This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

https://books.google.com



Digitized by Google

Presented to the
Univ. of Michigan
by
Henry C. Granger
Class of '71

GENERAL LIBRARY
OF
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

PRESENTED BY
Rev. Henry C. Granger
Class of 1871 Jan. 25 1900

Digitized by Google

BX
8915
.F58
1770

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE WHOLE

WORKS

OF THE REVEREND

90356

MR. JOHN FLAVEL,

Late MINISTER of the GOSPEL at *Dartmouth* in *Devon*.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

An Alphabetical TABLE of the principal Matters contained in the Whole.

THE EIGHT EDITION.

VOL. VI.

PAISLEY:

Printed by A. WEIR and A. M'LEAN.
And sold at the Shop of A. WEIR, near the Cross.
MDCCLXX.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

HUSBANDRY SPIRITUALIZED.

The Epiſtle Dedicatory, *Page* 1
Mr. Caryl to the Chriſtian Reader, 7
Mr. Watts to Mr Flavel, on his Spiritual Navigation and Huſbandry, 9
In Authoris Opera, by Mr. Condy, 10
Mr. Jeffery to Mr. Flavel, upon his Huſbandry Spiritualized, 11
An Epiſtle to the intelligent Country Reader, 13
The Author to the Reader, 15

The PROEM.

1 Cor. iii. 9. *Ye are God's huſbandry*, *ibid.*

PART I.

Chap. 1. *Upon the induſtry of the huſbandman*, 28
Chap. 2. *Upon the thriftineſs of the huſbandman*, 33
Chap. 3. *Upon the chearfulneſs of the huſbandman*, 39
Chap. 4. *Upon the due quality of arable land*, 44
Chap. 5. *Upon the improvement of bad ground*, 51
Chap. 6. *Upon the incurableneſs of ſome bad ground*, 58
Chap. 7. *Upon the plowing of corn-land*, 66
Chap. 8. *Upon the ſeed-corn*, 73
Chap. 9. *Upon ſpringing-weather after ſeed-time*, 80
Chap. 10. *Upon a dearth through want of rain*, 88
Chap. 11. *Upon the corruption of the ſeed before it ſprings*, 97
Chap. 12. *Upon the reſemblance of wheat and tares*, 104
Chap. 13. *Upon the dangers incident to the corn from ſeed-time to harveſt*, 109
Chap. 14. *Upon the patience of the huſbandman for the harveſt*, 115
Chap. 15. *Upon the harveſt-ſeaſon*, 120
Chap. 16. *Upon the care of huſbandmen to provide for winter*, 129
Chap. 17. *Upon reaping the ſame we ſow*, 134
Chap. 18. *Upon the joy of harveſt-men*, 139

Digitized by Google

Page
Chap. 19. *Upon the threshing out of corn,* 145
Chap. 20. *Upon the winnowing of corn,* 150

PART II.

The Introduction, 155
Chap. 1. *Upon the ingrafting of fruit-trees,* 156
Chap. 2. *Upon the union of the graff with the stock,* 161
Chap. 3. *Upon the gathering in of fruits in autumn,* 166
Chap. 4. *Upon the cutting down of dead trees,* 171

PART III.

The Introduction, 176
Chap. 1. *Upon the husbandman's care for his cattle,* *ibid.*
Chap. 2. *Upon the hard labour and cruel usage of beasts,* 181
Chap. 3. *Upon the seeking of lost cattle,* 185
Chap. 4. *Upon the feeding of fat cattle,* 189
Chap. 5. *Upon the husbandman's care for posterity,* 193
Chap. 6. *Upon the husbandman's care to preve and preserve his deeds,* 197

OCCASIONAL MEDITATONS.

MEDITATIONS ON BIRDS.

Med. 1. *Upon the singing of a nightingale,* 202
Med. 2. *Upon the sight of many small birds chirping about a dead hawk,* 205
Med. 3. *Upon the sight of a blackbird taking sanctuary in a bush from a pursuing hawk,* 206
Med. 4. *Upon the sight of divers goldfinches intermingling with a flock of sparrows,* 207
Med. 5. *Upon the sight of a robin-red-breast picking up a worm from a mole-hill, then rising,* 208
Med. 6. *Upon the shooting of two finches fighting in the air,* 209
Med. 7. *Upon the singing of a blind finch by night,* 210
Med. 8. *Upon the comparing of two birds nests,* *ibid.*
Med. 9. *Upon the early singing of birds,* 212
Med. 10. *Upon the haltering of birds, with a grain of hair,* *ibid.*

Digitized by Google

MEDITATIONS upon BEASTS.

Pag.
Med. 1. *Upon the clogging of a straying beast,* 213
Med. 2. *Upon the love of a dog to his master,* 214
Med. 3. *Upon the fighting of two rams,* 215
Med. 4. *Upon the catching of a horse in a fat pasture,* ibid.
Med. 5. *Upon the hunting of a deer,* 216

MEDITATIONS upon TREES.

Med. 1. *Upon the fall of blossoms, nipt by a frosty morning,* 217
Med. 2. *Upon the knitting or setting of fruit,* 218
Med. 3. *Upon the sight of a fair spreading oak,* 219
Med. 4. *Upon the sight of many sticks lodged in the branches of a choice fruit-tree,* ibid.
Med. 5. *Upon the gathering of choice fruit from a scrubbed, unpromising tree,* 220
Med. 6. *Upon an excellent, but irregular tree,* ibid.

MEDITATIONS upon a GARDEN.

Med. 1. *Upon the new-modelling of a gardan,* 221
Med. 2. *Upon the pulling up of a leek,* ibid.
Med. 3. *Upon a heedless tread in a curious garden,* 222
Med. 4. *Upon a withered posy taken up in the way,* 223
Med. 5. *Upon the sudden withering of a rose,* 224
Med. 6. *Upon the sudden withering of beautiful flowers,* ibid.
Med. 7. *Upon the tenderness of some choice flowers,* 225
Med. 8. *Upon the strange means of preserving the life of vegetables,* 226

NAVIGATION SPIRITUALIZED.

The Epistle Dedicatory, 228
An Epistle to every Seaman sailing Heaven-ward, 232
The Author to the Reader, 240

CHAP. I.

The launching of a ship plainly sets forth
Our double state, by first and second birth, 241

CHAP. II.

In the vast ocean spiritual eyes descry
God's boundless mercy, and eternity, 245

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III. Pag.
Within theſe ſmooth fac'd ſeas ſtrange creatures crawl;
But in man's heart far ſtranger than them all, 249
CHAP. IV.
Seas purge themſelves, and caſt their filth aſhore,
But graceleſs ſouls retain, and ſuck in more, 252
CHAP. V.
Seamen foreſee a danger, and prepare:
Yet few of greater dangers are aware, 254
CHAP. VI.
How ſmall a matter turns a ſhip about?
Yet we, againſt our conſcience, ſtand it out, 256
CHAP. VII.
Thro' many fears and dangers ſeamen run,
Yet all's forgotten when they do return, 259
CHAP. VIII.
The navigator ſhifts his ſails to take
All winds, but that which for his ſoul doth make, 263
CHAP. IX.
If ſeamen loſe a gale, there they may lie;
The ſoul, when once becalm'd in ſin, may die, 265
CHAP. X.
By navigation one place ſtores another,
And by communion we muſt help each other, 267
CHAP. XI.
The rocks abide, though ſeas againſt them rage;
So ſhall the church, which is God's heritage, 270
CHAP. XII.
What dangers run they for a little gains,
Who, for their ſouls, would ne'er take half the pains! 273
CHAP. XIII.
Millions of creatures in the ſeas are fed:
Why then are ſaints in doubt of daily bread? 275
CHAP. XIV.
Sea-waters drained through the earth, are ſweet;
So are th' afflictions which God's people meet, 278
CHAP. XV.
The ſeas within their bounds the Lord contains:
He alſo men and devils holds in chains, 281
CHAP. XVI.
To ſea without a compaſs none dare go:
Our courſe without the word is even ſo, 283
CHAP. XVII.
Look as the ſea, by turns, doth ebb and flow;
So their eſtates, that uſe it, come and go. 286

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XVIII. Pag.
Like hungry lions, waves for ſinners gape:
Leave then your ſins behind, if you'll eſcape, 289
CHAP. XIX.
To ſave the ſhip, rich lading's caſt away:
Thy ſoul is ſhipwreck'd if thy luſts do ſtay. 291
CHAP. XX.
Chriſt, with a word, can ſurging waves appeaſe:
His voice a troubled ſoul can quickly eaſe, 293
CHAP. XXI.
Our food out of the ſea God doth command;
Yet few therein take notice of his hand, 296
CHAP. XXII.
Whilſt thou by art the ſilly fiſh doſt kill,
Perchance the devil's hook ſticks in thy gill, 298
CHAP. XXIII.
Doth trading fail, and voyages prove bad?
If you cannot diſcern the cauſe, 'tis ſaid, 300
CHAP. XXIV.
In ſeas the greater fiſh the leſs devour:
So ſome men cruſh all thoſe within their pow'r, 303
CHAP. XXV.
In ſtorms to ſpread much ſail endangers all:
So carnal mirth, if God for mourning call, 306
CHAP XXVI.
A little leak neglected, dangerous proves:
One ſin connived at, the ſoul undoes, 308
CHAP. XXVII.
Ships make much way when they a trade-wind get;
With ſuch a wind the ſaints have ever met, 31
CHAP. XXVIII.
Storms make diſcov'ry of the pilot's ſkill:
God's wiſdom in affliction triumphs ſtill, 3
CHAP. XXIX.
Things in the bottom are unſeen: no eye
Can trace God's paths, which in the deeps do lie, 5
CHAP. XXX.
Millions of men are ſunk into the main;
But it ſhall not thoſe dead always retain, 17
CHAP. XXXI.
The ſeaman's greateſt danger's near the coaſt;
When we are neareſt heav'n the danger's moſt, 320
CHAP. XXXII.
How glad are ſeamen when they make the ſhore?
And ſaints, no leſs, when all their danger's o'er. 322

Digitized by Google

A Diſſuaſive from the SINS of Drunkenneſs, Swearing, Uncleanneſs, forgetfulneſs of Mercies, &c.

Pag.

The Epiſtle Dedicatory, 326
Caution 1. Of the Sin of Drunkenneſs, 328
Caution 2. The Art of Preſerving the Fruits of the Lips, 340
Caution 3. The Harlot's Face, in the Scripture-Glaſs, 351
Caution 4. Of Mercies and Promiſes, 362
Caution 5. The Seaman's Catechiſm, 372

The SEAMAN's COMPANION.

The Epiſtle Dedicatory, 383

SERMON I.

The Seaman's Farewel.

Acts xxi. 5, 6. "And we kneeled down on the ſhore, and "prayed; and when we had taken our leave one of another, "we took ſhip, and they returned home again," 385

SERMON II.

The Seaman in a Storm.

Pſal. cvii. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. "They that go down to "the ſea in ſhips, that do buſineſs in great waters: theſe "ſee the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep," &c. 403

SERMON III.

The Seaman's Preſervative in foreign Countries.

Pſalm cxxxix. 9, 10. "If I take the wings of the morning, "and dwell in the uttermoſt part of the ſea; even there "ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall hold me," 417

SERMON IV.

The ſucceſsful Seaman.

Deut. viii. 17, 18. "And thou ſay in thine heart, My power, "and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth; "but thou ſhalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he "that giveth thee power to get wealth," 434

SERMON V.

The diſappointed Seaman.

Luke v. 5. "Maſter, we have toiled all the night, and have "taken nothing," 445

SERMON VI.

The Seaman's Return.

Deu. xxxiii. 19. "They ſhall call the people unto the moun-"tain, there they ſhall offer ſacrifices of righteouſneſs: for "they ſhall ſuck of the abundance of the ſeas, and of the "treaſures hid in the ſand," 459

Digitized by Google

HUSBANDRY SPIRITUALIZED:

Or, The Heavenly Use of Earthly Things.

Consisting of many pleasant *observations*, pertinent *applications*, and serious *reflections*; and each chapter concluded with a *divine*, and suitable *poem*. Directing *husbandmen* to the most excellent improvements of their common employments. Whereunto are added, by way of *Appendix*, several choice *occasional meditations*, upon *birds*, *beasts*, *trees*, *flowers*, *rivers*, and several other objects; fitted for the help of such as desire to walk with God in all their solitudes, and recesses from the world.

The EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To the Worshipful Robert Savery, and William Savery, of *Slade* Esquires.

Honoured Friends,

IT hath been long since observed, that the world, below, is a glass to discover the world above; *Seculum est speculum*: and although I am not of their opinion, that say, the Heathens may spell Christ out of the sun, moon, and stars; yet this I know, that the irrational and inanimate, as well as rational creatures, have a language; and tho' not by articulate speech, yet, in a metaphorical sense, they preach unto man the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, Rom. i. 20. "There is (saith "the Psalmist, Psalm xix. 3.) no speech, nor language, where "their voice is not heard." Or (as Junius renders it) there is no speech, nor words, yet without these, their voice is understood, and their line (*i. e.* saith Diodate) their writing in gross, and plain draughts, is gone out through all the earth.

As man is compounded of a fleshly and spiritual substance, so God hath endowed the creatures with a spiritual, as well as fleshly usefulness; they have not only a natural use in alimen-

Digitized by Google

tal, and physical respects, but also a spiritual use, as they bear the figures and similitudes of many sublime and heavenly mysteries. Believe me (saith contemplative Bernard) thou shalt find more in the woods, than in a corner; stones and trees will teach thee what thou shalt not hear from learned doctors. By a skilful and industrious improvement of the creatures (saith Mr. Baxter excellently) we might have a fuller taste of Christ and heaven, in every bit of bread that we eat, and in every draught of bear that we drink, than most men have in the use of the sacrament.

And as the creatures teach divine and excellent things, so they teach them in a perspicuous and taking manner: *Duo illa nos maxime movent, similitudo et exemplum*, saith the orator *. These two things, similitude and example, do especially move us. Notions are more easily conveyed to the understanding, by being first cloathed in some apt similitude, and so represented to the sense. And therefore Jesus Christ, the great Prophet, delighted much in teaching by parables; and the prophets were much in this way also, Hos. xii. 10. "I have used similitudes "by the ministry of the prophets." Those that can retain little of a sermon, yet ordinarily retain an apt similitude.

I confess it is an humbling consideration, That man, who at first was led by the knowledge of God, to the knowledge of the creature, must now by the creatures learn to know God. That the creatures, (as one saith) like Balaam's ass, should teach their master. But though this be the unhappiness of poor man in his collapsed state, yet it is now his wisdom to improve such helps; and whilst others, by the abuse of the creatures, are furthering their perdition, to be, by the spiritual improvement of them, promoting our own salvation.

It is an excellent art to discourse with birds, beasts, and fishes, about sublime and spiritual subjects, and make them answer to your questions; and this may be done, Job xii. 7, 8. "Ask "now the beasts, and they shall teach thee, and the fowls of the "air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall "teach thee, and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee." That is (saith neat and accurate † Caryl) the creatures teach us when we think of them: 'They teach us, though not formally, yet virtually; they answer and resolve the question 'put to them, though not explicitely to the ear, yet convincingly to the conscience. So then, we ask the creatures, 'when we diligently consider them, when we search out the 'perfections and virtues that God hath put into, or stamps

* Cicero. † Caryl in loc.

Digitized by Google

'upon them. To set our mind thus upon the creature, is to 'discourse with the creature; the questions which man asks 'of a beast, are only his own meditations. Again, the creatures teach us; when we in meditation, make our collections, and draw down a demonstration of the power, wisdom, 'and goodness of God in making them, or the frailty of man 'in needing them: such conclusions and inferences are the 'teachings of the creatures.'

Common objects (saith † another) may be improved two ways; *viz.* In an argumentative, and in a representative way; by reasoning from them, and by viewing the resemblance that is betwixt them and spiritual matters.

First, In meditation argue thus, as in the present case and similitude of the apostle. If an husbandman upon the ordinary principles of reason can wait for the harvest, shall not I wait for the coming of the Lord? The day of refreshing; the corn is precious to him, and so is the coming of Christ to me. Shall he be so patient, and endure so much for a little corn? And not I for the kingdom of heaven? He is willing to stay till all causes have had their operations, till he hath received the former and the latter rain; and shall not I, till the Divine decrees be accomplished?

Secondly, In meditation, make the resemblance, and discourse thus within yourselves: This is my seed-time, heaven is my harvest; here I must labour and toil, and there rest. I see the husbandman's life is a great toil: no excellent thing can be obtained without labour, and an obstinate patience. I see the seed must be hidden in the furrows, rotten and corrupted, e'er it can spring forth with any increase. Our hopes are hidden, light is sown for the righteous; all our comforts are buried under the clods, and after all this there must be long waiting, we cannot sow and reap in a day; effects cannot follow, till all necessary causes have first wrought. It is not in the power of husbandmen to ripen fruits at pleasure, our times are in the hands of God, therefore it is good to wait; a long-suffering patience will reap the desired fruit. Thus you have some hints of this heavenly art of improving the creatures.

The motives inducing me to this undertaking, were the Lord's owning with some success, my labours of a like nature, together with the desire and inclination (stirred up in *Navigation Spiritualized.*

† Dr. Manton.

Digitized by Google

me, I hope, by the Spirit of the Lord, to devote my vacant hours to his ſervice in this kind.) I conſidered, that if the Phariſees in a blind zeal to a faction, could compaſs ſea and land to proſelyte men to their party, though thereby they made them ſevenfold more the children of the devil than before; how much more was I obliged, by true love to God, and zeal to the everlaſting happineſs of ſouls, to uſe my uttermoſt endeavours, both with *ſeamen* and *huſbandmen*, to win them to Chriſt, and thereby make them more than ſeventy-ſeven fold happier than before? Not to mention other encouragements to this work, which I received from the earneſt deſires of ſome reverend and worthy brethren inviting thereunto; all which I hope the event will manifeſt to be a call from God to this work.

I confeſs I met with ſome diſcouragement in my firſt attempt, from my unacquaintedneſs with rural affairs; and becauſe I was to travel in a path (to me) untrodden; but having once engaged in it, thoſe diſcouragements were ſoon overcome: and being now brought to what you here ſee, I offer to your hands theſe firſt-fruits of my ſpare hours.

I preſume you will account it no diſparagement, that I dedicate a book of huſbandry to gentlemen of your quality. This is *ſpiritual huſbandry*, which here is taught you; and yet I tell you, that great perſons have accounted that civil employment (which is much inferior to this) no diſparagement to them. "The king himſelf is ſerved by the field," Eccleſ. v. 9. Or, as Montanus renders the Hebrew text, *Rex agro ſit ſervus*; The king himſelf is a ſervant to the field. And of king Uzziah it is written, 2 Chron. xxvi. 10. "That he "loved huſbandry." And Amos vii. 1. we read of the King's *mowings*. Yea, Pliny hath obſerved, that corn was never ſo plentiful at Rome, as when the ſame men tilled the land that ruled the *commonwealth*. *Quaſi gauderet terra laureato vomere, ſcilicet et aratore triumphali*; as though the earth itſelf rejoiced in the laurelled plow-ſhare, and the triumphant plowman.

What pleaſure you will find in reading it, I know not; but to me it hath been a pleaſant path, from firſt to laſt; who yet have been at far greater expence of time and pains in compiling it, than you can be in reading it. The huſbandman's work, you know, is no eaſy work, and the ſpiritualizing of it hath greater difficulties attending it; but yet the pleaſure hath abundantly recompenſed the pains. I have found Eraſmus his obſervation experimentally true; *Qui litteris addicti ſumus, animi laſſitudinem a ſtudiis gravioribus contractum; ab iiſdem ſtudiis, ſed amoenioribus recreamus*: Thoſe that are addicted to

Digitized by Google

ſtudy, (ſaith he) when they have wearied their ſpirits with ſtudy, can recreate them again with ſtudy, by making a diverſion from that which is ſevere and knotty, to ſome more facile and pleaſant ſubject.

But to hear that God hath uſed and honoured theſe papers to the good of any ſoul, will yield me the higheſt content and ſatisfaction imaginable.

May you but learn that leſſon, which is the general ſcope and deſign of this book, *viz.* How to walk with God from day to day, and make the ſeveral objects you behold, *ſcalae et alae*, wings and ladders to mount your ſouls nearer to him, who is the center of all bleſſed ſpirits. How much will it comfort me, and confirm my hope, that it was the call of God indeed, which put me upon theſe endeavours!

O Sirs! What an excellent thing would it be for you, to make ſuch holy improvements of all theſe earthly objects which daily occur to your ſenſes, and cauſe them to proclaim and preach to you divine and heavenly myſteries; whilſt others make them groan, by abuſing them to ſin, and ſubjecting them to their luſts. A man may be caſt into ſuch a condition, wherein he cannot enjoy the bleſſing and benefit of a pious and powerful miniſtry; but you cannot (ordinarily) fall into ſuch a condition, wherein any thing (excepting a bad heart) can deprive you of the benefits and comforts of thoſe excellent ſermons, and divinity lectures, which the creatures here offer to preach and read to you.

Content not yourſelves, I beſeech you, with that natural ſweetneſs the creatures afford; for thereof the beaſts are capable, as much, if not more, than you; but uſe them to thoſe ſpiritual ends you are here directed, and they will yield you a ſweetneſs far tranſcending that natural ſweetneſs you ever reliſhed in them; and indeed, you never uſe the creatures as their *Lord's*, till you come to ſee *your Lord*, in and by them. I confeſs the diſcoveries of God in the word are far more excellent, clear, and powerful; "He hath magnified his word above all his "name." And therein are the unſearchable *riches of Chriſt*, or rich diſcoveries of that grace that hath no footſteps in nature, as the apoſtle's expreſſion ſignifies, Epheſ. iii. 8.

And if that which might be known of God by the creatures, leave men without excuſe; as it is manifeſt, Rom. i. 20. How inexcuſable then will thoſe be, who have received not only the teachings of the creature, but alſo the grace of the goſpel in vain! "How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?"

Digitized by Google

They that are careleſs in the day of grace, ſhall be ſpeechleſs in the day of judgment.

I am ſenſible of many defects in theſe papers (as well as in myſelf;) they have doubtleſs a taſte of the diſtractions of the times wherein they were written; nor was I willing to keep them ſo long under-hand, as the accurateneſs and exactneſs with which ſuch a ſubject ought to be handled, did require. Had I deſigned my own credit, I ſhould have obſerved that counſel, *Nonumque prematur in annum, (i. e.)* To have kept it much longer under the file, before I had expoſed it to public view; but I rather inclined to Solomon's counſel, "Whatever thy "hand finds out to do, do it with all thy might; for there is "no wiſdom, nor knowledge, nor device in the grave, whither "thou art going," Eccleſ. ix. 10.

I apprehend a neceſſity of ſome ſuch means to be uſed, for the inſtruction and conviction of country-people; who either are not capable of underſtanding truth in another dialect, or at leaſt are leſs affected with it. The propoſition in every chapter conſiſts of an obſervation in huſbandry; wherein, if I have failed in uſing any improper expreſſion, your candour will cover it, and impute it to my unacquaintedneſs in rural affairs: ——*In magnis voluiſſe ſat eſt.*

The reddition or application, you will find (I hope) both pertinent and cloſe. The reflections ſerious, and ſuch (as I hope) your conſciences will faithfully improve. I have ſhut up every chapter with a *Poem*, an innocent bait to catch the reader's ſoul.

That of *Herbert* is experimentally true:

A verſe may find him that a ſermon flies,
And turn delight into a ſacrifice.

I ſhould never have been perſuaded (eſpecially in this ſcribling age, wherein we may complain with the poet,

Scribimus indocti, doctique poemata paſſim,)

to have ſet my dull fancy upon the rack to extort a poem to entertain my reader; for I cannot ſay with Ovid, *Sponte ſua carmen*, &c. but that I have been informed, that many ſeamen, induced by the pleaſure of a verſe, have taken much pains to learn the poems in their compaſs by heart; and I hope both the children at home, and the ſervants in the fields, will learn to exerciſe themſelves this way alſo. O, how much better will it be ſo to do, than to ſtuff their memories with obſcene ballads, and filthy ſongs, which corrupt their minds, and diſpoſe them to much wickedneſs by irritating their natural

Digitized by Google

corruption! But these are purer flames, you will find nothing here of such a tendency.

'Tis guilt, not poetry, to be like those,
Whose wit in verse is downright sin in prose.
Whose studies are prophaneness, as if then
They only were good poets, when bad men.

D. DIGS.

I shall add no more, but to beg that God who instructeth the husbandman in his civil calling, to teach him wisdom spiritually to improve it; and particularly, that you may reap a crop of much spiritual benefit, from that seed which is here sown by the hand of the Lord's unprofitable servant, and in him,

Your very affectionate
Friend and servant,
JOHN FLAVEL.

To The CHRISTIAN READER.

THERE are three things wherein (as it hath been said, long before my day) the exercise of godliness doth chiefly consist: Prayer, temptation, meditation: Meditation is the subject of the following manual. The object of meditation is twofold. First, The word. Secondly, The works of God. The works of God are twofold. First, Internal. Secondly, External. The external works of God are twofold. First, Of creation. Secondly, Of providence. The works of providence are likewise twofold. First, 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 ends, designs and purposes. Secondly, 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 the 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 and for spirituals and eternals.

The worthy and ingenious Author of the ensuing discourse,

Digitized by Google

hath supplied us with an excellent help, for the spiritualizing of the providential works of God in natural things, by godly meditations; 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: The best of saints (on this side heaven) have (though they are not only earthly-minded) much earth in their minds; which like a heavy clog at their heels, or a weight at their hearts, presseth them down when they would make an essay to 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 it is then to get in, and be fixed upon heavenly thoughts, while we are engaged about earthly work; yea, are (for so is the husbandman) working the very earth, and raking in the bowels of it. 'Tis 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, in heart affecting and quickening contemplations, 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 daily practice of it. Earthly objects usually hinder us in our way, sometimes turn us quite out of our way to heaven. Many plow 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 and drives at, so to spiritualize all sorts, or the whole compass of earthly husbandry, that all sorts of husbandmen may become spiritual and heavenly? It seems to me a token for good, that God hath an intendment of some special good to the souls of such as are by profession proper husbandmen, seeing he hath

Digitized by Google

lately put it into the hearts of two faithful ministers (who with all of that profession, are husbandmen in a figure) to undertake, tho' in a different way, this subject, and to publish their labours in print, that they may be of use, not only for the present age, but for posterity. *Mr. Richard Steel, and this Author.*

And that the husbandman may be pleased as well as profited, in perusing the labours of this author; he hath, with singular aptness, and acuteness, contrived and contracted the sum and scope of every chapter into an elegant distich, or pair of verses, placed at the head of it, and concluded it with a choice melodious poem, suitable to, and dilating upon the whole matter of it. These the husbandman, who can but read, may quickly learn and sing for his solace, instead of those vain ballads, and corrupting rhimes, which many of that rank are apt to buy, and solace themselves withal, without any benefit, yea, much to their hurt, making their hearts more corrupt, carnal, and vain thereby.

Let me add one word more to the reader. This book of Husbandry Spiritualized, is not calculated only for the common husbandman; persons of any calling, or condition, may find the author working out such searching reflections and strong convictions, from almost every part and particular of the husbandman's work, as may prove, if faithfully improved, 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.

To his Reverend and Learned Friend, Mr. John Flavel, *on his Spiritual Navigation and Husbandry.*

LETTERS of mark to his dear servant given,
By him that sifts the ruffling winds of heaven:
To fight, and take all such as would not deign
T' acknowledge him the sea's great Sovereign.
He launch'd his little *pinace*, and began

Digitized by Google

T' attack the vaſſals of *Leviathan.*
Auſpicious gales ſwelling his winged ſails,
Searches all creeks, and ev'ry bark he hails;
That ſcarce a ſhip our Weſtern coaſt afford,
Which his brave *pinace* hath not laid aboard.
And what among our riddles ſome might count,
Was ſeen at once at Berwick, and the *Mount.*
Yea, in more *ports* hath in one *luſtre* been,
Than Hawkins, Drake, or Cavendiſh have ſeen.
And prizes of more worth brought home again,
Than all the *plate-fleets* of the Kings of Spain.
But that which makes the wonder ſwell the more,
Thoſe whom he took were *beggars* all before.
But reſts he here? No, no, our friend doth know,
'Tis good to have two ſtrings unto his bow.
Our rare Amphibion loves not to be pent
Within the bounds of one poor element.
Beſides, the learned author underſtood,
That of an idle hand there comes no good.
The law to him no *pulpit* doth allow,
And now he cannot *preach*, he means to *plow*,
Though preaching were a crime, yet he foreſaw
Againſt the plowman there could be no law.
Nor ſtays he on reſolves, but out-of-hand
He yoaks his teem, plows up the ſtubborn land;
Sows it with precious ſeed, harrows again
The tougher clods, takes pleaſure in his pain.
Whilſt, Orpheus-like, (which doth his art advance)
Rocks, fields, and woods, *after his pipe do dance.*
Induſtrious ſpirit, to what a rich account
With thy bleſt Lord, will all theſe labours mount?
That ev'ry nerve of thy beſt ſoul doſt ply,
To further heav'n's *ſpiritual huſbandry.*
This kind of tillage which thou teacheſt us,
Was never dreamt of by Triptolemus.
Go, reader, turn the leaves; and me allow
To pray (whilſt at work) *God ſpeed the plow.*

NICHOLAS WATTS.

In Authoris OPERA.

LET Paracelſus and Van Helmont's name,
No more ride triumph on the wings of fame.
Lo, here's a *chymiſt*, whoſe diviner ſkill
Doth *hallowed*, from unhallowed things diſtil.

Digitized by Google

Spiritualizeth ſea-affairs; again,
Makes the rude ground turn tutor unto men.
Shews *Mariners*, as by a compaſs, how
They may unto the *port* of glory row.
Teacheth the *plowman*, from their work, to know
What duties unto God, and man they owe.
Rare artiſt! who, when many tongues are mute,
Mak'ſt things, that are inanimate, confute
The age's ſins: by preaching unto eyes,
Truths, which, in other modes, their ears deſpiſe.
Proſper his pious labours, Lord! howe'er
Do not forget to crown the labourer.

Sic raptim canit,
DAN. CONDY.

To his Reverend and Invaluable Friend, Mr. J. F. *upon his* Huſbandry Spiritualized.

INGENIOUS Sir, What do I ſee? What now!
Are you come from the pulpit to the plow?
If ſo, then pardon me, if I profeſs,
The plow deſerves to be ſent to the preſs.
'Tis not long ſince you went to ſea, they ſay,
Compos'd a compaſs, which directs the way,
And ſteers the courſe to heaven; O bleſt art!
And bravely done that you did that impart
To us, who take it kindly at your hand,
And bleſs the Lord that you are come to land,
To be an huſbandman, wherein your ſkill,
With admiration doth your readers fill.
One grain will yield increaſe, it's ten times ten,
When the earth's manur'd by ſuch huſbandmen.
We may expect rich harveſts, and full crops,
When heav'nly dew deſcendeth in ſuch drops
Of ſpiritual rain, to water ev'ry field,
That it full heaps of grace to God may yield.
I muſt adore the wiſdom of that God
That makes men wiſe, who, even from a clod
Of earth, can raiſe ſuch heavenly meditation
Unto a pitch of higheſt elevation.
Beſides, I mark the goodneſs of the Lord,
Performing unto us his faithful word,
That all ſhould work for good unto the ſaints,

Digitized by Google

Which, in ſome meaſure, leſſens our complaints.
For though our Pulpit mercies be grown leſs,
We have ſome gracious helps yet from the preſs.
And herein all the world may plainly ſee,
That faithful ſervants will not idle be.
We have ſome bricks, although the ſtraw be gone,
The church, at laſt, ſhall be of poliſh'd ſtone.
Whatever men or devils act, or ſay,
Sion, at laſt, will have a glorious day.
The wretched muck-worm, that from morn to night
Labours, as if 'twere for an heav'nly weight;
And, when he hath got all he can, the moſt
Amounts to little more than a poor cruſt,
To feed his tired carcaſs: If himſelf
Have, by his carking, got a little pelf,
Leave it he muſt, to one he knows not whom,
And then muſt come to an eternal doom;
And hear his poor neglected wretched ſoul
Tell him at laſt, that he hath play'd the fool.
But here he's taught, how he, before he die,
May lay up treaſure for eternity;
Wherein he may be rich, yea, much much more,
Than they that do poſſeſs whole mines of ore.
When earth's more worth than heav'n, and gold than grace,
Then let the worldling run his brutiſh race;
But not before, unleſs he do intend
To meet with ſoul-deſtruction in the end.
But I muſt leave him, and return again
To gratulate the author for his pain.
And here I can't forbear to let my pen
To tell the world of all the huſbandmen,
That e'er I met, he, he hath hit the vein
To recompence the labourer's hard pain,
And taught him how to get the greateſt gain.
Wherein he treads a path not trode before;
By which, indeed, his ſkill appears the more.
I might *encomiums* give him, great and true,
And yet come very ſhort of what's his due:
But I muſt not walk in forbidden ways,
For, thereby, I am ſure, I ſhould diſpleaſe
His pious mind, who doth, and freely can
Give all the praiſe to the great huſbandman;
Who will his graces in his ſervants own,
But doth expect himſelf to wear the crown.

Digitized by Google

Farewel, dear Sir, I take my leave, and now
Will say no more than this, *God speed the plow.*

EDWARD JEFFERY.

The EPISTLE, to the intelligent Country READER.

THOU hast here the fruit of some of my spare hours, which were thus employed, when, by a sad providence, I was thrust from the society of many dear friends, into a solitary country dwelling. I hope none will envy me these innocent delights, which I made out of my lonely walks, whereby the Lord sweetened my solitudes there. It is like thou wilt find some passages here, that are harmlesly pleasant; yet, I assure thee, I know of none that the most *Cynical Reader* can censure, as sinfully light and vain. I must acknowledge, to the praise of God, that I have found some of those (which possibly some of my readers will call the slightest, and most trifling subjects of meditation) to be the ordinances for *instruction, caution,* and consolation to my own soul: yea, such a degree of comfort, I do profess to have found by these things, as hath much indeared the country-life to me, and made me much better to understand that saying of Horace, than when I learned it at school,

Novistine locum potiorem rure beato?
Est ubi plus tepeant hyems? Ubi gratior aura?
O rus, quando ego te adspiciam? Quandoque licebit
Nunc veterum libris, nunc somno, et inertibus hortis
Ducere solicitae jucunda oblivio vitae. (i. e.)
What life can with the country life compare?
Where breathes the purest, and most healthful air.
Where, undisturb'd, my study I pursue,
And, when I sleep, bid all my cares adieu. *Hor. Sat. 6.*

And what I have found so beneficial to myself, I cannot but think may be so to others. I assure thee, reader, I am not fond of any of these conceptions; and yet I think I may modestly enough say, That the emptiest leaf in this book may serve for more, and better uses, than a mere diversion, when thou canst find leisure to peruse it. I know, your troubles and cares are many; and though your condition of life hath many innocent comforts, and outward mercies to sweeten it, yet I believe most of you have found that ancient saying of Anacreon experimentally true: Εχει τι πικρον της λιθργιας γλυκυ.

'Some bitter troubles countrymen do meet,
'Wherewith the Lord doth intermix their sweet.'

Digitized by Google

The *cares* of your *minds* are commonly no less than the *pains* of your *bodies;* it concerns you, therefore, to *sweeten* what you cannot *avoid;* and I know no better way for that, than what is here directed to. O friends! what advantages have you for a spiritual life? Why may you not have two harvests every year? One for your souls, another for your bodies; if you could thus learn to husband your husbandry. Methinks spiritual meditations do even put themselves upon you. Husbandmen of old were generally presumed to be honest and good men; what else means that saying of Menander, Αλφεσιος εἶναι πρόσκοπος κἀπονηρος ἦν.

'Profess thyself an husbandman,
'And wicked too! believe't that can.'

What you are, godly or wicked, is not for me (that am a stranger to most of you) to determine; but if you are not godly, it is my desire and design to make you so: and I could not think on a more probable means to accomplish this honest design, than what I have here used. Methinks it should be a pleasure to you, when you come weary out of the fields from plow, or any other labour, to sit down in the evening, and read that chapter which concerns that particular business, and *refresh* your *souls*, even from that which hath *wearied* your *bodies*. Were your hearts but heavenly, and more time allowed for spiritual husbandry, your inward comforts would be much more, and your outward gains not a jot less; for if the success of all your civil labours, and employments, depend upon the pleasure and will of God (as all that are not Atheists do acknowledge) then, certainly, your business can succeed never the worse for your endeavours to please him, upon whose pleasure it so entirely depends. I have many times lifted up my heart to heaven, whilst these papers were under my hand, for a special blessing to accompany them, when they should be in yours. If the Lord accomplish my desires by them upon your souls, you shall enjoy two heavens, one here, and another hereafter. Would not that be sweet? The historian tells us, that Altitus Serarius was sowing corn in the field, when Q. Cincinnatus came to him bare-headed, with letters from the senate, signifying, that he was chosen to the dictatorship. I hope the Lord will so bless, and succeed these labours, that many of you will be called from holding the *plow* on earth, to wear the *crown* of glory in heaven; which is the sincere desire of

Your hearty well-wisher,

JOHN FLAVEL.

Digitized by Google

The AUTHOR to the READER.

COme you, whose list'ning ears do even itch
To hear the way prescrib'd of growing rich;
I'll shew you how to make your tenements
Ten thousand times more worth, and yet your rents
Not rais'd a farthing; here my reader sees
A way to make his dead and barren trees
Yield precious fruit; his sheep, though ne'er so bad,
Bear golden fleeces, such ne'er Jason had:
In ev'ry thing your gain shall more than double,
And all this had with far less toil and trouble.
Methinks I hear thee say, this cannot be,
I'll ne'er believe it. Well, read on, and see.
Reader, hadst thou but senses exercis'd
To judge aright; were spiritual things but priz'd
At their just value, thou wouldst quickly say,
'Tis so indeed; thou would not go thy way
Like one that's disappointed, and so fling
The book aside. *I thought 'twas some such thing.*
Time was when country Christians did afford
More hours and pains about God's holy word:
Witness the man who did most gladly pay
For some few leaves his whole cart-load of hay.
And time shall be, when heav'nly truth that warms
The heart, shall be preferr'd before your farms;
When holiness, as sacred scripture tells,
Shall be engraven on the horses bells.
Lord, hasten on those much desired times,
And, to that purpose, bless these rural rhimes.

THE PROEM.

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, by way of *proem*, to acquaint the reader with the foundation, and general rules of this art in the scriptures, thereby to procure greater respect unto, and prevent prejudice against composur of this kind.

To this end, I shall entertain the reader a little whil

Digitized by Google

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 from 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, q. d.

What are ye, but a field, or plot 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 Apollo 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,

1. Which the churches have to God.
2. Which God's miniſters have to the churches.

1. 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.

2. It ſerves to illuſtrate the relation that the miniſters of Chriſt ſuſtain to the churches, which is like that of the huſband'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,

* The faithful (or believers) are called God's huſbandry (γεωργιον, *georgeon*) becauſe God cultivates them as land by means of ſpiritual teachers (or paſtors.) *Rav.*

Digitized by Google

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 Corollaries from the whole. The first I shall dispatch in these twenty particulars following:

1. *Prop.* The husbandman purchases his fields, and gives a valuable consideration for them, Jer. xxxii. 9, 10.

Reddit. So hath God purchased his church with a full valuable price, even the precious blood of his own Son, Acts xx. 28. "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased, or, "acquired with his own blood." 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: every particular elect person, and none but such, are comprehended in this purchase; the rest still remain in the devil's right. 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, the elect (who only are intended in this purchase) pass over into God's right and property, 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. And to shew how much they are his own, you have two *possessives* in one verse, Cant. viii. 12. "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me, mine, which is "mine."

2. *Prop.* Husbandmen divide and separate their own lands from other men's, they have their land-marks and boundaries, by which propriety is preserved, Deut. xxvii. 17. Prov. xxii. 28.

Reddit. So are the people of God wonderfully separated and distinguished from all the people of the earth. Psal. iv. 3. "The "Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself. And the "Lord knoweth who are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. It is a special act of grace, to be inclosed by God out of the waste howling wilderness of the world, Deut. xxxiii. 16. This did God *in-*

Digitized by Google

tentionally, in the decree before the world was; which decree is executed in their sanctification and adoption.

3. *Prop.* Corn-fields are carefully fenced by the husbandman with hedges and ditches, to preserve their fruits from beasts that would otherwise over-run and destroy them——*Non minor est virtus quam quærere parta tueri.* It is as good husbandry to keep what we have, as to acquire more than we had.

Reddit. "My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruit-"ful hill, and he fenced it," Isa. v. 1, 2. No inheritance is better defended and secured, than the Lord's inheritance, Psal. cxxv. 2. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the "Lord is round about his people." 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 a flaming fire by night: for upon all "the glory shall be a defence," Isa. iv. 5. Not a particular saint, but is hedged about and inclosed in arms of power and love, Job i. 10. "Thou hast made a hedge about him." 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 en-"camp round about them that fear him," Psal. 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, Isa. xxvii. 2, 3. "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."

4. *Prop.* Husbandmen carry out their compost; to fertilize their arable ground, they dung it, dress it, and keep it in heart; and in these western parts are at great charges to bring lime, and salt-water sand to quicken their thin and cold soil.

Reddit. "Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig a-"bout it, and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well, if not, cut it "down," Luke xiii. 8. O the rich dressing which God bestows upon his churches! they are costly fields indeed, dress and fertilized, not only by precious ordinances and providences, but also by the sweat, yea, blood of the dispensers of them. 'You Londoners (saith Mr. Lockier *in Colos.* p. 552.) are 'trees watered choicely indeed; it is storied of the palm-tree, 'that at its first transplanting into Italy, it was watered with 'wine. I cannot say (saith he) that you have been so watered 'by me, I dare not; but this I can humbly and truly say, that

Digitized by Google

'if our choiceſt ſtrength and ſpirits may be named inſtead of 'water, wine; or if the bleſſing which hath gone along with 'theſe waters, at any time, hath turned them into wine, in 'vigour upon your ſouls, then hath God by me, watered your 'roots with wine.'

5. *Prop.* The huſbandman builds his houſe, where he makes his purchaſe, dwells upon his land, and frequently viſits it; he knows that ſuch as dwell far from their *lands*, are not far from *loſs*.

Reddit. So doth God; where-ever he plants a church, there doth he fix his habitation, intending there to dwell, Pſalm xlvi. 5. "God is in the midſt of her," ſhe ſhall not be moved. Thus God came to dwell upon his own fee and inheritance, in Judea, Lev. xxvi. 11, 12. "And I will ſet my tabernacle a-"mongſt you, and will be your God, and ye ſhall be my "people." Which promiſe is again renewed to his churches of the New Teſtament, 2 Cor. vi. 16. And when the churches ſhall be in their greateſt flouriſh, and purity, then ſhall there be the fulleſt and moſt glorious manifeſtation of the divine preſence among them, Rev. xxi. 3. "And I heard a great voice "out of heaven, ſaying, behold the tabernacle of God is with "men, and he will dwell with them, and be their God." Hence the aſſemblies are called, the places of his feet——And there they "behold the beauty of the Lord," Pſalm xxvii.

6. *Prop.* 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 chearfully.

Reddit. "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 chearfulneſs; for he ſaith, Jer. xxxii. 41. "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." It is not the giving out of mercy (ſaith one) that grieveth God, but the recoiling of his mercy back again upon him by the creatures ingratitude.

7. *Prop.* When huſbandmen have been at coſt and pains about their huſbandry, they expect fruit from it, anſwerable to their pains and expences about it: "Behold (ſaith James) the "huſbandman waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth," Jam. v. 7.

Digitized by Google

Reddit. "And he looked that it should bring forth fruit," Isa. v. 2. This heavenly Husbandman waits for the fruits of his fields also; never did any husbandman long for the desired harvest, more than God doth for the fruits of holiness from his saints: Great are the expectations of God from his people: "And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his ser-"vants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits "of it."

8. *Prop.* Husbandmen are much delighted, to see the success of their labours, it comforts them over all their hard pains, and many weary days, to see a good increase.

Reddit. 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 valleys sing with corn, Cant. vi. 2. "My beloved is gone down to the garden, into his beds of "spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lillies." These beds of spices (say * expositors) are the particular churches, the companies of believers; he goes to feed in these gardens, like as men go to their gardens to make merry, or to gather fruit, Cant. iv. 16. "He eats his pleasant fruit," *viz.* His peoples holy performances, sweeter to him than any *ambrosia*: thus he feeds in the gardens, and he gathers lillies when he translates good souls into his kingdom above; "For the Lord "taketh pleasure in his saints, and will beautify the meek with "salvation."

9. *Prop.* The husbandman is exceedingly grieved, when he sees the hopes of a good crop disappointed, and his fields prove barren, or blasted.

Reddit. So the Lord expresses his grief for, and anger against his people, when they bring forth no fruits, or wild fruits, worse than none, Hosea ix. 16. "Ephraim is smitten, "their root is dried up." Christ was exceedingly displeased with the fig-tree, and cursed it for its barrenness; it grieves him to the heart when his servants return to him with such complaints as these, "We have laboured in vain, we have spent "our strength for nought."

10. *Prop.* Husbandmen employ many labourers to work in their fields, there is need of many hands for such a multiplicity of business.

Reddit. God hath diversity of workmen also in the churches,

* Christ is fed when he sees the graces of his people; he gathers lillies when he translates any good soul out of this life. *Trap. on the place.*

Digitized by Google

whom he sends forth to labour in his spiritual fields, Eph. iv. 12. "He gave some apostles, some prophets, and some evange-"lists; and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of "the saints, for the work of the ministry," Amos iii. 7. I have sent [*my servants*] *the prophets*. It is usual with the apostles to place this title of a servant among their honourary titles, tho' a profane mouth once called it, *probrosum artificium*, a sordid artifice. Christ hath stampt a great deal of dignity upon his ministers, in retaining them for the neareſt service to himself, 1 Cor. iv. 1. "Let a man so account of us, as the mini-"sters of Christ;" 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.

11. *Prop.* The work about which husbandmen employ their servants in the field, is toilsome and spending, you see they come home at night as weary as they can draw their legs after them.

Reddit. 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 κονις, which signifies dust, to shew the laboriousness of their employment, labouring till even choaked with dust and sweat. 'Tis said of Epaphroditus, Phil. ii. 13. "That for the "work of Christ he was sick, and nigh unto death; not re-"garding his life, to supply their lack of service." The apostle's expression, Col. i. *ult.* is very emphatical, "whereunto "I also labour, striving, according to his working; which "worketh in me mightily." The word ἀγωνιζομενος, 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.

12. *Prop.* The immediate end of the husbandman's labour, and his servants labour, is for the improvement of his land, to make it more flourishing and fruitful.

Reddit. The scope and end of the ministry is for the church's benefit and 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 church's servants for Jesus sake, 2 Cor. iv. 6. The power they have received being for edification, and not for destruction, 2 Cor. x. 8. Christ hath given them to the churches; their gifts, their time, their strength, and all their ministerial talents, are not their own, but the church's stock and treasure.

Digitized by Google

13. *Prop.* The workmen that labour in the fields are accountable for their work to him that employed them.

Reddit. Church-officers are also accountable to God for all the souls committed to them. They are stewards of the mysteries of God, 1 Cor. iv. 1. and stewards are accountable. "We "watch for your souls (saith the apostle) as they that must give "an account," Heb. xiii. 7. If these servants be unfaithful in their work and trust, the blood of souls shall be required at their hands, Ezek. iii. 17, 18. which are *fulmina, non verba,* (saith Erasmus) thunderbolts, rather than words. The guilt of blood is the greatest guilt; and of all blood, the blood of souls.

14. *Prop.* Those that spend their time and strength all their days, in manuring and plowing the fields, do maintain themselves and their families by their labours; their hands are sufficient for themselves and theirs.

Reddit. "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," Mat. x. 10. 'Tis 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 an 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 to tread out the corn, *(i. e.)* 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.

15. *Prop.* It is a great trouble to husbandmen in a busy time, to be put off from their labours by stormy weather, which drives them out of the fields, and makes them let all lie, till it clear up again; yet, mean while, they are not idle, but employ themselves in home-work.

Reddit. Even so in God's husbandry, it is an unspeakable affliction to God's workmen to be rendered useless and unserviceable to the churches, by those storms of trouble, which drive them from their public ministerial work. With what a heavy heart did Paul go off from his work at Ephesus, Acts xx. It spends a minister to preach, but more to be silent. 'Tis a loud speaking judgment, when God shall say to them as to Ezekiel, "Son of man, I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy "mouth, and thou shalt be dumb," Ezek. iii. 26. Such silencing providences, speaking thundring language to gracious hearts; yet, even then, the keepers of the vineyard have a pri-

Digitized by Google

vate vineyard of their own to look after, they have much home-work, when no out-work.

16. *Prop.* 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? when you paſs by a field well dreſſed and fenced, every thing proſperous, and in exquiſite order, you may know, without farther enquiry, that a good huſbandman lives there.

Reddit. 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 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 ſpecial 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.

17. *Prop.* The huſbandman is not diſcouraged, though the ſeed lie long under the clods; he knows it will ſpring up at laſt, and reward him, or thoſe that come after him, for their pains and patience in waiting for it.

Reddit. Miniſters ſhould not be preſently diſcouraged in their work, becauſe they ſee but little or no appearance of all the ſeed they have ſown among the people. The "ſervant "of the Lord muſt be patient towards all, waiting if at any "time God will give them repentance," 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. And if it never ſpring up in his time, it may after his death; and if ſo, he ſhall not fail of his reward, John iv. 36, 37. "And he that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit "unto life eternal, that both he that ſoweth, and he that reap-"eth, may rejoice together; and herein is that ſaying true, one "ſoweth, and another reapeth." Though miniſters die, yet their words live; yea, their words take hold of men when they are in the duſt, Zech. i. 6.

18. *Prop.* Huſbandmen find low grounds, and valleys, moſt fertile; hills, how lofty ſoever they overtop the lower grounds, yet anſwer not the huſbandman's pains, as the valleys do: theſe are beſt watered and ſecured from the ſcorching heat of the ſun.

Digitized by Google

Reddit. Experience shews us, that the humblest saints are most fruitful under the gospel; "These are they that receive "with meekness the ingraffed word," Jam. i. 21. whose influences abide in them, as the rain doth in the low valleys. 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," Isa. xxxii. 20. among these valleys run the pleasant springs, and purling brooks, which fertilize the neighbouring ground. Heavenly ordinances there, leave fruitful influences.

19. *Prop.* The first crop is usually the best, and the longer the husbandman tills his ground, the less it produces; after a few years its vigour and strength is spent.

Reddit. The first entertainment of the gospel is commonly the best; and what good is done by the ministry is often done at its first entrance. New things are pretty, and very taking. "John at first was to the Jews a burning and shining light, "and they were willing, [for a season] to rejoice in his light," John v. 35. Paul was highly valued among the Galatians at first; such was their zeal, that they could have plucked out their eyes, and have given them to him; but how quickly did this full tide ebb again? For he complains, Gal. iv. 15. "Where then is the blessedness ye spake of?"

20. *Prop. 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 it waste.

Reddit. So when churches grow formal, and fruitless, the Lord removes his gospel-presence from them, plucks up the hedge of his protection from about them, and lays them open, as waste ground, to be over-run by their enemies. Jer. vii. 12. "Go to Shiloh, and see what I did unto it." What is become of those once famous and flourishing churches of Asia? Are they not laid waste, and trodden down by infidels? And 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 these five ensuing *corollaries*.

The first Corollary.

How great then are the dignities and privileges of the churches 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

Digitized by Google

pleaſant foever, in reſpect of their natural amenity and delights, are truly enough called the dark places of the earth; diſmal, ſolitary, cells, where *Ziim* and *Iim*, Bitterns, Cormorants, and every doleful creature dwells. But the church is the paradiſe of the earth, *a garden incloſed*, Cant. iv. 12. in whoſe hedges the goſpel birds chirp and ſing melodiouſly, Cant. ii. 12. Its beds are beds of ſpices, Cant. vi. 2. and betwixt its pleaſant banks, a cryſtal river of living water runs, Rev. xxii. 1. the ſtreams whereof make glad the city of God, in the midſt whereof the Lord himſelf delights to walk. O Sion, with what pleaſures doſt thou abound? If Bernard was ſo raviſhed with the delights of his *monaſtery*, becauſe of its green banks, and ſhady bowers, and herbs, and 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 delight doſt thou provide, even for the poor!* How much more ſhould we be raviſhed with Sion's glory? For, *beautiful for ſituation is mount Zion.* Of whom it may much more truly be ſaid, what a * chronicler of our own once ſaid of England, That it is the fortunate iſland, the paradiſe of pleaſure, the garden of God, whoſe valleys 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, Exod. xix. 5. "Ye ſhall be to me a peculiar treaſure, above all people; for "all the earth is mine."

The ſecond Corollary.

Hence it follows, That ſpiritual barrenneſs is a great reproach and ſhame to Chriſtians. Shall God's huſbandry, which is planted, watered, fenced, filled with favours and mercies, be like the barren heath in the deſart? Surely it ſhould be ſaid of every ſoul that grows here, as the hiſtorian ſaith of Spain, that there is *nihil infructuoſum, nihil ſterile;* nothing barren, or unfruitful in it. God's vineyard is planted in a very fruitful hill. Iſa. v. 1. "And ſurely they that are planted in the houſe of "the Lord, ſhould flouriſh in the courts of our God; they "ſhould bring forth fruit, even in old age, to ſhew that God

* Speed's Chronicle.

Digitized by Google

" is upright," Pſal. xcii. 13, 14. " They are created in Chriſt " Jeſus unto good works, which God hath ordained they " ſhould walk in," Eph. ii. 10. " They are married unto " Chriſt, that they might bring forth fruit to God," Rom. vii. 4. An empty branch is a diſhonour to the root that bears it, a barren field to the huſbandman that owns it; God cannot endure that in his fields, which he ſuffers in the wilderneſs.

The third Corollary.

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. xlviii. *ult.* You may ſee the footſteps of God in the creatures, but the face of God is only to be ſeen in his ordinances. Hence, Pſal. xxvii. 4. " David longed for " the temple, that he might ſee the beauty of the Lord." 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 thing: but in the *ſanctuary* you may ſee beauty, even in 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, Mat. xxv. 1. ſo it's deſcription is like that of heaven. Heb. xii. 22, 23. " You are come to the hea- " venly Jeruſalem, and to an innumerable company of angels," *&c.* And Rev. xxii. 4. " They ſhall ſee his face, and his name " ſhall be written in their foreheads." And ver. 6. The ſaints are repreſented " ſtanding nearer to the throne of God, than the " angels themſelves." Hence alſo ordinances are called galleries, in which both ſaints and angels walk, beholding the glory of him that ſits upon the throne. Zech. iii. 7. " If you " will keep my ways, I will give you galleries to walk in, a- " mong them that ſtand by."

The fourth Corollary.

If the church be God's huſbandry, then thoſe that be 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 intruſts about

Digitized by Google

his ſpiritual husbandry. Should husbandmen employ ignorant perſons, that neither underſtand the rules, nor proper ſeaſons of husbandry; how much would ſuch workmen damnify and 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, Luke xxi. 15. endues them with power from on high; as Chriſt was filled abundantly with the Spirit for his work, ſo, according to proportion, are thoſe that are ſent by him. John xx. 21, 22. "As my Father hath ſent me, ſo ſend I you." 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."

The fifth Corollary.

To conclude, If the church be God's husbandry, that is, if husbandry have ſo many reſemblances of God's works 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 teaching 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 to their ſouls? How do the Scriptures abound with parables, and lively ſimilitudes taken from husbandry? From the field, the ſeed, the plow, the barn, from threſhing and winnowing; ſimilitudes alſo from planting, graffing, 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 civil 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 their uſe; and in this manner to preſent them to

Digitized by Google

you, as you find them in the following chapters. Read, consider, and apply; and the Lord make you good husbandmen for your own souls.

THE FIRST PART OF HUSBANDRY SPIRITUALIZED.

CHAP. 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, plowing, sowing, harrowing, weeding, or reaping; and sometimes in his *barn*, threshing or winnowing; sometimes in his *orchard*, planting, graffing, or pruning, his trees; and sometimes among his *cattle*; so that he hath no time to be idle. As he hath a multiplicity of business, so every part of it is full of toil, and spending labour: 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, Gen. iii. 19. yet now not to sweat would increase his sin, Ezek. xvi. 49.

APPLICATION.

Behold here the life of a serious Christian, shadowed forth

Digitized by Google

to the life. As the life of a husbandman, ſo the life of a Chriſtian is no idle nor eaſy life. They that take up religion for *oſtentation*, and not for an *occupation*, and thoſe 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 religion their buſineſs, will find it no eaſy work, to exerciſe themſelves to godlineſs. Many there are, that affect the reputation and *ſweet* of it, who cannot endure the labour and *ſweat* of it. If men might be indulged to divide their heart 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 a 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, Pſalm cxix. 96. "Thy commandment is exceeding broad," of a vaſt extent and latitude, comprizing 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 within its compaſs.

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 puts him alſo upon a conſtant watch over all the corruptions of his heart. Oh, what a world of work hath a Chriſtian about him? 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 God will not allow his people to the neglect of any one of them: neither can he be a Chriſtian that hath not reſpect to every

Digitized by Google

command, and is not holy in all manner of conversation, Psalm cxix. 6. 2 Pet. iii. 11. 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 Christians. 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*, Lev. xi. 30. Exod. xiii. 13. And under the gospel, he allows no sluggish, lazy professor, 1 Tim. v. 11, 13. 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 *sacrificium medullatum*, a sacrifice full of marrow; observe the manner in which their work is to be performed.

Rom. xii. 11. In serving God, fervent in spirit, or hissing hot.

2 Pet. i. 10. In securing salvation, diligent; or doing it thoroughly, and enough.

1 Tim. iv. 7. In godliness, exercising or stripping themselves; as for a race.

Luke xiii. 24. In the pursuit of happiness, striving even to an agony.

Acts xxvi. 7. In prayer, serving God instantly; or in a stretched out manner; yea, pouring out their hearts before him, Psalm lxii. 8. as if the body were left like a dead corps 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 is, 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 finds not 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.

Digitized by Google

4. The husbandman hath some resting-days, when he throws aside all his work, and takes his recreation; but the Christian hath no resting-day, till his dying-day; and then he shall rest from his labours. Religion allows no idle day, "but requires "him to be always abounding in the work of the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 18. 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. O it is a spending day to him. 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, Luke xii. 19. "Soul, take thine ease, thou hast "goods laid up for many years;" but must to plow again, and count it well if the vintage reach to the seed-time, Levit. 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 the more solemn duties. These are to keep in the fire, which kindled the morning sacrifice, to kindle the evening 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 takes him off from all employment; they can look only 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, Psal xcii. 14. "They shall bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat "and flourishing."

REFLECTIONS.

1. How hard 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 yet understood the work of Christianity. Alas, my sleepy prayers, and formal duties, even all that ever I performed in my life, never cost me that pains, that one hour at plow 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. Wo is me, poor wretch! How is the judgment of Korah spiritually executed upon me

The worlding's reflection.

Digitized by Google

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!

The formalist's reflection.

2. And how little better is my case, 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.

The reflections of a slothful Christian.

3. How unlike a Christian dost thou, also, O my soul, 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 very 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 I not pant after God, Psal. xlii. 1. Ah, 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, now slack-handed, when so near to my everlasting rest, Rom. xiii. 11. or hast thou found the work of God so unpleasant to thee? Prov. iii. 17. or the trade of godliness so unprofitable? Psal. xix. 12. Or knowest thou not, that millions now in hell perished for want of serious diligence in religion, Luke xiii. 34. nor 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 in heaven for me? 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! rouze up thyself, and fall to thy work,

Digitized by Google

with a diligence answerable to the weight thereof; for it is no vain work concerning thee, it is thy life.

The POEM.

Religion *When* advanc'd in pow'r,
Will make you *Husband* every hour.
'Twill make *Men* strive with all their might,
And therein *Find* a sweet delight.
If there were *Nought* besides that pay
Christ gives *To* cheer us in our way;
Should we not *Do* the best we can?
For there's *No* such reward from man.
Shall others *Work*, and not regard
Their strength; *To* get a small reward?
Whilst we *Turn* slugs, and loyter thus?
O that *Their* zeal might quicken us!
Why are our *Hands*, and feet so slow,
When we *Unto* our business go?
How can we *Then* Christ's pay expect,
And yet the *Christian's* work reject?
If this, then *Also* that embrace
'Them both; *If* not, we both disgrace.
Some if *They* could these two divide,
'Twould *Please* them well, with Christ to side!
But if they *May* not, then it were
As good *Cease* pleading, they'll not hear.
Rouse up *From* sloth, my soul betake
Thee to thy *Work*, no cavils make.
O strive, *And* try! Saints say that even,
The pain they *Take*, hath much of heaven.
But yet *Their* best wine's kept till last,
Their rest, and *Ease* comes all so fast.

CHAP. II.

Upon the Thriftiness of the Husbandman.

The hardest lab'rers 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; *Qui fugit molam, fugit farinam;* He that refuses the mill, refuses the meal, (saith the proverb.) "The

Digitized by Google

" 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 in ver. 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 do 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 sweat and 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 commands, there is great reward," Psalm xix. 11. God is a " bountiful rewarder of such as diligently seek him," Heb. xi. 6. They must not indeed work for wages, * nor yet will God suffer their work to go unrewarded; yea, it sufficiently rewards itself, 1 Tim. vi. 6. And its reward is twofold; (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 and 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. Compare your gains, and you will quickly see the odds.

1. You get credit and reputation 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 its 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 Nethinim, or door-keeper,

* *Non mercenarii sed operarii.*

Digitized by Google

which was the lowest order or rank of officers in the house of God, Ezek. xliv. 10, 11. is yet preferred by David before the service of the greatest prince on earth, Psalm lxxxiv. 10. 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 temptation; "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 *schoolmen* put the question, how the *angels* and glorified saints become 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 who 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 live idly, 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. Bailiffs trouble not such mens doors; they usually have the forefoot of their neighbours. And by activity and diligence for God, souls are kept from backsliding, and running back in their graces and comforts. Remissness and intermission 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, make your bed sweet to you at night, Eccles. v. 12. "Rest is sweet to a labour-"ing man, whether he eat little or much." But the diligent life of a Christian makes the clods of the valley, his grave, sweet unto him, 2 Cor. i. 12. 2 Kings xx. 3. "Remember now, O "Lord, how I have walked before thee," *&c.* 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, John xvii. 4, 5. "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; "and now, O Father, glorify me with thine own self."

Digitized by Google

6. The expence of your sweat fills your purses, 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, Prov. iii. 14.

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.

Reflections of the slothful soul.

1. Blush then, O my soul, at the consideration of thy laziness and sloth, which is attended with so many spiritual wants! And can I wonder at it, when I refuse the painful way of duty, in which the precious fruits of godliness, are only to be found? If the fruits ly upon the surface of duty, or could be 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, than I have been? 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 further way about, by painful duty, is the nearer way to it. What pains do husbandmen take? What peril do seamen run for a little gain? O sluggish heart! wilt thou do nothing for eternal treasures?

Secondly, If there be such great reward 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, Isa. xii. 3. 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.

The worldings reflection.

Thirdly, If this be indeed the rich and thriving trade, why do I puddle 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 ear-

Digitized by Google

neſt, 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 nor 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 fields to encourage them in their labour! What pity is it, that ſo good a Maſter ſhould be ſo badly ſerved as he hath been by me! Hark how he pleads to gain my heart:

The *POEM*, by way of Dialogue betwixt Chriſt and the World.

CHRIST.

O Why ſo free of ſweat and time,
For what ere long will not be thine?
Or if it might, thou ſell'ſt to loſs,
A precious ſoul for laſting droſs.
Thoſe weary hands, and toiling brains,
Might be employed for better gains.
Wouldſt thou but work as hard for me,
As for the world, which *cozens* thee;
Thy gains ſhall be a thouſand fold:
For my revenue's more than gold.

WORLD.

Soul, I have always found thee willing,
Rather by me to earn a ſhilling,
Than truſt uncertain things which lye
Beyond thee in eternity.
Shall things unſeen now tempt thee? Tuſh,
A bird in hand's worth two i' th' buſh.
I pay thy wages down in hand,
This thou canſt feel, taſte, underſtand,
O let not ſuch a vain pretence
Prevail againſt thy very ſenſe.

CHRIST.

Thus beaſts are led, thus birds are ſnar'd,

Digitized by Google

Thus souls for ruin are prepar'd.
What! trust no farther than you see,
You'll trust a thief as far as me.
Deluded wretch! Will nought but sight
And sense convince thee? O how right,
How just is God? whose direful scourge
Such arguments in hell shall urge.

WORLD.

Christ threatens wrath to come, but I
Do threaten thee with poverty.
And why wilt thou thyself, and those
That are so dear, to want expose!
Come see, the saints, for all their brags,
How well they thrive, they're cloath'd with rags.

CHRIST.

If my dear saints in rags do go,
'Tis not religion cloaths them so;
But by such wants the Lord prepares
Their souls against the killing snares:
They all are heirs, tho' under age,
Expectants of their heritage:
Kept short for present, yet contemn
A change with those that scoff at them.

WORLD.

It is in vain to plead, for I
With present things charm pow'rfully;
Whate'er thou offer'st, they'll despise,
I hold them pris'ners by their eyes.

CHRIST.

If they will serve no other Lord,
Then let it stand upon record,
Against their souls, that they refus'd
My wages, and my grace abus'd.
Remember this when they shall see
All turn'd to ashes that's in thee.

ANOTHER.

NONE will deny but those are blessed pains
Which are attended with the richest gains.
Grant this, and then most clearly 'tis inferr'd,
Soul-work to all deserves to be preferr'd.
This is an unknown trade: O who can count
To what the gains of godliness amount?
For one poor shilling, O what risques some run?
Some toiling, as i' th' fire, from sun to sun.

Digitized by Google

Whereas one hour ſpent with God brings in
Such heav'nly treaſures, that poor ſouls have been
Enrich'd for ever. Even as you ſee
A prince's favourite, upon the knee,
Can in an hour's time more wealth obtain,
Than all your lives by labour you can gain.
Pray'r-gains are great, and quick returns are made,
Sure then the Chriſtian drives the richeſt trade.
'Tis true, the hypocrite that never drove
A ſerious trade for heav'n, may bankrupt prove:
But holy ſouls, which mind, and cloſely ply
Their bus'neſs, greatly are enrich'd thereby;
The diff'rence 'twixt the one, and t' other's beſt
By ſuch a ſimile as this, expreſt:
As in a ſummer's day you often ſee
The wanton butterfly, and painful bee;
On fragrant flowers fix, whence one doth ſtrive
To bear his precious burden to the hive;
The other's pains no profit with it brings,
His time is ſpent in painting of his wings.
When winter comes, the bee hath full ſupplies,
The other creeps into an hole, and dies.
Like different events ſhall be betwixt
The painful ſaint, and lazy notioniſt.

CHAP. III.

Upon the chearfulneſs of the Husbandman.

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

OBSERVATION.

THOUGH the labours of husbandmen are very great, and toilſome, yet with what chearfulneſs do they go through them? It is very delightful to hear the melody they make, by whiſtling, as they follow the plow; yea, the very horſes have their bells, which make a pleaſant noiſe. *Horſes* (ſaith Mr. Fuller) *will do more for a whiſtle than a whip;* and their bells do, as it were, gingle away their wearineſs. I have been often delighted with this country muſic, whereby they ſweeten their hard labours with an innocent pleaſure, and verify the ſaying of the poet;

Tempus in agrorum cultu conſumere dulce eſt. Ovid.

Altho' they plow from morning until night,

Digitized by Google

Time steals away with pleasure and delight.

APPLICATION.

BUT how much greater cause have the people of God to address themselves unto his work with all chearfulness of spirit? And, indeed, so far as the heart is spiritual, it delights in its duties. 'Tis true, the work of a Christian is painful, and much more spending, than the husbandman's (as was opened *chap.* 1.) but then it as much exceeds in the delights and pleasures that attend it. What is the Christian's work, but "with joy to draw water out of the wells of salvation?" Isa. xii. 3. You may see what a pleasant path the path of duty is, by the chearfulness of those that have walked in them, Psal. cxix. 14. "I have rejoiced in the way of thy judgments, "as much as in all riches." And by the promises that are made to such, Psal. cxxxviii. 5. "Yea, they shall sing in the "ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord." And again, "You shall have a song as in the night, when an "holy solemnity is kept, and gladness of heart, as when one "goeth with a pipe, to come to the mountain of the Lord, to "the mighty one of Israel," Isa. xxx. 29.

And, lastly, by the many commands, whereby joy in the way of the Lord is made the duty of the saints. "Rejoice in "the Lord, ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright," Psal. xcvii. 12. "Rejoice, and again I say rejoice," Phil. iv. 4. where the command is doubled, yea, not only simple rejoicing, but the highest degree of that duty comes within the command. Psal. cxxxii. 9, 16. "Shout for joy, all ye that are upright in "heart." And Luke vii. 22, 23. they that are bid *to leap for joy*, when about the difficultest part of their work. And that you may see there is a 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 ravishing, and 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 sun-shine? 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," Psal. xvi. 11. O what an angelical life doth a Christian then live?

Or, 2*dly*, If we consider the variety of spiritual employments, *Varietas delectat*. Change of employment takes off

Digitized by Google

the tediousness of labour. Variety of voices pleases the ear, variety of colours delight the eye, the same meat prepared several ways, pleases the palate more, and clogs it less. But O the variety of choice dishes wherewith God entertains his people in a Sabbath! as the word, prayer, sacraments, *&c.* Isa. lviii. 13. If thou call the Sabbath thy delights; or, as Tremellius renders it, thy delicate things. "My soul (saith David) shall "be satisfied, as with marrow and fatness," Psalm lxiii. 5.

3*dly*, Or *lastly*, If we 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. Rom. vii. 22. "I de-"light in the law of God after the inner man." *Gravia non gravitant in eorum loco*, (saith the philosopher) weighty things are not heavy in their own element, or center. And surely God is the center 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 after the flesh, (saith the apostle, "Rom. viii 5.) do mind the things of the flesh, and they that "are after the Spirit, the things 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 the duty excel all sensitive delights on earth.

REFLECTIONS.

How am I cast and condemned by this, may I say; who never savoured this spiritual delight in holy duties. When I am about my earthly employments, I can go on unweariedly from day to day; all the way is down-hill to my nature, and the wheels of my affections being oiled with carnal delight, run so fast, that they have need most times of trigging. Here I rather need the curb, than the spur. O how fleet and nimble are my spirits in these their pursuits! but O what a slug am I in religious duties! sure if my heart were renewed by grace, I should delight in the law of God, Rom. vii. 22. All the world is alive in their ways, every creature enjoys his proper pleasure; and is there no delight to be found in the paths of

The carnal heart's reflection.

Digitized by Google

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 a carnal heart as mine savours them not.

The hypocrite's reflection.

I cannot say but I have found delight in religious duties, but they have been only such as rather sprang from the ostentation of gifts and applauses of men, than any sweet and real communion I have had with God through them; 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 to listen to me, and be affected with my music. O false, 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? Job xxvii. 9, 10. "Will God hear his cry when trouble comes "upon him? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? "Will he always call upon God?" 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.

The upright heart's reflection.

From all this, the upright heart takes advantage to rouze up its delight in God, and thus it expostulateth with itself: Doth the plowman sing amidst his drudging labours, and whistle away his weariness in the fields; 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 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 together, 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, Psalm xl. 7. John iv. 32, 34.

Digitized by Google

Yea, it would not only ennoble, but facilitate all my duties, and be to me as wings to a bird in flying, or sails to a ship in motion. *Non tardat uncta rota*; oiled wheels run freely: "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of "Aminadab." O what is the reason (my God) my delight in thee should be so little? Is it not, because my unbelief is so great? Rouze up my delights, O thou fountain of pleasure! and let me swim down the stream of holy joy in duty, into the boundless ocean of those immense delights that are in thy presence, and at thy right hand for evermore.

The POEM.

O What a dull, despondent heart is mine!
That takes no more delight in things divine.
When all the creatures, both in heav'n and earth,
Enjoy their pleasures, and are big with mirth.
Angels and saints that are before the throne,
In extasies and raptures, ev'ry one
Perpetually is held; each blessed spirit
The purest, highest joys doth there inherit:
The saints on earth, in their imperfect state,
Those peerless joys, by faith do antedate.
To nat'ral men, who savour not this pleasure,
Yet bounteous nature doth unlock her treasure
Of sensitive delights; yea, strange to tell,
Bold sinners rant it all the way to hell.
Like fish that play in Jordan's silver stream,
So these in sensual lusts, and never dream
Of that dead sea to which the stream doth tend,
And to their pleasures puts a fatal end.
Yea, birds, and beasts, as well as men enjoy
Their innocent delights: these chirp, and play;
The chearful birds among the branches sing,
And make the neighb'ring groves with music ring:
With various warbling notes they all invite
Our ravish'd ears, with pleasure and delight.
The new-fallen lambs will, in a sun-shine day,
About their feeding dams jump up, and play.
Are cisterns sweet? And is the fountain bitter?
Or can the sun be dark, when glow-worms glitter?
Have instruments their sweet, melodious airs?
All creatures their delights, and saints not theirs?
Yea, theirs transcend these sensual ones, as far
As noon-day Phœbus doth a twinkling star.

Digitized by Google

Why droop I then, may any creature have
A life like mine for pleasure? Who e'er gave
The like encouragement that Christ hath giv'n,
To do his will on earth, as 'tis in heav'n?

CHAP. 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, but not to over-dress 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 and temperament 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 mediocrity, and competency of the things of this life, best fits them for the fruits of obedience, which is the end and excellency of their beings? A man may be over-mercied, as well as over-afflicted; *Rare fumant fælicibus aræ*, 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, neither too short, nor long; we cannot desire a better condition in this world. This was it that wise Agur requested of God, Prov. xxx. 8, 9. "Give "me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food con- "venient 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." Against both he prays *equally*, not *absolutely*; that had been his sin; but, comparatively, and submissively to the will of God. He had rather, if God see it fit, to avoid both of these 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 metaphor 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 moulder-

Digitized by Google

ing 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, like a wise Christian, the conveniency or inconveniency of his estate in the world, by its suitableness or unsuitableness to the end of his being; which is the service of God. He accounted the true excellency of his life to consist in its reference and tendency to the glory of his God; and he could not see how a *redundancy*, or too great a *penury* of earthly comforts could fit him for that; but a middle estate, equally removed from both extremes, best fitted that end. And this was all that good Jacob, who was led by the same spirit, looked at, Gen. xxviii. 20. "And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, "if God will be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, "and 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." Poor Jacob, he desires no great matters in the world, food and raiment will satisfy him; in spiritual matters his desires are boundless, he is the most greedy and unsatisfied man in the world, Hos. xii. 4. but in the matters of this life, if he can get from God but *offam et aquam*, a morsel of meat, and a mouthful of water, he will not envy the richest Crœsus, or Crassus upon earth. *Cibus et potus sunt divitiæ Christianorum*; meat and drink are the riches of Christians. *Divitiæ sunt ad legem naturæ compositæ 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 pilgrim upon earth, a man in a strange country travelling homeward? So David professed himself, Psalm cxix. 19. "I am a "stranger in this earth." And so those worthies, who are now at home in heaven, Heb. xi. 13. they professed themselves to be strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and to seek a country; a *viaticum* contents a traveller, he will not incumber himself with superfluous things, which would rather clog and tire, than expedite and 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 loth 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 gold-

Digitized by Google

en 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 saint desires a just competency as the *fittest*, because the *freest* state.

2. A gracious person desires no more but 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 creature-provisions in our land, as it was betwixt Egypt and Canaan; Egypt was watered with the foot 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 creature-comforts in their hands, look upon all as coming in an ordinary, 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; (i. e.)* 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, they sow, and reap, and eat, and look no further.

But now, when a man sees his mercies come in by the special and assiduous care of God for him, there is a 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," Psal. cxi. 5. Luther, who made many a meal upon a broiled herring, was wont

Digitized by Google

to say, *Mendicato pane hic vivamus, annon hoc pulchre sarcitur in eo, quod pascimur pane cum angelis et vita æterna, Christo et sacramentis:* 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 my 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 provi- 'dence, that thereby they have been very much sweetened, and 'my heart hath been raised to admire his grace. When of 'late under an hard dispensation (which I judge not meet to 'mention, wherein I suffered with inward peace conscientiously) 'all streams of wonted supplies being stopt, the waters of relief 'for myself and family did run low. I went to bed with some 'staggerings and doubtings of the fountain's letting out itself 'for our refreshing; but e'er I did awake in the morning, a 'letter was brought to my bed-side, which was signed by a 'choice friend, Mr. Anthony Ash, which reported some un- 'expected breakings out of God's goodness for my comfort. 'These are some of his lines,——Your God, who hath given 'you an heart thankfully to record your experiences of his 'goodness, doth renew experiences for your encouragement. 'Now I shall report one which will raise your spirit towards 'the God of your mercy, &c.' Whereupon he sweetly concludes, 'One morsel of God's provision, (especially if it comes 'unexpected, and upon prayer, when wants are most) will be 'more sweet to a spiritual relish, than all former full enjoy- 'ments 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, Psal. lxvi. 16, 17. Doubtless Hannah found more comfort in her Samuel, and Rachel in her Naphtali, 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 creature as may fit them for the service of God? What wretch then am I that

The reflection of the designing hypocrite.

† Epistle to the Earl of Bedford; *ante ultima.*

Digitized by Google

have desired only so much of religion as may fit me to gain the creature! As God's people have subjected all their creature-enjoyments to religion, so oppositely, O my soul, thou hast subjected religion to thy wordly interest and designs, Instead of eating and drinking to serve God, I have served God that I might 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, a stirrup to advancement, an artifice to carry on my carnal designs; verily I have my reward; and this is all the good I am ever like to get by it.

The worldling's reflection.

And no less should the worldling tremble, to consider how he hath 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 creature-comforts, that he rather looks upon it as an obstacle, and hindrance to them. May not the very heathens make me blush? Could Aristotle deliver this as a true rule to posterity, 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 urgent soever their business be, lay it all aside five times in the day to pray? Yea, is it common to a proverb among the very Papists, that mass and meat hinders 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, and doated on 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!

The gracious soul's reflection.

And may not many gracious hearts 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 mine heart been tortured from day to day with anxi-

Digitized by Google

ous 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 demand of thee.

Quest. 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 doth a heavy cloak-bag. Wouldst 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.

Quest. 2. Which of all the saints hast thou known to be the better for much of the world? It hath been some mens 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 is that of Pius Quintus; When I was in a low condition, said he, I had some comfortable hopes of my salvation; but 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 God's own people, though the world hath not excluded them 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.

Quest. 3. Is not this a sad symptom of a declining state of soul, to be so hot, eager, and anxious about the superfluous trifles of this life? Thinkest thou, O my soul! that one who walks in the views of that glory above, and maintains a con-

Digitized by Google

versation in heaven, can be much taken with these vanities? Do not the visions of God veil the tempting splendor 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 spiritual losses?

Quest. 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," Matth. vi. 32. If I had no Father in heaven, nor promise in the world, 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 to 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, and estimate my condition, rather by its usefulness to God, than its content and ease to my flesh.

The POEM.

IF fruit and service be, indeed, the end
To which my being and redemption tend,
Reason concludes, that state, of all the rest,
Which is most serviceable, to be best.
And such a state experience shews to lie
'Twixt fulness, and a pinching poverty.
This golden *mean* is worth a golden *mine*;
He that hath this, should be asham'd to whine.
The full-fed Christian, like the ox i' th' stall,
Is no way fit to work, or plow withal.
And penury, like Pharaoh's leaner kine,
Devours the fattest portions of our time.
That man with whom this earthly pleasure's found,
Or in whose heart those anxious cares abound;
And yet can walk by scripture-rule, and line,
Will need a better head and heart than mine;
A single staff the traveller may find,
Of use and service; but if you should bind
A bundle of them to his back, they'll make
Him slack his pace, and cry my shoulders ake.
I am a traveller, this world's my way,
A single staff may be of use to stay

Digitized by Google

My feeble body, if it do not crack
By too hard leaning on it; but my back
Will bear no more: Alas! I soon shall tire,
And more than one I cannot well desire.
Lord, to prescribe to thee becomes me not,
I rather do submit unto my *lot*;
But yet let condescending grace admit
Thy servant's suit this once, and this is it;
The staff of bread convenient let me have,
And manage it discreetly; so, 'twill save
Thy feeble servant from the mire and dirt,
But more or less than this may do me hurt.
Or if thou say, thy servant shall have none,
Then strengthen faith, that I may go alone.

CHAP. V.

Upon the Improvement of bad Ground.

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

OBSERVATION.

WHere land is spent out by tillage, or for want of manuring, the careful husbandman hath many ways to recover, and bring it in heart again. 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 it 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 case, not by yielding too many crops, but too few. The mystical husbandman hath some fields, (I mean particular societies and persons, who 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, Rev. iii. 2.

Digitized by Google

It is possible, yea, too common for gracious souls to be reduced to a very low ebb, both of graces and comforts; how low I will not say: Our British divines tell us, that grace indeed cannot be totally intermitted, nor finally lost; but there may be an omission of the act, though not an omission of the habit: The act may be perverted, though the faith cannot be subverted; it may be shaken in, though not shaken out: Its fruits may fall, but its sap lies hid in the root: They demerit the loss of the kingdom, but lose it not effectively; the effect of justification may be suspended, but the state of the justified cannot be dissolved.*

How far true grace in a believer may fail.

Certain it is, one that, like Paul, hath been wrapped up with joy, even to the third heavens, and cried, "I am more than a "conqueror, who shall separate me from the love of Christ?" may at another time ly mourning, as at the gates of death, crying, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from "the body of this death?" 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," Isa. 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 a-drift into the stormy ocean again, crying with the church, Lam. iii. 18. "My hope is perished from the Lord." His calm and clear air may be over-cast 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 beautiful heads.

To *God* he may say, I am cast out of thy sight: I know thou canst do much, but wilt thou shew wonders to the dead?

To the *promises* he may say, you are sweet things indeed, 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, a fancy, instead of you.

To *saints* he may say, turn away from me, labour not to comfort me, O do not spill your precious ointment 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

* *Gratia nec totaliter intermittitur nec finaliter amittitur. Actus omittitur, habitus non amittitur. Actio pervertitur, fides non subvertitur. Concutitor, non excutitor. Defuit fructus, latet succus. Jus ad regnum amittunt demeritorie, non effective. Effectus justificationis suspenditur, at status justificati non dissolvitur.*

Digitized by Google

the *light of God's countenance*, he may say, farewel 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. O sad relapse! deplored change! *quantum mutatus ab illo?*

But will God leave his poor creatures helpless, in such a case as this? Shall their leaf fall, their branches wither, their joy, their life, their heart depart? Will he see their graces fainting, their hopes gasping, the new creature panting, 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 was 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 declined soul, as sad as it sits at the gates of hell, may rouze 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 shall be a light unto me," Micah vii. 8. He may raise up himself upon his bed of languishing for all this, and say to God, "Though thou hast chastned 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 belye you; I said in my haste you were liars, but I eat my words, I am ashamed of my folly. Surely, O soul, there is yet hope in thine end, thou mayest be restored, Psal. xxiii. 3. 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," Psal. ciii. 12, 13. "He will spare "thee as a Father spareth his own son that serves him," Mark iii. 17. Hark, how his bowels yern! "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.

Digitized by Google

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," Psal. cii. 3, 4. 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 mayest call upon his name, Psal. lxxx. 18. 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 precious and 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 be"fore him, and the soul which he hath made;" Isa. lvii. 16. David told him as much, in the like condition, Psalm cxliii. 7, 8. "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:" *q. d.* 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, Job vi. 1, 2, 3, 11, 12. "My grief is heavier than the sand 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?" So chap. vii. 12. "Am I a sea, or a whale?" *&c.* Other troubles a man may, but this he cannot bear, Prov. xviii. 14. 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," Psal. lxxviii. 38, 39. 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, Psal. lxxx. 3. 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, Isa. lxi. 1. a new face shall come upon thy graces, they shall bud again, and blossom as a rose. If he do but send a spring of * auxiliary grace into thy soul, to actuate the dull

* Grace needs more grace to put in exercise.

Digitized by Google

habits of inherent grace, the work is done; then shalt thou return to thy first works again, Rev. ii. 4, 5. and sing, as in the days of thy youth.

REFLECTIONS.

O this is my very case, saith many a poor Christian; thus my soul languishes and droops from day to day. It is good news, indeed, that God both can, and will restore my soul; but sad that I should fall into such a state; how unlike am I to what I once 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,

A convictive reflection.

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 upon me? How did his company shorten those hours, and beguile the tediousness of the night? O my soul, speak thy experience, is it now as it was then? No, no, those days are past and gone, and thou 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, chap. xxix. "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."

2. Is thy obedience to the commands of Christ, and motions to duty, as free and chearful 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, saying, *Seek my face*, how did my spirit echo to his

Digitized by Google

calls? saying, "Thy face Lord will I seek," Psal. xxvii. 8. 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 like the chariots of Aminadab; love oiled the wheels of my affections, and "his commandments were not grievous," 1 John v. 3. *Non tardat ulla rota.* 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, bemoaning myself? How did I hasten to my closet, and there cry, like Ezra, chap. ix. 6. "O my God, I am "ashamed, and blush to look up unto thee." 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 how to recover thyself again? Hast thou forgotten how thou wouldst 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 wouldst have abhorred thyself, thou couldst 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.

A supporting reflection.

2. But yet mourn not, O my soul, 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 again, 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 recovered again, and been made both flourishing and fruitful. Is it not easier, thinkest thou, 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 to the pit, and my life to the de- "stroyers, yet he can send me a messenger, one among a thou- "sand, that shall declare to me my uprightness; then shall he de- "liver 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

Digitized by Google

xxxiii. 22. Though I 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.

Rouze up, therefore, O my soul, set thy faith a work on Christ for quickening grace, for he hath life in himself, and quickens whomsoever he will, John vii. 38. Stir up that little which remains, Rev. iii. 2. hast thou not seen lively flames proceed from glimmering, and dying sparks, when carefully collected, and blown up? Get amongst the most lively and quickening Christians; "as iron sharpens iron, so will these "set an edge upon thy dull affections," Prov. xxvii. 17. Acts xviii. 15. But, above all, cry mightily to the Lord for quickening, 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 contemplations 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 thy God, to be in the least discouraged.

The POEM.

THOU art the husbandman, and I
A worthless plot of husbandry,
Whom special love did, ne'ertheless,
Divide from nature's wilderness.
Then did the sun-shine of thy face,
And sweet illapses of thy grace,
Like April show'rs, and warming gleams,
Distil its dews, reflect its beams.
My dead affections then were green,
And hopeful buds on them were seen;
These into duties soon were turn'd,
In which my heart within me burn'd.
O halcyon days! thrice happy state!
Each place was Bethel, heaven's gate.
What sweet discourse, what heav'nly talk,
Whilst with thee I did daily walk!
Mine eyes o'erflow, my heart doth sink,
As oft as on those days I think.

Digitized by Google

For strangeness now is got between
My God and me, as may be seen
By what is now, and what was then;
'Tis just as if I were two men.
My fragrant branches blasted be,
No fruits like those that I can see.
Some canker-worm lies at my root,
Which fades my leaves, destroys my fruit.
My soul is banish'd from thy sight,
For this it mourneth day and night.
Yet why dost thou desponding lie?
With Jonah cast a backward eye.
Sure in thy God help may be had,
There's precious balm in Gilead.
That God that made me spring at first,
When I was barren and accurst,
Can much more easily restore
My soul to what it was before.
'Twas Heman's, Job's, and David's case,
Yet all recovered were by grace.
A word, a smile on my poor soul,
Will make it perfect sound and whole.
A glance of thine hath soon dissolv'd
A soul in sin and grief involv'd.
Lord, if thou canst not work the cure,
I am contented to endure.

CHAP. VI.

Upon the incurableness 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 and pasture, and improve that which was barren; and by his cost and pains make one acre worth ten; yet such is the nature of some rocky or miry ground, where the water stands, and there is no way to cleanse it, that it can never be made fruitful. The husbandman is fain to let it alone, as an incurable piece of waste or worthless ground; and though the sun and clouds shed their influences on it, as well as upon better

Digitized by Google

land, yet that doth not at all mend it. Nay, the more showers it receives, the worse it proves. For these do no way secundate or 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 reprooate sense, and perpetual barrenness; so that how excellent soever the means are, which they enjoy, and how efficacious soever to the conversion, edification, and salvation of others; yet they shall never do their souls good. Ezek. xlvii. 9, 11. "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;" *(i. e.)* given to an obstinate and everlasting barrenness. Compare Deut. ix. 23. By these waters, saith the judicious † Mr. Strong, understand the doctrine of the gospel; as Rev. xxi. 2. a river of water of life, clear as crystal; *Hic fluvius est uberrima doctrina Christi*, saith Mr. Brightman. This river is the most fruitful doctrine of Christ; yet these waters do not heal the miry, marshy places, *(i. e.)* men that live unfruitfully under ordinances, who are compared to miry, 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, *Cum libere propagatur*, when it is freely propagated, 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 is mixed together; this mixture makes mire. So when the truths of God do mix with the corruptions of men, that they either hold some truths, and yet live in their lusts; or else when men do make use of the truths of God to justify and plead for their sins. Or,

(3.) When, as in a miry place the longer the water stands in it, the worse it grows; so the longer men abide under ordinances, the more filthy and polluted they grow: These are the miry places that cannot be healed, their disease is incurable, desperate.

O this is a sad case! and yet very common; many persons

* Spiritual barrenness, p. 8.

Digitized by Google

are thus given over as incorrigible, and hopeless, Rev. xxii. 11. "Let him that is filthy be filthy still." Jer. vi. 29. "Reprobate "silver shall men call them, for the Lord hath rejected them." Isa. vi. 10, 11. "Go make the heart of this people fat, their ears "dull," *&c.*

Christ executes, by the gospel, that curse upon many souls, which he denounced against the fig-tree, Matth. xxi. 19. "Let "no fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever; and immediately "the fig-tree withered away." To be given up to such a condition, is a fearful judgment indeed; a curse with a witness; the sum of all plagues, miseries, and judgments, a fatal stroke at the root itself. It is a woe to have a bad heart (saith one) but it is the depth of woe to have a heart that never shall be made better. To be barren under the gospel, is a sore judgment, but to have that *pertinax sterilitas*, a pertinacious barrenness; this is to be twice dead, and plucked up by the root, as Jude speaks.

And to shew you the woful, and miserable state and plight 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, by so much the more dreadful and lamentable. As soul-mercies are the best of mercies, so soul-judgments are the saddest of all judgments. 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. *Omnia Deus dedit duplicia*, saith Chrysostom, speaking of bodily members; 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; *animam vero unam*, 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 seen, is not the "man." The apostle calls the body a vile body, Phil. iii. 21. and so it is, compared with the soul; and Daniel calls it the Sheath, which is but a contemptible thing to the sword which is in it. 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.

* Ουτος εστιν ανθρωπος το φαινομενον. Plato.

Digitized by Google

If one comes from the dead, if angels should descend from heaven to preach to him, there is no hope of him. If God shut up a man, who can open? Job xii. 14. 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 and skilful ministry, those seals of hardness, blindness and unbelief, thus impressed upon the spirit. Whom justice so locks up, mercy will never let out. This is that which maks up the *anathema Maranatha*, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. which is the dreadfullest curse in all the book of God, accursed till the Lord come.

(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, Isa. xxix. 10. "The Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of "deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes." 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 deep sleep, that do what you will to him, he feels, he knows it not. "Make their eyes heavy and "their ears dull; lest they should see, and hear, and be con-"verted," Isa. vi. 9, 10. This is the heart that cannot repent, which is spoken of, Rom. ii. 5. 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 shall never bear any 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. Mat. vii. 22. "We have prophesied in thy name;" this makes the wound desperate, that there is no finding of it, no prope to search it.

(4.) It is a stroke that cuts off from the soul all the comfort and sweetness of religion. A man may pray, hear, and confer, but all those duties are dry stalks to him, which yield no meat, no solid substantial nutriment; some common touches upon the affections he may sometimes find in duty, the melting voice or rhetoric of the preacher may perhaps strike his natural affections, as another tragical story pathetically delivered may do; but to have any real communion with God in ordinances, any discoveries or views of the beauty of the Lord in them, that he cannot have; for these are the special effects and operations of the spirit, which are always restrained.

God hath said to such, as he did to them, Gen. vi. 3. "My "Spirit shall no longer strive with them;" and then what sweet-

Digitized by Google

ness is there in ordinances? What is the word, separated from the Spirit, but a dead letter? It is the Spirit that quickens, 2 Cor. iii. 2. Friend, thou must know that the gospel works not like *a natural cause* upon those that hear it; if so, the effect would always follow, unless miraculously stopt and hindred; but it works like *a moral instituted cause*, whose efficacy and success depends upon the arbitrary concurrence of the Spirit with it. "The wind blows where it listeth, so is every one "that is born of the Spirit," John iii. 8. "Of his own will "begat he us by the word of truth." Ordinances are as the pool of Bethesda, which had its healing virtue only when the *angel* moved the waters; but the Spirit never moves savingly upon the waters of ordinances, for the healing of their souls, how many years soever they lie by them, though others feel a divine power in them, yet they shall not. As the men that travelled with Paul, when Christ appeared to him from heaven, they saw the light, but heard not the voice which he heard to salvation: So it is with these, they see the ministers, hear the words, which are words of salvation to others, but not so to them. Concerning these miserable souls, we may sigh, and say to Christ, as Martha did concerning her brother Lazarus: Lord, if thou hadst been here, in this sermon, or in this prayer, this soul had not remained dead. But here is the woe that lies upon him, God is departed from the means, and none can help him.

(5.) It is such a stroke upon the spirit of man, as is a fearful sign of his eternal reprobation. It is true, we cannot positively say of a man in this life, he is a reprobate, one that God will never shew mercy to; but yet there are some probable marks of it upon some men in this world, and they are of a trembling consideration wherever they appear; of which this is one of the saddest, 2 Cor. iv. 3. "If our gospel be hid, it is "hid to those that are lost, in whom the God of this world "hath blinded the minds of them that believe not; lest the "light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of "God, should shine unto them." So Acts xiii. 48. "As ma-"ny as were ordained unto eternal life believed. Ye believe "not, because ye are not of my sheep," John x. 26. And again, Matth. xiii. 11. "To you it is given to know the mysteries "of the kingdom, but to them it is not given." There cannot be a more dreadful character of a person marked out for wrath, than to continue under the ordinances, as the rocks and miry places do under the natural influences of heaven. What blessed opportunities had Judas? He was under Christ's own

Digitized by Google

ministry, he often heard the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth; he was day and night in his company, yet never the better; and why? Because he was the *son of perdition*, that is, a man appointed to destruction and wrath.

(6.) And lastly, To add no more. It is such a stroke of God upon the souls of men, as immediately fore-runs hell and damnation, Heb. vi. 8. "But that which beareth thorns and "briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to "be burnt." So that look as some saints, in this world, have had a prelibation or foretaste of heaven, which the scripture calls *the earnest of the spirit*: so this is a precursor 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, John xv. 6.) he is cast forth as a "branch, and withered;" 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.

The sincere soul's reflection.

1. Well then, blessed be God 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 common 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 and execute 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, Rom. vii. 4. And this hath more in it as to my comfort, than all the glittering gifts and splendid performances of the most glorious hypocrite can yield to him: if I might have my choice (saith one) I would chuse and prefer the most despicable and sordid work of a rustic Christian, before all the victories of Alexander, and triumphs of Caesar. *Blessed therefore be the Lord, who hath abounded unto me in all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places 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.

Digitized by Google

The formal professor's reflection.

2. O, then how little cause have I 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 secure heart upon them, the Lord hath been secretly blasting my soul under them, and insensibly executing this horrible curse by them. Shall I boast, with Capernaum, that *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, Luke xix. 41. "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." So long have I been a hearer, a professor 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? Have not self-ends and worldly respects lain at the bottom of my best duties? Have not my discourses, in communion with saints, been trade words, speaking what I have learnt, but not felt? Sad is my condition now, but it would be desperate and irrecoverable, shouldst thou execute this curse upon me.

The less fruitful Christian's reflection.

3. And what may I think of my condition? 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? I am told but now, that on whom this judgment falls, to them thou givest an heart that cannot repent. Lord, I bless thee for these evidences of freedom from the curse; for the fruits of fear, sorrow, and holy jealousy. * The laws of men spare for the fruits sake, and wilt thou not spare me also, my God, if there be found in me a blessing in the bud, Isa. lxv. 8.

The gospel

4. To conclude, what a serious reflection should this occasion in every dispenser of the

* The Roman laws defer punishing a woman with child. *Chrysf.*

Digitized by Google

gospel? How should he say when he goes to preach the gospel, I am 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. *preacher's reflections.*

The POEM.

YOU that besides your pleasant fruitful fields,
Have useless bogs, and rocky ground, that yields
You no advantage, nor doth quit your cost,
But all your pains and charges on them's lost:
Hearken to me, I'll teach you how to get
More profit by them, than if they were set
At higher rents than what your tenants pay
For your most fertile lands; and here's the way.
Think when you view them, why the Lord hath chose
These, as the emblem to decipher those
That under gospel-grace grow worse and worse;
For means are fruitless when the Lord doth curse.
Sweet showers descend, the sun his beams reflects
On both alike, but not with like effects.
Observe and see how after the sweet showers
The grass and corn revive; the fragrant flowers
Shoot forth their beauteous heads, the vallies sing,
All fresh and green, as in the verdant spring.
But rocks are barren still, and bogs are so;
Where nought but flags, and worthless rushes grow.
Upon these marshy grounds there lies this curse,
The more rain falls, by so much more the worse.
Even so the dews of grace, that sweetly fall,
From gospel-clouds, are not alike to all.
The gracious soul doth germinate and bud,
But to the reprobate it doth no good.
He's like the wither'd fig-tree, void of fruit;
A fearful curse hath smote his very root.
The heart's made fat, the eyes with blindness seal'd;
The piercing'st truths the gospel e'er reveal'd,
Shall be to him but as the sun and rain
Are to obdurate rocks, fruitless and vain.
Be this your meditation when you walk
By rocks and fenny-grounds, thus learn to talk

Digitized by Google

With your own souls; and let it make you fear
Lest that's your case that is described here.
This is the best improvement you can make
Of such bad ground; good soul, I pray thee take
Some pains about them; though they barren be,
Thou seest how they may yield sweet fruits to thee.

CHAP. VII.

Upon the plowing of Corn-land.

The plowman guides his plow with care and skill:
So doth the Spirit in sound conviction still.

OBSERVATION.

IT requires not only strength, but much skill and judgment, to manage and guide the plow. The Hebrew word חָרַשׁ which we tanslate to plow, signifies to be intent, as an artificer is about some curious piece of work. The plow 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, as it is Isa. xxxviii. 25. And hence that expression, Luke ix. 62. "He that puts his "hand to the plow, and looks back, is not fit for the kingdom "of heaven." The meaning is, that as he that plows must have his eyes always forward, 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 plow 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 of a sinner, is a work wherein much of the wisdom, as well as power of God, is discovered. The work of repentance, and saving contrition, is set forth in scripture by this metaphor of plowing *, Jer.

* *Glossius Rhet. Sacra, p.* 300.

Digitized by Google

iv. 3. Hos. x. 12. "Plow up your fallow ground;" that is, be convinced, humbled, 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 plow, it is reckoned one of the painfullest manual labours; it is also a very hard thing to convince and humble the heart of a secure, stout, and proud sinner, indurate in wickedness. 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, *Citius ex pumice aquam*; all the melting language, and earnest intreaties 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, Amos vi. 12. "Shall horses run upon the rock? "Will one plow there with oxen?" Yet when the Lord comes in the power of his Spirit, these rocks do rend, and yield to the power of the word.

(2.) The plow 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. Acts ii. 37. "When they heard this "they were pricked, (or * pierced point blank) to the heart. "Then the word divides the soul and spirit," Heb. iv. 12. It comes upon the conscience with such piercing dilemmas, and tilts the sword of conviction so deep into their souls, that there is no stanching the blood, no healing this wound, till Christ himself come, and undertake the cure. *Haeret lateri lethalis arundo*; 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-bitings to this; this swallows up all other troubles. See how that Christian Niobe, Luke vii. 38. is dissolved into tears; "Now deep calleth unto 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, and most magnanimous soul would sink and drown, did not Jesus Christ, by a secret and supporting hand, hold it up, and preserve it.

(3.) The plow rends the earth in parts and pieces, which before was united, and makes those parts hang loose, which for-

* Κατανυγεσι *punctim cædo, pungendo penetro.*

Digitized by Google

merly lay close. Thus doth the Spirit of conviction rend asunder the heart, and its most beloved lusts. Joel ii. 13. "Rent your "hearts, and not your garments:" That is, rather than your garments; for the sense is comparative, though the expression be negative. And this renting implies not only acute pain, flesh cannot be rent asunder without anguish, nor yet only force and violence; the heart is a stubborn, and knotty piece, and will not easily yield; but it also implies a disunion of parts united: As when a garment, or the earth, or any contiguous body is rent, those parts are separated which formerly cleaved together. Sin and the soul were glewed fast together before, there was no parting of them, they would as soon part with their lives, as with their lusts; but now when the heart is rent from them truly, it is also rent from them everlastingly, Ezek. vii. 15, to 19.

(4.) The plow turns up, and discovers such things as lay hid in the bosom of the earth before, and were covered under a fair green surface, from the eyes of men. Thus when the Lord plows 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 discerner of the thoughts and secret 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 shuffling 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 plow is but *opus ordinabile*, a preparative work in order to fruit. Should the husbandman plow his ground ever so often, yet if the seed be not cast in, and quickened, in vain is the harvest expected. Thus conviction also is but a preparative to a farther work upon the soul of a sinner; if it stick there, and 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 plowed, 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. O when a poor damned creature shall with horror 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 me with the guilt of them; many purposes and resolves I had then to turn to God, which,

Digitized by Google

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 plowing when the earth is prepared, and mollified by the showers of rain; 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 ingenuously, Ezek. xvi. 63. "That thou mayest remember, and "be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because "of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that "thou hast done." So it was with that poor penitent, Luke vii. 38. when the Lord Jesus had discovered to her the superabounding 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 receives his pardon at the foot of the ladder, and is melted by the mercy and clemency of his gracious prince towards him.

(7.) The plow kills those rank weeds which grow in the field, turns them up by the roots, buries and rots them. So doth saving 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 Ἀγανάκτησιν, there signifies the rising of the stomach, and being angry even unto sickness; religious wrath is the fiercest wrath, now the soul cannot endure sin, it trembles at it. "I find a woman more bitter than death," (saith penitent Solomon) Eccl. vii. 26. Conviction, like a surfeit, makes the soul to lothe what it formerly loved, and delighted in.

(8.) That field is not well plowed, where the plow jumps and skips over good ground, and makes baulks, it must run up the whole field alike; and that heart is not savingly convicted, where any lust is spared, and left untouched. Saving 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

Digitized by Google

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 plowed, than that which by long lying out of tillage is more consolidated, and clung together, by deep-rooted thorns, and brambles, which render it difficult to the plowman. 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, Eccles. vii. 28. "One man among a thousand "have I found," *&c.* Few that have long resisted the gospel, that come afterwards to feel the saving efficacy thereof.

REFLECTIONS.

The true convert's reflection.

1. O grace, for ever to be admired! that God should send forth his word and Spirit to plow up my hard and stony heart! yea, mine, when he hath left so many of more tender, ingenuous, sweet and melting tempers, without any culture or means of grace. O blessed gospel, heart-dissolving voice! I have felt thine efficacy, I have experienced thy divine and irresistible 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 thou not 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. O how did I struggle and oppose thee, as if thou hadst come with the sword of an enemy, rather than the lance, and probe of a skilful and tender-hearted physician? Blessed be the day wherein my sin was discovered and embittered! O happy sorrows, which pre-

Digitized by Google

pared for such matchless joys! O blessed hand, which turned my salt waters into pleasant wine! and after many pangs, and sorrows of soul, didst, at length, bring forth deliverance and peace.

The stubborn heart's reflection.

2. But, O what a rock of adamant is this heart of mine! that never yet was wounded, and savingly 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! my stupified 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 out 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 intreaties 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.

The miscarrying soul's reflection.

3. And may not I challenge the first place among all the mourners in the world, who have all lost 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 choaked, 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, neither have my lusts fallen before them? My conscience, indeed, hath been sometimes sick with sin, yea, so sick as to vomit them up by an external, partial reformation; but then, with the dog, have I turned again to my vomit, and now I doubt I am given over to an heart that cannot repent. Oh that these travelling pangs could be quickened again! but alas! they are ceased. I am like a prisoner escaped, and again recovered, whom the jaylor 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 chuse to be the object of thy wounding mercy, than of thy sparing

Digitized by Google

cruelty! if thou plow not up my heart again by compunction, I know it must be rent in pieces at last by desperation.

The POEM.

THERE's skill in plowing, that the plowman knows,
For if too shallow, or too deep he goes,
The seed is either buried, or else may
To rooks and daws become an easy prey.
This, as a lively emblem, fitly may
Describe the blessed Spirit's work and way:
Whose work on souls, with this doth symbolize;
Betwixt them both, thus the resemblance lies.
Souls are the soil, conviction is the plow,
God's workmen draw, the Spirit shews them how.
He guides the work, and in good ground, doth bless
His workmen's pains, with sweet and fair success.
The heart prepar'd, he scatters in the seed,
Which, in its season, springs, no fowl nor weed
Shall pick it up, or choak this springing corn,
'Till it be housed in the heavenly barn.
When thus the Spirit plows up the fallow ground,
When with such fruits his servants work is crown'd;
Let all the friends of Christ, and souls say now,
As they pass by the fields, *God speed the plow.*
Sometimes this plow, thin shelfy ground doth turn,
That little seed which springs, the sun-beams burn.
The rest uncovered lies, which fowls devour.
Alas! their heart was touch'd, but not with pow'r.
The cares and pleasures of this world have drown'd
The seed, before it peep'd above the ground.
Some springs indeed, the Scripture saith that some
Do taste the powers of the world to come.
These embrio's never come to timely birth,
Because the seed that's sown wants depth of earth.
Turn up, O God, the bottom of my heart;
And, to the seed that's sown, do thou impart
Thy choicest blessing. Though I weep and mourn
In this wet seed-time, if I may return
With sheaves of joy; these fully will reward
My pains and sorrows, be they ne'er so hard.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. 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 and curious about their ſeed-corn, that it may not only be clean and pure, but the beſt and moſt excellent of its kind. Iſa. xxviii. 25. "He "caſteth in the principal wheat." If any be more full and weighty than other, that is reſerved for ſeed. It is uſual with huſbandmen to pick and leaſe their ſeed-corn by hand, that they may ſeparate the cockel 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 ten following particulars, and their excellency above other principles in ſeven more.

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 plowed 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 deſart is of corn.

2. The earlier the ſeed is ſown, the better it is rooted, and enabled to endure the aſperities of the winter; ſo when grace is early infuſed, when nature is ſanctified in the bud, grace is thereby exceedingly advantaged. It was Timothy's ſingular advantage, that he knew the Scriptures of a child.

3. Froſts and ſnows conduce very much to the well-rooting of the ſeed, and makes it ſpread, and take root much the better. So do ſanctified afflictions, which uſually the people of God meet with after their calling, and often in their very ſeed time. 1 Theſ. i. 6. "And you became followers of us "and of the Lord, having received the word in much afflic-"tion." But if they have fair weather then, to be ſure they

Digitized by Google

shall meet with weather hard enough afterwards. Heb x. 32. "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye "were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions."

4. When the seed is cast into the earth, it must be covered 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, Heb. xii. 2. and of this they may be confident, that he that hath begun a good work in them, will perform it unto the day of Christ. The care of God over the graces of his people, is like the covering of the seed for security.

5. Seed-corn is in its own nature of much more value and worth than other corn; the husbandman casts in the principal wheat. So are the seeds of grace sown in the renewed soul, for it is called *the seed of God*, 1 John iii. 9. *The divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. One dram of grace is far beyond all the glory of this world; it is more precious than gold which perishes. 1 Pet. i. 7. "The price of it is above rubies, and all that thou canst "desire is not to be compared with it," Prov. iii. 15.

6. There is a great deal of spirit and vigour in a little seed, though it be small in bulk, yet it is great in virtue and efficacy. Gracious habits are also vigorous and efficacious things. Such is their efficacy that they overcome the world, 1 John v. 4. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." They totally alter and change the person in whom they are. "He "that persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith "which he once destroyed." They enable the soul to do and suffer great things for God, Heb. xi. 33, 34, 35.

7. The stalk and ear are potentially and virtually in a small grain of corn. So are all the fruits of obedience which believers afterwards bring forth to God, virtually contained in those habits or seeds of grace. It is strange to consider, that from a *mustard seed* (which, as Christ saith, is the least of all seeds) should grow such great branches, that the birds of the air may build their nests in them. Surely, the heroical and famous acts and atchievements of the most renowned believers sprang from small beginnings at first, to that eminency and glory.

8. The fruitfulness of the seed depends upon the sun and rain, by which they are quickened, as is opened largely in the next chapter. And the principles of grace in us have as ne-

Digitized by Google

ceſſary a dependence upon the aſſiſting and exciting grace without us. For though it be true, they are immortal ſeed; yet that is not ſo much from their own ſtrength as from the promiſes made to them, and that conſtant influx from above, by which they are revived and preſerved from time to time.

9. The ſeed is fruitful in ſome ſoils more than in others, proſpers much better, and comes ſooner to maturity. So doth graces 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.

10. 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, 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. Now, in the next place, (which is the ſecond thing promiſed, and mainly deſigned in this chapter) to ſhew you the choiceneſs and excellency of theſe holy principles with which ſanctified ſouls are embelliſhed and adorned; and to convince you that true grace excells all other principles, by which other perſons are acted, even as the principal wheat doth the chaff, and refuſe ſtuff, I ſhall here inſtitute a compariſon betwixt grace and the moſt ſplendid, common gifts in the world, and its tranſcendent excellency, above them all, will evidently appear in ſeven following particulars.

1. The moſt excellent common 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 original and extraction, not induced or raiſed from nature, but ſupernaturally infuſed by the Spirit from on high, John iii. 6. "That which is born of the fleſh is "fleſh, and that which is born of the Spirit is ſpirit." 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 gifts, as the heavenly *manna* which was rained down from

Digitized by Google

heaven differs from common bread, which, by pains and industry, the earth produces in a natural way.

2. The best natural gifts afford not that sweetness and solid comfort to the soul that grace doth; they are but a dry stalk that affords no meat for a soul to feed on. A man may have an understanding full of light, and an heart void of comfort at the same time; but grace is a fountain of purest living streams of peace and comfort, 1 Pet. i. 8. "Believing, we rejoice, with "joy unspeakable and full of glory: light is sown for the "righteous, and joy for the upright in heart." All true pleasures and delights are seminally in grace, Psal. xcvii. 11. They are sown for them in these divine and heavenly graces, which are glory in the bud.

Like a precious stone in a toad's head.

3. Gifts adorn the person, but do not secure the soul from wrath. A man may be admired for them among men, and rejected eternally by God. Who can considerately read that sixth chapter of the Hebrews, and not tremble to think in what a forlorn case a soul may be, though set off and accomplished with the rarest endowments of this kind! Mat. 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," &c. and yet themselves at last cast out as a prey to devils. How divinely and rhetorically did Balaam speak, and prophesy, Numb. xxxiii. What rare and excellent parts had the Scribes and Pharisees? Who upon that account, were stiled *Principes seculi*, the princes of the world, 1 Cor. ii. 8. What profound and excellent parts had the heathen *sages* and *philosophers*? 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 encrease the eternal burnings; but now gracious principles are the τα εχομενα σωτηριας, 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; and these treasures are never found but in elect vessels. Glory is by promise assured and 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 scripture speaks of them as already saved, Rom. viii. 24. "We are saved by hope," because it is as sure as if we were in heaven. We are made to sit in heavenly places.

4. Gifts may damnify the person that possesses them, and it

Digitized by Google

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. 12.) *i. e.* Their learning hanged in their light, they were too wise to submit to the simplicity of the gospel. The excellent parts of the old heretics did but serve to midwife into the world the monstrous birth of soul-damning heresies. *Cupit abs te ornari diabolus*, as Austin said to that ingenious young scholar; the devil desires to be adorned by thee. But now grace itself is not subject to such abuses, it cannot be the proper *univocal cause* of any evil effect: it cannot puff up the heart, but always humbles it, nor serve the devil's designs, but ever opposes them.

5. Gifts may be given a man for the sake of others, and not out of any love to himself; they are but as an excellent dish of meat which a man sends to a nurse, not for her sake, so much as for his child that sucks her. God, indeed, makes use of them to do his children good, the church is benefited by them, though themselves are but like cooks, they prepare excellent dishes, on which the saints feed, and are nourished, though themselves taste them not. They are *dona ministrantia, non sanctificantia*, ministring, but not sanctifying gifts, proceeding not from the good-will of God to him that hath them, but to those he benefits by them. And O what a sad consideration will this be one day to such a person, to think, I helped such a soul to heaven, while I myself must lodge in hell?

6. 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) *non excindit vitia sed abscondit*, 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. 6. 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.

7. And lastly, Gifts must leave us at last. "Whether th

Digitized by Google

" be knowledge, that shall cease. All flesh is grass, and the " goodliness of it as the flower of the grass; the grass wither- " eth, 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, if it hit right, (as one saith) 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. *Nunquam jocos dabis*, as Adrian said to his departing soul; but grace ascends with the soul into eternity, and there receives its perfection, and accomplishment. Gifts take their leave of the soul, as Orpha 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 spoke hyperboles, when he said, " Covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet I shew unto you " a more excellent way," 1 Cor. xii. *ult.* And thus you have the choiceness of these principles also.

REFLECTIONS.

The gracious soul's reflection. The lines are fallen to me in a pleasant place, may the gracious soul 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 famed, and honoured among men, let it suffice me 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 heaven- " ly 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 reprobates may have? and art not rather admiring and blessing God for those things which none, but the darlings and 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.

Digitized by Google

Pause a while, my soul, upon this point: With what seed is my heart sown, and of what kind are those things wherein I excel others? Are they indeed special seeds of grace, or common gifts, and 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, (1.) How comes it to pass that I never found any throws, or travailing pangs in the production of them? It is affirmed, and generally acknowledged, that the *new creature* is never brought forth without such pain and compunctions of heart, Acts ii. 37. I have indeed often felt an aking head, whilst I have read and studied to increase my knowledge? But when did I feel an aking heart for sin? O I begin to suspect, that it is not right. Yea, (2.) And my suspicion increases while I consider that grace is of an humbling nature, 1 Cor. xv. 10. Lord, how have I been elated by my gifts, and valued myself above what was meet? O how have I delighted in the noise of the Pharisee's trumpet! Mat. vi. 2. No music so sweet as that. Say, O my conscience, have I not delighted more in the theatre than the closet? 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 shewed 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, lamentable state, notwithstanding all my knowledge, and flourishing gifts. O shew me a more excellent way. Lord! 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 no hope of heaven.

The deceived soul's reflection.

The POEM.

GREAT difference betwixt that seed is found,
With which you sow your sev'ral plots of ground.

Digitized by Google

Seed-wheat doth far excel in dignity
The cheaper barley, and the coarser rye:
Tho' in themselves they good and wholesome are,
Yet these with choicest wheat may not compare.
Men's hearts, like fields, are sow'd with diff'rent grain,
Some baser, some more noble, some again
Excelling both the former, more than wheat
Excels that grain your swine and horses eat.
For principles of mere morality,
Like cummin, barley, fitches, pease, or rye,
In those men's hearts are often to be found,
Whom yet the scripture calleth cursed ground;
And nobler principles than these, sometime
Call'd common grace, and spiritual gifts, which shine
In some men's heads, where is their habitation;
Yet they are no companions of salvation.
These purchase honour both from great and small:
But I must tell thee, that if this be all,
Tho' like an angel in these gifts thou shine
Amongst blind mortals, for a little time;
The day's at hand, when, such as thou must take
Thy lot with devils in th' infernal lake.
But principles of special saving grace,
Whose seat is in the heart, not head, or face;
Like solid wheat sown in a fruitful field,
Shall spring, and flourish, and at last will yield
A glorious harvest of eternal rest,
To him that nourish'd them within his breast.
O grace! how orient art thou! how divine!
What is the glory of all gifts to thine!
Disseminate this seed within my heart,
My God, I pray thee, tho' thou shouldst impart
The less of gifts; then I may truly say,
That thou hast shew'd me the more excellent way.

CHAP. IX.

Upon springing-weather after seed-time.

By heaven's influence corn and plants do spring,
God's show'rs of grace do make his valleys sing.

OBSERVATION.

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

Digitized by Google

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, as it is Deut. xxviii. 12. the earth cannot yield her increase. The order and dependence of natural causes in the production of fruit, is excellently described, Hos. ii. 21, 22. "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." 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, by the light of nature, acknowledged, and therefore when they went to plow in the morning, they did lay one hand upon the plow (to speak their own part to be painfulness) and held up the other hand to Ceres, the goddess of corn, to shew that their expectation of plenty was from their supposed deity †. I fear many Christians lay both hands to the plow, 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 did I ever 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 steeps, that drop fatness. *Alma mater terra,* the earth indeed is a fruitful mother, but the rain which fecundates, and fertilizes it, hath no other Father but God, Job xxxviii. 28.

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

* *Natura nihil aliud est quam divinorum operum ordo.* Berentius.

† Weem's Cerem. Law.

‡ Smith's Essex Dove.

Digitized by Google

influences of heaven; for look, 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 cometh down, and the snow "from heaven, and watereth the earth, and maketh it bring "forth and bud; so shall my word be that goeth forth of my "mouth," Isa. 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, Acts xiv. 17. "He gave "us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons," *&c.* The doctrine of the gospel is also of an heavenly extraction and descent, they are heavenly truths which are brought to you in earthen vessels, things that were hid in God, and come from his bosom, Eph. iii. 8, 9. What Nicodemus said of Christ is, in a proportion, true of every faithful dispenser of the gospel, "Thou art "a teacher come from God," John iii. 2. You are not to look upon the truths which ministers deliver, as the mere effects and fruits of their inventions and parts, 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 from heaven, Eph iii. 8, 9. the efficacy and success of it 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. That is the first:

And then, (*2dly.*) The rain falls by divine direction and appointment: "He causes it to rain upon one city, and not upon "another," Amos iv. 7. You shall often see a cloud dissolve and spend itself upon one place, when there is not a drop within a few miles of it. Thus is the gospel sent to shed its rich influences upon one place, and not upon another; it pours down showers of blessings, upon one town or parish, whilst others are dry like the ground which lay near to Gideon's wet fleece. "To you is the word of this salvation sent," Acts xiii. 26. *Sent*; it comes not by *chance*, but by *commission* and appointment, and it is sent to you by special direction. Ministers can no more go whither they please, than the sailing clouds can move against the wind. Paul and Timothy, two fruitful clouds (that sent down many sweet refreshing showers upon every place whither they came) the Lord sent them through Phrygia and

Digitized by Google

Galatia, but forbad them to preach the word in Asia, Acts xvi. 6. "And when they essayed to go into Bithynia, the spirit suf- "fered them not," v. 7. But a man of Macedonia appears to Paul in a vision, and prayed him, saying, "Come over to Ma- "cedonia and help us," v. 9. Thus you see how the *mystical*, as well as the *natural* clouds are moved according to divine counsel; and though ministers are not now disposed to their respective places, in such an extraordinary way, yet there is still a special hand of the spirit guiding their motions, which is seen partly in qualifying them for such a people, and partly in drawing out their hearts to elect and call them, and inclining their hearts to accept the call.

3. 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 ways float, and the streets run, but it is gone presently, the earth hath but little benefit by it; and sometimes you have a sweet, gentle, soaking 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*, Job xxxvii. 6. So it is in these spiritual showers, the effects of some sermons (like a sudden spout of rain) are very transient, that touch the heart a little for the present, by way of conviction or comfort, but it fleets away immediately, Jam. i. 23. 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 do much 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 out of it as long as they live. "I will never "forget thy precepts, for by them thou hast quickned me," Psal. cxix. 93.

4. The rain is most beneficial to the earth, when there come sweet, warm sun-blasts with it, or after it. This the scripture calls "a clear shining after rain," 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. by which the *seminal virtue* of the earth is drawn forth, and then the herbs, 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,

Digitized by Google

from the melting affections of the preacher, who imparts not only the gospel, but his own soul with it, 1 Thes. ii. 8. this doth abundantly more good than that which drops coldly from the lips of the unaffected speaker.

5. Showers of rain do exceedingly refresh the earth, as a man is refreshed by a draught of water, when his spirits are even spent. O how welcome is a shower to the thirsty ground! Hence the little hills are said to rejoice on every side, yea to shout for joy, and sing when a shower comes, Psal lxv. 12, 13. But never were showers of rain so sweetly refreshing to the thirsty earth, as gospel-showers are to gracious hearts, Col. iv. 8. they comfort their very hearts. What joy was there in Samaria, when the gospel came to that place? Acts viii. 8. It revives the soul, it is *mel in ore, melos in aure, jubilum in corde*, honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, and a very jubilee in the heart.

6. Rain is necessary at seed-time, to make ready the earth to receive the seed, Psal. lxv. 9, 10. "Thou visitest the earth, and "watereſt it; thou greatly inrichest 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 a-"bundantly, thou settlest the furrows thereof, thou makest it "soft with showers, thou blessest the springing thereof." 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, Joel ii. 23, 24. "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 "fats shall overflow with wine and oil." 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, Psal. xix. 7. And there could be (in an ordinary way) no spring of grace without it, Prov. xxix. 18. 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, Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. "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

Digitized by Google

"knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, unto the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Were all the elect converted unto God, yet still there would be a necessity of a gospel-ministry.

7. After a great glut of rain, usually there comes a drought; it is a common country proverb, *Wet and dry, pay one another.* And truly when a people are glutted with a fulness of gospel-mercies, it is usual with God to shut up and restrain the gospel-clouds, that, for a time at least, there be no dews upon them, and thereby teach them to prize their despised (because common) mercies at an higher rate. For as a good man once said, mercies are best known by the back, and most prized when most wanted. "In those days the word of the Lord was precious, there was "no open vision," 1 Sam. iii. 1. It is with spiritual as with temporal food, slighted when plenteous, but if a famine once come, then every bit of bread is precious. Jerusalem remembered in the days of her afflictions, and of her misery, all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, Lam. i. 7. It is both a sinful and dangerous thing to wantonize with gospel-mercies, and despise the plainest (if faithful) ministers of the gospel. The time may come when you may be glad of the plainest sermon, from the mouth of the meanest ambassador of Christ.

8. To conclude, The prayers of saints are the keys that open and shut the natural clouds, and cause them either to give out, or with-hold their influences, Jam. v. 17, 18. "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 her "fruit." God hath subjected the works of his hands to the prayers of his saints, Isa. xlv. 11.

Prayer is also the golden key which opens these mystical gospel-clouds, and dissolves them into sweet 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, Luke x. 2. "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, to send forth la-"bourers into the vineyard." 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 great 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

Digitized by Google

ministers obtain the success and fruits of their labours, 2 Thess. iii. 1. "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the "Lord may have free course, and be glorified even as it is with "you." And thus you have the metaphor opened. Now, O! that these truths might come down in sweet showers upon the hearts both of *ministers* and people, in the following reflections.

REFLECTIONS.

Three reflections for gospel ministers.

1. Am I then a cloud? 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 not I 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 from men 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 quench and 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, Job xxix. 23. "return like the troops of Tema, ashamed, with their "heads covered," Job vi. 19. O that my lips might 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, Matth. xxiv. 30. Lord, let me be a cloud of heaven too: Let my heart and conversation be both there! Who is more advantaged for an heavenly life than I? heavenly truths are the subjects of my daily study, and shall earthly things be the objects of my daily delights and loves? God forbid that ever my earthly conversation should contradict and shame my heavenly calling and profession. Shine forth thou glorious sun of righ-

Digitized by Google

sourſneſs, and my heart ſhall quickly be attracted and mounted above theſe viſible clouds, yea, and above the aſpectable heavens.

Three reflections for private Chriſtians.

1. Is the goſpel rain, and are its miniſters clouds? Wo 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 deſart, which ſeeth not when good cometh, nor inhabit the parched places of the wilderneſs.

For thoſe that want a goſpel-miniſtry.

For thoſe that enjoy a goſpel-miniſtry.

2. O Lord, thou haſt cauſed the heavens above me to be black with clouds, 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:" that I might there ſee the beauty 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 precious ſoul-enriching ſhowers fleet away unprofitably from me? If ſo, then,

For unprofitable hearers.

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 aſſiduouſly and 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 forth into fruits of obedience.

The POEM.

THE vegetables here below depend
Upon thoſe treaſures which the heavens do ſpend
Moſt bounteouſly upon them; to preſerve
Their being and their beauty. This may ſerve

Digitized by Google

To shadow forth a heavenly mystery,
Which thus presents itself before your eye.
As when the sun draws near us in the spring,
All creatures do rejoice, birds chirp and sing.
The face of nature smiles; the fields adorn
Themselves with rich embroideries: The corn
Revives, and shooteth up; the warm sweet rain
Makes trees and herbs sprout forth, and spring amain.
Walk but the fields in such a fragrant morn,
How do the birds your ears with such music charm!
The flowers their flaming beauties do present
Unto your captiv'd eyes; and for their scent,
The sweet Arabian gums cannot compare,
Which thus perfume the circumambient air.
So, when the gospel sheds its cheering beams
On gracious souls, like those sweet-warming gleams
Which God ordains in nature, to draw forth
The vertue seminal that's in the earth;
It warms their hearts, their languid graces cheers,
And, on such souls, a spring-like face appears.
The gracious showers these spiritual clouds do yield,
Enriches them with sweetness, like a field
Which God hath bless'd. Oh! 'tis exceeding sweet,
When gracious hearts, and heavenly truths do meet!
How should the hearts of saints within them spring,
When they behold the messengers that bring
These gladsome tidings? Yea, their very feet
Are beautiful, because their message sweet.
Oh what a mercy do those souls enjoy,
On whom such gospel-dews fall day by day!
Thrice happy land! which in this pleasant spring,
Can hear these turtles in her hedges sing?
O prize such mercies! If you ask me, why?
Read on, you'll see there's reason by and by.

CHAP. X.

Upon a Dearth through want of Rain.

If God restrains the showers, you howl 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, Deut. xxviii. 23. Then the husbandmen are

Digitized by Google

called to mourning, Joel i. 11. All the fields do languish, and the bellowing cattle are pined with thirst. Such a sad state the prophet rhetorically describes, Jer. xiv. 3, 4, 5, 6 "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 plowmen were ashamed, they covered "their heads; yea, the hind also calved in the field, and for-"sook it, because there was no grass; and the wild asses did "stand in the high places: They snuffed up the wind like "dragons; their eyes failed, because there was no grass."

And that which makes the want of rain so terrible a judgment, is the famine of bread, which necessarily follows these extraordinary droughts, and is one of the sorest temporal judgments which God inflicts upon the world.

APPLICATION.

AND, truly as much cause have they to weep and tremble, over whose souls God shuts up the spiritual clouds of the gospel, and thereby sends a spiritual famine upon their souls. Such a judgment the Lord threatens in Amos viii. 11. "Behold the day is 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; for this particle [not] is not *exclusive* but *excessive*; implying, that a famine of bread is nothing, or but a light judgment compared with the famine of the word. Parallel to which is that text, Isa. v. 6. "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." 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 tremenduous judgment. Thus the Christians of Antioch, when Chrysostom their minister was banished, * they judged it better to lose the sun out of the firmament, than lose that, their minister. And when Nazianzen was taking his leave of Constantinople, as he was preaching his *farewel sermon*, the people were exceedingly af-

* It is better for us to want the light of the sun, than the teaching of Chrysostomus.

Digitized by Google

fected with his loss; and among the rest, an old man in the congregation fell into a bitter passion, and cried out, *Aude pater, et tecum trinitatem ipsam efice: (i. e.)* Go, Father, if you dare, and take away the whole trinity with you; meaning, that God would not stay when he was gone. How did the Christians of Antioch also weep and lament, when Paul was taking his farewel of them? Acts xx. 37, 38. He had been a cloud of blessings to that place, but now they must expect no more showers from him. Oh! they knew not how to give up such a 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. Oh the loss of a gospel-ministry is an inestimable loss, not to be repaired but by its own return, or by heaven! Mr. Greenham tells us, that in the times of popish persecution, when godly ministers were haled away from their flocks to *martyrdom*, the poor Christians would meet them in the way to the prisons, or stake, with their little ones in their arms, and throwing themselves at their feet, would thus bespeak them, 'What 'shall be our estate, now you are gone to *martyrdom*? Who 'shall instruct these poor babes? Who shall ease our afflicted 'consciences? Who shall lead us in the way of life? Recom-'pence unto them, O Lord, as they have deserved, who are the 'causes of this: Lord give them sad hearts.' *Quis talia fando, temperet a lachrymis?* And to let you see there is sufficient ground for this 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 the 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. There is a pedigree of judgments; first, Gomer bears Jezreel; next, Lo-ruhama, and at last brings forth Lo-ammi, Hosea i. 4, 6, 8, 9.

2. There is cause of mourning, if you consider the deplorable estate in which all the unregenerate souls are left, after the gospel is removed from them. What will become of these? Or by whom shall they be gathered? It made the bowels of Christ yearn within him, when he looked upon the scattered multitude that had no shepherd. Matth. ix. 36. What an easy conquest doth the devil now make of them? How fast doth hell fill in such times? Poor souls being driven thither in droves, and none to rescue them? Matthew Paris tells us, that

Digitized by Google

in the year 1073, when preaching was suppressed at Rome, letters were then framed as coming from hell; wherein the devil gave them thanks for the multitude of souls they had sent to him that year. But truly we need not talk of letters from hell, we are told from heaven, how deplorable the condition of such poor souls is; See Prov. xxviii. 19. Hos. iv. 6. Or,

3. The judgment will yet 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 soul-refreshments; for all these are sweet streams from the gospel-fountain, Psalm cxix. 50. Col. iv. 8. 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 served both *ad separationem et munitionem*, to distinguish and to defend them. When God plucks up this hedge, and breaks down this wall, all mischiefs break in upon us presently, 2 Chron. xv. 3, 4, 5, 6. "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." 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 creature-comforts. These usually come and go with the gospel. When God had once written *Lo-ammi* upon Israel, the next news was 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 soul-subsistence, for the gospel is their *feast of fat things*, Isa. xxv. 6. their spiritual wells, Isa. xii. 3. a dose distributed among the Lord's poor, Rom. i. 11. In a word, it is as the rain and dews of heaven, as hath been shewed, which being restrained, a spiritual famine necessarily follows,

Digitized by Google

a famine, of all, the most terrible. Now to shew you the analogy between this and a temporal famine, that therein you may see what caute you have to be deeply affected with it, take it in these six following particulars.

1. A famine caused by the failing of bread, or that which is in the stead, and hath the use of bread. Dainties and superfluous 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 and feeble man, that bread is to the faint and feeble spirits, which even so do lean upon it. And look what bread is to the natural spirits, that, and more than that, the word is to gracious spirits, Job xxiii. 12. "I have esteemed the "words of thy mouth, more than my necessary food." If once God breaks this staff, the inner man, that hidden man of the heart, will quickly begin to fail and faulter.

2. It is not every degree of scarcity of bread that presently 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 *panis nutrimentum*, the nourishing vertue of bread, that it shall signify no more, as to the end of bread, than a chip, Hag. i. 6. As by taking away *panem nutrientem*, 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 to fail; or else, though there be preaching, prayer, and other ordinances left (at least the names and shadows of them) yet the presence of God is not with them. There is no marrow in the bone, no milk in the breast; and so, as to a soul-subsistence, it is all one, as if there were no such things.

3. In a corporeal famine, mean and coarse things become sweet and pleasant: Famine raises the price and esteem of them. 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* *.

'In time of famine coarsest fare contents,
'The barking stomach strains no complements.'

It is storied of Artaxerxes Memor, that when he was flying before his enemies, he fed hungrily upon barley-bread, and said, *Cujusmodi voluptatis hactenus inexpertus fuit!* O what

* *Jejunus stomachus raro vulgaria temnit.* Horat.

Digitized by Google

pleasure have I hitherto been ignorant of! When great Darius drank the puddled water, that had been defiled with dead carcasses, which had been slain in that famous battle, 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 do the famine of the word raise the price and esteem of vulgar and despised truths. Oh! what would you 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 and remove 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. In time of famine some persons suffer more than others: it falls heaviest, and pincheth hardest upon the poorer sort; as long as any thing is to be had for money, the rich will have it. So it falls out in a spiritual famine; although the most experienced and best furnished Christians will have enough to do to live in the absence of ordinances, yet they are like to subsist much better than weak, ignorant, and unexperienced ones. Some Christians have husbanded their time well, and, like Joseph in the seven years *plenty*, *laid* up for a *scarcity*. The word of God dwells richly in them. Some such there are, as John calls young men, who are strong, and the word of God remaineth in them; of whom it may be said, as Jerom spake of Nepotianus, that by long and assiduous meditation of the scriptures, he had made his breast the very library of Christ. But others are babes in Christ; and though God will preserve that good work which he hath begun in them, yet these poor babes will soonest find and be most concerned in the loss of their spiritual fathers and nurses.

5. In time of famine there are pitiful cries, and heart-breaking complaints where-ever you go. Oh the many pale faces you shall then see, and the sad language that rings in your ears in every place! One cries, Bread, bread, for Christ's sake! one bit of bread! another faints and falls down at your door. *All her people sigh*, Lam. i. 11. Yea, the poor little ones are brought in, ver. 12. crying to their mothers, Where is the corn and wine? and then pouring out their souls into their mother's bosom. Just so it is in a famine of the word; poor Christians every where sighing and crying, Oh! where are our godly ministers? our sweet sabbaths, sermons, sacraments? My fa-

Digitized by Google

thers! my fathers! the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof! How beautiful were your feet upon the mountains? And then, weeping, like the people at Paul's *departure*, to think they shall see their faces no more.

6. Lastly, In time of famine there is nothing so costly or precious, but the 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 affliction, and give you the waters of ad-"versity; yet it will sweeten that bread and water to you, if "your teachers be no more removed into corners," Isa. xxx. 20.

REFLECTIONS.

The ungrateful soul's reflection.

1. Is the famine of the word such a fearful judgment? Then Lord pardon my unthankfulness, for the plentiful and long continued enjoyment of such a precious and invaluable mercy. How long 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 na-"tions of men to dwell on the face of the earth! And determin-"ed the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habi-"tation?" 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 in it, in such a happy nick of time, as can hardly be paralleled in history, for the plenty of gospel-mercies that this age and nation hath enjoyed; that my mother did not bring me forth in the deserts of Arabia, or wastes of America, but in England, where God hath made the sun of the gospel to stand still, as the natural sun once 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!

The deprived Christian's reflection.

2. Is the gospel indeed departed? 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!*

Digitized by Google

Wo 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 provocation 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 thus elegant, thus admirable, but as they are instruments in the hand of God appointed to such an end. Even as Austin 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 drowsie, dull, and careless have they been under the most excellent and quickning means? Few more than I. Alas! I have often presented my body before the Lord in ordinances, ἀλλ' ψυχὴ ἄλλου, but my soul hath been wandering abroad, as Chrysostom speaks. I should have come from under every sermon, as a sheet comes from the press, with all the stamps and lively impressions of the truths I have 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!

The silent minister's reflection.

3. I am now as a spring shut up, that can yield no refreshment to thirsty souls, ready to perish. Thou hast said to me, as once to Ezekiel, "Son of man, behold, I will make thy tongue cleave "to the roof of thy mouth, and thou shalt be dumb." This is a very heavy judgment; but thou must be justified and cleared in it. Although men may not, yet God, if he please, may put a lighted candle under a bushel. And herein I must acknowledge thy righteousness. Many times have I been sinfully silent, when both thy glory and the interest of souls engaged me to speak. Most justly therefore hast thou made my tongue to cleave to its roof. Little did I consider the preciousness of souls, or the tremendous account to be given for them, at the appearing of the great shepherd. I have now time enough to

Digitized by Google

sit down and mourn over former miscarriages, and lost opportunities. Lord restore me once again to a serviceable capacity, to a larger sphere of activity for thee, for I am now become as a broken vessel. It grieves me to the heart to see thy flock scattered; to hear thy people cry to me, as once to Joseph, "Give us bread; for why should we die in thy presence?" The word is like fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing. Oh! that thou wouldst once again open the doors of thine house, that there may be bread enough in thine house for all thy children.

The POEM.

WHEN God doth make the heavens above as brass,
The earth's like iron, flowers, herbs and grass
Have lost their fragrant green, are turned yellow;
The brooks are dry, the pining cattle bellow;
The fat and flow'ry meadows scorch'd and burn'd;
The country's mirth is into mourning turn'd;
The clefted earth her thirsty mouth sets ope
Unto the empty clouds, as 'twere in hope
Of some refreshing drops, that might allay
Her fiery thirst; but they soon pass away;
The pensive husbandman with his own eyes
Bedews his land, because he sees the skies
Refuse to do it. Just so stands the case,
When God, from souls, removes the means of grace.
God's ministers are clouds, their doctrine rain,
Which when the Lord, in judgment, shall restrain,
The peoples souls in short time will be found
In such a case as this dry parched ground.
When this sad judgment falls on any nation,
Let saints therein take up this lamentation.
O dreadful, dark, and dismal day!
How is our glory fled away?
Our sun gone down, our stars o'ercast?
God's heritage is now laid waste.
Our pining souls no bread can get;
With wantons God has justly met.
When we were fed unto the full,
This man was tedious, that was dull:
But they are gone, and there remain
No such occasions to complain.
Stars are not now for lights, but signs,
God knows of what heart-breaking times,

Digitized by Google

Sure heaven intends not peace, but wars,
In calling home ambaſſadors.
How long did Sodom's judgments ſtay,
When righteous Lot was ſnatch'd away?
How long remain'd that ſtately hall,
When Sampſon made the pillars fall?
When horſemen and commanders fly,
Woe to the helpleſs infantry.
This is a ſad and fatal blow,
A public loſs, and overthrow.
You that ſo long have wiſh'd them gone,
Be quiet now the thing is done:
Did they torment you e'er your day?
God hath remov'd them out o' th' way.
Now ſleep in ſin, and take your eaſe;
Their doctrine ſhall no more diſpleaſe.
But, Lord! what ſhall become of us?
Our teacher's gone, and left us thus:
To whom ſhall we ourſelves addreſs,
When conſcience labours in diſtreſs?
Oh! who ſhall help us out at need?
Or pour in balm when wounds do bleed?
Help, Lord! for unto thee our eyes
Do pour out tears; our groans, our cries
Shall never ceaſe, 'till thou reſtore
The mercies which we had before;
'Till Sion's paths, where graſs now grows,
Be trodden by the feet of thoſe
That love thy name, and long t' enjoy
The mercies they have ſinn'd away.

CHAP. XI.

Upon the Corruption of the Seed before it ſprings.

Seeds die and rot, and then muſt 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, John xii. 24. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit." The

Digitized by Google

death of the corn in the earth, is not a total death, but only the corruption or alteration of it: for if once the seminal life and vertue 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 here 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 dis-"honour; they are raised in glory; they are sown natural bo-"dies; they are raised spiritual bodies," 1 Cor. xv. 43, 44. 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," Job xix. 25, *&c.* And the resemblance betwixt the seed sown, and springing up; and the bodies of the saints dying, and rising again, lies in these following 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, Rom. viii. 10. Though Christ be in him, yet the body is dead; that is, sentenced to death, because of sin, Heb. ix. 27. "But it is appointed for all men once to "die."

2. The seed is cast into the earth in hope, 1 Cor. ix. 10. Were there not a resurrection of it expected, the husbandman would never be willing to cast away his corn. The bodies of saints are also committed to the grave in hope, 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, "concerning those which are asleep, as they which have no "hope; for if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even "so also them which sleep in Jesus, shall the Lord bring with "him." This blessed hope of a resurrection sweetens not only the troubles of life, but the pangs of death.

3. The seed is cast into the earth seasonably, in its proper season: so are the bodies of the saints, Job v. 26. "Thou shalt "come to thy grave in a full age, as a shock of corn cometh "in, in its season." They always die in the fittest time, though

Digitized by Google

sometimes they seem to die immaturely: the time of their death was from all eternity prefixed by God, beyond which they cannot go, and short of which they cannot come.

4. The seed lies many days and nights under the clods, before it rises and appears again; "even so man lieth down, and "riseth not again until the heavens be no more," Job xiv. 12. The days of darkness in the grave are many.

5. When the time is come for its 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 way through the clods. So in that day when the great trump shall sound, bone shall come to its bone, and the grave shall not be able to hold them a minute longer. Both sea and earth must render the dead that are in them, Rev. xx. 13.

6. When the seed appears above-ground, it appears much more fresh and orient, than when it was cast into the earth: God cloaths it with such beauty, that it is not like to 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. not properly, but analogically spiritual; for look, as spirits subsist without food, raiment, sleep, know no lassitude, weariness or pain; so our bodies, after the resurrection, shall be above these necessities and distempers; for we shall be as the angels of God, Matth. xxii. 30. 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 an human body is capable of, Phil. iii. 21. Indeed, the glory of the soul shall be the greatest glory; that is the orient 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 pieces, absolutely and everlastingly freed, (1.) From all natural infirmities and distempers: Death is their good physician, which at once freed 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, which render them very unserviceable to God. *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

Digitized by Google

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 again, God will bestow rich gifts and dowries, even upon the body, in the day of its re-espousals to the soul. (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, 2 Sam. xiv. 25. "That from "the crown of the head, to the soal of his foot, there was no "blemish in him." (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 and tortured with cares and troubles, to provide for a perishing body? Many unbelieving and unbecoming fears, it is now vexed with: What shall it eat? And what shall it drink? And wherewithal shall it be cloathed? "But meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; "God shall destroy both it and them," 1 Cor. vi. 13. *i. e.* as to their present use and office; for as to its existence, so the belly shall not be destroyed. But even as the masts, poop and stern of a ship abide in the harbour, after the voyage is ended, so shall these bodily members, as Tertullian excellently illustrates it. (4.) They shall be freed from death, to which thenceforth they can be subject no more; that formidable adversary of nature shall assault it no more. "For they which "shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the re-"surrection 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 separate, and single spirits, without bodies as the angels are: 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 kind of living upon, and delighting in creatures, seems in that text (by a synecdoche of the part which is ordinarily in scripture put for all creature-delights, dependencies, and necessities) 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!

* Ἰσαγγελος βιωσεται

Digitized by Google

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 my body now for the interest of thy glory, or 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! *The healthful saint's reflection.*

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 overvalued by me.

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

2. If my body shall as surely rise again in glory, vigour, and excellent endowments, as the seed which I sow doth; why should not this comfort me over all the pains, weakness, and dulness, with which my soul is now clogged? Thou knowest, my God, what a grief it hath been to my soul, to be fettered and entangled with the distempers and manifold indispositions of this vile body: It hath made me sigh; and say, with holy Anselme, when he saw the mounting 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 seraphim, 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 so weak as now it is. *The sickly saint's reflection.*

3. And is it so indeed? Then let the dying saint, like Jacob, rouze up himself upon his bed, and encourage himself against the fears of death by this refreshing consideration. Let him say, with *The dying saint's reflection.*

Digitized by Google

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 ſhouldſt be ſo loth to part with it, though but for a time, 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; yea, even the holieſt of men do ſometimes ſenſibly feel the like in themſelves; but beware thou love it not immoderately or inordinately; it is but a creature, how dear ſoever it be to thee; yea, a fading creature, and that which now ſtands in thy way to the full enjoyment of God. But ſay, my ſoul, why are the thoughts of parting with it ſo burdenſome to thee? Why ſo loth 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 Paul at the departure of Oneſimus? Philem. ver. 15. "It therefore departeth for a ſeaſon, that thou mayeſt "receive it for ever." 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 ſollicitous about thine abſent friend; for the fruition of God in thine unbodied ſtate, ſhall fill thee with infinite ſatisfaction, and reſt.

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. *Nihil corpus ſenſit in nervo cum anima ſit in coelo.* When thy ſoul ſhall be in heaven, it will not be ſenſible how the body is uſed on earth.

The ungodly ſoul's reflection.

4. But, oh! what an uncomfortable parting will mine be! and how much more ſad our meeting again! how will this ſoul and body bluſh, yea, tremble, when they meet, who have been co-partners in ſo much guilt? I damned my ſoul, to pleaſe my fleſh, and now have ruined both thereby: Had I denied my fleſh to ſerve Chriſt, worn out my body in the ſervice of my ſoul, I had, thereby, happily provided for them both, but I began at the wrong end, and ſo have ruined both eternally.

Digitized by Google

The POEM.

BARE ſeeds have no great beauty, but, inhum'd,
That which they had is loſt, and quite conſum'd;
They ſoon corrupt and grow more baſe, by odds,
When dead, and bury'd underneath the clods:
It falls in baſeneſs, but at length doth riſe
In glory, which delights beholders eyes.
How great a difference have a few days made,
Betwixt it, in the buſhel and the blade!
This lovely, lively emblem aptly may
Type out the glorious reſurrection-day;
Wherein the ſaints, that in the duſt do lie,
Shall riſe in glory, vigour, dignity;
With ſinging, in that morning they ariſe,
And dazle glory, ſuch as mortal eyes
Ne'er viewed on earth. The ſparkling beauties here,
No more can equalize their ſplendor there,
Than glimmering glow-worms do the faireſt ſtar
That ſhines in heaven, or the ſtones that are
In every ſtreet, may competition hold
With glittering diamonds in rings of gold.
For unto Chriſt's moſt glorious body they
Shall be conform'd in glory at that day;
Whoſe luſtre would, ſhould it on mortals fall,
Tranſport a Stephen, and confound a Paul.
'Tis now a coarſe and crazy houſe of clay;
But, oh! how dear do ſouls for lodgings pay!
Few more than I: For thou, my ſoul, haſt been
Within theſe tents of Kedar cooped in;
Where, with diſtempers clogg'd, thou mak'ſt thy moans,
And, for deliverance, with tears and groans
Haſt often ſu'd: Cheer up, the time will be,
When thou from all theſe troubles ſhall be free:
No jarring humours, cloudy vapours, rheums,
Pains, aches, or whatever elſe conſumes
My days in grief; whilſt in the Chriſtian race,
Fleſh lags behind, and can't keep equal pace
With the more willing ſpirit: None of theſe
Shall thenceforth clog thee, or diſturb thine eaſe.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XII.

Upon the resemblance of Wheat and Tares.

As wheat resembled is, by viler tares;
So vile hypocrisy, like grace appears.

OBSERVATION.

IT is Jerom's observation, that wheat and tares are so much alike in their first springing up, that it is exceeding difficult to distinguish the one from the other: These are his words, *Inter triticum et lolium quandiu herba est, et nondum culmus venit ad spicam; grandis similitudo est; et indiscernendo aut nulla, aut per difficilis distantia.* The difference (saith he) between them, is either none at all, or wonderfully difficult to discern, which those words of Christ, Mat. xiii. 30. plainly confirm. Let them both alone till the harvest; thereby intimating, both the difficulty of distinguishing the tares and wheat; as also the unwarrantable rashness of bold and hasty censures of men's sincerity or hypocrisy, which is there shadowed by them.

APPLICATION.

HOW difficult soever it be to discern the difference betwixt wheat and tares, yet, doubtless, the eye of sense can much easier discriminate them, than the most quick and piercing eye of man can discern the difference betwixt special and common grace; for all saving graces in the saints have their counterfeits in hypocrites. There are *similar works* in these, which a spiritual and very judicious eye may easily mistake for the *saving and genuine effects* of the sanctifying Spirit.

Doth the Spirit of God convince the consciences of his people of the evil of sin? Rom. vii. 9. Hypocrites have their convictions too, Exod. x. 16. "Then Pharaoh called for Moses "and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the "Lord your God, and against you." Thus was Saul also convicted, 1 Sam. xv. 24.

Doth true conviction and compunction work reformation of life in the people of God? Even hypocrites also have been famous for their reformations. The unclean spirit often goes out of the formal hypocrite, by an external reformation; and yet still retains his propriety in them, Matth. xii. 43, 44. For that departure is indeed no more than a politic retreat. Many that shall never escape the damnation of hell, have yet escaped

Digitized by Google

the pollutions of the world, and that by the knowledge of the Son of God, 2 Pet. ii. 21.

Doth the Spirit of the Lord produce that glorious and supernatural work of faith in convinced and humble souls? In this also the hypocrite apes and imitates the believer, Acts viii. 13. "Then Simon himself believed also." Luke viii. 13. "These "are they which for a while believe, and in time of temptation "fall away."

Doth the precious eye of faith, discovering the transcendent excellencies that are in Christ, inflame the affections of the believing soul with vehement desires and longings after him? Strange motions of heart have also been found in hypocrites towards Christ and heavenly things, John vi. 34. "Lord, ever-"more give us this bread." Mat. xxv. 8. "Give us of your oil, "for our lamps are gone out." With what a rapture was Balaam transported, when he said, "Let me die the death of the "righteous, and my last end be like his!" Numb. xxiii. 10.

Doth the work of faith, in some believers, bear upon its top branches the full ripe fruit of a blessed assurance? Lo! what strong confidences, and high-built persuasions of an interest in God, have sometimes been found even in unsanctified ones? John viii. 54. "Of whom you say, that he is your God; and "yet ye have not known him." To the same height of confidence arrived those vain souls, mentioned in Rom. ii. 19. Yea, so strong may this false assurance be, that they dare boldly venture to go to the judgment-seat of God, and there defend it, Mat. vii. 22. "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy "name?"

Doth the Spirit of God fill the heart of the assured believer with joy unspeakable and full of glory, giving them, *through faith*, a prelibation, or foretaste of heaven itself, in those first fruits of it? How near to this comes that which the *apostle* supposes may be found even in *apostates*? Heb. vi. 8, 9. who are there said "to taste the good word of God, and the powers of "the world to come." What shall I say, if real Christians delight in ordinances, those that are none, may also delight in approaching to God, Ezek. xxxiii. 32. It may be you will say, though the difference be not easily discernable in their active obedience, yet, when it shall come to suffering, there every eye may discern it; the false heart will then flinch, and cannot brook that work. And yet even this is no infallible rule neither; for the apostle supposes, that the *salamander* of hypocrisy may live in the very flames of martyrdom, 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

Digitized by Google

" If I give my body to be burnt, and have not charity." And it was long since determined in this case, *Non poena, sed causa facit martyrem*; so, that without controversy, the difficulty of distinguishing them is very great.

And this difference will yet be more subtle and undiscernible, if I should tell you, that as in so many things the hypocrite resembles the saint; so there are other things in which a real Christian may act too like an hypocrite. When we find a Pharaoh confessing, and Herod practising, as well as hearing, a Judas preaching Christ, and Alexander venturing his life for Paul; and, on the other side, shall find a David condemning that in another, which he practised himself, an Hezekiah glorying in his riches, a Peter dissembling, and even all the disciples forsaking Christ in an hour of trouble and danger: O then! how hard is it for the eye of man to discern betwixt chaff and wheat? How many upright hearts are now censured, whom God will clear? How many false hearts are now approved, whom God will condemn? Men ordinarily have no clear convictive proofs, but only probable symptoms; which, at most, can beget but a conjectural knowledge of another's state. And they that shall peremptorily judge either way, may possibly wrong the generation of the upright; or, on the other side, absolve and justify the wicked. And truly, considering what hath been said, it is no great wonder, that dangerous mistakes are so frequently made in this matter. But though man cannot, the Lord both can, and will, perfectly discriminate them. " The Lord knoweth who are his," 2 Tim. ii. 19. He will have a day perfectly to sever the tares from the wheat, to melt off the varnish of the most resplendent and refined hypocrite, and to blow off the ashes of infirmities, which have covered and obscured the very sparks of sincerity in his people: he will make such a division as was never yet made in the world, how many divisions soever there have been in it. " And then shall men indeed return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; betwixt him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not." Mean while, my soul, thou canst not better employ thyself, whether thou be sound or unsound, than in making these reflections upon thyself.

REFLECTIONS.

The censorious soul's reflection.

And is this so? Then, Lord, pardon the rashness and precipitancy of my censorious spirit; for I have often boldly anticipated thy judgment, and assumed thy prerogative, although thou hast said, " Why dost thou judge thy brother?

Digitized by Google

"And why doſt thou ſet at nought thy brother? We ſhall all "ſtand before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt. For it is written, "As I live (ſaith the Lord) every knee ſhall bow to me, and "every tongue ſhall confeſs to God. Let us not therefore "judge one another any more," Rom xiv. 10, 11, 12, 13. And again; "He that judgeth me is the Lord. Let us there-"fore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who "both will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and "make manifeſt the counſels of the heart; and then ſhall every "man have praiſe of God," 1 Cor. iv. 4, 5.

What if God will own ſome of them for his ſons, to whom I refuſe to give the reſpect of brethren? I may paſs haſty and headlong cenſures upon others; but where is my commiſſion for ſo doing? I want not only a commiſſion, but fit qualifications for ſuch a work as this. Can I pierce into the heart as God? Can I infallibly diſcover the hidden motives, ends and principles of actions? Beſides, O my ſoul, thou art conſcious of ſo much falſeneſs in thyſelf, that were there no other conſideration, that alone might reſtrain thee from all uncharitable and haſty cenſures. If others knew but what I know of myſelf, would they not judge as ſeverely of me, as I do of others?

The preſumptuous ſoul's reflection.

2. Though I may not judge the final ſtate of another, yet I may, and ought to judge the ſtate of my own ſoul; which is, doubtleſs, a more neceſſary and concerning work to me. For ſince every ſaving grace in a Chriſtian hath its counterfeit in the hypocrite, how needful is it for thee, O my ſoul, to make a ſtand here, and ſolemnly to ponder this queſtion, Whether thoſe things, whereon I depend, as my beſt evidences for the life to come, be the real, or only the common works of the Spirit? Whether they may be ſuch as can now endure the teſt of the word, and abide a fair trial at the bar of my own conſcience?

Come then, my ſoul, ſet the Lord before thee, to whom the ſecrets of all hearts are manifeſt; and in the awful ſenſe of that great day, make true anſwer to theſe heart-diſcovering queries: For though thou canſt not diſcern the difference betwixt theſe things in another, yet thou mayeſt and oughteſt to diſcern it in thyſelf: For what man knows the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit of man that is in him?

1. Is my obedience uniform? am I the ſame man at all times, places and companies? Or rather, am I not exact and curious in open and public, remiſs and careleſs in private and

Digitized by Google

secret duties? Sincere souls are uniform souls, Psal. cxix. 6. the hypocrite is no closet-man, Matth. vi. 5.

2. Doth that which I call grace in me oppose and mortify, or doth it not rather quietly consist with, and protect my lusts and corruptions? True grace tolerates no lust, Gal. v. 17. No, not the bosom darling corruptions, Psal. xviii. 23.

3. Doth that which I call my grace, humble, empty, and abase my soul? Or rather, doth it not puff it up with self-conceitedness? All saving grace is humbling grace, 1 Cor. xv. 10. "But the soul which is lifted up, is not upright," Hab. ii. 4.

Lastly, Canst thou, my soul, rejoice and bless God for the grace imparted to others? And rejoice, if any design for Christ be carried on in the world by other hands? Or, rather, dost thou not envy those that excel thee, and carest for no work in which thou art not seen?

But stay, my soul, it is enough: If these be the substantial differences betwixt special and common grace, I more than doubt, I shall not endure the day of his coming, *Whose fan is in his hand.* Do not those spots appear upon me, which are not the spots of his children? Woe is me, poor wretch! the characters of death are upon my soul! Lord add power to the form, life to the name to live, practice to the knowledge, or I perish eternally! O rather give me the *saint's heart*, than the *angels tongue*; the poorest breathing of the Spirit, than the richest ornaments of common gifts! Let me never deceive myself, or others, in matters of so deep and everlasting consequence.

The POEM.

IN eastern countries, as good authors write,
Tares, in their springing up, appear to sight,
Not like itself, a weed, but real wheat;
Whose shape and form it counterfeits so neat,
That 'twould require a most judicious eye,
The one from t'other to diversify.
Till both to some maturity be grown,
And then the difference is eas'ly known.
Even thus hypocrisy, that cursed weed,
Springs up so like true grace, that he will need
More than a common insight in this case,
That saith, this is not, that is real grace.
Ne'er did the cunning actor, tho' a slave
Array'd in princely robes, himself behave
So like a king, as this doth act the part

Digitized by Google

Of saving grace, by its deep hellish art.
Do gracious souls melt, mourn, and weep for sin?
The like in hypocrites observ'd hath been.
Have they their comforts, joys, and raptures sweet?
With them in comforts hypocrites do meet.
In all religious duties they can go
As far as saints, in somethings farther too;
They speak like angels, and you'll think within,
The very spirit of Christ and grace hath been.
They come so near, that some, like Isaac, take
Jacob for Esau, this, for that mistake:
And boldly call (their eyes, with his, being dim)
True grace, hypocrisy; and duty, sin:
Yea, many also, Jacob-like, embrace
Leah for Rachel, common gifts for grace:
And in their bosom hug it, 'till the light
Discover their mistake, and clear their sight:
And then, like him, confounded they will cry,
Alas! 'tis Leah, curs'd hypocrisy!
Guide me, my God, that I may not, instead
Of saving grace, nurse up this cursed weed.
O let my heart, at last, by thee be found
Sincere, and all thy workings on it sound!

CHAP. XIII.

Upon the Dangers incident to the 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 critical and dangerous periods between 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 plucked up as soon as it begins to sprout, by rooks, and other devouring fowls, Mat. xiii. 4. But if it escape the fowls, and gets root in the earth, yet then it is hazarded by noxious weeds, which purloin, and suck away its nourishment, whilst it is yet in the tender blade. If by the care of the vigilant husbandman it be freed from choaking weeds; yet, lastly, as great a danger as any of the

Digitized by Google

former still attends it; for oftentimes, whilst it is blowing in the ear, blastings and mildews smite it in the stalk, and cuts off the juice and sap that should ascend to nourish the ear, and so shrivels and dries up the grain whilst it is yet immaturate; 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 more greater dangers, amongst which it answerably meets with three dangerous periods, which marvellously hazard it: So that it is a much greater wonder that it ever arrives at its just 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 Christ, its Author, whom Herod sought to destroy in his very infancy. The new creature is scarce warm in its seat, before it must fight to defend itself. This conflict is excellently set forth in that famous text, Gal. v. 17. "The "flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; "and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye can- "not do the things that ye would."

By flesh here understand the corruption of nature by original sin, and the sinful motions thereof; by Spirit, not the soul, or natural spirit of man, but the Spirit of God in man, *viz.* those graces in man which are the workmanship of the Spirit, and therefore called by his name. The opposition betwixt these two is expressed by lusting, *(i. e.)* desiring the mutual ruin and destruction of each other; for even when they are not acting, yet then they are lusting; there is an opposite disposition against each other? which opposition is both a *formal* and an *effective* opposition. There are two contrary forms; two men in every saint, Col. iii. 9, 10. From hence an effective opposition must needs follow; for as things are in their natures and principles, so they are in their operations and effects; workings always follow beings; 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 cease to oppose sin, it would cease to be grace. And this doth much

Digitized by Google

more endanger the work of grace 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 and working 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; ſo that ye cannot do the good, nor yet the evil that ye would; not the good that ye would, becauſe when the ſpirit moveth to good, and beats upon the heart by Divine pulſations, exciting it to duty, the fleſh-croſſes and oppoſes it there; and 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; nor yet the evil that you would commit, if grace were not there; becauſe when luſt ſtirs, in its firſt motions, grace puts a rub in its way. "How can I do this great wickedneſs, "and ſin againſt God?" Gen. xxxix. 9. And if it cannot (which for the moſt part it doth) hinder the acting of ſin, yet it ſo engages the will againſt it, that it is not committed with complacency and full conſent, Rom. vii. 15. "What I do, I allow not." (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, Matth. iv. 11. 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, oh the wonder of free grace! it is not ſwallowed up in victory, but it eſcapes this hazard.

But (2.) It ſoon meets with another, though it eſcapes this, even by temptations, which ſtrike deſperately 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, do often fade, and greatly endanger it, when it is even ready for the harveſt. Thus it fell out with David, whoſe laſt ways were not like his firſt; and yet by this theſe holy fruits were not utterly deſtroyed, becauſe it is the ſeed of God, and ſo is immortal, 1 John v. 4, 5. And alſo becauſe the promiſes of perſeverance and victory made to it, cannot be fruſtrated; amongſt which theſe

Digitized by Google

are excellent, Isa. liv. 10. Jer. xxxiv. 40. 1 Cor. i. 8. Psal. i. 3. Psal. cxxv. 1. John iv. 15. So that here is matter of unspeakable comfort; though the flesh say, *Ego deficiam*, I will fail thee; though the world say, *Ego decipiam*, I will deceive thee; though the devil say, *Ego eripiam*, I will snatch thee away; yet as long as Christ saith, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, thy graces are secure in the midst of all these enemies.

REFLECTIONS.

The apostate's reflection.

1. This soul of mine was once plowed up by conviction, and sown (as I thought) with the seed of God. In those days many purposes and good resolutions began to chink and bud forth, promising a blessed harvest: but oh! (with what consternation and horror should I speak it) the cares and pleasures of this life, the lusts and corruptions of my base heart springing up, have quite destroyed and choaked it; by which it appears it was not the seed of God, as I then imagined it to be; and now my expected harvest shall be an heap in the day of grief and desperate sorrow, Isa. xvii. 11. I had convictions, but they are gone; troubles for sin, conscience of duties, but all is blasted, and my soul is now as a barren field, which God hath cursed.

Woe is me! I have revolted from God, and now that dreadful word, Jer. xvii. 5, 6. is evidently fulfilled upon me; "for "I am like the heath in the desart, that seeth not when good "cometh; my soul inhabits the parched places of the wilder-"ness." Alas! all my formal and heartless duties were but as so many scare-crows in the field, which could not defend these slight workings from being devoured by the infernal fowls. Had these principles been the seed of God, no doubt they would have continued and overcome the world, 1 John ii. 19. Wretched soul! thy case is sad; it will be better with the uncultivated wilderness, than with such a miscarrying soul, unless the great Husbandman plow thee up the second time, and sow thy heart with better seed.

The careless soul's reflection.

2. And are the corruptions of my heart to grace, 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 blustring 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 pro-

Digitized by Google

miſed it ſhall perſevere, and therefore I need not be ſo ſollicitous to preſerve it; for as this inference is quite oppoſite to the nature of true grace and aſſurance, which never encourage to careleſneſs, 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-promiſe: for although it is readily granted, that God hath made many comfortable and ſweet promiſes to the grace of his people, yet we muſt expect to enjoy the benefits and bleſſings of all thoſe promiſes, in that way and order in which God hath promiſed them; and that is in the careful and diligent uſe of thoſe means which he hath preſcribed, Ezek. xxxvi. 36, 37. For promiſes do not exclude, but imply the uſe of means, Acts xxvii. 31. I know my life is determined to a day, to an hour, and I ſhall live out every minute God hath appointed; but yet, I am bound to provide food, raiment and phyſic to preſerve it.

The doubting ſoul's reflections.

To conclude, let all doubting Chriſtians reflect ſeriouſly upon this truth, and ſuck marrow and fatneſs out of it to ſtrengthen and eſtabliſh them againſt all their fears: your life, your ſpiritual life hath for many years hanged in ſuſpence 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 choaked 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? Hath he not ſaid, "That having begun the good "work in thee, he will perfect it to the day of Chriſt?" Phil. i. 6. Hath he not ſaid, I give unto them eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh, John x. 28. 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 one uncertain, nor fight as one that beats the air, 1 Cor. ix. 26. But the foundation of God ſtands ſure, having this ſeal, the Lord knows who are his, 2 Tim. ii. 19. Though thy grace be weak, thy God is ſtrong; though the ſtream ſeem ſometimes to fail, yet 'tis fed by an ever-flowing fountain.

The POEM.

'TIS juſtly wondered that an ear of corn
Should come at laſt in ſafety to the barn:

Digitized by Google

It runs through many hazards, threatning harms,
Betwixt the sower's hands, and reaper's arms.
The earth no sooner takes it from the sack,
But you may see behind the sower's back
A troop of thieves, which would at once destroy
That seed in which lies hid the seed of joy.
This dangerous period past, it soon doth fall
Into a second, no less critical.
It shooteth forth the tender blade, and then
The noxious weeds endanger it again.
These clasp about it till they kindly choak
The corn, as flatt'ring ivy doth the oak.
Are weeds destroy'd, and all that danger past?
Lo, now another comes, the worst at last:
For when i' th' ear it blows, begins to kern,
A mildew smites it, which you can't discern,
Nor any way prevent, till all be lost,
The corn destroy'd, with all your hopes and cost.
Thus saving grace, that precious seed of joy,
Which hell and nature plot how to destroy,
Escapes ten thousand dangers, first and last,
O who can say, now all the danger's past?
'Tis like a crazy bark toss'd in a storm,
Or like a taper which is strangely born
Without a lanthorn in a blust'ring night,
Or like to glimmering sparks, whose dying light
Is still preserv'd: the roaring waves swell high,
Like moving mountains in the darken'd sky:
On their proud backs, the little bark is even
Mounted unto the battlements of heaven;
From thence dismounted, to the deeps doth slide,
Receiving water upon every side;
Yet he, whose voice the proudest waves obey,
Brings it at last into the quiet key:
The blustring winds strive, with a fatal puff,
To bring the taper to a stinking snuff:
Their churlish blasts extinguish it, and then
Our gentle breath recovers it again:
The fainting sparks beneath the ashes lie,
Where, choak'd and smother'd, they begin to die;
But these collected, we do gently blow,
Till from faint sparks to lively flames they grow.
Even thus is grace preserv'd, thus kept alive;
By constant wonders, grace doth live and thrive.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XIV.

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 untired patience, to digest all his labours. He that plows, plows in hope, 1 Cor. vi. 19. And they are not so irrational, to think they shall presently be partakers of their hope; nor, so foolish to anticipate the harvest, by cutting down their corn before it be fully ripened: but are content to plow, sow and weed it; and when it is fully ripe, then they go forth into their fields, and reap it down with joy.

APPLICATION.

CAN a little corn cause men to digest so many difficult labours, and make them wait with invincible patience till the reaping time come? Much more should the expectation of eternal glory steel and fortify my spirit against all intercurrent hardships and 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 in heart," Psal. xcii. 11. "Behold the husbandman waiteth," *&c.* Jam. v. 7. "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, Isa. liii. 7. 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. I have read of one Elezarius, a nobleman, that when his wife wondered at his exceeding great patience in bearing injuries, he thus answered her: You know sometimes my heart is ready to rise with indignation against such as wrong me; but I presently begin to think of the wrongs that Christ suffered; and say thus to myself; Although thy servant should pluck thy beard, and smite thee on thy face, this were nothing to what the Lord suffered: he suffered more and greater things; and assure yourself, wife, I never leave off thinking on the injuries done to my Saviour, till such time as

Digitized by Google

my mind be still and quiet. To this purpose it was well noted by Bernard, speaking of Christ's humiliation, Was Christ the Lord of glory thus humbled and emptied of his fulness of glory? And shall such a worm as I swell? (2.) The desert of sin, Lam. iii. 39. "Why doth the living man complain?" It was a good saying of the blessed Greenham; when sin lies heavy, affliction lies light. * And it is a famous instance which Dr. Taylor gives us of the duke of Conde. I have read, (saith he) when the duke of Conde had voluntarily entered into the incommodities of a religious poverty and retirement; he was one day spied and pitied by a lord of Italy, who, out of tenderness wished him to be more careful and nutritive of his person. The good duke answered, Sir, be not troubled, and think not that I am ill provided of conveniencies; for I send an 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 my self, and the consideration of what I deserve for my sins, which is eternal torments; and when with this knowledge I arrive at my lodgings, how unprovided soever I find it, methinks it is ever better than I deserve. (3.) And as the sense of sin, which merits hell, sweetens present difficulties, so (to come home to the present similitude) do the expectations and hopes of a blessed harvest and reward in heaven. This made Abraham willing to wander up and down many years as a stranger in the world; for he looked for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The hopes of such a harvest is encouragement enough 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 (which are therefore called the appointed weeks of the harvest) Jer. v. 24. and these cannot be hastened; but when we have done all that we can on our part, must wait till God send the former and the latter rain, and give every natural cause its effect: so is it in reference to our spiritual harvest; we are appointed to sweat in the use of all God's appointments; and when we have done all, must patiently wait till the divine decrees be accomplished, and 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 the glory to come, these following considerations are of excellent use.

* Dr. Taylor's great Exemplar, p. 103.

Digitized by Google

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," Heb. x. 37. "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 taber-"nacle," 2 Pet. i. 13, 14. *q. d.* 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 your glory.

3. Husbandmen know, though they cannot yet gather in the precious fruits of the earth, yet all this while they are ripening and preparing 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 eternal *decree*; Mat. xxv. 34. by an act of *creation*, Heb. xi. 10. by the death of Christ, which made a purchase of it, Heb. x. 19, 20. and by his ascension into it, John xiv. 2, 3. 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 us," 2 Cor. v. 5. he is every day at work, by ordinances, and by providences, to perfect his work in us; and as soon as that is finished,

Digitized by Google

we shall hear a voice like that, Rev. xi. 12. "Come up hither, "and immediately we shall be in the spirit;" for how ardently soever, we long for that desirable day, Christ longs for it more than we can do.

4. The husbandman is glad of the first-fruits, that encourages him, though the greatest part be yet out: and have not you received the first-fruits of that glory? Have you not earnests, pledges, and first-fruits of it? 'Tis your own fault, if every day you feed not upon such blessed comforts of the spirit, Rom. viii. 23. Rom. v. 2. 1 Pet. viii. 9. O how might the interposing time, even all the days of your patience here be sweetned with such prelibations of the glory to come!

5. Husbandmen know 'tis best to reap, when 'tis 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 whilst it's green, but he might gather it easier, and taste it sweeter, by tarrying longer for it. We would fain be glorified *per saltum*. 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 fly away and be at rest. Then we cry to God for ourselves, as Moses for his sister Miriam, "Heal her [now], O God, I beseech thee!" Numb. 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 into glory, thou shalt come as a shock of corn in its season.

REFLECTIONS.

The longing soul's reflection. I have waited for thy salvation, O God! Having received thy first-fruits, my soul longs to fill its bosom with the full ripe 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 most lovely face? When shall I hear his soul-transporting voice! Some need patience to die: I need it as much to live. Thy sights, O God, by faith, have made this world a burthen, 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 all 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

Digitized by Google

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! O day of gladness of my heart! How long, Lord! how long! Here I wait as the poor man at Bethesda's 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 is 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 have 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 all they that wait for thee.

The lingring soul's reflection.

But how doth my slothful soul sink down into the flesh, and settle itself 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 is indeed 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. 12. 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?* Or want I the assurance of a better state? 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."

The POEM.

NO prudent husbandman expects
The fruit of what he sows,
'Till every cause have its effects,
And then he reaps and mows:
He works in hope the year throughout,
And counts no labour lost,

Digitized by Google

If, when the season comes about,
His harvest quits his cost.
His rare example justly may
Rebuke, and put to shame
My soul; which sows its seed one day,
And looks to reap the fame.
Is cursed nature now become
So kind a soil to grace,
That to perfection it should come
Within so short a space?
Grace springs not up with seed and ease,
Like mushrooms in a night;
But rather, by degrees increase,
As doth the morning light.
Is corn so dear to husbandmen?
Much more is heaven to me.
Why should not I have patience, then,
To wait as well as he?
To promises, appointed years
By God's decrees, are set;
These once expired, beyond its fears
My soul shall quickly get.
How small a part of hasty time,
Which quickly will expire,
Doth me within this world confine,
And then comes my desire.
Come, Lord! how long my soul hath gasp'd!
Faith my affections warms;
O when shall my poor soul be clasp'd
In it's Redeemer's arms!
The time seems long; yet here I'll lie,
'Till thou, my God, do call:
It is enough, eternity
Will make amends for all.

CHAP. XV.

Upon the Harvest-Season.

Corn, fully ripe, is reap'd, and gather'd in:
So must yourselves, when ripe in grace, or sin.

OBSERVATION.

WHEN the fields are white to harvest, then husbandmen walk through them, rub the ears; and finding

Digitized by Google

the grain full and solid, they presently prepare their scythes and sickles; send for their harvest-men, who quickly reap and mow 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 threshed out; the good grain gathered into an heap, the chaff separated and burnt, or thrown to the dung-hill. 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, Joel ii. 3.) before them, like the garden of Eden, and behind them a desolate wilderness; and, in some places, 'tis usual to set fire to the dry stubble, when the corn is housed; which rages furiously, and covers it all with ashes.

APPLICATION.

THE application of this, I find made to my hands by Christ himself, in Mat. xiii. 38, 39. "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 reap-"ers are the angels."

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 grows black, he hurries in his corn with all possible haste, and houses it day and night.

So doth God, the great Husbandman; he hurries the saints into their graves, when judgments are coming upon the world; Isa. lvii. 1. "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." Methuselah died the year before the flood; Augustin a little before the sacking of Hippo; Pareus just before the taking of Heidelburgh; Luther a little before the wars broke 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? I find some of them thus ranked in a funeral *elegy*:

Digitized by Google

The learned Twisse went first (it was his right:)
Then holy Palmer, Burroughs, Love, Gouge, White,
Hill, Whitaker, grave Gataker and Strong,
Perne, Marshal, Robinson, all gone along.
I have not nam'd them half; their only strife
Hath been (of late) who should first part with life.
These few who yet survive, sick of this age,
Long to have done their parts, and leave the stage.

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, nor tares, can possibly resist the sharp and 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; Eccl. viii 8. "No man can keep "alive his own soul in the day of death; and there is no dis- "charge in that war." The frail body of man is as unable to withstand that stroke, as the weak reeds, or feeble stalks of the corn, are to resist the keen scythe and 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, Psalm cxxix. 6, 7. "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 sheaves, his bosom." Such withered grass are the wicked, who are never taken into the reaper's bosom; but as soon as saints 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, Luke xvi. 22. For look, as these blessed spirits did exceedingly rejoice at their conversion, Luke xv. 10. and thought it no dishonour to minister to them, whilst they stood in the field, Heb. i. 14. 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, Job vii. 9, 10. "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."

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

Digitized by Google

they be come to a maturity of grace or wickedneſs. Saints are not reaped down 'till their grace is ripe, Job v. 26. "Thou ſhalt "come to thy grave in a full age, as a ſhock of corn cometh "in its ſeaſon." 'Not that every godly man dies in ſuch a 'full old age (ſaith Mr. Caryl on that place;) but yet, in one 'ſenſe it is an univerſal truth, and ever fulfilled; for whenſo-'ever 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; (*i. e.*) they are ripe for death whenever they die. 'Whenever a 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 bloſſom; yet in his ſpiritual ca-'pacity he never dies before he be ripe: God ripens him ſpee-'dily, when he intends to take him out of the world ſpeedily; 'he can let out ſuch warm rays and beams of his Spirit upon 'them, as ſhall ſoon maturate the ſeeds of grace into a pre-'paredneſs for glory.'

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

It is worth remarking, that the meaſure of the ſin, and the end of the ſinner, come together. So Joel iii. 13. "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." 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 their 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 hum-ble and ſelf-denying, than in the days of their firſt profeſſion. The longer a ſaint grows in the world, the better he is ſtill ac-quainted with his own heart, and his obligations to God; both

Digitized by Google

which are very humbling things. Paul had one foot in heaven, when he called himself the chiefest 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, ideots in their own apprehensions; still, with the increase of learning, laying aside their pride and arrogancy.

2. When harvest is nigh, the grain is more solid and pithy than ever it was before; green corn is soft and spungy, but ripe corn is substantial and weighty: So it is with Christians; the affections of a young Christian, perhaps are more feverous and 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 active and pliable: but as he grows up to a perfect state, the parts are more consolidated and firmly knit. The fingers of an old musician are not so nimble; but he hath a more judicious ear in music than in his youth.

3. When corn is dead ripe, it is apt to fall of it's own accord to the ground, and there shed; whereby it doth, as it were, anticipate the harvest-man, and calls upon him to put in the sickle. Not unlike to which are the lookings and longings, the groanings and hastnings 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; (*i. e.*) 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, upon whom they appear.

1. When conscience is wasted, and grown past feeling, having no more for sin; when it ceases to check, 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

Digitized by Google

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 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 strange sins; and then justice quickly gave them up for 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, ver. 20. "who wink with their eyes," whilst plodding wickedness, as men used to do when they are most intent upon the study of 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 intangled and overcome of those lusts they once seemed to have clean escaped, these bring upon themselves swift damnation, and their judgment lingers not, 2 Pet. ii. 3, 20.

5. He that can endure no reproof or controul in the way of his sin, but derides all counsel, and, like a strong current, rages at, and sweeps away all obstacles in his way, will quickly fall into the dead lake, Prov. xxix 1. "He that being often "reproved, hardneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed,

Digitized by Google

" and that without remedy." This is a death-ſpot, a hell-ſpot, where-ever it appears. From this very ſymptom the prophet plainly predicted the approaching ruin of Amazia, 2 Chron. xxv. 16. " I know that God hath determined to de-" ſtroy thee, becauſe thou haſt done this, and haſt not hearkned " to my voice." He that will not be timely counſelled, ſhall be quickly deſtroyed.

Laſtly, 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; and with whomſoever he bears long, to be ſure theſe are none of them.

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, Joel iii. 13. Gen. xv. 16. It is in the filling up of the meaſure of ſin, as in the filling up of a veſſel caſt into the ſea, which rowls from ſide to ſide, taking in the water by little and little till it be full, and then down it ſinks to the bottom. Mean while, admirable is divine patience, which bears with theſe veſſels of wrath, whilſt fitting for deſtruction?

REFLECTION.

The reflection of a growing Chriſtian.

1. Cheer thyſelf, O my ſoul! with the heart-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 fromthe ſpringing of the ſeed, and ſhooting forth of thoſe gracious habits, I may conclude an approaching harveſt: Now is my ſalvation nearer than when I believed; every day I come nearer to my ſalvation, Rom. xiii. 11. 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, *&c.* 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 down in mercy, and bound up in the bundle of life, 1 Sam. xv. 29. I have not yet attained the meaſure and proportion 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, Phil. iii.

Digitized by Google

12, 13. O mercy to be admired! that I, who lately had one foot in hell, ſtand now with one foot in heaven!

The reflection of the decaying Chriſtian.

2. But the caſe is far different with me; whilſt others are ripening apace for heaven, I am withering; many a ſoul plowed up by conviction, and ſown by ſanctification long after me, hath quite over-topped, and out-grown me; my ſweet and early bloſſoms are nipped and blown off, my bright morning over-caſt and clouded; had I kept on, according to the rate of my firſt growth, I had either now been in heaven, or at leaſt in the ſurburbs of it on earth; but my graces wither and languiſh, my heart contracts and cools to heavenly things; the ſun and rain of ordinances and providences improve not my graces: how ſad therefore is the ſtate of my ſoul!

The reflection of a hardning ſinner.

3. Thy caſe, O declining ſaint, is ſad, but not like mine: thine is but a temporary remiſſion of the acts of grace, which is recoverable; but I am judicially hardening, and "treaſuring "up to my ſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath," Rom. ii. 5. Time was, when I had ſome tender ſenſe of ſin, when I could mourn and grieve for it; now I have none at all: my heart is grown ſtupid and ſottiſh. Time was, when I had ſome conſcientious care of duty, when my heart would ſmite me for the neglect of it; but now none at all. Wretched ſoul! what wilt thou do? Thou art gone far, indeed, a few ſteps further will put thee beyond hope: hitherto I ſtand in the field; the long-ſuffering God doth yet ſpare me; yea, ſpare me, while he hath cut down many of my companions in ſin round about me. What doth this admirable patience, this long-ſuffering, drawn out to a wonder, ſpeak concerning me! doth it not tell me, that the Lord is not willing I ſhould periſh, but rather come to repentance? 2 Pet. iii. 9. And what argument is like his pity and patience, to lead a ſoul to repentance? Rom. ii. 4. O that I may not fruſtrate at laſt the end of a long-ſuffering God, left he proportion the degree of his wrath, according to the length of his patience!

The POEM.

WHEN fields are white, to harveſt forth you go
With ſcythes and ſickles to reap down and mow.
Down go the laden ears flat to the ground,
Which thoſe that follow having ſtitch'd and bound,
'Tis carried home unto the barn, and ſo
The fields are red where lately corn did grow.

Digitized by Google

This world's the field, and they that dwell therein
The corn and tares, which long have rip'ning been:
Angels the reapers, and the judgment day
The time of harvest, when, like corn and hay,
The fading flowers of earthly glory must
Be mowed down, and levell'd with the dust:
The barns are heaven and hell, the time draws nigh,
When through the darkned clouds, and troubled sky,
The Lord shall break; a dreadful trumpet shall
Sound to the dead; the stars from heaven fall;
The rowling spheres with horrid flames shall burn;
And then the tribes on earth shall wail and mourn.
The judgment set, before Christ's awful throne
All flesh shall be conven'd, and every one
Receive his doom; which, done, the just shall be
Bound in life's bundle, even as you see
The full ripe ears of wheat bound up and borne
In sheaves with joy into the owner's barn.
This done, the angels next in bundles bind
The tares together; as they had combin'd
In acting sin, so now their lot must be
To burn together in one misery.
Drunkards with drunkards pinion'd, shall be sent
To hell together in one regiment.
Adulterers and swearers there shall lie
In flames amongst their old society.
O dreadful howlings! O the hideous moans
Of fetter'd sinners! O the tears! the groans!
The doleful lamentations as they go
Chain'd fast together to their place of woe!
The world thus clear'd, as fields when harvest's in,
Shall be no more a stage, for acting sin.
With purifying flames it shall be burn'd,
Its stately fabrics into ashes turn'd.
Cease then, my soul, to dote on or admire
This splendid world, which is reserv'd for fire.
Decline the company of sinners here,
As thou would'st not be shackled with them there.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XVI.

Upon the Care of Husbandmen to provide for Winter.

Your winter store in summer you provide:
To Christian prudence this must be apply'd.

OBSERVATION.

GOOD husbands are careful in summer to provide for winter; then they gather in their winter store: food and fewel for themselves, and fodder for their cattle. "He that "gathers in summer, is a wise son: but he that sleeps in har-"vest, is a son that causeth shame," Prov. x. 5. A well chosen season is the greatest advantage to any action; which, as it is seldom found in haste, so it is often lost by delay. 'Tis a good proverb which the frugal Dutch have among them: *Bonus servatius faciet bonum bonifacium*; A good saver, will make a good benefactor. And 'tis a good proverb of our own, he that neglects the occasion, the occasion will neglect him. Husbandmen know that summer will not hold all the year; neither will they trust to the hopes of a mild and favourable winter, but in season provide for the worst.

APPLICATION.

WHat excellent Christians should we be, were we but as provident and thoughtful for our souls? 'Tis doubtless a singular point of Christian wisdom, to foresee a day of spiritual straits and 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 seven particulars.

1. Husbandmen know there is a change and vicissitude of seasons and weather; though it be pleasant summer weather now, yet winter will tread upon the heel of summer: frosts, snows, and great falls of rains 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, Gen. viii. 22. "Whilst "the earth remaineth, seed-time, and harvest, cold and heat, "winter and summer, day and night, shall not cease."

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 will be also an

Digitized by Google

autumn; if a day of *prosperity*, it will 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 endless 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, Gen. iii. 6.

2. Common prudence and experience enable the husbandman, in the midst of summer, to foresee a winter, and provide for it before he feel it; yea, natural instinct teaches this to the very birds of the air, and beasts of the field.

And spiritual wisdom should teach Christians to exercise their foreseeing faculties, and not suffer them to feel evil before they fear it. But, oh! the stupifying nature of sin! Though the stork in the heavens knows her appointed time, and the turtle, crane and swallow the time of their coming, yet man, whom God hath made wiser than the fowls of the air, in this, acts quite below them, Jer. viii. 7.

3. 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 of giving men a day of grace, is to furnish them with an opportunity for the everlasting happiness and salvation of their souls; Rev. ii. 21. "I gave her a space to repent." It is not a mere reprival of the soul, or only a delay of the execution of threatned wrath, though there be much mercy in that; but the peculiar aim of this patience and bounty of God, is to open for them a way to escape the wrath to come, "by leading them to repentance," Rom. ii. 4.

4. The husbandman doth not find all harvest-seasons alike favourable; sometimes they have much fair weather, and meet with no hindrance in their business; othertimes it is a catching harvest, but now and then a fair day, and then they must be nimble, or all is lost.

There is also a great difference in soul-seasons; some have had a long and fair season of grace; a hundred and twenty years did God wait upon the old world, in the ministry of Noah. Long did God wait on the gainsaying Israelites, Isa. xlii. 14. "I have a long time held my peace; I have been still, and "refrained myself." Others have a short and catching season, all lies upon a day, upon a nick of time, Acts xvii. 30.

5. A proper season neglected, and lost, is irrecoverable. Many things in husbandry must be done in their season, or cannot

Digitized by Google

be done at all for that year: if he plow not, and sow not, in the proper season, he loses the harvest of that year.

It is even so as to spiritual-seasons: Christ neglected, and grace despised, in the season when God offers them, are irrecoverably lost, Prov. i. 28. "Then (that is when the season is over) "they shall call upon me, but I will not hear." Oh! 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 afterwards. There was one resolved to kill Julius Cæsar such a day: the night before a friend sent him a letter to acquaint him with it: but he being at supper, and busy in discourse, said, to-morrow is a new day; and indeed it was *dies novissima*, his last day to him. Whence it became a proverb in Greece, *To-morrow is a new day*. 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, Luke xix. 42. "O that thou hadst known, at least, "in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace; but "now they are hid from thine eyes."

6. Those husbandmen that are careful and laborious in the summer, have the comfort and benefit of it in winter: he that then provides fewel, 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 shifts and straits. And he that provides for eternity, and lays up for his soul a good foundation against the time to come, shall eat when others are hungry, and sing when others howl, Isa. lxv. 13. A day of death will 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 sincere diligence in duties; as 2 Cor. i. 12. "This is our rejoicing, the testi- "mony of our conscience, that in sincerity and godly simpli- "city, we have had our conversation in this world." So Hezekiah, 2 Kings xx. 3. "Remember now, O Lord, how I "have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart." A day of judgment will come, and then foolish virgins, who neglected the season of getting oil in their lamps, will be put to their shifts; then they come to the wise, and say, Give us of your oil, Matth. xxv. 8, 9. but they have none to spare, and the season of buying is then over.

Digitized by Google

7. No wise husbandman will neglect a fit opportunity of gathering in his hay and corn, upon a presumption of much fair weather to come: he will not say, The weather is settled, and I need not trouble myself; though my corn and hay be fit for the house, yet I may get it in another time as well as now.

And no wise Christian will lose a present season for his soul, upon the hopes of much more time, yet to come; but will rather say, Now is my time, and I know not what will be hereafter: hereafter I may wish to see one of the days of the Son of man, and not see it, Luke xvii. 22. It is sad to hear how cunning some men are to dispute themselves out of heaven, as if the devil had hired them to plead against their own souls; sometimes urging the example of those that were called at the eleventh hour, Mat. xx. 6. and sometimes that of the penitent thief: but, oh! to how little purpose is the former pleaded? they that were called at the eleventh hour were never called before, as these have been; no man had hired, that is, called or invited them to Christ; and for the thief (as Mr. Fenner rightly observes) it was a singular and extraordinary example. It was done when Christ hanged on the cross, and was to be inaugurated; then kings manifest such bounty, and pardon such crimes as are never pardoned afterwards. Besides, God was then in a way of working miracles; then he rent the rocks, opened the graves, raised the dead, and converted this thief; but God is now out of that way.

REFLECTION.

The careless soul's reflection.

1. I have indeed been a good husband for the world: with what care and providence have I looked out for myself and family, to provide food to nourish them, and cloaths to defend them against the asperities of winter? mean while, 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 (though it were saved by another hand)? and then minding her child, ran up and down like one distracted, wringing her hands, and crying, O my child! my child! I have saved my goods, and lost my child! Such will be the case of thee my soul, Matth. xvi. 26. Besides, how easy will my conviction be at the bar of Christ? Will not my providence and care for the things of this life, leave me speechless and self-

Digitized by Google

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 thy 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 proper season of grace? What then have I done, 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 youth; neither indeed is it ordinary for God so to do. It is storied of Caius Marius Victorious, who lived about three hundred years after Christ, and to his old age continued a Pagan; but at last being convinced of the Christian verity, he came to Simplicianus, and told him, he would be a Christian; but neither he, nor the church could believe it, it being so rare an example for any to be converted at his age: but at last, seeing it was real, there was a shouting and gladness, and singing of psalms in all churches; the people crying, Caius Marius Victorius is become a Christian! This was written for a wonder: and what ground have I to think, that God will work such wonders for me, who have neglected his ordinary means of salvation? *The presumptuous soul's reflection.*

3. Bless the Lord, O my soul! who gave thee a season, a day for eternal life, which is more than he hath afforded for thousands; yea, bless the Lord for giving thee an heart to understand and improve that season. I confess I have not improved it as I ought; yet this I can (through mercy) say, that however it fare in future times with my outward man, though I have no treasures or stores laid up on earth, or if I have, they are but corruptible, yet I have a blessed hope laid up in heaven, Col. i. 5. I have bags that wax not old. Whilst worldlings rejoice in their stores and heaps, I rejoice in these eternal treasures. *The industrious soul's reflection.*

The POEM.

Observe in summer's sultry heat,
How in the hottest day
The husbandman doth toil and sweat
About his corn and hay:
If then he should not reap and mow,
And gather in his store,

Digitized by Google

How should he live, when, for the snow,
He can't move out of door?
The little ants, and painful bees,
By nature's instinct led,
These have their summer granaries
For winter furnished.
But thou, my soul, whose summer's day
Is almost past and gone;
What soul-provision dost thou lay
In stock to spend upon?
If nature teaches to prepare
For temporal life, much rather
Grace should provoke to greater care,
Soul-food in time to gather.
Days of affliction and distress
Are hasting on apace;
If now I live in carelesness,
How sad will be my case!
Unworthy of the name of man,
Who for that soul of thine,
Wilt not do that which others can
Do for their very kine.
Think, frugal farmers, when you see
Your mows of corn and hay,
What a conviction this will be
To you another day:
Who ne'er were up before the sun,
Nor break an hour's rest
For your poor souls, as you have done
So often for a beast.
Learn once to see the difference
Betwixt eternal things,
And those poor transient things of sense,
That fly with eagle's wings.

CHAP. XVII.

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

Digitized by Google

its seed in itself, for the conservation of their *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 kind of fruits, yet it is specificated 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 spirituals, and the proposition shadowed forth by it, is fully expressed by the apostle, Gal. vi. 7. "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." And as sure as the harvest follows the seed-time, so sure shall such fruits and effects result from the seeds 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," Psalm cxxvi. 6. The sum of all this is, that our present actions have the same respect and 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 anguish and sorrow to the soul that soweth it. 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 *physically* 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, though not in point of honesty, yet in point of personal utility; 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 all souls be swayed in their motions, only by the influence of present things: And where then would

Digitized by Google

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 be truly said of all our works; *Aeternitati 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! James ii. 12. What more transient than a vain word? And yet for such words, men shall give an account in the day of judgment, Matth. xii. 36. That's 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 and reward of them then. Though the fruit or consequence 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 and quality, 2 Cor. v. 10. Then Dionysius shall retract that saying, *Ecce quam prospera navigatio a Deo datur sacrilegis*, Behold how God favours our sacrileges! Sometimes indeed (though but rarely) God causes sinners to reap, in this world, the same that they have sown; as hath been their sin, such hath been their punishment. It was openly confessed by Adonibezek, Judg. i. 7. "As I have done, so hath God requited me."

Socrates, in his church history, furnishes us with a pertinent passage to this purpose, concerning Valens the Emperor, who was an Arian, and a bitter persecutor of the Christians: This man, when eighty of the orthodox Christians sailed from Constantinople to Nicomedia, to treat with him about the points of Arianism, and to settle the matter by way of dispute; the Emperor hearing of their arrival, while they were yet in the harbour, and not a man landed, caused the ships to be fired wherein they were, and so consumed them all. Not long after, in his wars against the Goths, he was overthrown; and hiding himself in a little cottage, the enemy coming by, burnt it and him together. Thus this wretch reaped what he sowed, burning for burning, the very same in kind paid him again. It is not always so in this world; but so it shall be in

* *Drexellius de aeternitate prope finem.*

Digitized by Google

that to come: The tables 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 distributive justice shining out in its glory, "Tribulation, anguish and wrath "to every soul of man that doth evil; but glory, honour and "peace to every man that worketh good," Rom. ii. 9, 10. Then 'twill 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," Eccles. xii. 14.

REFLECTIONS.

The profane person's reflection.

1. This meditation may be to me what the hand-writing upon the wall was to that profane prince, Dan. v. 5, 6. and a like effect it should have upon me; for if all the actions of this life be seed sown for the next, Lord, what a crop, what a dreadful harvest am I like 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, sabbath-breaking, *&c.* "as the horse rusheth into the battle!" And what shall I reap from such seed as this, but vengeance and fury? These sins seemed pleasant in the commission, but, oh! how bitter will it 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 shouldest eat the fruit of thine own planting, and reap what thou hast sown? I thought nothing but profit and pleasure would spring from my lust; but now I see it is a root bearing gall and wormwood, Deut. xxix. 18. Wretched soul! what shall I do? By these actions am I undone. I have been the author of mine own ruin, twisted an halter with mine own fingers for the execution of mine own soul O! let me rather taste the bitterness of sin, by repentance now, than enjoy its present pleasures, which betray the soul to endless wrath!

The moral man's reflection.

2. How have I also been deceived in this matter? I verily thought that glory and immortality would have been the fruit and pro-

* *Cum video mala fata bonis, ignoscite quæso:*
Sollicitor nullos, esse putare Deos. Ovid.

Digitized by Google

duct of my moral honesty and righteousness; that joy and peace had been seminally contained in those actions; but now I see such fruit can spring from no other root but special grace. Glory is disclosed from no other bud but holiness. Alas! all my planting and sowing was to little purpose, because I sowed not the right kind of seed; the best fruit I can expect from this, is but a lesser degree of damnation.

Deluded soul! thy seed is no better than what the moral heathens sowed: And do I expect better fruit than what they reaped? Civility without Christ, is but a freer slavery; and Satan holds me as fast in captivity by this, as he doth the prophane by the pleasure of their lusts: Either I must sow better seed, or look to reap bitter fruit.

The holy soul's reflection.

3. Mean while, 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 present 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, Hos. 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.

The POEM.

'TWould be a strange and monstrous thing, to see
Cherries or plumbs grow on an apple-tree.
Who ever gather'd from the thistle, figs?
Or fruitful grapes from off the worthless twigs
Of pricking thorns? In nature still we find
All its productions answering to their kind.
As are the plants we set, or seeds we sow,
Such is the fruit we shake, and corn we mow:
And canst thou think, that from corruption's root
Thy soul shall pluck the sweet and pleasant fruit
Of spiritual peace! Whoever, that was wise,
Abus'd himself with such absurdities?
Look what you sow, the very same you'll reap,
The fruit of what you plant, be sure you'll eat.
How are they baffled by a subtile devil,
Who hope for heaven, whilst their ways are evil?

Digitized by Google

Such reasonings here their credulous souls beguile,
At which, in other things, themselves would smile.
Our present acts, though slightly passed by,
Are so much seed sown for eternity.
The seeds of prayers, secret groans and tears,
Will shoot at last into the full-blown ears
Of peace and joy. Blessed are they that sow
Besides these *waters*, yea, thrice bless'd, that go
Bearing such precious seed: Though now they mourn,
With joyful sheaves they shortly shall return.
Needs must the full-ripe fruits in heaven be good,
When as the seed was glory in the bud.
But, oh! the bitter, baneful fruits of sin,
When all the pleasure sinners have therein,
Like faded blossoms to the ground shall fall,
Then they will taste the wormwood and the gall!
What God and conscience now of sin report,
You slight, and with their dreadful threatnings sport:
But he'll convince you then your ways were naught,
As Gideon the men of Succouth taught.
If sermons cannot, fire and brimstone must
Teach men how good it is to pamper lust.
When conscience takes thee by the throat, and cries,
Now wretch! now sinner! thou that didst despise
My warnings; learn, and ever learning be
That lesson which thou ne'er wouldst learn of me.
The stoutest sinner then would howl and roar,
O sin I never saw thy face before.
Is this the fruit of sin? Is this the place
Where I must lie? Is this indeed the case
Of my poor soul? must I be bound in chains
With these companions? Oh! is this the gains
I get by sin? Poor wretch! I that would never
See this before, am now undone for ever!

CHAP. XVIII.

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.) *Nup-*

Digitized by Google

tial joys: the day of espousals is the day of the gladness of a man's heart, Cant. iii. 11. (2.) *The joy of children*: Though now it seems 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, John xvi. 21. there is joy that a man is born into the world. (3.) *The joy of conquests and victories*, when men divide the spoil: And, lastly, *The joy of harvest*. These two we find put together, as principal matters of joy, Isa. ix. 3. "They joy before thee, according to "the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the "spoil." The joy of harvest is no small joy; *Gaudium messis est messis gaudii*; The joy of the harvest, is the harvest of their joy. It is usual with men, when they have reaped down their harvest (or cut the neck, as they call it) to demonstrate their joy by shouting, and loud acclamations.

APPLICATION.

THUS, and unspeakable more than thus, do saints rejoice and shout for joy, when they reap the favour and love of God, for which they laboured in 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 yours; after they have sown to themselves in righteousness, and waited for the effects and 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, yet 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," Psalm iv. 7. Carnal joys are but as foul-fevers, the agues of the inward man; there is a great difference betwixt the unnatural inflammations of a feverish body, which waste the spirits, and drink up the radical moisture, and the kindly well-tempered heart of an healthy body; and as much between the sweet, serene, and heavenly joy, which flow from the bosom of Christ in the hearts of believers, and those earthly delights which carnal hearts, in a sensual way, suck out of creature enjoyments. I will shew you the transcendency of spiritual joys, above the joy of harvest, in these eight particulars following.

1. You that joy with the joy of the 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, Rev. ii. 17. Christ is the food of his soul, and his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood

Digitized by Google

drink indeed, John v. 55. *(i. e.)* the most real and excellent food. You read, Psalm lxxviii. 25. that men did eat angels food, *(i. e.)* 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 your harvest is in, because corn is virtually many other things besides food; you can turn it into cloaths to keep you warm, and many other necessaries may be purchased by it: but yet it is not like Christ, the object of a saint's joy; though it answers many things, it doth not answer all things, as Christ doth; turn it into what you will, it hath but a limited and respective usefulness; but Jesus Christ is all in all to believers, and out of him their faith can fetch all supplies; he is their health in sickness, their strength in weakness, their ease in pain, their honour in reproach, their wealth in poverty, their friend in friendlessness, their habitation when harbourless, their enlargement in bonds, the strength of their hearts, and life of their life; O! he is a full Christ! and whatever excellencies are scattered among all the creatures, do meet all in him, and much more.

3. You rejoice when you have gotten in your harvest, because now you can free those engagements, and pay those debts which you have contracted. 'Tis 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 the saints; for you rejoice that you are, or have wherewith to help yourselves out of mens debt: but they rejoice that they are out of God's debt; that his book is cancelled, and their sins pardoned: that by reason of the imputed righteousness of Christ, the law can demand nothing from them, Rom. viii. 1. O what matter of joy is this!

4. You rejoice, because now your corn is out of danger; all the while it was abroad, it was in hazard, but now it is housed you fear not the rain: but Christians rejoice, not because their corn is safe, but because their souls are so. All the while they abode in an unregenerate state, they were every moment in danger of the storms of wrath: but now, being in Christ, that danger is over; and what compare is there betwixt the safety of a little corn, and the security of an immortal soul?

5. Your joy is but a gift of common providence. Turks and Heathens can rejoice with your joy; but the joy of a Christian, is a peculiar favour and gift of God. Corn is given to all na-

Digitized by Google

tions, even the most barbarous and wicked have store of it; but Christ is the portion but of a few, and those the dearly beloved of God. Luther said of the whole Turkish *empire* (where is the best and greatest store of corn) that it is but a crumb which the master of the family throws to the dogs. He that had more corn than his barns could hold, now wants a drop of water to cool his tongue. Christ is a gift bestowed only upon God's elect.

6. 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.

7. God can separate your joy from these enjoyments, even while you have them, as well as when you leave them. 'Tis one thing for a man to have riches and full barns, and another thing to have comfort in them, Eccles. v. 19, 20. But now the joy of Christians is a thing inseparable from their enjoyment of Christ: indeed the sense of their interest may be lost, and so the acts of their joy intermitted: but they always have it in the seed, if not in the fruit, Psalm xcvii. 11. "Joy is sown "for the upright;" he hath it still in the principle, and in the promise.

8. 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 joy in 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 joys fall short of theirs.

REFLECTIONS.

A reflection for one that hath a full barn, but no Christ.

1. How have I rejoiced in a thing of nought, and pleased myself with a vanity? 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; common bounty hath given me a fulness of the things of this life; but what if the meaning of it should be to fat me for the day of slaughter? What if this be the whole of my portion from the Lord? What if the lan-

Digitized by Google

guage of his providences to my soul should be this; **Lo!** here I have given thee (with Ishmael) the fatness of the earth? Thou shalt not say, but thou hast tasted of thy Creator's bounty; but make the most of it, for this is all that ever thou shalt have from me; there be others in the world, to whom I have denied these things, but for them I have reserved better; for the most part they are poor in this world, but rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. Is not this enough to damp all my carnal mirth? Should my conscience give me such a Memento as Abraham, in the parable, gave to Dives; "Remember that thou in thy life-"time receivedst thy good things;" Ah! what a cut would that be to all my comforts? 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.

A reflection for one that hath Christ but no barn.

2. "Blessed be the God and Father of my "Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed me with "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly pla-"ces in Christ," Ephes. i. 3. Though he hath not seen fit to give me much of this world in hand, yet it hath pleased him to settle a rich inheritance upon me by promise; the hopes and expectations whereof, yield my soul more true comfort than all the present enjoyments of this world could have done. 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 my Christ: they have that which (though I have not) I shall not want; and I have that which all their riches cannot purchase. Bless the Lord, O my soul!

A reflection for one that hath a full barn, and Christ too.

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 of 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 with his hands to get his

Digitized by Google

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 upon God, and stand ready to minister to the necessities of his people.

A reflection for one that hath neither a barn, nor a Christ.

4. Oh! what an unhappy wretch am I! that have nothing either in hand, or in hope; am miserable here, and like to be so for ever: had I but an interest in Christ, as the godly poor have, that would sweeten all present troubles, and shew me the end of them. But, alas! I am poor and wicked, contemned of men, and abhorred of God; an object of contempt both to heaven and earth. Lord, look upon such a truly miserable object with compassion, give me a portion with thy people in the world to come, if thou never better my outward condition here! O sanctify this poverty; bless these straits and wants, that they may necessitate my soul to go to Christ: make this poverty the way to glory, and I shall bless thee to eternity that I was poor in this world.

The POEM.

OFT have I seen, when harvest's almost in,
The last load coming, how some men have been
Rapt up with joy, as if that welcome cart
Drew home the very treasure of their heart;
What joyful shoutings, hoopings, hollowing noise,
With mingled voices both of men and boys!
To carnal minds there is no greater mirth,
No higher joy, nor greater heaven on earth.
He speaks pure paradoxes, that shall say
These are but trifles to what saints enjoy:
But they despise your sparks, as much as you
Contemn their fun. Some that could never shew
A full stuff'd barn, on which you set your heart,
But glean, perhaps, the ears behind your cart;
Yet are the gleanings of their comfort more
Than all your harvest, and admired store.
Your mirth is mix'd with sorrow, theirs is pure;
Yours like a shadow fleets, but theirs endure.
God gives to you the husk, to them the pith,
And no heart-stinging sorrow adds therewith.
Though at the gates of death they sometimes mourn,
No sooner doth the Lord to them return,
But sorrow's banish'd from their pensive breast;
Joy triumphs there, and smiles their cheeks invest.

Digitized by Google

Have you beheld, when, with perfumed wings,
Out of the balmy east bright Phœbus springs,
Mounting th' Olympic hill, with what a grace
He views the throne of darkness, and doth chase
The shades of night before him; having hurl'd
His golden beams about this lower world,
How from sad groves, and solitary cells,
Where horrid darkness, and confusion dwells,
Batts, owls, and doleful creatures, fly away,
Resigning to the chearful birds of day:
Who in those places now do sit and chant,
Where lately such dire creatures kept their haunt.
Thus grief resigns to joy; sighs, groans and tears
To songs triumphant, when the Lord appears.
O matchless joy! O countenance divine!
What are those trifles to these smiles of thine?
May I, with poor Mephibosheth, be blest
With these sweet smiles; let Ziba take the rest.
My life! my treasure! thou shalt ne'er be sold
For silver hills, or rivers pav'd with gold.
Wer't thou but known to worldlings, they would scorn
To stoop their hearts to such poor things as corn:
For so they do, because thou art above
That sphere wherein their low conceptions move.

CHAP. XIX.

Upon the Threshing out of Corn.

More solid grain with greater strength you thresh,
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 on the threshing-floor; 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 to be threshed. This observation the prophet Isaiah hath, chap. xxviii. ver. 27. "The fitches are not threshed "with a threshing-instrument, neither is the cart-wheel tur-"ned about upon the cummin, but the fitches are beaten out "with a staff, and the cummin with a rod." The manner of beating out the corn in former times, was far different from that

Digitized by Google

which is now in use among us: they had the cart-wheel, which was full of iron spokes or teeth, and the hoofs of beasts for the harder soat of grain, as wheat, rye, and barley; a staff or flail for the fitches, and a rod or twig for the cummin; all which instruments were proportioned according to the nature 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 them all, but proportions his correction to their abilities and strength, Jer. xxx. 11. "I will not make a full end of thee, [but will cor-"rect thee in measure] and will not leave thee altogether unpu-"nished:" (*q. d.*) Afflicted thou must be; my respect to my own glory, and thy good, puts a necessity upon that; but yet I will do it moderately: I will not lay on 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 pills, or potions to his patient, 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, Psal. xc. 11. that would break thee to pieces, Psal. lxxviii. 38. Nor yet will he afflict thee according to the demerit of thy sin: as it shall be much less than what I could inflict, so it shall be less than thine iniquities deserve, Ezra ix. 13. Neither my power, nor thy desert, shall be the rule of my proceedings; but I will do it with moderation and mercy, as thou art able to bear. I that have instructed the husbandman to proportion his instrument to the quality of the grain before him, will exercise the like wisdom and mildness towards thee. And the similitude betwixt the husbandman's threshing his corn, and the Lord's afflicting his people, stands in these particulars.

1. The husbandman's end in threshing 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, Isa. xxvii. 9. "In measure when it shooteth forth, he will debate with it," (*i. e.*) he will moderately correct them; and what the ends of those corrections are, the next words inform us, "By this there-"fore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the "fruit to take away his sin." God uses afflictions, as we use soap, to cleanse away filthiness, and fetch out spots, Dan. xi. 35. He aims not at the destruction of their persons, but of their lusts.

Digitized by Google

2. If the huſbandman have cockle, darnel, or pernicious tares before him on the floor among his corn, he little regards whether it be bruiſed, or battered to pieces by the threſher 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 threſhing inſtrument, having teeth, which ſhall beat them to duſt, Iſa. xli. 15. "The daughter of Babylon "is like a threſhing-floor; 'tis time to threſh her," Jer. li. 33. And when that time is come, then (in alluſion to the beaſt that was to tread out the corn) "Sion'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 Sion; 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; he will never ſmite them again: there is no noiſe of the threſhing inſtrument in heaven; he that beat them with his flail on earth, will put them into his boſom in heaven.

4. Though the huſbandman lays on, and beats his corn, as if he were angry with it, yet he loves and highly prizes it; and though God ſtrike and afflict his people, yet he ſets a great value upon them; and it is equally abſurd to infer God's hatred to his people from his afflicting of them, as the huſbandman's hatred of his corn, becauſe he threſhes and beats it; Heb. xii. 6. "Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, and chaſ-"teneth every ſon whom he receiveth."

5. Though the huſbandman threſh and beat the corn, yet he will not bruiſe or hurt it, if he can help it; though ſome require more and harder ſtrokes than others, yet none ſhall have more than it can endure. And though the Lord afflict his ſervants, yet he will do them no hurt, Jer. xxv. 6. 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, Pſal. ciii. 13, 14. "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; he makes a way to "eſcape, that they may be able to bear it," 1 Cor. x. 13.

Digitized by Google

This care and tenderness over his afflicted, is eminently discovered in three particulars.

(1.) In not exposing them to, 'till he hath prepared them for, their trials, Luke xxiv. 49. "Tarry ye at Jerusalem, until "ye be endued with power from on high." 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 Paul, Acts xxvii. 23. "This night (and it was a sad night indeed) there stood by me "the angel of the Lord, whose I am."

(3.) In taking off the affliction, when they can bear it no longer, 1 Cor. x. 13. "He makes a way to escape, that they "may be able to bear it," Psal. cxxv. 3. 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's experience, When the spirit is ready to fail, then comes Jesus, according to that promise, Isa. lvii. 16.

REFLECTIONS.

A reflection for persecutors.

1. How unlike am I to God, in the afflicting of his people? The Lord is pitiful when he smites them; but I have been cruel: he is kind to them, when most severe; but the best of my kindnesses to them, may fitly enough be called severity; God smites them in love; I have smitten them in hatred. Ah! what have I done? God hath used me as his hand, Psal. xvii. 14. or as his rod, to afflict them, Jer. x. 7. but his end and mine have widely differed in that action, Isa. x. 7. I am but the scullion, or rather the whisp to scour and cleanse the vessels of glory; and when I have done that dirty work; those bright souls shall be set up in heaven, and I cast into the fire. If he shall have judgment without mercy, that showed no mercy, how can I expect mercy from the Lord, whose people I have persecuted mercilessly for his sake?

A reflection for such as meet with no affliction.

2. Is the Lord's wheat thus threshed on the *floor* of *afflictions*; 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 for threshing. Some there are whom God loves not so well as to spend

Digitized by Google

a rod upon them, but faith, "Let them alone," Hoſ. iv. 17. but miſerable is their condition, notwithſtanding their impunity! For what is the interpretation but this: I will come to a reckoning with them altogether 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, Heb. xii. 7. Oh, 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!

A reflection for an afflicted ſaint.

3. Well then, deſpond not, O my ſoul! Thou heareſt the huſbandman loves his corn, though he threſheth 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 threſhing-ſtrokes of God have come thick upon me; by which I may ſee what a tough and 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, 1 Pet. i. 6. and by this means he will purge my ſins: 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 ſo much out of love with thee, that 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: mean while I am under my own father's hand: ſmite me he may, but hate me he cannot.

The POEM.

THE ſacred records tell us, heretofore
God had an altar on a threſhing-floor,
Where threſhing inſtruments devoted were
To ſacred ſervice; ſo you find them here.
I now would teach the threſher, to beat forth
A notion from his threſhold, much more worth
Than all his corn; and make him underſtand
That ſoul-inſtructing engine in his hand.
With fewer ſtrokes, and lighter will you beat
The oats and barley, than the ſtubborn wheat,
Which will require and endure more blows
Than freer grain. Thus deals the Lord by thoſe
Whom he afflicts: he doth not uſe to ſtrike
Offending children with his rod alike;
But on the ableſt ſhoulders doth impoſe

Digitized by Google

The heaviest burthens, and the less on those
Of weaker grace: he shews himself a God
Of judgments in his handling of the rod.
God hath a rate-book by him, wherein he
Keeps just accounts how rich his people be;
What faith, experience, patience, more or less
Each one possesseth, and doth them assess
According to their stock. Such as have not
A martyr's faith, shall have no martyr's lot.
The kinds, degrees, and the continuance
Of all their suff'rings, to a circumstance
Prescribed are by him, who wisely sways
The world, and more than's right on no man lays.
Be man or devil the apothecary,
God's the physician: who can then miscarry
In such a hand? He never did or will
Suffer the least addition to his bill.
Nor measure, nor yet mercy he observes
In threshing Babylon; for she deserves
His heaviest strokes; and in his floor she must
Be beaten shortly with his flail to dust.
But Sion's God, in measure, will debate;
His children he may smite, but cannot hate;
He beats them, true, to make their chaff to fly,
That they, like purged golden grains, may lie
In one fair heap, with those bless'd souls that here
Once in like manner thresh'd and winnow'd were.

CHAP. XX.

Upon the winnowing of Corn.

The fan doth cause light chaff to fly away;
So shall the ungodly in God's winnowing-day.

OBSERVATION.

WHEN the corn is threshed out in the floor where it lies mingled with empty ears, and worthless chaff, the husbandman carries it out altogether into some open place; where, having spread his sheet for the preservation of the grain, he exposes it all to the wind; the good, 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 dung-hill, as a worthless thing.

Digitized by Google

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 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, Matth. iii. 12. 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 un-"quenchable fire." The preaching of the gospel, is as a fan in Christ's hand: and it is as much as if John had thus told the Jews, that though there were many hypocritical ones among them, that had now a place and name among the people of God, and gloried in their church-privileges; yet there is a purging blast of truth coming, which shall make them fly out of the church, as chaff out of the floor. Thus Christ winnows or fans the world *doctrinally*: The other is *judicially*, by bringing sore and grievous trials and sufferings upon the churches, for this very end, that those which are but chaff, (*i. e.*) empty and vain professors, may by such winds as these be separated from his people.

The church increases two ways, and by two diverse means; *extensively*, in breadth and numbers; and *intensively*, 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, Amos ix. 9, 10. "I will sift the house of Israel among all nati-"ons, 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." (*q. d.*) I will cause great agitations and tossings among you, by the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians, into whose countries you shall be dispersed and scattered; yet I will so govern those your dispersions by my *providence*, that not one good grain, one upright soul, shall eternally perish, but the sinners of my people, the refuse stuff, that shall perish.

To the same purpose speaks another prophet, Zeph. ii. 1, 2. "Gather yourselves together, (or as some read) fan yourselves, "yea, fan yourselves, before the decree bring forth, and the "day pass as the chaff." He doth not mean that the time shall

Digitized by Google

pass as the chaff, but there is a day of affliction and distress 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, Psalm i. 4, 5. "The ungodly are not so, but are like the "chaff which the wind drives away; therefore the ungodly "shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation "of the righteous;" *(i. e.)* 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 seven particulars.

1. The chaff and 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 oftentimes spring up with them in the same family, and from the same root, or immediate parents, Mal. i. 2. "Was not Esau "Jacob's brother?" Yet the one was wheat, the other chaff. Instances of this are infinite.

2. The husbandman would never endure the husks, chaff, and dry stalks to remain in the field; if it were not for the good corn's sake, he would quickly set fire to it, but that the corn is among it, which he highly prizeth: And, be assured, God would never suffer the wicked to abide long in this world, were it not for his own elect that are dispersed among them: Except the Lord had such a remnant dispersed in the world, he would quickly set fire to the four quarters, and make it like Sodom, Isa. i. 9.

3. The chaff is a very worthless thing, the husbandman cares not what becomes of it; and of as little worth are wicked men, Prov. x. 20. "The heart of the wicked is little worth." The heart is the principal part of the man, and yet that's but chaff, no worth in it; his hands, his cloaths, *&c.* are worth somewhat, but his heart is worth nothing.

4. 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, Rev. xii. 16. "The earth help-"ed the woman," *(i. e.)* worldly men for carnal ends helped the church, when a flood of persecution was poured out. The

Digitized by Google

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.

5. When the chaff and wheat are both brought forth and held up to the wind in one sieve, they fall two ways; the wheat falls down upon the floor or sheet, the chaff is carried quite away: So that although for a time 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, Matth. iii. 12.

6. If there be any chaff among the corn, it will appear when it is sifted in a windy day; it cannot possibly escape, if it be well winnowed; much more impossible it is for any wicked man to escape the critical search of God in that day; the closest hypocrite shall then be detected, for God will judge the secrets of men, 2 Cor. xvi. "He will then bring to light the "hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels "of the heart," 1 Cor. iv. 5.

7. *Lastly*, After corn and chaff are separated by the winnowing wind, they shall never lie together in one heap any more: The wicked shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but themselves thrust out: There is no chaff in heaven.

REFLECTIONS.

A reflection for a close hypocrite.

1. Am I an empty vain professor, that wants the pith and substance of real godliness? Then am I but chaff in God's account, though I grow among his corn; the eye of man cannot discern my hypocrisy; but when he comes, whose fan is in his hand, then how plainly will it be detected? Angels and men shall discern it, and say, "Lo, this is the man that made not God his "hope;" How shall I abide the day of his coming? Christ is the great heart-anatomist: Things shall not be carried then by names and parties, as they are now; every one shall be weighed in a just balance, and a *Mene Tekel* written upon every false heart: Great will be the perspicuity of that trial: My own conscience shall join with my judge, and shall then acknowledge, that there is not one drop of injustice in all that sea of wrath; and though I am damned, yet I am not wronged: The chaff cannot stand before the wind, nor I before the judgment of Christ.

2. Is there such a fanning time coming? Why do not I then sift my heart every day by serious self-examination? No work

Digitized by Google

more important to me, and yet how much have I neglected it? O my soul! thou hadst been better imployed, in searching thine own estate in reference to that day, than in prying sinfully 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.

A reflection for one that neglects self-examination.

5. Fear not, O my soul! though there be a blast coming which shall drive all the chaff into hell, yet it shall blow thee no harm. "I "know that when he hath tried me, I shall "come forth as gold," Job xxiii. 10. I confess I have too much chaff about me, but yet I am not altogether chaff; there is a solid work of grace upon my soul that will abide the trial: Let the judgment to come be as impartial and exact as it is possible to be, yet a grain of sincerity cannot be lost in it; for "God "will not cast away a perfect (*i. e.* an upright-hearted) man," Job viii. 20. He that is appointed to judge the world is mine; and his imputed righteousness will make me full weight in the balance. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for sincerity! this will abide, when common gifts, and empty names, will flee as the chaff before the wind.

A reflection for a sincere soul.

The POEM.

THE winnowing wind first drives the chaff away,
Next light and hollow grains; those only stay
Whose weight and solid substance can endure
This trial, and such grains are counted pure.
The corn for use is carefully preserv'd;
The useless chaff for burning flames reserv'd.
No wind but blows some good, a proverb is;
Glad shall I be if it hold true in this.
O that the wind, when you to winnowing go,
This spiritual good unto your souls might blow!
To make you pause, and sadly ruminate,
In what a doleful plight, and wretched state

Digitized by Google

Their souls are in, who cannot hope to stand
When he shall come, whose fan is in his hand;
His piercing eyes infallibly disclose
The very reins, and inward part of those
Whose out-side seeming grace so neatly paints,
That, with the best, they pass for real saints.
No hypocrite with God acceptance finds,
But, like the chaff, dispers'd by furious winds.
Their guilt shall not that searching day endure,
Nor they approach th' assemblies of the pure.
Have you observ'd in autumn, thistle-down,
By howling Aeolus, scatter'd up and down
About the fields? Even so God's ireful storm
Shall chase the hypocrite, who now can scorn
The breath of close reproofs; and like a rock,
Repel reproofs, and just reprovers mock.
How many that in splendid garments walk,
Of high professions, and like angels talk,
Shall God divest, and openly proclaim
Their secret guilt, to their eternal shame?
This is the day wherein the Lord will rid
His church of those false friends, who now lie hid
Among his people; there will not be one
False heart remain, to lose our love upon.
O bless'd assembly! glorious state! when all
In their uprightness walk, and ever shall.
O make my heart sincere, that I may never
Prove such light chaff as them thy wind shall sever
From solid grain! O let my soul detest
Unsoundness, and abide thy strictest test!

AN
INTRODUCTION
To the SECOND PART of
HUSBANDRY.

HOW is it, reader, have I tired thee,
Whilst thro' these pleasant fields thou walk'st with me?

Digitized by Google

Our path was pleasant; but if length of way
Do weary thee, we'll slack our pace and stay:
Let's sit a while, under the cooling shade
Of fragrant trees; trees were for shadow made.
Lo here a pleasant grove, whose shade is good;
But more than so, 'twill yield us fruit for food:
No dangerous fruits do on these branches grow,
No snakes among the verdant grass below;
Here we'll repose a while, and then go view
The pleasant herds and flocks; and so adieu.

CHAP. I.

Upon the Ingrafting of Fruit-trees

Ungraffed 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, sour, 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.

UNregenerate men, who never were acquainted with the mystery of spiritual union with Jesus Christ, but still grow upon their natural root, old Adam, may, by the force and power of natural principles, bring forth some fruit, which, like the wild hedge-fruit we speak of, may, indeed, be fair and pleasant to the eyes of men, but God takes no pleasure at all in it; it is sour, harsh, and distasteful to him, because it springs not from the Spirit of Christ, Isa. i. 13. "I cannot away with it, it "is iniquity," *&c.* But that I may not entangle the thread of my discourse, I shall (as in the former chapters) set before you a parallel betwixt the best fruits of natural men, and those of a wild ungraffed 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 it bears; it is the seed of some better tree accidentally blown, or cast into some waste and bad soil, where not being manured and ordered aright, it is turned wild; So all the fruits

Digitized by Google

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. It is observed by Gregory, pertinent to my present purpose, *Genus humanum in parente primo, pelut in radice putruit;* Mankind was putrified in the root of his first parent; Matth. vii. 18. "A corrupt tree cannot "bring forth good fruit."

2. This corrupt root spoils the fruit, by the transmission of its sour and naughty 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 and reason, no mere natural or unregenerate 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 Adam, is expressed by a quick and smart interrogation, Job xiv. 4. "Who "can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." The sense of it is well delivered us (by Mr. Caryl *in loc.*) This question (saith he) may undergo a twofold 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, which speaks to my purpose, it may refer to the action of the same man; man being unclean, cannot bring forth a clean thing; *(i. e.)* a clean or holy action; that which is originated is like its original. 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 shews us in that excellent parallel betwixt the two Adams, Rom. v. 12. "Wherefore, as by one man" [one, not only *in individuo sed in specie*, one representing the whole root or stock,] "sin entered into the world:" not by imitation only, but by propagation; and this brought death and ruin upon all the branches.

3. Although these wild hedge-fruits be unwholsome 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 shew and colour, to be excellent fruit; for it makes a fairer shew oftentimes than the best and most wholesome fruit doth: even so, these natural gifts and endowments which some unregenerate persons have, seem exceeding fair to the eye, and a fruit to be desired. What excellent

Digitized by Google

qualities have some mere natural men and women! what a winning affability, humble condescension, meekness, righteousness, ingenuous tenderness, and sweetness of nature! As it was (hyperbolically enough) said of one, *In hoc homine, non peccavit Adam*; Adam never sinned in this man; meaning that he excelled the generality of Adam's children in sweetness of temper and natural endowments. 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, Luke xvi. 15. 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 (before described) were but regenerated and changed in their spirits and principles, 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, (*i. e.*) 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 threatning is universal, John iii. 3. "Except you be regenerate, and born again, you cannot enter into the kingdom "of heaven." And again, Heb. xii. 14. "Without holiness, "no man (be his natural gifts never so excellent) shall see "God." Imbellished 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.

A reflection for an accomplished naturalist.

1. To what purpose then 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 du-

Digitized by Google

ries 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 *de omni scibile*, 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 aked with study, but when did my heart ake for sin? Methinks, O my soul! thou trimmest up thyself in these natural ornaments, to appear before God, much as that delicate Agag did, when he was to come before Samuel, and fondly conceits 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 a one as I into hell? Shall a man of such parts be damned? Alas! justice will hew thee to pieces, as Samuel did that spruce 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.

A reflection for a true, but weak believer.

2. I am a poor despised shrub, which have no beauty at all in me, and yet such a one hath the Lord chosen to transplant into Christ, whilst he left many fragrant branches standing on their native stock, to be fuel of his wrath to all eternity! O grace! for ever to be admired! Ah! what cause have I to be thankful to free grace, and for ever to walk humbly with my God! the Lord hath therefore chosen an unlikely, rugged, unpolished creature as I am, that pride may for ever be hid from mine eyes, and that I may ever glory in his presence, 1 Cor. i. 29. I now have the advantage of a better root and soil than any carnal person hath; it will therefore be a greater shame to me, and a reproach to the root that bears me, if I should be outstripped and excelled by them: yet, Lord, how often do I find it so? I see some of them meek and patient, whilst I am

Digitized by Google

rough and surly; generous and noble, whilst I am base and penurious. Truly such a branch as I am, is no honour to the root that bears it.

The POEM.

I Am a branch of that fair Eden tree
Which to mankind God hath ordain'd to be
The common stock; his situation good,
His branches many, of himself a wood;
And like a cedar by the river fed,
Unto the clouds his ample branches spread:
Sin smote his root, then justice cut him down,
And levell'd with the earth his lofty crown.
What hope of branches when the tree's o'erturn'd,
But like dry faggots to be bound and burn'd?
It had been so, had not transcendent love,
Which in a sphere above our thoughts doth move,
Prepar'd a better stock to save and nourish
Transplanted twigs, which in him thrive and flourish.
In Adam all are curs'd; no saving fruit
Shall ever spring from that sin-blasted root:
Yea, all the branches that in him are found,
How flourishing soever, must be bound
And pil'd together (horrid news to tell!)
To make an everlasting blaze in hell.
God takes no pleasure in the sweetest bud
Disclos'd by nature; for the root's not good.
Some boughs indeed richly adorned are
With natural fruits, which to the eye are fair;
Rare gifts, sweet dispositions, which attract
The love of thousands, and from most exact
Honour and admiration. You'll admire
That such as these are fewel for the fire.
Indeed, ten thousand pities 'tis to see
Such lovely creatures in this case to be.
Did they by true regeneration draw
The sap of life from Jesse's root, the law,
By which they now to wrath condemned are,
Would cease to curse, and God such buds would spare:
But out of him there's none of these can move
His unrelenting heart, or draw his love.
Then cut me off from this accursed tree,
Lest I for ever be cut off from thee.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. II.

Upon the Union of the Graff with the Stock.

Whene'er you bud and graff, therein you see,
How Christ and souls must here united be.

OBSERVATION.

WHEN the husbandman hath prepared his graffs in the season of the year, he carries them, with the tools that are necessary for that work, to the tree or stock he intends to ingraff, and having cut off the top of the limb in some 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 and stock together (there being the main current of the sap) then pulls out his wedge, binds both together (as in barking) and clays it up, to defend the tender graff and wounded stock from the injuries of the sun and rain.

These tender cyons quickly take hold of the stock, and having immediate coalition with it, drink in its sap, concoct 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 short time, become a flourishing and fruitful limb.

APPLICATION.

THIS carries a most sweet and 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 ingraffed, 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 graff a soul into Christ, the first work about it, is cutting work, Acts ii. 37. their hearts were cut by conviction, and deep compunction; no cyon is in-

Digitized by Google

graffed without cutting, no soul united with Christ, without a cutting sense of sin and misery, John xvi. 8, 9.

2. When the tender shoot is cut off from the tree, there are, ordinarily, many more left behind upon the same tree, as promising and vigorous as that which is taken; but it pleaseth the husbandman to chuse this, and leave them.

Even so it is in the removing or transplanting of a soul by conversion; it leaves many behind it in the state of nature, as likely and promising as itself; but so it pleaseth God to take this soul, and leave many others; yea, often such as grew upon the same root; I mean, the immediate parent, Mal. i. 2. "Was "not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Ja-"cob, and I hated Esau."

3. 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 ingraffed, 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 dead-hearted profession, but never came to any thing; and as such dead graffs, either fall off from the stock, or moulder away upon it; so do these, 1 John ii. 19.

4. 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's done, the better; they get no good by remaining as they are. And truly it concerns the servants of the Lord, who are imployed 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, "What shall I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas immediately direct him to Christ, Acts xvi. 30, 31. They do not say, it is too soon for thee to act faith on Christ, thou art not yet humbled enough, but "believe in the Lord Jesus "Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

5. 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 cyon can be ingraffed; according to that in the poet,

Venerit insitio, fac ramum ramus adoptet; (i. e.)
To graffs no living sap the stocks impart,
Unless you wound and cut them near the heart.

Such an incision, or wound, was made upon Christ, in or-

Digitized by Google

der to our ingrafting into him, John xix. 34. the opening of that deadly wound gives life to the souls of believers.

6. 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, 1 Cor. vi. 17. "He that is joined to the Lord, "is one spirit." 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 Paul) yet not I, but Christ "liveth in me," Gal. ii. 20. "He that dwelleth in love, dwel- "leth in God, and God in him," 1 John iv. 16.

7. Graffs are bound to the stock by bands made of hay or flags; these keep it steady, else the wind would loose it out of the stock.

The believing soul is also fastened to Christ by bands, which will secure it from all danger of being loosed off from him any more. There are two bands of this union; the Spirit on God's part, this is the firm bond of union, without which he could never be made one with Christ, Rom. viii. 9. "If any man "have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" and *faith* on our part, Eph. iii. 17. "That Christ may dwell in your "hearts by faith." These hold strongly.

8. Though the stock be one and the same, yet all graffs do not thrive and flourish alike in it; some outgrow 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 Thes. 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.

Four comfortable reflections for a regenerate soul.

1. Is it so indeed betwixt Christ and my soul, as it is betwixt the ingraffed cyon and the stock? What honour and glory then hath Christ conferred upon me, a poor unworthy creature! What! to be made one

Digitized by Google

with him, to be a living branch of him, to be joined thus to the Lord! Oh! 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 faggotted 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!" 1 John iii. 1.

2. Look again upon the ingraffed cyons, O my ſoul! and thou ſhalt find, that when once they have taken hold of the ſtock, they live as long as there is any ſap in the root; and becauſe he liveth, I ſhall live alſo, for my life is hid with Chriſt in God, Col. iii. 3. The graff is preſerved in the ſtock, and my ſoul is even ſo "preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus!" Jude, ver. 1.

3. 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 dear Son! What can God with-hold from one ſo ingraffed? Eph. i. 6. "All is yours, (ſaith my God) for ye are Chriſt's, and "Chriſt is God's," 1 Cor. iii. 23.

4. Once more, draw matter of inſtruction, as well as comfort, from this ſweet obſervation: ſeeing God hath put all this honour upon thee, by this moſt intimate union with his Chriſt, look to it, my ſoul, that thou live and walk as becomes a ſoul thus one with the Lord: be thou tender over his glory: doth not that which ſtrikes at the root, ſtrike at the very life of the graff? And ſhall not that which ſtrikes at the very glory of Chriſt, tenderly touch and affect thee? Yea, be thou tenderly affected with all the reproaches that fall upon him from abroad, but eſpecially with thoſe that redound to him from thine own unfruitfulneſs. Oh! diſgrace not the root that bears thee! let it never be ſaid, that any evil fruit is found upon a branch that lives and is fed by ſuch a root.

The POEM.

OH! what conſidering ſerious man can ſee
The cloſe conjunction of the graff and tree;

Digitized by Google

And whilſt he contemplates, he doth not find
This meditation graffed on his mind?
I am the branch, and Chriſt the vine;
Thy gracious hand did pluck
Me from that native ſtock of mine,
That I his ſap might ſuck.
The bloody ſpear did in his heart
A deep inciſion make,
That grace to me he might impart,
And I thereof partake.
The Spirit and faith is that firm band
Which binds us faſt together;
Thus we are claſped hand in hand,
And nothing can us ſever.
Bleſs'd be that hand which did remove
Me from my native place!
This was the wonder of thy love,
The triumph of thy grace!
That I, a wild and curſed plant,
Should thus preferred be,
Who all theſe ornaments do want,
Thou may'ſt in others ſee.
As long as e'er the root doth live,
The branches are not dry;
Whilſt Chriſt hath grace and life to give,
My ſoul can never die.
O bleſſed Saviour! never could
A graff cleave to the tree
More cloſe than thy poor creature would
United be with thee.
My ſoul, diſhonour not the root,
'Twill be a ſhame for thee
To want the choiceſt ſorts of fruit,
And yet thus graffed be.

Thus you may ſhake from graffs, before they blow,
More precious fruit than e'er on trees did grow.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. III.

Upon the Gathering in of Fruits in Autumn.

When trees are shak'd, but little fruit remains,
Just such a remnant to the Lord pertains.

OBSERVATION.

IT is a pleasant sight in autumn to see the fruitful branches hanging full of clusters, which weigh the boughs to the ground.

Aspice curvatos pomorum pondere ramos,
Ut sua quod peperit vix ferat arbor onus.

Which I may thus English.

O what a pleasant sight it is to see,
The fruitful clusters bowing down the tree!

But these laden branches are soon eased of their burden; for as soon as they are ripe, the husbandman ascends the tree, and shaking the limbs with all his might, cause a fruitful shower to fall like hail-stones upon the ground below; which being gathered to a heap, are carried to the pound, broken all to pieces in a trough, and squeezed to a dry lump in the press, whence all their juice and moisture runs into the fat. How few escape this fat, of all those multitudes that grow in the orchard? If you look upon the trees, you may possibly see here one, and there another, two or three upon the utmost branches, but nothing in comparison to the vast number that are thus used.

APPLICATION.

THis small remains of fruit, which are either left upon the tree, or gathered in for an hoard, do well resemble that small number of God's elect in the world, which free-grace hath reserved out of the general ruin of mankind. Four things are excellently shadowed forth to us by this similitude.

1. You see in a fruitful autumn, the trees even oppressed and over-laden with the weight of their own fruits, before the shaking time comes, and then they are eased of their burden. Thus, the whole creation groans under the weight of their sins who inhabit it, Rom. viii. 22. the creatures are in bondage, and by an elegant Prosopopeia, are said, both to groan and wait for deliverance. The original sin of man brought an original curse, which burdens the creature, Gen. iii. 17. "Cursed is the "ground for thy sake; and the actual sin of man brings actual curses upon the creature, Psalm cvii. 34. Thus the inhabitants

Digitized by Google

of the world load and burden it, as the limbs of a tree are burdened, and sometimes broken with the weight of their own fruit.

2. You may observe in your orchards every year, what abundance of fruits daily fall, either by storms, or of their own accord; but when the shaking time comes, then the ground is covered all over with fruit. Thus it is with the world, that mystical tree, with respect to men that inhabit it; there is not a year, a day, or hour, in which some drop not, as it were, of their own accord, by a natural death; and sometimes wars, and epidemical plagues blow down thousands together into their graves; these are as high winds in a fruitful orchard; but when the shaking time, the autumn of the world, comes, then all its inhabitants shall be shaken down together, either by death, or a translation equivalent thereunto.

3. When fruits are shaken down from their trees, then the husbandman separates them; the far greater part for the pound, and some few reserves for an hoard, which are brought to his table, and eaten with pleasure. This excellently shadows forth that great separation, which Christ will make in the end of the world, when some shall be cast into the wine-press of the Almighty's wrath, and others preserved for glory.

4. Those fruits which are preserved on the tree, or in the hoard, are comparatively but an handful to those that are broken in the pound; alas! it is scarce one of a thousand, and such a small remnant of elected souls hath God reserved for glory.

I look upon the world as a great tree, consisting of four large limbs or branches; this branch or division of it on which we grow, hath doubtless, a greater number of God's elect upon it than the other three; and yet, when I look with a serious and considering eye upon this fruitful European branch, and see how much rotten and withered fruit there grows upon it, it makes me say, as Chrysostom did of his populous Antioch; Ah, how small a remnant hath *Jesus Christ* among these vast numbers! "Many indeed are called, but ah! how few are "chosen?" Matth. xx. 16. Alas! they are but as the gleanings when the vintage is done; here and there one upon its utmost branches: to allude to that, Isaiah xvii. 6. It was a sad observation which that searching scholar, Mr. Brerewood, long since made upon the world; that, dividing it into thirty equal parts, he found no less than nineteen of them wholly overspread with idolatry, and heathenish darkness; and of the eleven remaining parts, no less than six are Mahometans; so that there

Digitized by Google

remains but five of thirty which profess the Christian religion at large; and the far greater part of these remaining five are invelopped and drowned in popish darkness; so that you see the reformed Protestant *religion* is confined to a small spot of ground indeed. Now, if from these we substract all the grosly ignorant, openly profane, merely civil, and secretly hypocritical, judge then in yourselves, how small a scantling of the world falls to Christ's share.

Well might Christ say, Matth. vii. 14. "Narrow is the way, "and strait is the gate that leadeth unto life; and few there "be that find it." And again, Luke xii. 32. "Fear not, little "flock." The large piece goes to the devil; a little remnant is Christ's, Rom. ix. 27. Saints in scripture are called *jewels*, Mal. iii. 17. Precious pearls and diamonds, which the Latins call *Uniones. Quia nulli duo simul reperiuntur*, (saith Pliny) because nature gives them not by pairs, but one by one: how many pebbles to one pearl! Suitable to this notion, is that complaint of the prophet, Mic. vii. 1, 2. "Wo is me! for I am as "when they have gathered the summer-fruits, as the grape-"gleanings of the vintage; there is no cluster to eat; my soul "desired the first ripe fruits; the good man is perished out of "the earth, and there is none, (*i. e.* none comparatively) up-"right among men." The prophet alludes to a poor hungry man, that, after the gathering time is past, comes into an orchard desiring some choice fruit to eat; but, alas! he finds none; there is no cluster; possibly here and there one after the shaking time. True saints are the world's rarities.

REFLECTIONS.

A reflection for one that follows the example of the multitude.

1. What then will be my lot, when that great shaking time shall come, who have followed the multitude, and gone with the tide of the world? How, even when I have been pressed to strictness and singular diligence in the matters of salvation, and told what a narrow way the way of life is, have I put it off with this? If it be so, then wo to thousands! Ah, fooliſh heart! Thousands, and ten thousands shall be woful and miserable, indeed, to all eternity! Will it be any mitigation of my misery, that I shall have thousands of miserable companions with me in hell? Or, will it be admitted for a good plea at the judgment-seat, Lord, I did as the generality of my neighbours in the world did; except it were here and there a more precise person, I saw none but lived as I lived. Ah, fooliſh sinner! is it not better to go to heaven alone, than to hell with company? The worst courses

Digitized by Google

have always the most imitators; and the road to destruction is thronged with passengers.

2. And how little better is my condition, who have often fathered the wickedness of my own heart, upon the encouragement of mercy? Thus hath my heart pleaded against strictness and duty; God is a merciful God, and will not be so severe with the world, to damn so many thousands as are in my condition. Deluded soul! if God had damned the whole race of Adam, he had done them no more wrong: yea, there is more mercy in saving but one man, than there is of severity and rigour in damning all. How many drunkards and adulterers have lived and died with thy plea in their mouths, "God is a merciful God!" But yet his word expressly saith, "Be not deceived; such shall not inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. vi. 9. God, indeed, is a God of infinite mercy; but he will never exercise his mercy to the prejudice of his truth. *A reflection for an abuser of mercy.*

3. Oh! what rich grace is here, That in a general shipwreck *mercy* should cast forth a line or plank to save me! That when millions perish, I with a few more should escape that perdition! Was it the Father's good pleasure to bestow the kingdom upon a little flock, and to make me one of that number? What singular obligations hath *mercy* put upon my soul! The fewer are saved, the more cause have they that are, to admire their salvation. If but one of a thousand had been damned, yet my salvation would have been an act of infinite grace; but when scarce one of a thousand are saved, what shall I call that grace, that cast my lot among them! *A reflection for an elect soul.*

The POEM.

HE that with spiritual eyes in autumn sees
The heaps of fruit which fall from shaken trees,
Like storms of hail-stones, and can hardly find
One of a thousand that remains behind;
Methinks this meditation should awake
His soul, and make it like those trees, to shake.
Of all the clusters, which so lately grew
Upon those trees, how few can they now shew?
Here one, and there another; two or three
Upon the utmost branches of the tree.
The greatest numbers to the pound are borne,
Squeez'd in the trough, and all to pieces torn.

Digitized by Google

This little handful's left, to shadow forth
To God's remnant in this peopled earth.
If o'er the whole terrestrial globe I look,
The gospel visits but a little nook.
The rest with horrid darkness overspread,
Are fast asleep, yea, in transgression dead.
Whole droves to hell the devil daily drives;
Not one amongst them once resists, or strives.
And in this little heaven-enlightned spot,
How fast an interest hath Satan got?
But few of holiness profession make;
And if from those that do profess, I take
The self-deluding hypocrites, I fear
To think how few'll remain that are sincere.
O tax not mercy that it saves so few;
But rather wonder that the Lord should shew
Mercy to any. Quarrel not with grace;
But for thyself God's gracious terms embrace.
When all were shipwreck'd, thou should'st wonder more
To find thyself so strangely cast ashore,
And there to meet with any that can tell
How narrowly they also 'scap'd from hell.
The smaller number mercy saves, the higher
Engagements lie on thee still to admire.
Had the whole species perish'd in their sin,
And not one individual saved been,
Yet every tongue before him must be mute,
Confess his righteousness, but not dispute.
Or had the hand of mercy which is free,
Taken another, and pass'd over me;
I still must justify him, and my tongue
Confess my maker had done me no wrong.
But if my name he please to let me see
Enroll'd among those few that saved be,
What admiration should such mercy move!
What thanks, and praise, and everlasting love!

Digitized by Google

CHAP. IV.

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 ax, 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 may be planted in its room, 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, rived abroad, and ricked up for the fire.

APPLICATION.

THus deals the Lord by useless and barren professors who do but cumber his ground, Matth. iii. 10. "And now "also the ax is laid to the root of the trees; therefore every "tree that brings not forth good fruit, is hewen down and cast "into the fire." And Luke xiii. 7. "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?" These three years, alluding to the time of his ministry, he being at that time entering upon the last half year, as one observes, by harmonizing the evangelists; 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, (*viz.* 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 and empty 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 pro-

Digitized by Google

session among real saints with whom we have been associated, and enjoyed the rich and excellent waterings of ordinances, that can secure us from the wrath of God, Matt. iii. 8, 9. "Bring "forth fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within "yourselves, we have Abraham to our father." 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. Let these scriptures be consulted, Matth. vii. 22. Matth. xxv. 11, 12. Rom. ii. 17, and 25.

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 dead-hearted persons, from sabbath to sabbath, and from year to year; for the Lord is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, 2 Pet. iii. 9. Thus the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah upon those dry trees, who are now smoaking and flaming in hell, 1 Pet. iii. 29. He waits long on sinners, but keeps exact accounts of every year and day of his patience, Luke. xiii. 7. "These three years." And Jer. xxv. 3. these twenty-three years.

3. When the time is come to cut it down, the dead tree cannot possibly resist the stroke of the ax; but receives the blow, and falls before it. No more can the stoutest sinner resist the fatal stroke by death, by which the Lord hews him down; Eccl. viii. 8. "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." 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 ax at thy root, and say to thee, as it is Ezek. vii. 6. "An end is "come, the end is come; it watcheth for thee; behold it is "come." Oh! saith Henry Beauford, (that rich and wretched cardinal, bishop of Winchester, and chancellor of England, when he perceived whereto he must), 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 (quoth he) will not death

Digitized by Google

be hired? Will riches do nothing? No, neither riches nor policy can then avail.

4. The 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, Eccl. xi. 3. So it fares with these mystical trees, I mean fruitless professors: Had their hearts and affections inclined and bended heaven-ward whilst they lived, that way, no doubt, they had fallen at their death; but as their hearts inclined to sin, and even bended to the world, so when God gives the fatal stroke, they must fall hell-ward and wrath-ward: And, how dreadful will such a fall be!

5. When the dead tree is carried out of the orchard, it shall never be among the living trees of the orchard any more; many years it grew among them, but now it shall never have a place there again. And when the barren professor is carried out of the world by death, he shall never be associated with the saints any more: He may then say, farewel all ye saints, among whom I lived, and with whom I so often heard, fasted, and prayed: I shall never see your face more; Matth. viii. 11, 12. "I say unto you, that many shall come from the east, and "west, and north, and south, and shall sit down with Abra-"ham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the "children of the kingdom shall be cast forth into utter darkness, "there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth."

6. When the dead tree is carried out of the orchard, the husbandman cuts off its branches, and rives it asunder with his wedges. This also is the lot of barren professors: "The "Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not "for him, and will cut him asunder;" he shall be dissected, or cut abroad, Luke xii. 46.

Now therefore "consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear "(or rend) you in pieces," Psalm l. 22. O direful day! when the same hand that 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 mer-"cy 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.

7. When this tree is cleaved abroad, then its rotten hollow inside appears, which was the cause of its barrenness; it looked like a fair and sound-bodied tree, but now all may see how rotten it is at the heart; so will God in that day, when he shall dissect the barren professor, discover the rottenness of his heart,

Digitized by Google

and unsoundness of his principles and ends: Then they who never suspected him before, shall see what a hollow and rotten hearted professor he was.

8. Lastly; The fruitless tree is cast into the fire. This also is the end and sad issue of formality, John xv. 6. "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 lie "gnashing "their teeth," Luke xiii. 28. and that both in indignation against the saints, whom they shall see in glory; and against Jesus Christ, who would not save them; 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 those undone creatures, foaming and gnashing their teeth in that fire which is not quenched! Mark ix. 44.

REFLECTION.

A reflection for a formal hypocrite. How often have I passed by such barren trees, 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 drousy, sleepy conscience! wert thou but tender, and faithful to me, thou wouldst make as round and terrible an application of such a spectacle to me, as the faithful prophet did to him, ver. 22. And thus wouldst thou, O my soul, 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; I was never planted a right seed; some green and flourishing leaves of profession, 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 ax lieth by thy 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, Psalm lxxx. 6. He is daily sollicited by his justice to hew me down, and yet I stand. Lord, cure my barrenness! I know thou hadst rather see the fruit than fire upon me.

Digitized by Google

The POEM.

IF, after pains and patience, you can see
No hopes of fruit, down goes the barrren tree.
You will not suffer trees that are unsound,
And barren too, to cumber useful ground.
The fatal ax is laid unto the root:
'Tis fit for fire, when unfit for fruit.
But, though this be a dead and barren tree,
Reader, I would not have it so to thee:
May it to thee this serious thought suggest,
In all the orchard this dead tree's the best;
Think on it sadly, lay it close to heart;
This is the case in which thou wast, or art
If so thou wast, but now dost live and grow,
And bring forth fruit, what praise and thanks dost owe
To that wise husbandman that made thee so?
O think, when justice lifted up its hand,
How mercy did then interceeding stand!
How pity did on thy behalf appear,
To beg reprieval for another year.
Stop, Lord! forbear him; all hope is not past;
He can but be for fire at the last.
Though many sermons, many a gracious call
He hath resisted like a brazen wall,
The next may win him; when thy grace shall raise
Unto itself a monument of praise.
How should this meditation thaw and melt
The heart of him that hath such mercy felt?
But, if thou still remain a barren tree,
Then here, as in a mirror, thou may'st see
Thy wretched state, when justice, at a blow,
Requites God's patience in thine overthrow.
And canst thou bear it? Can thy heart endure
To think of everlasting burnings? Sure,
This must thy lot, thy fearful portion be,
If thou continue still a barren tree.

Digitized by Google

AN INTRODUCTION To the THIRD PART of HUSBANDRY.

NOW, from the pleasant orchard let us walk
A turn i' th' fields, and there converse and talk
With cows and horses; they can teach us some
Choice lessons, though irrational and dumb.
My reader's weary; yet I do not fear
To be forsaken by one reader here:
He'll doubtless stay to hear what questions I
Propound to beasts, and how they make reply.
The fatted ox, and pamper'd horse you ride;
Their careless master for his care thus chide.

CHAP. I.

Upon the Husbandman's Care for his Cattle.

More care for horse and oxen many take,
Than for their souls, or dearest childrens sake.

OBSERVATION.

MANY husbandmen are exceſſively careful about their cattle, rising themselves early, or causing their servants to rise betimes, to provender and dress them. Much time is spent in some countries, in trimming and adorning their horses with curious trappings and plumes of feathers; and if at any time their beasts 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 chuse 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 truly enough be applied to some parents and masters, who take less care for the saving the souls of

Digitized by Google

their children and servants, than they do for the bodies of those beasts which daily feed at their stalls and cribs. 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 rejoice when cattle 'multiply, and repine when children increase; it is heathen-'ish distrustfulness, to fear that he who provides for your beasts, 'will not provide for your children; and it is no less than un-'natural cruelty, to be careful of 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 a stroke or way of wickedness, but yet never were at any pains or coast to break them; these must be fondled and 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 can speak, and will not see them in seven years after, lest their indulgence should do them hurt.

2. You keep your constant set times, *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, do 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

* Jenk. on Jude, part 2. p. 170. † Clark's Mir. p. 506.

Digitized by Google

rare a thing is it to find these men as careful to fit their posterity to be useful and 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 plow, 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 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 had not cloathed 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 in 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 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 than what it naturally took. Thus it is with children, Prov. xxii. 6. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is "old, he will not depart from it."

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 shew them not how to pray, he will shew 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. Oh! 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

Digitized by Google

and carelesness, in the loose and vain education of their children. By Lycurgus his 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 Switzers, 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.

A reflection for careless parents.

1. God hath found out my sin this day. 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 tyger, 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 as much for them, as I have done for a beast that perisheth!

A reflection for the disobedient child of a gracious parent.

2. But, unhappy wretch that I am! God cast a better lot for me; I am the off-spring 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, both in my hearing, as well as in secret; many holy and wholesome counsels have they from time to time dropt 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 counsel, grieved their hearts, and imbittered their lives to them by my sinful courses. Ah, my soul! thou art a degenerate plant; better will it be with the off-spring of infidels than with thee,

Digitized by Google

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.

The POEM.

YOUR cattle in fat pastures thrive and grow,
There's nothing wanting that should make them so.
The pamper'd horse commends his master's care,
Who neither pains or cost doth grudge or spare.
But art not thou mean while the vilest fool,
That pamper'st beasts, and starves thy precious soul?
'Twere well if thou couldst die as well as live
Like beasts, and had no more account to give.
O that these lines your folly might detect!
Who both your own and children's souls neglect
To care for beasts. O man! prepare to hear
The doleful'st language that e'er pierc'd thine ear;
When you your children once in hell shall meet,
And with such language their damn'd parents greet:

"O cursed father! wretched mother! why
"Was I your off-spring? Would to God that I
"Had sprung from tygers, who more tender be
"Unto their young than you have been to me.
"How did you spend your thoughts, time, care, and cost
"About my body, whilst my soul was lost?
"Did you not know I had a soul, that must
"Live, when this body was dissolv'd to dust?
"You could not chuse but understand if I,
"Without an interest in Christ did die,
"It needs must come to this. O how could you
"Prove so remorseless, and no pity shew?
"O cruel parents! I may curse the day
"That I was born of such as did betray
"Their child to endless torments. Now must I
"With, and through you, in flames for ever lie."

Let this make every parent tremble, lest
He lose his child, whilst caring for his beast:

Digitized by Google

Or left his own poor soul do starve and pine,
Whilst he takes thought for horses, sheep and kine.

CHAP. 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, as was noted in the former chapter; yet others are cruel and merciless towards them, not regarding how they ride or burden 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 high-ways to shift for a little grass, 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 dogs 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 *ad esum*, only for food, being no otherwise useful to men, *as swine*, &c. These are only fed for slaughter; we kill and eat them, and regard not their cries and strugglings when the knife is thrust to their very hearts! others are only *ad usum*, 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 *ad esum, et usum*, for food when dead, and service whilst alive, as the *ox*; these we make to plow our fields, draw our carriages, and afterwards prepare them for the 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 thankful, 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,

* Luther in 3d Precept.

Digitized by Google

by the way they heard a man in the fields, weeping and wailing bitterly; they rode to him, and ask'd him what he ailed? Perceiving his eye intently fixed upon an ugly toad, he told them that his heart 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: *Hoc est quod amare fleo*, said he, this is that which makes me weep bitterly. Whereupon one of the Cardinals cries out, well, said the Father, the unlearned will rise and take 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 but draw a comparison betwixt ourselves and these irrational creatures, in these three particulars.

1. Though they and we were made of the same mould and 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; God made other good creatures by a word of command, but man by counsel; it was not, Be thou, but, *Let us make man.* We might have been made stones without sense, or beasts without reason, but we were made men. 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," Psal. 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 mold.

2. How little ease or rest have they? They live not many years, and those they do are in bondage and misery, groaning under the effects of sin; but God hath provided better for us even as to our outward condition in the world; we have the more rest, because they have so little. How many refreshments and comforts hath God provided for us, of which they are uncapable? 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!

Digitized by Google

What a large capacity to man! Alas, they are only capable of a little ſenſitive pleaſure; as you ſhall ſee ſometimes, how they will friſk in a green paſture; 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 is but a material form, which, wholly depending upon, muſt needs die with the body; but our ſouls are a divine ſpark or blaſt; and when the body dies, it dies not with it, but ſubſiſts even in its ſeparated ſtate.

REFLECTIONS.

A reflection for an unthankful ſinner.

1. How great a ſin 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 which I may obſerve even in theſe 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 load 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 higher and more excellent end of my creation is, and might more endeavour to anſwer and live up to it! Or elſe, O my ſoul! it will be worſe with thee than 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 ſo have I. 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.

A reflection for an elect ſoul.

2. But how many ſteps, O my ſoul! mayſt thou aſcend in the praiſes of thy God, when thou conſidereſt the mercies that God hath beſtowed upon thee; not only in that he made thee not a

Digitized by Google

stone or tree without sense, or an horse or dog without reason; but that thou art not an infidel without light, or an unregenerate person without grace? What! to have sense, and all the delights of it, which stones have not! Reason, with the more high and noble pleasures of it, which beasts have not, the light and knowledge of the great things of the gospel, which the heathens have not! and such an expectation and hope of unconceivable glory and felicity, 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!

The POEM.

WHEN I behold a tired jade put on
With whip and spur, till all his strength be gone;
See streams of sweat run down his bleeding sides,
How little mercy's shewn by him that rides.
If I more thankful to my God wou'd prove,
Than such a rider merciless, 'twill move
My soul to praise: For who sees this, and can
But bless the Lord that he was made a man.
And such a sight the rider ought to move
This meditation duly to improve.
What hath this creature done, that he should be
Thus beaten, wounded, and tir'd out by me?
He is my fellow-creature; 'tis mere grace
I had not been in his, he in my case.
Ungrateful, stupid man! God might have made
Me bear the saddle, as I see this jade,
He never sinn'd, but for my sin doth lie
Subjected unto all this misery.
Lord, make my heart relent, that I should be
To thee more useless, than my horse to me:
He did his utmost, went as long as ever
His legs cou'd bear him; but for me I never
Thus spent my strength for God, but oft have been
Too prodigal thereof in ways of sin.
Though he's the horse, and I the man, 'twill be
Far better with my horse one day than me:
Unless thy grace prevent and superadd
A new creation unto that I had.
Could every rider fix a serious thought
On such a subject, and hereby be taught

Digitized by Google

To spiritualize it, and improve it thus;
How sweet would tedious journeys be to us!
But such a task, a graceless heart tires out,
More than the tired horse I write about.

CHAP. 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 away from your fields, you use all care and diligence to recover them again; tracing their footsteps, crying them in the market-towns, sending your servants abroad, and enquiring yourselves of all that you think can give news of them. What care and pains men will take in such cases, was exemplified in Saul, 1 Sam. ix. 4, 5. who with his servant, passed through mount Ephraim, to seek the asses that were strayed from his father, and through the land of Shalisha, and through the land of Shalim, and they were not there, and through the land of the Benjamites, but found them not.

APPLICATION.

THE care and pains you take to recover your lost cattle, carries a sweet and 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, Matth. xviii. 11. 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, do meet and touch, though there be as many particulars also in which they differ: all which I shall open under the following heads.

1. We sometimes find that 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 his 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, Eccles. vii. 29. "Lo, this only have I found, that God "made man upright, but he sought out to himself many in-"ventions:" He was not content and satisfied with that blest-

Digitized by Google

sed state God had put him into, but would be trying new conclusions, to the loss and ruin both of himself and his posterity.

2. Strayers are evermore sufferers for it; all they get by it, to be pined and pounded: And what did man get by departing from his God, but ruin and misery to soul and body? Will you have an abbreviate of his sufferings and losses? The full account none can give you: Why, by straying from his God, he lost the rectitude and holiness of his nature; like a true strayer, he is all dirty and miry, overspread and besmeared both in soul and body with the odious filthiness of sin; he lost the liberty and freedom 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 and humility, 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 forecited place, Matth. xvii. 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 low 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 in a perishing state; I will seek after them, and save them. The Son of man is come to seek and to save.

4. You are glad when you have found your strayers; much more is Christ, when he hath found a lost soul. O it is a great satisfaction to him to see the fruit of the travail of his soul; Isa. liii. "Yea, there is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety nine just persons that need no repentance." What demonstrations of joy and gladness did the father of the prodigal give, when he had found his son that was lost? Luke xv. 20.

5. When you have brought home your strayers, you sometimes clog them, to prevent their wandering again, and stop up the gaps with thorns; and so doth God oftentimes by such souls as are recovered and brought home to Christ; he hangs a clog of affliction to prevent their departure from God again, 2 Cor. xii. 7.

But then there are five particulars in which Christ's seeking lost souls, and your seeking lost cattle differ.

Digitized by Google

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, can never find him again of himself. Alas! his heart is bent to backsliding, he hath no will to return. Hear how Christ complains, John v. 40. "Ye will not come "unto me." Man's recovery begins in God, not in himself.

2. Your servants can find, and bring back your lost cattle as well as you; but so cannot Christ's servants: Ministers may discover, but cannot recover them; they daily see, but cannot save them; lament them they can, but help them they cannot; intreat and beg them to return they can, and do, 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. You seek all the cattle that are strayed from you, especially the best; but Jesus Christ only seeks poor lost man. There were other creatures, and such as by nature were more excellent, that lost their God and themselves; I mean, the apostate angels; but he came not to seek them: herein his singular love to man appears.

4. When you have recovered and brought home your lost cattle, you may lose them the second time, and never recover them again; but so cannot Christ. Man once recovered is for ever secured by him. "All that thou hast given me, I have "kept, and not one of them is lost, but the son of perdition;" and he was never savingly found, John xvii. 12.

5. Though you prize your cattle, yet you will not venture your life for the recovery of them; rather let them go, than regain 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 return to him: nay, I fly from Christ, who is come on purpose from heaven 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 re- *A reflection for a lost soul.*

Digitized by Google

turn. 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 have 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, O my soul! 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!

A reflection for one that was lost, but is found.

2. O my soul! 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 marvellous! 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. Thy love, O my Saviour! was a preventing love, a wonderful love; thou lovedst me much more than I loved myself; I was cruel to my own soul, but thou wast kind; thou soughtest for me, a lost sinner, and not for lost angels; thy hand of grace caught hold of me, and hath let go thousands, and ten thousands, as good as myself by nature: like another David, thou didst rescue my poor lost soul out of the mouth of the destroyer; yea, more than so, thou didst lose thine own life to find mine: And now, dear Jesus, since I am thus marvellously recovered, shall I ever straggle again from thee? O let it for ever be a warning to me, how I turn aside into by-paths of sin any more.

The POEM.

WHen cattle from your fields are gone astray,
And you to seek them through the country ride;
Enquiring for them all along the way,
Tracking their foot-steps where the turn'd aside;
One servant this way sent, another that,
Searching the fields and country round about;
This meditation now falls in so pat,
As if God sent it to enquire you out:
My beasts are lost, and so am I by sin;
My wretched soul from God thus wandring went;
As I seek them, so was I sought by him,
Who from the Father's bosom forth was sent.
Pursu'd by sermons, follow'd close by grace,
And strong convictions, Christ hath sought for me;

Digitized by Google

Yea, though I shun him, still he gives me chase,
As if resolv'd I should not damned be.
When angels lost themselves, it was not so;
God did not seek or once for them enquire;
But said, Let these apostate creatures go,
I'll plague them for it with eternal fire.
Lord! what am I, that thou shouldst set thine eyes,
And still seek after such a wretch as I?
Whose matchless mercy, and rich grace despise,
As if, in spight thereof, resolved to die.
Why should I shun thee? Blessed Saviour, why
Should I avoid thee thus? Thou dost not chafe
My soul to slay it; O that ever I
Should fly a Saviour that's so full of grace!
Long hast thou sought me, Lord, I now return,
O let thy bowels of compassion sound;
For my departure I sincerely mourn,
And let this day thy wandring sheep be found.

CHAP. IV.

Upon the Feeding of fat Cattle.

Fat beasts you kill, the lean you use to save:
God's dispensations some such meaning have.

OBSERVATION.

IT is a good observation of a Father, and well applied; *Vituli triturantes quotidie ligantur, vituli mactandi quotidie in pascuis libere relinquuntur:* Oxen for use are daily yoked and kept short, whilst those that are designed for the shambles, are let loose in green pastures to feed at pleasure. Store beasts fare hard, and are kept lean and low; feeding beasts are excused from the yoke, whilst others are laboured and wrought hard every day; the one hath more than he can eat, the other would eat more if he had it.

APPLICATION.

THUS deals the Lord oft-times with his own elect, whom he designs for glory; and with the wicked, who are preparing for the day of wrath: thus are they filled with earthly prosperity, and creature-enjoyments, like rusty and wanton beasts turned out at liberty in a fat pasture, whilst poor saints are kept hard and short; Amos iv. 1. "Hear this word, ye "kine of Bashan, that are in the mountains of Samaria, which "oppress the poor, crush the needy." These metaphorical

Digitized by Google

kine are the prosperous oppressors of the world, full fed, and wanton wicked men. It is true, heaven hath not all the poor, nor hell all the rich; but it is a very common dispensation of providence, to bestow most of the things of this world upon them that have no portion in heaven; and to keep them short on earth, for whom that kingdom is provided. Let me draw forth the similitude in a few particulars.

1. The beasts of slaughter have the fattest pastures; so have the ungodly in the world; "Their eyes stand out with fat-"ness: they have more than heart could wish," Psal. lxxiii. 7. Their hearts are as fat as grease, Psal. cxix. 70. These be they that fleet off the cream of earthly enjoyments, "whose bellies are filled with hidden treasures," Psal. xvii. 14. "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked," Job ix. 24. O what full estates! what an affluence of earthly delights hath God cast in upon some wicked men! There is much wantonness, but no want in their dwellings: some that know not which way to turn themselves in hell, once knew not where to bestow their goods on earth.

2. Feeding beasts grow wanton in their full pastures; there you shall see them tumble and frisk, and kick up their heels. The same effect hath the prosperity of the wicked; it makes them wanton; their life is but a diversion from one pleasure to another, Job xxi. 11, 12, 13. "They send forth their little "ones like a flock, and their children dance: they take the tim-"brel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ: they "spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the "grave." The same character doth the prophet Amos give of them, Amos vi. 4, 5, 6. "They stretch themselves upon "beds of ivory, drink wine in bowls," *&c.* and no sorrow goes to their hearts. These are they that live in pleasures upon earth, as a fish in the water, Jam. v. 5.

3. These fat pastures do but the sooner hasten the death of these cattle: the sooner they are fatted, the sooner they are slaughtered; and the prosperity of the wicked serves to the same end: the prosperity of fools shall destroy them; *i. e.* it shall be the means and instrument of heating and heightening their lusts, and thereby fitting them for destruction; their prosperity is food and fewel to their corruptions. Many wicked men had not been so soon ripe for hell, had they not grown in the sunshine of prosperity.

4. Fatted beasts do not in the least understand the intent and meaning of the husbandman, in allowing them such large and fat pastures, which he denies to his other cattle; and as little

Digitized by Google

as beasts, do wicked men understand the scope and end of God's providences, in casting prosperity and wealth upon them; little do they think their tables are a snare, a gin, and a trap for their souls; they only, like beasts, mind what is before them, but do not at all understand the tendency and end of these their sensual delights.

5. Though the husbandman keeps his store-cattle in short commons, yet he intends to preserve them: these shall remain with him, when the others are driven to the slaughter.

Such a design of preservation is carried on in all those outward straits, wants, and hardships which the Lord exposes his people to. I confess, such dispensations, for the present, are very stumbling and puzzling things, even to gracious and wise persons. To see wicked men, not only exempted from their troubles, but even oppressed with prosperity: to see a godly man in wants and straits, and a wicked man have more than his heart can wish, is a case that poses the wisest Christian, till he considers the designs and issues of both those providences, and, then he acquiesces in the wisdom of God so ordering it, Psal. lxxiii. 5, 14, 18, 23.

REFLECTIONS.

A reflection for a voluptuous worldling.

1. Doth my prosperity fat me up for hell, and prepare me for the day of slaughter? Little cause have I then to glory in it, and lift up my heart upon these things. Indeed, God hath given (I cannot say blessed me with) a fulness of creature-enjoyments; upon these my carnal heart seizeth greedily and securely, not at all suspecting a snare lying in these things for the ruin of my soul. What are all these charming pleasures, but so many rattles to quiet my soul, whilst its damnation steals insensibly upon it? What are all my businesses and employments in the world, but so many diversions from the business of life? There are but two differences betwixt me, and the poorest slave the devil hath on earth; such are whipped on to hell by outward miseries, and I am coached to hell in a little more pomp and honour; these will have a less, and I a greater account in the day of reckoning. O that I had never known prosperity! I am now tumbling in a green pasture, and shortly shall be hanging up in the shambles in hell: if this be the best fruit of my prosperity, if I were taken captive by cruel canibals, and fed with the richest fare, but withal understood, that the design of it were to fat me up like a beast for them to feed upon, how little stomach should I have to their dainties? O my soul! it were much better for thee to have a sanctified poverty,

Digitized by Google

which is the portion of many saints, than an enfnaring prosperity, set as a trap to ruin thee for ever.

A reflection for a poor Christian.

2. The wisdom of my God hath allotted me but short commons here; his providence feeds me but from hand to mouth; but I am, and well may be, contented with my present state; that which sweetens it is, that I am one of the Lord's preserved. How much better is a morsel of bread, and a draught of water here with an expectancy of glory hereafter, than a fat pasture given in, and a fitting for the wrath to come? Well since the case stands thus, blessed be God for my present lot! Though I have but a little in hand, I have much in hope; my present troubles will serve to sweeten my future joys; and the sorrows of this life will give a lustre to the glory of the next: that which is now hard to suffer, will then be sweet to remember; my songs will then be louder than my groans now are.

The POEM.

THOSE beasts which for the shambles are design'd,
In fragrant flow'ry meadows you shall find,
Where they abound with rich and plenteous fare,
Whilst others graze in commons thin and bare:
Those live a short and pleasant life, but these
Protract their lives in dry and shorter leas.
Thus lives the wicked; thus they do abound
With earthly glory, and with honour crown'd.
Their lofty heads unto the stars aspire,
And radiant beams their shining brows attire.
The fattest portion's serv'd up in their dish;
Yea, they have more than their own hearts can wish.
Dissolv'd in pleasures, crown'd with buds of May;
They, for a time, in these fat pastures play,
Frisk, dance and leap, like full-fed beasts; and even
Turn up their wanton heels against the heaven;
Not understanding that this pleasant life,
Serves but to fit them for the butcher's knife.
In fragrant meads they tumbling are to-day,
To-morrow to the slaughter led away.
Their pleasure's gone, and vanish like a bubble,
Which makes their future torments on them double.
Mean while God's little flock is poor and lean,
Because the Lord did ne'er intend or mean
This for their portion; and besides doth know
Their souls prove best, where shortest grass doth grow.

Digitized by Google

Cheat up, poor flock, although your fare be thin,
Yet here is something to take comfort in:
You here securely feed, and need not fear,
Th' infernal butcher can't approach you here.
'Tis somewhat that; but, oh! which far transcends,
Your glorious shepherd's coming, who intends
To lead you hence unto that fragrant hill,
Where, with green pastures, he his flocks will fill;
Or which he from celestial casements pours
The sweetest dews, and constant gracious show'rs;
Along whose banks rivers of pleasures slide;
There his bless'd flocks for ever shall abide.
O envy not the worldlings present joys,
Which to your future mercies are but toys:
Their pasture now is green, your's dry and burn'd;
But then the scene is chang'd, the tables turn'd.

CHAP. V.

Upon the Husbandman's Care for Posterity.

Good husbands labour for posterity;
To after-ages saints must have an eye.

OBSERVATION.

PRovident and careful husbandmen do not only labour to supply their own necessities, while living, but lay up something for their posterity when they are gone: they do not only leave to their children what their progenitors left them, but they desire to leave it improved and bettered. None but bad husbands and spend-thrifts are of the mind with that heathen emperor Tiberius, who having put all into such confusions 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, When I am dead, 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 do very much 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 are bound to do, with respect to the truths committed to them, and by them to be transmitted to succeeding saints.

Digitized by Google

In the first ages of the world, even till the law was given, faithful men were instead of books and records; they did, by oral tradition, convey the truths of God to posterity: but since the sacred truth hath been consigned to writing, no such tradition (except full consentient with that written word) is to be received as authentic; but the truths therein delivered to the saints, are, by verbal *declarations*, open *confessions*, and constant *sufferings*, to be preserved and delivered from age to age. This was the constant care of the whole cloud of witnesses, both ancient and modern, who have kept the word of God's patience, and would not accept their own lives, liberties, or estates, no, nor the whole world in exchange for that invaluable treasure of truth: they have carefully practised Solomon's counsel, Prov. xxiii. 23. "Buy the truth, but sell it not;" they would not alienate that fair inheritance for all the inheritances on earth. Upon the same reasons that you refuse to part with, or imbezzle your estates, Christians also refuse to part with the truths of God.

1. You will not waste or alienate your inheritance, because it is precious, and 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 his Bible. Though some profane persons may say with Pilate, What is truth? Yet know, that any one truth of the gospel is 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 very blood of their impoverished children. The people of God do also consider, how much the generations to come are concerned in the conservation of the truths of God for them: It cuts them to the heart, but to think that their children should be brought up to worship dumb idols, and fall down before a wooden and breaden God. The very birds and beasts will expose their own bodies to apparent danger of death, to preserve their young. Religion doth much more intender 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 bears 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 strictly required to deliver up their Bibles,

Digitized by Google

those that did so, were justly branded, and hushed out of their company, 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 do 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; "earnestly "contending for the faith once delivered to them," Jude 3.

5. To conclude; rather than you will part with your estates, you will chuse 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! How have I flinched and sunk 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 the truth; yea, rather bold and daring soul! that would 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; 2 Tim. ii. 12. "If we deny him, he will deny us." *A reflection for cowardly and faint-hearted professors.*

2. Lord! unto me hast thou committed the precious treasure and trust of truth; and as I received it, so do I desire to deliver it to the generations to come, that the people which are yet unborn my praise the Lord. God forbid I should never part with such a fair inheritance, and thereby beggar my own and thousands of souls! Thou hast given me thy truth, and the *A reflection for such as suffer for truth.*

Digitized by Google

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 invaluably 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 pass a fine, and cut off that golden line, whereby thy 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.

A reflection for such as are in quiet possession of truth.

3. How dear hath this inheritance of truth cost some Christians? 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.

The POEM.

A Public spirit scorns to plant no root
But such from which himself may gather fruit,
For thus he reasons, If I reap the gains
Of laborious predecessors pains,
How equal is it, that posterity,
Should reap the fruits of present industry?
Should every age but serve it's turn, and take
No thought for future times, it soon will make
A bankrupt world, and so entail a curse
From age to age, as it grows worse and worse.
Our Christian predecessors careful thus
Have been to leave an heritage to us.
Christ's precious truth conserved in their blood,
For no less price those truths our fathers stood.
They have transmitted, would not alienate
From us, their children, such a fair estate.
We eat what they did set: and shall truth fail
In our days? Shall we cut off th' entail,

Digitized by Google

Or end the line of honour? Nay, what's worse,
Give future ages cause to hate, and curse
Our memories? Like Naboth, may this age
Part with their blood sooner than heritage.
Let pity move us, let us think upon
Our childrens soul, when we are dead and gone:
Shall they, poor souls, in darkness grope, when we
Put out the light, by which they else might see
The way to glory? Yea, what's worse, shall it
Be said in time to come, Christ did commit
A precious treasure, purchas'd by his blood,
To us, for ours, and for our childrens good!
But we, like cowards, false, perfidious men,
For carnal ease lost it, ourselves, and them.
O let us leave, to after ages, more
Than we receiv'd from all that went before!
That those to come, may bless the Lord, and keep
Our names alive, when we in dust shall sleep.

CHAP. VI.

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, make the worst of their cause, and query about all the supposeable danger with him. If he tell them their case is suspicious and hazardous, how much are they perplexed and troubled? They can neither eat, drink, or 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, and therefore slighted them, as fancies and

Digitized by Google

whimsies: I say, 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 to eternity; so you cannot but imagine, that the cares, fears, and solicitudes of souls about these things, are much, very much beyond yours. Let us compare the cases, and see how they answer to 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 *in capite*, by virtue of their intermarriage with Jesus Christ; they come to be instated in that glorious inheritance contained in the covenant of grace. You have their tenure in that scripture, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. "All is yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ "is God's." 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 sealing and executing of your 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 and sealing time, 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, and the covenant of promises. These are cunning and potent adversaries, and do maintain long debates with the gracious soul, and reason so cunningly and sophistically with it, that it can by no means extricate and satisfy itself; always alledging, that their title is worth nothing, which they, poor souls, are but too apt to suspect.

3. All the while that a suit of 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 moneys 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, 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 would then rejoice in them: But, alas! our title is dubi-

Digitized by Google

ous: 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 those, Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know "my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me."

5. You have little quiet in your spirits, till the case be resolved; your meat and drink doth you little good; 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 gracious souls; their eyes are held waking in the night, by reason of the troubles of their hearts, Psalm lxxvii. 4. Such fears as these are frequently returning upon their hearts, what if I should be found a self-deceiver at last? What if I but hug a phantasm instead of Christ? How can this, or that, consist with grace? Their meat and drink doth them little good: their bodies are often macerated by the troubles of their souls.

6. You will not make the best of your condition, when you state your case to a faithful counsellor; neither will they, but oftentimes (poor pensive souls) they make it much worse than indeed it is; charge themselves with that which God never charged them with; though this be neither their wisdom, nor their duty; but the fears of miscarrying make them suspect fraud in all they do or have.

7. 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,

Digitized by Google

and drink their wine, yea, if it be but water, with a merry heart, Eccles. ix. 7.

REFLECTIONS.

The careless soul's reflection.

1. O how hath my spirit been tossed and hurried, when I have met with troubles and clamours about my estate! But as for spiritual troubles, and those soul perplexing cases, that Christians speak of, I understand but little of them. I never called my everlasting state in question, nor broke an hour's sleep upon any such account. Ah, my supine and 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 by finding thine hypocrisy, thou shouldst lose thy peace, or rather, thy security? To what purpose will it be to shut thine eyes against the light of conviction, unless thou couldst also find out a way to prevent thy condemnation? Thou seest other souls, how attentively they wait under the word, for any thing that may speak to their condition. Doubtless thou hast heard, how frequently and seriously they have stated their condition, 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.

The doubting soul's reflection.

2. I have heard how some have been perplexed by litigious adversaries; but I believe none have been so tost with fears, and distracted with 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 ordinances, 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 daily renewed. O my God, do thou decide my case! tell me how the state 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 things; 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

Digitized by Google

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 again 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, which grow upon the top boughs of faith; 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, thou clap my old chains upon me, and shut up my soul again in prison. *The assured Christian's reflection.*

The POEM.

MEN can't be quiet till they be assur'd
That their estate is good, and well secur'd.
To able counsel they their deeds submit,
Intreating them with care t' examine it:
Fearing some clause an enemy may wrest,
Or find a flaw, whereby he may divest
Them, and their children. O who can but see
How wise men in their generation be!
But do they equal cares and fears express
About their everlasting happiness?
In spiritual things 'twould grieve one's heart to see
What careless fools these careful men can be.
They act like men of common sense bereaven;
Secure their lands, and they'll trust God for heaven.
How many cases have you to submit
To lawyers judgments? Ministers may sit
From week to week, and yet not see the face
Of one that brings a soul-concerning case.
Yea, which is worse, how seldom do you cry
To God for counsel? Or beg him to try
Your hearts, and strictest inquisition make
Into your state, discover your mistake?
O stupid souls! clouded with ignorance,
Is Christ and heaven no fair inheritance,

Digitized by Google

Compar'd with yours? Or is eternity
A shorter term than yours, that you should ply
The one so close, and totally neglect
The other, as not worth your least respect.
Perhaps the devil, whose plot from you's conceal'd,
Persuades your title's good, and firmly seal'd
By God's own Spirit; though you never found
One act of saving grace to lay a ground
For that persuasion. Soul, he hath thee fast,
Tho' he'll not let thee know it till the last.
Lord, waken sinners, make them understand,
'Twixt thee and them, how rawly matters stand:
Give them no quiet rest until they see
Their souls secur'd better than lands can be.

Occasional MEDITATIONS upon Birds, Beasts, Trees, Flowers, Rivers, and other Objects.

MEDITATIONS ON BIRDS.

MEDITATON I.

Upon the singing of a nightingale.

WHO that hears such various, ravishing, and exquisite melody, would imagine the bird that makes it, to be of so small and contemptible a body and feather? Her charming voice engaged not only mine attentive ear, but my feet also to make a nearer approach to that shady bush in which that excellent musician sat veiled; and the nearer I came, the sweeter the melody still seemed to be; but when I had descried the bird herself, and found her to be little bigger, and no better feathered than a sparrow, it gave my thoughts the occasion of this following application.

This bird seems to me the lively emblem of the formal hypocrite; (1.) In that she is more in sound than substance, a loud and excellent voice, but a little despicable body; and it recalled to my thoughts the story of Plutarch, who hearing a nightingale, desired to have one killed to feed upon, not questioning but she would please the palate as well as the ear; but when the nightingale was brought him, and he saw what a poor little creature it was, Truly, said he, thou art *vox et praeterea nihil*, a mere voice, and nothing else; so is the hypocrite: did a man

Digitized by Google

hear him ſometimes in more public duties and diſcourſes, O, thinks he, what an excellent man is this! what a choice and rare ſpirit is he of! but follow him home, obſerve him in his private converſation and retirements, and then you will judge Plutarch's note as applicable to him as the nightingale. (2.) This bird is obſerved to charm moſt ſweetly, and ſet her ſpirits all on work, when ſhe perceives ſhe hath engaged attention; ſo doth the hypocrite, who lives and feeds upon the applauſe and commendation of his admirers, and cares little for any of thoſe duties wich bring in no returns of praiſe from men: he is little pleaſed with a ſilent melody and private pleaſure betwixt God and his own ſoul.

Scire tuum nihil eſt niſi te ſcire hoc ſciat alter.

Alas! his knowledge is not worth a pin,
If he proclaim not what he hath within.

He is more for the theatre than the cloſet; and of ſuch Chriſt ſaith, "Verily they have their reward." (3.) Naturaliſts obſerve the nightingale to be an ambitious bird, that cannot endure to be outvied by any: ſhe will rather chuſe to die than be excelled; a notable inſtance whereof we have in the following pleaſant poem, tranſlated out of Starda, concerning the nightingale and a lutaniſt.

Now the declining ſun did downward bend
From higher heavens, and from his looks did ſend
A milder flame, when near to Tyber's flow,
A lutaniſt allayed his careful woe
With ſounding charms; and in a greeny ſeat
Of ſhady oak, took ſhelter from the heat;
A nightingale o'erheard him, that did uſe
To ſojourn in the neighbour groves, the muſe
That fill'd the place, the ſyrene of the wood
(Poor harmleſs ſyrene!) ſtealing near, ſhe ſtood
Cloſe lurking in the leaves, attentively
Recording that unwonted melody:
She conn'd it to herſelf; and every ſtrain
His fingers play'd, her throat return'd again.
The lutaniſt perceiv'd an anſwer ſent
From th' imitating bird, and was content
To ſhew her play more fully: then in haſte
He tries his lute, and giving her a taſte
Of the enſuing quarrel, nimbly beats
On all his ſtrings: as nimbly ſhe repeats;

Digitized by Google

And wildly raging o'er a thousand keys,
Sounds a shrill warning of her after-lays:
With rolling hand the lutanist then plies
The trembling threads, sometimes in scornful wise
He brushes down the strings, and strikes them all
With one even stroke; then takes them several,
And culls them o'er again; his sparkling joints
With busy discant mincing on the points,
Reach back again with nimble touch, then stays:
The bird replies, and art with art repays.
Sometimes as one unexpert, and in doubt,
How she might wield her voice, she draweth out
Her tone at large, and doth at first prepare
A solemn strain, nor wear'd with winding air,
But with an equal pitch, and constant throat,
Makes clear the passage for her gilding note;
Then cross division diversly she plays,
And loudly chanting out her quickest lays,
Poises the sound, and, with a quivering voice,
Falls back again. He wondring how so choice,
So various harmony could issue out
From such a little throat, doth go about
Some harder lessons, and with wond'rous art,
Changing the strings, doth up the treble dart,
And downward smite the base, with painful stroke
He beats; and as the trumpet doth provoke
Sluggards to fight, even so his wanton skill
With mingled discord joins the hoarse and shrill.
The bird this also tunes; and whilst she cuts
Sharp notes with melting voice, and mingled puts
Measures of middle sound, then suddenly
She thunders deep, and jugs it inwardly
With gentle murmur, clear and dull she sings
By course, as when the martial warning rings.
Believ't the minstrel blusht, with angry mood;
Inflam'd (quoth he) thou chantress of the wood,
Either from thee I'll bear the prize away,
Or vanquish'd, break my lute without delay.
Unimitable accents then he strains,
His hand flies on the strings; in one he chains
Far different numbers, chasing here and there,
And all the strings he labours every where?
Both flat and sharp he strikes, and stately grows
To prouder strains, and backward as he goes

Digitized by Google

Doubly divides, and closing up his lays
Like a full choir, a shivering consort plays:
Then pausing, stood in expectation
Of his co-rival, nor durst answer on.
But she, when practice long her throat had whet,
Enduring not to yield, at once doth set
Her spirits all to work, and all in vain;
For whilst she labours to express again,
With nature's simple voice, such divers keys,
With slender pipes such lofty notes as these.
O'ermatch'd with high designs, o'ermatch'd with woe;
Just at the last encounter of her foe,
She faints, she dies, falls on his instrument
That conquer'd her, a fitting monument.
So far even little souls are driven on,
Struck with a virtuous emulation.

And even as far are hypocrites driven on by their ambition and pride, which is the spur that provokes them in their religious duties.

MEDIT. II.

Upon the sight of many small birds chirping about a dead hawk.

HEaring a whole choir of birds chirping and twinkling together, it engaged my curiosity a little to enquire into the occasion of that convocation, which mine eye quickly informed me of; for I perceived a dead hawk in the bush, about which they made such a noise, seeming to triumph at the death of their enemy; and I could not blame them to sing his knell, who, like a Canibal, was wont to feed upon their living bodies, tearing them limb from limb, and scaring them with his frightful appearance. This bird, which living was so formidable, being dead, the poorest wren or titmouse fears not to chirp or hop over. This brings to my thoughts the base and ignoble ends of the greatest tyrants, and greedy ingrossers of the world, of whom (whilst living) men were more afraid, than birds of a hawk, but dead, became objects of contempt and scorn. The death of such tyrants is both inglorious and unlamented; "When the wicked perish, there is shouting," Prov. xi. 10. Which was exemplified to the life, at the death of Nero, of whom the poet thus sings;

Cum mors crudelem rapuisset sæva Neronem,
Credibile est multos Romam agitasse jocos.

Digitized by Google

When cruel Nero dy'd, th' historian tells,
How Rome did mourn with bonefires, plays, and bells.

Remarkable for contempt and shame have the ends of many bloody tyrants been. So Pompey the great, of whom Claudian the poet sings,

Nudus pascit aves, jacet en qui possidet orbem
Exiguæ telluris inops———

Birds eat his flesh. Lo, now he cannot have,
Who rul'd the world, a space to make a grave.

The like is storied of Alexander the Great, who lay unburied thirty days; and William the Conqueror, with many other such birds of prey: whilst a beneficial and holy life is usually closed up in an honourable and much lamented death.

For mine own part, I wish I may so order my conversation in the world, that I may live, when I am dead, in the affections of the best, and leave an honourable testimony in the consciences of the worst; that I may oppress none, do good to all, and say, when I die, as good Ambrose did, I am neither ashamed to live, nor afraid to die.

MEDIT. III.

Upon the sight of a blackbird taking sanctuary in a bush from a pursuing hawk.

WHEN I saw how hardly the poor bird was put to it to save herself from her enemy, who hovered just over the bush in which she was fluttering and squeaking, I could not but hasten to relieve her, (pity and succour being a due debt to the distressed;) which, when I had done, the bird would not depart from the bush, though her enemy were gone; this act of kindness was abundantly repaid by this meditation, with which I returned to my walk; my soul, like this bird, was once distressed, pursued, yea, seized by Satan, who had certainly made a prey of it, had not Jesus Christ been a sanctuary to it in that hour of danger. How ready did I find him to receive my poor soul into his protection? Then did he make good that sweet promise to my experience, those that come unto me, I will in no wise cast out. It called to mind that pretty and pertinent story of the philosopher, who walking in the fields, a bird, pursued by a hawk, flew into his bosom; he took her out, and said, 'Poor bird, I will neither wrong 'thee, nor expose thee to thine enemy, since thou camest to

Digitized by Google

me for refuge. So tender, and more than so, is the Lord Jesus to distressed souls that come unto him. Blessed Jesus! how should I love and praise thee, glorify and admire thee, for that great salvation thou hast wrought for me? If this bird had fallen into the claws of her enemy, she had been torn to pieces, indeed, and devoured, but then a few minutes had dispatched her; and ended all her pain and misery: but had my soul fallen into the hand of Satan, there had been no end of its misery.

Would not this scared bird be flushed out of the bush that secured her, though I had chased away her enemy? And wilt thou, O my soul, ever be enticed or scared from Christ thy refuge? O let this for ever engage thee to keep close to Christ, and make me say, with Ezra, "And now, O Lord, since thou "hast given me such a deliverance as this, should I again break "thy commandments!"

MEDIT. IV.

Upon the sight of divers goldfinches intermingling with a flock of sparrows.

METhinks these birds do fitly resemble the gaudy courtiers, and the plain peasants; how spruce and richly adorned with shining and various coloured feathers (like scarlet, richly laid with gold and silver lace) are those? How plainly clad, in a home spun country russet are these? *Fine feathers* (saith our proverb) *make proud birds:* and yet the feathers of the sparrow are as useful and beneficial, both for warmth and flight, though not so gay and ornamental, as the others; and if both were stript out of their feathers, the sparrow would prove the better bird of the two: by which I see, that the greatest worth doth not always lie under the finest cloaths: And besides, God can make mean and homely garments as useful and beneficial to poor and despised Christians, as the ruffling and shining garments of wanton gallants are to them: and when God shall strip men out of all external excellencies, these will be found to excel their glittering neighbours in true worth and excellency.

Little would a man think such rich treasures of grace, wisdom, humility, *&c.* lay under some russet coats.

Saepe sub attrita latitat sapientia veste.

Under poor garments more true worth may be
Than under silks that whistle, who but he.

Digitized by Google

Whilst, on the other side, "the heart of the wicked (as Solo-"mon hath observed) is little worth," how much soever his cloaths be worth. Alas! it falls out too frequently among us, as it doth with men in the Indies, who walk over the rich veins of gold and silver ore, which lies hid under a ragged and barren surface, and know it not. For my own part, I desire not to value any man by what is extrinsical and worldly, but by that true internal excellency of grace, which makes the face to shine in the eyes of God and good men: I would contemn a vile person, though never so glorious in the eye of the world; but honour such as fear the Lord, how sordid and despicable soever to appearance.

MEDIT. V.

Upon the sight of a robin-red-breast picking up a worm from a mole-hill, then rising.

OBserving the mole working industriously beneath, and the bird watching so intently above, I made a stand to observe the issue; when in a little time the bird descends, and seizes upon a worm, which I perceived was crawling apace from the enemy below that hunted her, but fell to the share of another which from above waited for her. My thoughts presently suggested these *meditations* from that occasion: methought this poor worm seemed to be the emblem of my poor soul, which is more endangered by its own lusts of pride and covetousness, than this worm was by the mole and bird: my pride, like the aspiring bird, watches for it above; my covetousness, like this subterranean mole, digging for it beneath. Poor soul! What a sad *dilemma* art thou brought to? If thou go down into the *caverns* of this earth, there thou art a prey to thy covetousness that hunts thee; and if thou aspire, or but creep upward, there thy pride waits to ensnare thee. Distressed soul! whither wilt thou go? Ascend thou mayest, not by vain elation, but by a heavenly conversation, beside which there is no way for thy preservation; "the way of life is "above to the wise," *&c.*

Again, I could not but observe the accidental benefit this poor harmless bird obtained by the labour of the mole, who hunting intentionally for herself, unburroughed and ferreted out this worm for the bird, who possibly, was hungry enough, and could not have been relieved for this time, but by the mole, the fruit of whose labour she now feeds upon. Even thus the Lord oft-times makes good his word to his people: "The wealth

Digitized by Google

"of the wicked is laid up for the just." And again, "The "earth shall help the woman." This was fully exemplified in David, to whom Nabal, that churlish muckworm, speaks all in possessives. "Shall I take my bread," *&c.* "and give it to "one I know not whom?" And yet David reaps the fruit of all the pains and toils of Nabal at last. Let it never encourage me to idleness, that God sometimes gives his people the fruit of others sweat; but if providence reduce me to necessity, and disable me from helping myself, I doubt not then, but it will provide instruments to do it. The bird was an hungry, and could not dig.

MEDIT. VI.

Upon the shooting of two finches fighting in the air.

HOW soon hath death ended the quarrel betwixt these two little combatants! had they agreed better, they might have lived longer; it was their own contention that gave both the opportunity and provocation of their death; and though living they could not, yet, being dead, they can lie quietly together in my hand.

Foolish birds, was it not enough that birds of prey watched to devour them, but they must peck and scratch one another? Thus have I seen the birds of paradise (saints I mean) tearing and wounding each other, like so many birds of prey, and by their unchristian contests giving the occasion of their common ruin; yea, and that not only when at liberty, as these were, but when ingaged also; and yet, as one well observes, if ever Christians will agree, it will either be in a prison, or in heaven; for in a prison their quarrelsome lusts lie low, and in heaven they shall be utterly done away.

But O what pity is it, that those who shall agree so perfectly in heaven, should bite and devour each other upon earth? That it should be said of them, as one ingeniously observed, who saw their carcasses lie together, as if they had lovingly embraced each other, who fell together by a duel; *Quanta amicitia se invicem amplectuntur; qui mutua et implacabili inimicitia perierunt!*

Embracing one another, now they lie,
Who by each other's bloody hands did die.

Or, as he said, who observed how quietly and peaceably the dust and bones, even of enemies, did lie together in the grave; *Non tanta vivi pace conjuncti effetis;* you did not live together so peaceably. If conscience of Christ's command will not,

Digitized by Google

yet the consideration of common safety should powerfully persuade to unity and amity.

MEDIT. VII.

Upon the singing of a blind finch by night.

A Dear friend, who was a great observer of the works of God in nature, told me, that being entertained with a sight of many rarities at a friend's house in London; among other things, his friends shewed him a *finch*, whose eyes being put out, would frequently sing, even at midnight. This bird, in my opinion, is the lively emblem of such careless and unconcerned persons, as the prophet describes, Amos vi. 4, 5, 6. who chant to the viol, when a dismal night of trouble and affliction hath over-shadowed the church. You would have thought it strange to have heard this bird sing in the night, when all others are in a deep silence except the owl, an unclean bird, and the nightingale; which before we made the emblem of the hypocrite. And as strange it is, that any, except the prophane and hypercritical, should so unseasonably express their mirth and jollity; that any of Sion's children should live in pleasure, whilst she herself lies in tears. The people of God, in Psal cxxxvii. tell us, in what postures of sorrow they sat; even like birds, with their heads under their wings, during the night of their captivity. "How shall we sing the Lord's songs in a strange "land?" It is like enough, such as can sing, and chant in the night of the church's trouble, have well feathered their nests in the days of her prosperity; however, let them know, that God will turn their unseasonable mirth into a sadder note; and those that now sit sad, and silent, shall shortly sing for joy of heart, when "the winter is past, the rain over and gone, the flowers "appear again upon the earth, and the time of the singing of "birds is come."

MEDIT. VIII.

Upon the comparing of two birds nests.

'TIS pretty to observe the structure and commodiousness of the habitations of these little architects, who, though they act not by reason and counsel, but only by natural instinct, yet reason itself could hardly have contrived a neater building of such simple materials. How neatly hath the *thrush* ceiled or plastered his nest, with admirable art, and industry! how warmly hath the *finch* matted his? And both well fenced against the injury of the weather.

Digitized by Google

How comfortably hath nature provided convenient habitations for these weak and tender young ones, who have warm lodging, and variety of provisions hourly brought them, without their care or pains? This trifling object suggests to my thoughts a more excellent and serious contemplation, even the wonderful and unparalleled abasement of Jesus Christ, who for my sake voluntarily submitted himself to a more destitute and neglected state, than these birds of the air: For Matth. viii. 20. he saith, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have "nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

"The craggy rock to foxes holes afford,
"The pleasant woods a resting-place to birds;
"For Christ no fixed habitation's found,
"But what was borrow'd, or the naked ground *."

O melting consideration! that the glorious Son of God, John i. 14. "The Lord of glory," James ii. 1. "The brightness "of his Father's glory," Heb. i. 3. "Who was rich," 2 Cor. viii. 9. "and thought it not robbery to be equal with God," Phil. ii. 6. who from *all eternity* was infinitely and ineffably "delighting and rejoicing in the bosom of his Father," Prov. viii. 30. that he, I say, should manifest himself *in flesh*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. yea, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," Rom. viii. 3. that is, in flesh that had the marks and effects of sin upon it, as hunger, thirst, pain, weariness and mortality, and not only so, but to chuse such a state of outward meanness and poverty, never being possessed of a house in this world; but living as a stranger in other mens houses, and stooping in this respect to a lower condition than the very birds of the air, and all this for enemies. O let it work both admiration and thankfulness in my soul! my body is better accommodated than the body of my Lord. "Dear Jesus! by how much the viler thou madest "thyself for me, by so much the dearer shalt thou be to "me †."

* *Vulpibus in saltu rupes excisa latebras*
Præbat, et aereis avibus dat silva quietem;
Ast hominis nato nullis succedere tectis
Est licitum—— Heins. in loc.

† *Quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi charior.* Bern.

Digitized by Google

MEDIT. IX.

Upon the early singing of birds.

HOW am I reproved of sluggishness by these watchful birds! which chearfully entertain the very dawning of the morning with their chearful and delightful warblings! They set their little spirits all a-work betimes, whilst my nobler spirits are bound with the bonds of soft and downy slumbers. For shame, my soul! suffer not that publican sleep to seize so much of thy time, yea, thy best and freshest time; reprove and chide thy sluggish body, as a good bishop once did, when, upon the same occasion, he said, *Surrexerunt passeres, et sternunt pontifices.*

The early chirping sparrows may reprove
Such lazy bishops as their beds do love.

Of many sluggards it may be said, as Tully said of Verres, the deputy of Sicily, *Quod nunquam solem nec orientem, nec occidentem viderat*; that he never saw the sun rising, being in bed after, nor setting, being in bed before.

It is pity that Christians, of all men, should suffer sleep to cut such large thongs out of so narrow a hide, as their time on earth is. But, alas! it is not so much early rising, as a wise improving those fresh and free hours with God, that will enrich the soul; else, as our proverb saith, *A man may be early up, and never the near*; yea, far better it is to be found in bed sleeping, than to be up doing nothing, or that which is worse than nothing. O my soul! learn to prepossess thyself every morning with the thoughts of God, and suffer not those fresh and sweet operations of thy mind to be prostituted to earthly things; for that is experimentally true, which † one, in this case, hath pertinently observed, that if the world get the start of religion in the morning, it will be hard for religion to overtake it all the day after.

MEDIT. X.

Upon the haltering of birds, with a grain of hair.

OBserving, in a snowy season, how the poor hungry birds were haltered and drawn in by a grain of hair cunningcast over their heads, whilst, poor creatures, they were busily feeding, and suspected no danger; and even whilst their com-

† Mr. Case, in Epist. to the Morn. Lect.

Digitized by Google

panions were drawn away from them, one after another, all the interruption it gave the rest, was only for a minute or two, whilst they stood peeping into that hole through which their companions were drawn, and then fell to their meat again as busily as before; I could not chuse but say, 'Even thus surprizingly doth death steal upon the children of men, whilst 'they are wholly intent upon the cares and pleasures of 'this life, not at all suspecting its so near approach.' These birds saw not the hand that ensnared them, nor do they see the hand of death plucking them one after another into the grave.

"Death's steps as swift, and yet no noise it makes;
"Its hand unseen, but yet most surely takes †."

And even as the surviving birds for a little time seemed to stand affrighted, peeping after their companions, and then as busy as ever to their meat again: just so it fares with the careless, inconsiderate world, who see others daily dropping into eternity round about them, and for the present are a little startled, and will look into the grave after their neighbours, and then fall as busily to their earthly employments and pleasures again, as ever, till their own turn comes.

I know, my God, that I must die as well as others; but O let me not die as others do, let me see death before I feel it, and conquer it before it kill me; let it not come as an enemy upon my back, but rather let me meet it as a friend, half way. Die I must, but let me lay up that good treasure before I go, Matth. vi. 19. Carry with me a good conscience when I go, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7. and leave behind me a good example when I am gone, and then let death come, and welcome.

MEDITATIONS upon BEASTS.

MEDIT. I.

Upon the clogging of a straying beast.

HAD this bullock contented himself, and remained quietly within his own bounds, his owner had never put such an heavy clog upon his neck; but I see the prudent husbandman chuses rather to keep him with this clog, than lose him for want of one. What this clog is to him, that is affliction and trouble to me; had my soul kept close with God in liberty and prosperity, he would never thus have clogged me with adversi-

† *Omnibus obscuras injecit illa manus.* Ovid.

Digitized by Google

ty; yea, and happy were it for me, if I might stray from God no more, who hath thus clogged me with preventive afflictions. If, with David, I might say, "Before I was afflicted I went a-"stray, but now I have kept thy word," Psalm cxix. 67. O my soul! it is better for thee to have thy pride clogged with poverty, thy ambition with reproach, thy carnal expectancies with constant disappointments, than to be at liberty to run from God and duty.

It is true, I am sometimes as weary of these troubles, as this poor beast is of the clog he draws after him, and often wish myself rid of them; but yet, if God should take them off, for ought I know, I might have cause to wish them on again, to prevent a greater mischief. It is storied of Basil, that for many years he was sorely afflicted with an inveterate head-ach, (that was his clog) he often prayed for the removal of it; at last God removed it, but instead thereof he was sorely exercised with the motions and temptations of lust, which when he perceived, he as earnestly desired his head-ach again, to prevent a greater evil. Lord! if my corruptions may be prevented by my afflictions, I refuse not to be clogged with them; but my soul rather desires thou wouldst hasten the time when I shall be for ever freed from them both.

MEDIT. II.

Upon the love of a dog to his master.

HOW many a weary step, through mire and dirt, hath this poor dog followed my horse's heels to day, and all this for a very poor reward? for all he gets by it at night, is but bones and blows, yet will he not leave my company, but is content upon such hard terms, to travel with me from day to day.

O my soul! what conviction and shame may this leave upon thee, who art oftentimes even weary of following thy master, Christ, whose rewards and encouragements of obedience are so incomparably sweet and sure! I cannot beat back this dog from following me, but every inconsiderable trouble is enough to discourage me in the way of my duty. Ready I am to resolve as that scribe did, Matth. viii. 19. "Master, I will follow thee "whithersoever thou goest;" but how doth my heart faulter, when I must encounter with the difficulties of the way? Oh! let me make a whole heart-choice of Christ for my portion and happiness! and then I shall never leave him, nor turn back from following him, though the present difficulties were much more, and the present encouragements much less.

Digitized by Google

MEDIT. III.

Upon the fighting of two rams.

TAking notice how furiously these sheep, which by nature are mild and gentle, did yet, like bulls, push each other, taking their advantage by going back to meet with a greater rage and fury: methought I saw in this a plain emblem of the unchristian contests and animosities which fall out amongst them that call themselves the people of God, who are in scripture also stiled sheep, for their meekness and innocency; and yet, through the remaining corruptions that are in them, thus do they do push each other; as one long since complained, *non secus ac,*

Cum duo conversis inimica in praelia tauri,
Frontibus incurrunt —— —— —— ——

Shall Christians one another wound and push,
Like furious bulls, when they together rush?

The fighting of these sheep doth in two respects notably comport with the sinful practices of contending Christians, 1. That in this fight they engage with their heads one against another: and what are they, but those head-notions, or *oppositions of sciences*, falsely so called, that have made so many broils and uproars in the Christian world? O! what clashings have these heady opinions caused in the churches! First heads, and then hearts have clashed. Christians have not distinguished betwixt *adversarius litis, et personae;* an adversary to the *opinion*, and to the *person*; but dipt their tongues and pens in vinegar and gall, shamefully aspersing and reproaching one another, because their understandings were not cast into one mould, and their heads all of a bigness. But, 2. That which heountry-men observe from the fighting of sheep, *That itpresages foul and stormy weather*, is much more certainly consequent upon the fighting of Christ's sheep. Do these clash and push? Surely *it is an infallible prognostic of an ensuing storm*, Mal. iv. 6.

MEDIT. IV.

Upon the catching of an horse in a fat pasture.

WHEN this horse was kept in poor short leas, where he had much scope, but little grass, how gentle and tractable was he then? He would not only stand quiet to be taken, but come to hand of his own accord, and follow me up and down the field for a crust of bread, or handful of oats; but

Digitized by Google

since I turned him into this fat pasture, he comes no more to me, nor will suffer me to come near him, but throws up his heels wantonly against me, and flies from me, as if I were rather his *enemy* than *benefactor*. In this I behold the carriage of my own heart towards God, who the more he hath done for me, the seldomer doth he hear from me; in a low and afflicted state, how tractable is my heart to duty? Then it comes to the foot of God voluntarily. But in an exalted condition, how wildly doth my heart run from God and duty? With this ungrateful requital God faulted his own people, Jer. iii. 31. teachable and tractable in the *wilderness*, but when fatted in that rich pasture of Canaan, "Then we are lords, we will come no "more to thee." How soon are all God's former benefits forgotten? And how often is that ancient observation * verified, even in his own people?

"No sooner do we gifts on some bestow,
"But presently our gifts grey-headed grow."

But that is a bad tenant, that will maintain a suit at law against his landlord with his own rent; and a bad heart, that will fight against God with his own mercies. I wish it may be with my heart, as it is reported to be with the waters in the kingdom of Congo, that are never so sweet to the taste, as when the tide is at the highest.

MEDIT. V.

Upon the hunting of a deer.

THE full-mouthed cry of these dogs, which from the morning have hunted this poor tired deer, which is now no longer able to stand before them, but is compassed round with them, who thirst for, and will presently suck her blood; brings to my thoughts the condition and state of Jesus Christ, in the days of his flesh, who was thus hunted from place to place by blood-thirsty enemies. Upon this very account, the 22d Psalm, which treats of his death, is inscribed with the title of *Aijeleth Shahar*, which signifies the *hind of the morning*, and fully imports the same notion which this occasion presented me with; for look, as the *hind* or *deer*, which is intended to be run down that day, is rouzed by the dogs early in the morning, so was Christ, in the very morning of his infancy, by bloody Herod, and that cruel pack confederated with him. Thus was

* Μετα τ δοσιν ταχιστα γηρασκει χαρις.
Post munera cito consenescit gratia.

Digitized by Google

he chased from place to place, till that was fulfilled which was prophetically written of him in ver. 16. of the forecited Psalm: "For dogs have compassed me about, the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet."

And canst thou expect, O my soul! to fare better than he did, or escape the rage of bloody men? Surely, if the Spirit of Christ dwell in thee, if his holiness have favoured thee, these dogs will wind it, and give thee chase too; they go upon the scent of holiness still, and would hunt to destruction every one, in whom there is *aliquid Christi*, any thing of Christ, if the gracious providence of the Lord did not sometimes rate them off: for it is no less a pleasure which some wicked ones take in hunting the people of God, than what † Claudian the poet observes men use to take in hunting wild beasts.

"Whilst weary huntsmen in the night do sleep,
"Their fancies in the woods still hunting keep."

Lord! should I with the hypocrite decline the profession and practice of holiness, to escape the rage of persecuting enemies, at what time they cease, my own conscience would begin to hunt me like a blood-hound; let me rather chuse to be chased by men than God, to flee before pursuing enemies, than be dogged from day to day with a guilty conscience.

MEDITATIONS upon TREES.

MEDIT. I.

Upon the fall of blossoms, nipt by a frosty morning.

BEholding in an early spring, fruit-trees embossed with beautiful blossoms of various colours, which breathed forth their delicious odours into the circumambient air, and adorned the branches on which they grew, like so many rich jewels, or glittering pendents; and further observing, how these perfumed blossoms dropt off, being bitten with the frost, and discoloured all the ground, as if a shower of snow had fallen; I said within myself, these sweet and early blossoms are not unlike my sweet and early affections to the Lord, in the days of my first acquaintance with him. O what fervent love, panting desires, and heavenly delights beautified my soul in those days! The odoriferous scent of the sweetest blossoms, the

† *Venator defessa thero quum membra reponit,*
Mens tamen ad sylvas, et sua lustra redit. Claud

Digitized by Google

morning breath of the most fragrant flowers, hath not half that sweetness with which those my first affections were enriched. O! happy time, thrice pleasant spring! My soul hath it still in remembrance, and is humbled within me; for these also were but blossoms which now are nipt and faded, that first flourish is gone; my heart is like the winter's earth, because thy face, Lord, is to me like a winter sun. "Awake, O "north wind! and come, south-wind, blow upon my garden, "that the spices thereof may flow out, then let my beloved "come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruit!"

MEDIT. II.

Upon the knitting or setting of fruit.

I Have often observed, that when the blossoms of a tree set and knit, though the flourish thereof be gone, and nothing but the bare rudiment of the expected fruit be left; yet then the fruit is much better secured from the danger of frosts and winds, than whilst it remained in the flower or blossom; for now it hath past one of those *critical periods*, in which so many trees miscarry and lose their fruit. And methought this *natural observation* fairly led me to this *theological proposition*, 'That good motions, and holy purposes in the soul, are never 'secured, and past their most dangerous *crisis*, till they be 'turned into fixed resolutions, and answerable executions, 'which is as the knitting and setting of them.'

Upon this proposition my melting thoughts thus dilated: happy had it been for thee, my soul! had all the blessed motions of the Spirit been thus knit and fixed in thee. Oh, how have mine affections blown and budded under the warm beams of the gospel! But a chill blast from the cares, troubles and delights of the world without, and the vanity and deadness of the heart within, have blasted all; my goodness hath been but as a morning-dew, or early cloud, that vanisheth away. And even of divine ordinances, I may say what is said of human ordinances, "They have perished in the using." A blossom is but *fructus imperfectus, et ordinabilis*, an imperfect thing in itself, and something in order to fruit; a good motion and holy purpose is but *opus imperfectum, et ordinabile*, an imperfect work, in order to a complete work of the Spirit; when that *primus impetus*, those first motions were strong upon my heart, had I then pursued them in the force and vigour of them, how many difficulties might I have overcome? Revive thy work, O Lord, and give not to my soul a miscarrying womb, or dry breasts.

Digitized by Google

MEDIT. III.

Upon the ſight of a fair ſpreading oak.

WHAT a lofty flouriſhing tree is here? It ſeems rather to be a little wood, than a ſingle tree, every limb thereof having the dimenſions and branches of a tree in it; and yet as great as it is, it was once but a little ſlip, which one might pull up with two fingers; this vaſt body was contained virtually and potentially in a ſmall acorn. Well then, I will never deſpiſe the day of ſmall things, nor deſpair of arriving to an eminency of grace, though at preſent it be but as a bruiſed reed, and the things that are in me be ready to die. As things in nature, ſo the things of the Spirit, grow up to their fulneſs and perfection by ſlow and inſenſible degrees. The famous and heroical acts of the moſt renowned believers were ſuch as themſelves could not once perform, or it may be think they ever ſhould. Great things, both in nature and grace, come from ſmall and contemptible beginnings.

MEDIT. IV.

Upon the ſight of many ſticks lodged in the branches of a choice fruit-tree.

HOW is this tree battered with ſtones, and loaded with ſticks, that have been thrown at it, whilſt thoſe that grow about it, being barren, or bearing harſher fruit, eſcape untouched! Surely if its fruit had not been ſo good, its uſage had not been ſo bad. And yet it is affirmed, that ſome trees, as the walnut, *&c.* bear the better for being thus bruiſed and battered.

Even thus it fares in both reſpects with the beſt of men; the the more holy, the more envied and perſecuted; every one that paſſes by will have a fling at them. Methinks I ſee how devils and wicked men walk round about the people of God, whom he hath incloſed in his arms of power, like ſo many boys about an orchard, whoſe lips water to have a fling at them. But God turns all the ſtones of reproach into precious ſtones to his people; they bear the better for being thus battered. And in them is that ancient * obſervation verified.

"The palms and crowns of virtue thus increaſe;
"Thus perſecution's turned into peace."

* *Creſcunt virtutum palmae, creſcuntque coronae*
Mutantur mundi prælia, pace Dei.

Digitized by Google

Let me be but fruitful to God in holiness, and ever abounding in the work of the Lord, and then whilst devils and men are flinging at me, either by hand or tongue persecutions, I will sing amidst them all with the divine poet:

"What open force, or hidden charm,
"Can blast my fruits, or bring me harm,
"Whilst the inclosure is thine arm?" Herb. Poem. p. 125.

MEDIT. V.

Upon the gathering of choice fruit from a scrubbed, unpromising tree.

WOuld any man think to find such rare delicious fruit upon such an unworthy tree to appearance as this is? I should rather have expected the most delicious fruit from the most handsome and flourishing trees; but I see I must neither judge the worth of trees or men by their external form and appearance. This is not the first time I have been deceived in judging by that rule; under fair and promising outsides I have found nothing of worth; and in many deformed despicable bodies, I have found precious and richly furnished souls. The sap and juice of this scrubbed tree is concocted into rare and excellent fruits, whilst the juice and sap of some other fair, but barren trees, serves only to keep them from rotting, which is all the use that many souls which dwell in beautiful bodies serve for; they have, as one saith, *animam pro sale*; their souls are but salt to their bodies. Or thus,

The only use to which their souls do serve,
Is but like salt, their bodies to preserve.

If God have given me a sound soul in a sound body, I have a double *mercy* to bless him for; but whether my body be vigorous and beautiful, or not, yet let my soul be so: for as the esteem of this tree, so the esteem and true honour of every man, rises rather from his fruitfulness and usefulness, than from his shape and form.

MEDIT. VI.

Upon an excellent, but irregular tree.

SEeing a tree grow somewhat irregular, in a very neat orchard, I told the owner it was pity that tree should stand there; and that if it were mine I would root it up, and thereby reduce the orchard to an exact uniformity. It was replied to this purpose, 'That he rather regarded the fruit than the form;' and that this slight inconveniency was abundantly preponderat-

Digitized by Google

ed by a more considerable advantage. This tree, *said he*, which you would root up, hath yielded me more fruit than many of those trees which have nothing else to commend them but their regular situation. I could not but yield to the reason of this answer; and could wish it had been spoken so loud, that all our uniformity-men had heard it, who will not stick to root up many hundred of the best bearers in the Lord's orchard, because they stand not in an exact order with other more conformable, but less beneficial trees, who *perdunt substantiam propter accidentia*, destroy the fruit to preserve the form.

Not much unlike, such foolish men are those,
That strive for shadows, and the substance lose.

MEDITATIONS upon a GARDEN.

MEDIT. I.

Upon the new-modelling of a garden.

A Gentlewoman who had lately seen a neat and curious garden, returns to her own with a greater dislike of it than ever; resolves to new-model the whole plat, and reduce it to a better form; is now become so curious and neat, that not a weed or stone is suffered in it, but all must lie in exquisite order; and whatever ornament she had observed in her neighbours, she is now restless till she sees it in her own.

Happy were it, thought I, if in an holy emulation every one would thus endeavour to rectify the disorders of their own conversation, by the excellent graces they behold in the more heavenly and regular lives of others. Some Christians there are (I wish their number were greater) whose actions lie in such a comely and beautiful order, that few of their neighbours can look upon their examples without self-conviction and shame; but few are so happy to be provoked into self-reformation by such rare patterns. I see it is much easier to pull up many weeds out of a garden, than one corruption out of the heart; and to procure an hundred flowers to adorn a knot, than one grace to beautify the soul. It is more natural to corrupt man to envy, than to imitate the spiritual excellencies of others.

MEDIT. II.

Upon the pulling up of a leek.

A White head and a green tail! How well doth this resemble an old wanton lover, whose green youthful lusts

Digitized by Google

are not extinguished, though his white head declares that nature is almost so! Gray hairs should be always matched with grave deportments; and the sins of youth should rather be the griefs than pleasures of old age. It is sad when the sins of the soul, like the diseases of the body, grow stronger, as nature grows weaker: and it recals to my mind that ancient observation of * Menander:

"It is the worst of evils, to behold
"Strong youthful lusts to rage in one that's old."

It is a thousand pities, that those who have one foot in the grave, should live as if the other were in hell! that their lusts should be so lively, when their bodies are three parts dead! Such sinful practices bring upon them more contempt and shame, than their hoary heads, and reverend faces can procure them honour.

"Gray hairs, and aged wrinkles, did of old
"Procure more reverence than bags of gold †."

But alas! how little respect or reverence can the hoary head obtain amongst wise men, except it be found in the way of righteousness? I think the lowest esteem is too much for a nold servant of the devil; and the highest honour little enough for an ancient and faithful servant of Christ.

MEDIT. III.

Upon a heedless tread in a curious garden.

PAssing through the small divisions of a curious knot, which was richly adorned with rare tulips, and other beautiful flowers; I was very careful to shun those flowers, which indeed had no other worth to commend them, but their exquisite colour; and unadvisedly trode upon and spoiled an excellent choice herb, which, though it grew obscurely, yet had rare physical virtues in it.

When I was made sensible of the involuntary trespass I had committed, I thought I could scarcely make the owner a better compensation, than by telling him, that herein (though against my will) I did but tread in the footsteps of the greatest part of the world, who are very careful (as I was) to keep their due

* Γεροντ ερασης ισχατη κακη τυχη.
Senex amore captus, ultimum malum. Menand.

‡ *Magna fuit capitis quondam reverentia cani,*
Inque suo pretio ruga senilis erat. Ovid. 5 Fast.

Digitized by Google

distance from splendid, though worthless gallants, mean while trampling upon, and crushing under foot the obscure, but most precious servants of God in the world. As little do they heed these most excellent persons, as I did this precious herb.

Summa ingenia in occulto sæpe latent, saith Plautus.

Rare wits, and herbs, sometimes do sculk and shrink
In such blind holes, as one would little think.

For my own part, I desire to tread upon no man with the foot of contempt and pride, much less upon any good man; and that I may not, it concerns me to look before I step; I mean, to consider before I censure: had I done so by this rare herb, I had never hurt it.

MEDIT. IV.

Upon a withered posy taken up in the way.

FInding in my walk, a posy of once sweet and fragrant, but now dry and withered flowers, which I suppose to be thrown away by one that had formerly worn it: thus, said I, doth the unfaithful world use its friends, when providence hath blasted and withered them; whilst they are rich and honourable, they will put them into their bosoms, as the owner of this posy did, whilst it was fresh and fragrant, and as easily throw them away as useless and worthless things, when thus they come to be withered. Such usage as this * Petronius long since complained of.

"Are they in honour? Then we smile like friends;
"And with their fortunes all our friendship ends."

But this loose and deceitful friend stinks so odiously in the very nostrils of nature, that a † *heathen poet* severely taxes and condemns it as most unworthy of a man.

"'Tis base to change with fortune, and deny
"A faithful friend, because in poverty."

And is this indeed the friendship of the world? Doth it thus use them whom once it honoured? Then, Lord! let me never seek its friendship. O let me esteem the smiles and honours of men less, and thy love and favour more! thy love is indeed unchangeable, being pure, free, and built upon nothing that is

* *Cum fortuna manet vultum servatis amici,*
Cum cecidit turpi vertitis ora fuga. Petronius.

† *Turpe sequi casum, et fortunæ cedere, amicum*
Et nisi sit fœlix et effugere saum.

Digitized by Google

mutable; thou never serveſt thy friends as the world doth its darlings.

MEDIT. V.

Upon the ſudden withering of a roſe.

BEing with my friend in a garden, we gathered each of us a roſe; he handled his tenderly, ſmelled to it but ſeldom, and ſparingly; I always kept it to my noſe, or ſqueezed it in my hand, whereby in a very ſhort time it loſt both colour and ſweetneſs, but his ſtill remained as ſweet and fragrant as if it had been growing upon its own root. Theſe roſes, ſaid I, are the true emblems of the beſt and ſweeteſt creature-enjoyments in the world, which being moderately and cautiouſly uſed and enjoyed, may for a long time yield ſweetneſs to the poſſeſſor of them; but if once the affection ſeize too greedily upon them, and ſqueeze them too hard, they quickly wither in our hands, and we loſe the comfort of them, and that either thro' the ſoul's ſurfeiting upon them, or the Lord's righteous and juſt removal of them, becauſe of the exceſs of our affections to them; earthly comforts, like pictures, ſhew beſt at a due diſtance. It was therefore a good ſaying of * Homer, Ἀνδρὶ ξεινοδόκῳ, &c.

"I like him not, who at the rate
"Of all his might doth love or hate."

It is a point of excellent wiſdom to keep the golden bridle of moderation upon all the affections we exerciſe upon earthly things, and never to ſlip thoſe reins, unleſs when they move towards God, in whoſe love there is no danger of exceſs.

MEDIT. VI.

Upon the ſudden withering of beautiful flowers.

HOW freſh and orient did theſe flowers lately appear, when being daſhed over with the morning dew, they ſtood in all their pride and glory, breathing out their delicious odours, which perfumed the air round about them, but now are withered and ſhrivelled up, and have neither any deſireable beauty or ſavour in them.

So vain a thing is the admired beauty of creatures, which ſo captivates the hearts, and exerciſes a pleaſing tyranny over

* *Mihi nunquam is placet hoſpes*
Qui valde preterque modum odit vel amat, Homer.

Digitized by Google

the affections of vain man, yet it is as suddenly blasted as the beauty of a flower †.

" How frail is beauty! In how short a time
" It fades, like roses, which have past their prime.
" So wrinkled age, the fairest face will plow,
" And cast deep furrows on the smoothest brow.
" Then where's that lovely tempting face? Alas!
" Yourselves would blush to view it in a glass."

If then thou delightest in beauty, O my soul! chuse that which is lasting. There is a beauty which never fades, even the beauty of holiness upon the inner man; this abides fresh and orient for ever, and sparkles gloriously, when thy face (the seat of natural beauty) is become an abhorrent and loathsome spectacle. Holiness enamels and sprinkles over the face of the soul with a beauty, upon which Christ himself is enamoured; even imperfect holiness on earth is a rose that breathes sweetly in the bud; in heaven it will be full-blown, and abide in its prime to all eternity.

MEDIT. VII.

Upon the tenderness of some choice flowers.

HOW much care is necessary to preserve the life of some flowers! they must be boxed up in the winter, others must be covered with glasses in their springing up, the finest and richest mould must be sifted about the roots, and assiduously watered, and all this little enough, and sometimes too little to preserve them; whilst other common, and worthless flowers, grow without any help of ours: Yea, we have no less to do to rid our gardens of them, than we have to make the former grow there.

Thus stands the case with our hearts, in reference to the motions of grace and sin. Holy thoughts of God must be assiduously watered by prayer, earthed up by meditation, and defended by watchfulness; and yet all this is sometimes too little to preserve them alive in our souls. Alas! the heart is a soil that

† *Forma bonum fragile est, quantumque accedit ad annos,*
Fit minor, et spatio carpitur ipsa suo.
Nec semper violae, nec semper lilia florent,
Et riget amissa spina relicta rosa
Tempus erit quo vos speculum vidisse pigebit,
Jam veniunt rugae quae tibi corpus arent, &c. Ovid. *de Art.*

Digitized by Google

agrees not with them, they are tender things, and a small matter will nip and kill them. To this purpose is the complaint of the divine Poet.

Who would have thought a joy
so coy
To be offended so,
and go
So suddenly away?
Hereafter I had need
take heed.
Joys among other things
Have wings,
And watch their opportunities of flight,
Converting in a moment, day to night.

HERBERT.

But vain thoughts, and unholy suggestions, these spread themselves, and root deep in the heart; they naturally agree with the soil: So that it is almost impossible, at any time, to be rid of them. It is hard to forget, what is our sin to remember.

MEDIT. VIII.

Upon the strange means of preserving the life of vegetables.

I Observe that plants and herbs are sometimes killed by frosts, and yet without frosts they would neither live nor thrive: They are sometimes drowned with water, and yet without water they cannot subsist: They are refreshed and cheared by the heat of the sun, and yet that sun sometimes kills and scorches them up. Thus lives my soul: Troubles and afflictions seem to kill all its comforts; and yet without these, its comforts could not live. The sun-blasts of prosperity sometimes refresh me, and yet those sun-blasts are the likeliest way to wither me: By what seeming contradictions is the life of my spirit preserved! what a mystery, what a paradox is the life of a Christian?

Welcome, my health, this sickness makes me well.
Med'cines adieu.
When with diseases I have list to dwell,
I'll wish for you.
Welcome, my strength, this weakness makes me able.
Powers adieu.

Digitized by Google

When I am weary grown of ſtanding ſtable;
I'll wiſh for you.
Welcome, my wealth, this loſs hath gain'd me more.
Riches adieu.
When I again grow greedy to be poor,
I'll wiſh for you.
Welcome, my credit, this diſgrace is glory.
Honours adieu.
When for renown and fame I ſhall be ſorry,
I'll wiſh for you.
Welcome content, this ſorrow is my joy.
Pleaſures adieu.
When I deſire ſuch griefs as may annoy,
I'll wiſh for you.
Health, ſtrength, and riches, credit and content,
Are ſpared beſt ſometimes when they are ſpent.
Sickneſs and weakneſs, loſs, diſgrace and ſorrow,
Lend moſt ſometimes, when moſt they ſeem to borrow.

And if by theſe contrary and improbable ways the Lord preſerves our ſouls in life, no marvel then we find ſuch ſtrange and ſeemingly contradictory motions of our hearts, under the various dealings of God with us, and are ſtill reſtleſs, in what condition ſoever he puts us; which reſtleſs frame was excellently expreſſed in that pious epigram of the reverend Gataker, made a little before his death.

I thirſt for thirſtineſs, I weep for tears,
Well pleas'd I am to be diſpleaſed thus:
The only thing I fear, is want of fears,
Suſpecting I am not ſuſpicious.
I cannot chuſe but live, becauſe I die;
And when I am not dead, how glad am I?
Yet when I am thus glad for ſenſe of pain,
And careful am, leſt I ſhould careleſs be;
Then do I grieve for being glad again,
And fear, leſt carefulneſs take care for me.
Amidſt theſe reſtleſs thoughts this reſt I find,
For thoſe that reſt not here, there's reſt behind.
Jam tetigi portum, valete.

Digitized by Google

NAVIGATION SPIRITUALIZED:

Or, A New Compass for SEAMEN,

Conſiſting of XXXII. Points;

Of { Pleaſant OBSERVATIONS, Profitable APPLICATIONS, and Serious REFLECTIONS.

All concluded with ſo many Spiritual POEMS.

What good might ſeamen get, if once they were
But heavenly minded? If they could but ſteer
The Chriſtian's courſe, the ſoul might then enjoy
Sweet peace, they might like ſeas o'erflow with joy.
Were God our all, how would our comforts double
Upon us! thus the ſeas of all our trouble
Would be divinely ſweet: men ſhould endeavour
To ſee God now, and be with him for ever.

To all Maſters, Mariners, and Seamen; eſpecially ſuch as belong to the Borough of Clifton, Dartmouth, and Hardneſs, in the county of Devon.

SIRS,

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 (ſaith he) in which num-'ber 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 before them. And it was anciently accounted the moſt deſperate employment, and they little better than loſt men that uſed the ſeas. 'Through all my life (ſaith Ariſtotle) three 'things do eſpecially repent me: 1. That ever I revealed a 'ſecret to a woman. 2. That ever I remained one day with-'out a will. 3. That ever I went to any place by ſea, whither

Digitized by Google

'I might have gone by land.' 'Nothing (saith another) is 'more miserable, than to see a virtuous and worthy person 'upon the sea.' 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 be well supposed to be men of singular piety and seriousness: For nothing more composes the heart to such a frame, than the lively apprehensions of eternity do; and none have greater external advantages for that, than you have. But, alas! for the generality, what sort of men are more ungodly, and stupidly insensible of eternal concernments? living, for the most part, as if they had made a covenant with death, and with hell were at agreement. It was an ancient saying, *Qui nescit orare, discat navigare*, 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 be profane, to drink and swear, and dishonour God, 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. 4. As I remember, I have read of a profane soldier, who was heard swearing, though he stood in a place of great danger; and when one that stood by him 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 sea; 'For (saith he) it is the 'schoolmaster of all vice and dishonesty.' Sirs! it is a very sad consideration to me, that you who float upon the great deeps, in whose bottom so many thousand poor miserable creatures lie, whose sins have sunk them down, not only into the bottom of the sea, but of hell also, whither divine vengeance hath pursued them: That you, I say, who daily float, and hover over them, and have the roaring waves and billows that swallowed them up, gaping for you as the next prey, should be no more affected with these things. Oh what a terrible voice doth God utter in the storms! "It breaks the cedars, shakes the wilder-"ness, makes the hinds to calve," Psal. 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 efficacious and powerful, Heb. iv. 12. to convince and rip up the heart. This word is exalted above all his name, Psalm cxxxviii. 3. and if

Digitized by Google

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 and rouze, there is an Euroclydon, a fearful ſtorm coming, which will ſo awaken your ſouls, as that they ſhall never ſleep any more, Pſal. xi. 6. "Upon the wicked he ſhall "rain ſnares, fire and brimſtone, and an horrible tempeſt: "This is the portion of their cup." 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 among 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 the 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 coaſting to and fro, from one country to another? But never think of that *heavenly* country above, nor how you may get the merchandize thereof, 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 all 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 yare and 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 imbarked 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 you 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 deſign? Or if not, yet it is but a fading ſhort-lived inheritance, which like the flowing tide, for a while, covers the ſhore, and then returns, and leaves it naked and dry 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 and employ-

Digitized by Google

ments, which I have put into a new dreſs and mode. I have endeavoured to cloath ſpiritual matters in your own dialect and phraſes, that they might be the more intelligible to you; and added ſome pious poems, with which the ſeveral chapters are concluded, trying by all means to aſſault your ſeveral affections, and as the apoſtle ſpeaks, "to catch you with guile." I can ſay nothing of it; I know it cannot be without its manifold imperfections, ſince I am conſcious of ſo many in myſelf; only this I will adventure to ſay of it, that how defective or empty ſoever it be in other reſpects, yet it is ſtuffed and filled with much true love to, and earneſt deſires after the ſalvation and proſperity of your ſouls. And for the other defects that attend it, I have only two things to offer, in way of excuſe; it is the firſt eſſay that I ever made in this kind, wherein I find no precedent: and it was haſtned for your ſakes, too ſoon out of my hands, that it might be ready to wait upon you, when you undertake your next voyage: ſo that I could not reviſe and poliſh it. Nor indeed was I ſolicitous about the ſtile; I conſider, I write not for critical and learned perſons; my deſign is not to pleaſe your fancies any further, than I might thereby get advantage to profit your ſouls. I will not once queſtion your welcome reception of it: 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, and ſecured from periſhing, in the new covenant? What life would it put into 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 a ſpecial 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 came home laden with the riches of both 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 that land of reſt.

So prays

Your moſt affectionate friend to ſerve you in ſoul concernments,

JOHN FLAVEL.

Digitized by Google

To every SEAMAN sailing Heaven-ward.

Ingenious Seaman,

THE art of navigation, by which islands especially are enriched, and preserved in safety from foreign invasions; and the wonderful works of God in the great deep, and foreign nations, are most delightfully and fully beheld, &c. is an art of exquisite excellency, ingenuity, rarity, and mirability: 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 merchandize 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, and hath the same brinish taste and salt gust which the waters of the sea have) 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 mystery. 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 all 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 be a *pilot* to carry a soul to the *fair haven in* Emanuel's *land*. The art of natural navigation is wonderfully improved since the coming of Christ, before which time (if there be truth in *history*) the use of the *loadstone* was never known in the world; and before the virtue of that was revealed unto the mariner, it is unspeakable with what uncertain wanderings seamen *floated* here and there, rather than *sailed* the right and direct way. Sure I am, the art of spiritual navigation is wonderfully improved since the coming of Christ; it oweth its clearest and fullest discovery to the coming of Christ. This art of arts is now perfectly revealed in the scriptures of the old and new testament; but the rules thereof are dispersed up and down therein. The collecting and methodizing of the same cannot but be a work very useful unto souls: though, when all is done, there is an absolute necessity of

Digitized by Google

the teachings of the Spirit, and of the anointing that is from above, to make souls *artists* in sailing heaven-ward. The *ingenious author* of the *Christian's Compass*, or the *Mariner's Companion*, makes three parts of this art (as the schoolmen do of divinity) viz. *speculative*, *practical*, and *affectionate*. The principal things necessary to be known by a spiritual *seaman*, in order to the steering rightly and safely to the *port* of happiness, he reduceth to four heads, answerable to the four general points of the compass; making *God* our *north*; *Christ* our *east*; *holiness* our *south*; and *death* our *west* points. Concerning God, we must know, (1.) That he is, Heb. xi. 6. and that there is but one God, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. (2.) That this God is that supreme good, in the enjoyment of whom all true happiness lies, Psal. iv. 6, 7. Mat. v. 8.----xviii. 20. (3.) That (life eternal lying in God, and he being incomprehensible and unconceivable in essence, as being a Spirit) our best way to eye him is in his attributes, Exod. xxxiv. 5, 6, 7. and works, Rom. i. 20. and especially in his Son, 2 Cor. iv. 6. (4.) That as God is a Spirit, so our chiefest, yea, only way of knowing, enjoying, serving, and walking with him, is in the Spirit likewise, Job iv. 24. Concerning Christ, we must know, (1.) That he is the true Sun which ariseth upon the world, by which all are enlightened, John i. 9. Mal. iii. 2. Luke i. 78, 79. (2.) That God alone is in him, reconciling himself to the world, 2 Cor. v. 19. 1 Cor. i. 30. John xiv. 6. (3.) That Jesus Christ is only made ours by the union and indwelling of himself in us through the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. and vi. 17. John xvi. 8, 9. 1 Cor. xii. 3, 13. (4.) That the way of the Spirit's uniting us to Christ, is by an act of power on his part, and by an act of faith on our parts, John iii. 16, 36. and v. 29. Eph. iii. 17. Concerning holiness, we must know, (1.) That whoever is in Christ is a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 11. (2.) Holiness is the soul's highest lustre, Exod. xv. 11. when we come to perfection in holiness, then is our sun at the height in us. (3.) Holiness, is Christ filling the soul; Christ our Sun is at the highest in our hearts, when they are most holy. (4.) This holiness is that which is directly opposite to sin; sin eclipses holiness, and holiness scatters sin, Heb. vii. 26. Phil. ii. 15. 2 Pet. iii. 11. Concerning death, we must know, (1.) Death is certain; the sun of our life will set in death; when our days come about to this western point, it will be night, Heb. ix. 27. Psal. xlix. 7, 9. (2.) If we die in our sins out of Christ, we are undone for ever, Job viii. 24. Phil. i. 21. (3.) It is our benighting to die, but it is not our annihilating,

Digitized by Google

1 Cor. xv. Rev. xx. 12. (4.) After death comes judgment; all that die shall arise to be judged, either for life or death, the second time, Heb. ix. 27. Mat. xxv. Heb. vi. 2. These four heads, and the particulars under them, are as necessary to be known in spiritual navigation, as the four points of the compass are in natural navigation. The things which we ought to do in order to our arrival to our happiness, our author makes as many as there be points in the compass. And for an help to memory, we may begin every particular with initial known letters, on the points of the compass. (1.) N. Never stir or steer any course, but by light from God, Psalm cxix. 105. Isa. viii. 10. (2.) N. and by E. Never enter upon any design, but such as tends towards Christ, Acts x. 43. (3.) N. N. E. Note nothing enviously, which thrives without God, Psalm lxxiii. 12, 13. (4.) N. E. and by N. Never enterprize not-warrantable courses, to procure any of the most prized or conceited advantages, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. (5.) N. E. Now entertain the sacred commands of God, if hereafter thou expect the sovereign consolations of God, Psal. cxix. 48. (6.) N. E. and by E. Never esteem Egypt's treasures so much, as for them to forsake the people of God, Heb. xi. 26. (7.) E. N. E. Err not; especially in soul-affairs, Jam. i. 16. 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. 2 Tim. ii. 18. (8.) E. and by N. Eschew nothing but sin, 1 Pet. iii. 11. Job i. 7, 8,—31, 34. (9.) E. Establish thy heart with grace, Heb. xiii. 9. (10.) E. and by S. Eye sanctity in every action, 1 Pet. i. 15. Zech. xiv. 20. (11.) E. S. E. Ever strive earnestly to live under, and to improve the means of grace. (12.) S. E. and by E. Suffer every evil of punishment or sorrow, rather than leave the ways of Christ and grace. (13.) S. E. Sigh earnestly for more enjoyments of Christ. (14.) S. E. and by S. Seek evermore some evidences of Christ in you the hope of glory. (15.) S. S. E. Still set eternity before you, in regard of enjoying Jesus Christ, John xvii. 24. (16.) S. and by E. Settle it ever in your soul, as a principle which you will never depart from, That holiness, and true happiness are in Christ, and by Christ. (17.) S. Set thyself always as before the Lord, Psal. xvi. 8. Acts ii. 25. (18.) S. and by W. See weakness hastning thee to death, even when thou art at the highest pitch or point. (19.) S. S. W. See sin which is the sting of death, as taken away by Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. (20.) S. W. and by S. Store up wisely some provisions every day for your dying day. (21.) S. W. Set worldly things under your feet, before death come to look you in the face. (22.) S. W. and by W. Still weigh and watch with loins girded, and lamps trimmed, Luke xii. 35, 36, 37. (23.)

Digitized by Google

W. S. W. Weigh soul-works, and all in the balance of the sanctuary. (24.) W. and by S. Walk in sweet communion with Christ here, and so thou mayest die in peace, Luke ii. 29. (25.) W. Whatsoever thy condition be in this world, eye God as the disposer of it, and therein be contented, Phil. iv. 11. (26.) W. and by N. Walk not according to the course of the most, but after the example of the best. (27.) W. N. W. Weigh not what men speak or think of thee, so God approve thee, 2 Chron. x. 18. Rom. ii. 28, 29. (28.) N. W. and by W. Never wink at, but watch against small sins, nor neglect little duties, Eph. v. 15. (29.) N. W. Never wish rashly for death, nor love life too inordinately, Job iii. 4. (30.) N. W. and by N. Now work nimbly ere night come, Job xii. 35, 36. Eccles. ix. 10. (31.) N. N. W. Name nothing when thou pleadest with God for thy soul, but Christ and free-grace, Dan. ix. 17. (32.) N. and by W. Now welcome Christ, if at death thou wouldst be welcomed by Christ. A tender, quick, enlivened and enlightened conscience, is the only point upon which we must erect these practical rules of our Christian compass, Heb. xiii. 1. 2 Cor. i. 12. Our memory, that is the *box* in which this compass must be kept, in which these rules must be treasured, that we may be as ready and expert in them, as the *mariner* is in his sea-compass. So much for the speculative and practical parts of the art of soul-spiritual-navigation. The affectionate part doth principally lie in the secret motions or movings of the soul towards God in the affections, which are raised and warmed, and especially appear active in meditation; meditation being, as it were, the limbec, or still, in which the affections heat and melt, and, as it were, drop sweet spiritual waters. The affectionate author of the *Christian's Compass* doth indeed, in the third and last part of his undertaking, hint at several meditations which the spiritual seaman is to be acquainted with, unto which thou hast an excellent supplement in this *New Compass for Seamen*. This collection is prefixed, that at once thou mayest view all the compasses (both speculative, practical, and affectionate) by which thou must steer heaven-ward. What further shall be added by way of preface, is not to commend this new compass, which indeed (2 Cor. iii. 1.) needs no συστατικων επιστολων, *letters of commendation*, or any panegyrick to usher it into any honest heart; but to stir up all, especially seamen, to make conscience of using such choice helps for the promoting the sanctification and salvation of their souls, for the making of them as dexterous in

Digitized by Google

the art of spiritual navigation, as any of them are in the art of natural navigation. Consider therefore,

1. What rich merchandize thy 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 into one scale, and one soul in the other, and the world is found too light, Matth. xvi. 26. Shouldst 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 in the world. So far wilt thou be from profiting by any of thy sea-voyages. There is a plain μωρον in those words of Christ, "What is a "man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his "own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his "soul?" More is meant than is spoken. *

The smallest pore is a leak wide enough to let in death, and sink thy vessel.

2. What a leaking vessel thy body is, in which this unspeakable, inconceivable rich treasure, thy soul, is embarked! O the many diseases and distempers in the humours and passions that thy body is subject to! It is above 2000 years ago, that there have been reckoned up 300 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 affections and passions of the mind, the distempers of them are no less deadly to some, than the diseases of the body; but besides these internal causes, there are many external causes of leaks in this vessel, as † poisonous malignities, wrathful hostilities, and casual mishaps; very small matters may be of great moment to the sinking of this vessel. The least gnat in the air may choak one, as it did Adrian, a 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 poetical poet Anacreon. Thus you see what a leaking 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 thy soul is to sail in the leaking ship of thy body. As there are not more changes in the sea, than are in the world, the world be-

* Erasmi chiliad. p. 229.

† In Ethiopia there is a certain poison whereof the tenth part of one grain will kill a man, and for one grain ten men. *Dan. Sennert. Hypom. Phys. cap. 2. p. 47.*

Digitized by Google

only constant in inconstancy, "The fashion of this world "passeth away," 1 Cor. vii. 31. 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, syrens and pyrates; worldly temptations, worldly lusts, and worldly company cause many to "drown themselves in perdition," 1 Tim. vi. 9. The very things of this world endanger your 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. Thus I have hinted to you, the dangerousness of the sea wherein you are to sail. 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 heavenly art of spiritual navigation, thou shouldst not steer thy course aright! I will instance only in two consequents thereof. 1. Thou wilt never arrive at the haven of happiness. 2. Thou shalt be drowned in the ocean of God's wrath. As true 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 true and certain it is, thou shalt never enter into heaven, but sink into the deep of the bottomless pit. Am I not herein a messenger of the saddest tidings that ever yet thy ears did hear? Possibly now thou makest a light matter of these things, because thou dost not know what it is to miss of heaven, 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; and as God hath set and ordered things, can 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 (this is God's peculiar prerogative, to make a creature as sensible of misery as he pleaseth) then thou wilt have other thoughts of these things than thou now 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, that thy torments may be increased, they acknowledge the truth of thy apprehensions, yea, the strength of them shall be increased; thou shalt have the true

* The flames of hell shall shine about the damned, to let them see how they are tormented. *Insid.* on the chief good. book. 2.

Digitized by Google

and deep apprehenſions of the greatneſs of that good that thou ſhalt miſs of, and of that evil which thou ſhalt procure unto thyſelf; and then thou ſhalt not be able to chuſe, 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, irrecoverable loſs and miſery! yea, for the increaſing of thy torments, thy affections and memory ſhall be enlarged. O that, to prevent that loſs and miſery, theſe things may now be known, and 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 to 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 preface, I ſhall briefly acquaint *ſeamen*, why thy ſhould, of all others, be men of ſingular piety and heavenlineſs, and therefore more than ordinarily ſtudy the heavenly art of *ſpiritual navigation*. O that *ſeamen* would then conſider,

1. How nigh they border upon the confines of 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 over-ſet 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, *Ego craſtinum non habui*; I have not had a morrow in my hands theſe many years. Should not they then be extraordinary ſerious and heavenly, continually! Certainly (as the reverend *author* of this *new compaſs* well obſerves) nothing more compoſeth the heart to ſuch a frame, than the lively apprehenſions of eternity do; and none have greater external advantages for that, than *ſeamen* have.

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, or the ſacred "ſcriptures of the moſt High," to teach us much of God, and what reaſons we have to bewail our rebellion againſt God, and to make conſcience of obeying God only, naturally, and 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

† *Terror ubique tremor, timor undeque, & undique terror.* Ovid.

‡ *Mundi creatio eſt Scriptura Dei.* Clemens. *Univerſus mundus eſt Deus explicatus.*

Digitized by Google

God by the help of this book, will be left inexcusable, Rom. ix 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 great deep, Psal. cvii. 24.

3. Consider how often you are nearer heaven than any people in the world. "They mount up to heaven," Psal. cvii. 26. It has been said of an ungodly minister, that contradicted his preaching in his life and conversation, that it was pity he should ever come out of the 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 a pity you should come down from the high towering waves of the sea? Should not *seamen* that in stormy weather have their feet (as it were) upon the battlements of heaven, look down upon all earthly happiness in this world 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 oft mount up to heaven, make it their main business here, once at last 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 and salvations. They that go down to the sea in ships, are sometimes in the 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 their sight, when they have been far out of sight of any land; or by his bringing their near-perishing ship safe to shore. Sometimes they have been in very great danger of being taken by pyrates, yet wonderfully preserved, either by God's calming of the winds in that part of the sea where the pyrates have sailed, or by giving the poor pursued ship a strong gale of wind to run away from their pursuers, or by sinking the pyrates, *&c.* Sometimes their ships have been cast away, and yet they themselves wonderfully got safe to shore upon planks, yards, masts, *&c.* I might be endless in enummerating their deliverances from drowning, from burning, from slavery, *&c.* Sure (*seamen*) your extraordinary salvations lay more than ordinary engagements upon you, to praise, love,

Digitized by Google

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 acclamations of Σῶτερ, Σῶτερ, *a Saviour, a Saviour*, made the very birds fall down from the heavens astonished. 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," 1 Sam. xii. 23, 24. That by the perusal of this short and sweet treatise, wherein the judicious and ingenious author hath well mixed *utile dulci*, profit and pleasure, you may learn the good and right way, even to fear the Lord, and 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 immortal souls, T. M.

The AUTHOR to the READER.

WHEN dewy-cheek'd Aurora doth display
Her curtains, to let in the new-born day,
Her heav'nly face looks red, as if it were
Dy'd with a modest blush, 'twixt shame and fear.
Sol makes her blush, suspecting that he will
Scorch some too much, and others leave too chill.
With such a blush, my little new-born book
Goes out of hand, suspecting some may look
Upon it with contempt, while others raise
So mean a piece too high, by flatt'ring praise,
Its beauty cannot make its father dote;
'Tis a poor babe, clad in a sea-green coat.
It's gone from me too young, and now is run
To sea, among the tribe of Zebulun.
Go, little book; thou many friends wilt find
Among that tribe, who will be very kind;
And many of them care of thee will take,
Both for thy own, and for thy father's sake.

Digitized by Google

Heav'n save it from the dang'rous storms and gusts
That will be rais'd against it by men's lust s.
Guilt makes men angry, anger is a storm;
But sacred truth's thy shelter, fear no harm.
On times, or persons, no reflection's found!
Though with reflections few books more abound.
Go, little book, I have much more to say,
But seamen call for thee, thou must away.
Yet e're you have it, grant me one request,
Pray do not keep it pris'ner in your chest.

A NEW COMPASS FOR SEAMEN: OR, NAVIGATION SPIRITUALIZED.

CHAP. I.

The launching of a ship plainly sets forth
Our double state, by first and second birth.

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 fluctuating, tossing, and labouring, until she be either overwhelmed, and wrecked in the sea, or through age, knocks, and bruises, grows leaky, and unserviceable; and so is haled up, and ript abroad.

APPLICATION.

No sooner come we into the world as men, or as Christians, by a natural or supernatural birth, but thus we are tossed upon a sea of troubles. Job v. 7. "Yet man is born to trouble, as

Digitized by Google

" the sparks fly upwards." The spark no sooner comes out of the fire, but it flies up naturally; it needs not any external force, help, or guidance, but ascends from a principle in itself; so naturally, so easily doth trouble rise out of sin. There is *radically* all the misery, anguish, 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, flaws, deformities, 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, Gen. iii. 17, 18, 19. These are full of pain, trouble, and disappointment, Hag. i. 6. We earn wages, and put it into a bag with holes, and disquiet ourselves in vain; all our relations full of trouble. The apostle speaking to those that marry, saith, 1 Cor. vii. 28. " Such shall have " trouble in the flesh." Upon which words one glosseth thus:

See Mr. Whateley's Care-cloth.

Flesh and trouble are married together, whether we marry or no; but they that are married, marry with, and match into new troubles: All relations have their burdens, aswell as their comforts: 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 noblest 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 Pharaoh, Gen. xlvii. 9. "Few " and evil have the days of the years of our lives been." Eccl. ii. 22, 23. " For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? " For all his days are sorrows, and his travel grief, yea, his " heart taketh no rest in the night: This is also vanity."

Neither doth our new birth free us from troubles, though then they be sanctified, sweetned, and turned into blessings to us. We put not off the human, when we put on the divine nature; nor are we then freed from the sense, though we are 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. 2 Cor. vii. 5. " When we were come into Mace" donia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every " side: Without were fightings, and within were fears." Rev. vii. 14. " These are they that come out of great tribulations." The first cry of the new-born Christian (says one) gives hell an-

Digitized by Google

alarm, and awakens the rage both of devils and men againſt him. Hence Paul and Barnabas acquainted thoſe new converts, Acts xiv. 22. "That through much tribulation they muſt enter in-"to the kingdom of God." And we find the ſtate of the church, in this world, ſet out (Iſa. liv. 11.) by the ſimilitude of a diſtreſſed ſhip at ſea: "O thou afflicted [and toſſed] with "tempeſts, and not comforted." [Toſſed] as Jonah's ſhip was; for the ſame word is their uſed, Jonah i. 11, 13. as a veſſel at ſea, ſtormed, and violently driven without rudder, maſt, ſail, or tacklings. Nor are we to expect freedom from thoſe troubles, until harboured in heaven; ſee 2 Theſſ. i. 7. O what large catalogues of experiences do the ſaints carry to heaven with them, for 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, deſertions, by paſſion and compaſſion: Beſides their own, there comes daily upon them the troubles of others; many rivulets fall into this channel and brim, yea, often overflow the banks. Pſalm xxxiv. 19. "Many are the "afflictions of the righteous."

REFLECTION.

Hence ſhould the graceleſs heart thus reflect upon itſelf, O my ſoul! into what a ſea of troubles art thou lanched forth! and what a ſad caſe art thou in! full of trouble, and full of ſin; and theſe do 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 the ſaints, they ſuffer in the world, as well as I; but it is but for a while, 1 Pet. v. 10. and then they ſuffer no more, 2 Theſſ. i. 7. "But all tears "ſhall be wiped away from their eyes," Rev. vii. 17. But my troubles look with a long viſage, ah! they are but the beginning of ſorrows, but a parboiling before I be roaſted in the flames of God's eternal wrath. 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, ver. 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." Theſe troubles of the ſaints are ſanctified to them, but mine are fruits of the curſe. They have ſpiritual conſolations to balance them, which flow into their ſouls in

Digitized by Google

the same height, and degree, as troubles do upon their bodies, 2 Cor. i. 5. But I am a stranger to their comforts, and "inter-"meddle not with their joys," Prov. xiv. 10. 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, return with comfort, and their "countenance is no more "sad," 1 Sam. i. 18. When their belly is as bottles, full of new wine, they can give it vent by pouring out of their souls into their Father's bosom: 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 am a vile, unworthy wretch? yet he promiseth to *love freely*, Hos. xiv. 4. and invites such as are heavy laden to him, Mat. xi. 28.

Hence also should the gracious soul reflect sweetly upon itself after this manner: And is the world so full of trouble? O my soul! what cause hast thou to stand admiring at the indulgence and goodness of God to thee? Thou hast hitherto had a smooth passage, comparatively to what others have had. How hath divine wisdom ordered my condition, and cast my lot? Have I been chastised with whips? others with scorpions. Have I had no peace without? some have neither had peace without nor within, but terrors round about. Or 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 dost thou thus linger in it, and hanker after it? Why 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 full 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?

The POEM.

My soul, art thou besieged
With troubles round about?
If thou be wise, take this advice,
To keep these troubles out.
Wise men will *keep* their conscience as their eyes;
For in their *conscience* their best treasure lies.

Digitized by Google

See you be *tender* of your inward peace,
That ſhipwreck'd, *then* your mirth and joy muſt ceaſe:
If God from *you* your outward comforts rend,
You'll find what *need* you have of ſuch a friend.
If this be *not* by ſin deſtroy'd and loſt,
You need not *fear*, your peace will quit your coſt.
If you'd know *how* to ſweeten any grief,
Tho' ne'er ſo *great*, or to procure relief
Againſt th' *afflictions*, which, like deadly darts,
Moſt fatal *are* to men of carnal hearts;
Reject not *that* which conſcience bids you chuſe;
And chuſe not *you* what conſcience ſaith, refuſe.
If ſin you *muſt*, or miſery under lie,
Reſolve to *bear*, and chuſe the miſery.

CHAP. II.

In the vaſt ocean ſpiritual eyes deſcry
God's boundleſs mercy, and eternity.

OBSERVATION.

THE ocean is of a vaſt extent and depth, though ſuppoſedly meaſurable, yet not to be ſounded by man. It compaſſeth about the whole earth, which, in the account of Geographers, is twenty-one thouſand and ſix hundred miles in compaſs; yet the ocean environs it on every ſide, Pſalm civ. 35. and Job xi. 9. Suitable to which is that of the poet. *

" He ſpread the ſeas, which then he did command,
" To ſwell with winds, and compaſs round the land."

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 our God, whoſe mercy is ſaid to be over all his works, Pſal. cxlv. 9. In how many ſweet notions is the mercy of God repreſented to us in the Scripture? He is ſaid to be *plenteous*, Pſalm ciii. 8. *abundant*, 1 Pet. i. 3. *rich in mercy*, Epheſ. ii. 4. then, that his mercies are *unſearchable*, Epheſ. iii. 8. " High as the heavens above the earth,"

* *Tum freta diffudit rapidiſque tumeſcere ventis*
Juſſit, & ambitae circumdare littora terrae. Ovid

Digitized by Google

Psalm. 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 come home to the *metaphor*, 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, even, *scarlet, crimson, (i. e.)* deep-dyed with many intensive aggravations, Isa. i. 18. 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, 1 Tim. i. 13. "None (saith Augustine) more fierce than Paul among "the persecutors, and therefore none greater among sinners:" To which himself willingly subscribes, 1 Tim. i. 15. *yet pardoned.* How hath mercy rode in triumph, and been glorified upon the vilest of men! How hath it stopped the slanderous mouths of men and devils! It hath yearned upon "Fornicators, "idolaters, adulterers, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, "extortioners;" to such have the sceptre of mercy been stretched forth, upon their unfeigned repentance and submission, 1 Cor. vi. 9. What doth the Spirit of God aim at, in such a large accumulation of 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 it?* Isa. lvii. 15. Though shallow rivers may be drained and dried up, yet the ocean cannot. And tho' these transitory days, months, and years will at last expire and determine; yet eternity shall not. O! it is a long word! and amazing matter! what is eternity, but a constant permanency of persons and things, in one and the same state and condition for ever; putting them 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 watches, hours, 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. Gerhard and Drexelius do both illustrate it by this known similitude: Suppose a bird were to come once in a thousand years to some vast mountain of sand, and carry away in her bill one sand in a thousand years; O what a vast time would it be, e'er that immortal bird, after that rate, should carry

Digitized by Google

off 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, which are not competent to eternity: In time there is a *ſucceſſion*, one generation, year, and day paſſeth, and another comes; but eternity is a fixed [*new.*] In time there is a *diminution* and waſting, the more is paſt, the leſs is to come. But it is not ſo in eternity. In time there is an *alteration* of condition and ſtates: A man may be poor to-day, and rich to-morrow; ſickly and diſeaſed this week, and well the next; now in contempt, and anon in honour: But no changes paſs upon us in eternity. As the tree falls at death and judgment, ſo it lies for ever. If in heaven, there thou art a pillar, and ſhalt go forth no more, Rev. iii. 12. If in hell, no redemption thence, but the ſmoak of their torments aſcendeth for ever and ever, Rev. xix. 3.

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 corporeal enemies in the ſeas? And ſhall not I break forth into his praiſes, who hath drowned all my ſins in the depth of mercy? O my ſoul, bleſs thou the Lord, and let his high praiſes ever be in thy mouth. Mayeſt thou not ſay, that he hath gone to as high an extent and degree of mercy in pardoning thee, as ever he did in any? O my God, who is like unto thee! that pardoneth 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 deſpiſers of mercy, when the ſinner's eyes come to be opened too late for mercy, to do them good! 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 we would not commit ourſelves to him. We read, that the arms of Chriſt were open to embrace and receive us, but we would not. O unparalleled folly! O ſoul-deſtroying madneſs! Now the womb of mercy is ſhut up, and ſhall bring forth no more mercies to me for ever. Now the gates of grace are ſhut, and no cries can open them.

Mercy acted its part, and is gone off the ſtage; and now juſtice enters the ſcene, and will be glorified for ever upon me. How often did I hear the bowels of compaſſion ſounding in

Digitized by Google

the gospel for me? But my hard and impenitent heart could not relent; and now, if it could, it is too late. I am now past 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! O soul-confounding word! An ocean indeed, to which this ocean is but as a drop; for in thee no soul shall see either bank or bottom. If I lie but one night under strong pains of body, how tedious doth that 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 in execution? And how long is their punishment in duration? O! how shall I dwell with everlasting burnings? Oh that God would but vouchsafe one treaty more with me! But alas, all tenders and treaties are now at an end with me. On earth peace, Luke ii. 13. but none in hell. O my soul! consider these things; come, let us debate this matter seriously, before we launch out into this ocean.

The POEM.

WHO from some high-rais'd tower views the ground,
His heart doth tremble, and his head goes round;
Even so my soul, whilst it doth view and think
On this eternity, upon whose brink
It borders, stands amazed, and doth cry,
O boundless! bottomless eternity!
The scourge of hell, whose very lash doth rend
The damned souls in twain: What! never end?
The more thereon they ponder, think, and pore,
The more, poor wretches, still they howl and roar.
Ah! though more years in torments we should lie,
Than sands are on the shores, or in the sky
Are twinkling stars; yet this gives some relief!
The hope of ending. Ah! but here's the grief!
A thousand years in torments past and gone,
Ten thousand more afresh are coming on;
And when these thousands all their course have run,
The end's no more than when it first begun.
Come then, my soul, let us discourse together
This weighty point, and tell me plainly whether
You for these short-liv'd joys, that come and go,
Will plunge yourself and me in endless woe.
Resolve the question quickly, do not dream
More time away. Lo, in an hasty stream

Digitized by Google

We swiftly pass, and shortly we shall be
Ingulphed both in this eternity.

CHAP. III.

Within these smooth fac'd seas strange creatures crawl;
But in man's heart far stranger than them all.

OBSERVATION.

IT was an unadvised saying of Plato, *Mare nil memorabile producit:* the sea produceth nothing memorable. But surely there is much of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God manifested in those inhabitants of the watery region: notwithstanding the sea's azure and smiling face, strange creatures are bred in its womb. "O Lord, (saith David) how manifold are "thy works: In wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth "is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, where-"in are things creeping innumerable, both small and great "beasts," Psal. civ. 24, 25. And we read, Lam. iv. 3. of Sea-monsters, which draw out their breasts to their young. Pliny and Purchas tell incredible stories about them. About the tropic of Capricorn, our seamen meet with flying fishes, that have wings like a rere-mouse, but of a silver colour; they fly in flocks like stares. There are creatures of very strange forms and properties; some resembling a cow, called by the Spaniards, *manatee*, by some supposed to be the sea-monster spoken of by Jeremy. In the rivers of Guinea, Purchas saith, there are fishes that have four eyes, bearing two above, and two beneath the water, when they swim: both resembling a toad, and very poisonous. How strange, both in shape and property, is the sword-fish and thresher, 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, Rom. i. 29, 30, 31. "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, "wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, mur-"der, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, hat-"ers of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil "things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, cove-"nant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmer-"ciful." O what a swarm is here! and yet there are multitudes more, in the depths of the heart! And it is no wonder,

Digitized by Google

considering that with this nature, we received the spawn of the blackest and vilest abominations. This original lust is productive of them all, Jam. i. 14, 15. which lust, though it be in every man, *numerically*, different from that of others, yet it is one and the same *specifically*, for sort and kind, in all the children of Adam; even as the reasonable soul, though every man hath his own soul, viz. a soul individually distinct from another man's, yet it is 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, Matth. xv. 18, 19. "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:" even such monsters, as would make a gracious heart tremble to behold. 'What are my lusts (saith one) but so many toads spitting of venom, and spawning of poison; croaking in my judgment, creeping in my will, and crawling into my affections?' 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 where they are begotten.

Fuller's Meditations, p. 11.

REFLECTION.

And are there such strange abominations in the heart of man? Then how is he degenerated from his primitive perfection and glory! His streams were once as clear as crystal, and the fountain of them pure, there was no unclean creature moving in them. What a stately fabric was the soul at first! And what holy inhabitants possessed the several rooms thereof! But now, as God speaks of Idumea, Isa. xxxiv. 11. "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." Yea, as Isa. xiii. 21, 22. "The wild beasts of "the desart lie there; it is full of doleful creatures, the satyrs dance in it, and dragons cry in those sometimes pleasant "places." O sad change! how sadly may we look backwards 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

Digitized by Google

"the Almighty was yet with me, when I put on righteouſ-
"neſs, and it cloathed 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, under the dominion and vaſſalage of divers luſts, Tit. iii. 3. What a tumultuous ſea is ſuch a ſoul: how do theſe luſts rage within them! how do they conteſt and ſcuffle 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 imperious luſt that is in the throne; and, like the lunatic, Matth. 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. vii. 20. They have no peace now in the ſervice of ſin, and leſs ſhall they 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 and reſult of this is eternal death; no ſooner it is delivered of its deceitful pleaſures, but preſently it falls in travail again, and brings forth death, Jam. i. 15.

Once more: 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? Let my heart be enlarged abundantly here. Lord, what am I, that I ſhould be taken, and others left? Reflect, O my ſoul, upon the conceptions and births of luſts in the days of vanity, which thou now bluſheſt to own. O what black imaginations, helliſh deſires, vile affections, are lodged there! Who made me to 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 on ſuch an one; or caſt a look of love towards me, in whom were legions of unclean luſts and abominations.

The POEM.

MY ſoul's the ſea, wherein, from day to day,
Sins like Leviathans do ſport and play.
Great maſter luſts, with all the leſſer fry,
Therein increaſe, and ſtrangely multiply.

Digitized by Google

Yet ſtrange it is not, ſin ſo faſt ſhould breed,
Since with this nature I receiv'd the ſeed
And ſpawn of ev'ry ſpecies, which was ſhed
Into its caverns firſt, then nouriſhed
By its own native warmth; which like the ſun
Hath quickened them, and now abroad they come;
And like the frogs of Egypt creep and crawl
Into the cloſeſt rooms within my ſoul.
My fancy ſwarms, for there they friſk and play,
In dreams by night, and fooliſh toys by day.
My judgments clouded by them, and my will
Perverted, every corner they do fill.
As locuſts ſeize on all that's freſh and green,
Uncloath the beauteous ſpring, and make it ſeem
Like drooping autumn; ſo my ſoul, that firſt
As Eden ſeem'd, now's like a ground that's curſt.
Lord purge my ſtreams, and kill thoſe luſts that lie
Within them; if they do not, I muſt die.

CHAP. IV.

Seas purge themſelves, and caſt their filth aſhore,
But graceleſs ſouls retain, and ſuck in more.

OBSERVATION.

SEAS are in a continual motion and agitation, they have their flux and reflux, by which they are kept from putrefaction: like a fountain it cleanſes itſelf, Iſa. lvii. 20. "It can-"not reſt, but caſts up mire and dirt;" whereas lakes and ponds, whoſe waters are ſtanding, and dead, corrupt and ſlink. 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, 1 John iii. 3. "He purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure. "Keepeth himſelf, that the wicked one toucheth him not," 1 John v. 18. ſcil. *tactu qualitativo*, with a qualitative touch, as the loadſtone toucheth iron, leaving an impreſſion of its nature behind it. They are doves delighting in cleanneſs, Iſa. xxxi i. 15. "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." See how all

Digitized by Google

ſenſes and members are guarded againſt ſin: but it is quite contrary with the wicked; there is no principle of holineſs in them, to oppoſe or expel corruption. It lies in their hearts as mud in a lake or well, which ſettles and corrupts more and more. Hence Ezek. xlvii. 11. their hearts are compared to miry or marſhy places, which cannot be healed, but are given to ſalt: 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. The reaſon is, becauſe it meets with an obſtacle in their ſouls; ſo that 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, which it ſtrives to expel and purge out, but as ſpots in the leopard's ſkin, Jer. xiii. 21. or letters faſhioned and engraven in the very ſubſtance of marble or braſs, with a pen of iron, and point of a diamond, Jer. xvii. 1. Or as ivy in an old wall, that hath gotten root into its very entrails. "Wickedneſs is ſweet to their mouths, they roll it under their tongues," Job xx. 12. No threats nor promiſes can divorce them from it.

REFLECTION.

Lord! this is the very frame of my heart, may the graceleſs ſoul ſay. My corruptions quietly ſettle in me, my heart labours not againſt it: I am a ſtranger to that conflict which is daily maintained in all the faculties of 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 can 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 and well grounded 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 dreadfulleſt curſe in the book of God, Rev. xxii. 11. "Let him that is filthy be filthy ſtill." 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 together in another world? O my ſoul! what a diſmal reckoning will that be! Ponder with thyſelf in the mean while, 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.

Digitized by Google

The POEM.

MY heart's no fountain, but a ſtanding lake
Of putrid waters; if therein I rake,
By ſerious ſearch, O! what a noiſome ſmell,
Like exhalations riſing out of hell;
The ſtinking waters pump'd up from the hold,
Are as perfumes to ſeamen: but my ſoul
Upon the ſame account that they are glad,
(Its long continuance there) is therefore ſad.
The ſcripture ſaith, "No ſoul God's face ſhall ſee,"
Till from ſuch filthy luſts it cleanſed be.
Yet though unclean, it may that way be rid,
As Herculus the Augean ſtable did.
Lord turn into my ſoul that cleanſing blood,
Which from my Saviour's ſide flow'd as a flood.
Flow, ſacred fountain, brim my banks; and flow
Till you have made my ſoul as white as ſnow.

CHAP. V.

Seamen foreſee a danger, and prepare:
Yet few of greater dangers are aware.

OBSERVATION.

HOW watchful and quick ſighted are ſeamen, to prevent dangers! if the wind die away, and then freſh up ſouthерly; or if they ſee the ſky hazy, they provide for a ſtorm: if by the proſpective glaſs they know a Pyrate 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 upon 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 and ſuſpicious ought we to be in ſpiritual concernments. We ſhould ſtudy, and be acquainted with Satan's wiles, and policy. The apoſtle takes it for granted, that Chriſtians are not ignorant of his devices. 2 Cor. ii. 11. "The "ſerpent's eye (as one ſaith) would do well in the dove's head." The devil is a cunning pyrate, 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 have no wiſdom to do himſelf good, yet he

Digitized by Google

hath policy enough to do us mischief. He lies in ambush behind our lawful comforts and employments; yet, for the generality of men, how supine and careless are they, suspecting no danger? Their souls, like Laish, dwell carelessly, their senses unguarded: O what an easy prize, and conquest, 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 fullness of grace that dwelt in him, the purity of his person, and the hypostatical union, was secured from the danger of all temptations) the case then were otherwise; but we have a traitor within, Jam. i. 14, 15. as well as a tempter without. 1 Pet. v. 8. "Our adversary the devil goes about as a "roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." And, like the beasts of the forests, poor souls lie down before him, and become his prey. All the sagacity, wit, policy, and foresight of some men, is summoned in to serve their bodies, and secure their fleshly enjoyments.

REFLECTION.

Lord! how doth the care, wisdom, and vigilance of men in temporal and external things, condemn my carelessness in the deep, and dear concernments of my precious 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 danger 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 it 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 deny one fleshly lust, nor withstand one temptaion. O how I am convinced and condemned, not only by other's care and vigilance, but my own too, in lesser and lower matters?

The POEM.

I Am the ship, whose bills of lading come
To more than man's or angel's art can sum,
Rich fraught with mercies, on the ocean, now
I float, the dang'rous ocean I do plow.
Storms rise, rocks threaten, and in ev'ry creek
Pyrates and pickeroons their prizes seek.

Digitized by Google

My soul should watch, look out, and use its glass,
Prevent surprisals timely; but, alas!
Temptations give it chace, it's grappled sure,
And boarded, whilst it thinks itself secure.
It sleeps, like Jonah, in the dreadfull'st storm,
Altho' it's case be dang'rous, and forlorn.
Lord, rouze my drowsy soul, lest it should knock,
And split itself upon some dang'rous rock.
If it of faith and conscience shipwreck make,
I am undone for ever; soul, awake!
Till thou arrive in heav'n, watch, and fear;
Thou may'st not say, till then, the coast is clear.

CHAP. VI.

How small a matter turns a ship about?
Yet we, against our conscience, stand it out.

OBSERVATION.

IT is just matter of admiration, to see so great a body as a ship is, and when under sail too, before a fresh and 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 of our consideration. Jam. iii. 4. "Behold also "the ships, which though they be great, and driven of fierce "winds; yet they are turned about with a small helm, whi-"thersoever the governor listeth." Yea, * Aristotle himself, that eagle-eyed philosopher, could not give a reason of it, but looked upon it as a very marvellous and wonderful thing.

APPLICATION.

To the same use and office has God designed conscience in man, which being rectified and regulated by the word and spirit of God, is to steer and order 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, that is imaginable: for it binds under the reason and consideration of the most absolute and 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 it, as no power under heaven can relax or dispense with. Angels cannot do it, much less man; for that would be to exalt themselves above

* Aristot. Secund. *Mirabilium*, c. 5.

Digitized by Google

God. Now therefore it is an high and dreadful way of sinning, to oppose and rebel against conscience, when it convinces of sin and duty. Conscience sometimes reasons it out with men, and shews them the necessity of changing their way and course; arguing it from the clearest and most allowed 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, Rom. viii. 18. Heb. xi. 26. and it is our duty to chuse them, and make all secular and temporary concernments to stand aside, and give place to them. Yet though men be convinced of this, their stubborn will stands out, and will not yield up itself to the conviction.

Further, It argues from this acknowledged truth, that all the delight and pleasures in this world are but a miserable portion, and that it is the highest folly to adventure an immortal soul for them, Luke ix. 15. Alas! what remembrance is there of them in hell? They are as the waters that pass away. What have they left, of all their mirth and jollity, but a tormenting sting? It convinceth them clearly, also, that in matters of deep concernment it is an high point of wisdom, to apprehend and improve the right seasons and opportunities of them, Prov. x. 5. "He that gathers in summer is a wise son." Eccles. viii. 5. "A wise man's heart discerns both time and judgment. "There is a season to every purpose," Eccles. iii. 1. *viz.* a nick of time, an happy juncture, when, if a man strikes in, he doth his work effectually, and with much facility: such seasons conscience convinceth the soul of, and often whispers thus in its ear: Now, soul, 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 cannot it prevail; the proud, stubborn will rebels, and will not be guided by it. See Eph. ii. 3. Job xxxiv. 37. Isa. xlvi. 12. Ezek. ii. 4. Jer. xliv. 16.

REFLECTION.

Ah! Lord, such an heart have I had before thee; thus obstinate, thus rebellious, so uncontroulable by conscience! Many a time hath conscience thus whispered in mine ear, many a time hath it stood in my way, as the angel did in Balaam's, or the cherubims 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

Digitized by Google

cals with me alone? and how ſweetly hath it expoſtulated with me? How clearly hath it convinced of ſin, danger, duty, with ſtrong demonſtration? How terrible hath it menaced my ſoul, and ſet the point of the threatning at my very breaſt? And yet my head-ſtrong affections will not be remanded by it. I have obeyed the voice of every luſt and temptation, Tit. iii 3. 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 and crimſon-coloured, Jam. iv. 17. Ah! this is to ſin with an high hand, Numb xv. 30. to come near to the great and unpardonable tranſgreſſion, Pſalm xix. 13. O how dreadful a way of ſinning is this, with opened 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, Luke xii. 48. yea, Lord, and if ever my conſcience, which by rebellion is now grown ſilent, ſhould be in judgment awakened in this life; O! what an hell ſhould I have within me! how would it thunder and roar upon me, and ſurround me with terrors?

Thy word aſſures me, that no length of time can wear out of its memory what I have done, Gen. xlii. 21. no violence or force can ſuppreſs it, Mat. xxvii. 4. no greatneſs of power can ſtifle it; it will take the mightieſt monarch by the throat, Exod. x. 16. Dan. v. 6. no muſic, pleaſures, or delights, can charm it, Job. xx. 22. O conſcience! thou art the ſweeteſt friend, or the dreadfulleſt 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.

The POEM.

A Ship of greateſt burthen will obey
The rudder; he that ſits at helm, may ſway
And guide its motion: If the pilot pleaſe,
The ſhip bears up, againſt both wind and ſeas.
My ſoul's the ſhip, affections are its ſails,
Conſcience the rudder. Ah! but Lord, what ails

Digitized by Google

My naughty heart, to ſhuffle in and out,
When its convictions bid it tack about?
Temptations blow a counter blaſt, and drive
The veſſel where they pleaſe, tho' conſcience ſtrive.
And by its ſtrong perſuaſions it would force
My ſtubborn will to ſteer another courſe.
Lord, if I run this courſe, thy word doth tell
How quickly I muſt needs arrive at hell.
Then rectify my conſcience, change my will;
Fan in thy pleaſant gales, my God, and fill
All my affections, and let nothing carry
My ſoul from its due courſe, or make it vary;
Then if the pilot's work thou wouldſt perform,
I ſhould bear bravely up againſt a ſtorm.

CHAP. VII.

Thro' many fears and dangers ſeamen run,
Yet all's forgotten when they do return.

OBSERVATION.

WE have an elegant and lively deſcription of their fears and dangers, Pſal. cvii. 25, 26, 27. "He commandeth "and raiſeth the ſtormy winds, 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 wits end." Or, as it is in the Hebrew, "All wiſdom "is ſwallowed up." Suitable to which is that of the poet *.

"The Pilot knows not what to chuſe, or flee;
"Art ſtands amaz'd in ambiguity."

O what a ſtrange and miraculous deliverance have many ſeamen had? How often have they yielded themſelves for dead men, and verily thought the next ſea would have ſwallowed them up? How earneſtly then do they cry for mercy? and, like the Corinthians, can pray in a ſtorm, though they regard it not at other times, Pſal. cvii. 28. Jonah i. 5, 6.

APPLICATION.

Theſe dreadful ſtorms do at once diſcover to us the mighty

* *Rector in incerto eſt: nec quid fugiat petat*
Invenit; ambiguis ars ſtupet ipſa malis. Ovid.

Digitized by Google

power of God in raising them, and the abundant goodness of God in preserving poor creatures in them.

1. The power of God is graciously manifested in raising them; the wind is one of the Lord's wonders, Psal. cvii. 24, 25. "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." Yea, ver. 18. God appropriates it as a peculiar work of his; "He causeth his [wind "to blow.]" Hence he is said, in Scripture, "to bring them "forth out of his treasury," Psal. cxxxvii. 7. there they are locked up, and reserved, not a gust can break forth, till he command and 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; although it be a strong and terrible creature, he controuls and rules it: yea, the Scripture sets forth God, "as riding upon "the wings of the wind," Psal. xviii. 10. It is a borrowed speech from the manner of men, who when they would shew 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 their god Aeolus, but we know this is the royalty, and sole prerogative of the true God, who made heaven and earth; it is he that "makes the storm a calm," Psal. cvii. 29. and it is he that shifts and changes them from point to point, as he pleaseth; for he hath appointed them their circuits, Eccles. i. 6. "The wind "goeth towards the south, and turneth about unto the north; it "whirleth about continually, and returneth again according to "its circuits."

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 upon them, and they are driven before it, as a wreck upon the seas; yet, I say, that God should preserve you there, is a work of infinite goodness and power. That those winds which do rend the very earth, mountains, and rocks, 1 Kings xix. 11. "Breaks the cedars, yea, the cedars of Lebanon, shakes the "wilderness, and makes the hinds to calve," Psal. xxix. 5, 8, 9. which naturalists say bring forth with greatest difficulty; fore-

Digitized by Google

your preservation, in such tempests, is 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 Paul speaks, in a like case, Acts xxvii. 20. "All hope of "being saved is taken away;" 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 rocks, 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 and pity, that you may learn to fear that God in whose hand your soul and breath are.

And it may be, for the present, your hearts are much affected; conscience works strongly, it smites you for sins formerly committed, such and such counsels of ministers, or relations slighted. Now, saith 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 these 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 at present upon me? And what terrible apprehensions had I then of my eternal condition? What vows did I make in that distress? And how earnestly did I then beg for mercy? But, Lord, though thy vows are upon me, yet have I been the same; yea, added to, and filled up the measure of my sins. Neither the bonds of mercy thou hast laid upon me, nor the sacred and solemn vows I have laid upon myself, could restrain me from those ways of iniquity, which then appeared so dreadful to me.

Ah! Lord, what an heart have I? What love, pity, and

Digitized by Google

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, ah! what an invaluable mercy is this? And do I thus requite the Lord, Deut. xxxii. 6. and pervert and abuſe his goodneſs thus? Surely, O my ſoul, if this be the fruit of all thy preſervations, they are rather reſervations to ſome farther and ſorer judgments. How dreadfully will juſtice at laſt avenge the quarrel of abuſed mercy, Joſh. xxiv. 20. How grievouſly did God take it from the Iſraelites, that they provoked him at the ſea, even at the red-ſea? Pſal. cvi. 7. where God had wrought their deliverance in ſuch a miraculous way. Even thus have I ſinned after the ſimilitude of their tranſgreſſions; 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 mordering 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.

The POEM.

THE ſhip that now ſails trim before a wind,
E'er the deſired port it gains, may find
A tedious paſſage; gentle gales a while
Do fill its ſails, the flatt'ring ſeas do ſmile,
The face of heav'n is bright, on ev'ry ſide
The wanton purpoice tumbles on the tide.
Into their cabins now the ſeamen go,
And then turns out again, with, *What chear, ho?*
All on a ſudden darken'd are the skies,
The lamp of heav'n obſcur'd, the winds doth riſe;
Waves ſwell like mountains: Now their courage flags,
The maſts are crack'd, the canvas torn to rags.
The veſſel works for life; anon one cries,
The main maſt's gone by th' board: another plies
The pump, until a third does ſtrike them blank,
With, *Sirs, prepare for death, we've ſprung a plank.*
Now to their knees they go, and on this wiſe
They beg for mercy, with their loudeſt cries:
Lord, ſave us but this once, and thou ſhalt ſee
What perſons, for the future, we will be:
Our former time's miſ-ſpent, but, with a vow,
We will engage, if thou wilt ſave us now,

Digitized by Google

To mend what is amiſs. The gracious Lord,
Inclin'd to pity, takes them at their word;
The winds into their treaſures he doth call,
Rebukes the ſtormy ſea, and brings them all
To their deſired haven; once a-ſhore,
And then their vows are ne'er remember'd more.
Thus ſoul's are ſhipwreck'd, tho' the bodies live,
Unleſs in time thou true repentance give.

CHAP. VIII.

The navigator ſhifts his ſails to take
All winds, but that which for his ſoul doth make.

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 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 ſecular and lower matters, and yet how ignorant and unskilful in the great and 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 a great deal of exactneſs in it; but in ſoul-matters, no knowledge at all. They can can underſtand the Equator, Meridian, and Horizon; by the firſt they can tell the latitude of any place, ſouth, or north, meaſuring it by the degrees in the Meridian; by the ſecond they can tell you the longitude of a place, eaſt and weſt, from the Meridian, meaſuring it by the degrees of the Equator; and by the third they can diſcern the divers riſings and ſettings of the ſtars. And ſo in other arts and ſciences, we find men endowed with rare abilities, and ſingular ſagacity. Some have piercing apprehenſions, ſolid judgments, ſtupendous memories, rare invention, and excellent elocution; but put them upon any ſpiritual ſupernatural matter, and the weakeſt Chriſtian, even a babe in Chriſt, ſhall excel them therein, and give a far better account of regeneration, the work of grace, the life of faith, than theſe can. 1 Cor. i. 26. "Not many wiſe

Digitized by Google

" men after the flesh, *&c.* But God hath chosen the foolish " things of this world," *&c.*

REFLECTION.

How inexcusable, then, art thou, O my soul! and how mute and 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 husks and 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 and skilful) such sots and 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 chuse me, even poor me, whose natural faculties and 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, Matth. xi. 25. " I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou " hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and reveal" ed them to babes." And let it ever be 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?

The POEM.

ONE thing doth very much affect my mind,
To see the seaman husband ev'ry wind;
With excellent art he shifts the sails, and knows
How to improve the fairest wind that blows.
If a direct, or fore right gale he want,
A side wind serves his turn, tho' ne'er so scant.
And will not this one day in judgment rise
Against your souls? Ah! can you be so wise.
In smaller matters; what, and yet not know
How to improve fresh gales of grace that blow?
Fast moor'd in sin your wind-bound souls can lie,
And let these precious gales rise, blow, and die.
Sometimes on your affections you may feel
Such gracious breathings: Ah, but hearts of steel,

Digitized by Google

They move you not, nor cause you to relent;
Tho' able, like Elijah's wind, to rent
The rocks asunder; If you do not prize
Those breathings, other winds will shortly rise,
And from another quarter; those once gone,
Then next look out for an Euroclydon,
A dreadful storm: How soon, no man can tell;
But when it comes, 'twill blow such souls to hell.

CHAP. IX.

If seamen lose a gale, there they may lie;
The soul, when once becalm'd in sin, may die.

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 an uncertain, variable thing; they must take it when they may: they are unwilling to lose one flow, or breath, that may be serviceable to them. If a prosperous gale offers, and they not ready, it repents them to lose it, as much as it would repent us to see a vessel of good wine, or beer, tapped and run to waste.

APPLICATION.

There are also seasons, and gales of grace, for our souls, golden opportunities of salvation afforded to men, the neglect of which proves the loss and ruin of souls. God hath given unto man 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, Luke xiii. 7. Jer. xxv. 3. Luke xix. 42. The longest date of it can be but the time of this life; this is our day to work in, Job ix. 4. and upon this small wire 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, Heb. vi. 7, 8. and Jer. vi. 29.

Therefore it is a matter of high importance to our souls to apprehend these seasons. How pathetically doth Christ bewail Jerusalem upon this account! Luke xix. 42. "O that thou

Digitized by Google

" hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things of thy peace! " but now they are hid from thine eyes." If a company of seamen are set a-shore upon some remote, 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 to their time? The lives of those men depend upon a quarter of an hour. Many a soul hath perished eternally, the gospel leaving them behind in their sins, 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 gos-" pel dispensation) 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 for sin and misery, yea, I have been carried by the power of the gospel, to resolve and purpose to turn to God, and become a new creature; but sin hath been too subtle and deceitful 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, Rev. xx. 11. " Let him that is filthy, be filthy still." 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. Ah! if I have trifled out this season, and irrecoverably lost it, then I may take up that lamentation, Jer. viii. 20. and say, " My harvest is past, my summer " is ended, and I am not saved."

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 for me, and make it effectual to me, before I go hence, and be seen no more!

The POEM.

A Fresh and whisking gale presents to day,
But now the ship's not ready; winds must stay,

Digitized by Google

And wait the ſeaman's leiſure. Well, to morrow
They will put out; but then, unto their ſorrow,
That wind is ſpent, and by that means they gain
Perchance a month's repentance, if not twain.
At laſt another offers, now they're gone;
But e're they gain their port, the market's done.
For ev'ry work, and purpoſe, under heav'n,
A proper time and ſeaſon God hath giv'n.
The fowls of heaven, ſwallow, turtle, crane,
Do apprehend it, and put us to ſhame.
Man hath his ſeaſon too, but that miſ-ſpent,
There's time enough his folly to repent.
Eternity's before him, but therein
No more ſuch golden hours as theſe have been:
When theſe are paſs'd away, then you ſhall find
That proverb true, *Occaſion's bald behind.*
Delays are dang'rous, ſee that you diſcern
Your proper ſeaſons: O that you would learn
This wiſdom from thoſe fools, that come too late
With fruitleſs cries, when Chriſt has ſhut the gate.

CHAP. X.

By navigation one place ſtores another,
And by communion we muſt help each other.

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 ſociable commerce and traffick maintained amongſt them all, and all combining in a common league, may, by the help of navigation, exhibit mutual ſuccours to each other. The ſtaple commodities proper to each country, I find expreſſed by the poet, Bart. Coll.

Hence comes our ſugars from Canary iſles;
From Candy currants, muſkadels, and oils;
From the Molucco's, ſpices; balſamum,
From Egypt; odours from Arabia come;
From India, gums, rich drugs, and ivory;
From Syria, mummy; black, red ebony,
From burning Chus; from Peru, pearl, and gold;
From Ruſſia, furs, to keep the rich from cold.

Digitized by Google

From Florence, silks; from Spain, fruit, saffron, sacks;
From Denmark, amber, cordage, firs, and flax;
From Holland, hops; horse, from the banks of Rhine;
From France, and Italy, the choicest wine.
From England, wool; all lands as God distributes,
To the world's treasure pay their sundry tributes.

APPLICATION.

Thus hath God distributed the more rich and 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; even 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 excellencies. 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 excelled in the former, 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 that liveliness of affections, and tenderness of heart, that appears 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 fellowship among them all, 1 Cor. xii. 21. "The head "cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you." As in a family where there is much business to be done, even the little children bear a part, according to their strength, Jer. vii. 18. "The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, the "women knead the dough." 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 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, pleasant, and desirable companions on earth, then ascends with them into heaven, where every grace receives its adolescence and perfection:

Digitized by Google

and then, though they be ten thousand times more excellent and delightful than ever they were 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 dropt into us, and improvement of them, as one well notes *. We should do by saints, as we use to do by some choice books 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 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 sweet and 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.

The POEM.

TO several nations God doth so distribute
His bounty, that each one must pay a tribute
Unto each other. Europe cannot vaunt,
And say, Of Africa I have no want.
America and Asia need not strive,
Which of itself can best subsist and live.
Each country's want, in something, doth maintain
Commerce betwixt them all. Such is the aim

* Mr. Gurnal.

Digitized by Google

And end of God, who doth diſpenſe and give
More grace to ſome, their brethren to relieve.
This makes the ſun ten thouſand times more bright,
Becauſe it is diffuſive of its light;
Its beams are gilded glorioufly; but then
This property doth gild them o'er again.
Should ſun, moon, ſtars, impropriate all their light,
What diſmal darkneſs would the world benight?
On this account men hate the vermin brood,
Becauſe they take in much, but do no good.
What harm, if I at yours my candle light?
Except thereby I make your room more bright.
He that, by pumping, ſucks and draws the ſpring,
New ſtreams, and ſweeter, to the well doth bring.
Grace is a treaſure in an earthen pot;
When death hath daſht it, no more can be got
Out of that veſſel: then, while it is whole,
Get out the treaſure to enrich your ſoul.

CHAP. XI.

The rocks abide, though ſeas againſt them rage:
So ſhall the church, which is God's heritage.

OBSERVATION.

THE rocks, though ſituate in the boiſterous and tempeſtuous ocean, yet abide firm and immovable 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 oppoſitions wherewith it is encountered and aſſaulted in this world. Theſe *metaphorical* waves roar and beat with violence againſt it, but with as little ſucceſs as the ſea againſt the rocks, Matth. xvi. 18. "Upon this rock will I build "my church, and the [gates] of hell ſhall not prevail againſt "it." The gates of hell, are the power and policy of hell; for it is conceived to be an alluſive ſpeech to the gates of the Jews, wherein their ammunition for war was lodged, which alſo were the ſeats of judicature, there 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, Zech. xii. 3. "In that day I will make Jeruſa-

Digitized by Google

" lem a burdenſome ſtone for all people; all that burden them-
" ſelves with it, ſhall be cut in pieces, though all the people of
" the earth be gathered together againſt it." An alluſion to one that eſſays to roul 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, Pſalm xlvi 5, 6. " God is in the
" midſt of her, ſhe ſhall not be moved: God ſhall help her,
" and that right early." Vatab. *Dum aſpicit mane.* When the morning appears. Which notes (ſaith Calvin) God's aſſiduous and conſtant help and ſuccour, which is extended in all dangers, as conſtantly as the ſun ariſes. 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, Zech. ii. 5. " I, ſaith the Lord, will be a wall of fire round a-
" bout it." Some think this phraſe alludes to the cherubims, that kept the way of the tree of life with flaming ſwords: others, to the fiery chariots round about Dathan, where Eliſha was; but moſt think it to be an alluſion to an antient 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, 4, 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, Zech. ii. 8. " He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of
" mine eye." 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 peo-

Digitized by Google

ple, of whom he uses this tender and dear 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, he is as tender as a 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 prone and 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 Zion in her distress, for fear of being ruined with her.

What David spake to Abiathar, 1 Sam. xxii. 23. that may Zion 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 safeguard." God hath entailed great salvation and deliverances upon Zion; and blessed are all her friends and favourers; the Rock of Ages is its defence. Fear not, therefore, O my soul, though the hills be removed out of their place, and cast into the midst of the sea. O let my faith triumph, and 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 Zion, when the proud waves have spent their fury and rage against it.

The POEM.

Mesopotamia, situate in the seas,
May represent the church; or, if you please,
A rock, o'er which the waves do wash and swell,
May figure it; chuse either, which you will.
Winds strive upon those seas, and make a noise,
The lofty waves sometimes lift up their voice,
And, swelling high successively, do beat
With violence against it, then retreat.
They break themselves, but it abides their shock;
And when their rage is spent, there stands the rock.
Then they are out, that do affirm and vote,
Peace, pomp, and splendor, is the church's note.
And they deserve no less reproof, that are
In Zion's troubles ready to despair.
This rock amidst far stronger rocks doth lie,
Which are its fence; so deep, so thick, so high,

Digitized by Google

They can't be batter'd, scal'd, or undermin'd:
And these, environ'd by them, daily find
Their bread ascertain'd; waters pour'd:
Then shout and sing, ye that are thus immur'd.

CHAP. XII.

What dangers run they for a little gains,
Who, for their souls, would ne'er take half the pains?

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 hopes and probability of getting a small estate. *Per mare, per terras, per mille pericula currunt.* 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 mens 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, and 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 τὸ πρᾶγμα, the *master-design*, which engrosseth all their time, studies, and contrivances. The will hath past 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, and fullest discovery of a man's portion and 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, Matth. vi. 20, 21. The heads and hearts of saints are full of solicitous cares and fears about their spiritual condition; the great design they drive on, to which all other things are but [παρεργα], things on the by, is to make sure their calling and election. This is the [*pondus*] the weight and bias of their spirit; if

their hearts stray and wander after any other thing, this reduces them again.

REFLECTION.

Lord, this hath been my manner from my youth, may the carnal minded man say; I have been labouring for the meat that perisheth; disquieting myself in vain, full of designs and projects for the world, and unwearied in my endeavours to compass an earthly treasure; yet therein I have either been checked and disappointed by Providence, or if I have obtained, yet I am no sooner come to enjoy that content and comfort I promised myself in it, but I am ready to leave it all, to be stript out 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 and pinch 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 carcase; 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 vineyard I have not kept? I have been a perpetual 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 on 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."

The POEM.

THE face of man impress'd and stamp'd on gold,
With crown, and royal sceptres, we behold.
No wonder that a human face it gains,
Since head, heart, soul, and body, it obtains.
Nor is it strange a sceptre it should have,
That to its yoke the world doth so enslave.
Charm'd with its chinking note, away they go,
Like eagles to the carcass, ride and row.
Thro' worlds of hazards fooliſh creatures run,
That into its embraces they may come.
Poor Indians, in the mines, my heart condoles,
But seldom turns aside to pity souls,
Which are the slaves, indeed, that toil, and spend
Themselves upon its service. Surely, friend,
They are but sextons, to prepare, and make
Thy grave, within those mines, whence they do take

Digitized by Google

And dig their ore. Ah! many souls, I fear,
Whose bodies live, yet lie entombed there.
Is gold so tempting to you? Lo! Christ stands,
With length of days, and riches in his hands.
Gold in the fire try'd he freely proffers,
But few regard, or take those golden offers.

CHAP. XIII.

Millions of creatures in the seas are fed:
Why then are saints in doubt of daily bread?

OBSERVATION.

THere are multitudes of living creatures in the sea. The Psalmist saith, there are in it, "Things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts," Psal. civ. 25. and we read, Gen. i. 20. that 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. Psal. cxlv. 15, 16. "Thou givest them their meat in due season: thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every "living thing."

APPLICATION.

If God take 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 seeketh 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, and enforceth it with a [*much rather*] upon them, Matth. vi. 25, 31. God would have his people be without *carefulness*, (*i. e.*) anxious care, 1 Cor. vii. 32. "And to cast their care upon him, for he "careth for them," 1 Pet. v. 7. There are two main arguments suggested in the gospel, to quiet and satisfy the hearts of saints in this particular: the one is, that the gift of Jesus Christ amounts to more than all these things come to; yea, in bestowing him, he has given that which virtually and eminently comprehends all these inferior mercies in it, Rom. viii. 32. "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?"

Digitized by Google

And 1 Cor. iii. 22. "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, "and Christ is God's." Another argument is, that God gives these temporal things to those he never gave his 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, Psalm xvii 14. Now if God clothe and feed his enemies, if (to allude to that, Luke xii. 28.) he clothe the 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 are saints?

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, 2 Sam. xxiii 47. *The Lord liveth.* But one time, being in a deep distress, and forgetting that consolation, one of her little children came to her, and said, 'Mother, why weep ye so? What! is 'God dead now?' Which words, from a child, shamed her out of her unbelieving fears, and quickly brought her spirits to rest. O saint, whilst God lives, thou canst not want what is good for thee.

How sweet a life might Christians live, could they but bring their hearts to a full subjection to the disposing 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 gracious woman once made upon her death-bed, to a friend that asked, 'Whether she were 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 chuse?' 'Truly, (said she) if God would 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 gracious 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 herein, 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

Digitized by Google

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, Matth. vii. 21. Surely, unleſs I were jealous of my Father's affection, I could not be ſo dubious of his proviſion for me. Ah! I ſhould rather wonder that I have ſo much, than replie that 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, as the ſaints have done, Hab. iii. 17, 18. 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 an 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 hath 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!

The POEM.

VAriety of curious fiſh are caught
Out of the ſea, and to our tables brought;
We pick the choiceſt bits, and then we ſay,
We are ſufficed; come, now, take away.
The table's voided, you have done; but fain
I would perſuade to have it brought again.
The ſweeteſt bit of all remains behind,
Which, through your want of skill, you could not find.
A bit for faith, have you not found it? Then
I've made but half a meal; come, taſte again,
Haſt thou conſider'd, O my ſoul! that hand
Which feeds thoſe multitudes in ſea and land!
A double mercy in it thou ſhouldſt ſee;
It fed them firſt, and then with them fed thee.
Food in the waters we ſhould think were ſcant
For ſuch a multitude, yet none do want.
What num'rous flocks of birds about me fly?
When ſaw I one, through want, fall down, and die?
They gather what his hand to them doth bring,
Tho' but a worm, and at that feaſt can ſing.
How full a table doth my Father keep?
Bluſh, then, my naughty heart, repent, and weep;

Digitized by Google

How faithless and distrustful hast thou been,
Altho' his care and love thou oft hast seen?
Thus in a single dish you have a feast,
Your first and second course, the last the best.

CHAP. XIV.

Sea-waters drained through the earth, are sweet;
So are th' afflictions which God's people meet.

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. This we find by constant experience, the sweetest crystal spring came from the sea, Eccles. i. 7.

APPLICATION.

Afflictions in themselves are evil, Amos ii. 6. very bitter and unpleasant. See Heb. xii. 11. Yet not morally and 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 always disclaimeth sin, Jam. i. 3. Besides, if it were so evil, it could, in no case, or respect, be the object of our election and desire, as in some cases it ought to be, Heb. xi. 25. but it is evil, as it is the fruit of sin, and grievous unto sense, Heb. xiv. 11. But though it be thus brackish, and unpleasant in itself, yet, passing through Christ and the covenant, it loses that ungrateful property, and becomes pleasant in the fruits and effects thereof unto believers, Heb. xii. 11.

Yea, such are the blessed fruits thereof, that they are to account it all joy, when they fall into divers afflictions, Jam. i. 2. David could bless God that he was afflicted, and many a saint hath done the like. A good woman once compared her afflictions to her children: 'For, (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 afflictions, to discover the corruption that is in the heart, Deut. viii. 2. it is a furnace to shew the dross. Ah! when a sharp affliction comes, then the pride, impatience, and unbelief of the heart appears: *Matura vexatio prodit seipsam.* When the water is stirred, then the mud and filthy sediment, that lay at the bottom, rises. Little, saith the afflicted soul, did I think, there had been in me that

Digitized by Google

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? I could not have imagined the sight of death would have so appalled me, the loss of outward things have so pierced me. Now what a blessed thing is this, to have the heart thus discovered.

Again, sanctified afflictions discover the emptiness and vanity 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 an empty, 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 and self: but now affliction makes us more spiritual, and then it is nothing. It drives them nearer to God, makes them see the necessity of the life of faith, with multitudes of other benefits.

But yet these sweet fruits of afflictions do not naturally, and of their own accord, 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 (as I noted before) is, because they run now into another channel; Jesus Christ hath removed them from mount Ebal to Gerezim; they are no more the effects of vindictive wrath, but paternal chastisement. And, as * Mr Case well notes, 'a teaching affliction is to the saints, 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, whereinto Jesus Christ hath wrung and pressed the juice and virtue of all his mediatory offices. Surely, that must be a cup of generous, royal wine, like that in the supper, a cup of blessing to the people of God.

REFLECTION.

Hence may the unsanctified soul draw matter of fear and trouble, even from its unsanctified troubles. And thus it may 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,

* Correction, Instruction, p. 82.

Digitized by Google

and so it remains still; they have not purged out, but only given vent to the pride, murmur, and atheism of my heart. I have been in my afflictions, as that wicked Ahaz was in his, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. who, "in the midst of his distress, yet "trespassed more and more against the Lord." When I have been in storms at sea, or troubles at home, my soul within me hath been as a raging sea, casting up mire and dirt. 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 to the wicked, Psal. cxix. 119.

Hence also should gracious souls draw much encouragement and comfort amidst all their troubles. O 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 the hand. O 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, Rom. v. 12. Isa. vii. 9. 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, do promote and further it?

The POEM.

'TIS strange to hear what diff'rent censures fall
Upon the same affliction; some do call
Their troubles sweet, some bitter; others meet
Them both mid-way, and call them bitter sweet.
But here's the question still, I fain would see,
Why sweet to him, and bitter unto me?
Thou drink'st them, dregs and all, but others find
Their troubles sweet, because to them refin'd,
And sanctify'd; which difference is best,
By such apt similies as these expres't:
From salt and brackish seas fumes rise and fly,
Which, into clouds condens'd, obscure the sky;
Their property there alter'd, in few hours,
Those brackish fumes fall down in pleasant show'rs;
Or as the dregs of wine and beer, distill'd
By limbec, with ingredients, doth yield
A cordial water, tho' the lees were bitter,
From whence the chymist did extract such liquor.
Then marvel not, that one can kiss that rod,
Which makes another to blaspheme his God,

Digitized by Google

O get your troubles sweeten'd, and refin'd,
Or else they'll leave bitter effects behind.
Saints troubles are a cord, let down by love,
To pully up their hearts to things above.

CHAP. XV.

The seas within their bounds the Lord contains:
He also men and devils holds in chains.

OBSERVATION.

IT is a wonderful work of God, to limit and 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, and will be admired. Psal. civ. 9. "Thou hast set a "bound that they may not pass over, that they turn not again "to cover the earth." Which it is clear they would do, were they not thus limited. So Job xxxviii. 8, 10, 11. "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 "stayed."

APPLICATION.

And no less is the glorious power and mercy of God discovered in bridling the rage and fury 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 remain-"der of wrath thou shalt restrain," Psal. 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 in 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 of providence; 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 ye come, and no further." Sometimes he ties them up so short, that they cannot touch his people, though they have the greatest opportunities and advantages. Psal. cv. 12, 13, 14, 15. "When they were but a few

Digitized by Google

" men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it; 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 a- " nointed, and do my prophets no harm." And sometimes he permits them to touch and trouble his people, but then sets bounds and limits to them, beyond which they must not pass. That is a pregnant text to this purpose, Rev. ii. 10. " Behold " the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be " tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days."

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 marrow and fatness, 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 stopt 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 a kind of submission, respects those limits which God hath set it.

Thus the fiercest element is repressed by the feeblest things: 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, gracious hand, that they cannot execute their purpose, nor perform their enterprize. How full of devils, and devilized 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 a saint in the midst of such hosts of enemies, as great a miracle, though not so sensible, as the preservation of those three noble Jews, in the midst of the

* See the Turk's letter to the emperor of Germany, lately published by authority.

Digitized by Google

fiery furnace, or Daniel in the den of lions? For there is as strong a propension in Satan, and wicked men, to destroy the saints, as in the fire to burn, or a lion to devour. O! then, let me chearfully 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, Psal. lxxvi. 10. and the advantage of my soul, Rom. viii. 28.

The POEM.

THIS world's a forest, where, from day to day,
Bears, wolves, and lions, range and seek their prey;
Amidst them all poor harmless lambs are fed,
And by their very dens in safety led.
They roar upon us, but are held in chains;
Our shepherd is their keeper, he maintains
Our lot. Why then should we so trembling stand?
We meet them, true, but in their keeper's hand.
He that to raging seas such bounds hath put,
The mouth of rav'nous beasts can also shut.
Sleep in the woods, poor lambs, yourselves repose
Upon his care, whose eyes do never close.
If unbelief in you don't lose their chain,
Fear not their struggling, that's but all in vain.
If God can check the waves by smallest sand,
A twined thread may hold these in his hand.
Shun sin, keep close to Christ; for other evils
You need not fear, tho' compass'd round with devils.

CHAP. XVI.

To sea without a compass none dare go:
Our course without the word is even so.

OBSERVATION.

OF how great use and necessity is the compass to seamen! though they can coast a little way by the shore, yet they dare not venture far into the ocean without it; it is their guide, and directs and shapes their course for them: and if by the violence of wind and weather they are driven beside their due course, yet by the help of this they are reduced, and 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

Digitized by Google

is in the ocean, comparatively, but as the head of a ſmall pin upon a table.

APPLICATION.

What the compaſs, and all other mathematical 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. Gal. vi. 16. "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 is in a dark night, Pſal. cxix. 105. that 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 ſhuffle in and out, and ſhape not their courſe and converſation according 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," Pſal. lxxiii. 24. The whole hundred and nineteenth pſalm is ſpent in commendation of its tranſcendent excellency and uſefulneſs. Luther profeſſed that he prized it ſo highly, 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, Pſalm cxix. 30. "I have choſen the way of truth, (or the true way;) thy "judgments have I laid before me." Some indeed have opened their detracting blaſphemous mouths againſt it; as Julian, that vile apoſtate, who feared not to ſay, there was as good matter in Phocillides as in Solomon, in Pindarus's odes, as in David's pſalms.

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. Montanus tells us, that although the apoſtle would have ſermons and ſervice celebrated in a known tongue, yet the church, for very good cauſe, hath otherwiſe ordered it. Gilford called it the mother of hereſies. Bonner's chaplain judged it worthy to be burnt as a ſtrange doctrine. They ſet up their inventions above it, and frequently

Digitized by Google

come in with a *non obstante* against Christ's institutions. And thus do they make it void, or, as the word ἀκυροῦντες signifies, Matth. xv. 6. unlord it, and take away its authority as a rule. But those that have thus slighted it, and followed the by paths unto which their corrupt hearts have led them, they take not hold of the paths of life, and are now in the depths of hell. All other lights, to which men pretend, in the neglect of this, are but false fires, that will lead men into the pits and bogs of destruction at last.

REFLECTION.

And is thy word a compass, to direct my course to glory? O where am I then like to arrive at last, that in all my course have neglected it, and steered according to the council 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 enquired 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 a-drift 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 and issue thereof. Lord, let me now resolve to study, prize, and 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 to give a perfect rule, give me also a perfect heart to walk by that rule to glory!

The POEM.

THis world's a sea, wherein a num'rous fleet
Of ships are under sail. Here you shall meet
Of ev'ry rate and size; frigates, galleons,
The nimble ketches, and small pickeroons:
Some bound to this port; some where winds and weather
Will drive them, they are bound they know not whither.
Some steer away for heaven, some for hell;
To which some steer, themselves can hardly tell.
The winds do shape their course, which tho' it blow
From any point, before it they must go.
They are directed by the wind and tide,
That have no compass to direct and guide:

Digitized by Google

For want of this, must run themselves a-ground,
Brave ships are cast away, poor souls are drown'd.
Thy word our compass is, to guide our way
To glory; it reduces such as stray.
Lord, let thy word dwell richly in my heart,
And make me skilful in this heavenly art:
O let me understand, and be so wise,
To know upon what point my country lies:
And having set my course directly thither,
Great God preserve me in the foulest weather.
By reason some will coast it; but I fear,
Such coasters never will drop anchor there.
Thy word is truly touch'd, and still directs
A proper course, which any base heart neglects.
Lord, touch my iron heart, and make it stand
Pointing to thee, its loadstone. To that land
Of rest above, let ev'ry tempest drive
My soul, where it would rather be than live.

CHAP. XVII.

Look as the sea, by turns, doth ebb and flow:
So their estates, that use it, come and go.

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 tides, so also its waves are the emblem of inconstancy, still rolling and tumbling, this way and that, never fixed and quiet. *Instabilis unda: as fickle as a wave*, is common, to a proverb, See Jam. i. 6. "He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the "wind, and tossed." So Isa. lvii. 20. "It cannot rest."

APPLICATION.

Thus mutable and inconstant are all outward things, there is no depending on them: nothing of any substance, or any solid consistence in them. 1 Cor. vii. 31. "The fashion of this world "passeth away." It is an high point of folly to depend upon such vanities. Prov. xxiii. 5. "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 towards heaven." 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, (*i. e.*) the cause of its transitoriness is

Digitized by Google

in itself; the creature is subjected to vanity by sin; they are sweet flowers, but withered presently, Jam. i. 10. "As the flower of the grass, so shall the rich man fade away." The man is like the stalk or 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, 1 Pet. iv. 24.

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 and overjetting a roof upon such a feeble, tottering foundation! We have seen meadows full of such curious 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 hath sent "grashoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter "growth," Amos vii. 2. Just as the grashoppers, and other creatures, devour the second tender herbage, as soon as the field begins to recover its verdure; so men, after they have been denuded and blasted by Providence, they 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. Henry IV. a potent prince, was reduced to such a low ebb, that he petitioned for a prebend's place in the church of Spire. Gallimer, king of the Vandals, was brought so low, that he sent to his friend for a spunge, a loaf of bread, and an harp: a spunge to dry up his tears, a loaf of bread to maintain his life, and an harp to solace himself in his misery. The story of Bellisarius is very affecting: he 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 Bellisario.* Give one penny to poor Bellisarius. Instances in history of this kind are infinite. Men of the greatest estates and honours, have nevertheless become the very *ludibria fortunae,* 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 godly men have had their estates,

Digitized by Google

how justly soever acquired, thus scattered by Providence also. Whoever had an estate, better gotten, better bottomed, or better managed, than Job? yet all was overthrown and swept away in a moment; though in mercy to him, as the issue demonstrated.

Oh 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, 1 Tim. vi. 17. "Charge them "that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded "and trust in uncertain riches."

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 and eager in the prosecution of such vanities, than I am to enrich my soul with solid and everlasting treasure? O that ever a sensual lust should be more operative in them than the love of God in me! 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 they have 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 it with all their might; they have no contrary principle to oppose them; their thoughts, strength, and affections, are entirely carried in one channel; but I find "a law in my members warring a-"gainst the law of my mind;" I must strive through a thousand difficulties and contradictions, to the discharge of a duty. 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 hot and eager after it? And why am I so apt to doat upon its beauty, especially when God is staining all its pride and glory! Jer. xlv. 5, 6. Surely it is unbecoming the spirit of a Christian at any time, but at such a time we may say of it, as Hushai of Ahithophel's counsel, "It is not good at "this time."

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 splendor and glory of

Digitized by Google

the world, treading both under foot in the duſt, and crowning myſelf with nothing but ſpiritual excellencies and glory!

The POEM.

JUdge in thyſelf, O Chriſtian! is it meet
To ſet thy heart on what beaſts ſet their feet?
'Tis no hyperbole, if you be told,
You dig for droſs, with mattocks made of gold.
Affections are too coſtly to beſtow
Upon the fair fac'd nothings here below.
The eagle ſcorns to fall down from on high,
(The proverb ſaith) to catch the ſilly flie.
And can a Chriſtian leave the face of God,
T' embrace the earth, or doat upon a clod?
Can earthly things thy heart ſo ſtrangely move,
To tempt it down from the delights above;
And now to court the world at ſuch a time
When God is laying judgment to the line?
'Tis juſt like him that doth his cabin ſweep
And trim, when all is ſinking in the deep:
Or like the ſilly bird, that to her neſt
Doth carry ſtraws, and never is at reſt,
Till it be feather'd well, but doth not ſee
The ax beneath, that's hewing down the tree.
If on a thorn thy heart itſelf repoſe
With ſuch delight, what if it were a roſe?
Admire, O ſaint, the wiſdom of thy God,
Who of the ſelf ſame tree doth make a rod,
Leſt thou ſhould ſurfeit on forbidden fruit,
And live not like a ſaint, but like a brute.

CHAP. XVIII.

Like hungry lions, waves for ſinners gape:
Leave then your ſins behind, if you'll eſcape.

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 Pſalm cxlviii. 8. The ſtormy winds are ſaid to *fulfil his word*; not only his word of command,

Digitized by Google

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 God's threatenings, how sad then is their condition that put forth to sea under the guilt of all their sins? O, if God should commissionate the winds to go after and arrest thee for all thou owest him, where art thou then? How dare you put forth under the power of a divine threat, before all be cleared betwixt God and thee? Sins in scripture are called debts, Matth. vi. 12. They are debts to God; not that we owe them to him, or ought to sin, but *metonymically*, because they render the sinner obnoxious to God's judgments, even as pecuniary debts oblige him that hath not wherewith to pay, to suffer punishment. All sinners must undergo the curse, either in their own person, according to the express 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 this surety, hath his discharge, his *quietus est*, sealed in the blood of Christ; all process at law, or from the law, is stopt, Rom. viii. 1. But if thou be an impenitent, persisting sinner, thy debt remains upon thine own score, "And be sure thy sin will find thee out, wherever "thou goest," Numb. xxxii. 23. (*i. e.*) God's revenging hand for sin will be upon thee: Thou mayest lose the sight and memory of thy sins, but they lose not the sight of thee; they follow after, as the hound doth the fleeting game upon the scent, till they have fetched thee up: And then consider, "How fear-"ful a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God," Heb. x. 31. 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 not thou 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 at last, but ruin? There is abundant mercy indeed for returning sinners; but the gospel speaks of none for persisting and 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. O! 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

Digitized by Google

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; a child of Hagar. 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 at once, and I diſcharged for ever. 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 this Chriſt, thy refuge city; thou knoweſt not how ſoon the avenger of blood may overtake thee.

The POEM.

THY ſins are debts, God puts them to account;
Canſt tell, poor wretch, to what thy debts amount?
Thou fill'ſt the treaſure of thy ſins each hour.
Into his vials God doth alſo pour
Proportionable wrath: Thou ſeeſt it not;
But yet aſſure thyſelf, there's drop for drop.
For every land of patience running out,
A drop of wrath runs in. Soul, look about!
God's treaſure's almoſt full, as well as thine:
When both are full, O then the dreadful time
Of reck'ning comes; thou ſhalt not gain a day
Of patience more, but then there haſtes away
Heaven's purſevant, who comes upon the wing
With his commiſſion ſeal'd, to take and bring.
Do'ſt ſtill reject Chriſt's tenders? Well, next ſtorm
May be the bailiff order'd to perform
This dreadful office. O then reſtleſs be,
Till God in Chriſt be reconcil'd to thee.
The ſum is great, but if a Chriſt thou get,
Fear not, a prince can pay a beggar's debt.
Now if the ſtorm ſhould riſe, thou need not fear;
Thou art, but the delinquent is not there.
A pardoned ſoul to ſea may boldly go:
He fears not bailiffs, that doth nothing owe.

CHAP. XIX.

To ſave the ſhip, rich lading's caſt away
Thy ſoul is ſhipwreck'd if thy luſts do ſtay.

IN ſtorms and diſtreſſes at ſea, the richeſt commodities are caſt overboard; they ſtand not upon it, when life and all is in jeopardy and hazard, Jonah i. 5. The mariners caſt forth

Digitized by Google

the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it. And, Acts xxvii. 18, 19. they cast out the very tacklings of the ship. How highly soever men prize such commodities, yet reason tells them, it were better these should perish, than life. Satan himself could say, Job. i. "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 mortify, cast out, and cut off their dearest lusts, rather than their immortal souls should sink and perish in the storm of God's wrath. Life, indeed, is a precious treasure, and highly valued by men: You know what Solomon saith, Eccles. ix. 4. That "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 men indeed do much overvalue 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? Alas! life is but a "vapour, "which appeareth for a little while, and then vanisheth away," Jam. iv. 14.

Life indeed 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, Matth. xix. 26. 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. "If ye live "after the flesh, ye must die," Rom. viii. 13. God saith to you in this case, as to Ahab, when he spared Benhadad, 1 Kings xx. 42. "Because thou hast let go a man, whom God hath ap- "pointed to destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his "life." 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 pity, and cruel 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 it is 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,

Digitized by Google

as to mortify them on earth? Surely, it is "profitable for me, "that one member perish, rather than that all be cast into "hell," Matth. v. 24. 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.

The POEM.

THY soul's the ship, its lading is its lusts,
God's judgments, stormy winds, and dang'rous gusts;
Conscience the master; but the stubborn will
Goes *supra cargo*, and doth keep the bill:
Affections are the men. The winds doth rise,
The storm increases: Conscience gives advice
To throw those lusts o'erboard, and so to ease
The vessel, which else cannot keep the seas.
The will opposes, and th' affections say,
The master's counsel they will not obey.
The case is dangerous, that no man can doubt,
Who sees the storm within, and that without.
Lusts and affections cannot part; no, rather,
They are resolv'd to swim or sink together.
Conscience still strives, but they cannot abide
That it, or reason, should the case decide.
Lust knows that reason, in like cases, still
Determines well: Then chuse ye whom ye will.
Shall's make the devil judge? This case has been
Before him, and he judg'd, that skin for skin,
And all men have, they'll part with for their life.
Then how unreasonable is this strife?
They that their sins do with their persons ship,
Do for their souls prepare a dreadful whip.

CHAP. XX.

Christ, with a word, can surging waves appease:
His voice a troubled soul can quickly ease.

OBSERVATION.

WHEN the sea works, and is tempestuous, it is not in the power of any creature to appease it. When the Egyptians would by their hieroglyphics express an impossibility, they did it by the picture of a man treading upon the waves

Digitized by Google

It is storied of Canute, an antient Danish king, that when a mighty storm of flattery arose upon him, he appeased it by shewing that he could not appease the sea: But one of his courtiers told him, as he rode near the sea-side, '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 seas and waves, come no further, touch 'not my feet.' But the sea came up, notwithstanding that charge, and confuted the flattery. But now Jesus Christ hath command of them indeed: It is said of him, Matth. viii. 26. *That he rebuked them.* And Mark iv. 38. He quiets them with a word, *Peace, be still;* 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 creatures to hush or quiet it. Spiritual terrors, as well as spiritual consolations, are not known till felt. O 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 drink up the spirits, and those armies of terrors charge violently and successively upon it, as Job vi. 4. What creature then is able to stand before them! Even God's own dear children have felt such terrors, as have *distracted them*, Psal. lxxxi. 15. Conscience is the seat of guilt; it is like a burning glass, so it contracts the beams of the threatnings, twists them together, and reflects them on the soul, until it smoke, scorch, 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*, Psal. l. 22. *Surprizing wrath*, Job xx. 23. And *abiding wrath*, Job iii. 36.

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 mystical waves also, and hush them with a word; yea, he is the Physician, and no other. It is the sprinkling of his blood, which, like a cooling fomentation, allays those heats within: That blood of sprinkling speaks peace, when all others 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, Eph. ii. 14, And hence faith fetches in peace to the soul, Rom. v. 1.

Digitized by Google

REFLECTION.

Can none appeaſe a troubled conſcience, but Chriſt? Then learn, O my ſoul, to underſtand, and 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. O, 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, mitigate, 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 a *Magormiſſabib* wouldſt thou be, ſhould God rouſe that ſleepy lion in thy boſom! My condition is not at all the better, becauſe my conſcience is quiet. Ah, the day is coming, when it muſt awake, and will lighten and thunder terribly within me, if I get not into Chriſt the ſooner. 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 my eye-lids, till I feel the comfort of that blood of ſprinkling, which alone ſpeaketh peace.

The POEM.

AMong the dreadful works of God, I find
No *metaphors* to paint a troubled mind.
I think on this, now that, and yet will neither
Come fully up, though all be put together.
'Tis like the raging ſea that caſts up mire,
Or like to Aetna, breathing ſmoke and fire;
Or like a rouſed lion, fierce and fell;
Or like thoſe furies that do howl in hell.
O conſcience! who can ſtand before thy power,
Endure thy gripes, and twinges but an hour?
Stone, gout, ſtrappado, racks, whatever is
Dreadful to ſenſe, is but a toy to this.
No pleaſures, riches, honours, friends can tell
How to give eaſe: In this 'tis like to hell.
Call for the pleaſant timbrel, lute and harp;
Alas! the muſic howls, the pain's too ſharp
For theſe to charm, divert, or lull aſleep:
Theſe cannot reach it, no, the wound's too deep.
Let all the promiſes before it ſtand,
And ſet a Barnabas at it's right hand;
Theſe in themſelves no comfort can afford,
'Tis Chriſt, and none but Chriſt, can ſpeak the word.

Digitized by Google

And he no ſooner ſpeaks, but all is ſtill,
The ſtorm is over, and the mind tranquil.
There goes a pow'r, with his majeſtic voice,
To huſh the dreadful ſtorm, and ſtill its noiſe.
Who would but fear and love this glorious Lord,
That can rebuke ſuch tempeſts with a word?

CHAP. XXI.

Our food out of the ſea God doth command;
Yet few therein take notice of his hand.

OBSERVATION.

THE providence of God in furniſhing us with ſuch plenty and variety of fiſh, is not ſlightly to be paſt 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; as Newfoundland, New-England, *&c.* 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 do ſubſiſt.

APPLICATION.

But now, what returns do we make to heaven for theſe mercies? O 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, or act in ſubmiſſion to it, and are careful to return, according to received benefit. Men do not conſider, "That their works are in the hand of God," Eccl. 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, Jam. iv. 13. 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 the ſecond cauſe, in the ſame degree it departs from the living God, Jer. x. 5.

And how do you think the bleſſed God will take it, to ſee himſelf thus debaſed, and the creature thus 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

Digitized by Google

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 with a neglective eye pass by God, as if he came in but collaterally, and on the bye, into it? But, certainly, all endeavours will be unsanctified, if not successless, in which God is not eyed and engaged.

"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," Psalm cxxvii. 2. *(i. e.)* 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? O this hath been my sin! I have acted, as if my condition had been at my own dispose; 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 in the world, ready to transfer the fault on this thing, or that! And again, how apt am I to be vainly lifted up in carnal confidence, when I see myself competently furnished with creature munition and provision? Oh, what a God-provoking wickedness is this! How oft hath providence checked my carnal presumption, and dashed many hopeful projects? Yet have I not owned it, as I ought, and submitted to it. Oh, 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.

The POEM.

IN all the gifts of God we should advance
His glorious name; not say, it came by chance.
Or to the idol of our prudence pay
The tribute of our praise, and go our way.
The waves do clap their hands, and in their kind
Acknowledge God; and what, are they more blind

Digitized by Google

That float upon them? Yea, for what they get
They offer sacrifices to their net.
This is your manner, thus to work you go:
Confess the naked truth; is't not so?
This net was wisely cast, 'tis full, 'tis full:
O well done mates, this is a gallant pull.
Thus what is due to God, you do apply
Unto yourselves most sacrilegiously.
I cannot wonder such come empty home,
That are so full of self and sin: Yet some
I hope look higher, and on God reflect
Due praise. A blessing such may well expect.

CHAP XXII.

Whilst thou by art the silly fish dost kill,
Perchance the devil's hook sticks in thy gill.

OBSERVATION.

THERE is skill in fishing; they that go to sea in a fishing voyage, use to go provided with their craft (as they very 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 fall 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 have for the fish: He hath his devices and wiles to catch souls, 2 Cor. ii. 11. Ephes. vi. 11. He is a serpent, an old serpent, Rev. xii. 9. Too crafty for man in his perfection, much more in his collapsed and degenerated state, his understanding being cracked by the fall, and all his faculties poisoned, and perverted.

Divines observe four steps, or degrees of Satan's tempting power:

First, He can find out the constitution-evils of men; he knows to what sin their natures are more especially prone, and inclinable.

Secondly, He can propound suitable objects to those lusts, he can exactly and fully hit every man's humour; as Agrippina mixed her poison in that meat her husband loved best.

Thirdly, He can inject and cast motions into the mind, to

Digitized by Google

close with those tempting objects; as it is said of Judas, John xiii. 2. "The devil put it into his heart."

Fourthly, He can sollicit, irritate, and provoke the heart, and by those continual restless sollicitations 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 finds the work sticks, and meets with rubs and 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 do so, the very propounding of an object is enough to some, without any further sollicitation; the devil makes an easy conquest of them.

And, beside all this, his policy much appears in the election 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 and intellective; but external and sensitive also; as the sparkling of the wine, when it gives its colour 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 by him at his will.

REFLECTION.

And is Satan so subtil 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 last. The day in which Sodom was destroyed, began with a pleasant sun-shine, but ended in 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. Ah! with what a smiling face doth sin come on towards me in its temptations? how doth it tickle the carnal fancy, and please the deceived heart? But

Digitized by Google

what a dreadful cataſtrophe and 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 theſe go before it to make a 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 I 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.

The POEM.

THere's ſkill in fiſhing, that the devil knows;
For when for ſouls Satan a fiſhing goes,
He angles cunningly; he knows he muſt
Exactly fit the bait unto the luſt.
He ſtudies conſtitution, place and time,
He gueſſes what is his delight, what thine:
And ſo accordingly prepares the bait,
Whilſt he himſelf lies cloſely hid, to wait
When thou wilt nibble at it. Doſt incline
To drunken meetings? then he baits with wine:
Is this the way? If into this he'll ſmell,
He'll ſhortly pledge a cup of wrath in hell.
To pride or luſt is thy vile nature bent?
An object ſuitable he will preſent.
O think on this! when you caſt in the hook,
Say, Thus for my poor ſoul doth Satan look.
O play not with temptations, do not ſwallow
The ſugar'd bait, conſider what will follow.
If once he hitch thee, then away he draws
Thy captive ſoul cloſe priſ'ner in his paws.

CHAP. XXIII.

Doth trading fail, and voyages prove bad?
If you cannot diſcern the cauſe, 'tis ſad.

OBSERVATION.

THERE are many ſad complaints abroad (and, I think, not without cauſe) that trade fails, nothing turns to

Digitized by Google

account. And though all countries are open and free for traffic, a general peace with all nations, 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 prosperity and success in trade is from the blessing of God, I suppose few are so *atheistical*, as once to deny, or question. The devil himself acknowledges it, Job i. 10. "Thou hast "blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased "in the land." It is not in the power of any man to get riches, Deut. viii. 18. "Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for "it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth." It is his blessing that makes good men rich, and his permission that makes wicked men rich. That maxim came from hell, *Quisque fortunæ suæ faber*: 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 the west," Psalm lxxvi. 6, 7.

This being acknowledged, it is evident, that in all disappointments, and want of success in our callings, we ought not to stick in second causes, but to look higher, even to the hand and disposal of God: For whose it is to give the blessing, his also it is to with-hold it. And this is as clear in scripture, as the other: It is the Lord that takes away the fishes of the sea, Hos. iv. 3. Zeph. i. 3. "It is he that curseth our bless- "sings," Mal. ii. 3.

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 to, or 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 others, 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 and enjoyments, 1 Tim. iv. 5. 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, as appears by that expression, Hos. xii. 7. This is that which will blast all our enjoyments.

Digitized by Google

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 also as they employ; neither regarding the souls or 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 and confluence of outward blessings, "this made "us kick against God," as, Deut. xxxiii. 15. "forget God," Deut. iv. 14. yea, grow proud of our strength and riches, Ezek. xvi. 13. and Jer. ii. 31. Ah! how few of us in the days of our prosperity, behaved ourselves as good Jehosaphat did? 2 Chron. xvii. 5, 6. "He had silver and gold in abundance, "and his heart was lifted in the way of God's command-"ments;" 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 of 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 my duty, and not mind my eternal concernments! Oh, 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," Psal. xxxvii. 16.

The POEM.

THERE's great complaint abroad that trading's bad,
You shake your head, and cry, 'Tis sad, 'tis sad.

Digitized by Google

Merchants lay out their ſtock, ſeamen their pains,
And in their eye they both may put their gains.
Your fiſhing fails, you wonder why 'tis ſo,
'Tis this (ſaith one) or that; but I ſay no;
'Twill ne'er be well, till you confeſs and ſay,
It is our ſin that frights the fiſh away.
No wonder all goes into bags with holes,
Since ſo the goſpel hath been in your ſouls.
We kick'd like Jeſurun, when the flowing tide
Of wealth came tumbling in, this nouriſh'd pride.
'Twixt ſoul and body, now I wiſh it may
Fare, as betwixt the Jews and us this day.
O that our outward want and loſs may be
To us a ſoul-enriching poverty!
If diſappointments here advance the trade
For heaven, then complain not; you have made
The richeſt voyage, and your empty ſhips
Return deep laden with ſoul-benefits.

CHAP. XXIV.

In ſeas the greater fiſh the leſs devour:
So ſome men cruſh all thoſe within their pow'r.

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, dolphins, and other fiſhes, follow the caplein, and other 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 by them.

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, Exod.

Digitized by Google

xxii. 23. "If thou afflict the widow and the fatherless, and they "cry unto me, I will surely hear their cry." And ver. 27. "I will hear his cry, for I am gracious." Nay, God will not only hear their cry, but avenge their quarrel. That is a remarkable text, 1 Thes. iv. 6. "That no man go beyond "and defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord "is the [avenger] of all such." This word * *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 now 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 over-power 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.

Believe it, sirs, it is a sin so provoking to God, that he will not let it escape without severe punishment, sooner or later. The prophet Habbakuk, chap. 1. 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 devoureth the man that is more righteous than "he?" And Prov. xxiii. 10, 11. "Enter not into the fields of "the fatherless," *(i. e.)* 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 council 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 threatning, 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 and allowances, de-

* Exdnos.

Digitized by Google

frauded 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, Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. Lev. xix. 30. or have I not perſecuted ſuch as God hath ſmitten? Pſalm lxix. 26. and rigorouſly exacted the utmoſt of my due, though the hand of God hath gone out againſt them, breaking their eſtates? 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, Jam. ii. 13. "That they ſhall have judgment without mercy, "that have ſhewed no mercy? 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?"

The POEM.

DEvouring whales, and rav'nous ſharks, do follow
The leſſer fry, at one gulp do ſwallow
Some hundreds of them, as our ſeamen ſay:
But we can tell far ſtranger things than they.
For we have ſharks aſhore on ev'ry creek,
That to devour poor men do hunt and ſeek.
No pity, ſenſe, or bowels, in them be,
Nay, have they not put off humanity?
Extortioners, and cheaters, whom God hates
Have dreadful open mouths, and thro' thoſe gates
Brave perſons with their heritages paſs
In fun'ral ſtate, friends crying out, alas!
O give me Agur's wiſh, that I may never
Be ſuch myſelf, or feel the hands of either.
And as for thoſe that in their paws are grip'd,
Pity and reſcue, Lord, from that ſad plight.
When I behold the ſqueaking lark, that's borne
In faulcon's talons, crying, bleeding, torn;
I pity its ſad caſe, and would relieve
The priſoner, if I could, as well as grieve.
Fountain of pity! hear the piteous moans
Of all thy captive and oppreſſed ones.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XXV.

In storms to spread much sail endangers all:
So carnal mirth, if God for mourning call.

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 and top-gallant, and shew their bravery.

APPLICATION.

When the judgments of God are abroad in the earth, it is no time then to make mirth, Ezek. xxi. 10. "Should we "[then] make mirth? It contemneth the rod of my son as e-"very tree." *(i. e.)* As if it were a common rod, and ordinary affliction: whereas the rod of my son is not such as may be had of every tree; but it is an iron rod to such as despise it, Psalm ii. 9. O it is a provoking evil, and commonly God severely punishes it. Of all persons such speed worst in the common calamity. Amos vi. 1. "Woe to them that are at ease "in Sion, that are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph," as ver. 6. It may be (as one observes upon the text) they did not laugh at him, or break jests upon him; but they did not condole with him. And what shall be their punishment! see verse 7. "Therefore now shall they go captive with the first "that go captive:" God will begin with them first. Solomon tells us, Eccles. iii. 4. "There is a time to weep, and a "time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance:" 'Only (as master Trap notes upon the text) we must not in-'vert the order, but weep with men, that we may laugh with 'angels.' To be merry and frolic in a day of tribulation, is to disturb the order of seasons. That is a terrible text, Isa. xxii. 12. which should make the hearts 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 sackloth; and behold, joy "and gladness, slaying oxen, killing sheep, drinking wine," &c. Well, what is the issue of this? "Surely, this iniquity "shall not be purged from you till ye die." O dreadful word! surely (my brethren) sympathy is a debt we owe to Christ mystical. Whatever our constitution, condition, or personal immunities be, yet when God calls for mourning, we must

Digitized by Google

hear and obey that call. David was a king, an expert muſician, a man of a ſanguine, and chearful 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. At ſuch a time we may "ſay "of laughter, thou art mad, and of mirth, what doth it."

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 underſtand-"ing have heard its voice," Micah vi. 9. But I have been deaf to that cry. How loth (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 like that Chriſtian Niobe, Luke vii. 38. 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 may juſtly fear, leſt "when they ſhall ſing for joy of heart, I "ſhall howl for vexation of ſpirit," Iſa. lxv. 13, 14. Surely, O my ſoul! ſuch laughter will be turned into mourning, either here or hereafter.

The POEM.

IN troublous times, mirth in the ſinner's face
Is like a mourning-cloak with ſilver-lace.
The lion's roaring makes the beaſts to quake:
God's roaring judgments cannot make us ſhake.
What belluine contempt is this of God,
To laugh in's face, when he takes up the rod?
Such laughter God in tears will ſurely drown,
(Unleſs he hate thee) e'er he lay it down.
Theſe rods have voices, if thou hear them well;
If not, another rod's prepar'd in hell:
And when the arm of God ſhall lay it on,
Laugh if thou canſt; no, then thy mirth is gone.

Digitized by Google

All Sion's children will lament and cry,
When all her beauteous ſtones in duſt do lie?
And he that for her then laments and mourns,
Shall want no joy, when God to her returns.

CHAP XXVI.

A little leak neglected, dangerous proves:
One ſin connived at, the ſoul undoes.

OBSERVATION.

THE ſmalleſt leak, if not timely diſcovered and ſtopt, 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.

APPLICATION.

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 mourned over 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, Pſalm cxix. 96. The *command is exceeding broad*; not as if it gave men a latitude to walk as they pleaſe, but *broad, (i. e.)* extending itſelf to all our words, thoughts, actions, and affections: Laying a law upon them all; conniving at no evil in any man, 1 Pet. ii. 1.

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, Pſalm cxxxix. 23, 24. Job xxxi. 13. and eſpecially againſt that ſin which was its darling in the days of his vanity, Pſalm xviii. 23. 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, and 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 ſhedding and applica-

* Εις τα χειρ.

Digitized by Google

tion of the blood of Christ, Heb. ix. 22. which blood is of infinite value and price, 1 Pet. i. 19.

To conclude, God's people know, that little as well as great sins, are dangerous, deadly, and destructive in their own nature; a little poison will destroy a man. Adrian was choaked with a gnat, Caesar stabbed with bodkins. A man would think Adam's sin had been no great matter, yet what dreadful work did it make! It was not as a single bullet, to kill himself only; but as a chain-shot, which cut off all his poor, miserable posterity. Indeed, no sin can be little, because its object, against whom it is committed, is so great, whence it receives a kind of infiniteness in itself, and because the price paid to redeem us from it is so invaluable.

REFLECTION.

And is the smallest sin not only damning in its own nature, but will certainly prove the ruin of that soul that hides and covers it; O 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 and lusts: Let me never say of any sin, as Lot did of Zoar, "It is a little one, spare it." 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," Rom. viii. 32. Neither will he spare me, if I defend and hide it, Deut. xxix. 20. Ah! if my heart were right, and my conversation sound, that lust, whatever it be, that is so favoured by me, would especially be abhorred, and hated, Isa. ii. 20. and xxx. 22. 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 is the sin that will open the door to him, and deliver up my soul, Matth. xii. 43, 44. Lord, let me make thorough work of it; let me cut it off, and pluck it out, though it be as a right hand, or eye. Ah! 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 lust, for his sake that shed his dearest blood for me!

The POEM.

THere's many a soul eternally undone
For sparing sin, because a little one.
But we are much deceiv'd; no sin is small,

Digitized by Google

That wounds so great a God, so dear a soul.
Yet say it were, the smallest pen-knife may,
As well as sword, or lance, dispatch and slay.
And shall so small a matter part and sever
Christ and thy soul? What! make you part for ever?
Or wilt thou stand on toys with him, when he
Deny'd himself in greatest things for thee?
Or will it be an ease in hell to think
How easily thy soul therein did sink?
Are Christ and hell for trifles sold and bought?
Strike souls with trembling, Lord, at such a thought!
By little sins, belov'd, the soul is lost,
Unless such sins do great repentance cost.

CHAP. XXVII.

Ships make much way when they a trade-wind get;
With such a wind the saints have ever met.

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 about the Equinoctial, seamen meet with a trade-wind, blowing, for the most part, one way; and there they sail jocund before it, and scarce need to lower a top-sail for some hundreds of leagues.

APPLICATION.

Although the people of God meet with many seeming rubs and set-backs 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. Rom. viii. 21. "We know that all "things work together for good, to them that love God, to "them that are called according to his purpose." This is a most precious scripture, pregnant with its consolation to all believers in all conditions, a pillar of comfort to all distressed saints: 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 or remote probability, but upon the knowledge of the saints; *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

Digitized by Google

direct tendency to our good; as *ordinances*, *promises*, *blessings*, *&c.* but even such things as have no natural fitness and tendency to such an end; as *afflictions*, *temptations*, *corruptions*, *desertions*, *&c.* all these help onward. They

(*Work together.*) Not all of them directly, and of their own nature and inclination; but by being over-ruled, and determined to such an issue by the gracious hand of God: Nor yet do they work out such good to the saints, singly, and apart, but as adjuvant causes or helps, standing under, and working in subordination to the supreme and principal cause of their happiness.

Now, the most seeming opposite things, yea, sin in itself, which in its own nature is really opposite to their good, yet eventually contributes to it. Afflictions and desertions seem to work against us, but being once put into the rank and order of causes, they work together with such blessed instruments, as word and prayer, to an happy issue. And though the faces of these things, that so agree and work together, look contrary ways; yet there are, 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, *&c.* 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 are more instruments at work for thine eternal good, than thou art aware of.

REFLECTION.

Chear up then, O my soul, and lean upon this pillar of comfort in all distresses. Here is a promise for me, if I am a called one; 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 to work 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 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, and p[r]one to repine at thy dispensations, when they have crossed my w[ill]

Digitized by Google

not considering that my God faithfully pursues my good, even in those things that cross, as well as in that which pleases me.

Blessed Lord! what a blessed condition are all thy people in, who are within the line of this promise? 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 befals 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 into all that concerns the people of God, so the curse hath an influence into 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, as this promise is.

The POEM.

WHEN once the dog-star rises, many say,
Corn ripens then apace, both night and day.
Souls once in Christ, that morning-star lets fall
Such influences on them, that all
God's dispensations to them then, sweet or sour,
Ripen their souls for glory ev'ry hour.
All their afflictions, rightly understood,
Are blessings; ev'ry wind will blow some good.
Sure at their troubles saints would never grudge,
Were sense deposed, and faith made the judge.
Falls make them warier, amend their pace;
When gifts puff up their hearts, and weaken grace.
Could Satan see the issue, and th' event
Of his temptations, he would scarcely tempt.
Could saints but see what fruits their troubles bring,
Amidst those troubles they would shout and sing.
O sacred wisdom! who can but admire
To see how thou dost save from fire, by fire!
No doubt but saints in glory wond'ring stand
At those strange methods few now understand.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XXVIII.

Storms make diſcov'ry of the pilo'ts ſkill:
God's wiſdom in affliction triumphs ſtill.

OBSERVATION.

IN fair weather, when there is ſea-room enough, then 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 ſhews the utmoſt of his art and ſkill, and yet ſometimes all is too little. They are (as the ſcripture ſpeaks) *at their wits 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 and tempeſts of affliction and trouble, there are the moſt evident and full diſcoveries of the wiſdom and power of our God: it is indeed continually active for his people in all conditions, Iſa. xxvii. 3. "Leſt any hurt it, I will keep it night "and day." Pſal. cxxi. 4. "He that keepeth Iſrael neither "ſlumbereth nor ſleepeth." His people's dangers are without intermiſſion, therefore his preſervations are ſo too. But now, when they come into the *ſtrait* of affliction, and deadly dangers, which threaten like rocks on every ſide; now 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 lieu and 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 the ſaints have many times very ſtrong and ſweet conſolation, a little before their greateſt trials: and this is ſo ordinary, that commonly when they have had their 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 the diſciples, Luke xxiv. 49. it was com-

Digitized by Google

manded them that they "should tarry in Jerusalem, till they "were endowed with power from on high." The Lord knew what a hard providence they were like to have, and what great oppositions and difficulties they must encounter, in publishing the everlasting gospel to the world; and therefore first prepares and endows them with power from on high, *viz.* with eminent measures of the gifts and graces of the Spirit; as faith, patience, self-denial, *&c.* So Paul had first his revelations, then his buffetings.

3. In coming in so opportunely in the time of their great distress, with relief and comfort, 1 Pet. iv. 14. "Then the "Spirit of glory and of God resteth on them." 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 to several saints; and alloting 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 most 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 ly always upon them, Psalm cxxv. 3. Our God is a God of judgment, Isa. xxx. 18. 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, and glorify itself in the distresses of the saints, then why should I fear in the day of evil? Psalm xlix. 4. Why doth my heart faint at the foresight and apprehension 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 thus with me. Creatures cannot do what they please, his wisdom limits and over-rules them all, to gracious and sweet 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 I am in it, and curiously pry into it, 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

Digitized by Google

ordering of all thine afflictions, and not truſt it in the hands of men or angels.

The POEM.

THough toſt in greateſt ſtorms, I'll never fear,
If Chriſt will ſit at th' helm to guide and ſteer:
Storms are the triumph of his ſkill and art;
He cannot cloſe his eyes, nor change his heart.
Wiſdom and power ride upon the waves,
And in the greateſt danger helps and ſaves.
From dangers it by dangers doth deliver,
And wounds the devil out of his own quiver;
It countermines his plots, and ſo doth ſpoil,
And make his engines on himſelf recoil.
It blunts the politician's reſtleſs tool,
And makes Ahitophel the veriеſt fool;
It ſhews us how our reaſon us miſled,
And if he had not, we had periſhed.
Lord, to thy wiſdom I will give the reins,
And not with cares perplex and vex my brains.

CHAP. XXIX.

Things in the bottom are unſeen: no eye
Can trace God's paths, which in the deeps do lie.

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, Pſal. xxxvi. 6. "Thy righ-"teouſneſs is like the great mountains, thy judgments are a "great deep;" *(i. e.)* 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. Though the ſaints cannot ſee the one, yet they can clearly diſcern the other, Jer. xii. 1. Jeremiah was at a ſtand; ſo was Job in the like caſe, Job xii. 7. So was Aſaph, Pſal. lxxiii. and Habbakuk, chap. i. 3. Theſe wheels of providence are dreadful for their height, Ezek. i. 18. There be deep

Digitized by Google

mysteries of providence, as well as of faith. It may be said of some of them, as of 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 issue and 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, *Deus sum non sequax*: I am a God not to be traced. Some providences, like Hebrew letters must be read backward, Psal. 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," Psal. lxxvii. 19. Who can trace foot-steps in the bottom of the sea? "The angels," Ezek. i. "have their hands under their "wings." The hand is either, *symbolum roboris*, The symbol of strength; or *instrumentatum operationis*, The instrument of action: where these hands are put forth, they work effectually, yea, but very secretly, they are hid under their wings. There be some of God's works that are such secrets, as that they may not be enquired into; they are to be believed and adored, but not pryed into, Rom. xi. 33. Others that may be enquired after, but yet are so profound, that few can understand them, Psal. cxi. 2. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of "all those that have pleasure therein." 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.

O then, why is my heart disquieted, because it cannot sometimes discern the way of the Lord, and see the connection and dependance on 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 sits 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 shew me plainly the ultimate and general issue of all these mysterious providences, Eph. i. 22. Rom. viii. 28. 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 doth. 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

Digitized by Google

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? Amos ix. 8. Eccleſ. viii. 12.

The POEM.

LORD! how ſtupendous, deep, and wonderful,
Are all thy draughts of providence? So full
Of puzzling intricacies, that they lie
Beyond the ken of any mortal eye.
A wheel within a wheel's the ſcripture notion,
And all thoſe wheels tranſverſe, and croſs in motion.
All creatures ſerve it in their place; yet ſo,
As thouſands of them know not what they do.
At this or that, their aim they do direct;
But neither this, nor that, is the effect:
But ſomething elſe they do not underſtand,
Which ſets all politicians at a ſtand.
Deep counſels, at the birth, this hand doth break,
And deeper things performeth by the weak.
Men are, like horſes, ſet at ev'ry ſtage,
For providence to ride from age to age;
Which, like a poſt, ſpurs on, and makes them run
From ſtage, to ſtage, until their journey's done;
Then take a freſh: but they the bus'neſs know,
No more than horſes the poſt-letters do.
Yet tho' it's work be not conceal'd from ſight,
'Twill be a glorious piece, when brought to light.

CHAP. XXX.

Millions of men are ſunk into the main;
But it ſhall not thoſe dead always retain.

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 has received ſo many thouſand bodies of men into its devouring throat, yet it is not the abſolute lord,

Digitized by Google

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, even to a person. Rev. xx. 11, 12. "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 book, according to "their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were "in it."

The doctrine of the resurrection of the body, is a doctrine full of singular consolations to believers, 1 Cor. xv. and most clearly asserted in Scripture, Acts xxvi. 8. Job xix. 25. 1 Cor. xv. *&c.* 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. The Epicures and Stoics laughed Paul to scorn when he preached it to them, Acts xvii. 32. The Familists and Quakers at this day reject it as a fable. The Socinians say the same body shall not rise, but an aerial body. 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 by the bodies of the saints in Diocletian's reign! or when drowned in the sea, and there devoured by several fishes, and those again devoured by others. But yet 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?" Acts xxvi. 8.

REFLECTION.

And must I rise again, where-ever my body falls at death? Then, Lord, how am I concerned to get union with Christ while I live? By virtue thereof only, my resurrection can be made comfortable, and blessed to me. Ah! 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 re-unite my scattered parts; and in this body I must stand before thine awful tribunal, to receive according to what I have done therein, 2 Cor. v. 10. Thou that commandest me to stand forth among the noblest rank of creatures, when I had no being, and savest my substance, being yet imperfect, canst as easily reduce me to that being again.

Digitized by Google

What though reaſon vote it impoſſible, and ſenſe incredible? Though all theſe difficulties and incumbrances grow upon my faith, yet I know my body is not loſt for ever; the ſound of thy laſt and dreadful 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 at the laſt day, when multitudes, 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 luſt, muſt behold Chriſt the Judge, not as a Redeemer, but as a Revenger. That tongue that hath vented ſo much of the filthineſs of my heart, will then be ſtruck ſpeechleſs before him; and this fleſh which I ſo pampered and provided for, condemned to everlaſting flames. O my God, let me make ſure work for ſuch a day! if I now get real union with thy Son, I ſhall awake with ſinging out of the duſt; and then, as thou ſaidſt to Jacob, ſo to me, when I go down into the ſea, or grave, Gen. xlvi. 3, 4. "Fear not to go down into the deep; for I will ſurely bring "thee up again."

The POEM.

IT ſhould not ſeem incredible to thee,
That God ſhould raiſe the dead in ſeas that be:
We ſee in winter, ſwallows, worms and flies
Depriv'd of life, yet in the ſpring they riſe.
What tho' your bodies ſev'ral fiſh devour,
Object not that to the Almighty pow'r.
Some chymiſts in their art are ſo exact,
That from one herb they uſually extract
Four diff'rent elements; what think ye then,
Can poſe that God, who gave this ſkill to men?
The gard'ner can diſtinguiſh thirty kinds
Of ſeeds from one another, tho' he finds
Them mix'd together in the ſelf-ſame diſh;
Much more can God diſtinguiſh fleſh from fiſh.
They ſeem as loſt, but they again muſt live;
The ſea's a ſteward, and ſtewards account muſt give.
Look what you are, when in the ocean drown'd,
The very ſame at judgment you'll be found.
I would not care where my vile body lies,
Were I aſſur'd it ſhou'd with comfort riſe.

Digitized by Google

CHAP. XXXI.

The seaman's greatest danger's near the coast:
When we are nearest heav'n, the danger's most.

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 straits and difficulties that many saints meet with in all their lives, is when they come nearest to heaven, and have almost finished their course. Heaven, indeed, is a glorious place, the spacious, and royal mansion of the great king; but *difficilia quae pulchra:* it hath a strait and narrow entrance, Luke xiii. 24. O the difficulty of arriving there! how many hard tugs in duty, 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 do 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, Mat. vii. 22.

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, neither mast nor sail left. The righteous themselves are scarcely saved, *(i. e.)* they are saved with very much difficulty. They have not all an *abundant entrance*, as the apostle speaks, 2 Pet. i. 11.

'Some persons (as * one well notes) are *afar off*, Eph. ii. 23. '*(i. e.)* touched with no care of religion: some come near, 'but never enter, as semi-converts. See Matth. xii. 34. 'Others enter, but with great difficulty, they are saved as by 'fire, 1 Cor. iii. 13. Make an hard shift. But then there 'are some that go in with full sail before the wind, and have 'an abundant entrance: they go triumphing out of the world."

* Manton on Jude. p. 119.

Digitized by Google

Ah! 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, and batteries. 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, and make them go groaning and howling out of the world, 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 that strive so much, and go so far, yet perish at last; and if the righteous themselves are scarcely saved, then where shall such an ungodly 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, and walked humbly with God; yet if some of these have such an hard tug at last, then what will become of such a vain, sensual, careless, flesh-pleasing wretch as I have been?

Again, Do saints 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. Ah! 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, 2 Kings xx. 2, 3. and say, "Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked "before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart," &c.

The POEM.

After a tedious passage, saints descry
The glorious shore, salvation being nigh:
Death's long boat's launch'd, ready to set ashore
Their panting souls. O how they tug at oar,
Longing to be at rest! but then they find
The hardest tug of all is yet behind.
Just at the harbour's mouth they see the wreck
Of souls there cast away, and driven back.
A world of dang'rous rocks before it lie;
The harbour's barr'd, and now the winds blow high:

Digitized by Google

Thoughts now ariſe, fears multiply apace;
All things about them have another face.
Life blazes, juſt like an expiring light,
The ſoul's upon the lip prepar'd for flight.
Death, till the reſurrection, tears and rends,
Out of each other's arms, two parting friends,
The ſoul and body. Ah! but more than ſo,
The devil falls upon them e're they go,
With new temptations, back'd with all his pow'r,
And ſcruples, kept on purpoſe for that hour.
This is the laſt encounter, now, or never;
If he ſucceedeth now, they're gone for ever.
Thus in they put, with hardſhip at the laſt,
As ſhips out of a ſtorm, nor ſail, nor maſt:
Yet ſome go in before a wind, and have
Their ſtreamer of aſſurance flying brave.
Lord, give me eaſier entrance, if thou pleaſe;
Or if I may not there arrive with eaſe,
Yet I beſeech thee, ſet me ſafe a-ſhore,
Tho' ſtormy winds at harbour's mouth ſhould roar.

CHAP. XXXII.

How glad are ſeamen when they make the ſhore?
And ſaints, no leſs, when all their danger's o'er.

OBSERVATION.

WHAT joy is there among ſeamen, when at laſt, after a tedious and dangerous voyage, they deſcry land, and ſee the deſired haven before them? Then they turn out of their loathed cabins, and come upon open deck with much joy. Pſal. cvii. 30. "Then they are glad, becauſe they be quiet: So he "bringeth them to their deſired haven." 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 a tranſcendent joy, yea, raviſhing, 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! 2 Theſſ. i. 7. 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. The ſaints are now fluctuating upon a troubleſome and tempeſtuous ſea; their hearts ſometimes ready to ſink, and die within them, at the apprehenſion of ſo many and great

Digitized by Google

dangers and difficulties. Many a hard ſtorm they ride out, and many ſtraits and troubles they here encounter with, but at laſt they arrive at their deſired and long expected haven, and then heaven rings and reſounds with their joyful acclamations. And how can it be otherwiſe, when as ſoon as ever they ſet foot upon that glorious ſhore, Chriſt himſelf meets and receives them, with a "Come ye bleſſed of my Father," Matth. xxv. 34. O joyful voice! O much deſired word! ſaith Paraeus, what tribulation would not a man undergo for this word's ſake!

Beſides, then they are perfectly freed from all evils, whether of ſin or ſuffering, and perfectly filled with all deſired good. Now they ſhall join with that great aſſembly, in the high praiſes of God. O what a day will this be! if, ſaid 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 nature, 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 godly relations alſo (to whoſe converſion, perhaps, they have been inſtrumental) all crowned, in one day, with everlaſting diadems of bliſs! 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 is 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! John i. 12. 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! for at preſent we are toſſed upon an ocean of troubles, fears, and temptations; but theſe will make heaven the ſweeter.

Chear up, then, O my ſoul, thy ſalvation is now nearer than when thou firſt believedſt, Rom. xiii. 11. and it will not now be long e're I receive the end of my faith, 1 Pet. i. 9. and then it will be ſweet to reflect even upon theſe hardſhips in the way.

* Morning Exerciſe, p. 651.

Digitized by Google

Yet 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 abaſures and ſufferings, as bleſſed Paul did, Rom. i. 18. 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, Heb. x. 34. oppoſe the honour that will be put upon thee in that day, to thy preſent reproaches, and ſee how eaſy it will make them to thee, 1 Cor. iv. 5. 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. Jam. iii. 5. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God choſen the poor "of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?"

Am I tempted? here is relief againſt that, Rev. xii. 16. "Now is come ſalvation and ſtrength; for the accuſer of our "brethren is caſt down," *&c.*

Am I deſerted? Here is a remedy for that too, Rev. xxii. 5. "And there ſhall be no night there," *&c.* Come then, my ſoul, let us enter upon our inheritance by degrees, and begin the life of heaven upon earth.

The POEM.

WHEN Solomon in Iſrael firſt was king,
Heav'n's arches, earth's foundations, ſeem'd to ring
With joyful exclamations? How much more
Will heav'n reſound, when ſaints are come a-ſhore!
How will the raviſh'd ſouls tranſported be
At the firſt glimpſe of Chriſt! whom they ſhall ſee
In all his glory; and ſhall live, and move,
Like ſalamanders, in the fire of love.
A flood of tears convey'd them to the gate
Where endleſs joys receiv'd them. Now the date
Of all their ſorrow's out; henceforth they walk
In robes of glory. Now there's no more talk
Of fears, temptations, of that ſnare, or this:
No ſerpent in that paradiſe doth hiſs.
No more deſertions, troubled thoughts, or tears;
Chriſt's full enjoyment ſuperſedes thoſe fears.
Delights of princes courts are all but toys
To theſe delights, theſe are tranſcendent joys,
The joys of Chriſt himſelf; of what they are,
An angel's tongue wou'd ſtammer to declare.
Were our conceptions clear, did their tongues go
Unto their Ela, yet the note's too low.

Digitized by Google

What! paint the ſun too bright! it cannot be;
Sure heaven ſuffers no hyperbole.
My thoughts are ſwallow'd up, my muſe doth tire,
And hang her wings, conception ſoars no higher.
Give me a place among thy children there,
Altho' I ly with them in dungeons here,

A concluding SPEECH.

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 your's: 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 key 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 ſtorm or another, 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, as Prov. v. 12, 13. "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?" 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 did to Zebulun, the mariners tribe, Deut. xxxiii. 12. "Rejoice Zebu-"lun in thy going out." The Lord will be with you, which way ſoever you turn yourſelves; and being in the boſom of the covenant, 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.*

Digitized by Google

A PATHETICAL and SERIOUS

DISSUASIVE

From the horrid and deteſtable SINS of Drunkenneſs, Swearing, Uncleanneſs, forgetfulneſs of Mercies, violation of Promiſes, and Atheiſtical Contempt of Death.

Applied by way of CAUTION to SEAMEN, and now added as an APPENDIX to their NEW COMPASS.

Being an ESSAY toward their much-deſired Reformation: fit to be ſeriouſly recommended to their profane Relations, whether Seamen or others, by all ſuch as unfeignedly deſire their eternal Welfare.

To the right worſhipful Sir JOHN FREDERICK, Kt, one of the worſhipful Aldermen of the City of London, and their honourable BURGESS in the preſent Parliament: And to the truly religious and ever honoured Mr JOHN LOVERING, of the city of London, merchant.

Much honoured and eſteemed,

ALthough dedications are too often abuſed to a vain flattery, yet there is an excellent uſe and advantage to be made of them: partly to encourage perſons of worth and eminency to eſpouſe the intereſt of religion themſelves; and partly to oblige thoſe readers, for whom ſuch books are principally intended, to a diligent peruſal of them, by intereſting ſuch perſons in them, for whom they have great reſpects, or on whom they have any dependence.

Upon the firſt account, a dedication would be needleſs to you; for I am perſuaded, you do not only in your judgment approve the deſign I here manage, *viz.* The reformation of the profane and looſer ſort of our ſeamen; but are alſo heartily willing to improve your intereſt to the uttermoſt for the promotion of it. I cannot look upon you as perſons acted by that low and common ſpirit that the moſt of your profeſſion are acted by, who little regard, if they be good ſervants to them, whe-

Digitized by Google

ther God have any service from them or no; and if they pay them the wages due for their work, never think of the wages they are to receive for their sin. You are judged to be persons of another spirit, who do not only mind, but advance Christ's interest above your own, and negotiate for his glory, as well as for your own gain: and yet herein you consult your own interest as well as God's: *Subordinata non pugnant.* Your interest is never more prosperously managed, or abundantly secured, than when it is carried on in a due subordination to God's. Their reformation will apparently tend to your advantage. Those sins of theirs, against which I have here engaged, are the Jonahs in your ships; it is sin that sinks them, and drives them against the rocks. "One sinner destroyeth much good," Eccl. viii. 11. How much more a lewd crew of them conspiring to provoke God! the death of their lusts, is the more probable means to give life to your trade. And as these counsels prosper in their hearts, so will your business thrive in your hands. Piety and prosperity are married together in that promise, Psal. i. 3. Onesimus was never so profitable a servant to Philemon, as when he became his brother in a *spiritual*, as well as his servant in a *civil* capacity, Philem. vers. 11. and 16. compared. And yet if your interest were forced to step back, to give way to Christ's, I hope you would (notwithstanding) rejoice therein. So that my present business is, not so much to perswade you, whose hearts, I hope, God hath already perswaded to so good a work; as to make your names and respects, which are great among them, an innocent bait to tempt them to their duty. And if either your names or interest may be useful to such an end, I presume I may use them freely, and welcome; for, sure I am, they can never be put to a better use.

Well then, I will make bold to send this small adventure in your ships; and if the return of it be but the conversion of one soul to God, I shall reckon that I have made a better voyage than you, let your returns be never so rich.

How these things will affect them, I know not. I do suppose it will produce different effects upon them, according to the different tempers of their spirits, and according as God shall command, or suspend the blessing. Possibly some will storm at the close and cutting rebukes of the word, (for most mens lusts are a great deal more sensible and tender than their consciences) and will fondly imagine that this necessary plainness tends to their reproach. But if none but the guilty can be supposed to be angry at them, they will thereby reproach themselves a great deal more than ever I intended to do.

Digitized by Google

I confeſs it is a bitter pill, and compounded of many operative and ſtrong ingredients, which do acute it; but not a jot more than is neceſſary. I ſhall beg the aſſiſtance of your prayers to God for them, and of your grave admonitions and exhortations to them for God; which will much help its operation, and facilitate my deſign, to do their ſouls a piece of everlaſting ſervice; with which deſign I can truly ſay, I even travel in pain for them. Your aſſiſtance therefore in this good work, will put the higheſt obligation upon

Your moſt affectionate

Friend and Servant,

to be commanded,

JOHN FLAVEL.

A

SOBER CONSIDERATION

Of the SIN of

DRUNKENNESS.

IN the former treatiſe I have endeavoured to ſpiritualize earthly objects, and elevate your thoughts to more ſublime and excellent contemplations; that earthly things may rather be a ſtep, than a ſtop to heavenly. You have therein my beſt advice to guide you in your courſe to that port of your eternal reſt and happineſs.

In this I have given warning of ſome dangerous rocks and quick-ſands that lie upon your left hand; upon which millions of ſouls have periſhed, and others are wilfully running to their own perdition. Such are the horrid ſins of *drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, profane ſwearing, violation of promiſes, engagements made to God,* and *atheiſtical ſlighting and contempt of death and eternity.* All which I have here given warning of, and held forth a light to diſcover where your danger is. If after this you obſtinately proſecute your luſts, and will not be reclaimed; you periſh without apology, I have freed mine own ſoul.

Digitized by Google

Let none interpret this necessary plainness, as a reproach to seamen, as if I represented them to the world worse than they are. If, upon that account, any of them be offended, methinks these three or four considerations should remove that offence.

First, That if this close and plain dealing be necessary, in order to your cure, and you will be offended thereat, it is better you should be offended than God. Ministers are often put upon lamentable straits, they sail betwixt Scylla and Charybdis; the wrath of God upon one side, if we do not speak plain and home, as the necessity of the case requires; and man's wrath if we do: what shall we do in this strait? Either God or you, it seems, must be offended; and if it cannot be avoided, I shall rather hazard your anger than God's, and think it far more tolerable.

Secondly, If you did but see the necessity and end of this manner of dealing with your souls, you would not be offended. But put it into a more sensible case, and you will see and acknowledge it presently. If I should see an high built wall giving way, and ready to fall upon you, would you be angry with me, if by plucking you out of the danger, I should pluck your arm out of joint; certainly you would not. Why, this is the case here: See Isa. xxx. 13. "Therefore this iniquity shall be "to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, "whose breaking cometh suddenly, at an instant."

Thirdly, What a madness is it to abide in a condition over which all woes and curses hang, and yet not be able to endure to hear of it! Why, what will it profit you to have your misery hid from your eyes, and kept from your ears a little while? You must see this wrath, and hear louder vollies of woes from your own consciences, if you remain in this condition. You cannot bear that from us, which your conscience will one of these days preach themselves to you, and that in a more dreadful dialect than I have used here.

Fourthly, I do not charge these sins indifferently upon all seamen. No, I know there are some choice and good men amongst your men, that fear an oath, and hate even the garments spotted with the flesh, who are (I question not) the credit and glory of our English nation, in the eyes of strangers that converse with them. Nor yet do I think that all that are wicked amongst them are equally guilty of all these evils; for though all that are graceless, be equally under the dominion of original corruption, yet it follows not from thence, that therefore actual sins must reign alike in them: there is a great diffe-

Digitized by Google

rence, even among ungodly men themſelves, in this reſpect; which difference ariſeth from their various cuſtoms, conſtitutions, abilities, educations, and the different adminiſtrations of the Spirit, in enlightening, convincing, and putting checks upon conſcience: for though God be not the author, yet he is the orderer of ſin. And this makes a great diſparity, even among wicked men themſelves. Some are perſons of good morals, though not gracious principles, which produce a civil and ſober, though not a holy and religious life. And others, though they live in ſome one of theſe luſts, yet are not guilty of ſome others of them. For it is with original corruption, juſt as it is with the ſap of the earth, which though it be the matter of all kind of fruits, yet in ſome ground it ſorts better with one grain than with another: and ſo in plants, in one tree it becomes an apple, in another a cherry; even ſo it is with this original corruption, in one man it runs moſt into ſwearing, in another into uncleanneſs, in a third into drunkenneſs. Luſt is nothing elſe but the corrupt appetite of the creature to ſome ſinful object; and therefore look as it is with the appetite with reſpect to food, ſo it is with the vitiated appetites of ſouls to ſin. One man loves this food beſt, and another that; there is endleſs variety in that, and ſo in this.

Having ſpoken thus much to remove offence, I ſhall now beg you to peruſe the following diſcourſe. Conſider what evidence theſe things carry with them. 'Search the alledged ſcriptures, ſee if they be truly recited and applied to the caſe in hand: And if ſo, O tremble at the truth you read! bring forth your luſts, that they may die the death. Will you not part with theſe abominable practices till death and hell make the ſeparation? Ah! how much better is it for you that grace ſhould do it? And becauſe many of you ſee not the danger, and therefore prize not the remedy, I do here requeſt all thoſe that have the bowels of pity in them, for their poor relations, who are ſinking, drowning, periſhing, to ſpread theſe following cautions before the Lord for a bleſſing, and then put them into their hands. And O that all pious maſters would perſuade all thoſe that are under their charge to buy this enſuing treatiſe, and diligently peruſe it. And the firſt caution I ſhall give them is this:

CAUTION I.

TAke heed, and beware of the deteſtable ſin of drunkenneſs, which is a beaſtly ſin, a voluntary madneſs, a ſin that unmans thee, and makes thee like the beaſts that periſhes; yea, ſets thee below the beaſts, which will not drink to

Digitized by Google

excefs; or, if they do, yet it is not their ſin. † One of the ancients calls it, 'A diſtemper of the head, a ſubverſion of the 'ſenſes, a tempeſt in the tongue, a ſtorm of the body, the 'ſhipwreck of virtue, the loſs of time, a wilful madneſs, a 'pleaſant devil, a ſugared poiſon, a ſweet ſin, which he that 'has, has not himſelf, and he that commits it, doth not only 'commit ſin, but he himſelf is altogether ſin.' It is a ſin at which the moſt ſober heathens bluſhed. The Spartans brought their children to loath it, by ſhewing them a drunkard, whom they gazed at as a monſter: Even Epicurus himſelf, who eſteemed happineſs to conſiſt in pleaſure, yet was temperate, as Cicero obſerves. Among the heathens he was accounted the beſt man, that ſpent more oil in the lamp, than wine in the bottle. Chriſtianity could once glory in its profeſſors: Tertullian ſaith of the primitive Chriſtians, they ſat not down before they prayed; they eat no more than might ſuffice hunger, they drank no more than was ſufficient for temperate men; they did ſo eat and drink, as thoſe that remembered they muſt pray afterward. But now we may bluſh to behold ſuch beaſtly ſenſualiſts adorning themſelves with its name, and ſheltering themſelves under its wings.

And amongſt thoſe that profeſs Chriſtianity, how ordinarily is this ſin committed by ſeamen? This inſatiable dropſy is a diſeaſe that reigns, eſpecially among the inferior and ruder ſort of them. Some of them have gone aboard drunk, and laid the foundation of their voyage in ſin. O what a preparation is this! They know not whether ever they ſhall ſee the land of their nativity any more; the next ſtorm may ſend them into eternity: Yet this is the farewel they take, this is their preparation to meet the Lord. And ſo in their returns, notwithſtanding the terrible and aſtoniſhing works of the Lord, which they have beheld with their eyes, and their marvellous preſervation in ſo great and terrible extremities; yet thus do they requite the Lord, as ſoon as their dangers are over, as if they had been delivered to commit all theſe abominations. But a few hours or days ſince, they were reeling to and fro upon a ſtormy ocean, and ſtaggering like drunken men, as it is ſaid, Pſal. cvii. 27.

† *Turbatio capitis, ſubverſio ſenſus, tempeſtas linguae, procella corporis, naufragium virtutis, amiſſio temporis, inſania voluntaria, blandus daemon, dulce venenum, ſuave peccatum, quam qui habet, ſeipſum non habet; quam qui fecit, peccatum non fecit, ſed ipſe totus eſt peccatum.* Aug. ad. lacr. Virginis.

Digitized by Google

and now you may see them reeling and staggering in the streets, drowning the sense of all those precious mercies and deliverances in their drunken cups.

Reader, if thou be one that is guilty of this sin, for the Lord's sake, bethink thyself speedily, and weigh, with the reason of a man, what I shall now say, in order to thy conviction, humiliation, and reformation. I need not spend many words, to open the nature of this sin to you; we all grant, that there is a lawful use of wine and strong drink to support nature, not to clog it; to cure infirmities, not to cause them. "Drink no "longer water, but use a little wine, for thy stomach's sake, "and thine often infirmities," saith Paul to Timothy, 1 Tim. v. 23. Mark, drink not water, but wine; *Sed modice*, (i. e.) *medice; pro remedio, non pro deliciis*, saith Ambrose *; that is, use it modestly, *viz.* medicinally, not for pleasure, but for remedy. Yea, God allows it, not only for bare necessity, but for chearfulness and alacrity, that the body may be more fit and expedite for duty, Prov. xxxi. 7. but further no man proceeds, without the violation of sobriety. When men sit till wine have inflamed them, and reason be disturbed, (for drunkenness is the privation of reason, caused by immoderate drinking), then do they come under the guilt of this horrid and abominable sin. To the satisfaction and refreshment of nature, you may drink: for it is a part of the curse to drink, and not be satisfied; but take heed you go no further; "For wine is a "[mocker], strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived "thereby, is not wise," Prov. xx. 1. The throat is a slippery place; how easily may a sin slip thro' it into the soul? These sensual pleasures have a kind of inchanting power upon the soul, and by custom gain upon it, till they have inslaved it, and brought it under their power. Now, this is the sin against which God hath delivered so many precepts, and denounced so many woes, in his word. Eph. v. 18. "Be not drunken with "wine, wherein is excess." Rom. xiii. 13. "Not in rioting "and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness." Isa v. 11. "Woe to them that rise up early in the morning, that they "may follow strong drink, that continue until night, till wine "inflame them:" with many other of dreadful importance. Now, to startle thee for ever from this abominable and filthy lust, I shall here propound to thy consideration these ten ensuing arguments; and oh that they might stand in the way, as the angel did in Balaam's, when thou art in the prosecution of thy sensual pleasures! And the first is this:

* *Qui dedit aquam, dedit vinum.*

Digitized by Google

Argument 1. It ſhould exceedingly diſſuade from this ſin, to conſider that it is an high abuſe of the bounty and goodneſs of God, in affording us thoſe ſweet refreſhments, to make our lives comfortable to us upon earth. In Adam we forfeited all right to all earthly, as well as heavenly mercies: God might have taken thee from the womb, when thou waſt a ſinner but of a ſpan long, and immediately have ſent thee to thine own place; thou hadſt no right to a drop of water, more than what the bounty of God gave thee: And whereas he might have thruſt thee out of the world as ſoon as thou cameſt into it, and ſo all thoſe days of mercy thou haſt had on earth, might have been ſpent in howling and unſpeakable miſery in hell: Behold the bounty and goodneſs of God to thee; I ſay, behold it, and wonder: He hath ſuffered thee for ſo many years to live upon the earth, which he hath prepared and furniſhed with all things fit for thy neceſſity and delight: Out of the earth, on which thou treadeſt, "he bringeth forth thy food, and [wine] to "make glad thy heart," Pſal. civ. 14, 15. And doſt thou thus requite the Lord? Hath mercy armed an enemy to fight againſt it with its own weapons? Ah! that ever the riches of his goodneſs, bounty, and long-ſuffering, all which are arguments to lead thee to repentance, ſhould be thus abuſed! If God had not been ſo bountiful, thou couldſt not have been ſo ſinful.

Arg. 2. It degrades a man from the honour of his creation, and equaliſeth him to the beaſts that periſheth: Wine is ſaid to take away the heart, Hoſ. iv. 11. *i. e.* the wiſdom and ingenuity of a man, and ſo brutifies him; as Nebuchadnezzar, who loſt the heart of a man, and had the heart of a beaſt given him, Dan. iv. 32. The heart of a man hath its generoſity and ſprightlineſs, brave, vigorous ſpirits in it, capable of, and fitted for noble and worthy actions and employments; but his luſt effeminates, quenches, and drowns that maſculine vigour in the puddle of exceſs and ſenſuality: For no ſooner is a man brought under the dominion of this luſt, but the government of reaſon is renounced, which ſhould exerciſe a coercive power over the affections, and all is delivered up into the hand of luſt and appetite; and ſo they act, not by diſcretion and reaſon, but by luſt and will, as the beaſts do by inſtinct. The ſpirit of man entertains itſelf with intellectual and chaſte delights; the ſoul of a beaſt is only fitted for ſuch low, ſenſitive, and dreggy pleaſures. Thou haſt ſomething of the *angel*, and ſomething of the *beaſt* in thee: thy ſoul partakes of the nature of angels, thy body of the nature of beaſts. Oh! how many

Digitized by Google

pamper the *beast*, while they starve the *angel?* God, in the first chapter, put all the creatures in subjection to thee; by this lust, thou putteſt thyself in subjection to the creature, and art brought under his power, 1 Cor. vi. 12. If God had given thee the head or feet of a beast, oh! what a misery wouldst thou have esteemed it? and is it nothing to have the heart of a beast? Oh! consider it sadly.

Arg. 3. It is a sin by which thou greatly wrongest and abusest thine own body. The body is the soul's instrument; it is as the tools are to a skilful artificer; this lust both dulls and spoils it, so that it is utterly unfit for any service of him that made it. Thy body is a curious piece, not made by a word of command, as other creatures, but by a word of counsel; "I "am fearfully and wonderfully made, and curiously wrought," saith the Psalmist, Psal. cxxxix. 14. or as the vulgar, *Ace pictus sum*, Painted as with needle-work of divers colours, like a garment richly embroidered. Look how many members, so many wonders! There are miracles enough, saith one, betwixt head and foot, to fill a volume. There is, saith another, such curious workmanship in the eye, that, upon the first sight of it, some atheists have been forced to acknowledge a God; especially that fifth muscle in the eye is wonderful, whereby, (as a learned † author observes) man differeth from all other creatures, who have but four; one, to turn the eye downward, a second to hold it forward, a third to move it to the right-hand, a fourth to the left; but none to turn it upward as a man hath. Now, judge in thyself; Did God frame such a curious piece, and enliven it with a soul, which is a spark, a ray of his own light, whose motions are so quick, various, and indefatigable, whose flights of reason are so transcendent; did God, thinkest thou, send down this curious piece, the top and glory of the creation, the *index* and *epitome* of the whole world, Eccl. xii. 2. did God, I say, send down this picture of his own perfection, to be but as a strainer for meats and drinks, a sponge to suck in wine and beer? Or canst thou answer for the abuse and destruction of it? By this excess thou fillest it with innumerable diseases, under which it languisheth; and at last thy life, like a lamp, extinguished, being drowned with too much oil. † 'Infinite diseases are begotten by it, (saith 'Zanch); hence come apoplexies, gouts, palsies, sudden death,

* *Columb. de re anat.*

† *Infinitae morborum genera inde nascuntur apoplexae, paralyses, arthrides*, &c. *Ille optimus medicus sibi, qui medicus cibi.* Aug.

Digitized by Google

' trembling of the hands and legs;' herein they bring Cain's curſe upon themſelves, ſaith Ambroſe: Drunkenneſs ſlays more than the ſword. Oh! what a terrible thing will it be to conſider upon a death-bed, that theſe pangs and aches are the fruits of thy intemperance and exceſs! "Who hath woe? "Who hath ſorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath bab- "bling? Who hath wounds without cauſe? Who hath red- "neſs of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that "go to ſeek mixed wine," Prov. xxiii. 29, 30. By this *enumeration*, and manner of *interrogation*, he ſeems to make it a difficult thing to recount the miſeries that drunkenneſs loads the outward man with; for look as vermin abound where there is ſtore of corn, ſo do diſeaſes in the bodies of drunkards, where crudities do ſo abound. Now, methinks, if thou haſt no regard to thy poor ſoul, or the glory of God, yet ſuch a ſenſible argument as this, from thy body, ſhould move thee.

Arg. 4. Drunkenneſs waſtes and ſcatters thine eſtate, poverty attends exceſs; the drunkard ſhall be clothed with rags, and brought to a morſel of bread. Solomon hath read thy fortune, Prov. xxi. 17. "He that loveth wine and oil ſhall not be "rich;" luxury and beggary are ſeldom far aſunder. When Diogenes heard a drunkard's houſe cried to be ſold; 'I thought, '(quoth he) it would not be long e'er he vomited up his houſe 'alſo.' The Hebrew word ירש, and the Greek word ασωτια, which ſignify luxury; the former is compounded of two words, which ſignify, *Thou ſhalt be poor;* and the latter ſignifies the loſing of the poſſeſſion of that good which is in our hand. "The drunkard and the glutton ſhall ſurely come to poverty," Prov. xxiii. 21. In the Hebrew it is, he ſhall be diſinherited, or diſpoſſeſſed. It doth not only diſpoſſeſs a man of his reaſon, which is a rich and fair inheritance given to him by God, but it alſo diſpoſſeſſes him of his eſtate: It waſtes all that either the provident care of thy progenitors, or the bleſſing of God upon thine own induſtry, hath obtained for thee. And how will this ſting like an adder, when thou ſhalt conſider it? Apicus the Roman, hearing that there were ſeven hundred crowns only remaining of a fair eſtate that his father had left him, fell into a deep melancholy, and, fearing want, hanged himſelf, ſaith Seneca. And not to mention the miſeries and ſorrows they bring hereby upon their families, drinking the tears, yea, blood of their wives and children: Oh! what an account will they give to God, when the reckoning day comes! Believe it, ſirs, there is not a ſhilling of your eſtates, but God will reckon with you for the expence thereof. If you have

Digitized by Google

spent it upon your lusts, whilst the necessity of your families, or the poor, called upon you for it; I should be loth to have your account to make, for a thousand times more than ever you possessed. O woful expence, that is followed with such dreadful reckonings!

Arg. 5. Consider what vile and ignominious characters the Spirit of God hath put upon the subjects of this sin. The scripture every where notes them for infamous, and most abominable persons. When Eli supposed Hannah to be drunken, "Count not thine handmaid a daughter of Belial," said she, 1 Sam. i. 16. Now, a son or daughter of Belial is, in scripture-language, the vilest of men or women. So Psalm lxix. 12. "They that sit in the gate, speak against me, and I am the "song of drunkards," (*i. e.*) of the basest and vilest of men, as the opposition plainly shews; for they are opposed to them that sit in the gate, that is honourable persons. The Lord would have his people shun the society of such as a pest, not to eat with them, 1 Cor. v. 11. Yea, the scripture brands them with atheism; they are such as have lost the sense and expectation of the day of judgment; mind not another world, nor do they look for the coming of the Lord, Matth. xxiv. 27, 28. He saith the Lord delayeth his coming, and then falls a drinking with the drunkard. The thoughts of that day will make them leave their cups, or their cups will drown the thoughts of such a day. And will not all the contempt, shame, and infamy which the Spirit of God hath poured on the head of this sin, cause thee to abhor it? Do not all godly, yea moral persons, abhor the drunkard? Oh! methinks the shame that attends it, should be as a fence to keep thee from it.

Arg. 6. Sadly consider, there can be nothing of the sanctifying Spirit in a soul that is under the dominion of this lust; for upon the first discovery of the grace of God, the soul renounces the government of sensuality: "The grace of God that "bringeth salvation, teacheth men to live soberly," Tit. ii. 11, 12. That is one of its first effects. Drunkenness indeed may be found among heathens, that are lost in the darkness of ignorance; but it may not be once named among the children of the day. "They that be drunken, are drunken in the "night: but let us that are of the day, be sober," 1 Thess. v. 7, 8. And the apostles often oppose wine and the Spirit as things incompatible, Eph. v. 18. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein "is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." So Jude 19. "Sen-"sual, not having the Spirit." Now, what a dreadful consideration is this? "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is

Digitized by Google

"none of his," Rom. viii. 9. Senſual perſons have not the Spirit of Chriſt, and ſo can be none of his. It is true, Noah, a godly man, once fell into this ſin; but, as Theodoret ſaith, and that truly, it proceeded *ab inexperientia non ab intemperantia*, from want of experience of the force and power of the grape, not from intemperance; and, beſides, we find not that ever he was again overtaken with that ſin; but thou knoweſt it, and yet perſiſteſt. O wretched creature! the Spirit of Chriſt cannot dwell in thee. The Lord help thee to lay it to heart ſadly!

Arg. 7. It is a ſin over which many direful woes and threats hang in the word, like ſo many lowring clouds, ready to pour down vengeance upon the heads of ſuch ſinners. Look, as the condition of the ſaints is compaſſed round with promiſes, ſo is yours with threatenings, Iſa. v. 11. "Woe to them that riſe up "early in the morning, that they may follow ſtrong drink, and "continue until night, until wine inflame them." So If. xxviii. 1, 2. "Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of E-"phraim," *&c.* with many other, too long to enumerate here. Now, conſider what a fearful thing it is to be under theſe woes of God! Sinner, I beſeech thee, do not make light of them, for they will fall heavy; aſſure thyſelf not one of them ſhall fall to the ground; they will all take place upon thee, except thou repent.

There are woes of men, and woes of God: God's woes are true woes, and make their condition woful, to purpoſe, on whom they fall. Other woes, as one ſaith, do but touch the skin, but theſe ſtrike the ſoul; other woes are but temporal, theſe are eternal; others do only part betwixt us and our outward comforts, theſe betwixt God and us for ever.

Arg 8. Drunkenneſs is a leading ſin, which has a great retinue and attendance of other ſins waiting on it; it is like a ſudden land-flood, which brings a great deal of dirt with it. So that look as faith excels among the graces, becauſe it enlivens, actuates, and gives ſtrength to them, ſo is this among ſins. It is not ſo much a ſpecial ſin againſt a ſingle precept of God, as a general violation of the whole law, ſaith accurate Ameſius. It doth not only call off the guard, but warms and quickens all other luſts, and ſo expoſes the ſoul to be proſtituted by them. (1.) It gives occaſion, yea, is the real cauſe of many contentions, and fatal quarrels, Prov. xxiii. 29. "Who hath woe? "Who hath ſorrow? Who hath [contentions] babbling, wounds "without cauſe? They that tarry long at the wine," *&c.*

Digitized by Google

Contentions and wounds are the ordinary effects of drunken meetings: When reason is deposed, and lust heated, what will not men attempt? (2.) Scoffs and reproaches of the ways and people of God, Psal. lxix. 12. "David was the song of the "drunkards." (3.) It is the great incendiary of lust: You shall find rioting and drunkenness joined with chambering and wantonness, Rom. xiii. 13. *Nunquam ego ebrium castum putabo*, saith Hierom; I will never think a drunkard to be chaste. Solomon plainly tells us what the issue will be, Prov. xxiii. 33. "Thine eyes shall behold a strange woman, and thy heart shall "utter perverse things," speaking of the drunkard. It may be called *Gad*, for a troop followeth it. Hence one aptly calls it, *The devil's bridle*, by which he turneth the sinner which way he pleases; he that is overcome by it, can overcome no other sin.

Arg. 9. But if none of the former considerations can prevail, I hope these two last may, unless all sense and tenderness be lost. Consider, therefore, in the 9th place, that drunkards are in scripture marked out for hell; the characters of death are upon them. You shall find them pinioned with other sons of death, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. "Know ye not that the unrighteous "shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effe-"minate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, "nor covetous, nor [drunkards], nor revilers, nor extortion-"ers, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Oh dreadful thunder-bolt! He is not *asleep* but *dead*, that is not startled at it. Lord, how are guilty sinners able to face such a text as this is! Oh soul! darest thou for a superfluous cup, adventure to drink a cup of pure unmixed wrath? O think when the wine sparkles in the glass, and gives its colour, think, I say, what a cup of trembling is in the hand of the Lord for thee. Thou wilt not now believe this: Oh! but the day is coming, when thou shalt know the price of these brutish pleasures. Oh! it will then sting like an adder. Ah! this short-lived beastly pleasure is the price for which thou sellest heaven, and rivers of pleasure that are at God's right hand.

Obj. *But I hope I shall repent, and then this text can be no bar to my salvation.*

Sol. True; if God shall give thee repentance, it could not. But, in the last place, to awaken thee thoroughly, and startle thy secure conscience, which sensuality hath brawned and cauterized, let me tell thee,

Arg. 10. That it is a sin out of whose power few, or none, are ever rescued and reclaimed. On this account it was that Se

Digitized by Google

Auguſtine called it the *pit of hell.* He that is addicted to this ſin, becomes incurable, ſaith a * reverend divine; for ſeldom, or never have I known a drunkard reclaimed. And its power to hold the ſoul in ſubjection to it, lies in two things eſpecially: (1.) As it becomes habitual; and habits are not eaſily broken. Be pleaſed to view an example in the caſe, Prov. xxiii. 35. "They have ſtricken me, ſhalt thou ſay, and I was not ſick; "they have beaten me, and I felt it not. When ſhall I awake? "I will ſeek it yet again." (2.) As it "takes away the heart," Hoſ. iv. 11. that is, the underſtanding, reaſon, and ingenuity of a man, and ſo makes him uncapable of being reclaimed by counſel. Upon this account it was that Abigail would not ſpeak leſs or more to Nabal, until the wine was gone out of him, 1 Sam. xxv. 36, 37. Plainly intimating, that no wholeſome counſel can get in, until the wine be gone out. When one asked Cleoſtratus, whether he were not aſhamed to be drunken, he tartly replied, 'And are not you aſhamed to admoniſh a drunkard?' Intimating that no wiſe man would caſt away an admonition upon ſuch an one. And it not only renders them uncapable of counſel for the time, but by degrees it beſots and infatuates them; which is a very grievous ſtroke from God upon them, making way to their eternal ruin. So then you ſee upon the whole, what a dangerous gulph the ſin of drunkenneſs is. I beg you, for the Lord's ſake, and by all the regard you have to your ſouls, bodies and eſtates, beware of it. O conſider theſe ten arguments I have here produced againſt it. I ſhould have proceeded to anſwer the ſeveral pleas and excuſes you have for it; but I mind brevity, and ſhall ſhut up this firſt caution, with a very pertinent and ingenious poem of Mr George Herbert, in his TEMPLE.

Drink not the third glaſs, which thou canſt not tame
When once it is within thee; but before
May'ſt rule it as thou liſt, and pour the ſhame
Which it will pour to thee, upon the floor.
It is moſt juſt to throw that on the ground,
Which would throw me there, if I kept the round.

He that is drunken, may his mother kill,
Lie with his ſiſter: he hath loſt the reins;
Is outlaw'd by himſelf; all kind of ill
Did with the liquor ſlide into the veins.

* Ameſ. de Conſc. *p.* 139.

Digitized by Google

The drunkard forfeits man, and doth divest
All worldly right, save what he has by beast.

Shall I, to please another's wine-sprung mind,
Lose all my own? God has given me a measure
Short of his can, and body; must I find
A pain in that wherein he finds a pleasure?
Stay at the third glass; if thou lose thy hold,
Then thou art modest, but the wine grows bold.

If reason move not gallants, quit the room,
(All in a shipwreck shift their sev'ral way.)
Let not a common ruin thee intomb:
Be not a beast in courtesies; but stay,
Stay at the third glass, or forego the place:
Wine, above all things, doth God's stamp deface.

CAUTION II.

THE second evil I shall deal with, is the evil of the tongue, which, as St James saith, is full of deadly poison, oaths, curses, blasphemies; and this poison it scatters up and down the world in all places; an untamed member that none can rule, Jam. iii. 7, 8. The fiercest of beasts have been tamed by man, as the apostle there observes, which is a relic of his old superiority and dominion over them: but this is an unruly member that none can tame but he that made it; no beast so fierce and crabbed as this is. It may be, I may be bitten by it for my labour and endeavours to put a restraint upon it; but I shall adventure it. My design is not to dishonour or exasperate you; but if my faithfulness to God and you should accidentally do so, I cannot help that.

Friends, Providence oftentimes confines many of you together within the narrow limits of a ship, where you have time enough, and, if your hearts were sanctified, many choice advantages of edifying one another. O what transcendent subjects doth Providence daily present you with, to take up your discourses! How many experiences of extraordinary mercies and preservations have you to relate to one another, and bless the Lord for! Also, how many works of wonder do you daily behold, who go down into the deeps? O what heavenly employment is here for your tongues! how should they be talking of all his wonders? How should you call upon each other, as David did, Psal. lxvi. 16. "Come hither, and I will tell you "what God hath done for my soul," at such a time, in such an extremity? How should you call upon one another to pay

Digitized by Google

"the vows your lips have uttered in your diſtreſs?" Thus ſhould one provoke another in this angelical work, as one lively bird ſets the whole flock a chirping.

But tell me, Sirs, ſhould a man come aboard you at ſea, and ask of you, as Chriſt did of thoſe two diſciples going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 17. "What manner of communication is this "that ye have by the way?" O what a ſad account would he have from moſt of you! It may be he ſhould find one *jeſting*, and another *ſwearing*, a third *reviling* godlineſs, and the profeſſors of it; ſo that it would be a little hell for a ſerious Chriſtian to be confined to your ſociety. This is not, I am confident, the manner of all. We have a company of more ſober ſeamen, and bleſſed be God for them; but ſurely thus ſtands the caſe with moſt of you. O what ſtuff is here from perſons profeſſing Chriſtianity, and bordering cloſe upon the confines of eternity, as you do?

It is not my purpoſe to write of all the diſeaſes of the tongue; that would fill a volume, and is inconſiſtent with my intended brevity. Who can recount the evils of the tongue? The apoſtle ſaith, "It is a world of iniquity," Jam. iii. 6. And if there be a world of ſin in one member, who can number the ſins of all the members? Laurentius reckons as many ſins of the tongue, as there are letters in the alphabet. And it is an obſervable note that one hath upon Rom. iii. 13, 14. That when Paul anatomizeth the natural man there, he inſiſteth longer upon the organs of ſpeech, than all the other members: "Their "throat is an open ſepulchre, with their tongues they have uſed "deceit; the poiſon of aſps is under their lips, their mouth is "full of curſing and bitterneſs."

But, to be ſhort, we find the Spirit of God in ſcripture comparing the tongue to a tree, Prov. xv. 4. "A wholeſome tongue "is a tree of life." And words are the fruit of the tree, Iſa. lvii. 12. "I create the fruit of the lips." Some of theſe trees bear precious fruits, and it is a lovely ſight to behold them laden with them in their ſeaſons, Prov. xxv. 11. "A word fit"ly ſpoken, is like apples of gold in pictures of ſilver." Such a tongue is a tree of life. Others of theſe trees bear evil fruit, grapes of Sodom, and cluſters of Gomorrah. I ſhall only inſiſt upon two ſorts of theſe fruits, *viz.* (1.) Withered, fapleſs fruit; I mean idle and unprofitable words. (2.) Rotten and corrupt fruit; I mean, prophane oaths, and prophanations of the ſacred name of God. No fruit in the world ſo apt to corrupt and taint, as the fruit of the lips. When it is ſo, the ſcripture calls it σαπρος λογος, corrupt or rotten communication,

Digitized by Google

Eph. iv. 29. To prevent this the Spirit of God prescribes an excellent way to season our words, and keep them sweet and sound, that they may neither wither, nor become idle and sapless, or putrify and become rotten, as prophane words are, Col. iv. 6. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned "with salt, that you may know how to answer every man." Oh! if the salt of grace were once cast into the fountain, the heart streams must needs become more savoury and pleasant, as the waters of Marah when they were healed. My present work is to attempt the cure of this double evil of *idle words*, and *prophane oaths*, whereof thousands among you are deeply guilty. I shall begin with the first, *viz.*

I. IDLE WORDS. That is, useless chat, unprofitable talk, that is not referred any way to the glory of God. This is a common evil, and little regarded by most men; but yet a sin of severer aggravations than the most imagine: light words weigh heavy in God's balance.

Arg. 1. For, first, The evil of them is exceedingly aggravated by this: they abuse and pervert the tongue, that noble member, from that employment and use which God by the law of creation designed it to, God gave not to man the organs and power of speech (which is his excellency above the beasts) to serve a passion, or vain humour, to vent the froth and vanity of his spirit; but to extol the Creator, and render him the praise of all his admirable and glorious works. For though the creation be a curious well tuned instrument, yet man is the musician that must touch it, and make the melody. This was the end of God in forming those instruments and organs: but now hereby they are subject to Satan and lust, and employed to the dis-honour of God that made them. God is pleased to suspend the power of speech (as we see in children) until reason begins to bud in them: they have not the liberty of one, until they have the use of the other; which plainly shews, that God is not willing to have our words run waste.

Arg. 2. It is a sinful wasting of our precious time; and that puts a further aggravation upon it. Consider, sirs, the time of life is but a little spot betwixt two eternities. The long-suffering God wheels about those glorious celestial bodies over your heads in a constant revolution, to beget time for you; and the preciousness of every minute thereof results from its use and end: it is intended and afforded as a space to you to repent in, Rev. ii. 21. And therefore great things depend upon it: no less than your eternal happiness or misery hangs upon those precious opportunities. Every minute of it hath an influence

Digitized by Google

into eternity. How would the damned value one hour of it, if they might enjoy it! The business you have to do in it, is of unspeakable weight and concernment: this great work, this soul work, and eternity-work, lies upon your hands; you are cast into straits of time about it: and, if so, O what an evil is it in you, to waste it away thus to no purpose!

Arg. 3. It is a sin that few are sensible of, as they are of other sins, and therefore the more dangerous. It is commonly committed, and that without checks of conscience. Other sins, as murder and adultery, though they be horrid sins, yet are but seldom committed, and when they are, conscience is startled at the horridness of them; few, except they be prodigious wretches indeed, dare make light of them. But now for idle and vain words, there are innumerable swarms of these every day, and few regard them. The intercourse betwixt the heart and tongue is quick; they are quickly committed, and as easily forgotten.

Arg. 4. And then, 4thly, They have mischievous effects upon others. How long doth an idle word, or foolish jest, stick in mens minds, and become an occasion of much sin to them? The froth and vanity of thy spirit, which thy tongue so freely vents among thy vain companions, may be working in their minds, when thou art in the dust, and so be transmitted from one to another; for unto that no more is requisite than an *objective existence* of those vain words in their memories. And thus mayest thou be sinning in the persons of thy companions, when thou art turned into dust. And this is one reason that Suarez gives for a general judgment, after men have passed their particular judgment immediately after their death, 'Because (saith he) after this, multitudes of sins by their means will 'be committed in the world, for which they must yet be judged to a fuller measure of wrath.' So that look as many of the precious servants of God, now in glory, have left many weighty and holy sayings behind them, by which many thousands of souls have been benefited, and God glorified on earth, after they had left it: so thou leavest that vanity upon the mind of others behind thee, by which he may be dishonoured to many generations. And then,

II. For PROPHANE OATHS, the corrupt fruit of a graceless heart; oh! how common are these among you? Yea, the habit of swearing is so strengthened in some, that they have lost all sense and conscience of the sin. Now, oh! that I might prevail with you to repent of this wickedness, and break the force of this customary evil among you! will you but give me

Digitized by Google

the reading of a few pages more, and weigh with the reason of men, what you read? If you will not hearken to counsel, it is a fatal sign, 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. and you shall mourn for this obstinacy hereafter, Prov. v. 12, 13. Desperate is that evil that scorns the remedy. And if you have patience to read it, the Lord give you an heart to consider what you read, and obey the counsels of God; or else it were better thine eyes had never seen these lines. Well, then, I beseech you consider,

Arg. 1. That prophane oaths are an high abuse of the dreadful and sacred name of God, which should neither be spoken or thought of without the deepest awe and reverence. It is the taking of that sacred name in vain, Exod. xx. 7. Now God is exceeding tender and jealous over his name; it is dear to him; his name is dreadful and glorious; Mal. i. 14. "I am a great "king, and my name is dreadful among the heathen." The heathens would not ordinarily mention the names of such as they reverenced. Suetonius saith, that Augustus prohibited the common use of his name: he thought it an indignity to have his name tossed up and down in every one's mouth. Yea, says Dr Willet on Exod. xx. it was a use among them to keep secret such names as they would have in reverence. They durst not mention the name of Demogorgon, whom they held to be the first God: they thought when he was named, the earth would tremble. Also the name of Mercurius Trismegistus, was very sparingly used, because of that reverence the people had for him. Now consider, shall poor worms be so tender of preserving the reverence of their names! Shall not heathens dare to use the names of their idols; and shall the sacred and dreadful name of the true God be thus bandied up and down by tongues of his own creatures? Will not God be avenged for these abuses of his name? Be confident, it shall one day be sanctified upon you in judgment, because ye did not sanctify it according to your duty.

Arg. 2. Swearing is a part of the worship of God; and therefore profane swearing can be no less than the profanation of his worship, and robbing him of all the glory he has thereby; Deut vi. 13. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and "serve him, and shalt swear by his name." So Jer iv. 2. "Thou shalt swear the Lord liveth in truth, in judgment, "and in righteousness." If a man swear by God after this manner, God is exceedingly glorified thereby. Now, that you may see what revenue of glory God hath from this part of his worship, and how it becomes a part of divine worship you must know then, an oath is nothing else, but *the asking or*

Digitized by Google

desiring a divine testimony, for the confirmation of the truth of our testimony: Heb. vi. 16. "For men verily swear by the "greater; and an oath for [confirmation] is to them an end "of all strife." The corruption of human nature by the fall, has made man such a false and fickle creature, that his single testimony cannot be sufficient security for another, especially in weighty cases, to rest upon; and therefore in swearing, he calleth God for a witness of the truth of that he affirms, or promiseth: I say, calleth God to be a witness of the truth of what he saith, because he is *truth* itself, and cannot lie, Heb. vi. 18. Now this calling for, or asking of a testimony from God, makes an oath become a part of God's worship, and gives him a great deal of glory and honour; for hereby he that sweareth, acknowledgeth his *omniscience*, and *infallible truth* and *righteousness*. His *omniscience* is acknowledged: for by this appeal to him, we imply and acknowledge him to be the *searcher of the heart and reins*; that he knows the secret intents and meaning of our spirits. *His supreme* and *infallible truth* is also acknowledged; for this is manifestly carried in an oath, that though I am a false and deceitful creature, and my affirmation cannot obtain universal and full credence, yet he that is greater than I, by whose name I swear, cannot deceive. And, lastly, his *righteousness* is acknowledged in an oath: for he that sweareth doth, either *expressly* or *implicitly*, put himself under the curse and wrath of God, if he swear falsely. Every oath hath an execration or imprecation in it, Neh. x. 29. "They entered "into a curse, and an oath, to walk in God's law." And so 2 Cor. i. 23. "I call God for a record upon my soul." And the usual form in the Old Testament was, "The Lord do so to me, and "more also." Now hereby God hath the glory of his righteousness and justice given him by the creature, and therefore it is a choice part of the divine worship, or of that homage which a creature oweth to his God. And if this be so, then how easily may the sin of rash and profane oaths be hence argued and aggravated? The more excellent any thing is by an institution of God, by so much more horrid and abominable is the abuse thereof. O how often is the dreadful majesty of heaven and earth called to witness to frivolous things! and oft to be a witness of our rage and fury! as 1 Sam. xiv. 39. Is it a light thing to rob him of his peculiar glory, and subject poor souls to his curse and wrath, who has said, "He will be a swift "witness against you?" Mal. iii. 5. Your tongues are nimble

Digitized by Google

in commiting this ſin, and God will be ſwift in puniſhing of it.

Arg. 3. It is a ſin which God hath ſeverely threatened to puniſh, and that with temporal and corporal plagues: "For by "reaſon of oaths, the land mourns," Hoſ. iv. 2, 3. That is, it brings the heavy judgment of God upon whole nations, under which they ſhall mourn. And in Zech. v. 2, 3, 4. You have there *a roll of curſes, (i. e.)* a catalogue of judgments and woes, *the length thereof twenty cubits*, (*i. e.* ten yards), to ſet out the multitude of woes contained in it: it is a long catalogue, and *a flying roll*, to denote the *ſwiftneſs* of it: it flies towards the houſe of the ſwearer; it makes haſte. The judgments that are written in it linger not, but are even in pain to be delivered. And this flying roll, full of dreadful woes, flies and enters into the houſe of the ſwearer; *and it ſhall therein remain*, ſaith the Lord; it ſhall cleave to his family; none ſhall claw off theſe woes from him: and it ſhall conſume the timber thereof, and the ſtones thereof, *(i. e.)* bring utter ſubverſion, ruin, and deſolation to his houſe. O dreadful ſin! what a deſolation doth it make! your mouths are full of oaths, and your houſes ſhall be full of curſes. Woe to that wretched family, into which this flying roll ſhall enter! Woe, I ſay, to the wretched inhabitants thereof! "The curſe of the Lord, "(ſaith Solomon) is in the houſe of the wicked; but he bleſ-"ſeth the [habitation] of the juſt," Prov. iii. 33. *Tugurioium* (i. e.) ſaith Mercer, *his poor little tenement or cottage*. There is a bleſſing, the promiſes, like clouds of bleſſing, dwell over it, and drop mercies on it; but a curſe in the houſe of the wicked. Ah! how many ſtately manſions are there, in which little other language but oaths and curſes are heard! and theſe are as ſo much gun-powder laid under the foundation of them, which, when juſtice ſhall ſet fire to, O what work will it make! woe to the inhabitants thereof! well then, break off this ſin by repentance, unleſs you intend to ruin your families, and bring all the curſes of God into your houſes: If you have no pity for yourſelves, yet pity your poſterity; have mercy for your wives and children; do not ruin all for the indulgence of a luſt.

Arg. 4. But that is not all; it brings ſoul-judgments and ſpiritual plagues upon you: it brings hell along with it. And if thou be not afraid to ſin, yet, methinks, thou ſhouldſt be afraid to *burn*: if the love of God can work nothing upon thy brawny heart, yet, methinks, the terrors of the Lord ſhould ſtartle and affright it. To this purpoſe, I beſeech you weigh

Digitized by Google

these scriptures; and, methinks, unless God hath lost all his authority with you, and hell all its terrors, it should startle you. The first is that dreadful scripture, James v. 12. "But above "all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by heaven, nei- "ther by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your "yea, be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into [condem- "nation."] O view this text seriously! methinks it should be like the fingers that came forth and wrote upon the wall that dreadful sentence that changed the countenance of a king, and that in the height of a frolic humour, and made his knees smite together. Mark, [*above all things*], a form of vehemency and earnestness, like that, Eph. vi. 16. "But above all, tak- "ing the shield of faith." As faith hath a prelation there before all the graces, so swearing here before all other vices. [*Swear not*], (i. e.) *vainly, rashly, profanely:* for otherwise it is a lawful thing, and a part of God's worship, as I have shewed: but swear not vain oaths, by the creatures, heaven, or earth, *&c.* Which is to advance the creature into the room of God: a sin to which the Jews were much addicted. But, "Let your "yea, be yea; and your nay, nay;" (*i. e.*) accustom your- selves to short and plain affirmations and negations, to a simple and candid expression of your minds. And the thundering ar- gument that backs it, is this, [*lest ye fall into condemnation*]; (*i. e.*) lest for these things the Judge of heaven and earth pass a sentence of condemnation to hell upon you. O, sirs! dare you touch with this hot iron? dare you from henceforward commit that sin, that you know will bring you under the con- demnation and judgment of God? Do you know what it is for a soul to be cast at God's bar? did you never see a poor ma- lefactor tried at the assizes, and observe how his face gathers paleness, how his legs tremble, and death displays its colours in his cheeks, when sentence is given upon him? But what is that to God's condemnation? What is a gallows to hell? A- nother text I would commend to your consideration is that, Exod. xx. 7. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that "taketh his name in vain;" where vain oaths are especially included. Now, what doth God mean, when he saith, he will not hold him guiltless? The meaning is plain, his sins shall be reckoned and imputed to him; they shall lie upon his soul; he shall be bound over to answer to God for them. O terri- ble sentence! what soul can bear it, or stand before it! "Bless- "ed is the man (saith David) to whom the Lord imputeth "not iniquity:" Surely then, cursed is that man to whom God

Digitized by Google

will impute them: and to the swearer they shall all be imputed, if he break not off his sin by repentance, and get a Christ the sooner. O! how darest thou think of going before the Lord with the guilt of all thy sins upon thee? When Christ would administer the very spirit of joy into one sentence to a poor sinner, Matth. ix. 2. He said, "Son, be of good cheer, thy "sins be forgiven." And when God would contract the sum of all misery into one word, he saith, "His sins shall lie down "with him in the dust," Job xx. 11. Ah, soul! one of these days thou shalt be laid on thy death-bed, or see the waves, that shall entomb thee, leaping and roaring upon every side; and then thou wilt surely have other thoughts of the happiness that lies in remission of sin than thou hast now. Observe the most incorrigible sinner then; hark, how he sighs, and groans, and cries, Ah, Lord! and must I die? And then see how the tears trickle down his cheeks, and his heart ready to burst within him. Why, what is the matter? Oh! the Lord will not pardon him, he holds him guilty! If he were sure his sins were forgiven, then he could die: but, oh! to appear before the Lord in them, appals him, daunts him, kills the very heart of him! he would fain cry for mercy, but conscience stops his mouth. O, saith conscience, how canst thou move that tongue to God in prayer for mercy, that hath so often rent and torn his glorious name, by oaths and curses? Sirs, I pray you do not make light of these things; they will look wishly upon you one of these days, except ye prevent it by sound conversion.

Arg. 5. And then, lastly, to name no more, I pray you consider, that a custom of vain words, and profane oaths, is as plain an *indication* and *discovery* of an unregenerate soul, as any in the world: this is a sure sign thou art none of Christ's, nor hast any thing to do with the promises and privileges of his people; for by this the Scripture distinguished the state of saints and sinners, Eccl. ix. 2. "There is one event to the "righteous, and to the wicked; to the clean and to the unclean; "to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as "is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as "he that feareth an oath." Mark, he that sweareth, and he that feareth an oath, do as manifestly distinguish the children of God from wicked men, as clean and unclean, righteous and wicked, sacrificing and not sacrificing. This fruit of the tongue plainly shews what the tree is that bears it; Isa. ii. 6. "The vile person will speak of villany; and out of the a-"bundance of the heart the mouth speaks." *Loquere, ut vi-*

Digitized by Google

dum, said one; Speak, that I may see what you are. Look what is in the heart, that is vented by the tongue; where the treasures of grace are in the heart, words ministring grace will be in the lips; Psalm xxxvii. 30. "The mouth of the righteous "speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment; "for the law of the Lord is in his heart." To this sense we must understand that Scripture, Matth. xii. 37. "By thy "words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt "be condemned." Certainly, justification and condemnation, in the day of judgment, shall not pass upon us merely for the good or bad words we have spoken; but according to the state of the person, and frame of the heart. But the meaning is, that our words shall justify or condemn us in that day, as evidence of the state and frame of the soul. We use to say, such witnesses hanged a man; the meaning is, the evidence they gave cast and condemned him. O think seriously of this; if words evidence the state of the soul, what a woeful state must thy soul needs be in, whose mouth overflows with oaths and curses! How many witnesses will be brought in, to cast thee in the great day? "Your own tongue shall then fall up"on you," as the expression is, Psal. lxiv. 8. And out of your own mouth God will fetch abundant evidence to condemn you. And thus I have opened unto you the evil of vain words, and profane oaths; and presented to your view their several aggravations. If by these things there be a relenting pang upon thine heart, and a serious resolution of reformation, then I shall commend these few helps or means to thy perusal, and conclude this head. And the first help is this.

Help 1. Seriously fix in thy thoughts that Scripture, Matth. xii. 36. "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men "shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of "judgment." O let it sound in thine ears day and night! O ponder them in thy heart! [*I say unto you*] I that have always been in the Father's bosom, and do fully know his mind, that I am constituted the Judge of quick and dead, and do fully understand the rule of judgment, and the whole process thereof, I say, and do assure you, that [*every idle word that men shall speak*], *(i. e.)* every word that hath not a tendency and reference to the glory of God, though there be no other obliquity of evil in them than this, that they want a good end: how much more then, scurrilous words, bloody oaths, and blasphemies? [*Men shall give an account thereof;*] that is, shall be cast and condemned to suffer the wrath of God for them; as ap-

Digitized by Google

pears by that parallel Scripture, 1 Pet. iv. 4, 5. For as the learned observe, there is plainly a *metalepsis* in these words: the *antecedent*, *to give an account*, is put for the *consequent*, punishment, and condemnation to hell-fire; the certainty whereof admits but of this one exception, *viz.* intervenient repentance, or pardon obtained through the blood of Christ here, before you be presented at that judgment-seat. O then, what a bridle should this text be to thy extravagant tongue! I remember Hierom was wont to say, 'Whether I eat or drink, or what 'ever I do, methinks I still hear the sound of these words in 'mine ear, Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.' O that the sound of these words may be always in your ears!

Help 2. Consider before you speak, and be not rash to utter words without knowledge. He that speaks what he thinks not, speaks *hypocritically*; and he that thinks not what to speak, speaks *inconsiderately*. You have cause to weigh your words before you deliver them by your tongue; for whether you do, or do not, the Lord *pondereth* them: records are kept of them, else you could not be called to an account for them, as I shewed you, you must.

Help 3. Resign up your tongue to God every day, and beg him to guide and keep it. So did David, Psal. cxli. 3. "Set "a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep thou the door "of my lips." Beg him to keep you from provocations and temptations; or, if you fall into them, intreat him for strength to rule your spirits in them, that you may not be conquered by temptations.

Help 4. But above all, labour to get your souls cleansed and purified by faith, possessed with saving and gracious principles: all other means will be ineffectual without this. O see the vileness of thy nature, and the necessity of a change to pass upon it! First make the tree good, and then his fruit good: a new nature will produce new words and actions. To bind your souls with vows and resolutions, while you are strangers to a regenerate work, is to bind Sampson with green withs, whilst his locks remain upon his head. I will shut up this with the advice of that divine poet, Mr. George Herbert; it may be, it may affect thee, and run in thy thoughts when thou art alone.

Take not his name, who made thy mouth, in vain;
It gets thee nothing, and hath no excuse.
Lust and wine plead a pleasure; avarice gain:
But the cheap swearer, through his open sluice,

Digitized by Google

Lets his ſoul run for nought, as little fearing.
Where I an Epicure, I could hate ſwearing.

When thou doſt tell another's jeſt, therein
Omit the oaths, which true wit cannot need:
Pick out of tales the mirth, but not the ſin.
He pares his apple that will cleanly feed.
Play not away the virtue of that name,
Which is thy beſt ſtake, when grief makes thee tame.

The cheapeſt ſins moſt dearly puniſh'd are,
Becauſe to ſhun them alſo is ſo cheap;
For we have wit to mark them, and to ſpare.
O crumble not away thy ſoul's fair heap.
If thou wilt die, the gates of hell are broad,
Pride and full ſins have made the way a road.

CAUTION III.

THE next danger I ſhall give you warning of, is the ſin of *uncleanneſs*; with which I fear too many of the rude and looſer ſort of ſeamen defile themſelves; and poſſibly, the temptations to this ſin are advantaged, and ſtrengthened upon them more than others, by their condition and employments. Let no man be offended that I here give warning of this evil: I intend to aſperſe no man's perſon, or raiſe up jealouſy againſt any; but would faithfully diſcharge my duty to all, and that in all things. It was the complaint of Salvian many hundred years ago, that he could not ſpeak againſt the vices of men, but one or other would thus object. *Guber. Dei, lib. 4. Salv.* 'There he meant me; he hit me:' and ſo ſtorm and fret. 'Alas (as he replieth) it is not we 'that ſpeak to you, but your own conſcience; we ſpeak to the 'order, but conſcience ſpeaks to the perſon." I ſhall uſe no other apology in this caſe. That this ſin is a dreadful gulph, a quick ſand, that hath ſucked and deſtroyed thouſands, is truly apparent both from Scripture and experience. Solomon tells us, Prov. xxii. 14. that it is a "deep ditch, into which ſuch "as are abhorred of the Lord ſhall fall." Oh! the multitudes of dead that are there! and if ſo, I cannot in duty to God, or in love to you, be ſilent, where the danger is ſo great. It is both needleſs, and beſides my intention, here to inſiſt largely upon the explication of the particulars in which uncleanneſs is diſtributed: the more ordinary and common ſins of this kind are known by the names of adultery and fornication. The latter is, when ſingle perſons come together, out of the ſtate of mar-

Digitized by Google

riage. The former is, when at least one of the persons committing uncleanness is contracted in marriage. This now is the evil I shall warn you of. And, that thou mayest never fall into this pit, I shall endeavour to fence and hedge up thy way to it, by these ensuing arguments: and, oh! that the light of every argument may be powerfully reflected upon your conscience! Many men are wise in generals, but very vain *ἐν διαλογισμοις*, in the reasonings, or imaginations, as the apostle calls them, Rom. i. 21. *(i. e.)* in their *practical inferences*. They are good at speculation, but bunglers at application: but it is truth in the particulars, that, like an hot iron, pierces; and, oh! that you may find these to be such in your soul! To that end, consider,

Arg. 1. The names and titles by which this sin is known in scripture, are very vile and base. The Spirit of God, doubtless, hath put such odious names upon it, on purpose to deter and affright men from it. In general it is called *lust*; and so (as one notes) it beareth the name of its mother: it is *uncleanness* in the abstract, Numb. v. 19. filthiness itself; *an abomination*, Ezek. xxii. 11. And they that commit it are called *abominable*, Rev. xxi. 8. Varro saith, the word imports that which is not lawful to mention; or, rather, abominable persons, such as are not fit for the society of men, such as should be hissed out of all mens company: they are rather to be reckoned to beasts than men. Yea, the scripture compares them to the filthiest of beasts, even to dogs. When Ishbosheth charged this sin upon Abner, 2 Sam. iii. 8. "Am I a dog's head, (saith he) "that thou chargest me with a fault concerning this woman?" And in Deut. xxiii. 18. the "hire of a whore," and the "price "of a dog," are put together. The expression of this lust in words or gesture, is called *neighing*, Jer. v. 8. Even as fed horses do, that scatter their lust promiscuously. Or, if the scripture speaks of them as men, yet it allows them but the external shape of men, not the understanding of men. Among the Jews they were called fools in Israel, 2 Sam. xiii. 13. and so Prov. vi. 32. "Whoso committeth adultery with a "woman, lacketh understanding." And sinners, Luke vii. 37. "And behold a woman that was a [sinner,]" that is, an eminent notorious sinner; by which term, the scripture decyphers an unclean person, as if, among sinners, there were none of such a prodigious stature in sin as they. And we find, that when the Spirit of God would set forth any sin by an odious name, he calls it adultery; so idolatry is called adultery, Ezek. xvi. 32. And indeed this spiritual and corporal adultery often-

Digitized by Google

times are found in the same persons. They that give themselves up to the one, are, by a righteous hand of God, given up to the other, as it is too manifestly and frequently exemplified in the world. So earthly-mindedness hath this name put upon it, on purpose to affright men from it, Jam. iv. 4. Now, certainly, God would never borrow the name of this sin, to set out the evil of other sins, if it were not most vile and abominable. 'Tis called the sin of the Gentiles, or heathens, 1 Thess. iv. 5. And, oh! that we could say, it were only among them that know not God! How then are you able to look these scriptures in the face, and not blush? O what a sin is this! Art thou willing to be ranked with fools, dogs, sinners, heathens, and take thy lot with them? God hath planted that affection of shame in thy nature, to be as a guard against such filthy lusts; it is a sin that hath filthiness enough in it, to defile the tongue that mentions it, Ephes. v. 3.

Arg. 2. It is a sin that the God of heaven hath often prohibited, and severely condemned in the word, which abundantly declares his abhorrence of it. You have prohibition upon prohibition, and threatning upon threatning in the word against it; Exod. xx. 14. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." This was delivered upon mount Sinai, with the greatest solemnity and terror, by the mouth of God himself. Turn to, and ponder the following scriptures among many others, Prov. v. 2, 3, 4. Acts v. 29. Rom. i. 24, 29. Rom. xiii. 13. 1 Cor. vi. 13,--18. 2 Cor. xii. 21. Gal. v. 29. Eph. v. 3. Col. iii. 5. 1 Thes. iv. 2, 3, 4, 5. Heb. xii. 16. Heb. xiii. 4. All these, with many others, are the true sayings of God: by them thou shalt be tried in the last day. Now, consider how terrible it will be to have so many words of God, and such terrible ones too, as most of those are, to be brought in and pleaded against thy soul in that day! Mountains and hills may depart, but these words shall not depart: heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one title of the word shall pass away. Believe it, sinner, as sure as the heavens are over thy head, and the earth under thy feet, they shall one day take hold of thee, though we poor worms who plead them with thee, die and perish: Zech. i. 5, 6. The Lord tells us it shall not fall to the ground. Which is a borrowed speech from a dart that is flung with a weak hand; it goes not home to the mark, but falls to the ground by the way. None of these words shall so fall to the ground.

Arg. 3. It is a sin that defiles and destroys the body; 1 Cor. vi. 18. "He that committeth adultery, sinneth against his own

Digitized by Google

"body." In most other sins the body is the *instrument; here* it is the *object* against which the sin is committed: that body of thine, which should be the temple of the Holy Ghost, *is* turned into a stye of filthiness; yea, it not only *defiles*, but destroys it. Job calls it a "fire that burneth to destruction," Job. xxxi. 12. or as the Septuagint reads it, a fire that *burneth* in all the members. It is a sin that God hath plagued with strange and terrible diseases; that Morbus Gallicus, and *Sudor* Anglicus, and that Plica Polonica, whereof you may read in Bolton's four last things, page 30. and Sclater on Rom. i. 30. These were judgments sent immediately by God's own hand, to correct the new sins and enormities of the world; for they seem to put the best physicians besides their books. O how terrible is it to lie groaning under the sad effects of this sin! As Solomon tells us, Prov. v. 11. "And thou mourn at *the* "last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed." To this sense some expound that terrible text, Heb. xiii. 4. "Marriage is "honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whore-"mongers and adulterers God will judge;" *(i.e.)* with some remarkable judgment inflicted on them in this world: if it escape the punishment of men, it shall not escape the vengeance of God. Ah! with what comfort may a man lie down upon a sick bed, when the sickness can be looked upon as a fatherly visitation coming in mercy? But thou that shortenest thy life, and bringest sickness on thyself by such a sin, art the devil's martyr; and to whom canst thou turn in such a day for comfort?

Arg. 4. Consider what an indelible blot it is to thy nature, which can never be wiped away; though thou escape with thy life, yet, as one says, thou shalt be burnt in the hand, yea, branded in the forehead. What a foul scare is that upon the face of David himself, which abides to this day? "He was up-"right in all things, save in the matter of Uriah." And how was he slighted by his own children and servants, after he had committed this sin! compare 1 Sam. ii. 30. with 2 Sam. xii. 10, 11. "A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his re-"proach shall not be wiped away. This is to give thine "honour to another," Prov. v. 9. The shame and reproach attending it, should be a preservative from it. Indeed the devil tempts to it by hopes of secresy and concealment; but though many other sins lie hid, and possibly shall never come to light until that day of manifestation of all hidden things, yet this is a sin that is most usually discovered. Under the law, God appointed an extraordinary way for the discovery of it, Numb. v. 13. And to this day, the providence of God doth often very

Digitized by Google

strangely bring it to light, though it be a deed of darkness: the Lord hath many times brought such persons, either by terror of conscience, phrensy, or some other means, to be the publishers and proclaimers of their own shame. Yea, observe this, said the reverend Mr. Hildersham on the fourth of John, even those that are most cunning to conceal and hide it from the eyes of the world, yet through the just judgment of God, every one suspects and condemns them for it: this dashes in pieces, at one stroke, that vessel in which the precious ointment of a good name is carried. A fool in Israel shall be thy title; and even children shall point at thee.

Arg. 5. It scatters thy substance, and roots up the foundation of thy estate; Job xxxi. 12. "It roots up all thy increase. "Strangers shall be filled with thy wealth, and thy labours "shall be in the house of a stranger," Prov. v. 10. "For by "means of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a morsel of "bread," Prov. vi. 26. It gives rags for its livery (saith one) and though it be *furthered* by the fulness, yet it is *followed* with a morsel of bread. This is one of those temporal judgments with which God punishes the unclean person in this life. The word Delilah, which is the name of a harlot, is conceived to come from a root that signifies to exhaust, drain, or draw dry. This sin will quickly exhaust the fullest estate; and, oh! what a dreadful thing will this be, when God shall require an account of thy stewardship in the great day! how righteous is it, that that man should be fuel to the wrath of God, whose health and wealth have been so much fuel to maintain the flame of lust! O how lavish of their estates are sinners to satisfy their lusts! if the members of Christ be sick, or in prison, they may there perish and starve, before they will relieve them; but to obtain their lusts, O how expensive! "Ask me never so much, and I "will give it," said Shechem, Gen. xxxiv. 12. "Ask what "thou wilt, and it shall be given thee," said Herod to the daughter of his Herodias. Well, you are liberal in spending treasures upon your lusts; and believe it, God will spend treasures of wrath to punish you for lusts. It had been a thousand times better for thee thou hadst never had an estate, that thou hadst begged thy bread from door to door, than to have such a sad reckoning as thou shalt shortly have for it.

Arg. 6. O stand off from this sin, because it is a pit, out of which very few have been recovered that have fallen therein. Few are the foot-steps of returners from this den. The longer a man lives in it, the less power he hath to leave it. It is not

Digitized by Google

only a *damning*, but an *infatuating* sin. The danger of falling this way must needs be great, and the fall very desperate, because few that fall into it do ever rise again. I shall lay two very terrible scriptures before you to this purpose, either of them enough to drive thee speedily to Christ, or to drive thee out of thy wits; the one is that, Eccl. vii. 26. "And I find more "bitter than death, the woman whose heart is snares and nets, "and her hands as bands: Whoso pleaseth God shall escape "from her, but the sinner shall be taken by her." The argument which the Spirit of God uses here to dissuade from this sin, is taken from the *subject*; they that fall into it, for the most part, are persons in whom God has no delight, and so in judgment are delivered up to it, and never recovered by grace from it. The other is that in Prov. xxii. 14. "The "mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit; he that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein." O terrible word! able to daunt the heart of the secureest sinner: Your whores *embrace* you, yea, but God *abhors* you! You have their *love*, Oh but you are under God's *hatred!* What say you to these two scriptures? If you are not atheists, methinks such a word from the mouth of God, should strike like a dart through thy soul. And upon this account it is that they never are recovered, because God has no delight in them. If this be not enough, view one scripture more, Prov. ii. 18, 19. "For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead: None that go "to her, return again, neither take they hold of the paths of "life." Reader, if thou be a person addicted to this sin, go thy ways, and think seriously what a case thou art in. *None return again*, (*i. e.*) a very few of many: The examples of such as have been recovered, are very rare. Pliny tells us, the mermaids are commonly seen in green meadows, and have inchanting voices; but there are always found heaps of dead men's bones lying by them. This may be but a fabulous story: But I am sure, it is true of the harlot, whose syren-songs have allured thousands to their inevitable destruction. It is a captivating sin, that leads away the sinner in triumph; they cannot deliver their souls; Prov. vii. 22. "He goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a [*fool*] to the "correction of the stocks." Mark, a fool; it dementates and befools men, takes away their understanding; the Septuagint renders it, ὡσπερ κύων επι δεσμους, as a dog to the collar; or, like as we use to say, a dog in a string. I have read of one, that having by this sin wasted his body, was told by physicians, that except he left it, he would quickly lose his eyes: He

Digitized by Google

answered, if it be so, then *vale lumen amicum*, farewel sweet light. And I remember Luther writes of a certain nobleman in his country, who was so besotted with the sin of whoredom, that he was not ashamed to say, that if he might live here for ever, and be carried from one stew to another, he would never desire any other heaven. The greatest conquerors that have subdued kingdoms, and scorned to be commanded by any, have been miserably enslaved and captivated by this lust. O think sadly upon this argument! God often gives them up to impenitency, and will not spend a rod upon them to reclaim them. See Hosea iv. 14. Rev. xxii. 11.

Arg. 7. And then in the *7th* place, those few that have been recovered by repentance out of it, O how bitter hath God made it to their souls! "I find it (saith Solomon) more bitter than "death," Eccl. vii. 26. Death is a very bitter thing; O what a struggling and reluctance is there in nature against it! But this is more bitter. Poor David found it so, when he roared under those bloody lashes of conscience for it, in Psalm li. Ah! when the Lord shall open the poor sinner's eyes, to see the horrid guilt he hath hereby contracted upon his own poor soul, it will haunt him as a ghost, day and night, and terrify his soul with dreadful forms and representations! O dear bought pleasure, if this were all it should cost! What is now become of the pleasure of sin? O what gall and wormwood wilt thou taste, when once the Lord shall bring thee to a sight of it! The Hebrew word for repentance (*Nachum*), and the Greek word (*Metamelia*), the one signifies an irking of the soul, and the other signifies, after grief: Yea, it is called, a renting of the heart, as if it were torn in pieces in a man's breast. Ask such a poor soul, what it thinks of such courses now? Oh! now it loaths, abhors itself for them. Ask him, if he dare sin in that kind again? You may as well ask me (will he answer) whether I will thrust my hand into the fire. Oh! it breeds an *indignation* in him against himself. That word [αγανακτησιν], 2 Cor. vii. 11. signifies the rising of the stomach with very rage, and being sick with anger. Religious wrath is the fiercest wrath. O what a furnace is the breast of a poor penitent! what fumes, what heats do abound in it, whilst the sin is even before him, and the sense of the guilt upon him? One night of carnal pleasure will keep thee many days and nights upon the rack of horror, if ever God give thee repentance unto life.

Arg. 8. And if thou never repent, as indeed but few do that fall into this sin, then consider how God will follow t!

Digitized by Google

with eternal vengeance: Thou shalt have flaming fire for burning lust. This is a sin that hath the scent of fire and brimstone with it, wherever you meet with it in scripture. The harlot's guests are lodged in the *depths of hell*, Prov. ix. 18. No more perfumed beds; they must now lie down in flames. Whoremongers shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death, Rev. xxi. 8. Such shall not inherit the kingdom of God and Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 9. No dog shall come into the New Jerusalem; there shall in no wise enter in any thing that defileth, or that worketh abomination. You have spent your strength upon sin, and now God sets himself a work to shew the glory of his power in punishing, Rom. ix. 22. The wrath of God is transacted upon them in hell by his own immediate hand, Heb. x. 30. Because no creature is strong enough to convey all his wrath, and it must all be poured out upon them, therefore he himself will torment them for ever with his own immediate power: Now he will *stir up all his wrath*, and sinners shall know the price of their pleasures. The punishment of Sodom is a little map of hell, as I may say. O how terrible a day was that upon those unclean wretches! But that fire was not of many days continuance: When it had consumed them, and their houses, it went out for want of matter: but here, the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, kindles it. The pleasure was quickly gone, but the sting and torment abide for ever. "Who knoweth the power of his anger? Even according "to his fear, so is his wrath," Psalm xc. 11. Oh consider, how will his almighty power rack and torment thee! Think on this when sin comes with a smiling face towards thee in the temptation. O think! If the human nature of Christ recoiled, when his cup of wrath was given him to drink; if he were sore amazed at it, how shalt thou, a poor worm, bear and grapple with it for ever?

Arg. 9. Consider further, how closely soever thou carriest thy wickedness in this world, tho' it should never be discovered here, yet there is a day coming when all will out, and that before angels and men. God will rip up thy secret sins in the face of that great congregation at the day of judgment: Then that which was done in secret shall be proclaimed as upon the house-top, Luke xii. 3. "Then God will judge the secrets of "men," Rom. ii. 16. "the hidden things of darkness will "be brought into the open light." Sinner, there will be no sculking for thee in the grave, no declining this bar; thou refusedst, indeed, to come to the *throne of grace*, when God

Digitized by Google

invited thee, but there will be no refusing to appear before the *bar of justice*, when Christ shall summon thee. And as thou canst not decline appearing, so neither canst thou then palliate and hide thy wickedness any longer; for then shall the books be opened; the book of God's omniscience, and the book of thine own conscience, wherein all thy secret villany is recorded; for though it ceased to speak to thee, yet it ceased not to write and record thy actions. If thy shameful sins should be divulged now, it would make thee tear off thy hair with indignation; but then all will be discovered: Angels and men shall point at thee, and say, lo, this is the man, this is he that carried it so smoothly in the world. Mr. Thomas Fuller relates a story of Ottocar king of Bohemia, 'who, refusing to do his homage to 'Rodulphus the first emperor, being at last sorely chastised 'with war, condescended to do him homage privately in a tent; 'but the tent was so contrived by the emperor's servants, '(saith the historian) that, by drawing one cord, it was taken 'all away, and so Ottocar presented on his knees, doing ho-'mage to the emperor in the view of three armies.' O sirs, you think to carry it closely, you wait for the twilight, that none may see you; but, alas! it will be to no end, this day will discover it; and then what confusion and everlasting shame will cover thee! Will not this work then?

Arg. 10. Lastly, consider but one thing more, and I have done. By this sin thou dost not only damn thine own soul, but draweſt another to hell with thee. This sin is not as a single bullet that kills but one, but as a chain-shot, it kills many, two at least, unless God give repentance. And if he should give thee repentance, yet the other party may never repent, and so perish for ever through thy wickedness; and, oh! what a sad consideration will that be to thee, that such a poor soul is in hell, or likely to go thither by thy means? Thou hast made fast a snare upon a soul, which thou canst not untie; thou hast done that which may be matter of sorrow to thee as long as thou livest; but though thou canst grieve for it, thou canst not remedy it. In other sins it is not so: if thou hadst stollen another's goods, restitution might be made to the injured party, but here can be none: if thou hadst murdered another, thy sin was thine own, not his that was murdered by thee: but this is a complicated sin, defiling both at once; and if neither repent, then, oh! what a sad greeting will these poor wretches have in hell! how will they curse the day, that ever they saw each other's face! O what an aggravation of their misery will this be! For look, as it will be mater of joy in heaven,

Digitized by Google

to behold such there as we have been instrumental to save, it must it needs be a stinging aggravation of the misery of the damned, to look upon those that have been the instruments and means of their damnation. Oh, methinks, if there be any tenderness at all in thy conscience, if this sin have not totally brawned and stupified thee, these arguments should pierce like a sword through thy guilty soul. Reader, I beseech thee, by the mercies of God, if thou hast defiled thy soul by this abominable sin, speedily to repent. O get the blood of sprinkling upon thee; there is yet mercy for such a wretch as thou art, if thou wilt accept the terms of it. "Such were some of you, "but ye are washed," 1 Cor. vi. 11. Publicans and harlots may enter into the kingdom of God, Matth. xxi. 31. Though but few such are recovered, yet how knowest thou but the hand of mercy may pull thee, as a brand out of the fire, if now thou wilt return and seek it with tears? Though it be a *fire that consumeth unto destruction*, as Job calls it, Job xxxi. 12. yet it is not an unquenchable fire, the blood of Christ can quench it.

And for you whom God hath kept hitherto from the contagion of it, O bless the Lord, and use all God's means for the prevention of it. The seeds of this sin are in thy nature; no thanks to thee, but restraining grace, that thou art not delivered up to it also. And that thou mayest be kept out of this pit, conscionably practise these few directions.

Direct. 1. Beg of God a clean heart, renewed and sanctified by saving grace; all other endeavours do but palliate a cure: the root of this is deep in thy nature; O get that mortified, Matth. xv. 19. "Out of the heart proceed fornication, "adulteries." 1 Pet. ii. 11, 12. "Abstain from fleshly lusts, "——having your conversation honest." The lust must first be subdued, before the conversation can be honest.

Direct. 2. Walk in the fear of God all the day long, and in the sense of his omniscient eye that is ever upon thee. This kept Joseph from this sin, Gen. xxxix. 9. "How can I do this "wickedness, and sin against God?" Consider, the darkness hideth not from him, but shineth as the light. If thou couldst find a place where the eye of God could not discover thee, it were somewhat: thou darest not to act this wickedness in the presence of a child, and wilt thou adventure to commit it before the face of God? see that argument, Prov. v. 20, 21. "And "why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, "and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man "are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his "goings."

Digitized by Google

Direct. 3. Avoid lewd company, and the society of unclean persons; they are but *panders* for lust. *Evil communication corrupts good manners.* The tongues of sinners do cast fire-balls into the hearts of each other, which the corruption within is easily kindled and enflamed by.

Direct. 4. Exercise thyself in thy calling diligently; it will be an excellent means of preventing this sin. It is a good observation that one hath, That Israel was safer in the brick-kilns in Egypt, than in the plains of Moab. 2 Sam. xi. 2. "And it "came to pass in the even-tide, that David arose from off his "bed, and walked on the roof of the king's house;" and this was the occasion of his fall. See 1 Tim. v. 11, 13.

Direct. 5. Put a restraint upon thine appetite: feed not to excess. Fulness of bread and idleness were the sins of Sodom, that occasioned such an exuberancy of lust *. "They are like "fed horses, every one neighing after his neighbour's wife. "When I had fed them to the full, then they committed a-"dultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlot's "houses," Jer. v. 7, 8. This is a sad requital of the bounty of God, in giving us the enjoyment of the creatures, to make them fuel to lust, and instruments of sin.

Direct. 6. Make choice of a meet yoke-fellow, and delight in her you have chosen. This is a lawful remedy: See 1 Cor. vii. 9. God ordained it, Gen. ii. 21. But herein appears the corruption of nature, that men delight to tread by-paths, and forsake the way which God hath appointed; as that divine poet, Mr. Herbert, saith,

If God had laid all common, certainly
Man would have been the closer: but since now
God hath impall'd us, on the contrary,
Man breaks the fence, and every ground will plow.
O what were man, might he himself misplace!
Sure, to be cross, he would shift feet and face.

Stolen waters are sweeter to them than those waters they might lawfully drink at their own fountain: But withal know, it is not the having, but the delighting in a lawful wife, as God requires you to do, that must be a fence against this sin. So Solomon, Prov. v. 19. "Let her be as the loving hind, and "pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times, and be "thou ravished always with her love."

* *Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus.*

Digitized by Google

Direct. 7. Take heed of running on in a course of sin, (especially superstition and idolatry); in which cases, and as a punishment of which evils, God often gives up men to these vile affections, Rom. i. 25, 26. "Who changed the truth of "God into a lie; [worshipped] and served the creature more "than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, Amen. [For this "cause] God gave them up to vile affections," &c. They that defile their souls by idolatrous practices, God suffers, as a just recompence, their bodies also to be defiled with uncleanness, that so their ruin may be hastened. Let the admirers of traditions beware of such a judicial tradition as this is. Woe to him that is thus delivered by the hand of an angry God! No punishment in the world like this, when God punishes sin with sin: when he shall suffer those κοιναι ἐννοιαι, those common notices of conscience to be quenched, and all restraints to be moved out of the way of sin, it will not be long e'er that sinner come to his own place.

CAUTION IV.

IN the next place, I shall make bold to expostulate a little with your conscience concerning the precious mercies you have received, and the solemn promises you have bound yourselves withal for the obtaining of those mercies. I fear God hath many bankrupt debtors among you, that have dealt slippery and unfaithfully with him; that have not rendered to the Lord according to the great things he hath done for them, nor according to those good things they have vowed to the mighty God of Jacob. But, truly, if thou be a *despiser* of mercy, thou shalt be a *pattern* of wrath. God will *remember* them in fury, who *forget* him in his favours. I will tell you what a grave and eminent minister once told his people (dealing with them about this sin of unthankfulness for mercy); and I pray God it may affect you duly. † "Let us all mourn (saith he) and "take on; we are all behind hand with God. The Christian "world is become bankrupt, quite broke, makes no return to "God for his love. He is issuing out process to seize upon "body, goods, and life, and will be put off no longer. Bloody "bailiffs are abroad for bad debtors all the world over. Chri"stians are broke, and make no return, and God is breaking all. "He cannot have what he would have, what he should have, "he will take what he can get: for money he will take goods, "limbs, arms, legs; he will have his own out of your skin, "out of your blood, out of your bodies and souls. He is set-

† Mr. Lockyer on Col. i. p. 113.

Digitized by Google

ing the Christian world as light and as low as they have set his love. Ah, Lord, what a time do we live in! long-suffering is at an end, mercy will be righted in justice, justice will have all behind, it will be paid to the utmost farthing; it will set abroach your blood, but it will have all behind," &c.

Do you hear, souls? Is not this sad news to some of you, who have received vast sums of mercy, and given God your bond for the repayment of him in praise and answerable fruit, and yet forfeited all, and lost your credit with God? O how can you look God in the face, with whom you have dealt so perfidiously! I am now come in the name of God to demand his due of you; to call to remembrance the former receipts of mercy which you mind not, but God doth, and there is a witness in your bosom that doth, and will one day witness to your faces, that you have dealt perfidiously with your God. Your souls have been the *graves* of mercy, which should have been as so many gardens where they should have lived and flourished. I am come now to open those graves, and view those mercies that your unthankfulness hath killed and buried, to lay them before your eyes, and see whether your ungrateful hearts will bleed upon them. Buried mercies are not lost for ever; they shall as certainly have a day of * resurrection as thyself: it were better for thee they should have a resurrection now in thy heart, than to rise as witnesses against thee, when thou shalt rise out of the dust: that will be a terrible resurrection indeed, when they shall come to plead against thy soul. Nothing pleads more dreadfully against a soul than abused mercy doth. But I shall come to the particulars upon which I interrogate your consciences; and I pray deal truly and ingenuously in answering these queries.

Quer. 1. And, first, I shall demand of you, whether you never had experience of the power and goodness of God, in restoring you to health from dangerous sickness and diseases? Have you not sometimes had the sentence of death in yourselves? And that possibly when you have been in remote parts, far from your friends and relations, and destitute of all means and accommodations. Did you not say in that condition, as Hezekiah did in a like case? Isa. xxxviii. 10, 11, 12. "I said,

* There is a double resurrection of mercy: a resurrection of mercy in mercy, and a resurrection of mercy in wrath. It is the first I now labour for, and that to prevent the second.

Digitized by Google

" in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the " grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I " shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the liv- " ing: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the " world:" Remember thyself, Man; canst not thou call to mind the day when the arrows of death came whisking by thee, and it may be hit those next thee; took away those that were as lively and lusty as thyself, when you began your voyage, and yet they were cast for death, thou for life, and that when there was but an hair's breadth betwixt thee and the grave? Tell me, soul, what friend was that who stood by thee then, when thou wast forsaken of all friends? When it may be thy companions stood ready to throw thee over-board, who was it that pitied and remembered thee in thy low estate? Who was it that rebuked thy disease? or, (as * one very aptly expresses it) 'restrained the humours of thy body, from overflowing and 'drowning thy life? For, when they are let out in a sickness, 'they would overflow and drown it, as the waters would the 'earth, if God should not say to them, stay, you proud waves.' Who was it, man, that when thy body was brought low and weak, and like a crazy rotten ship in a storm, took in water on all sides, so that all the physicians in the world could not have stopped those leaks? Consider, what hand was that which quieted and calmed the tempestuous sea, *careened* and mended thy crazy body, and launched thee into the world again, as whole, as sound, as strong, as ever? Was it not the Lord, that hath done all this for thee? Did not he keep back thy soul from the pit, and thy life from perishing? Yea, when thou wast chastened with pain, upon thy bed, (as Elihu speaks) Job xxxiii. 19, 20, 21. and the multitude of thy bones with strong pains, so that thy life abhorred bread, and thy soul dainty meat; thy flesh consumed away, that it could not be seen, and thy bones that were not seen, stuck out: Yet then, as it is verse 28. he delivered thy soul from going down into the pit, and caused thy life to see the light. Had the lamp of life been then extinguished, thou hadst gone down into endless darkness; hell had shut her mouth upon thee. Now tell me, soul, what hast thou done with this precious mercy? Hast thou walked before the Lord in a deep sense thereof, and answered his end therein, which was, to lead thee to repentance? Or hath thy stupid or disingenuous heart forgotten it, and lost all sense of it, so that God's end is frustrated, and thy salvation not a jot furthered

† Mr. Thomas Goodwin.

Digitized by Google

thereby? Oh! if it be so, woe to thee! for the blood of this mercy, which thy ingratitude hath murdered, like the blood of Abel, cries to God against thee. What a wretch art thou thus to requite the Lord for such a mercy! He saw thy tears, and heard thy groans, and said within himself, he shall not die, but live. Alas, poor creature! if I cut him off now, he is eternally lost: I will send him back a few years more into the world. I will try him once more, it may be he will bear some fruits to me from this deliverance; and if so, well; if not, I will cut him down hereafter: He shall be set at liberty upon his good behaviour a little longer. And is all this nothing in thine eyes? Wretch that thou art, dost thou forget and slight such a favour as this? Is it worth no more in thine eyes? Well, it would be worth something in the eyes of the poor damned souls, if they might have so many years cut out of their eternity, for a mere intermission of their torments, much more as a time of patience and mercy. O consider, what pity and goodness thou hast abused!

Quer. 2. Wast thou never cast upon miserable straits and extremities, wherein the good providence of God relieved and supplied thee? How many of you have been beaten so long at sea, by reason of contrary winds and other accidents, until your provisions have been exhausted and spent: To how short allowance have you been kept: And what a mercy would you have esteemed it, if you could but have satisfied nature with a full draught of water. Certainly, this hath been the case of many of you. O what a price and value did you then set upon those common mercies, which at other times have been slightly overlooked! And when you have seen no hopes of relief, have you not looked sadly one upon another? and, it may be, said, as that widow of Sarepta did to the prophet, 1 Kings xvii. 12. "And she said, as the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a "cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a "cruse; and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may "go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, "and die." Even such hath been your case; yet hath that God, whose mercies are over all his works, heard your sorrows, and provided relief for you, either by some ship, which providence sent to relieve you in that distress, or by altering the winds, and sending you safe to the land, before all your provisions have been spent. And hast thou kept no records of these gracious providences? Yea, dost thou abuse the creature, when thou are brought again to the full enjoyment of it; and possibly, receivest the creatures (whose worth thou hast so lately

Digitized by Google

ſeen in the want of them) without thankſgiving, or a ſenſible acknowledgment of the goodneſs of God in them? I ſay, doſt thou thus anſwer the expectations of God? Well, beware leſt God teach ſuch an unworthy creature, by woeful experience, that the opening of his hand to give thee a mercy, is worth the opening thy lips to bleſs him for it. Beware leſt that unthankful mouth that will not bleſs the Lord for bread and water, have neither the one nor the other to bleſs him for. I can give you a ſad inſtance in the caſe, and I have found it in the writing of an eminent divine, who ſaid he had it from an eye and ear-witneſs of the truth of it. A young man lying upon his ſick-bed, was always calling for meat; but when the meat he called for was brought unto him, he ſhook, and trembled dreadfully at the ſight of it, and that in every part of his body, and ſo continued, until his food was carried away. And thus he did, as often as any food was brought into his preſence; and not being able to eat one bit, pined away; but before his death, he freely acknowledged the juſtice of God in his puniſhment: For, ſaid he, in the time of my health, I ordinarily received my meat without thankſgiving. O let the abuſers and deſpiſers of ſuch mercies fear and tremble!

Quer. 3. Have you not been eminently protected and ſaved by the Lord, in the greateſt dangers and hazards of life; in fights at ſea, when men have dropt down at your right hand, and at your left, and yet the Lord hath covered your heads in the day of battle? And though you have been equally obnoxious to death and danger with others, yet your name was not found among theirs in the liſt of the dead. Or in ſhipwrecks, ah, how narrowly have ſome of you eſcaped! a plank hath been caſt in, you know not how, to ſave you, when your companions, for want of it, have gone down to the bottom; or you have been enabled to ſwim to the ſhore, when others have fainted in the way, and periſhed? In what a variety of ſtrange and aſtoniſhing providences hath God walked towards ſome of you, and what returns have you made to God for it? Oh, ſirs! I beſeech you, conſider but theſe two or three things that I ſhall now lay before you to conſider of.

Conſid. 1. An heathen will do more for a dung-hill-deity, than thou, that calleſt thyſelf a Chriſtian, wilt do for the true God, that made heaven and earth, Dan. v, 4. They praiſed the gods of ſilver, and of gold, and of braſs, of iron, wood, and ſtone. When the Philiſtines were delivered from the hand of Samſon, the text ſaith, Judg. xvi. 24. "They praiſed

Digitized by Google

"their god," &c. Then Dagon must be extolled. O let shame cover thy face!

Consid. 2. That the abuse of mercy and love is a sin that goes near to the heart of God. Oh! he cannot bear it. It is not the giving out of mercy that troubles him, for that he doth with delight; but the recoiling of his mercies upon him by the creatures ingratitude, this wounds. "Be astonished, O ye "heavens, at this, and be ye horribly afraid." And again, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth," Isa. i. 2. *q. d.* O you innocent creatures, which inviolably observe the law of your creation, be you all astonished, and clothed in black, to see nature cast, by sin, so far below itself, and that in a creature so much superior to you as man, who, in the very womb, was crowned a king, and admitted into the highest order of creatures, and set as lord and master over you; yet doth he act not only below himself, but below the very beasts. "The ox "knoweth his owner;" *(i. e.)* there is a kind of gratitude in the beasts, by which they acknowledge their benefactors that feed and preserve them. Oh! what a pathetical exclamation is that, Deut. xxxii. 6. "Do you thus requite the Lord, O "foolish people, and unwise."

Consid. 3. It is a sin that kindles the wrath of God, and will make it burn dreadfully against thee, unthankful sinner: It stirs up the anger of God, in whomsoever it be found, though in the person of a saint, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. "But Hezekiah "rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him: "for his heart was lifted up, therefore there was wrath upon "him, and upon Jerusalem." And so you read, Rom. i. that the Heathens, because they were not thankful, were given up to vile affections; the forest plague in the world. It is a sin that the God of mercy scarce knows how to pardon, Jer. v. 7. "How shall I pardon thee for this?" This forgetting of the God that saves us in our extremities, is a sin that brings desolation and ruin, the effects of God's high displeasure upon all our temporal enjoyments. See that remarkable scripture, Isa. xvii. 10, 11. "Because thou hast [forgotten] the God of [thy "salvation,] and hast not been [mindful] of the rock of [thy "strength:] Therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and "shalt set it with strange slips: In the day shalt thou make thy "plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed "to flourish; but the harvest shall be an heap in the day of grief, "and desperate sorrow." The meaning is, that God will blast and curse all thine employments, and thou shalt be under desperate sorrow, by reason of the disappointments of thy hopes.

Digitized by Google

Consid. 4. It is a sin that cuts of mercy from you in future straits: If you thus requite the Lord for former mercies, never expect the like in future distresses. God is not weary of his blessings, to cast them away upon such souls that are but graves to them. Mark what a reply God made to the Israelites, when they cried unto him for help, being invaded by the Amorites, Judg. x. 11, 12, 13. "Did not I deliver you from the "Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of "Ammon, and from the Philistines? The Zidonians also, "and the Amalekites, and ye cried unto me, and I delivered "you out of their hand. Yet ye have forsaken me, and served "other gods; wherefore I will deliver you no more." O sad world! it is, as if the Lord had said, I have tried what mercy and deliverance will do with you, and I see you are never the better for it: Deliverance is but seed sown upon the rocks. I will cast away no more favours upon you; now look to yourselves, shift for yourselves for time to come; wade through your troubles as well as you can. O brethren! there is nothing more quickly works the ruin of a people, than the abuse of mercy. O, methinks, this text should strike terror into your hearts. How often hath God delivered you? Remember thy eminent deliverance at such a time, in such a country, out of such a deep distress: God was gracious to thy cry then, thou hast forgotten and abused his mercy; what now, if God should say, as in the text, therefore I will deliver thee no more? Ah, poor soul! what wouldst thou do then, or to whom wilt thou turn? It may be thou wilt cry to the creatures for help and pity; but, alas! to what purpose? They will give as cold and as comfortless an answer as Samuel gave unto Saul, 1 Sam. xxviii. 15, 16. "And Samuel said unto Saul, Wherefore "hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war "against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth "me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore have I called thee, *&c.* Then said Samuel, wherefore "then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from "thee, and is become thine enemy?" Oh! thou wilt be a poor shiftless creature, if once by abusing mercy thou make it thine enemy!

Consid. 5. It is breach of vows made in distress to obtain these mercies; they have been easily forgotten and violated by thee when thou hast obtained thy desire: A word or two to convince you what a further evil lies in this, and how by this consideration thy sins come to be buoyed up to a greater

Digitized by Google

height, and aggravation of sinfulness; and then I have done with this head.

A vow is a promise made to God, in the things of God. The obligation of it is, by casuists, judged to be as great as that of an oath. It is a sacred and solemn bond, wherein a soul binds to God in lawful things; and being once bound by it, it is a most heinous evil to violate it. It is an high piece of dishonesty to fail in what we have promised to men, saith * Dr. Hall; but to disappoint God in our vows, is no less than sacrilege. The act is free and voluntary; but if once a just and lawful vow or promise hath past your lips, saith he, you may not be false to God in keeping it. It is with us for our vows, as it was with Ananias and Sapphira, for their substance: "Whilst "it remained (saith Peter) was it not thine own?" He needed not to sell and give it; but if he will give, he may not reserve: It is death to save some; he lies to the holy Ghost, that defalks from that which he engaged himself to bestow. If thou hast vowed to the mighty God of Jacob, look to it that thou be faithful in thy performance; for he is a great and jealous God, and will not be mocked.

Now, I am confident there be many among you, that, in your former distresses, have solemnly engaged your souls thus to God; that if he would deliver you out of those dangers, and spare your lives, you would walk more strictly, and live more holy lives than ever you did. You have, it may be, engaged your souls to the Lord against those sins, as drunkenness, lying, swearing, uncleanness, or whatsoever evil it was that your conscience then smote you for; the vows of God (I say) are upon many of you. But have you performed those vows that your lips have uttered? Have you dealt truly with God; or have you mocked him, and lied unto him with your lips, and omitted those very duties you promised to perform, and returned to the self-same evils you have promised to forsake? I only put the question, let your consciences answer it. But if it be so, indeed, that thou art a person that makest light of thy engagements to God, as indeed seamen's vows, and sick men's promises are, for the most part, deceitful and slippery things, being extorted from them by fear of death, and not from any deep resentment of the necessity, and weight of those duties to which they bind their souls: I say, if this sin lie upon any of your souls, I advise you to go to God speedily, and

* Cases of conscience.

Digitized by Google

bewail it; humble yourself greatly before him, admire his patience in forbearing you, and pay unto him what your lips have promised. And to move you thereunto, let these considerations, among many others, be laid to heart.

Consid. 1. Think seriously upon the greatness of that majesty whom thou hast wronged by lying to him, and falsifying thy engagements. O think sadly on this! it is not man whom thou hast abused, but God; even that God in whose hand thy life and breath is. For although (as one truly observes) there be not in every vow a formal invocation of God, (God being the proper correlate, and, as it were, a party to every vow, and therefore not formally to be invoked for the contestation of it); yet, there is in every vow an amplicit calling God to witness; so that certainly the obligation of a vow is not one jot beneath that of an oath. Now if God be as a party to whom thou hast past thy promise, and that obligation on that ground be so great; Oh what hast thou done! for a poor worm to mock the most glorious majesty of heaven, and break faith with God; what a dreadful thing is that! if it were but to thy fellow-creature, though the sin would be great; yet not like unto this. Let me say to thee as the prophet Isaiah, chap. vii. 13. "Is it a "small thing for you, to weary men, but will you weary my "God also?" If you dare to deceive and abuse men, dare you do so by God also? Oh! if the exceeding vileness of the sin do not affect thee, yet methinks the danger of provoking so dreadful a Majesty against thee should! And therefore consider,

Consid. 2. That the Lord will most certainly be avenged upon thee for these things, except thou repent. O read, and tremble at the word of God! Eccles. v. 4, 5, 6. "When thou vowest "a vow unto God, defer not to pay it: for he hath no pleasure "in fools; pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that "thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldst vow, and not "pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin, neither "say thou, before the angel, that it was an error; wherefore "[should God be angry] at thy voice, and [destroy] the works "of thy hands?" Mark, God will be angry, and in that anger he will destroy the work of thy hands, (*i. e.*) saith Diodate, 'bring thee and all thy actions to nought, by reason of thy 'perjury.' Now, the anger of God, which thy breach of promise kindles, as appears by this text, is a dreadful fire. O, what creature can stand before it? as Asaph speaks, Psalm lxxvi. 7. "Thou, even thou art to be feared; and who may "stand in thy sight, when once thou art angry?"

Consid. 3. Consider, that all this while thou sinnest against

Digitized by Google

knowledge and conviction; for, did not thy conscience plainly convince thee, when eminent danger opened its mouth, that the matter of thy neglected vow was a most necessary duty? If not, why didst thou bind thy soul to forsake such practices, and to perform such duties? Thou didst so look upon them then; by which it appears, thy conscience is convinced of thy duty, but lust doth master and over-rule: and if so, poor sinner, what a case art thou in, to go on from day to day sinning against light and knowledge? Is not this a fearful way of sinning? and, will not such sinners be plunged deeper into hell than the poor Indians, that never saw the evil of their ways, as thou dost? Ponder but two or three scriptures in thy thoughts, and see what a dreadful way of sinning this is: Rom. ii. 9. "Tribulation, anguish, and wrath, to every soul of man that "doth evil, to the [Jew first], and also to the Gentile." To the Jew first, (*i. e.*) to the Jew especially, and principally; he had a precedency in means and light, and so let him have in punishment. So Jam. iv. 17. "To him that knoweth to do good, and "doth it not, to him it is sin;" (*i. e.*) Sin with a witness, horrid sin, that surpasses the deeds of the wicked. So Luke xii. 47. "And that servant that knew his Lord's will, and pre-"pared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall "be beaten with many stripes." Which is a plain allusion to the custom of the Jews in punishing an offender, who being convicted, the judge was to see him bound fast to a pillar, his cloaths stript off, and an executioner with a scourge to beat him with so many stripes: but now, those stripes came but from the arm of a creature; these, that the text speaks of, are set on by the omnipotent arm of God. Of the former, there was a determinate number set down in their law, as forty stripes; and sometimes they would remit one of that number too, in mercy to the offender, as you see in the example of Paul, 2 Cor. xi. 24. "Of the Jews I received forty stripes "save one;" but in hell no mitigation at all, nor allay of mercy. The arm of his power supports the creature in its being, while the arm of his justice lays on eternally. Soul, consider these things; do thou not persist any longer then in such a desperate way of sinning against the clear conviction of thine own conscience, which in this case must needs give testimony against thee.

Well then, go to God with the words of David, Psal. lxvi. 13, 14. and say unto him, "I will pay thee, my vows which my "lips have uttered, and my tongue hath spoken when I was

Digitized by Google

" in trouble." Pay it, soul, and pay it speedily unto God, else he will recover it by justice, and fetch it out of thy bones in hell. O trifle not any longer with God, and that in such serious matters as these are!

And now I have done my endeavour to give your former mercies and promises a resurrection in your consciences. O that you would sit down and pause a while upon these things, and then reflect upon the past mercies of your lives, and on what hath passed betwixt God and your souls, in your former straits and troubles? Let not these plain words work upon thy spleen, and make thee say, as the widow of Sarepta did to the prophet Elijah, 1 Kings xvii. 18. " What have I to do with " thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come to call my sin " to remembrance?" But rather let it work kindly on thy heart, and make thee say as David to Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33. " Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee " this day to meet me; and blessed be thy advice."

CAUTION V.

THE fifth and last danger I shall warn you of, is, your contempt and slighting of death. Ah! how light a matter do many of you, at least in words, make of it? It seems you have little reverential fear of this king of terrors, not only that you speak slightly of it, but also because you make no more preparations for it, and are no more sensible of your preservations and deliverances from it. Indeed, the heathen philosophers did many of them profess a contempt of death, upon the account of wisdom and fortitude; and they were accounted the bravest men, that most despised and slighted it: But, alas, poor souls! they saw not their enemy against whom they fought, but skirmished with their eyes shut; they saw indeed its pale face, but not its sting and dart. There is also a lawful contempt of death. We freely grant, that, in two cases, a believer may contemn it. *First*, When it is propounded to them a temptation, on purpose to feare them from Christ and duty, then they should slight it; as Rev. xii. 11. " They loved not " their lives unto the death." *Secondly*, When the natural evil of death is set in competition with the enjoyment of God in glory, then a believer should despise it, as Christ is said to do, Heb. xii. 2. though his was a shameful death. But upon all other accounts and considerations, it is the height of stupidity and security to despise it.

Now, to the end that you might have right thoughts and apprehensions of death, which may put you upon serious preparation for it; and that when ever your turn comes to con-

Digitized by Google

rict with this king of terrors, under whose hand the Pompeys, Cæsars, and Alexanders of the world, who have been the terrors of nations, have bowed down themselves; I say, that when your turn and time comes, as the Lord only knows how soon it may be, you may escape the stroke of its dart and sting, and taste no other bitterness in death, than the natural evil of it: to this end I have drawn the following questions and answers, which, if you please, may be called *The Seaman's Catechism.* And, oh! that you might not dare to launch forth into the deeps, until you have seriously interrogated and examined your hearts upon those particulars. Oh! that you would resolve, before you go forth, to withdraw yourselves a while from all clamours and distractions, and calmly and seriously catechise your own selves in this manner.

Quest. 1. What may the issue of this voyage be?

Answ. Death, Prov. xxvii. 1. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Jam. iv. 13, 14. "Go to now, ye that say, To-day, or to-morrow, we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow; for what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

Quest. 2. What is death?

Answ. Death is a separation of soul and body, until the resurrection, 2 Cor. v. 1. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved." Job xiv. 10, 11, 12. Read the words.

Quest. 3. Is death to be despised and slighted, if it be so?

Answ. O no! it is one of the most weighty and serious things that ever a creature went about: so dreadful doth it appear to some, that the fear of it subjects them to bondage all their lives, Heb. ii. 15. "And to deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage." And in scripture it is called, *The king of terrors*, Job xviii. 14. Or the black prince, as some translate. Never had any prince such a title before. To some it hath been so terrible, that none might mention its name before them.

Quest. 4. What makes it so terrible and affrighting to men?

Answ. Several things concur to make it terrible to the most of men: as, *first*, Its harbingers and antecedents, which are strong pains, conflicts, and agonies. *Secondly*, Its office and work it comes about, which is to transfer us into the other world. Hence, Rev. vi. 8. it is set forth by a *pale horse*: an horse for its use and office to carry you away from hence into the upper, or lower region of eternity; and a pale horse, for its

Digitized by Google

ghastliness and terror. *Thirdly*, But above all, it is terrible in regard of its consequence; for it is the door of eternity, the parting point betwixt the present world and that to come; the utmost line and boundary of all temporal things. Hence, Heb. ix. 27. "It is appointed unto men once to die; but after this "the judgment," Rev. vi. 8. "And I looked, and behold, a "pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell "followed him." Ah! it makes a sudden and strange alteration upon mens conditions, to be plucked out of house, and from among friends, and honours, and so many delights, and hurried in a moment into the land of darkness, to be cloathed with flames, and drink the pure wrath of the Almighty for ever. This is it that makes it terrible.

Quest. 5. If death be so weighty a matter, am I prepared to die?

Answ. I doubt not; I am afraid I want many things that are necessary to a due preparation for it.

Quest. 6. What are those things wherein a due preparation for death consisteth?

Answ. Many things are necessary. *First*, Special and saving union with Jesus Christ. This is that which disarms it of its sting: "O death, where is thy sting? Thanks be to God, who "hath given [us] the victory, through [our] Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. xv. 55, 57. So John xi. 26. "Whosoever [liveth], "and [believeth] in me, shall never die." Whosoever liveth, (*i. e.*) is quickened with a new spiritual life and principle, and so puts forth the principal act of that life, *viz.* faith, he shall never die, (*i. e.*) eternally. This hornet, death, shall never leave its sting in his sides. *Secondly*, To entertain death comfortably, the evidence and knowledge of this union is necessary, 2 Cor. v. 1. "For we [know], that if our earthly "house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of "God," *&c.* And then he cannot only be content, but groan to be uncloathed, ver. 2. A mistake in the former will cost me my soul; and a mistake here will lose me my peace and comfort. *Thirdly*, In order to this evidence, it is necessary that I keep a good conscience in all things both towards God and man, 2 Cor. i. 12. "This is our rejoicing, even the testimony "of our conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not "in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our "conversation in the world." This good conscience respects all and every part of our work and duty to be done, and all and every sin to be renounced and denied: so that he is that is early united unto Christ by faith, hath the clear evidence of that uni-

Digitized by Google

on; and the evidence fairly gathered from the testimony of a good conscience, witnessing his faithfulness, as to all duties to be done, and sins to be avoided, he is fit to die; death can do him no harm; but, alas! these things are not to be found in me.

Quest. 7. But what if I die without such a preparation as this is? What will the consequence of that be?

Answ. Very terrible, even the separation of my soul and body from the Lord to all eternity; John iii. 36. "He that "believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that be- "lieveth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God "abideth on him." *He shall not see life;* there is the privative part of his misery, separation from the blessed God. *And the* [*wrath*], mark it, not anger, but wrath; not the wrath of man, but of [God], at whose rebukes the mountains skip like frighted men, and the hills tremble: the wrath of God not only flashes out upon him, as a transient flash of lightening, but [*abideth*], dwells, sticks fast; there is no power in the world can loose the soul from it. [*Upon him*], not the body only, nor the soul only, but on [*him*], (*i. e.*) the whole person, the whole man. Here is the principal positive part of that man's misery.

Quest. 8. Can I bear this misery?

Answ. No: my heart cannot endure, nor my hands be strong, when God shall have to do with me upon this account. I cannot bear his wrath; angels could not bear it; it hath sunk them into the depths of misery. Those that feel but a few sparks of it in their consciences here, are even distracted by it, Psalm lxxxviii. 15. Christ himself had never borne up under it, had it not been supported by the infinite power of the divine nature, Isa. xlii. 1. "Behold my Servant whom I uphold." How then shall I live, when God doth this? what will be done to the dry tree? Oh! there is no abiding of it, it is insufferable! "The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling surprizeth "the hypocrite: who among us shall dwell with the devour- "ing fire? Who can endure the everlasting burning?" Isa. xxxiii. 14.

Quest. 9. If it cannot be borne, is there any way to prevent it?

Answ. Yes, there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. And herein I am in better case than the damned; I have the [*may be's*] of mercy, and they have not. Oh! what would they give for a possibility of salvation? Isa. i. 16, 17, 18. "Wash "ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from "before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well," *&c.*

Digitized by Google

" Come now, let us reaſon together: and though your ſins be " as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as ſnow." Iſa. lv. 7 " Let the " wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his " thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will " have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abun- " dantly pardon." Though my diſeaſe be dangerous, it is not deſperate, it doth not ſcorn a remedy. Oh! there is balm in Gilead, and a phyſician there. There is yet a poſſibility, not only of recovering my primitive glory, but to be ſet in a better caſe than ever Adam was.

Queſt. 10. How may that be?

Anſw. By going to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Rom. viii. 1. " There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in " Chriſt Jeſus." Rom. viii. 33, 34. " Who ſhall lay any thing " to the charge of God's elect? It is God that juſtifieth, Who " is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died, yea, rather, " that is riſen again."

Queſt. 11. But what is it to go to Chriſt?

Anſw. To go to Chriſt, is to * embrace him in his † perſon and ‡ offices, and to reſt § entirely and cloſely upon him for ‖ pardon of ſin, and †† eternal life: being deeply ‡‡ ſenſible of the want and worth of him. John i. 12. " To as many as " [received] him, he gave power to become the ſons of God, " even to as many as believed on his name." John iii. 36. " He that believeth [on the Son] hath life." 1 Cor. i. 30. " And of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made " unto us wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemp- " tion." Acts iv. 12. " Neither is there ſalvation in any " other," *&c.* Acts xiii. 39. " And by him all that believe " are [juſtified from all things,] from which ye could not be " juſtified by the law of Moſes." Iſa. xlv. 22. " Look unto " me, and be ye ſaved," Acts ii. 37. " Now when they heard " this they were pricked to the heart," *&c.*

Queſt. 12. But will Chriſt receive me, if I go unto him?

Anſw. Yes, yes; he is more ready to receive thee, than thou art to come to him; Luke xv. 20. " And he aroſe, and " came to his father: but, when he was yet a great way off, " his father ſaw him, and had compaſſion on him, and ran, " and fell on his neck, and kiſſed him." The ſun doth but go, the father ran; if he had but received him into the houſe, it had been much; but he fell on his neck, and kiſſed him. He

* John i. 12. † John iii. 16. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 30 § Acts iv. 12, ‖ Acts xiii. 39. †† Iſa. xlv. 22. ‡‡ Acts ii. 37.

Digitized by Google

beſpeaks him, much after that rate he expreſſed himſelf to returning Ephraim: "My bowels are troubled for him; I will "ſurely have mercy on him," Jer. xxxi. 20. There is not the leaſt parentheſis in all the pages of free-grace, to exclude a ſoul that is ſincerely willing to come to Chriſt.

Queſt. 13. But how may it appear that he is willing to receive me?

Anſw. Make trial of him thyſelf. If thou didſt but know his heart to poor ſinners, you would not queſtion it. Believe what he ſaith in the goſpel; there thou ſhalt find that he is a willing Saviour; for therein thou haſt, firſt, his moſt ſerious invitations, Matth. xi. 28. "Come unto me, ye that are "weary and heavy laden." Iſa. lv. 1. "Ho! every one that "thirſteth, come ye to the waters." Theſe ſerious invitations are, ſecondly, backed and confirmed with his oath, Ezek. xxxv. 11. "As I live, I deſire not the death of a ſinner." Thirdly, Amplified with pathetical wiſhes, ſighs and groans, Luke xix. 42. "Oh! that thou hadſt known, even thou, at "leaſt, in this thy day." Fourthly, Yea, delivered unto them in undiſſembled tears, Mat. xxiii. 37, 38. "He wept over it, "and ſaid, O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem!" Fifthly, Nay, he hath ſhed not only tears, but blood, to convince thee of his willingneſs. View him in his dying poſture upon the croſs, ſtretching out his dying arms to gather thee, hanging down his bleſſed head to kiſs thee; every one of his wounds was a mouth opened to convince thee of the abundant willingneſs of Chriſt to receive thee.

Queſt. 14. But my ſins are dyed in grain; I am a ſinner of the blackeſt hue: will he receive and pardon ſuch an one?

Anſw. Yea, ſoul, if thou be willing to commit thyſelf to him: Iſa. i. 18. "Come now, let us reaſon together; though your "ſins be as ſcarlet, I will make them as ſnow; though they "be red like crimſon, I will make them as wool."

Queſt. 15. This is comfortable news; but may I not delay my cloſing with him for a while, and yet not hazard my eternal happineſs, ſeeing I reſolve to come to him at laſt?

Anſw. No; there muſt be no delays in this caſe; Pſalm cxix. 60. "I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy com-"mandments."

Queſt. 16. Why may I not defer it, at leaſt for a little while?

Anſw. For many weighty reaſons this work can bear no delays. Firſt, The offers of grace are made to the preſent time, Heb. iii. 15. "While it is ſaid to-day, harden not your heart."

Digitized by Google

There may be a few more days of God's patience, but that is unknown to thee. 2. Your life is immediate uncertain; how many thousands are gone into eternity since the last night? If you can say to sickness when it comes, Go, and come again another time, it were somewhat. 3. Sin is not a thing to be dallied with. Oh, who would be willing to lie down one night under the guilt of all his sins? 4. Delays increase the difficulty of conversion: sin still roots itself deeper; habits are the more strengthened, and the heart still more hardned. 5. There be thousands now in hell, that perished through delays; their consciences often urged and pressed hard upon them, and many resolutions they had, as thou hast now; but they were never perfected by answerable executions, and so they perished. 6. Thy way of sinning now is desperate; for every moment thou art acting against clear light and conviction; and that is a dreadful way of sinning. 7. There can be no solid reason for one hours delay; for thou canst not be happy too soon: and be sure of it, if ever thou come to taste of the sweetness of a Christian life, nothing will more pierce and grieve thee than this, that thou enjoyedst it no sooner.

Quest. 17. Oh, but the pleasures of sin engage me to it; how shall I break these cords and snares?

Answ. That snare may be broken by considering solemnly these five things. 1. That to take pleasure in sin, is an argument of a most deplorable and wretched state of soul. What a poisonous nature doth it argue in a toad, that is sucking in nothing but poison and filth where-ever it crawls? O what an heart hast thou! Hast thou nothing to find pleasure in but that which makes the Spirit of Christ sad, and the hearts of saints ake and groan, which digged hell, and let in endless miseries upon the world? 2. Think that the misery it involves thee in is infinitely beyond the delights it tempts thee by: it doth but delight the sensual part, and that but with a brutish pleasure, but will torment thy immortal soul, and that for ever. The pleasure will quickly go off, but the sting will remain behind. "I tasted but a little honey on the top of my rod, (said Jona-"than) and I must die," 1 Sam. xiv. 43. 3. Nay, that is not all; but the Lord proportions wrath according to the pleasures souls have had in sin, Rev. xviii. 7. "How much she hath "lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give unto "her." 4. What dost thou pay, or, at least, pawn for this pleasure? Thy soul, thy precious soul, is laid to stake for it; and, in effect, thus thou sayest, when thou deferrest the closing with Christ upon the account of enjoying the pleasures of sin a

Digitized by Google

little longer: Here, devil, take my soul into thy possession and power: if I repent I will have it again; if not, it is thine for ever. O dear-bought pleasures!

What is the world? A great exchange of ware,
Wherein all sorts and sexes cheapning are:
The flesh, the devil, sit and cry, what lack ye?
When most they fawn, they most intend to rack ye.
The wares are cups of joy, and beds of pleasure;
There's goodly choice, down weight, and flowing measure.
A soul's the price, but they give time to pay,
Upon the death-bed, or the dying-day.
Hard is the bargain, and unjust the measure,
When as the price so much outlasts the pleasure.

QUARLES.

Lastly, It is thy gross mistake to think thou shalt be bereaven of all delights and pleasures, by coming under the government of Christ: for one of those things in which his kingdom consists, is joy in the holy Ghost, Rom. xiv. 17. Indeed, it allows no sinful pleasures to the subjects of it, nor do they need it; but from the day thou closest in with Christ, all thy pure, real, and eternal pleasures and delights begin to bear date. When the prodigal was returned to his father, then, saith the text, "They "began to be merry," Luke xv. 24. See Acts viii. 5, 6. No, no, soul, thou shalt want no joy, for the scripture saith, "They "shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, "and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures; "for with thee is the fountain of life," *&c.* Psal. xxxvi. 8, 9.

Quest. 18. But how shall I be able to undergo the severities of religion? There are difficult duties to be done, and an heavy cross to be taken up; these be the things that daunt me.

Answ. If pain and suffering daunt thee, how is it thou art not more out of love with sin than with religion? For it is most certain, that the sufferings for Christ are nothing to hell, the just reward and certain issue of sin; the pains of mortification are nothing to the pains of damnation: there is no compare betwixt suffering for Christ, and suffering from Christ; Matth. v. 29. "If thy right hand or eye offend thee, cut it "off, and pluck it out; it is profitable for thee that one mem-"ber suffer, than that the whole body be cast into hell." Secondly, Thou seest the worst, but not the best of Christ. There be joys and comforts in those difficult duties and sufferings, that thou seest not; Col. i. 24. "Who now rejoice in my suf-

Digitized by Google

"ferings." James i. 2. "My brethren, count it all joy when "ye fall into divers temptations," &c. Thirdly, Great ſhall be thy aſſiſtance from Chriſt, Phil. iv. 13. "I can do all things "through him that ſtrengthens me. The Spirit helps our in-"firmities," takes the other end of the burden, Rom. viii. 26. What meaneſt thou to ſtand upon ſuch terms, when it is heaven or hell, eternal life or death, that lie before thee?

Queſt. 19. But to what purpoſe will my endeavours to come to Chriſt be, unleſs I be elected? All will be to no purpoſe.

Anſw. True; If thou be not elected, thou canſt not obtain him, or happineſs by him: but, yet, that is no diſcouragement to ſtrive: for in thy unconverted ſtate, thy election or non-election is a ſecret to thee: the only way to make it ſure, is by ſtriving and giving all diligence in the way of duty, 2 Pet. i. 10. And if you ponder the text well, you will find, that election is not only made ſure in the way of diligence and ſtriving, but calling is put before it, and lies in order to it: firſt ſecure thy effectual calling, and then thine election.

Queſt. 20. But I have no ſtrength of my own to come to Chriſt by: and is it not abſurd to urge me upon impoſſibilities in order to my ſalvation?

Anſw. Firſt, Certainly you are more abſurd in pleading and pretending your impotence againſt your duty; for you do think you have a power to come to Chriſt, elſe how do you quiet your conſcience with promiſes and ſolves of converſion hereafter? Secondly, Though it be true, that no ſaving act can be done without the concurrence of ſpecial grace; yet this is as true, that thy inability to do what is above thy power, doth not excuſe thee from doing what is in thy power to do. Canſt thou not forbear, at leaſt, many external acts of ſin? And canſt thou not perform, at leaſt, the external acts of duty? Oh! if thou canſt not come to Chriſt, yet, as the blind man, lie in the way of Chriſt: do what thou canſt do, and confeſs and bewail thy impoteney, that thou canſt do no more. Canſt thou not take thy ſoul aſide in ſecret, and thus bemoan it; my poor ſoul! what wilt thou do? O what will become of thee, thou art Chriſtleſs, covenantleſs, hopeleſs, and, which is moſt ſad, ſenſeleſs and bowelleſs? oh! thou canſt not bear the infinite wrath of the eternal God, whoſe Almighty power will be ſet on work to torment ſuch as thou art; and yet thou takeſt no courſe to prevent it! Thou ſeeſt the buſy diligence of all others, and how the kingdom of heaven ſuffers violence by them: and art not thou as deeply engaged to look to thy own happineſs, as any in the world? Will hell be more tolerable to thee than others?

Digitized by Google

O what a compoſition of ſtupidity and ſloth art thou: Thou liveſt after ſuch a rate, as if there were neither fire in hell to torment thee, nor glory in heaven to reward thee. If God and Chriſt, heaven and hell, were but dreams and fables, thou couldſt not be leſs affected with them. Ah, my ſoul! my ſoul! my precious ſoul! Is it eaſy to periſh? Wilt thou die as a fool dieth? O that men would but do this, if they can do no more!

And, now, ſoul, you ſee what death is, that you have made ſo ſlight of; and what is the only way that we poor ſons of death, have to eſcape its ſting. You have here ſeen the vanity of all your pleas and pretences againſt converſion, and the way to Chriſt prepared and caſt up for you. Now, ſirs, I beg you, in the name of God that made you, and as if I made this requeſt upon my bended knees to you, that you will now, without any more delays, yield yourſelves to the Lord. Soul, I beſeech thee, haſte thee into thy chamber, ſhut thy door, and beſpeak the Lord after ſome ſuch manner as this, before thou dareſt to launch out into the deeps again.

O dreadful and glorious Majeſty! thou haſt bowels of mercy, as well as beams of glory: I have heard the ſounding of theſe bowels for me this day. Lord, I have now heard a repreſentation of the grim and ghaſtly face of death: ah, I have now ſeen it as the king of terrors, as the door of eternity, as the parting point, where ſinners take their eternal farewel of all their delights: I have ſeen this black prince mounted on his pale horſe, and hell following him: I have been convinced this day, that if he ſhould come and fetch away my ſoul in that condition it is, hell would follow him indeed. Lord, I have now heard of the prince of life alſo, in whoſe bleeding ſide death hath left and loſt its envenomed ſting; ſo that though it may kill, yet it cannot hurt any of his members. To this glorious Redeemer I have now been invited; all my pretences againſt him have been confuted, and my ſoul, in his name, aſſured of welcome, if I come unto him, and caſt myſelf upon him. And now, Lord, I come, I come, upon thy call and invitation; I am unfeignedly willing to avouch thee this day to be my God, and to take thee for my portion. Lord Jeſus! I come unto thee; thy clay, thy creature moves towards the fountain of pity: look hitherto, behold a ſpectacle of miſery. Bowels of mercy, hear! behold my naked ſoul, not a rag of righteouſneſs to cover it; behold my ſtarving ſoul, not a bit of bread for you to eat: ah! it has fed upon wind and vanity hitherto. Behold my wounded ſoul bleeding at thy foot; every part, head and heart, will and affections, all wounded by ſin. O thou com-

Digitized by Google

passionate Samaritan! turn aside, and pour thy sovereign blood into these bleeding wounds, which, like so many opened mouths, plead for pity. Behold a returning submitting rebel, willing to lay down the weapons of unrighteousness, and to come upon the knee for a pardon. Oh, I am weary of the service of sin, I can endure it no longer! Lord Jesus, thou wast anointed to preach glad tidings to the meek, and to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; come now, and knock off those fetters of unbelief: O set my soul at liberty, that it may praise thee! For so many years Satan hath cruelly tyrannized over me. O that this might be the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of the salvation of my God! Lord, thou wast lifted up, to draw men unto thee; and, indeed, thou art a drawing Saviour, a lovely Jesus! I have hitherto slighted thee, but it was because I did not know thee: mine eyes have been held by unbelief, when thou wast opened in the gospel; but now I see thee as the chiefest of ten thousands. Thou art the glory of heaven, the glory of earth, the glory of Sion; and, oh! that thou wouldst be the glory of my soul! I confess, I am not worthy thou shouldst look upon me; I may much rather expect to be trampled under the feet of justice, than to be embraced in thine arms of mercy: and that thou shouldst rather shed my polluted blood, than sprinkle thine own upon me. But, Lord, what profit is there in my blood? Wilt thou pursue a dried leaf? Shall it ever be said, that the merciful King of heaven hanged up a poor soul that put the rope about his own neck, and so came self-condemningly to him for mercy! O, my Lord, I am willing to submit to any terms, be they never so hard and ungrateful to the flesh: I am sure, whatever I shall suffer in thy service, cannot be like to what I have suffered, or am like to suffer by sin; henceforth be thou my Lord and master; thy service is perfect freedom; be thou my priest and prophet, my wisdom and righteousness. I resign up myself unto thee; my poor soul with all its faculties, my body with all its members, to be living instruments of thy glory. Let *holiness to the Lord* be now written upon them all, let my tongue henceforth plead for thee, my hands be lifted up unto thy testimonies, my feet walk in thy ways: O let all my affections, as willing servants, wait upon thee, and be active for thee. Whatever I am, let me be for thee; whatever I have, let it be thine; whatever I can do, let me do for thee; whatever I can suffer, let me suffer for thee. O that I might say, before I go hence, my beloved is mine, and I am his! O that what I have begged on earth, might be rati-

Digitized by Google

fied in heaven! my ſpirit within me ſaith, *Amen.* Lord Jeſus, ſay thou *Amen.*

THE SEAMAN's COMPANION:

Wherein the Myſteries of Providence, relating to SEAMEN, are opened; their Sins and Dangers diſcovered; their Duties preſſed, and their ſeveral Troubles and Burdens relieved.

In ſix practical and ſuitable SERMONS.

To all Maſters, Mariners, and Seamen; eſpecially ſuch as belong to the Port of Dartmouth, and the Parts adjacent.

SIRS,

YOUR ready acceptation of my former labours for you, hath encouraged this ſecond and laſt endeavour of mine this way to ſerve you. I have for many years been convinced of the great uſe and need you have of the following diſcourſes: But the motives that quickned me to their publication at this time, were eſpecially theſe two:

Firſt, The hand of the Lord hath gone forth with terror againſt you; this winter many of your companions are gone down to the bottom. Such a doleful account of ſhipwrecks from every coaſt, and ſuch ſad lamentations as have been heard in almoſt every maritime town, cannot but deeply affect every heart with ſorrow and compaſſion, and hath engaged me in this ſervice for the remnant that is left.

Secondly, The ſeaſonable and prudent care his Majeſty hath at this time manifeſted for the regulation and preſervation of your Newland trade, and encouragement of your honeſt induſtry therein, hath alſo provoked me to haſten this deſign, for the regulation of your lives and manners, without which, all external means will ſignify but little to your true proſperity.

This little manual contains the ſum of your duty in the ſeveral parts of your employments, and faithfully diſcovers the temptations and dangers attending you in them all. Upon which conſideration it is fitly entituled, *The* SEAMAN's COMPANION.

Digitized by Google

As God hath cast my lot among you, so he hath inclined my heart studiously to promote your welfare. I have been, by long observation, convinced, that one principal cause of your miscarriages, is the neglect of God in your outsets. Did you pray more, you might expect to prosper better. Indeed, if that Epicurean doctrine were true, that God concerns not himself about the affairs of this lower world, but leaves all things to be swayed by the power of natural causes, your neglect of prayer might be more excusable: But, whilst successes and disappointments depend upon his pleasure, it cannot but be the most direct course you can steer to ruin all, to forget and neglect God in your enterprizes. To cure this evil, and prevent the manifold mischiefs that follow it, the *first sermon* is designed. And if the Lord shall bless it to your conviction and reformation, I may then comfortably apply the words of Moses to you, Deut. xxxiii. 18. "Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out."

You often hear the terrible voice of God in the storms; and are at your wit's end, not knowing what course to take, nor which way to turn for safety and comfort: And yet how soon are all those impressions worn off? And those mercies which (whilst new) were so affecting, after a few days become stale and common. I have, therefore, in the *second sermon*, laboured not only to direct and support you in those straits, but have also endeavoured to fix the sense of those providences upon your hearts, and instruct you how to make due improvements of them, by answering the several aims and designs of them.

It hath been much upon my heart, to what and how many temptations to sin you are exposed in foreign countries, where lawful remedies are absent, alluring objects present, and temptations exceedingly strengthned upon you, by hopes of secrecy and concealment: And, indeed, for a man, whose heart is not thoroughly seasoned with religion, and awed by the fear of God, to converse in such places, and with such company, and not be polluted with their sins, is, upon the matter, as great a miracle, as for the three children to come out of the fiery furnace without an hair singed, or the smell of fire upon their garments. I have therefore prepared for you the best preservative from these temptations in the *third sermon*, which the Lord make an effectual antidote to your souls against the corruptions that are in the world through lust.

I have frequently observed the mischievous influence that success and prosperity have had upon some of you: How the God of your mercies hath been forgotten, and his mercies

Digitized by Google

made instruments of sin against him: How apt are men to ascribe all to their own wisdom, care and industry, as if God had no hand in it? The *fourth sermon* therefore leads up your thoughts to the fountain of all your good, and drops many very seasonable and necessary cautions upon you, to keep you humble and thankful under prosperity.

And because men will not own God in their success, but sacrifice to their own net; God often teaches them the evil of it, by sad losses and disappointments: Yea, disappointments sometimes follow the best of men, and that in the most just and honest employments. To caution the former sort, and support the latter, in such a case, I recommend the *fifth sermon* to your serious consideration, not doubting, if the blessing of God go forth with it, but it may prove a very seasonable and useful discourse to you in that condition.

And, lastly, because it is so common for seamen to forget the many mercies they have received in a voyage, when it is over, and God hath brought them to the havens of desire, and among their relations, I have, in the *last sermon*, instructed them in their duty, and laboured to work in such a sense of mercies upon their hearts, as may engage them to a due and thankful acknowledgment of God in all.

You see, by this brief account, how honest the design is in which I have engaged for you. But I am sensible, that the management is very defective, it being dispatched in haste, and when my hands were filled with other work, and my body clogged with many infirmities. But, such as it is, I heartily devote it to the special service of your souls, and remain

Yours, in all Christian service,

JOHN FLAVEL.

DARTMOUTH, Jan. 21. 1675.

Digitized by Google

THE SEAMAN's FAREWEL.

SERMON. I.

Acts xxi. 5, 6. *And we kneeled down on the ſhore, and prayed; and when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ſhip, and they returned home again.*

THIS ſcripture gives us an account of the manner of Paul's embarking at Tyre, in his voyage for Jeruſalem; and therein an excellent pattern for all that go down into the ſeas, to do buſineſs in the great waters. It is true, his buſineſs, in that voyage, was not to get an eſtate, but to witneſs to the truths of Jeſus Chriſt, with the hazard of his life. Many diſcouragements he met with in this voyage, and not the leaſt at Tyre, where he met with certain diſciples that ſaid to him, by the Spirit, that he ſhould not go to Jeruſalem, though, in that, they followed their own ſpirit; but he is not to be diſſuaded: Like that noble Roman *, and upon a more noble account, 'he judged it neceſſary to go, but not to live.' The diſciples ſeeing his unalterable reſolution, expreſs their affections to him at parting, by bringing him to the ſhip, and that with their whole families, wives and children, ver. 5. therein giving him the laſt mark of their dear reſpects.

In this farewel, their Chriſtian affections are mutually manifeſted by two ſorts of actions,

Viz. { Sacred and Civil } in { Prayers and Salutations. }

1. Prayers; the beſt office one Chriſtian can do for another. As prayer is the beſt preface, ſo certainly it is the beſt cloſe to any buſineſs or enjoyment: In which prayer we may note the place, poſture, and matter or ſcope.

Firſt, The place; it was upon the *ſhore*, the parting place near to which the ſhip rode, waiting for Paul: And this was no unuſual thing among them in thoſe days. Tertullian † tells

* *Neceſſe eſt ut eam, non ut vivam.* Caeſar.

† *Per omne littus preces ad coelum mittunt.* Tertul. de Jejun.

Digitized by Google

us, "they sent their prayers to heaven from every shore;" and elsewhere, he calls them, *orationes littorales*, "shore-prayers." So customary it was for holy men, in those days, to be taken into the ship or boat from their knees, not from the tavern or ale-house.

Secondly, The posture; "they kneeled down." As all places, so all postures have been used in prayer. Some have used one posture, and some another; but this is the common and ordinary posture: Knees when they can (as an ingenious author speaks) then they must be bowed.

Thirdly, The matter and scope of the prayer, which though it be not expressed, yet may with great probability be argued from the place and occasion, to be, as Erasmus speaks, *Pro fausta navigatione*, for a prosperous voyage, and divine protection. He knew to what, and how many hazards of life they are hourly exposed, that border so near unto death, as mariners and passengers at sea do; and therefore would not commit himself to the sea, 'till first he had solemnly committed himself to God, whose voice the winds and seas obey: Nor was he willing to take his leave of his dear friends, until he had poured out his heart to God with them, and for them, whose faces he might never see again in this world, and engaged their prayers also for him.

2. As their affections were mutually manifested by this *sacred* action, *prayer*; so by *civil* ones too, affectionate embraces and *salutations*. "When we had taken our leave one "of another." Salutations were used among the Jews, both at their meeting and parting. This latter consisted in words and gestures; the usual words were, "The Lord bless you," Ruth ii. 4. "Peace be unto thee. Grace be with you," *&c.* The gestures were kissing each other. These were kisses which a Cato might give, and a Vestal receive. In both these, *viz.* their prayers for, and salutations of, each other, they manifested their Christian affections mutually, but especially by their prayers at parting. Hence note,

Doct. *Those that undertake voyages by sea, had need not only to pray earnestly themselves, but also to engage the prayers of other Christians for them.*

They that part praying, may hope to meet again rejoicing; and those designs which are not prefaced with prayer, cannot wind up with a blessing. There are two sorts of prayer, *stated* and *occasional*.

Stated prayer is our conversing with God, either publicly,

Digitized by Google

privately, or secretly, at the constant seasons allotted for it, in the returns of every week and day.

Occasional, is the Christian's address to God at any time upon extraordinary emergencies, and calls of providence; or, when we undertake any solemn business, (and what more solemn than this?) and then the chief matter and scope of prayer is to be suited to the present occasion and design in hand; of this sort is that I am here to speak. Now in opening the point, I will shew,

(1.) What those special mercies are that seamen should pray for, when they are to undertake a voyage.

(2.) What influence prayer hath upon those mercies, and how it must be qualified for that end.

(3.) What aid and assistance the prayers of other Christians may contribute to the procurement of them.

And then make application of all.

(1.) We will inform the seaman, what those special mercies are, he should earnestly pray for, when he undertakes a voyage.

And amongst those mercies to be earnestly requested of God by him, the first and principal is, *the pardon of sin*; a mercy which must make a part of every prayer, and at this time to be earnestly sued for. Guilt is that Jonah in the ship, for whose sake storms, shipwrecks, and ruin pursue it. It is said, Psalm cxlviii. 8. "That the stormy winds fulfil God's word." If the word there spoken of, be the word of God's threatening against sin, as some expound it, then the stormy winds, and lofty waves, are God's *serjeants* sent out with commission to arrest sinners upon the sea, his water-bailiffs to execute the threatenings of God upon them in the great deeps. Hence those expressions of scripture, Numb. xxxii. 23. "Be sure your "sin will find you out;" and Gen. iv. 7. "Sin lieth at the "door." In both which places, the Spirit of God compares a man's guilt to a blood-hound, that pursues and follows upon the scent where-ever a man goes. And indeed our sins are called *debts*, Matth. vi. 12. Not that we owe them to God, or ought to sin against him; but *metonymically*, because as pecuniary debts oblige him to suffer that hath not wherewith to pay, and expose him to the danger of serjeants and bailiffs where-ever he shall be found; so do our sins, in reference to God, who hath reckoned with many thousands of sinners upon the sea, there arrested them by his winds and waves which he sent out after them, and laid their bodies in the bottom of the sea, and their souls in the bottom of hell. Oh! that is a dismal

Digitized by Google

ſtorm, that is ſent after a man, to drive ſoul and body to deſtruction! with what heart or courage can that man go down into the deeps, and expoſe himſelf among the raging waves and roaring winds, that knows God hath a controverſy with him; and for ought he knows, the next ſtorm may be ſent to hurry him to the judgment-ſeat of the great and terrible God? Certainly, Friends, it is your great concern to get a pardon, and be at peace with God; a thing ſo indiſpenſible, that you cannot have leſs; and ſo comprehenſive, that you cannot deſire more. If ſin be pardoned, you are ſafe, you need fear no ſtorms within, whatever you find without: But woe to him that finds at once a raging ſea, and a roaring conſcience; trouble without, and terror within; ſhip and hope ſinking together. You are privy to all the evils and wickedneſs of your hearts and lives. You know what treaſures of guilt you have been heaping up all your days; and think you when diſtreſſes and extremities come upon you, conſcience will be as quiet and ſtill, as it is now? No, no, guilt will fly in your faces then, and ſtop your mouths. O therefore humble yourſelves at the feet of God for all your iniquities; apply yourſelves to the blood of ſprinkling; pray, and plead with God for remiſſion of ſin; without which you are in a woeful caſe to adventure yourſelves at ſea, to thoſe eminent perils of life.

(2.) Another mercy you are earneſtly to pray for is, That the *preſence* of God may go with you, I mean not his *general preſence*, which fills the world; that will be with you, whether you pray for it or no; but his *gracious ſpecial preſence*, which was that Moſes ſo earneſtly ſued for in Exod. xxxiii. 15. "If thy preſence go not with me, carry us not hence." He and the people were now in a waſte howling wilderneſs, but bound for Canaan, that earthly paradiſe; yet you ſee, he chuſes rather to be in a *wilderneſs* with God, than in a Canaan without him: and no wonder, for this gracious preſence of God, as to *comfort*, is all that a gracious ſoul hath, or deſires to have in this world; and as to ſecurity and protection from dangers, it is the only *aſylum*, ſanctuary, and refuge in the day of trouble. If the preſence of God be graciouſly with us, it will guard the heart againſt terror in the moſt imminent diſtreſs, as you ſee, Pſal. xxiii. 4. "Yea, though I walk thro' "the valley of the ſhadow of death," (that is, through the moſt apparent and imminent dangers of death *), "yet will I

* *Quamvis in ſumma mortis ipſius pericula incurram.* Gloſſ. Philol. Sacr.

Digitized by Google

"fear no evil, for thou art with me." And indeed there is no room for fear; for with whomsoever God is in a gracious and special manner present, these three matchless mercies are secured to that man.

First, That God's special providence shall watch over him in all dangers, Psalm xci. 1, and 4. "He shall abide under the "shadow of the Almighty; he shall cover thee with his "feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust." As the hen gathers her brood under her wings, not only to cherish, but to defend them from all danger, so God takes his people under his providential wings for their security.

Secondly, He appoints for them a guard of angels, whose office is to watch over and minister to them in all their straits. So we read, Psal. xci. 11. "He shall give his angels charge "over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." Many invisible services they do for us. Luther tells us the angels have two offices, *Superius canere, & inferius vigilare:* to sing above, and watch below. These are as a life-guard to that man with whom the Lord is.

Thirdly, He readily hears their cries in a day of distress, and is with them to save and deliver them. So ver. 15. "He shall "call upon me, and I will answer him, I will be with him in "trouble, I will deliver him, and honour him." O what a matchless mercy is this! how many times, when poor seamen have seen death apparently before their eyes, have they cried, *mercy! mercy!* How ordinary is it for their eyes, on such occasions, to add salt-water, where alas, there was too much before? But now to have God with you in such an hour of straits, to hear, support, and deliver you; O you cannot estimate the worth of such a mercy! Pray therefore, for it is a mercy indispensably necessary for you; and say to him, as Moses, "Lord, if thy presence may not go with us, carry us not "hence."

(3.) A third mercy you are specially concerned to beg of God, is, that you may be kept from the temptations to sin you will meet with when you are abroad in the world. The whole world lies in wickedness, 1 John v. 19. Every place, every employment, every company hath its snares and temptations attending it: And you know you have corrupt natures, as much disposed to close with temptations, as tinder is to catch fire: So that unless the preventing, restraining, and mortifying grace of God be with you, they will but touch and take. If there were no devil to tempt you externally; yet such a cor-

Digitized by Google

rapt heart meeting with a ſuitable temptation and occaſion, is enough to overcome you; Jam. i. 14. "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own luſts, and enticed." Alas! you know not what hearts you have till temptations prove them; and what comfort can you take in the ſucceſs and proſperity of your affairs, be it never ſo great, if you return with conſciences polluted and wounded with ſin. He that brings home a pack of fine cloaths, infected with the plague, hath no ſuch great bargain of it, how cheap ſoever he purchaſed them. O therefore beg earneſtly of God, that you may be kept from ſin; pray that you be not led into temptation.

(4.) Pray for *divine protection* in all the dangers and hazards to which you ſhall be expoſed. You know not how ſoon your life and eſtate ſhall be in jeopardy: This night you may ſleep quietly in your cabin, to-morrow you may be tugging at the pump, and the next night take up your lodging upon a cold rock. How ſmartly doth the apoſtle James reprehend the ſecurity of trading perſons; Jam. iv. 13, 14. "Go to now, ye that "ſay, to-day or to-morrow we will go into ſuch a city, and con-"tinue there a year, and buy and ſell, and get gain; whereas "you know not what ſhall be on the morrow. For what is "your life? It is even a vapour, that appears for a little time, "and then vaniſheth away." How eaſily can God daſh all your deſigns, and hopeful projects in one hour! You know you are every moment as near death, as you are near the water, which is but a remove of one or two inches. How poor a defence is the ſtrongeſt ſhip againſt the lofty ſeas, and lurking rocks? How innumerable are the accidents and contingencies in a voyage, which the moſt ſkilful navigator cannot foreſee or prevent?

They are, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks, at their wits end, Pſalm cvii. 27. But O how ſecure and ſafe, amidſt all dangers, is that man whom the Lord takes into his ſpecial protection? And he will not ſhut out thoſe that ſincerely commit themſelves to him: The winds and ſeas obey his voice; he can with a word turn the ſtorm into a calm, Pſalm cvii. 29. or order means for your preſervation, when you ſeem loſt to the eye of ſenſe and reaſon. I have read of a young man, that being in a great ſtorm at ſea, was obſerved to be very chearful, when all the reſt was as dead men; and being aſked the reaſon of his chearfulneſs, in a caſe of ſo much danger? He replied, 'Truly I have no cauſe to fear, for the pilot of the ſhip 'is my father.' O it is an unſpeakable comfort when a man

Digitized by Google

hath committed himself into the hands of God, as a Father, and trusted him over *all!*

(5.) Pray for counsel and direction in all your affairs and undertakings, and lean not to your own understandings. "I "know, O Lord, (saith the prophet) that the way of man is not "in himself, neither is it in him that walks, to direct his "own steps," Jer. x. 23. Undertake nothing without asking God's leave, and counsel. How many that have stronger heads than you, have miserably ruined themselves and their designs, by trusting to their own prudence? "A man's heart "(saith Solomon) deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth "his steps," Prov. xvi. 9. We must still reserve the power of God's providence, saith one †; God would not have us too carnally confident. The Lord can blast your enterprize, though managed with never so much wisdom and contrivance. You are not only to look to God as the *author* of *success*, but as the *director* and *guider* of the *action*. It is by his conduct and blessing, that all things come to pass. If your designs succeed not, you are presently ready to ascribe it to ill fortune, and say, you had bad luck; when indeed you ruined it yourselves, in the first moulding of it, by undertaking of it without asking counsel of God: "In all thy ways acknowledge him," Prov. iii. 6.

(6.) Pray for success upon your lawful employments and designs, and own it to be from the Lord. You have an excellent pattern in Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv. 12. "O Lord "God of Abraham thy servant, send me good speed this day." He reverences the sovereignty of providence, and acknowledges success to be a flower of the imperial crown of heaven, and the bridle that God hath upon the reasonable creature, to dispose of the success of human affairs. I look on that business or design in a fair and hopeful way to prosper, wherein we have engaged God to be with us, by asking his counsel, and recommending the success to his blessing. These are the mercies you are to pray for.

Secondly, Next I will shew you what influence prayer hath into those mercies you are to pray for; and it hath much every way. To be short, it hath a threefold influence into them.

† Manton on Jude. It is a robbery to use goods without the owner's leave. We forget to bid ourselves good speed, when we do not acknowledge God's dominion. This is but a piece of religious manners.

Digitized by Google

(1.) It is a proper and effectual means to obtain and procure them. God will have every thing fetched out by prayer, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. "I will yet for this be inquired of by the houſe "of Iſrael, to do it for them." God gives not our mercies for prayers, nor will he give them without our prayers. This is the ſtated method in which our mercies are conveyed to us; and therein the wiſdom and goodneſs of God are eminently diſcovered. His wiſdom in making us to ſee the author of every mercy in the way of receiving it, and ſecuring his own glory in the diſpenſing of every mercy: His *goodneſs* to us, in ſweetening every mercy this way to us, and raiſing its value in our eſtimation. Prayer coming between our wants and ſupplies is a ſingular means to raiſe the price of mercies with us, and engage us to due improvements of them. So that it is an idle pretence for any to ſay, God knows our wants, whether we pray or no; and if mercies be decreed for us, we ſhall have them, though we aſk them not: for though God knows our wants, yet he will have us know them too, and ſenſibly to feel the need of mercy. And though prayer be altogether needleſs to his *information*, yet it is very neceſſary to teſtify our ſubmiſſion: And though it is true, if God have decreed mercy for us, we ſhall have it; yet it is not true, that therefore we need not to pray for it: For decrees exclude not the ſecond means, nor render the creatures duty unneceſſary. "I "know the thoughts, that I think towards you, ſaith the Lord, "thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected "end. Then ſhall ye call upon me, and ye ſhall go and pray "unto me, and I will hearken unto you," Jer. xxix. 11, 12. So that it is plain, mercies muſt be expected in the way of prayer, that being God's appointed way, and ſtated method in the diſpenſing of them.

(2.) As prayer hath influence into the procuring of our mercies, ſo it hath a ſingular influence into the ſweetening of them: no mercies ſo ſweet as thoſe that are received upon the knee. There is a twofold ſweetneſs men taſte in their earthly enjoyments: one is *natural*, and that thoſe that never eye God in them, may reliſh as much as others; the other is *ſpiritual*, and ſupernatural, reſulting from the conſideration of the way in which, and the end for which they are given: and I am confident, ſuch is the refreſhing ſweetneſs of mercies coming in the way of prayer, that they derive a thouſand times more ſweetneſs from the channel through which they come, than they have in their own natures. So that it was rightly obſerved by

Digitized by Google

him that said, 'A believer tastes more sweetness in the common bread he eats at his own table, than another can do in the consecrated bread he eats at the Lord's table.' And then,

(3.) Prayer hath a sanctifying influence upon all our enjoyments, and therefore no wonder it makes them so sweet: what you obtain this way, you obtain with a blessing, and that is the sweetest and best part of any enjoyment. So you find, 1 Tim. iv. 5. every creature is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. One mercy of this kind is better than ten thousand promiscuously dispensed in the way of common providence: by these no man knows love or hatred; but these surely come from God's love to us, and end in the increase of our love to him. So that you see prayer hath a manifold influence upon our mercies: But it is not any kind of prayer that doth thus procure, sweeten and sanctify our mercies to us: some mens prayers rather obstruct than farther their mercies; but if it be the fervent prayer of a righteous man, directed by the rule of the word, to the glory of God, we may say of such prayer, as David said of Saul's sword, and Jonathan's bow, it never returns empty *.

Thirdly, I shall shew what aid and assistance the prayers of others may give to the procurement of the mercies we desire; for you see this instance in the text, it was the united joint-prayers of the disciples with Paul, that on this occasion was judged necessary.

Now considering prayer according to its use, and end, as a means of obtaining mercy from the Lord; the more disposed, apt, and vigorous the means are, the more *surely* and *easily* the mercies are obtained which we pray for. There may be much zeal, fervency, and strength in the prayer of a single saint: Jacob alone may wrestle with God, and as a prince prevail; but much more in the joint united force of many Jacobs. *Vis unita fortior;* if one can do much, many can do more. O what may not a blessed combination of holy and humble spirits obtain from the Lord! If one man's heart be dead and out of tune, another's may be lively and full of affection. Besides, God delights in those acts of mercy most, by which many are refreshed and comforted; and where there is a common stock of prayers going, like a common adventure in one ship, there the return of prayer, like the return of such a ship, makes many glad hearts. Certainly it is of great advantage for the people of God, to engage as many as they can to pray for them. When Dani-

* If the good ask good, it is a good manner, and for a good end.

Digitized by Google

el was to obtain that secret from the God of heaven, Dan. ii. 17, 18. he makes use of his three friends to improve their acquaintance with God, and interest in God for him upon that occasion. "Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing "known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah his companions, "that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven con- "cerning this secret." Some Christians have greater intimacies with God than others, they are special favourites in the court of heaven; and what an advantage it is to be upon their hearts, when they are with God, judge ye. I remember St. Bernard having spoken of the due frames and tempers that Christians should strive to work their hearts into, when they are engaged in this work of prayer, concludes with this request, *Et quum talis fueris, memento mei. And when thy heart* (saith he) *is in this temper, then remember me.* Oh! it is a singular mercy to be interested in their prayers that are in special favour with God! It is true, Jesus Christ is the great favourite, for whose sake all prayers are heard: and without his intercession, the intercessions of an Abraham, a Moses, a Jacob, signify nothing; but in the virtue of his intercession, the intercessions of others may be singularly advantageous to us. Job's friends were good men, but yet they must go to Job, and get his prayers for them, before God would be intreated for them, Job xlii. 8.

And, indeed, upon the contrary, it is a sad sign that God designs not to give us that mercy which he takes off our own heart, or the hearts of others from praying for. When he saith, Pray not for such a man, or for such a mercy for him, the case then becomes hopeless, the mercy is set, and there is no moving it, Jer. xiv. 11. But if once a spirit of prayer be poured upon you, and upon others too in your behalf, you may look upon the mercy as even at the door, and count it as good as if it were in your hand. And thus you see what the mercies are you should pray for; what influence prayer hath upon them; and what assistance the prayers of other Christians may contribute to the obtaining of them; that so your hearts may be excited and encouraged, not only to pray for yourselves, but to engage as many as you can to seek the Lord for you, as you see Paul here did, when he was undertaking his dangerous voyage. In the next place I shall apply it.

Use 1. And, first, This may serve sharply to reprove the generality of our seamen, who mind every thing necessary to their voyage, except prayer, the principal thing; who go out in voy-

Digitized by Google

ages without asking God's leave or blessing. And here three sorts of persons fall under conviction, and just rebuke.

First, Such as do but mock God, and delude themselves by heartless, dead and empty formalities. Some there be that dare not altogether slight and neglect prayers, but *pro forma*, they will do something themselves; and it may be as a compliment, or, at most, as a customary thing, will desire the prayers of others: but, alas! there is no heartiness or sincerity in these things; they are no way affected with the sense of their own wants, sins, or dangers; they never understood the use, nature, or end of prayer. We blame the blind Papists, and that justly, for their blind devotions, who reckon their prayers by number, and not by weight; and truly, there is but little difference between theirs, and some of our devotions. It is † St. Augustine's counsel, "Do you learn to have in your hearts what "every one hath in his lips." O that you would once learn to be in earnest with God! to pray as men that understand with whom you have to do; and what great things you have to transact with God! ah, my friends, you may believe it, that if ever you had felt the weight of sin upon your consciences, and had had such sick days and nights or it, as some have had, you would not ask a pardon so coldly and indifferently as you do. If you did but know the benefit of God's presence with you in troubles, how sweet it is; or could but apprehend how terrible a thing it is to be left of God, as Saul was, in the day of distress, you would weep and make supplication for his gracious presence to go forth with you; and would say, with Moses, "If thy "presence may not go with me, then carry me not hence." But, alas! these things appear not to you in their reality and importance. And hence is all that wretched formality and deadness of spirit.

Secondly, It rebukes much more such as wholly slight and neglect prayer, as a useless and vain thing; who undertake designs without prayer, not at all acknowledging God in any of their ways. And it is justly to be suspected, there are multitudes of such practical atheists among seamen, as well as other orders of men. Poor men! my heart mourneth over you; you are certainly a forlorn set of men, who live without God in the world. It was anciently said, "he that would learn to "pray, let him go to sea ‡:" But now, how long may a man

† *Discite habere in corde, quam omnis homo habet in lingua.* Aug. in Ps. 32.

‡ *Qui nescit orare, discat navigare.*

Digitized by Google

be at sea, before he hear a praying seaman! Let your families from which you part, witness what conscience you have made to seek God, as you have been here directed, before your outset: it is said, Deut. xxxiii. 18. to the tribe of seamen, "Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out." But in this case we may invert the words, and say, *Mourn, O ye seamen, in your going out.* How deplorable a case is this? Let your cabins witness what conscience you make of the duty of prayer: you can talk and sleep there, but when did you pray there? You there hear the voice of God in the roaring seas; but when did God hear your voice in prayer? You see the wonders of God in the deeps, wonders of *creation*, and wonders of *preservation*; but mean time you yourselves are the greatest wonders that are to be seen in the sea: men immediately depending upon God for their lives, liberties, and estates, every moment, and not once owning or acknowledging him by prayer.

The very * Heathens will rise up in judgment against you, and condemn you. I remember Plato brings in Alcibiades asking Socrates, How he ought to express his resolution and purposes? To whom he thus answereth; "Before every undertaking thou must say, If God will." And we know the eastern nations would undertake nothing of moment, without first acknowledging God by prayer. The Greeks σὺν Θεῷ, by the leave or blessing of God, is known to all. The Turks will condemn such as you are, for they fail not to pray five times a day, how urgent soever their business be. The blind and superstitious Papists will condemn you, with whom it is a proverb, *Mass and meat hinder no man.* Oh! whither will you turn? And who shall comfort you, when trouble comes upon you? Wonder not at crosses and disappointments in your business; how can you expect it should be otherwise, as long as God is neglected, yea, disowned? Say not, this is the fruit of *ill luck*, but of your profane neglects. If the success of all your business depends upon God (as none but Atheists dare deny) then certainly the directest and readiest course a man can take to destroy all, is to disengage God by a sinful neglect of him. The most compendious way to ruin, is to forget God, and cast off prayer. "Pour out thy fury (saith the prophet) upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not upon thy name," Jer. x. 25. Will nothing less than extremity make you cry to God? Wonder not then, if God bring you

* Αλλα που; χρη γελειν, *cui respondet.* Socrates. Ουτι των Θεος ειλετο. Plato in Timeo.

Digitized by Google

unto that extremity which your profaneneſs makes neceſſary for your awakening.

Thirdly and *laſtly*, How much ſadder, and more deplorable, is the caſe of thoſe that not only neglect to call upon the name of God by prayer, but do alſo wound his name through and through by their curſed oaths and blaſphemies? who inſtead of going on board praying, as Paul here did, go on board curſing, ſwearing, and blaſpheming his great and dreadful name; not going from their *bended knees*, but drunken *ale-benches*, to the ſhip.

O the admirable patience of God! O the power of his long-ſuffering! that ever that ſhip ſhould ſwim one hour above water, that carries ſuch loads of ſin and guilt within it! It is noted in Gen. iv. 26. in the days of Seth, "That then men began to "call upon the name of the Lord." Some tranſlate לקרא the word *invocation*, or prayer, and ſome profanation; then began profaneneſs in calling upon the name of the Lord. In a mournful feeling of this diſhonour done to God by it, Seth calls the ſon that was born to him in thoſe times, *Enoch*, or *Sorrowful*. Sure I am, however the word be here to be tranſlated, there is a vile generation in our days, that inſtead of calling upon the name of the Lord by prayer, do call upon it profanely, rending and tearing that great and terrible name with the language of hell. Poor man! with what hope or encouragement can thoſe lips of thine, in the day of thy extremity, cry, *Mercy! mercy!* that have ſtruck through the ſacred name of God ſo many times with blaſphemy! O that you would lay it to heart! O that this day God would ſet your ſins in order before you!

Is this a beginning that promiſes a comfortable iſſue? Do you thus prepare yourſelves to meet death and danger? O my ſoul! come not thou into their ſecrets! O let God rather ſtrike me perfectly dead whilſt I live, than afflict my ſoul through my ears with theſe dreadful dialects of the damned.

Uſe. 2. In the next place this point is exceeding uſeful, by way of *exhortation*, to perſuade all men, and particularly ſeamen, to be men of prayer; to imitate that noble pattern in the text, and no longer to live in the neglect of a duty ſo neceſſary, ſo ſweet, and ſo beneficial to them, as the duty of prayer is. O that you did but know the excellency of this duty! how would you give yourſelves unto prayer! As David ſpeaks, Pſalm. cix. 4. Now to perſuade you to be praying men, and no longer to live in the neglect of ſo excellent a duty, I will offer theſe motives to your conſideration.

Motive 1. *God hath ſtiled himſelf a God hearing prayer,*

Digitized by Google

For your encouragement to this duty, he hath assumed this title to himself, Psalm lxv. 2. "O thou that heareſt prayer, unto "thee shall all fleſh come." You cry not as the Heathens do, to stocks and stones, that cannot help or hear them that seek to them, but to the living and true God, by whom never did any upright soul lose a prayer. And to come home to your case more fully, he is a God that hears the prayers of poor distressed men upon the seas, when all hope and human help have utterly failed them. So you read in Psalm cvii. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do "business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, "and his wonders in the deep: for he commandeth, and raiſ- "eth 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, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits "end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he "bringeth them out of their distreſs." So that what the Psalmist elsewhere speaks of the mystical depths of trouble, is true here even in a proper literal sense: "Out of the depths "have I cried unto thee, O Lord, hear my voice," Psal. cxxx. 1, 2. Many a prayer hath been heard, and miraculously answered upon the sea. There have men been convinced, and fully satisfied, that it is not in vain to cry to the Lord. So evident and clear have been the appearances of God at the cry of the poor distressed creatures, that they have sensibly and thankfully acknowledged him according to his name: "The hope "of the ends of the earth, and the confidence of them that "are afar off upon the sea," Psalm lxv. 5. Who is there among you, that has not either heard of, or himself been an example, and instance of this truth? I might here insert many famous examples to confirm it, but the case is too plain to need them, and it would be too great a digression.

Motive 2. *Prayer is certainly the best relief to the distreſſed.* We may say of it, as David said of the sword of Goliah, give me that, for there is none like it. You that are seamen, know what the use of the *pump* is, when the waters leak into your ship, and of what use the scupper-holes are to you, when waves break and dash over your necks: why, of the same use is prayer, when sorrow leaks into your hearts, and distresses are ready to overwhelm your souls. This gives a vent to that which else would quickly sink you. "Your hearts shall live "that seek the Lord," Psalm lxix. 32. Prayer will buoy up your fainting spirits; it will sensibly ease an oppressed heart.

Digitized by Google

No fear of fainting, while a man continues praying. Luther was wont to call prayers the leeches of his cares and troubles. O but if troubles come in upon a man every way, and he have no vent, no outlet for them, when the ordinary vents of reason, courage, and resolution are all choaked (as sometimes they are) and there is no succour or relief coming in from heaven; what a wretched forlorn condition is such a poor creature in? O therefore get acquaintance with this excellent duty.

Motive 3. *All secondary means of deliverance and comfort necessarily depend upon the will and pleasure of God, and signify nothing without him.* What the Psalmist saith of an horse, I may say of a ship, Psalm xxxiii. 17. That it is a vain thing for safety. Alas! what a poor defence is it against those giant-like waves of the sea? And that men (especially seamen) may be convinced of this, God hath many times caused those stately and strong-built ships to perish, and be dashed all to pieces, and preserved those that were not safe in them upon a plank or broken piece of the ship, Acts xxvii. 44. which have carried them more safely to the shore than it could do. And will you not yet see that means signify nothing without God, and that your dependance upon him is necessary in every condition, and the acknowledgment thereof so too? I am perswaded there would not be half so many shipwrecks and disappointments as there are, if your carnal confidence in the means were less, and your reliance upon the Lord more. Therefore it is you so often receive the sentence of death in yourselves, that you may learn not to trust in yourselves, but in God. Oh! were but your sails filled by prayer, how prosperous would your designs be?

Motive 4. *Whatever deliverances from dangers, or success in business, you receive out of the way of prayer, can yield you but little comfort; for they are not sanctified to you.* You may be delivered, though you pray not, and success may follow those that seek not God for it; but that which you call deliverance, is rather a reservation to future misery; and that you call success, is but a snare to your souls. You have the things, but not the comfort and blessing of them. God may give your desire to your ruin; your lives may be rescued for a time from death, that you may fill up the measure of your iniquities. Your affairs may prosper, and that prosperity may destroy you, Prov. i. 32. At best it is but an effect of common providence; and of such deliverances you can never say as Hezekiah said of his; and every one that receives the like mercy in the way of prayer, may say of his, Isa. xxxviii. 17. "But thou hast in love to

Digitized by Google

" my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou " hast cast all my sins behind thy back." I deny not, but a deliverance by the hand of common providence is a mercy in itself; and it may prove a very great mercy to you in the event, if time thereby added to your life be a space of repentance; else it is but a short reprieval of your damnation, and leaves you to perish under greater guilt than was upon you before. But, on the contrary, how sweet are those mercies that come in the way of prayer; that discover God's love to you, and inflame yours to him? One such mercy is worth a thousand of the former.

Motive 5. *Consider all you that go out without prayer, how soon you may be out of a capacity of prayer.* Now you will not, and shortly you may not, have one opportunity to pray for evermore: now unbelief shuts your mouths, and shortly death may do it. How soon may you be past your prayers, both your own and others, and be fixed by death in your unalterable condition? O seek the Lord therefore whilst he may be found, call upon him whilst he is yet near. Now is your praying season, hereafter there will be no use of prayer. " For this, " (saith the Psalmist,) shall every one that is godly pray unto " thee, in a time when thou mayst be found: surely in the " floods of great waters, they shall not come nigh unto him." Psal. xxxii. 6. *i. e.* saith Deodate upon the place, in the time of the general destruction of sinners, as it was in the deluge; then there is no coming nigh to God by prayer, nor canst thou come nigh him in the day of thy particular destruction, by the flood of great waters. O therefore live not a day longer in the profane and sinful neglect of this great duty of prayer!

Object. *Why, but I observe those that pray not, generally escape as well as they that do.*

Answ. This objection was once made by a soldier in the time of fight, when he was pressed by his companion to pray; and God quickly stopped his blaspheming mouth with a mortal bullet. Have a care of such bold atheistical pleas; they greatly provoke the Lord against you: I had rather die praying, than live prayerless.

Object. *But to what purpose is it for me to pray, if I am unregenerate? God hears not such prayers, if I make them: and, besides, the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

Answ. Labour therefore to get into a regenerate state, and be not persuaded to rest a day longer in so sad a condition.

Digitized by Google

However, in the mean time, you must know, that prayer being a part of natural worship, all men, even the unregenerate, are obliged to it by the light and law of nature; otherwise, the neglect of it could not be their sin.

Object. *But many pray, and receive not: I myself have often done so.*

Answ. "You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss," Jam. iv. 3. If we were disposed to receive as God is to give, we should not be long without the answer of our prayers.

(1.) If Your persons were accepted through Christ, your prayers should be accepted too, Gen. iv. 4. But you are in a state of nature, destitute of the Spirit, John xv. 7. And so your voice is to God not the voice of a child, but a stranger.

(2.) If your prayers were regulated by the will of God, they could not miss of the desired success; 1 John v. 14. "If we "ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us."

(3.) If your prayers had more faith and fervency, they would not return empty; see Jam. i. 6. and v. 16. Well then, object no more against your duty, but in the fear of God apply yourselves to it, and dare not to go forth in any design, until thou hast by prayer recommended thyself, and thy affairs to God. Go alone, my friends, retire from the world; and say not, you cannot spare time for prayer; better any thing else were neglected than this. Tell the Lord, thou art now launching forth into the ocean, and knowest not what this voyage may bring forth. Possibly thou mayest never return to the land of thy nativity any more; but however it shall please him to dispose the event, beseech him with all earnestness, that thou mayest have the pardon of sin sealed to thee before thou go. O beg him to separate guilt from thy person, before thou be separated from thy habitation and relations; lest that stroke that shall separate thy soul from thy body, should eternally separate both soul and body from God.

Desire of the Lord that his presence may go with thee whereever thou shalt go. Tell him, it is the fountain both of thy safety and comfort. Desire him, if his presence may not go with thee, not to carry thee hence. All the relief thou hast against trouble, is wrapped up in that promise of his, *I will be with him in trouble.* Tell him, those will be tasteless comforts, and succourless troubles, in which he is not.

Intreat the Lord, with all importunity, to keep thee, by his fear, from the sins and temptations that are in the world. Tell him, thou art sensibly affected with the danger which thy own corrupt heart will every where expose thee to: sins in buying

Digitized by Google

and selling, into which thou mayeſt eaſily be drawn by an earthly covetous heart: ſins in drinking, wherein thou mayeſt be entangled (except he keep thee) by evil company, and an irregular appetite: ſins of uncleanneſs, by which thou mayeſt be overcome in the abſence of lawful remedies, and preſence of alluring objects, except his fear quench the temptation, and break the ſnare.

Be earneſt alſo with the Lord for his gracious protection of thee in all thy dangers. Tell him, thou canſt not be in ſafety any where, but under the ſhadow of his wings. Tell him, *at what time thou art afraid, thou wilt truſt in him*; and beſeech him, that when thy heart ſhall be overwhelmed with fears and troubles, he will lead thee to the rock that is higher than thee. Beſeech him alſo to give thee counſel in all thy ſtraits and difficulties, that thou mayeſt not lean to thine own underſtanding, but that he will make thy way plain before thee.

And if it be his good pleaſure, that he would bleſs thy juſt and honeſt enterprizes with ſucceſs and proſperity: which if he ſhall do, tell him, it is thy deſire, and beg the aſſiſtance of his grace, that thou mayeſt improve all thy mercies to his praiſe. If thus you ſet forth in the fear of God, you may expect a ſweet ſucceſs, and happy iſſue.

THE SEAMAN in a STORM.

SERMON II.

PSAL. cvii. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. *They that go down to the ſea in ſhips, that do buſineſs in great waters: theſe ſee the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For 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, and ſtagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he brings them out of their diſtreſs.*

THIS *pſalm* contains an excellent account of the myſterious and admirable effects of providence: and this *pa-*

Digitized by Google

ragraph contains that vein or branch of *divine providence* which respects seamen; a sort of men more immediately depending upon the favour of providence than any men in the world; though all do necessarily and continually depend upon it.

In these verses we have a description, both (1.) of the persons, (2.) of the danger, (3.) of the deliverance, by the wonderful working of *divine providence* for them.

First, A description of the persons about whom this wonderful providence is exercised: "They that go down to the "sea in ships; that do business in great waters;" the periphrasis of a *seaman*. These are said *to go down to the sea in ships*, not because the sea is lower than the land, but because it is lower than the shore, which is the rampart raised by providence against its inundations. And their end or design in going down into the sea, is not pleasure and recreation, but to do business, (*i. e.*) to export and import such wares and commodities as are necessary, if not to the being, at least, to the well-being of the several kingdoms and countries of the world. These are the men here spoken off, who "see (more than any) "the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." Works and wonders by an ὑπὸ δύο, usual figure, is as much as his wonderful works; namely, of *creation*, in the strange and monstrous productions of the sea; and of *preservation*, with respect to themselves, in the dreadful dangers they there encounter. Thus the person or subject is described.

Secondly, The danger is likewise described, in which these sea-faring men are sometimes involved; and indeed the Psalmist here gives us a very rhetorical and elegant description of their condition in the stormy sea; and shews us how deplorable their state and condition is at such a time. Where we are to note both the causes and effects of these tempests.

1. The causes; and they are twofold.

First, The principal cause, the will and pleasure of God. He commandeth and raiseth the stormy winds. This is God's prerogative; none can raise winds but himself; and if devils or witches do it at any time, yet it is still by his permission; as you see in Job i. 12, 19. the Lord is said to hold the wind in his fists, Prov. xxx. 4. as a man holds a wild fierce beast in a chain, or by a collar: and when they blow, "He brings them out of "his treasuries," Psal. cxxxv. 7. There is indeed a natural cause of winds, of which philosophers give us this rational account, 'That it is a hot and dry exhalation raised from the earth, by 'the power of the heavenly bodies, which being repelled or forced back by the coldness of the middle region, moves oblique-

Digitized by Google

'ly or slantingly, and sometimes very violently through the 'air.' But though this be the natural cause of the winds, yet this doth not at all restrain the absolute sovereignty of God over them. It is he *that commands, and raiseth them*, as the text speaks; and though it be said, John iii. 8. "The wind "blows where it listeth;" yet that expression makes it not an arbitrary creature; but the meaning is, either thus, It blows where it listeth, for any opposition that man can make to it, though it cannot blow where it listeth in respect to God. Or thus, such is the great variableness and instability of the winds, blowing now this way, now that, that it seems to move with a kind of spontaneity, as a bird doth in the air; though indeed it doth but seem so, for all its motions are ordered of the Lord. And you cannot say in this sense, as 1 Kings ix. 11. "That "God is not in the wind." Now when it pleaseth the Lord to shew his power upon the great deeps, he sends forth these winds out of his treasure. This is the principal cause. Then next,

2. We have the instrumental, subordinate and next cause of the storm; and that is, the 'winds lifting up the waves of the 'ocean.' There is naturally in the sea a continual agitation, and rolling of its waters hither and thither; it *cannot rest*, as the prophet speaks it; but when a violent wind blows upon it, the ocean is incensed and enraged; and the winds roll, moving mountains of water before them. Then, like wild beasts, the waves seem to break loose and rage, not only to be *latrantes undas*, as Virgil calls them, *barking waves*, but κυματα αγρια, *raging waves*, as Jude speaks, ver. 13. Yea, *roaring waves*, as our Saviour stiles them, Luke xxi. 25. Thus of the causes of the storm principal and subordinate. Next we have,

Secondly, The terrible effects of the tempests, and that both upon their bodies and their minds.

(1.) External upon their bodies; it tosses them up and down in a dreadful manner, which the Psalmist elegantly expresses in the text, "They mount up to heaven, they go down to the "depths," a lofty hyperbolical expression; very near unto it is that of Virgil:

Tollimur in coelum, curvato gurgite; et iidem,
Subducta, ad manes imos descendimus, unda! Aen. 3.

They seem to mix with the very clouds, and then open deep graves for them in the bottom sands. Yea, it moves them not only perpendicularly, lifting them up, and casting them down, but

Digitized by Google

obliquely and circularly also. "They reel to and fro, and stag-"ger like a drunken man," or, as some translate, *agitantur in gyrum*, they run round: they are, indeed, moved according to the unstable motion of the waves, on whose proud backs they are mounted. This is the external effect of the storm upon their bodies.

(2.) The internal effect of it upon their minds, which is far more terrible. For it is said here, *Their soul is melted because of trouble, and they are at their wits end.* Both which expressions do import a greater commotion and storm in the passions of the mind, than that is in the waves of the sea. The stoutest spirit quails and melts when it comes to this; and the wisest artist is at his wits end. Thus you have the description of the persons, and of their danger, both in the cause and effects upon the body and mind. Next,

(3.) We have their deliverance by the wonderful hand of divine providence, in ver. 27. "Then they cry unto the Lord "in their trouble, and he brings them out of their distress." Their usual cry in such extraordinary exigencies, is, *mercy! mercy!* Now they can pray, that could not pray before. Extremity drives them to their knees, not only with cries, but vows to the Lord, and he delivers them out of their distresses: some delivered one way, and some another, but all in a stupendous way, which cannot but astonish them that are so delivered, and make them acknowledge the finger of God was in it.

From all this we observe,

Doct. *That the preservations and deliverances of seamen in the dreadful storms and tempests at sea, is the wonderful work of divine providence.*

"The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them "that have pleasure therein;" Psal. cxi. 2. And, among his providential works, none greater and more admirable, than those which seamen daily behold in their great and marvellous protections upon the sea.

Now, the glory of divine providence towards seamen, shines and displays itself in three things: especially, *first*, In making the ocean navigable for them at any time. *Secondly*, in preserving them from shipwrecks in the fury and stress of weather. *Thirdly*, In finding out ways, and strangely providing means of safety when their ships are lost, and broken upon the sea.

1. It is a wonderful providence of God to make the ocean navigable for men at any time; that such a fluid body as water is, which cannot support a stone or bullet of an ounce weight, should yet, by reason of its own saltness, and the innate pro-

Digitized by Google

perty of timber, be able to support ships of such vast burden, which are carried from place to place, being mounted on the backs of its proud waves. Who can but acknowledge a most wise providence, in gratifying the natural wit and desire of man, which fits him for converse and traffic with foreign nations; with instruments and materials so fit for his purpose as timber, iron, hemp, pitch, the load stone, and whatever else is necessary for his purpose? I cannot open the wisdom of God's providence in this respect to better advantage than I find it done by the learned pen of Dr. More, in his Antidote against Atheism page 58. 'Navigation (saith he) being of so great consequence to the delight and convenience of human life, and there being both wit and courage in man to attempt the seas, were he but fitted with right materials, and other advantages requisite; when we see there is so pat a provision made for him to this purpose, in large timber for the building of his ship, a thick sea-water to bear the ship's burden; in the *magnet* or loadstone for his compass; in the steady and parallel direction of the axis of the earth for his *cynosura*: and then observing his natural wit and courage to make use of them; and how that ingenite desire of knowledge and converse, and of the improving of his own parts and happiness, stir him up to so notable a design: we cannot but conclude from such a train of causes, so fitly and congruously complying together, that it was really the counsel of an universal and eternal mind, that hath the overseeing and guidance of it,' *&c.*

2. But (to come home to the case before us) that men should be preserved at sea from immediate ruin in the dreadful tempests that befal them there; this is a mysterious and admirable work of God: that a poor ship should not be swallowed up by the furious ocean, when mountains of water come rolling towards it with an horrid noise, and give it such dreadful stripes; when seas roll over it, and so cover it with the waves, that for a time they know not whether they sink or swim; to see it emerge out of such fatal dangers, keep up its head, and mount upon the backs of those lofty seas that threaten immediately to overwhelm it: O how great is the power and care of providence in such a case! especially if you consider these following particulars, among many others, which threaten ruin on every side: and should but one of these many contingencies befal them, in the eye of reason, they are lost men.

1. Of how many parts, comparted together, doth a ship consist? These parts, indeed are fastened together with bolts of iron; but being in so many planks, what a wonder is it that

Digitized by Google

none springs, that no bolt gives way, or seams open, whilst every part works with such violence, and so great a stress of weather lies upon it. Should such a thing fall out, (as it is a wonder it should not), how soon would the ship swim within as well as without?

2. How often are they put from their course by stress of weather, and know not where they are; not being able, for many days, to take any observation? so that they must go whither winds and waves will drive them: for there is no dropping anchors in the main, nor resisting the course of the seas, to which they can make no more resistance than a child to a giant. And how is it they are not dashed upon the rocks, or foundered in the sands, seeing the winds shape their course, and not art? But there is a God that steers your course for you, when you cannot.

3. How often are you even fallen upon rocks and shores before you see them, and are almost past *hope* before you begin to *fear*? Sometimes almost imbayed, and as much as ever you can do to weather a rock or head-land, which you discerned not until it was almost too late.

I remember Dr Johnson, in that ingenious and wonderful narrative of his voyage to the Sound, when he had survived two shipwrecks, and was embarked in the third ship, 'We 'had not (saith he) been above two or three hours at sea, but 'there was a sad distraction among us in the ship, and the 'mariners crying, *mercy! mercy!* for we had almost fallen foul 'on a rock, which lay so cunning in the water, that we did 'not espy it till we were upon it; but, by the goodness of God, 'we sailed close by it, and so escaped it: the least touch of it 'had been our ruin.'

4. How often do you ride at anchor in furious weather, near rocks and shores? Your lives, under God, every moment depending upon a cable and anchor; if the one break, or the other come home, you are lost men. And how wonderful is it they do not! what is a cable in a storm, but as the new cords with which the Philistines bound Samson, and as easily would they be snapt asunder like a thread of tow, were it not for the care of providence over you? These, and an hundred other accidents which hourly threaten you, might, and would send you down to the bottom, but that the Lord permits it not so to be.

5. And yet more wonderful than all this; how often doth God suffer ships to founder and sink under you, and to be dashed to pieces against the rocks, and yet preserve you when the ordinary means of preservation are cut off and gone?

Digitized by Google

Who like these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep?

For, *first*, sometimes a small boat shall save them, when a stout ship could not: thus many of them have been wonderfully preserved; and thus the aforementioned author relates the manner of this wonderful preservation. 'Our ship (saith he) had sprung a leak, or rather a plank, and was ready to sink: O how the face of every man was changed at this affrightment! one was at his prayers, another wringing his hands, a third shedding tears, when we had no need of more salt-water. After this fit, they fell to work, and (as it is usual in such extremes) we were all busy in doing of nothing, and did we know not what. The master's mate, whom we sent down to search out the leak, quickly returned to us with a sad countenance, trembling hands, gnashing of teeth, a quivering tongue, and words half spoken, signifying unto us, that the wound was incurable. Here was now no room for counsel, neither had we time to ask one another what was best to be done; but we presently cast out our long-boat, and shot off eight or nine guns, which seemed to be so many tolls of a passing-bell before our death. I leaped into the boat, but leaped short; one leg in the boat, *Alterum in Charontis cymba.* Now were we left in the north seas, which seldom wear a smooth brow; but at this time contending with the wind, swelled into prodigious mountains. It blew half a storm, and we were now in a small vessel: what credit could we give to our safety in a small and open shallop, when so stately a castle of wood, which we but now lost, could not defend itself against the insolency of the waves? We were many leagues from any shore, having no compass to guide us, nor provisions to sustain us, and the night grew black upon us——Nothing but a miracle could preserve us, being out of the reach of human help——We fell to prayer, and our extremity pleaded for us:——For in this moment of death, when we were without the least expectation of deliverance, he sent a ship to us, which we must needs confess to be the finger of God,' *&c.* Thus he——And this has been the wonderful door opened in extremity to multitudes more for their escape: but, oh! how astonishing are these ways of the Lord? Well may we say, "His ways are in the sea, "and his paths in the great deep, and his footsteps are not "known," Psalm lxxvii. 19.

Secondly, Sometimes they shall be cast upon a rock in the

Digitized by Google

sea, where they shall be preserved, until some other way of deliverance come; yea, preserved strangely, God blessing a small matter of provision which they saved to sustain them; though they said of it, as the widow of Sarepta to the prophet, 1 Kings xvii. 12. "I have but an handful of meal, and a little oil, and "I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for "me and my son, that we may eat it, and die." Or if they could save nothing, yet a few muscles or birds eggs, with God's blessing, have sustained them until the time of mercy come. This hath been the case of many. Think upon this you that abuse the good creatures of God by drunkenness: how sweet would a cup of fresh water be to you when reduced to such extremity? Oh! if your hearts be not harder than the rocks you lay upon, how would such extraordinary mercies melt you into love and thankfulness?

Thirdly, Sometimes they have been wafted to the shore safely upon the wreck *, or by making a raft of the broken pieces of the ship, and torn sails, and ropes; and upon this (God knows, a poor security against the boisterous waves) have they ventured themselves: a sinking man (as we say) will catch at a bulrush. Paul, and those that suffered shipwreck with him, were thus saved; "The centurion commanded, that they "which could swim, should cast themselves first into the sea, "and get to land; and the rest, some on boards, and some on "broken pieces of the ship; and so it came to pass that they "escaped all safe to land," Acts xxvii. 43, 44.

Oh, the miraculous works of the Lord! to save by such contemptible and improbable means! Who can but with great joy see and acknowledge the finger of God to be here? "Lo, "these are parts of his way; but how little a portion is heard "of him?" Job xxvi. 14.

1. *Use of reproof.* If your preservation in storms at sea, be the wonderful works of divine providence, then divers of you deserves to be sharply reproved from this truth. And I beseech you suffer the word of reproof meekly and penitently. I shall speak nothing to reproach you; no, it is not to reproach, but to reform you: and if you hate reproof, and mock at counsel, God may shortly speak in such thundering language to your consciences, as will be terrible for you to bear. I remember, it is said of St. Bernard, That whilst he was seriously reproving the profaneness of one (and if I misremember not, it was his own brother) who was a soldier, and observing how he

* *Tabula post naufragium.*

Digitized by Google

lighted his holy and ſerious counſel, his ſpirit was greatly grieved at it, and he told him, 'Brother, God, I fear, will ſhortly 'make way to your heart with a ſword, to which my words 'can find no acceſs:' And the event ſoon verified the ſad prediction. I pray God none of you may be taught by captivities and ſhipwrecks, what it is to reject faithful reproofs, and wholeſome counſel, ſeaſonably given for your good. You that read theſe lines, ſeriouſly aſk your own conſciences theſe following queſtions.

(1.) Have you not ſoon forgotten the works and wonders of the Lord, which your eyes have ſeen? It may be, for the preſent, you have been ſenſibly affected with your danger, and the mercy of God in your deliverance, but hath it remained upon your hearts? I doubt theſe mercies have been written in the duſt, which ſhould have been engraven, as in the rock, for ever. Thus it was with Iſrael, a people that ſaw as many wonders wrought for them by the immediate finger of God, as ever did any people in the world; and yet it is ſaid of them, even after the *red-ſea* deliverance, in which "God divided "the ſea for them, when the waves thereof roared," Iſa. li. 15. and with which, for the preſent, their hearts were greatly affected; for it is ſaid, Pſalm cvi. 12. "That they believed "his word, and ſang his praiſes;" but in the next verſe you read, that a little time eaſily wiped out the ſenſe of this mercy; for it is ſaid, ver. 13. "They ſoon forgat his works, and waited "not for his counſels." I doubt this was not the ſin of Iſrael only, but is the caſe of many of you at this day. Well, God did not forget you in the time of extremity, though you ſo quickly forgot him. Think not to excuſe yourſelves from this guilt, by ſaying, you do ſtill remember the thing: you may do ſo, and yet be ſaid to forget his mercy: for a deliverance may be remembered, by him that received it, two ways; namely, *ſpeculatively*, and *affectingly*. A ſpeculative remembrance is only to call to mind the ſtories of ſuch a danger, and preſervation; this you may do, and yet God account himſelf forgotten, except you ſo remember it, as ſtill to feel the powerful impreſſions thereof upon your hearts, ſoftening, and melting them into thankfulneſs, love, and dependance upon the God of your ſalvations.

(2.) Have you not walked very unanſwerably to your deliverances, yea, and to the ſolemn engagements you made to God in the day of your diſtreſs? I fear ſome of you have walked, after God hath reſcued you by a wonderful immediate hand

Digitized by Google

from the jaws of death, as if you had been *delivered to do all these abominations*. As it is Jer. vii. 10. It may be the *last* week, or month, you were reeling to and fro upon the ſtormy ſea, and ſtaggering *like* drunken men; and *this*, reeling and ſtaggering along the ſtreets, *really* drunken. O horrid abomination! do ye thus requite the Lord, who pitied you in your diſtreſs, and, being full of compaſſion, ſaved you, when you cried to him? Is this the fruit of your wonderful ſalvation? If a man ſhould have told you in that day it would have been thus, you yourſelves could not have believed it, but would have anſwered as Hazael did to the prophet, 2 Kings viii. 13. "What! "is thy ſervant a dog, that he ſhould do ſuch things?" Yet ſo it was, and ſo it is ſtill: the Lord humble you for this great wickedneſs. If this be all the fruit of mercy and deliverance, it had been better for you that you had gone down to the bottom then, rather than to live only to treaſure up more wrath againſt the day of wrath, and fill up your meaſure.

(3.) Are there not a ſort of Atheiſtical ſeamen, who own not providence at all, either in the raiſing of theſe horrid tempeſts, or in their marvellous preſervation in them! but look on all as coming in a natural way, and their eſcape to be only by good fortune and chance? How wonderful a thing is it, in the eyes of all conſidering men, that providence ſhould take any notice of them in a way of favour, that ſo wickedly diſown it, and ſo directly diſoblige it? How can you poſſibly ſhut your eyes againſt ſuch clear light, and ſtop your ears againſt ſuch loud and plain language, whereby the power and goodneſs of God proclaims itſelf to you in theſe providences? Ah! methinks you ſhould moſt readily and thankfully ſubſcribe that great truth, Pſal. lxviii. 20. "He that is our God, is the "God of ſalvation; and unto God the Lord belong the iſſues "from death." But, though men ſee ſigns and wonders, they will not believe; yea, though themſelves become wonders to the world by their miraculous deliverances, yet ſo brutiſh and ſtupid are they, that they will not ſee the hand that ſaves them. Take heed what you do: you ſet yourſelves in the direct way to deſtruction by this, and highly provoke the Lord to abandon and caſt you out of the care of his providence: and if he once do ſo, you are loſt men.

(4.) And yet more vile (if more vileneſs can be in ſin) than all this: are there not a generation of wretched men among you, that fall a ſwearing, curſing, and blaſpheming God, even when he is uttering his terrible voice in the tempeſt, and every moment threatening to intomb them in the deep? When

Digitized by Google

you should be upon your knees bewailing your sins, and pleading with God for mercy, (as I doubt not but some of you do) to be yet more and more provoking him, daring him to his face; and yet more incensing his indignation, which is already kindled against you; who, that hears this, can chuse but admire the riches of God's patience and forbearance towards such men? The very heathen mariners in a storm *called every man upon his God*, Jonah i. 5. We say, extremity will cause the worst of men to pray, and compose the vainest spirit unto seriousness; but it seems by you, it will not. Is this the frame and temper you will meet death in? What! speaking the language of devils and damned spirits before you come among them; hasting on your own ruin, as if it were too slack and lingering in its motion? The Lord open the eyes of these miserable creatures, and convince them, that they are not only going to hell, as others are, but that they are the forlorn of all that wretched crew that are bound thither; and proportionably will be their misery, except they repent.

2. *Use of exhortation.* This point is yet farther improvable for you by way of exhortation, serving to press you to those proper duties which God calls you to by his terrible providential voice in the storms, and by your wonderful deliverances.

1. And the first lesson you are to learn from hence is, *To adore the power of God.* O what a manifestation of divine power is here! you are the men that see more than others the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. It is one of God's ends in shewing you these wonders, "To make his "mighty power known," Psal. cvi. 8. O what a terrible voice doth God utter upon the seas, when the heavens are black above you, the furious winds and dreadful thunders rattling about you, the sea and waves roaring beneath you! Is not this voice of the Lord full of majesty? Doth it not awe your hearts, and make them tremble? In three things his infinite power is discovered to you.

First, In raising these terrible tempests, and that from so small and weak a beginning as a thin vapour from the earth is: this is the wonderful work of God, Psalm cxxxv. 7. "He causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for the rain, he bringeth wind out of his "treasuries."

Secondly, In limiting and bounding their force and power: what prodigious effects else would follow: The wind is a fierce and boisterous creature, and would (if God did not by his pro-

Digitized by Google

vidence reſtrain) deſtroy, and overturn all, both by ſea and land; or if Satan, who is ſtiled *The prince, or power of the air*, were left at liberty to execute his malice by ſuch an inſtrument, not a ſhip ſhould croſs the ſeas, nor a houſe be ſafe at land; as is evident enough by the furious haſte he made to overturn the houſe with an horrible tempeſt upon Job's children, as ſoon as he had received a permiſſion from heaven to do it.

And, *thirdly*, No leſs viſible is the power of God in calming and appeaſing the ſtormy winds, and remanding them into his treaſuries, Pſalm cvii. 29. "He maketh the ſtorm a "calm." Yea, he doth ſo in the very nick of time, when all is concluded loſt. Thus you read in Mark iv. 39. "When the "waves beat into the ſhip," ſo that it was now full, and the diſciples cried unto the Lord, "Maſter, careſt thou not that "we periſh? He aroſe and rebuked the wind, and ſaid to the "ſea, Peace, be ſtill; and the wind ceaſed, and there was a "great calm." Juſt as one would huſh a child, *Peace, be ſtill.* O the ſovereign power of God! how ſhould it be reverenced and adored by all that behold it, in theſe marvellous effects of it?

2. The ſecond leſſon you are taught by this doctrine, is, *To admire the mercy of God.* Mercy is no leſs diſcovered than power; yea, the power of God is put forth to give his mercy a fair occaſion to ſhine forth in your deliverance. God ſometimes permits your dangers to grow to an extremity, and delays your deliverances to the laſt moment, till all hopes of ſafety are gone, upon the like reaſon that Lazarus's reſurrection was deferred, that the work of God in your preſervation may commend itſelf to you under the greateſt advantage.

O that you would view theſe mercies in all their endearing circumſtances! I can only hint your duty generally in this caſe; you may enlarge upon it, if you have hearts fit for ſuch a bleſſed work. And mark particulary the multitudes of mercies that are complicated and involved in one deliverance. Obſerve the ſeaſon when, the manner how, the means by which your ſalvation was wrought. It is a thouſand pities that ſo much of God's glory and your comfort, as any one, even the ſmalleſt circumſtance, may contain, ſhould ever be loſt.

3. *Laſtly*, And above all, *See that ye anſwer God's ends in your deliverance:* If thoſe be loſt, God may ſay concerning you, as David did of Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 21. "Surely, in vain "have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderneſs; ſo

Digitized by Google

"that nothing was miſſed of all that pertained to him; and "he hath requited me evil for good." So here, in vain have I kept this fellow upon the ſea, when I ſuffered others to ſink; in vain have I preſerved his life, liberty and eſtate; ſo often by an out-ſtretched arm of power and mercy to him, ſeeing he requites me evil for good.

O let me intreat you to be careful to comply with the deſigns and ends of God in theſe your wonderful preſervations! If you enquire what God's ends and deſigns in your deliverance are, I anſwer,

Firſt, It is to lead you to repentance. "The goodneſs of "God (ſaith the apoſtle) leadeth thee to repentance," Rom. ii. 4. Doſt thou not know the voice of mercy? Why, it beſpeaks thy return to God. It may be thou haſt ſpent all thy life, to this day, in the ſervice of ſin: Thou never redeemeſt one of all thy precious hours to conſider thine own eſtate, to bewail thy ſin and miſery, to ſeek after an intereſt in Chriſt. Why, now here is a providence fallen in, that doth, as it were, take thee by the hand, and lead thee to this great and neceſſary work. The end of God in raiſing this ſtorm, was to deliver thee from the more dreadful tempeſt of his wrath, which, without repentance, muſt ſhortly overtake thy ſoul in the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever. Now God hath awakened thy conſcience by this fright, made it charge home thy ſins upon thee, terrified thee with diſmal apprehenſions of death and hell. O what a fair opportunity and advantage hath he now put into thy hand for repentance, reformation, and gaining an intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt! If this ſeaſon be loſt, conſcience ſuffered again to fall into any dead ſleep, and thy heart be again hardened by the deceitfulneſs of ſin, thou mayeſt never have ſuch an opportunity for ſalvation opened to thee any more.

Secondly, If this end be anſwered, then a farther deſign God hath in thy deliverance, is to engage and encourage thy ſoul to a dependance upon God in future ſtraits and dangers. This is food for faith; and now you are furniſhed with experience of the power, mercy, and goodneſs of God, to enable you to reſt yourſelves upon him when new exigencies befal you. If God exerciſe you with ſuch extremities another time, you may ſay with the apoſtle, 2 Cor. i. 10. "Who delivered "us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we "truſt, he will yet deliver us."

If your firſt deliverance were a deliverance without a promiſe, when you were without Chriſt, what encouragement have you to depend upon him, when his end is anſwered in your repen-

Digitized by Google

tance and converſion? and, being in Chriſt, are entituled to all the promiſes.

Thirdly, and *laſtly*, God's end in your marvellous preſervations and deliverances, is, to furniſh you for, and to engage you to a life of praiſe. O how ſhould the high praiſes of God be ever in your mouths! you have ſeen his works and wonders in the deeps; and this is it which the Pſalmiſt preſſes upon you, as a becoming return for your mercies, in the words following my text; "O that men would praiſe the Lord for "his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children "of men!"

O with what warm and enlarged affections ſhould you expreſs your thankfulneſs to the God of your ſalvation! and ſay as David, "What am I, O Lord God, and what is my father's "houſe, that thou ſhouldſt do ſuch great things for me?" Was ſuch a life as mine worth the working of ſo many wonders to ſave it? O Lord, thou knoweſt it has been a life ſpent in vanity. Thy glory hath not been precious in mine eyes, but my life hath been precious in thine eyes. Many more uſeleſul, and leſs ſinful than myſelf, have periſhed, and I am ſaved. O Lord, ſhew me the deſigns and gracious ends of theſe deliverances. Surely there is ſome great thing to be done by me, or elſe ſo great a ſalvation had not been wrought for me. The Lord ſaw in what a ſad caſe my poor ſoul was, to be ſummoned immediately before his judgment-ſeat; that if I had gone down under all my guilt, I had ſunk to the bottom of hell: But thou, in love to my ſoul, haſt delivered it from the pit of corruption, that I might yet enjoy a ſeaſon for ſalvation, and be once more intruſted with the precious talents of time and means. O that I may not reject or abuſe the grace of God in this new inſtrument, as I have too often done in the former! let me not live as one delivered to commit all theſe abominations!

And now after all that is come upon me for my evils, ſeeing thou, my God, haſt puniſhed me ſo much leſs than my iniquities deſerve; and haſt given me ſuch a deliverance as this, ſhould I again dare to break thy commandments? Ezra ix. 13, 14. "O let this new mercy produce a new heart and "life!"

Digitized by Google

THE SEAMAN's PRESERVATIVE

In FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

SERMON III.

PSALM cxxxix. 9, 10. *If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

IN this psalm the omnipresence and omniscience of God are the subjects of the Psalmist's meditation; and these attributes are here promiscuously discoursed, not only because of the near affinity that is betwixt their natures, but because the one is the demonstration of the other: It is evident God knows all things, because he fills all places. Touching the omniscience of God, he discovers the infinite perfection of that attribute by the particular and exact notion it takes of all our ways: verse 3. "Thou compassest my paths, and art acquainted with all "my ways." Of all our words; verse 4. "There is not a "word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altoge-"ther." Yea, of all our thoughts; and that not only in the instant of their conception, but long before they were conceived; verse 2. "Thou understandest my thoughts afar off," even from eternity. Thus he displays the omniscience of God: And then to make demonstration of the truth and certainty of this doctrine of God's omniscience, he proves it from his omnipresence: *q. d.* He that fills all things, cannot but know all things. Now God's presence fills heaven, yea, and hell too, verse 8. And all parts of the earth and sea, even the remotest, verse 9, 10. And therefore no creature, nor action of any creature, can escape his cognizance. It is not here as among men; if a malefactor be condemned by the laws of one kingdom, he may escape by flying into another; but it is far otherwise here; for saith the Psalmist, (personating a guilty fugitive endeavouring to make an escape from the arrest of God's justice), "If I "take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost "parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy "right hand shall hold me."

Digitized by Google

In which words, you have these two things mainly remarkable.

1. The greatest security and encouragement to a sinner supposed.

2. That supposed security and encouragement utterly destroyed.

1. The greatest security and encouragement to a sinner supposed; "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the "uttermost parts of the sea" *. Where two things seem to offer towards his protection.

First, The place; the remotest part of the sea; by which you are to understand the most obscure nook in the creation; farthest removed from an inspection or observation.

And, *secondly*, his swift and speedy flight, after the commission of sin, to this supposed refuge and sanctuary: It is here supposed, that a sinner should fly as swift as the light of the sun, which in a moment shines from the east to the west: and so the meaning is, could I flee with a celerity equal to the sun, or his beams of light, which breaking forth in the morning, do in an instant enlighten the remotest parts of the hemisphere: Could I as swiftly flee to the most obscure, remote, solitary place in all the world. Thus the sinner's security is supposed.

2. This supposed security and encouragement is utterly destroyed; "Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right "hand shall hold me." † The leading hand of God is not here to be understood, as a directing or guiding hand, to shew the fugitive sinner the way of his escape; but contrarily, "Thy "hand shall lead me," as a keeper leads his prisoner back to the place of custody, from which he endeavoured to escape. And the following clause is exegetical: "Thy right hand "shall hold," or detain *me*, *viz.* in strict custody. So that the sum of all is this:

Doct. *That the whole world affords no place of secrecy or security for a sinner to escape the observing eye, and righteous hand of God.*

Jonah fled from the Lord to Tarshish; but could he escape so? No, the Lord sent a storm after him, which brought back the fugitive, Jonah i. 3, 4. We read, Isa. xxix. 15. of such "as dig deep, to hide their counsels from the Lord," *i. e.*

* He alludes to the swiftest of all motion, even that of light, which springs in a moment from east to west. *Calvin.*

† *Non accipitur deducere pro viam monstrare; sed deducet me manus tua tanquem custos captivum sibi commissum deduxit.* Vatab.

Digitized by Google

They plot, contrive and ſtudy to conceal their wicked deſigns, to ſin with greateſt ſecrecy and ſecurity. But, what can poſſibly be a covering from him, to whoſe ſight all things are naked and manifeſt? Where can a ſinner be hid from him whoſe preſence fills heaven and earth? Jer. xxiii. 25. The ſcripture gives full proof to this great truth. It is clear from Prov. xv. 3. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the "evil and the good." And again, Job xxxiv. 21, 22. "For "his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he ſeeth all his go-"ings; there is no darkneſs, nor ſhadow of death, where the "workers of iniquity may hide themſelves." Whoever goes about to conceal a ſin in ſecret, attempts a fooliſh and impoſſible deſign, Pſalm xliv. 21. "Shall not God ſearch this out? For "he knoweth the ſecrets of the heart: For the eyes of the Lord "run to and fro, through the whole earth," 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

Now in the handling of this point, I purpoſe to ſhew you,

1. That men are often induced to ſin upon hopes of ſecrecy and concealment.

2. That to ſin upon theſe encouragements, ſtrongly argues their natural atheiſm: They think they are ſafe, if men know it not; they reckon not upon God's diſcovery of them.

3. That theſe encouragements to ſin are vain things, it being impoſſible any place can hide a ſinner from God; and how it appears that the eye of God is, and muſt needs be upon us, and our actions, where-ever we are, and how cloſely ſoever we endeavour to hide them: And then apply it.

Firſt, Men are often induced to commit ſin upon the hopes of ſecrecy and concealment. Sin (eſpecially ſome ſorts of ſin) carry ſo much ſhame and *odium* in them, that it reſtrains men from the open practice of them; but if Satan can perſuade them they ſhall never be divulged to their reproach, they will venture upon them. See that text, "The eye of the adulterer "waiteth for the twilight, ſaying, no eye ſhall ſee me, and "diſguiſeth his face," Job xxiv. 15. Reckoning himſelf ſecure, if he can carry his wickedneſs under a vail of darkneſs, not caring what wickedneſs he doth, ſo he may do it undiſcerned: It is not the acting of ſin, but the diſcovery of it, that puts them into terrors. So it is added with reſpect both to the adulterer and the thief, ver. 17. "The morning is to them as "the ſhadow of death, if one know them; they are in the ter-"rors of the ſhadow of death;" *i. e.* If a man, eſpecially a man in authority, a magiſtrate meet them, it is as if the image of death paſſed before them in a viſion. So thoſe idolaters,

Digitized by Google

Ezek. viii. 12. "Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the house of his imagery? For they say, the Lord seeth us not." They conclude all is well, if nothing appear. This encouragement of secrecy is the great argument by which Satan prevails with men to commit any sin that hath shame or danger attending it: But his promises of concealment are usually made good, as his promises of great wealth are to witches. This is the encouragement.

Secondly, Next, I will make it evident to you, that to sin upon this encouragement, argues atheism in him that commits it. This is plain; for, did men believe the omnipresence and omniscience of God, such an encouragement to sin as secrecy could have no force with them. Thus, when the antients of Israel practised their idolatry in the dark, it is plain they thought God saw them not, Ezek. viii. 12. "For they say, the "Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth;" *i. e.* They did not really believe God's omnipresence and omniscience. And Job tells us, chap. xxxi. 26, 27, 28. "That if he "had beheld the sun in his brightness," (*i. e.*) to admire and worship it as a God; or, "his heart being secretly enticed, "he should have denied the God that is above." Every one that is enticed to sin upon the encouragement of secrecy, doth so far deny the God that is above. If such a man did really believe there is a God that sees him, "whose eyes are as flames "of fire," Rev. i. 14, "To whom the darkness and the light "are both alike," Psal. cxxxix. 12. it were impossible he should be so terrified at the discovery of a creature, and so secure and wholly unconcerned at the discovery of God: It could not be, that the observation of the great God should not so much trouble them, as the observation of a little child.

Thus we find the inward thoughts of mens hearts concerning God, discovered by their bold attempts upon secret sins, Isa. xxxix. 15. "Woe to them that seek deep to hide their counsel "from the Lord, and their works are in the dark; and they "say, who seeth us, and who knoweth us?" They think if their works are shrouded under a veil of darkness, they are safe enough; if they can escape the bar of an earthly god (a magistrate) they shall never be accountable at any other bar. We have another sad instance of the same impiety in Psalm lxxiii. 11. "And they say, how doth God know? And is there "knowledge in the Most High?" If men did not fancy to themselves there is no God, or (which is all one) that he is like unto themselves, one that cannot see in darkness, they could

Digitized by Google

never encourage themselves as they do, to sin upon such a foolish pretence.

Thirdly, But my proper business, in this place, is to prove, that these encouragements to sin are vain things: That no sinner can hide himself from the eye of God. This is plain both from scripture and reason.

The scriptures speak full home to this truth. Prov. v. 21. "The ways of a man are before the Lord, and he pondereth "all his paths." To ponder or weigh our paths, is more than simply to observe and see them. He not only sees the action, but puts it into the balances, with every circumstance belonging to it, and tries how much every ingredient in the action weighs, and what it comes to. So that God hath not only *an universal inspection* upon every action, but he hath a *critical inspection* into it also. "The Lord is a God of knowledge, "and by him actions are weighed," 1 Sam. ii. 3. So Jer. xiii. 25. 27. "Thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood: I have seen they adulteries, and thy neighings, the "lewdness of thy whoredoms and abominations;" *q. d.* Thou forgettest there is a God in the heavens that beheld thee, and didst verily believe all was safe, because secret from man. In this falsehood or cheat put upon thee, by the devil, and thine own atheistical heart, *thou didst trust*. But I have seen thee, and all thy secret lewdness. It is a proverb among sinners, *Si non caste, tamen caute*. Carry the matter, if not honestly, yet warily; If thou hast a mind to sin, yet order it so, that the world may be never the wiser. But how vain a thing is this? If men do not, the Lord doth see it; "I know, and am a wit-"ness, saith the Lord," Jer. xxix. 23. Thus the scripture speaks roundly and fully to the point in hand.

But, because the atheism of the world is so great, and it is a hard thing to convince men of this great truth, so as to overawe them from any secret sin by it; I will, by rational arguments, demonstrate the truth to every man's conscience, and give you plain and full evidence, that how secretly soever men carry their sinful designs, yet the Lord must needs be privy to them; and it is impossible they should escape his cognizance.

1. For, *first*, He that formed all, cannot but know all: the workman cannot be supposed to be ignorant of any part of his own work. Now God is the former of all things; every place, and every person he hath made: where, then, shall the workers of iniquity hide themselves? You have a folly, of sinners, in thinking to conceal themselves from the eye of God, convinced and reproved by this very argument, Isa. xxxix. 1

Digitized by Google

16. "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsels "from the Lord, and their works are in the dark; and they "say, who seeth us? And who knoweth us? Surely, your "turning of things upside down, shall be esteemed as the pot- "ter's clay: for, shall the work say to him that made it, he "made me not? Or, shall the thing framed say of him that "framed it, he hath no understanding?" *q. d.* Think ye by deep-laid designs, by the advantage of darkness, by the moulding and new moulding your crafty designs in your heads, as the clay is moulded now into this, then into that shape by the potter's hand, to hide it from me? O brutish creatures, and without understanding! am not I the God that formed you? And can it be supposed I should not know the most secret thoughts, plots and designs of mine own creatures, who cannot contrive a design, nor conceive a thought without me? How absurd is this? Find out a place which God made not, or a creature which he formed not; and then your pretences to that creature's concealment from God in such a place, may have some colour: and this argument is again urged to convince the brutish atheist, Psal. xciv. 8, 9, 10. "Understand, "ye brutish among the people, and ye fools, when will you "be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He "that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chasteneth "the heathen, shall not he correct? He that teacheth man "knowledge, shall not he know? The Lord knoweth the "thoughts of man, that they are vanity;" so that it is the vainest of all vanity in the world, to think of hiding your sins from the Lord.

2. He that sustains all, cannot but know, and discern all. You that seek to hide counsel from the Lord, know ye not, "That in him you live, move, and have your being?" Acts xvii. 28. Do not you derive that very power from him, which you abuse by sinning against him? And do you depend necessarily and continually upon God for all? Must he give you the power to move, and by that power can you move beyond him, and get out of his reach? You cannot think a thought without him, and yet can exclude him from those very thoughts which you had no power to conceive, but from him? Exercise but common reason in the case, and it will hiss at your absurd designs.

3. He that governs all, can be ignorant of nothing. These is a perpetual influence of providence, swaying and governing all the creatures, and all their actions; else the very ligaments of nature would crack, and the world break up and disband.

Digitized by Google

This providence extends itself to the least and lowest of creatures and their actions, Luke xii. 6. a sparrow falls not to the ground without it. "The great God hath something to "do about the most minute * and inconsiderable things;" yea, the most contingent and uncertain things, as is the disposal of a lot, Prov. xvi. 33. And, indeed, this omniscience of God is that which is necessary to this universal government. How shall he rule that person, or in that place, which he knows not? Indeed earthly governors may do so; it is not necessary they have a personal immediate cognizance of each place and person in their dominions: it is enough that they be virtually and mediately governed by them; but it is not so with God: it is necessary his eye should immediately see all the parts of his dominion. He could not rule the world, if he were not an omniscient God. Psal. lxvi. 7. "He ruleth by his power for ever; "his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt "themselves."

4. He that hath set a spy to observe and note what every man doth, cannot but know his actions, how secret soever they be. Now, so it is here; God sends a spy with you, to observe and record your most secret actions, and thoughts, in every place, I mean your own consciences, from whose observation none of your ways can possibly be exempt. The sense of this made the heathen say, *Turpe quid ansurus, te sine teste time.* When thou art attempting a sinful act, fear thyself without any other witness; conscience is privy to your most secret designs and thoughts; 1 Kings ii. 44. "Thou knowest all the "wickedness which thine heart (*i. e.* thy conscience) is privy "to:" and if conscience know all, God must needs see and know it. So the apostle reasons, from the lesser to the greater, 1 John iii. 20. "If our heart condemn us, (which is there put "for conscience) God is greater than our hearts, and know-"eth all things." If the spirit of a man knows the things of a man, much more he that formed that spirit, and endowed man with it.

5. He that knows things more secret and unsearchable than our most secret actions can be, must needs know them how secret soever they be. Now there are many things more close and secret than any action of ours can possiby be, and yet God knows them. The thoughts of the heart are more secret than any external action; so secret, that no creature can search them; the devil himself hath but a conjectural guess at them: "But the Lord telleth unto man what is his thought;" as in

* *Deus maximus in minimus.*

Digitized by Google

Amos iv. 13. So Jer. xvii. 10. "I the Lord search the heart, "I try the reins;" *i. e.* The most obscure, inward and deep secrets lodged in the heart; nay, which is more, he not only knows our thoughts when they are formed and conceived in the heart, but long before their conception; Psalm cxxxix. 2. "Thou knowest my thoughts afar off." Divines generally interpret it from eternity; even so long before they were actually thought, he foreknew every thought we should think; and what can be imagined more secret, and undiscernible, than a future thought!

Now if this be known to him, how much more are our thoughts formed into projects and designs, and these executed by external actions? O deceive not yourselves with hopes of secrecy! Nothing can be a secret to him that knows the counsels of all hearts.

6. He that providentially brings to light the most secret contrivances of men, and publishes them before all Israel, and before the sun, must needs see them, and know them. How closely had Achan covered his wickedness: He never suspected a discovery, yet God brought it to light. With how much contrivance was the sin of David covered? yet God discovered it: "Thou didst this thing secretly, but I will do this thing "before all Israel, and before the sun," 2 Sam. xii. 12. Histories abound with examples of God's bringing to light murders, so secretly committed, that it was impossible they should ever be revealed in this world, without a miracle of providence; and yet so they have been brought to light. Bessus, having committed such a murder, fancied the swallows that were chattering in the chimney, had said, Bessus killed a man, and thereupon confessed the fact. How secure were the contrivers of the popish powder-plot, that Catholic villany, in a double sense having sworn all their accomplices to secrecy, and managed the whole design so closely, that Guy Faux, upon the discovery of it, said, *The devil must needs be the discoverer of it.* How easy were it to expatiate upon this theme? But I will not be tiresome in instances: all ages are the witnesses of this truth. Who can then deny or question that great or confessed truth, Dan. ii. 28. "There is a God in heaven that reveals secrets:" and if he reveals them, he must needs know them.

7. He that will judge all secrets, cannot but know them. "Now God will judge the secrets of men in that great day," Rom. ii. 16. "God will bring every work into judgment, with "every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil," Eccl. xii. *ult.* The Judge of the whole earth will not judge

Digitized by Google

at random; his judgment will be infallible, because his omniscience is so. "His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he "seeth all his goings; for he will not lay upon man more than "right, that he should enter into judgment with God," Job xxxiv. 21, 23.

So that the truth of this point is beyond all controversy and contradiction, that the whole world affords no place of secrecy or security for a sinner to escape the observing eye, and righteous hand of God.

The uses follow in these inferences.

1. *Inference.* If this be so, then time, place, and opportunity, how much soever they seem to promise secrecy and concealment, should never further a temptation to sin.

Suppose all circumstances concurring, so that in the eye of reason you seem secured from the shameful consequences of sin; yet, methinks, the consideration of this truth should sufficiently deter you from a wicked purpose; Prov. v. 20. "And why "wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and "embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of a man "are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his "goings." There be four things which strengthen temptations to sin, and particularly the sin of uncleanness upon seamen. *First*, The absence of lawful remedies. *Secondly*, The presence of alluring objects. *Thirdly*, The instigation of wicked examples. *Fourthly*, And the hopes of concealment, being remote from their acquaintance: so that their sins, in probability, shall never disgrace them. This last circumstance is not the least: O how many hath it prevailed upon! but I hope you will never yield to this temptation, whose heart and strength are broken by this consideration of the eye of God upon you. A chaste woman being once sollicited to folly, told him that sollicited her, she could never yield to the motion, until he could find a place where God should not see.

Nay, my friends, it should do more than restrain you from the gross acts of sin; it should powerfully curb the very thoughts and first motions of sin in your hearts. That was the use holy Job made of this truth, Job xxxi. 1, 4. "I have "made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think "upon a maid? Doth he not see my ways, and count all my "steps?"

Suppose you should carry your wickedness so close, that none on earth should know it; yet the Lord sees it, and will bring it into judgment, and your own conscience is privy to it. I

Digitized by Google

pray, sirs, tell me, is it not a great comfort to a malefactor, that he acted his crime so closely, that none but the judge, and one authentic witness more, (whose testimony is as good as a thousand) beheld it? Why, this is the case of all secret sinners. But, to press home this great and necessary truth more particularly, I beseech you to consider,

1. God doth not only behold you, but beholds you with detestation and abhorrence in your ways of iniquity: It is a sight that grieves him to the heart, Gen. vi. 5, 6. "And the Lord saw "the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil "continually." Here was wickedness, great wickedness, breaking out externally, and evil, only evil, and that continually, working internally; so that both heart and life were evil extensively, intensively, and protensively. This the Lord saw; and how it affected him, the sixth verse tells you; "And it repented the Lord "that he had made man on the earth; and it grieved him at the "heart:" Ah! it cuts him to the heart, to see your sinful hearts and courses. Nothing can be so contrary to the pure and holy nature of God as this is: this made the prophet admire how his patience could endure such a sight, Hab. i. 13. "Thou "art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look up-"on iniquity; wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal "treacherously?" *&c.* As if he should say, Lord, how canst thou behold thyself affronted by vile creatures, and hold thy hands from avenging it? O the stupendous patience of God!

2. It doth not only grieve him to the heart, but it puts his patience to the greatest trial and exercise in beholding it: therefore he is said "to endure with much long-suffering," Rom. ix. 22. It doth, as it were, create a conflict betwixt his patience and justice: he is so provoked by your sin, that he expresses it as a difficulty to bear it, Amos ii. 13. "I am pressed "under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves;" burdened till the axle-tree of infinite patience be ready to crack under the weight.

Nay, *thirdly*, He doth not only see your evils, but he registers and records them, in order to a day of reckoning with you for all together, except ye repent; Deut. xxxii. 34. "Is not "this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my trea-"sures?" A metaphor taken from the clerk of the assize, who seals up the bag of indictments, against the time of trial. You think if you can blind the eyes of men, all is well, you shall hear no more of it: ah! but it is sealed up among God's trea-

Digitized by Google

stores; (*i. e.*) the things he records and reserves for the day of account.

4. God doth not only see you, but he will also one day make you see yourselves, and your ways, and that with horror and consternation. You think you shall taste nothing but the sweet and pleasure of sin; but how are you deceived? The days are coming, when sin, that is now pleasant, shall be turned into wormwood and gall. You will not see the evil of it; and because you see it not, you think God doth not. "These things "(saith God) hast thou done, and I kept silence, and thou "thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but "I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes," Psal. l. 21. God sees them now, and he will make you see them too, by opening your eyes in this world graciously, or in that to come judicially.

5. God doth not only see your ways, but he will make all the world see them too: For, "there is nothing hid that shall "not be revealed, nor covered, that shall not be made known," Matth. x. 26. "There is a day when God will make manifest "the hidden counsels of the heart," 2 Cor. iv. 5. "When "that which hath been spoken in darkness, shall be heard in "light; and that which ye have spoken in the ears in closets, "shall be proclaimed upon the house tops," Luke xii. 3. Well then, whenever the occasions and opportunities of sin are presented to you, under this encouragement of security, I beseech you remember this truth, that no place can hide you from the eye of God. He sees all your ways, yea, he sees them with abhorrence; the sight of them is the greatest exercise of his patience. His sight of them is not a transient glance, but he sees and records your evils; they are sealed up among his treasures: He sees, and will make you see them too, with horror, when he shall set them in order before you: he sees them, and will make angels and men see them in the great day. O then, never let secrecy any more encourage you to sin!

2. *Inference.* What prodigious sinners must they be, that seek no covert for their sin in darkness, but with an impudent face declare, yea, glory in their shame; who are not ashamed to sin openly with a bare face, and a whore's forehead? These are sinners of the first magnitude. "They declare their sin "as Sodom, and hide it not, Isa. iii. 9. It is as natural to man to endeavour to hide his sin, as Adam, and you see from the text, guilty sinners fain would, if it were possible, fly to any obscure corner from the observation of God and men; and

Digitized by Google

it is a mercy God hath planted such an affection, as shame is, in the soul of man, to be a bridle to restrain his exorbitant lusts. But yet there is a generation of monstrous sinners, who have so far unmanned themselves, "That they are not at all ashamed "when they commit abominations, neither can they blush," Jer. vi. 15. If there be any remains of shame left in them, they exercise it upon a wrong object: they are ashamed of that which would be to their glory, and glory in that which is their shame; they add impudence to their sin, and blush not to proclaim that which others study to conceal.

Such a vile temper as this, shews a man even ripe for wrath; he hath even filled up his measure, and is come to the very culminating point and top of wickedness. There be some men arrived to such a degree of holiness, that all that converse with them, judge them even ripe for heaven: they speak the dialect, and have the very savour of heaven upon them. Others are come to such a prodigious height of impiety, that understanding men cannot but conclude they are nigh unto damnation; they speak the very language, and have the very scent of hell upon them. Such are they that openly declare their sin as Sodom, and glory in their shame.

Thus we see some drunkards will glory in their strength, to pour down wine and strong drink, and can boast of the number of their cups: some adulterers can glory in their acts of wickedness, not sufficing themselves to damn their own souls, but labouring to infect and corrupt as many as they can by their filthy tongues, that they may draw them into the same misery. We can hardly tell how to screw up sin one peg higher than this: first to practise sin, then defend it, then boast of it. Sin is first a man's burden, next his custom, next his delight, and then his excellency. Lord, whither is man fallen! that holiness should ever be his disgrace; and sin, yea, the vilest of sins, his glory! O the power of divine patience!

3 *Inference.* If the eye of God searches every obscure corner in the world, to behold the evil that is committed there, then certainly the eye of God cannot but look into every secret place in the world, to see the good that is done there. "The "eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and "the good," Prov. xv. 3. The good as well as the evil; yea, he beholds with delight the good done in secret.

As some sinners seek corners to act their wickedness in, and cannot satisfy themselves to commit sin in the light, (for, as our Saviour saith, John iii. 20. "He that doth evil hateth the "light;) so, on the contrary, a truly godly man seeks corners

Digitized by Google

to pray in, to meditate in, and to examine his own heart in, and thinks these duties of godliness can never be managed with too great a privacy; not that he is in the least ashamed of his duty; no, that is not the reason, but he is afraid of hypocrisy, when duties lie too open, and exposed to the eyes of men. A sinner takes his full liberty to vent his corruptions, when he can do it in secret; and a saint takes his full liberty to vent and exercise his graces, when no eye but the eye of God sees him. "Thou, when thou prayest (saith our Saviour) enter into thy "closet, and shut thy door, and pray to thy Father which is in "secret, and thy Father (which seeth in secret) shall reward "thee openly." O how much better is it, both as to your present comfort, and future account, to get into a corner to pray, than to whore and drink? To pour out your souls to God graciously, than to pour out your lusts against God so wickedly? How contrary are the principles of grace and corruption? The study of sinners is to hide their evils from the eyes of men; the study of a saint is to hide his duties from the eyes of men: The sinner would not have the world suspect what he hath been about; nor would the saint have all the world know what he hath been about. The way of an adulterer is as the "way of an eagle in the air, or as a serpent upon a rock;" *i. e.* a secret way, where they leave no prints or tracts behind them. "So is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth and wip-"eth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness," Prov. xxx. 19, 20. By wiping the mouth, is there meant preventing all suspicion; suffering no sign of the action to remain upon them: So, contrarily, a gracious person that hath been with God in secret prayer, or fasting, when his duty is ended, he labours to avoid all ostentations. And therefore you have the caution from Christ, Matth. vi. 17, 18. "But thou, when thou "fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face; that thou ap-"pear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in "secret." The meaning is, carry thy private duties so close, that none may know what passeth between God and thee: When thou hast been entertained in secret with hidden *manna*, a feast of fat things, wipe thy mouth in a holy sense, *i. e.* wipe off all suspicion of hypocrisy and vanity by a prudent and humble concealment. * "Religion doth not lay all open, as we say:" As sinners have their secret pleasures, their stolen waters which are sweet to them; so the saints have their secret delights in God, their hidden *manna*, which no man knows but he that eateth of it. And as the eye of God vindictively beholds the

* *Non est religio ubi omnia patent.*

Digitized by Google

one, ſo it delightfully beholds the other; and ſo you find it, Cant. ii. 14. "O my dove, (faith Chriſt to the church) that "art in the clifts of the rocks, in the ſecret places of the "ſtairs: Let me ſee thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; "for ſweet is thy voice, and thy countenance comely." Let this encourage you to ſecret duties; let not others find more pleaſure in ſecret luſts, than you can do in God and ſecret duties.

4. *Inference.* Doth the eye of God ſee all the evil and wickedneſs that is committed in all the ſecret corners of the world? How admirable then is the patience of God towards the world! Who can imagine how much wickedneſs is ſecretly practiſed in a town or city every day? Or, if all the villanies that are perpetrated in a ſmall circumference in one day, were known to us, we ſhould admire that God doth not make us, like Sodom, for judgment and deſolation, before the next day. What then are the innumerable ſwarms of ſin, which are as the ſands upon the ſea-ſhore, from all the parts and corners of the earth! Alas, there is not the ten thouſandth part of the groſſer ſort of wickedneſſes committed in the world, that ever comes to our eye or ear; and if it did, we cannot eſtimate the evil of ſin, as God doth; nor feel with that reſentment the burden of it, as he doth; and yet the long-ſuffering God forbears it with infinite patience. Surely his power was not more diſcovered in making the world, than it is in forbearing to deſtroy it again, for the wickedneſs that is in it. But the world ſtands for the church's ſake that is in it. "And were it not that the Lord "of hoſts had left us a ſmall remnant, we had been as Sodom, "we had been like unto Gomorrah," Iſa. i. 9. There is alſo an elect remnant to be called and gathered by the goſpel out of it, in their ſeveral generations: and when that number ſhall be accompliſhed, God will ſet fire to the four quarters of it, and it ſhall lie in white aſhes; till then the long-ſuffering of God waiteth.

5. *Inference.* If God ſees all the ſecret wickedneſs that is committed in every corner of the world; how clear is it, that there is a judgment to come, and that this judgment will be exact?

That there is a judgment to come, is by this manifeſt; and alſo that there is abundance of ſin committed in the world, which never comes to light here, nor never will in this world. It is true, mens ſins are open; and the judgments of God upon them are as open; but it is not ſo with all. The apoſtle ſaith, 1 Tim. v. 24. "Some mens ſins are open before hand,

Digitized by Google

"going before-hand to judgment, and some mens they follow "after." Some mens sins are written, as it were, in their foreheads, every one sees them; but others follow after, are not discovered till the day of the revelation of the secrets of all hearts, and then that which is now done in closets shall be proclaimed as upon house-tops: Though they were never put to shame for their sins, in the places where they committed them, yet God will shame them, before men and angels. This is the day to judge secrets, 1 Cor. iv. 5.

And, as it is certain there will be such a judgment, so it is certain this judgment will be exact; for the judge of all hath seen all: Whatever he charges any man with, hath been acted before his face, Psal. xc. 8. "Thou settest our secret sins in "the light of thy countenance." Here can be no mistake, the omnipotent God will judge for what he hath seen; "For his "eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings, "for he will not lay upon man more than right, that he should "enter into judgment with God." The meaning is, he cannot mistake in his judgment, being omniscient, and having seen all the ways of man; so that there can be no plea offered by any man for a reverse of his sentence.

O then let us be exact and careful, as well in our secret as in our public actions; for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, Eccl. xii. *ult.*

6. *Inference.* Lastly, If the eye of God be in every place upon us, and all our actions; then let those whose condition of life hath sent them out of the eyes and observations of their parents and masters, keep the sense of God's eye upon their hearts, as ever they would escape sin and ruin.

It is no small advantage to young unprincipled persons, to live under the discipline of pious and careful governors; but it often falls out, that they are early transplanted into another soil, sent into foreign countries in order to their education or employment; and as often are there corrupted and debauched by the evil examples of the places where they reside; they learn another language, or drive another trade than what their parents or masters designed them for. But if the sense of this great truth might accompany them where-ever they are, O what a sovereign antidote might it prove against those deadly poisons of temptations! This alone would be a sufficient preservative. If our children and servants have but the awful sense of God's eye upon them, we may turn them loose into the wide world without fear.

Digitized by Google

If Providence shall direct this discourse to your hands, my heart's desire and prayer for you is, that the Spirit of the Lord would imprint this great truth upon your hearts. And I am the more moved to endeavour your preservation, upon the consideration of the apparent danger you are in, and the manifold disappointments and mischiefs that must unavoidably follow the corrupting of your tender years. The danger you are in is great, whether you consider,

First, The infecting, catching nature of sin. No plague is more infectious and insinuating than sin is. Many are the wiles, devices, stratagems, and baits, Satan lays to draw you into sin, 2 Cor. ii. 11. Or,

Secondly, The proneness that is in your own nature, to close with the offers and temptations that you are tried with; it is as great a wonder if you escape, as that one that lives in a pesthouse should remain healthy; or that dry tinder should not catch, when thousands of sparks fly about it, and light upon it. Or,

Thirdly, The absence of all those means by which you have formerly been preserved from sin. You are now without the ordinances of God, the family duties, the admonitions, counsels, examples, and observations of your parents, masters, and friends: All which have been of great use to keep you from sin, and repress the vanities of youth. Or, lastly,

Fourthly, The manifold furtherance or temptations which your age affords; *Childhood and youth are vanity*. Inconsiderateness, rashness, injudiciousness, and the want of experience, do all cast you into the very snare. See how the Holy Ghost hath signified the danger of persons at your age, in Prov. vii. 7.

All these things do greatly endanger you. And if any, or all of them together, prevail to the vitiating and corrupting of you, then what a train of sad consequences will follow upon it! For,

1. The great God will be dishonoured and reproached by you, even that God whose distinguishing mercies are now before your eyes, and should be admired by you; that caused you to spring up in a better soil, and not from idolaters in a land of darkness.

2. Conscience will be wounded and polluted with guilt; and though, at present, you feel not the remorse and gnawings of it, yet now you are preparing for it. The sins of youth are complaints and sorrows of old age, Job xiii. 26.

Digitized by Google

3. The hearts of your friends, if godly, will be grieved, and greatly troubled, to find their expectations and hopes disappointed; and all those prayers for you, and counsels bestowed on you, to come to nothing. If an unequal match by Esau was such a grief of heart to Isaac and Rebecca, what will prophaneness and uncleanness be to your parents? Gen. xxvi. 34.

4. The serviceableness and comfort of your whole life, will, in all probability, be destroyed by the corruption of your youth. If blossoms be withered, and buds nipt, what fruit can be expected? To conclude,

5. Your precious and immortal souls are hazarded to all eternity. And "what shall it profit a man, to gain the whole "world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in "exchange for his soul?" Matth. xvi. 26.

All this mischief may be happily prevented by the serious consideration of this point you have now been reading. For, if God shall fix that truth in your hearts by faith, then,

First, Instead of running with others into the same excess of riot, you will keep yourselves pure and unspotted in an unclean defiling world. You will answer all temptations to sin, as Joseph did, Gen. xxxix. 9. "How can I do this great wickedness, "and sin against God?"

Secondly, Instead of joining with others in sin, you will mourn for the sins of others. You will say with David, Psal. cxx. 5. "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesheo, that I dwell in "the tents of Kedar!" Your soul, like Lot's, will be vexed, from day to day, with the filthy conversations of the wicked, 2 Pet. i. 17, 18.

Thirdly, Instead of returning to your country with a wounded name and conscience, you will return full of inward comfort and peace, and to the joy of all your friends and relations.

Fourthly, To conclude, You will give fair encouragements to the expectations of all that know you, of becoming useful instruments for the glory of God, and benefit of the world in your generation. O therefore beg of God, that this truth may be deeply engraven upon your hearts.

Digitized by Google

THE SUCCESSFUL SEAMAN.

SERMON IV.

DEUT. viii. 17, 18. *And thou say in thine heart, My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth; but thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.*

THIS context contains a necessary and very seasonable caution to the Israelites, who were now passing out of their wilderness straits into the rich and fruitful land of Canaan, which abounded with all earthly blessings and comforts. Now, when the Lord was about to give them possession of this good land, he first gives them some wholesome caveats to prevent the abuse of these mercies. He knew how apt they were to forget him in a prosperous estate, and ascribe all their comfortable fruitions to their own prudence and valour: to prevent this, he reminds them of their former estate, and warns them about their future estate; he reminds them of their former condition, whilst they subsisted upon his immediate care in the wilderness; verses 15, 16. "Who led thee through the great and terrible "wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions, and "drought, where there was no water;" here were their dangers and wants. "Who brought thee forth water out of the "rock of flint, who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, "which thy fathers knew not:" here were their supplies in these straits. "That he might humble thee, and that he "might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end:" here was the wise and gracious design of God in all this.

But wherein did God humble them by feeding them with manna? Were they not shrewdly humbled (saith Mr. Gurnal, vol. II. p. 345. an ingenious author) to be fed with such a dainty dish, which had God for its cook, and was called angels food for its delicacy? It was not the meanness of the fare, but the manner of having it, by which God intended to humble them. The food was excellent, but they had it from hand to mouth; so that God kept the key of their cupboard, they stood to his immediate allowance: this was an humbling way. But now

Digitized by Google

the dispensation of Providence was just upon the change; they were going to a land, "where they should eat bread without "scarceness," verse 9. and have their comforts in a more natural, stated, and sensible way; and now would be the danger. Therefore,

He not only reminds them of their former estate, but in this text cautions them about their future estate, "Say not in thy "heart, my power, or the might of my hand, hath gotten me "this wealth," *&c.* In this caution we have these two things especially to observe:

I. The false cause of their prosperity removed.

II. The true and proper cause thereof asserted.

1. The false cause removed: "Not their power, or the might "of their hand." That is said to be gotten by the hand, which is gotten by our wisdom, as well as labour: head-work, and wit-work, are hand-work in the sense of this text. It cannot be denied, but they were a great people, prudent, industrious, and had an excellent polity among them: but yet, though they had all these natural external means of enriching themselves in that fertile soil, God will, by no means, allow them to ascribe their success and wealth to any of these causes: for, alas! what are all these without his blessing?

2. The true and proper cause asserted: "It is the Lord that "gives thee power to get wealth:" *i. e.* All thy care, labour, wisdom, strength, signify nothing without him; it is not your pains, but his blessing, that makes your designs to prosper: and therefore in all your prosperity, still acknowledge him as the Author of all. Hence note,

Doct. *That the prosperity and success of our affairs are not to be ascribed to our own abilities, but to the blessing of God upon our lawful endeavours.*

We find two proverbs, in one chapter, that seem to differ in the account they give of this matter; and indeed they do but seem so. It is said, Prov. x. 4. "The hand of the diligent "maketh rich;" ascribing riches and prosperity to human diligence. And verse 22. "The blessing of the Lord it maketh "rich." But these two are not really opposed to each other, but the one subordinated to the other. The diligent hand, with God's blessing upon it, makes rich; neither of them alone, but both conjoined. A diligent hand cannot make rich without God's blessing; and God's blessing doth not ordinarily make

Faith must not stifle industry, nor industry blind faith.

Digitized by Google

rich without a diligent hand. And these two are put together in their proper places, 1 Chron. xxii. 16. "Up and be doing, "and the Lord be with you." It is a vain pretence for any man to say, If the Lord be with me, I may sit still, and do nothing; and a wicked one to say, If I am up and doing, I shall prosper whether God be with me or no. The sluggard would fain prosper without diligence, and the atheist hopes to prosper by his diligence alone: but Christians expect their prosperity from God's blessing, in the way of honest diligence.

It is a common thing for men to benumb their own arms, and make them as dead and useless by leaning too much upon them: so it is in a moral as well as natural way: all the prudence and pains in the world avail nothing without God. So saith the Psalmist, in Psal. cxxvii. 2. "It is in vain for you to rise up "early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrow, for so he "giveth his beloved sleep."

A man would think, he that rises betimes, fares hard, works hard, sits up late, cannot but be a thriving man; and probably he would be so, if God's blessing did second his diligence and frugality. But the Psalmist intends it of diligence in a separate sense; a diligent hand working alone, and then it is all in vain, and serves only to confirm the common proverb, *Early up, and never the nearer.* Labour without God cannot prosper; and labour against God will not only destroy itself, but the labourer too.

Now, that this is really so as the doctrine states it, I shall endeavour to make evident.

1. By a general demonstration of the whole matter.
2. By a particular enumeration of the ordinary causes and means of all success; which are all dependent upon the Lord's blessing.

First, That success in business is not in the power of our hand, but in the hand of Providence to dispose it as he pleases, and to whom he pleases, appears by this, 'That Providence 'sometimes blasts and frustrates the most prudent and well-laid 'designs of men; and in the mean time succeeds and prospers 'more weak and improbable ones.' What is more common in the observation of all ages than this? One man shall toil as in the fire, for very vanity; run to and fro, plot and study all the ways in the world to get an estate, deny back and belly, and all will not do: he shall never be able to attain what he strives after, but his designs shall be still fruitless. Another hath neither a head to contrive, nor a hand to labour as the former hath: nor doth he torture his brains about it, but manages his

Digitized by Google

affairs with less judgment, and spends fewer thoughts about it, and yet success follows it. It shall be cast in upon some, who as they did not, so, considering the weak management of their business, had little rational encouragement to expect it; and fly from others, who industriously pursue it in the prudent choice and diligent use of all the proper means of attaining it. And this is not only an observation grounded upon our own experience, but confirmed by the wisest of men; Eccles. ix. 11. "I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all." If two men run for a prize, reason gives the prize to the swiftest: if two armies join battle, reason gives the victory to the strongest; if two men undertake a design to get wealth, reason gives the riches to the wisest; yea, but Providence sometimes disposes it quite contrary to the verdict of reason, and the prize is given to the slowest, the victory to the weakest, the estate to the more shallow capacity: so that these events seem to fall out rather casually, than answerable to the means employed about them. And who that observes this, can doubt but it is the hand of God's providence, and not our diligence, that disposes the issues of these things? For why doth God so often step out of the ordinary way, and cross his hands, as old Israel did, laying the right hand upon the younger, and the left upon the elder: I mean, give success to the weak, and disappointment to the strong, but to convince us of this great truth which I here bring it to confirm? And because men are so apt to sacrifice to their own prudence, and disown providence, therefore it sometimes makes the case much plainer than so: it denies riches to the industrious, that live for no other end but to get them, and casts them in upon those that seek them not at all, and indeed are scarcely competent for business. Aristides, one of the wisest men of his age, was yet still so poor, that Plutarch said, it brought a slur upon justice itself, as if she were not able to maintain her followers. Socrates, one of the prime Grecian sages, was so exceeding poor, that Apuleius could not but note, "That *poverty* was become an inmate with *philosophy* *;" when in the mean time, the empty, shallow, and foolish, shall come up with it, and overtake it without any pains at all, which others prosecute in the most rational course all their life, and all to no purpose. Thus it is noted of pope Clement the fifth,

* *Paupertas est philosophia vernacula.*

Digitized by Google

None more rich, none more foolish. * And this is the ground of that proverb, *Fortuna favet fatuos: Fortune favours fools.* Though the author of that proverb, in nicknaming providence, shewed as little wisdom as he that is the subject of it.

By all which, this point is in the general made good: it is not industry, but providence, that directs and commands the success of business: It being much in the attaining of riches, as the apostle saith it is in the obtaining of righteousness: "The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained "to righteousness; but Israel, which followed after the law "of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness," Rom. ix. 30, 31. So it is here, for the vindication of the honour of providence, which men would scarcely own, if it did not thus baffle them sometimes: they that follow the world cannot obtain it; and they attain it that follow it not; that all men may see their good is not in their own hand; and left man, who is not only a covetous creature, and would engross all to himself, but as proud as covetous, should ascribe all to himself. But this will farther appear,

Secondly, By a particular enumeration of the ordinary causes and means of all success in business, which are all dependant things upon a higher cause.

Now, if we proceed upon a rational account, we shall find five things required to the success of our affairs: and that I may speak to your capacity, I will instance in that affair of merchandizing, in which you are employed, as the hands that execute what the heads of your merchants contrive; and will shew you, that neither their wisdom in contriving, nor your skill and industry in managing their designs, can prosper without the leave and blessing of divine providence. Let us therefore consider, what is necessary to the raising of an estate in that way of employment; and you will find, that in a rational and ordinary way, success cannot be expected, unless,

1. The designs and projects be prudently laid, and moulded with much consideration and foresight. An error here is like an error in the first concoction, which is not to be rectified afterwards. "The wisdom of the prudent (saith Solomon) is "to understand his way;" that is, to understand, and thoroughly to consider, the particular designs and business in which he is to engage. Rashness and inconsiderateness here hath been the ruin of many thousand enterprizes. And if a design be never so well laid, yet,

2. No success in business can be rationally expected, except

* *Epitom. Hist. Gallic.*

Digitized by Google

there be an election of proper instruments to manage it. The best laid design in the world may be spoiled by an ill management. If the persons employed be either uncapable or unfaithful, what but trouble and disappointment can be expected? "He that sendeth a message (saith Solomon) by the hands of a "fool, cutteth off the legs, and drinketh damage." It is as if a man should send him on his business that had no legs to go; *i. e.* one that is incompetent for the business he is employed about. All that a man shall reap from such a design, is damage: and if the instrument employed be never so capable, yet if he be not also faithful to the trust committed to him, all is lost; and such is the depth of deceit in the heart of men, that few or none can be secured against it. Solomon was the wisest of men, and yet fatally miscarried in this matter; "He seeing the young "man (Jeroboam) that he was a mighty man of valour, and "that he was industrious, made him ruler over all the charge "of the house of Joseph," 1 Kings xi. 28. And this was the man that rent the kingdom from his son, even ten tribes from the house of David. And yet,

3. Let designs be projected with the greatest prudence, and committed to the management of the fittest instruments; all is nothing as to success, without the concurrence of health, strength, favourable winds, security from the hands of enemies, and perils of the deep. If any of these be wanting, the design miscarries, and all our projects fail. How often are hopeful and thriving undertakings frustrated by the failure of any one of these requisites? "Go to now, ye that say, to-day or to mor-"row we will go into such a city, and remain there a year, "and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what "shall be on the morrow: for what is your life? It is even "a vapour that appears for a little while, and then vanisheth "away," Jam. iv. 13, 14. How soon are the purposes of mens hearts broken off, and their thoughts perish in one day? They think to send or go to such a place, and there enrich themselves, and return prosperous; but sometimes death, sometimes captivity, sometimes cross winds, dash all their hopes.

4. Proper seasons must be observed, else all success and expectation of increase is lost. "There is (saith Solomon) a sea-"son for every thing, and a time to every purpose under the "sun," Eccles. iii. 1. This being taken, gives facility and speedy dispatch to a business; and therefore he gives this reason, why man miscarries so frequently, and is disappointed in his enterprizes, because he knows not the time; Eccles. ix. 11. 'He comes (as one saith) when the bird is flown.' It is a wise

Digitized by Google

and weighty proverb with the Greeks, 'That there is much time 'in a short opportunity:" That is, a man hitting the season of a business, may do more in a day, than, losing it, he may be able to do in a year. This is of a special consideration in all human affairs, and is the very hinge upon which success turns: So that to come before, is to pluck apples before they are ripe; and to come after it, is to seek them when they are fallen and perished.

5. Lastly, In getting wealth, the leaks in our estates must be stopped: else we do but put it into a bag with holes, as the prophet's phrase is in Hag. i. 6. If a man lose as much one way as he gets another, there can be no increase. Hence it is, that many are kept low and poor all their days: If one design prospers, yet another miscarries; or, if all succeed well abroad, yet there is a secret consumption of it at home, by prodigality, riot, luxury, or a secret curse upon it, which the scripture calls *God's blowing upon it*, Hag. i. 9. If therefore by any of these ways our gains moulder away, we do but disquiet ourselves in vain, and labour in the fire for very vanity. Thus you see what things are requisite to the advancement of an estate upon a prudential account.

Now let us particularly observe what a dependance there is upon Providence in all these things; and then it will be clear that our good is not in our hand, nor success at our beck, but it is the Lord that gives us power to get wealth. For,

As to the moulding and projecting of a design, we may say, both of the prudent merchant, and ingenious seaman, what the prophet doth of the husbandman, Isa. xxviii. 10. "It is his "God that instructs him to discretion, and teacheth him." There is, indeed, a spirit in man, "But it is the inspiration of "the Almighty that giveth understanding," Job xxxii. 8. The faculty is man's, but the light of wisdom, whether natural or spiritual, is God's: and the natural faculty is of itself no more capable of directing us in our affairs, without his teaching, than the dial is to inform us of hours without the sun's shining upon it. And because men are so dull in apprehending, and backward in acknowledging it, but will lean to their own understandings, thence it is, that prudent designs are so often blasted, and weaker ones succeeded.

And no less doth Providence manifest itself in directing to, and prospering the means and instruments employed in our business: it is of the Lord that they prove ingenious, active, and faithful servants to us; that your factors abroad prove not malefactors to you; that every design is not ruined by the negli-

Digitized by Google

gence, ignorance, or treachery of them that manage it. If God qualify men to be fit instruments to serve you, and then providentially direct you to them, his hand is thankfully to be owned in both. It was no small mercy to Abraham, that he had so discreet, pious, and faithful a servant to manage even his weightiest affairs, so prudently and prosperously for him. Laban, Pharoah, and Jethro, never prospered, as when Jacob, Joseph, and Moses, had the charge of their business. Laban ingenuously acknowledged, "That he had learned by experi-"ence the Lord had blessed him for Jacob's sake," Gen. xxx. 27. A heathen you see is more ingenuous in owning the mercy of God to him in this case, than many professed Christians are, who sacrifice all to their own net, and burn incense to their drag, (*i. e.*) idolize the means and instruments of their prosperity, and see nothing of God in it.

And then as to the preservation of those that go down into the sea, to do our business in the great waters; who can but acknowledge this to be the peculiar work of God? Doth not daily experience shew how often poor seamen are cut off in the prosecution of our designs, sometimes by sickness, sometimes by storms, and sometimes by enemies, to whom they become a prey? If they escape all these, yet how often do they lie wind-bound, or hindered by cross-accidents, till the proper season be over, and the design lost? Certainly, if providence shall so far favour men, as to prevent all these; command winds fit for their purpose, restrain enemies, preserve life, and carry them safely and seasonably to their ports, it deserves a thankful acknowledgment; and those that do not acknowledge providence, do disoblige it.

Lastly, Who is it that stops the leaks in your estates, prevents the wasting of your substance, and secures you to what you possess? Is it not the Lord? How many fair estates moulder away insensibly, and come to nothing! Certainly, as there is a secret blessing in some families, so that themselves can scarce give any account how they are provided for, so there is a secret blast and consumption upon others, which brings poverty upon them like an armed man. And this is the true sense of that scripture, Hag. i. 6. "Ye have sown much, and bring in "little. Ye eat, but ye have not enough: ye drink, but are "not filled with drink: ye clothe you, but are not warm; "and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a "bag with holes;" or, as in the Hebrew, a *bag pierced, or bored through*; what goes in at one end, goes out at another,

Digitized by Google

and so all labour is lost; nothing stays with them to do them good. So that it is an undeniable truth, that *prosperity* and *success* is not to be ascribed to our abilities, but to the blessing of God upon our lawful endeavours.

1. *Inference.* And if so, how are they justly reprovable, that wholly depend upon means in the neglect of providence; that never eye God, or acknowledge him in any of their ways? This is a very great evil, and highly provoking to the Lord: it is the fruit and discovery of the natural Atheism of the hearts of men. How confident are men of success and prosperity, when second causes lie for it, and smile upon them? And, on the contrary, how dejected and heartless, when they seem to lie cross to their hopes? O how few consider and believe that great truth, Eccl. ix. 1. "That the righteous, and the "wise, and their works are in the hand of God!" To be in the hand of God, noteth both their subjection to his power, and to his directive providence. Whether your works be in your hand, or put out of your hand, they always are in God's hand, to prosper or frustrate them at his pleasure.

Foolish man decreeth events, without the leave of Providence: as if he were absolute lord of his own actions, and their success. Indeed you may then speak of success, when you have asked God's leave; Job xxii. 28. "Acquaint thyself with "God, then shalt thou decree a thing, and it shall be established." But your confidence in the means, whilst God is neglected, will surely be followed either with a disappointment or a curse. For what is this, but to labour without God, yea, to labour against God? For so do all they that give the glory of God to the creature; that set the instrumental and subordinate in the place of the principal efficient cause. It is just with God to deny you your comfort in those things wherein you rob him of his glory.

2. *Inference.* How vain and unreasonable are the proud boasts of men, in the midst of their successes and prosperity! If God be the sole author of it, and it is not in your power, nor the might of your hand, that hath gotten you this wealth; why do you glory in it, as if it were the effect and fruit of your own prudence and industry? How soon do the spirits of men rise with their estates? How haughtily do they look? How proudly do they speak? What a sensible change of temper doth this small change of condition work? it is an exceeding hard thing to keep down the heart, when providence exalteth a man's estate. *Magnae felicitatis est, a felicitate non vinci*, saith Austin. It is a great felicity not to be over-

Digitized by Google

come by felicity. That man is surely rich in grace, whose graces suffer no eclipse by his riches. It is as hard to be prosperous and humble, as to be afflicted and chearful. But to keep down thy heart in times of success and prosperity, I will offer thee, reader, a few humbling considerations about this matter.

1. And the first is this: Though providence do succeed and prosper the earthly designs, yet this is no argument at all of the love of God to thy soul: thou mayest be the object of his hatred and wrath for all this. No man knows either love or hatred by all that is before him, Eccl. ix. 1. How weak an evidence for heaven must that be, which millions now in hell have had in a greater measure than you have? The least drachm of grace is a better pledge of happiness, than the greatest sum of gold and silver that ever lay in any man's treasury. Externals distinguish not internals; you cannot so much as guess what a man's spiritual estate is, by the view of his temporal. Ishmael was a very great man, the head of a princely family, but, for all that, excluded from the covenant, and all its spiritual blessings, Gen. xvii. 20, 21. He that reads the lxxiii. Psalm, and the xxi. of Job, will plainly see how wretched a case that man is in, who hath no better evidence for the love of God than this amounts to.

2. Be not proud of outward prosperity and success; for providences are very changeable in these things; yea, it daily rings the changes all the world over. Many a greater estate than yours, and every way as well, yea, far better secured to the eye of reason, hath he scattered in a moment. It is the saying of a philosopher, speaking of the estates of merchants and seamen, *Non amo faelicitatem e funibus pendentem*: I like not that happiness that hangs upon ropes. I need not here cite *histories* to confirm this truth: there is none of you but can abundantly confirm it to yourselves, if you will but recollect those instances and examples which have fallen within your time and remembrance. It is a poor happiness, that may leave a man more miserable to-morrow, than he that never arrived to what you have, can be.

3. Pride not yourselves in your success; for as providences are very changeable, so the change seems very nigh to you, when your heart is thus lifted up, especially if you be such, to whose eternal happiness God hath any special regard: to be sure, he will pull down that proud heart, and quickly order humbling providences to that end: "He looketh upon every

Digitized by Google

"one that is proud, to abase him," Job. xl. 11. The heart of good Hezekiah was tickled with vain-glory, and he must needs shew the king of Babylon's servants all his treasures, and precious things; and at that very time came the prophet Isaiah to him with a sad message from the Lord, that all these treasures, in which he had gloried, must be carried to Babylon, Isa. xxxix. If you hope comfortably to enjoy the good of providence, provoke it not by such vain ostentations. It is an ingenious note, even of an heathen,

Tu quoque fac timeas, et quae tibi laeta videntur,
Dum loqueris, fieri tristia posse, puta. Ovid.

Exercise fear in prosperity, and think with thyself, when thy heart is most affected with it, that whilst the boast is in thy lips, the scene may alter, and thy happiness be turned into sorrow. Whilst that proud boast was in the mouth of Nebuchadnezzar, the voice from heaven told him, "His kingdom was "departed from him," Dan. iv. 30, 31. Pride shews that prosperity, which feeds it, to be at its vertical point.

3. *Inference.* If success in business be from the Lord, then certainly the true way to prosperity is to commend our affairs to God by prayer. He takes the true way to thrive, that engages God's blessing upon his endeavours. "Commit thy way "unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to "pass," Psalm xxxvii. 4. It is a vile thing for any man to grudge that time that is spent in prayer, as so much time lost in his business. But having pressed this point before, I shall add no more here.

4. *Inference.* Doth all success, and prosperity depend upon, and come from God? Then let it be faithfully employed to his glory. "If it be of him, and through him," then it is all the reason in the world it should "be to him," Rom. xi. 36. You do but give him of his own, as David speaks: "All this "store cometh of thine hand, and is thine own," 1 Chron. xxix. 16. He never intended your estates for the gratifying of your lusts, but to give you a larger capacity thereby of honouring him in the use of them. O consider, when God hath prospered your estates abroad, and you return successfully home, how you have an opportunity of honouring God, and evidencing your sense of his goodness to you, by relieving of the poor with a liberal and chearful charity; by encouraging the gospel, and making them partakers of your good things, who labour for your souls, and dispense better things to you than you can return to them. I would not here be mis-interpreted, as the I pleaded my own interest, under a pretence of pleading God's;

Digitized by Google

no, God forbid; I am well satisfied with a capacity of doing any good, how little soever I receive; nor can many of you reap the fruit of my labours: but I would not leave you ignorant, or regardless of so great and plain a duty as this is: you are bound to this retribution, by a plain and positive precept; Gal. vi. 6. "Let him that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth, in all good things." You are obliged to do it, proportionably to the success God gives you in your trade, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. And when you have so done, not to think it any great matter, 1 Cor. ix. 11. but the discharge of a plain and necessary duty.

5. *Inference.* Let not your hearts be satisfied with all the success and increase of the world, except your souls thrive as well as your bodies, and your eternal concerns prosper as well as your temporal. It was a pious wish of St. John for Gaius his host, "That he might prosper, and be in health, even as his soul prospered," 3 Epist. John, ver. 2. But it were to be wished, that your souls did but prosper as your bodies and estates do. It is a poor comfort to have an increasing estate, and a dead and declining soul. When a considerable present was sent to Luther, he earnestly protested, God should not put him off with those things. O friends! I beseech you take not up in these enjoyments!

6. *Inference, Lastly,* If God be the author of all your success, how prodigious an evil is it to make your prosperity an instrument of dishonouring him that gave it; to abuse the estates providence gives you, to rioting and drunkenness? Do you thus requite the Lord! is this the thanks you give him for all his care over you! and kindness to you! you would never be able to bear that from another, which God bears from you. If God do you good, O do not return him evil for it!

THE DISAPPOINTED SEAMAN.

SERMON. V.

LUKE v. verse 5. *Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing.*

THESE words are the reply made by Peter unto Christ, who, in the former verse, had commanded him to

Digitized by Google

"launch out into the deep, and let down the nets for a "draught." Peter is discouraged as to any farther attempt at that time, having already taken so much pains to so little purpose: "We have (saith he) toiled all the night, and have taken "nothing." In which reply we note these two things:

1. The great pains he and his company had taken in their honest calling and employment to get a livelihood; "We have "toiled all night." No calling more lawful, no diligence in an honest employment could be greater; not only to spend the night, when other labourers take their rest, in watching, but in toiling. The * word κοπιάσαντες comes from a verb that signifies *wasting, tiring, spending, labour.* Here was great diligence, even to the wearying and wasting of their spirits: "They toiled, and that all the night."

2. The unsuccessfulness and fruitlessness of their labours, they *caught nothing.* Though their design was honest, and their industry great, yet it succeeded not according to their desire and expectations: it proved but lost labour and pains to no purpose. Hence the note will be,

Doct. *That God sometimes frustrates and blasts the most diligent labours of men, in their just and lawful callings.*

What employment more honest, or laborious, than that of the husbandman, who eats his bread in the sweet of his brows, and sustains all that spending toil, and labour, by an expectation of fruit in the season? And yet sometimes it so falls out, that after all his labours, and hopes, he reaps nothing but shame and disappointment. Joel i. 11. "Be astonished, O ye "husbandmen: Howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat, and "for the barley, because the harvest of the field is perished."

The employment of the mariner is as lawful as it is beneficial; what he gets, is gotten with imminent hazard of life and liberty, as well as watchings and labours; and yet it so falls out, sometimes, that they labour but for the wind, and spend their strength for very vanity: God cuts off their expectations and lives together. There is a time when they return rich and prosperous, and a time when they either return empty, or return no more. So it was with Tyre, that renowned mart, and famous empory; the flourishing and fall of whose trade you have in Ezek. xxvii. 33, 34. "When thy wares "went forth out of the seas, thou filledest many people, thou "didst enrich the kings of the earth with the multitude of thy

* Κοπιάω signifies when one lies down wearied at the end of his work.

Digitized by Google

"riches, and of thy merchandise." Here was their prosperity and success; but will this day always last? Shall the sun of their prosperity never set? No, no, the change was at hand; for in the next verse the scene alters. "In the day when thou "shalt be broken by the seas, in the depths of the waters of "thy merchandise, and all thy company in the midst of thee "shall fall."

Now if we search into the grounds and reasons of these disappointments by the hand of providence, we shall find them reducible to a threefold cause, and reason.

1. The sovereign pleasure of God so disposes it.
2. The good of the people of God requires it.
3. The manifold sins of men in their callings, provoke it.

First, The sovereign pleasure of God so disposes it. He is the Rector of the universe, and as such will still assert his dominion. It is his pleasure to establish this order in the world, to exalt some, and depress others; to set some above, and others below: all must not be rich and great, but some must be poor and low, and to these ends providences are suited: On some it smiles, on others it frowns. 1 Sam. ii. 7. "The Lord "maketh poor, and maketh rich; he bringeth low, and lifteth "up." And certainly there is much of divine wisdom shining forth in this ordination and disposition of persons and their conditions. If providence had alike prospered every man's designs, and set them upon a level, there had been no occasion to exercise the rich man's charity, or the poor man's patience. Nay, without frequent disappointments, itself would scarcely be owned in successes, nor these successes be half so sweet to them that receive them, as now they are. The very beauty of providence consists much in these various and contrary effects: So that with respect to the infinite wisdom which governs the world, it is necessary some should be crossed, and others prosper in their designs.

Secondly, And if we consider the gracious ends and designs of God towards his own people, it appears needful that all of them, in some things, and many of them in most things (relating to their outward conditition in this world) should be frustrated in their expectations and contrivances. For if all things here should succeed according to their wish, and a constant tide of prosperity should attend them,

1. How soon would sensuality and earthliness invade their hearts and affections? Much prosperity, like the pouring in of much wine, intoxicates, and overcomes our weak heads and

Digitized by Google

hearts. † Earthly, as well as heavenly objects, have a transforming efficacy in them; there cannot but be much danger in those earthly things that give or promise us much delight. Can a Christian keep his heart as loose from the smiling, as from the frowning world? We little think how deeply it insinuates into our affections in the day of prosperity; but when adversity comes, then we find it.

2. How soon would it estrange them from their God, and interrupt their communion with him? He is certainly a very mortified, and heavenly Christian whose walk with God suffers no interruption by the multitude of earthly affairs, especially when they are prosperous. When Israel was settled in the midst of the riches and delights of Canaan, then say they, (even to their benefactor, the Author of all their prosperity) "We are Lords, we will come no more to thee?" Jer. ii. 31. Or, if it do not wholly interrupt their communion, yet secretly destroys and wastes the vigour, life, and sweetness of it. So that divine wisdom sees it necessary to cross and disapoint them in the world, to prevent the mischievous influences that prosperity would have upon their duties. He had rather you should miss your desired comforts in these things, than that he should miss that delightful fellowship with you, which he so desires.

3. How loth should we be to leave this, if constant success and prosperity should follow our affairs and designs here? we see that notwithstanding all the cares, fears, sorrows, crosses, wants, and disappointments we meet with from year to year, and from day to day; yet we are apt to hug the world in our bosoms. As bitter as it is, we court it, admire it, and zealously prosecute it. We cling to it, and are loth to leave it, though we have little rest or comfort in it. What could we do then, if it should answer our expectation and desires? If we grasp with pleasure a thorn that pierces and wounds us; what would we do, if it were a rose that had nothing but delight and pleasure in it?

Thirdly, And as disappointments fall out as the effects of sovereign pleasure, and are ordered as preventive means of such mischief, which prosperity would occasion to the people of God; so it comes as a righteous retribution and punishment of the many evils that are committed in our trading and dealings with men. It is a hard thing to have much bu-

† *Luxuriant animi rebus plerumque secundis.* In prosperous times, our mind oft wanton grows.

Digitized by Google

fineſs paſs through our hands, and no iniquity cleave to them, and defile them. If God be provoked againſt us by our iniquities, wonder not, that things go croſs to our deſires and hopes. God may ſuffer ſome men to proſper in their wickedneſs, and others to miſcarry in their juſt and righteous enterprizes; but ordinarily we find that crying ſins are remarkably puniſhed, ſooner or later with viſible judgments. So that if others do not, yet we ourſelves may obſerve the relation that ſuch a judgment bears to ſuch a ſin.

And, from among many, I will here ſelect theſe following evils, which have deſtroyed the eſtates and hopes of many.

(1.) Irreligious and atheiſtical neglect and contempt of God, and his worſhip, eſpecially in thoſe that have been enlightened, and made profeſſion of religion. This was the ſin which brought that blaſting judgment upon the eſtates and labours of the Jews, as the prophet Haggai tells them, chap. i. ver. 2, 4, 6, 9. compared; "They neglected the houſe of God," *i. e.* were careleſs and regardleſs of his worſhip, and, in the mean time, were wholly intent upon their own houſes and intereſts; as he tells them in ver. 2, 4. And what was the iſſue of this? Why, ruin to all their earthly comforts and deſigns. So he tells them, ver. 6, 9. "Ye have ſown much, and bring in little; "ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not fil- "led with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and "he that earneth wages, doth it to put it into a bag with "holes. Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and "when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why, ſaith "the Lord of hoſts? Becauſe of mine houſe that is waſte; and "ye turn every man unto his own houſe." Here are great and manifold diſappointments of their hopes, a curſe, a blaſt upon all they took in hand; and the procuring cauſe of all this, was their eager proſecution of the world, in a careleſs diſregard of God, and his ſervice.

(2.) Injuſtice and fraud is a blaſting ſin. A little unjuſt gain mingled with a great eſtate, will conſume it like a moth. The Spirit of God hath uſed a very lively ſimilitude to repreſent to us the miſchievous effects of this ſin upon all human diligence and induſtry. Jer. xvii. 11. "As the partridge ſitteth "upon eggs, and hatcheth them not; ſo he that getteth rich- "es, and not by right, ſhall leave them in the midſt of his "days, and at his end ſhall be a fool."

Unjuſt gain, how long ſoever men ſit brooding upon it, ſhall after all their ſedulity and expectation, turn to no other ac-

Digitized by Google

count than a fowl's sitting upon a nest of addle-eggs uses to do: if she sit till she have pined away herself to death, nothing is produced.

You think you consult the interest of your families herein, but the Lord tells you, "That you consult shame to your hou-"ses," Hab. ii. 10. This is not the way to *feather*, but to *fire* your nest. A quiet conscience is infinitely better than a full purse; one dish of wholesome, though coarser food, is better than an hundred delicate, but poisoned, dishes. If a man have eaten the best food in the world, and afterwards sips but a little poison, he loseth not only the benefit and comfort of that which was good, but his life, or health, to boot. It may be, you have gotten much honestly; what pity is it all this good should be destroyed, for the sake of a little gotten dishonestly? This is the reason why some men cannot prosper.

(3.) Oppression is a blasting sin to some men's estates and employments. It is a crying sin in the ears of the Lord, and ordinarily intails a visible curse upon men's estates; this, like a moth, will suddenly fret and consume the greatest estate. Jam. v. 2, 4. "Your riches are corrupted, and your garments "moth-eaten;" *i. e.* The secret of God wastes and destroys what you get. And what was the cause? He tells us, ver. 4. "Behold, the hire of the labourers, that have reaped down your "fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the "cries of them which have reaped, are entered into the ears "of the Lord of Sabaoth."

The oppression of poor labourers doth more mischief to the oppressors, than it doth to them that are oppressed. It is noted by * one upon this scripture, that it is twice repeated in this text, "Which have reaped your fields;" and then again, "The cry of them which have reaped:" and the reason is, because it is their life, and so an act of the greatest unmercifulness; and besides, they are disappointed of the solace of their labours. Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. "He hath set his heart upon it;" *(i. e.)* he comforts himself in the toils and labours of the day, by reckoning upon his wages at the end of the day.

I wish those that are owners and employers of poor seamen, may seasonably consider this evil: what a woe is denounced upon him "that useth his neighbour's service without wages!" Jer. xxii. 13. Or that by crafty pretences defrauds them of any part thereof, or by tiresome delays wears out their patience, and casts them upon manifold sufferings and inconveni-

* Manton *in loc.*

Digitized by Google

encies while they wait for it. God hath not only threatened to be a swift witness against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, but hath strictly forbidden the detaining of their wages. The Jews were commanded to make payment before the sunset *, Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. Levit. xix. 30. Be just in all your dealings and contracts, or never expect the righteous God should smile upon your undertakings.

(4.) Falsehood and lying is a blasting sin to our employments; a sin which tends to destroy all converse, and disband all civil societies. And tho' by falsehood men may get some present advantages, yet hear what the holy Ghost saith of riches gotten this way: "The getting of riches by a lying tongue, "is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death," Prov. xxi. 6. Some trade in lies, as much as in wares; yea, they trade off their wares with lies. And this proves a gainful trade (as some men count gain) for the present; but, in reality, it is the most unprofitable trade that any man can drive. For it is but *the tossing of a vanity to and fro:* a phrase importing labour in vain, it profits nothing in the end, and as it profits nothing, so it hurts much: they seek profit intentionally, but death eventually; *i. e.* it will bring destruction and ruin, not only upon our trades, but our souls. The God of truth will not long prosper the way of lying; one penny gotten by a laborious hand, is better than great treasures gotten by a lying tongue: take heed you seek not death in seeking an estate this way. It is a sin destructive to society; for there is no trade where there is no trust, nor no trust where there is no truth; and yet this cursed trade of lying creeps into all trades, as if there were no living (as one speaks) without lying: but sure it is better for you to be *losers* than *liars*. He sells a dear bargain indeed, that sells his conscience with his commodity.

(5.) Perjury, or false swearing, is a blasting sin. The man cannot prosper that lies under the guilt thereof. It is said, Mal. iii. 5. "That God will be a swift witness against the "false swearer," *i. e.* it shall not be long before God by one remarkable stroke of judgment, or another, witnesseth against so great and horrid an evil. And again, Zach. v. 4. the curse, yea, the roll of curses, "shall enter into the house of the false "swearer, and shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall

* He does not make good payment who does not pay in due time.

Digitized by Google

" consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones there-
" of." This is a sin that hath laid many houses waste, even great and fair, without inhabitant. The ruins of many that were once flourishing, and great men, are at this day left to be the lasting monuments of God's righteous judgments, and dreadful warnings to posterity.

And thus I have shewed you, what are those common evils in trade, which are the causes of those blasts and disappointments upon it. It now remains that we apply it.

Inference 1. Doth God sometimes disappoint the most diligent labours of men in their lawful callings? Then this teacheth you patience and submission under your crosses and disappointments; for it is the Lord that orders it to be so. Events are in his hand, and it is a sin of great aggravation to fret and murmur at them, when they fall out cross to your desires and hopes. " Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts, that the peo-
" ple shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary
" themselves for very vanity?" Hab. ii. 13.

To labour in the very fire, notes intense labour, such as exhausts the very spirits of men, whilst they are sweltering and toiling at it; and yet all is to no purpose, they labour but for vanity: and whence is it, that such vigorous endeavours are blasted, and miscarry? Is it not of the Lord? And if it be of the Lord, why do we fret and quarrel at his disposals? Indeed, many dare not openly and directly charge God, but seek to cover their discontent at providence, by a groundless quarrel with the instruments, who, it may be, are chargeable with nothing; but that after they have done all they could, in the use of proper means, they did not also secure the event. It is true, the dominion of providence doth not excuse the negligence of instruments; and in many cases, these may be justly reproved, when providence is duly honoured, and submitted to: But when men groundlessly quarrel with instruments, because they are crossed in their expectations, the quarrel is commenced against God himself; and our discontents with men, are but a covert for our discontents with God.

Now this is a sore evil, a sin of great and dreadful aggravations. ' To be given over (saith a grave * author) to a con-
' tradicting spirit, to dispute against any part of the will of
' God, is one of the greatest plagues that a man can be given
' up to.' " Who art thou that replieſt against God?" Rom. ix. 20. It may be thou hast lost an estate, thy friends fail, thy

* Mr. Strong, Of the will of God, p. 242.

Digitized by Google

hopes are fallen; God hath blown upon all the projects that thy heart did fancy to itself. Possibly in one day, the designs, labours, and hopes of many years are destroyed: Well, be it so, yet repine not against the Lord. Consider, he is the Sovereign, and only Lord, who may do whatever he pleaseth to do, without giving thee any account of his matters. Who can say to him, What dost thou? Beside, if thou be one that God delights in, even these disappointments are to be numbered with thy best mercies. These things are permitted to perish, that thou may'est not perish for ever; and it should trouble thee no more, than when thy life is preserved by casting out the wares and goods of the ship. It is better that these perish, than that thou shouldst perish; but if thou be one that mingled sin (especially such as were before mentioned) with thy trade, and so hast pulled down misery upon thine own head, by provoking the Lord against thee: With what face canst thou open thy mouth to complain against him? Will you lay a train to blow up all your success, and then fret against God, when you see the issue? O how unreasonable is this!

But because disappointments fall out so frequently, and it is so hard to bring our hearts to a quiet submission to the will of God under them, I will not dismiss this point, until I have offered you some proper and weighty considerations to work your hearts into a calm, and meek submission to the will of God; and I shall account it a great mercy, if they may prevail.

Consideration 1. And, in the first place, if thou be one that feareſt God, consider, that disappointments in earthly things fix no mark of God's hatred upon thee. He may love thee, and yet cross thee, Eccl. ix. 1, 2. "No man knows either love "or hatred by all the things that are before him. All things "come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous, and "to the wicked." Yea, we often find success and prosperity following the wicked, whilst the rod of God is upon the tabernacles of the righteous. "These are the ungodly that pro-"sper in the world, (saith the Psalmist) whilst in the mean "time he was plagued all the day long, and chastened every "morning," Psal. lxxiii. 12, 14. Well, then, if you have no other ground than this, you cannot infer the want of love, from the want of success. A man may be prospered in wrath, and crossed in mercy.

Consideration 2. And what though your projects, hopes, and expectations of enlarging your estates fail; yet you may live as happily, and comfortably in the condition you are, (if God

Digitized by Google

give you a heart suitable to it) as if you had enjoyed all that success you so fancied, and desired.

It is not the increase of an estate, but the blessing of God upon a competency, that makes our condition comfortable to us. As the estate enlarges, so doth the heart. The prophet Habakkuk, speaking of the Chaldean prince, Hab. ii. 6. saith, "He keeps not at home, he enlarges his desire as hell, and "is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him "all nations, and heapeth unto him all people." And this is the nature of every man's heart, to enlarge its desire and the greatest enlargements of providence. Still the heart is projecting for some further comfort and content, in some new acquisition; when, indeed, a man is as near it in a lower condition, as in the highest exaltation.

It is storied of Pyrrhus †, king of Epirus, that having enlarged his dominions by the conquest of Macedonia, he thirsted after Italy; and demanding the advice of Cineas, his great counsellor, he asked the king, what he meant to do when he had conquered Italy? Why then, said he, I mean to get Sicily, which is near, rich, and powerful. When you have gotten Sicily, (said Cineas) What then? Afric, said the king, is not far off, and there be many goodly kingdoms, which by my fame, and the valour of my soldiers, I may subdue. Be it so, said Cineas: When you have Afric, and all in it, what will you do then? Why then, said the king, thou and I will be merry, and make good chear. Cineas replied, sir, if this be the end you aim at, what need you venture your kingdom, person, and honour, to purchase what you have already? Surely Epirus and Macedonia are sufficient to make you and me merry; and had you all the world, you could not be more merry than you may now be.

Reader, I advise thee, under all disappointments of thy expectations, to bless God for any comfortable enjoyment thou hast. If God give thee a smaller estate, and a contented heart; it is as well, yea, better than if thou hadst enjoyed thy desire. The bee makes a sweeter meal upon two or three flowers, than the ox that hath so many mountains to graze upon.

Consideration 3. And what if by these disappointments, God be carrying on the great design of his eternal love upon thy soul? This may be the design of these providences; and if so, sure there is no cause for thy despondencies. There is a double aim of these providences; sometimes they are sent to awaken and rouze the dull, decayed habits of grace, which under

† Plutarch in Pyrrho.

Digitized by Google

prosperous providences fall asleep, by the intermission of acts, and remission of wonted vigour, and activity? And should the Lord permit things to run on at this rate, what a deplorable case would this grow to? 'Let a man live (saith ‡ one,) but 'two or three years without affliction, and he is almost good 'for nothing; he cannot pray, nor meditate, nor keep his 'heart fixed upon spiritual things: But let God smite him in 'his health, child, or estate; now he can find his tongue 'and affections again; now he awakes, and falls to his duty 'in earnest; now God hath twice as much honour from him 'as he had before. Now, saith God, his amendment pleas-'eth me; this rod was well bestowed: I have disappointed 'him to his great benefit and advantage. And thus God 'chides himself friends with his people again.'

And sometimes they prove the blessed occasions to work grace. "If they be bound in fetters, and holden in cords of "affliction, then he sheweth them their works, and their "transgression, that they have exceeded: He openeth also "their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return "from iniquity," Job xxxvi. 8, 9, 10.

And if this be the fruit of it, you will bless God through eternity for these happy disappointments. Then these things perished, that thy soul might not perish.

Consideration 4. Be patient under disappointments; for if you meekly submit, and quietly wait upon God, he can quickly repair all that you have lost, and restore it, by other providences, double to you. Have you not heard, after all Job's deprivations, and the frustrations of all his earthly hopes, and his admirable patience under all, what a gracious end the Lord made with him? And why may not you hope for such a comfortable change of providence towards you, if you also carry it under disappointments, as he did? Certainly, sad providences are near their change, when the heart is calmed in the will of God, and corrected home to him.

Consideration 5. And why should it seem so hard and grievous to you, for God to disappoint your hopes and purposes, when you cannot but know, that you have disappointed his expectations from you so often, and that in greater, and better things than these?

He hath looked for fruit (as it is, Isa. v. 4.) for obedience, reformation, and renewed care of duty from you many times; he promised himself, and made account of a good return of his

‡ Mr. Steel.

Digitized by Google

afflictions and mercies, and you promised him as much, and yet have failed his expectation: And is it then strange that you should fail of your hopes, who have failed God so often?

O then see that you are quiet in the will of God; fret not at the defeating of your hopes, wreak not your discontent upon innocent instruments, but look to the just, and holy, and good will of God in all things. The wife is sometimes angry with the servant for what he hath done, till he tells her that it was his master's order, and then she is quiet.

Is a ship miscarried, a voyage lost, a relation dead, an estate gone, a friend carried into captivity, whose return was expected with so much delight and comfort? why, if it be so, it is the Lord hath done it, and be thou silent before him. Your repining will not make it better; sin is no proper cure for affliction. A quiet and submissive spirit is well-pleasing to God, as well as profitable for you.

Inference 2. Doth God sometimes disappoint the expectations of men in their employments? then never set your hearts immoderately upon earthly things, nor raise up to yourselves too great expectations, from these things. The stronger your expectations, the heavier God's disappointments will be.

There is a double evil in over-reckoning ourselves, and over-acting our confidence about worldly things: it provokes God to disappoint us, and then makes the disappointment much more grievous when it comes.

It provokes a disappointment, especially to the godly. The Lord is jealous of their affections, and will not endure that any thing should be a corrival, or competitor with him for their hearts: yea, it is so usual with God to dash and remove whatever ingrosses too much of the heart, that a gracious soul cannot but reckon that comfort in great danger to be lost, which he finds to be overloved.

If David set his heart upon Absalom, God will not only smite him, but smite David by him, and make him first the instrument of his sorrow, and then the object of it. Jonah did but take a little too much comfort in his gourd, and you know the next news we hear is, that God had prepared a worm to smite it, and cause it to wither away.

And when your inordinate hopes are crossed, as it is very probable they will be, how will your sorrows be aggravated in proportion to them? Those things that seemed to promise us most comfort, are the things that give us most sorrow. Strong affections make strong afflictions. Our sorrows usually rise

Digitized by Google

from what was our hope, and our comforts from that which was the leaſt regarded.

Inference 3. If it be ſo, then labour to make ſure of things eternal, leſt you be eternally diſappointed there alſo. O what a ſad caſe is that man in, whoſe expectations fail from both worlds! If your hopes from this world fail, yet you may bear it comfortably, if you fail not in your better hopes; but if theſe fail too, you are, of all men, the moſt miſerable. You know, by experience, how ſad it is to have your hopes cut off in theſe ſmaller concerns; to go forth in expectation of a profitable voyage, and to return in a worſe caſe than you went out: it may be you thought to get an eſtate, but the iſſue is, to loſe that little you had. You thought to go to ſuch a place, and there meet with a good market, and poſſibly yourſelves may be carried as ſlaves, to be ſold in the ſame market. Theſe diſappointments are very ſad, and cutting things, but nothing to an eternal diſappointment in your great concern.

For a man to hope he is in Chriſt, and a pardoned ſtate, and at laſt find himſelf deceived, and that all the ſins of his nature, heart, and practice, lie upon him: to hope for admiſſion into heaven, when he is turned out of this world by death, and find the door ſhut againſt him; to cry with theſe poor diſappointed wretches, Matth. xxv. 11. "Lord, Lord, open to us;" and receive ſuch an unexpected return from Chriſt, as they did, "Depart from me, I know you not:" Lord, how intolerable is ſuch a defeat of hope as this! O! who can think of it without horror!

The things about which your expectations are fruſtrated in this world, are ſmall things; you may be happy in the want of them: but the fruſtration of your hopes from the world to come, is in things of infinite weight. Theſe diſappointments are but for a little while! but this will be for ever. O therefore be provoked, even by theſe things, to a diligent and ſeaſonable prevention of a far greater miſery.

Since theſe things cannot be ſecured, labour to ſecure thoſe things that may. O that you were but as full of thoughts, cares, and fears for heaven as you are for the world! you have ſpent many thouſand thoughts about theſe things to no purpoſe. All your thoughts about them are come to nothing; but had they been ſpent for your ſouls, to what a comfortable account would they now have turned? Friends, I beſeech you make ſure for eternity, and let theſe croſſes and loſſes in the world, be the happy occaſions to awaken you to an earneſt and ſerious

Digitized by Google

diligence for your everlasting interests. Then you are no losers by your losses; nay, you will have great cause to call them prosperous disappointments, and gainful losses to you.

Inference 4. Then as you would not have the works and labours of your hands blasted, beware of those sins that provoke God to blow upon them. Think not that injustice, oppression, deceit, and perjury should ever profit you. God hath cursed all the ways of sin, and you cannot prosper in them. Above all, beware of atheism and irreligion: God will not own them that disown him, and slight his worship. I doubt your profanation of the Lord's day, by drunkenness, idleness, and worldly employments, is not the least cause of those disappointments and losses that have befallen you: the first day of the week, like the first-fruits of the Jews *harvests*, might sanctify the whole lump.

And let none pretend that multiplicity of business will not allow them time and disposition for sabbath-work. If you be too busy to attend the Lord's service, he can quickly give you a writ of ease, and make you keep more resting days from your labours than you are willing to do. The Lord would not excuse the Israelites, no, not in their busiest seasons, the times of earing and harvest, and the very building of the tabernacle; but all must give way to the sabbath. And I am sure, the promise of blessing and success is made to the conscientious observation of it: Isa. lviii. 13, 14. "If thou turn away thy foot from "the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure upon my holy day; and "call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honour-"able; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, "nor finding thine own pleasures, nor speaking thine own "words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord:" There is a recompence to the soul. "And he shall cause thee to "ride on the high places of the earth:" There is a reward to the body. Godliness is profitable to all things.

Digitized by Google

THE SEAMAN's RETURN.

SERMON VI.

DEUT. xxxiii. 19. *They shall call the people unto the mountain, there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness: For they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of the treasures hid in the sand.*

THIS scripture is part of the last words of Moses: a man that, in his life, was a great blessing to Israel: and when he was to be separated from them by death, he pronounces distinct and suitable blessings upon all the tribes. As Christ parted from his disciples, blessing them, so doth Moses from his people; only with this difference, Moses as God's mouth pronounced, but the great God of heaven and earth alone could confer the blessing. Moses blessed them authoritatively, but could not bless them potestatively, as Christ did. Now, these words contain the blessing of the tribe of Zebulun, which was the tribe of seamen. And in them we shall consider these two parts, *viz.*

1. Their privilege. 2. Their duty.

First, Their privilege, "That they should suck of the "abundance of the seas, and of the treasures hid in the sand." To suck the abundance of the sea, is a * metonymical expression, signifying as much as to be enriched and stored with the wares and merchandise imported by sea to them. Geographers attribute to the sea, arms, and bosoms; and to the scripture, breasts. The sea, like an indulgent mother, embraces those that live upon it in her bosom, and with full flowing breasts nourisheth them, and feeds them as a mother doth the infant that sucks, and depends for its livelihood upon her breasts.

And these breasts do not only afford those that hang upon them the necessaries of life, bread, raiment, &c. but the rich-

* *Affluentiam maris sugere, est marinis bonis, & mercibus abundare.* Glas.

Digitized by Google

es, ornaments, and delights of life also. "The treasures hid "in the sand," † as gold, coral, ambergrease, and such like precious and rich treasures which it yields. This was the blessing and privilege of the tribe of Zebulun, whose cities and villages were commodiously situated upon the sea-shore, for merchandise and traffic: as you may see, Jos. xix. 11.

Secondly, Their duty, to which these mercies and privileges obliged them: "They shall call the people to the mountains, "there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness." By the *mountain*, we are here to understand the *temple*, which Moses, by the spirit of prophecy, foresaw to be built upon mount Sion, and mount Moriah; which two were as the shoulders that supported it, vers. 12. Here was the worship of God; the sacrifices were here offered up to him. And hither Zebulun, in the sense of God's mercies to them, should call the people, *i. e.* say some, their own people, their families, and neighbours; or as others, the strangers that were among them for traffic; saying, as Isa. ii. 3. "Come, let us go up to the house of the "Lord, to the mountain of the God of Jacob." And here they shall offer *the sacrifices of righteousness*. By which we are to understand their thank-offerings for the mercies they had received of the Lord. The Jews had not only expiatory sacrifices to procure the pardon of sins committed, but eucharistical sacrifices, or thank-offerings, to testify the sense they had of mercies received. These sacrifices typified moral duties; and when these types were abolished, the apostle shews, that "the "calves of our lips, the sacrifices of praise," are in the stead of them, Heb. xiii. 15.

So then the sum of all is this, that when they returned from sea, or had received the blessings thereof, from the hand of God, they should repair to the place of his worship, and there acknowledge and praise the God of their mercies. So that the whole verse thus explained, casts itself into this doctrinal observation.

Doct. *That it is the special duty of seamen, when God returns them to their habitations in peace, thankfully to acknowledge and bless his name, for all the preservations and mercies they have received from his hand.*

These are mercies indeed, which are obtained from God by prayer, and returned to him again by praise. When we have received our mercies, God expects his praises: After the

† *Referunt ad ea quae emovere solent maria, scil. ad auri fodinas. Effodient e terra arenosa aurum.* Pol. Synop. in loc.

Digitized by Google

Psalmist had opened the hazards and fears of seamen upon the stormy ocean, and the goodness of God in bringing them to their desired haven, Psal. cvii. 30. he presently calls upon them for this duty, ver. 31. "O that men would praise the "Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the "children of men!"

O that men would! why, how is it imaginable they should not? He hath the heart of a beast, not of a man, that will not. Did I say the heart of a beast? Give me that word again. There is a kind of gratitude, even in beasts, to their benefactors. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's "crib," Isa. i. 3.

Now the method into which I will cast the discourse, shall be,

First, To open the nature of the duty, and to shew you what it is to praise God for his mercies.

Secondly, To give you the grounds and reasons of the duty, why God expects it, and you ought to give it to him. And then,

Thirdly, To apply it in the several uses it is improveable unto.

1. The nature of the duty needs opening; for few understand what it is. Alas! it is another manner of thing than a customary, formal, cold *God be thanked*. Now, if we search into the nature of this duty, we shall find that whoever undertakes this angelical work, must,

First, Be a heedful observer of the mercies he receives. This is fundamental to the duty. Where no observations of mercies have been made, no praises for them can be returned. God was never honoured by his unobserved mercies. When David had opened the providences of God to the several degrees and orders of men, in its various administrations, and called upon them distinctly to praise God for them; he adds, in the close of all, "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, "even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord," Psal. cvii. *ult.* It is God's charge against Israel, Hosea ii. 8. "She did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, "and multiplied her silver:" *i. e.* She did not observe and take notice of these mercies, as coming from my hand; but only looked at the next cause. Thus it is with many, they think not upon their own mercies; others can observe them, but they cannot; they can quickly observe what troubles befal them, but take little notice of their own mercies. Such men can never be thankful.

Digitized by Google

Secondly, The thankful man must not only *observe* what mercies he hath, and from whom they come; but must particularly consider them in their natures, degrees, seasons, and manner of conveyance; there is much of God's glory, and our comfort lost for want of this. "The works of the Lord "are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure there-"in," Psal. cxi. 2. And indeed, there is no employment in all the world, that yields more pleasure to a gracious soul, than the anatomizing of providence doth. How sweet is it to observe the mutual respects, coincidencies, and introductive occasions of our mercies! every minute circumstance hath its weight and value here. He hath little pleasure in his meat, that swallows it whole without chewing.

Thirdly, The thankful person must duly estimate and value his mercies. It is impossible that man can be thankful for mercies he little esteems. Israel could not praise God for that angels food with which he fed them, whilst they despised it in saying, There is nothing but this *manna*.

And surely it shews the great corruption of our nature, that those things which should raise the value of mercies with us, cause us the more to slight them; yet thus it falls out. The commonness, or long-continuance of mercies with us, which should endear them the more, and every day increase our obligation to God, causes them to seem but cheap and small things. And therefore doth God so often threaten them, yea, and remove them; that their worth and excellency may thereby be acknowledged.

Fourthly, The thankful person must faithfully record his mercies, else God cannot have his due praise for them. "Bless "the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits," Psal. ciii. 2. Forgotten mercies bear no fruit: a bad memory in this case, makes a barren heart and life.

I confess the mercies of God are such a multitude, that a memory of brass cannot retain them. "I will come before thee "in the multitude of thy mercies," saith David, Psal. v. 7. They are called "showers of blessings," Ezek. xxxiv. 26. And as impossible it is distinctly to recount all our mercies, as to number the drops of rain that fall in a shower. Nevertheless, it hath been the pious care and endeavour of the people of God, to preserve and perpetuate his mercies, by using all the helps to memory they could. Therefore they have kept registers, Exod. xvii. 14. endited Psalms, *to bring to remembrance*, Psal. lxx. *title*; denominated places from the mercies

Digitized by Google

received there. Thus Jacob called the place where he found so much mercy, Beth-el. Hagar named the well, where God unexpectedly relieved her, Beer-lahai-roi, the well of him that liveth and looketh upon me, Gen. xvi. 13, 14.

They have ſtamped the mercies upon the days in which they received them. Thus the Jews called thoſe days in which God wrought their deliverance, *Purim*, after the name *Pur*, ſignifying the lot Haman had caſt for their lives; Eſth. ix. 26. Yea, they have called their mercies upon their children, 1 Sam. i. 20. Thus thankful ſouls have ſtriven to recogniſe their mercies, that God might not loſe the praiſe, nor themſelves the comfort of them.

Fifthly, The thankful perſon muſt be ſuitably affected with the mercies he receives. It is not a *ſpeculative*, but an *affectionate* remembrance that becomes us: then God hath his glory, when the ſenſe of his mercies melts our hearts into holy joy, love, and admiration. Thus, David ſits down before the Lord like a man aſtoniſhed at his goodneſs to him; 2 Sam. vii. 20. "And what can David ſay more? For thou Lord knoweſt thy "ſervant." The mercies of God have made the ſaints hearts leap for joy within them: Pſal. xcii. 4. "Thou, Lord, haſt made "me glad, through thy works; therefore will I triumph in "the works of thy hands." Mercies are not mercies, deliverances are no deliverances to us, if we that receive them, are not glad of them.

Sixthly, The thankful perſon muſt order his converſation ſuitably to the engagements that his mercies have put him under. When we have ſaid all, it is the life of the thankful, that is the very life of thankfulneſs. Obedience and ſervice are the only real manifeſtations of gratitude. "He that offereth praiſe, "glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his converſation a-"right, will I ſhew the ſalvation of God," Pſal. l. 23. Set down this for an everlaſting truth, That God was never praiſed and honoured by an abuſed mercy. God took it ill from Hezekiah, "That he rendered not again according to the be-"nefit done unto him," 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. He that is truly thankful, will ſay as David, Pſal. cxvi. 12. "What ſhall I "render to the Lord for all his benefits?" We then glorify God with his mercies, when we employ them to right ends, when we thankfully take our own ſhare of comfort from them, receiving them with thankſgiving, as from the hand of a father. Mr. Swinnock * tells of a young man, who, lying upon

* Swinnock's Chriſtian Man's Calling, page 409.

Digitized by Google

his sick bed, was always calling for meat; but as soon as it was brought him, he shook and trembled dreadfully at the sight of it, and so continued till it was taken away; and before his death, acknowledged God's justice, for that in his health he ordinarily received his meat without thanksgiving.

Use all God's mercies with thankfulness; God will remember them in fury, who forget him in his favours.

And think not what God bestows upon you, is wholly for your own use: but honour God with your mercies, by cloathing the naked, and feeding the hungry, especially such as are godly. This is a due improvement of your estates; thus you may make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. Ah, how little do we consider what praise, what glory we may occasion, this way, from others, to the name of God! it is storied of * Dionysius the Syracusian *tyrant*, that when he saw what heaps of gold and silver his son hoarded up in his closet, he asked him what he meant to let it ly there, and not to make friends with it, to get the kingdom after his death? O son (said he) thou hast not a spirit capable of a kingdom. Thus honour the Lord with your substance; look upon all you have as your Master's talents, for which you must give an account; and so use and employ them for God, that you may give up your account with joy; and then you will shew yourselves thankful indeed. Thus you see what is included in real thankfulness. O, it is another matter than we take it to be.

2. Next I promised to give you the grounds and reasons of this duty; why you are obliged after the reception of mercies, to such a thankful return of praises. And, among many, I will only single out these three, and briefly open them.

First, God requires and expects it. It is so special and peculiar a part of his glory, as he will never part with it. As great landlords oblige their tenants to a homage and service, when they make over their estates to them, and reserve a quit-rent to themselves, which they value at a high rate; so God, when he bestows deliverances of mercies upon us, still reserves an acknowledgment to himself: and this is dear to him, he will not endure to be defrauded of it; much less, that it be given to another. You find this reservation of praise expressly made by him in Psalm l. 15. "Call upon me in the day of "trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Where you have the request, the grant, and the reservation in the grant, *q. d.* When I have granted thee thy desire, see thou

† *Justin, lib.* 51.

Digitized by Google

do not defraud me of my glory. There be three things in every mercy, the *matter* of it, the *comfort* of it, and the *glory* of it. The two first God makes over freely to us, he gives the mercies themselves, he allows us to suck out all the lawful pleasure and delight that is in them; but the third he reserves to himself, and will never part with to any other. If an Hezekiah himself render not to God due acknowledgments, as well as God loves him, there shall be great wrath upon him, and Judah, for the default, 2 Chron. xxxii. 26.

Secondly, You are under manifold engagements to render it to the Lord.

(1.) Common ingenuity obliges to a due acknowledgment of favours freely received; and unthankfulness on that score, is the odium of mankind. *Ingratum si dicas, omnia dixeris.* You cannot give a man a more odious character among men, than to say, He is an ungrateful man.

(2.) The examples of the very heathens will condemn you. They praised their gods, which yet were no gods, when they received any deliverance, Judges xvi. 24. Shall idols, dung-hill-deities, receive their sacrifices and praises, whilst the true God is forgotten?

Nay, (3.) Many of you have formally and expressly obliged your souls to it, by solemn vows and promises in the day of your distress: and yet will you deal perfidiously with God? Will you not pay the vows which your lips have uttered? Certainly, you can never free your souls from the guilt of perfidiousness against God, whilst you give him not the glory due to his name.

3. *Lastly*, Your ingratitude is the ready way to deprive you of the mercies you have, and to with-hold from you the mercies you might have in your future distresses and wants. He that is ungrateful for mercies received, provokes God to remove them. Thus it fell out with ungrateful Israel, Hosea ii. 5, 8, 9. "She did not know, (*i. e.* she did not with consideration and thanks duly acknowledge) that I gave her corn, and "wine, and oil. Therefore will I return, and take away my "corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof; "and will recover my wool and my flax." Thus they suffered their mercies to lapse into the Lord's hand for non-payment of their duties. If you are weary of your mercies, and willing to be rid of them, you cannot take a more effectual course, than to forget from whom you had them, and with-hold his praise for them.

Digitized by Google

And then, for future mercies and deliverances, you have no ground to expect any more from God, whom you have thus requited for former favours. He that gives no thanks for one mercy, hath little ground to expect another. It was a sad word which God spake upon this very provocation, Judg. x. 11, 12, 13. when a new distress befel Israel by the Ammonites, and they cried to the Lord for help, he tells them, that he had many times delivered them from their enemies: "Yet (saith he) "have you forsaken me, and served other gods. Wherefore I "will deliver you no more; go and cry to the gods which ye "have chosen, and let them deliver you in the time of your "tribulation." *Q. d.* With what face can you come to me for new mercies and deliverances, when yourselves know how former mercies have been abused! Think ye that I am weary of my mercies, to cast them away upon such unthankful wretches? No, no, expect no more mercies from me, "I will deliver you "no more." One of the fathers calls ingratitude, *Obex infernalis, An hellish stop;* which interrupts the course and current of all God's mercies. Mercy is not only a precious thing, too good to be cast away, but it is a very tender thing, and God deeply resents the abuses of it. Thus you see the grounds and reasons of your duty; it now remains that we apply it.

Use 1. Is it your unquestionable duty to return praises upon every receipt of mercies? Then, in the first place, bear your shame and just reproof for your manifest unthankfulness. You dare not deny, but you have received many signal and eminent mercies from the hands of God. If you should deny that, I need go no farther to prove you prodigiously ungrateful. But it is too manifest to be denied: you have found God a very present help in trouble: his mercy hath often rescued you out of the jaws of death. Some of you have been in dangers in the deeps; in deaths oft: you have been put to your wits end; all visible hope and help failed. You might have said, with the Psalmist, Psal. cxiii. 4. "I looked upon my right hand, and "there was none; and upon the left, but refuge failed." You have seen your companions intombed before your eyes in the seas, and concluded in your own thoughts, your turn was next. You have been in danger by barbarous enemies, that have chased you upon the sea, to make you a prey: yea, it may be you have been a prey to them, and never thought to have seen the land of your nativity, your houses, wives, and children, any more. You have languished under dangerous diseases, and that remote from friends, and necessary accommodations; you have lost your estates, and been reduced to a low ebb, and never

Digitized by Google

thought to have ſeen a day of proſperity any more: yet hath the Lord delivered you out of all your troubles. He hath provided unexpected means of preſervation, when the proud waters were ready to go over your ſouls. And though others went down before your eyes; you were marked out for deliverance, God ſpake to the raging waves, ſaying, touch not this man, I will not deliver him up, though I have done ſo by others. When cruel enemies chaſed you, he delivered you, cauſing the darkneſs of the night to interpoſe ſeaſonably betwixt you and them; as the dark ſide of the cloud ſhadowed Iſrael from the Egyptians that purſued them, Exod. xiv. 20. ſometimes giving you a favourable gale, which blew mercy and deliverance to you: ſometimes by ſtrengthening you to reſiſt their furious attacks, and delivering you from their rage: or, if he delivered you into their hands, yet there he preſerved you, enabling you to endure their ſeverities, or cauſing the enemy to treat you well; and finding out a way which you knew not, to bring you at laſt out of the houſe of bondage.

He pitied you under your dangerous diſeaſes; and though neceſſary accommodations and means might be wanting, he was your phyſician, and healed you; he recovered you immediately without means, or bleſſed weak and ſmall means to your good. When you were reduced by loſſes and captivities to a low ebb, ſo that you might ſay as the church, Lam. iii. 17. I forgat proſperity; he hath not only recruited thy ſtrength, but thy eſtate alſo: and when both thy body and eſtate, like an old leaky ſhip, have been ready to ſink, he hath ſtopped the leaks in both, careened, repaired, and launched thee into the world again, as whole, as ſound, and as ſtrong as ever.

And now, reader, ſuffer me to account and expoſtulate a little with thy conſcience; what hath the fruit of all theſe mercies been to thee? And how haſt thou carried it ſince thoſe days, towards the God of thy mercies? Haſt thou indeed been melted by the ſenſe of all this kindneſs, into love, thankfulneſs, and new obedience? Have theſe favours engaged thee to more ſtrictneſs in thy duties, and greater watchfulneſs againſt ſin? Haſt thou ſaid, with that good man, Ezra ix. 13, 14. "And now, "my God, ſeeing thou haſt puniſhed me leſs than mine iniqui-"ties deſerve, and haſt given me ſuch deliverances as theſe, "ſhould I again break thy commandments?" If it be ſo, ſurely mercy and goodneſs ſhall follow thee all the days of thy life. The Lord then reckons all theſe mercies well beſtowed, and will never repent that he hath done thee good.

Digitized by Google

But I fear this is not thy case. Sure I am, there are some among you that have quickly forgotten the God that delivered you. Some that have abused him to his face, by ascribing his mercies to good luck, chance, and fortune; not once owning him as your deliverer. And some that have made his mercies weapons of sin, to wound him withal, wasting your estates by prodigality, which were given to refresh your families, and God's poor; yea, abusing them to drunkenness and luxury. And is this the thanks you return him? For which of all my good works (saith Christ to the Jews) do you stone me? So say I, for which of all God's kindnesses to you, do you thus dishonour, and abuse him? O let shame cover your faces this day! Go, reader, fold down this leaf, and get thee to thy knees, and say, I am the man to whom this reproof is sent. I have abused the God of my mercies, I have turned his grace into wantonness. Smite with Ephraim upon thy thigh, and say, *What have I done?* Mourn heartily for thy unkindness to thy best friend, "The God that hath done thee good all thy life "long, and deserves other returns from thee than these."

Use 2. *Lastly*, It calls upon you all to be thankful for your mercies. Chrysostom once wished for a voice like thunder, that all men might hear him. O that I could so call you to this duty, that some of you might effectually hear God's call in this exhortation!

Will you own the hand that delivers you, that feeds, clothes, and heals you? Will you resolve to live the life of praise, and render to the Lord according to the benefits you have received? Will you indeed walk humbly, and thankfully, under all your deliverances, and successes, and glorify God by that wherewith he hath comforted and refreshed you? If there be any saving knowledge of God, and spiritual sense of his love in your souls, methinks I should prevail with you; for do but weigh these following arguments seriously, and they will engage you to it.

Argument 1. How freely have all your mercies streamed to you from the fountain of grace? There was nothing in you to engage it. The very notion of mercy includes freeness; they are all bestowed upon us, not only as we are *immerentes*, but *male meruntes*, undeserving, but ill deserving creatures; not only without our merits, but against our merits. And what though there be a concurrence of your abilities, head-work and hand-work in the procurement of some of your mercies, yet still those mercies are the pure effects of free-grace: for all those endeavours of yours had signified nothing to their procurement, without God's blessing; yea, and that wisdom and

Digitized by Google

industry which you have used, were themselves the free gifts of God. You know there are thousands in the world as industrious and wise as you, and such as never provoked God by such sins as you have; who yet are denied the mercies you enjoy. O how should this endear you to God!

Argument 2. How seasonably your mercies have been bestowed upon you, in the very point of extremity, and danger! God hath on purpose suffered it to grow to an extremity, that thereby he might commend his mercy to you with greater advantage. "In the mount of the Lord it hath been seen," Gen. xxii. 14. without this, God saw his mercies would have been slighted, and low prized by you: But God hath watched the opportunity of bestowing his goodness upon you, for no other end, but to magnify his mercies in your eyes, and make the deeper and more lasting impressions upon your hearts. Shall such mercies, which at first were so amazing, and overwhelming to you, at the reception whereof, you were like men that dreamed, as the Psalmist speaks, Psalm cxxvi. 1. so soon grow stale, and common? God forbid!

Argument 3. How special and distinguishing have some of your mercies been? God hath not dealt with every one as he hath with you. Are not some that went out with you found wanting at your return? They are among the dead, it may be among the damned, and you among the living, yet enjoying the capacity, and the means of salvation. God hath prospered your voyage, and returned you with success; you have sucked the abundance of the sea, and the treasures hid in the sand, as the text speaks; but others may say as Naomi, Ruth i. 21. "I went out full, and am come back empty." I went out full of hopes, and am come back with sad disappointments. And is not this a strong tie to thanksgiving?

Argument 4. Did not your mercies find you under great guilt? You know what your own transgressions against the Lord were, and yet such was the strength of mercy, that it brake through all your great provocations, and made its way to you through a multitude of iniquities. It came triumphing over all your great unworthiness; and is not such mercy worthy to be admired, and recorded for ever! O what will affect and melt your hearts, if this will not? Surely such mercies have a constraining power in them, upon all sensible souls.

Argument 5. To conclude; if all the goodness of God, which hath passed before your eyes, does indeed prevail upon you to love the Lord, and fear to offend him; if it really constrains you to give up yourselves, and all you have, to be his; then all

Digitized by Google

this is but the beginning of mercies, and you shall see yet greater things than these. God hath more mercies yet behind, and those of a higher kind, and more excellent nature than these temporal mercies are. You are now delivered from the dangers of the sea, and have escaped those perils: O but what is this to deliverance from wrath to come? You have been preserved from, or delivered out of Turkish slavery; but what is that to a deliverance from the curse of the law, the bondage of your lusts, and the power of Satan? Happy souls, if these deliverances do, in any measure, prove introductive to the great salvation.

The CONCLUSION.

Thus I have, as the Lord hath enabled me, endeavoured to chuse and improve proper subjects for your meditation in every condition that befals you. I cannot carry these truths one degree farther, it is the Lord only that can make them effectual to your souls. But it is my earnest request to you, masters, that have the over-sight, and must give an account for your companies, that you will not only read, and consider these things yourselves, but that you will at fit seasons, especially upon the Lord's day, read and inculcate them upon your servants and company; and that, as those who must give an account. Will not this be a better expence of that precious and hallowed time, than to spend it in sleeping in your cabins, or drinking in tipling-houses? All that sin of theirs which you may prevent, and do not, becomes your own sin. And have you not personal sins enough already, but you must draw the guilt of their sins upon you also? I beseech you, and it is my last request, that you will faithfully labour, that you and your companies may serve the Lord.

The End of the Sixth Volume.

Digitized by Google

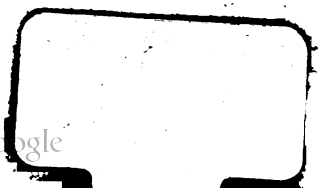
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
3 9015 06534 4684



Digitized by Google

