not once speaking to any, or so much as opening his eyes, but refusing every thing the Doctor appointed him to take. In the morning he with much ado spake two or three words, and bade his son answer a letter that came from Amsterdam, but all the day lay in a drowsy posture speaking to none. It proved to be a palsy all over his right side and tongue, and so he lay till four o’clock on Thursday morning, being the seventh of August, 1659, and then gave up the ghost. Yet observable it is, that on Wednesday he called for all his children by name, and blessed them, laying his hand on their head, and lifting up his eyes, and had his memory so well, that one of his children being wanting, [sleeping in its cradle,] he said ‘ One more,’ and so it was brought to him. He had his eye fixed for a great while together on his eldest son, and stroked him often as he stood by him, lifting up his eyes to heaven, in token of his praying for him.

The Dutch Ministers took order to have him buried in their own grave, and accordingly attended him to it.

He was about fifty years old when he died, of stature

tall and thin, in countenance lean and pale, of a very weak constitution, yet very active; of a courteous nature, very affable, and easy to be entreated; in his fashions neither rude nor fantastic: He was both moral and gracious, and in all his actions graceful; earth hath lost and heaven hath gained a saint by his death. He is now blessed, and no doubt but his name is precious among those that have “received like precious faith.”

END OF VOL. XXVII.

