

THE GALLANT'S BURDEN.

The burden of Dumah. He calls unto me out of Seir, Watchman, what was in the night? Watchman, what was in the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will ask, inquire; return, and come.—ISAIAH XXI. 11, 12.

Quo brevior, eo obscurior,—The shorter this prophecy is, the more mystical. In holy writ, these two things ever concur, *sententia brevis, res ampla*,—a finite sentence, an infinite sense. As in a little map we see a world of countries; and what the foot cannot measure in many days, the eye peruseth in a moment: this is the little map of Idumea or Edom, wherein we may survey the state of that whole region; not much unlike the situation of it, standing in this chapter betwixt Chaldea and Arabia. The burdens against them both are heavy, and the plagues aggravated with more circumstances. 'The burden of Dumah,' though short, shall weigh with them grain for grain.

As you travel with me into this country, by the guidance of that enlightening Spirit, tie your considerations to two special things:—I. The map; II. The moral. In the map you shall find—1. An inscription; 2. A description. In the inscription: (1.) The name of the country; (2.) The nature of the prophecy. The description rests itself on three objects: (1.) A mountain; (2.) A watchman; (3.) An Edomite: where is shadowed, (1.) under the mountain, security; (2.) under the watchman, vigilance; (3.) under the Edomite, scorn. Now, if you ask, as did the prophet Ezekiel, what these things meant, the moral directs you, 1. by a question; 2. by an answer. The question would know what was in the night. The answer declares it, (1.) by a resolution; (2.) by an advice. The resolution, *Venit mane et vespere*,—'The morning comes, and also the night;' the advice, 'If ye will ask, inquire: return, and come.'

I.—1. In the inscription we propounded to be considered, (1.) The name of the country; (2.) The nature of the prophecy.

(1.) For the country, there is some question what this Dumah should be. Some affirm it to be the country of the Ishmaelites, and to receive the name from Dumah, that son of Ishmael mentioned Gen. xxv. 14; but that Dumah, with other the sons of Ishmael, inhabited Arabia, which is burdened in the prophecy following, distinctly severed from this. This Dumah then was the country of the Idumeans or Edomites, the place where Esau and his genera-

tion dwelt. This is clear by the mount Seir, which was a hill of the Edomites, Ezek. xxxv. 15.

This Idumea is here called Dumah *per aphæresin*. Thus God insinuates his contempt of that rebellious and accursed nation, by cutting short the name, as unworthy to stand in his book, graced with the full length. The estimation which the wicked bear with God is here expressed: he thinks the mention of them a blur to his sacred leaves. Now, shall their persons sit in his kingdom with honour, whose names may not stand in his book without disgrace? Sometimes they are concealed, as Dives, Luke xvi. 19. That real parable gives no other title to the condemned churl. Christ allows the tyrant Herod no other name than a fox: Luke xiii. 32, 'Go tell that fox,' &c. God calls those princes the 'bulls of Bashan on the mountain of Samaria,' Amos iv. 1. They would be blots to his holy book, if they were expressly named. Sometimes they are named, but with abbreviations: Dumah for Idumea. Thus Aram is called Ram, Ruth iv. 15. Ephesdammin, a coast of the Philistines, never spoken of without contempt, is twice thus curtailed. In 1 Chron. xi. 13, it is called Pasdammin; and, 1 Sam. xvii. 1, Dammin.

Let not this observation slip from us without our use. If God take letters from the name, he intends to take blessings from the person. When Jeconiah's curse is written in the cutting off his posterity from the throne of David, and himself from the prosperity of the earth, he is called Coniah, Jer. xxii. 18; the reason is added, 'He is a despised person,' let him have a shortened name: 'a broken idol, and an unpleasant vessel,' &c.

Thus God crosseth the world's fashion by putting them in his chronicle which are not here thought of, and leaving those out which the world boasts of as her glory. To a soul that hath more affection in her than religion, it seems a great matter of pity that Cato, Alexander, and some of those mighty Roman Cæsars, honoured with the graces of nature, the bounties of fortune, and the greatest glory the forced world could yield them, should yet want a name in God's book, a place in his kingdom. Greatness is the fairest object to the eye of the world; goodness to the eye of heaven. There is a glorious splendour in pompous honour, to draw the eyes of admiration after it; it little affects the sight of God, if virtue gives it not a lustre. He that is goodness and greatness itself (when others have it in the concrete, good and great, he hath and deserves it in the abstract) is pleased to prefer his title of *Optimus* before that of *Maximus*, and first to be called *Good*, and then *Great*, Exod. xv. 11. His affections should be ours; he is the absolute precedent of our imitation.

There are infinite ways that conduct to seeming honour, excluding virtue; the end of them all is shame, since of a natural man it is true that *quanto ornatioꝝ, tanto nequior*,—the more adorned, the more wicked. Our bonnets veil, our knees bow to many whom the sight of heaven and virtue scorns. This imparity of men living is made even by death, who sweeps all, beggar and prince, with his impartial besom, into one bag: and when judgment comes, they are made odd and unequal again; for then the least in the world's estimation shall sit down with the blessed kings and patriarchs in heaven, when kings and patriots without grace shall be excluded. If you desire your names to be registered with the pen of eternity, write them yourselves with the pen of charity. The book of grace is the counterpart to the book of election: they are written in heaven first, and there God reads them. We cannot see into this book through the thick clouds of the air and sun; let us write them in the leaves of obedience, and there read them, 2 Tim. ii. 19: .

they stand sure with God before, not sure to us till now. Write them in the entrails of the poor, in the ruins of the church, by you bettered, repaired, maintained, 2 Pet. i. 10, (*non norunt hæc monumenta mori*), and you shall one day hear the Judge himself read them in the audience of all the world, to your joy, crown, eternity of bliss, Matt. xxv. 34.

Christ diverted his apostles' triumph to another honour, Luke x. 17. They were little less than proud that the devils were subdued unto them through his name whom they served. True, saith Christ, 'I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning; nevertheless rejoice not that the spirits obey you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven,' ver. 20. Rejoice not of your ennobled bloods, admired with living praises, and rescued from the jaws of oblivion by sumptuous sepulchres; there is small matter of joy that the name lives in bright honour on earth, when the soul lies in the rusting miseries of hell; but rejoice on your assurance of memorial with God: Prov. x. 7, 'The memory of the just shall be blessed; but the name of the wicked shall rot.' A great name commonly ariseth either from blood, popular applause, or golden trappings. The last useth a man like a counter, that stands now for a million, instantly for a penny. The first finds honour, perhaps deserves it not, leaves it to succession. The middlemost is unconstant, as the causes are: the vulgar opinions, whose distracted voices seldom hit on the same tune, or never keep it long. The monarchs of the world have large and tedious titles, according to their several dominions: good luck have they with that honour which the hand of God reacheth forth unto them: there is a title that betters all theirs; those are folded up in time that perisheth; this brings honour without end or limits: to be a Christian. Such have their names produced in God's book, to shew that they stand written with golden letters in the Lamb's book of heaven: Abram shall be called *Abraham*; Jacob, *Israel*. The Hebrews well observed, that God, to those he loved, added a letter of his own name, that *tetragrammaton*, Jehovah: as the letter *He* to Abraham's and Sarah's name; the letter *Jod* to Jehoshua's, who was before called Hoshea.

It was happy for Mordecai that his name stood in the Persian chronicles, that Ahasureus might read him: his service shall be found out with rewards. Array him with the king's robe, set him on the king's chariot, and proclaim his name through the popular streets: 'This is the man whom the king will honour,' Esther vi. 9. It is more blessed to stand in the chronicles of heaven, registered by the pen of that eternal Spirit. We shall one day sit with the king in his throne, Rev. iii. 21,—*vincenti dabitur sedere*, &c.,—and put on his robe of glory; 'be fashioned like his glorious body,' Phil. iii. 21. 'Such honour have all his saints,' Ps. cxlix. 9. It is the decree and promise of him whose word is more stable than the foundations of the earth, 'Those that honour me I will honour.' Revolve then his sacred name in your sanctified mouths; sing Hosannahs to it here, that you may sing Hallelujahs hereafter; and having drunk hearty draughts of his waters of mercy, bless with David his great and glorious name. The honour of your own names is attained, nay, consists in this; maintain the glory of it with your strengths, sound it with your praises, and (if need be) seal it with your bloods; and God shall write your names, not shortened like Dumah's, but at full length, in a book never to be blotted out.

(2.) The nature of the prophecy follows, being that other branch of the inscription. A *burden*; a matter not easily portable, but will weigh heavy on whomsoever imposed. The burden is in two respects: [1.] Of the prophets that bear it; [2.] Of the people that were to suffer it.

[1.] The word of the Lord is to the prophets a heavy burden till they are delivered of it : there is no rest in the bones to the surcharged conscience, no more than to the pregnant woman till she be eased. I confess that security, vanity, abundance of wealth, setting their shoulders to this burden, make many a prophet forego all sense of the weight. Jonah, laden with his commission for Nineveh, lay as securely in the sides of the ship as if the God of Israel had laid no burden on him ; but himself was a burden to the ship, and the fury of the waves, winds, and *his* anger that moves all, was not appeased till the ship was disburdened of Jonah, that had disburdened himself of the message of God. Let me speak it with grief and fear. We are the sons of those prophets,—I mean their successors in God's ministerial work,—and the word of the eternal God is no lighter a burden to us than it was to them ; nay, let me add, (that which is not to be thought of without trembling,) there is the burden of a curse threatened to them that neglect this burden : ' Cursed is he that doth God's business negligently.' Lest I should seem bitter in applying this too generally, let me freely speak what Paul applies to his own person, if he slighted this ponderous charge : ' A necessity' (which is no less than a burden) ' is laid upon me, and woe unto me if I preach not the gospel !' 1 Cor. ix. 16.

I know that our harvest abounds with plentiful and painful labourers, that bear the heat and burden of the day, and according to their several offices, (whether in overseeing, planting, or watering,) with the sweat of their brows they labour in God's vineyard ; but to complain of the evil that is, is no wrong to the good that is : ' Many excellent things are spoken of thee, O thou city of God !' Ps. lxxxvii. 3. O thou church of England ! oh, might it be no wrong to thy perfections, no stain to thy beauty, to condole some wants in thy sons ! It is sin to be silent, where an impartial speech may take good effect. The sweet dews of holy admonitions may from this place, (as the liver,) spread into all the veins of the land.

The ministry is a matter of both honour and burden. Are there none that catch at honour, will not meddle with the burden ; whose pined flocks must either content themselves with a bare pasture, or else stray forth into neighbouring commons, whiles they forget to break their Master's bread ; yea, perhaps, to set the whole loaf before his guests ? Are there none that load their minds with the burden of cares too heavy for a Christian soul to bear ; the load of ambition, the burden of covetousness, so pressing them down, as if they were exonerated of the burden of the gospel ? But if any soul be sensible of this burden, (as one into whose bowels God hath put the compassion of distressed souls,) ' for Zion's sake he will not hold his peace,' Isa. lxii. 1. Yea, let me speak it of him that Job of himself : ' He is full of matter, and the spirit within him compelleth him : the word is in him, like new wine in bottles, which must be vented or will burst forth,' Job xxxii. 18. And if we slip our shoulders from under this burden, God can make the whole world too hot for us, and at last impose a burden of another nature on our then weaker and more unable souls ; the mountains and rocks, if weighed in the balance, will be found lighter : the burden of all their sins whose souls have bled to death by our negligence. We may, through our impatience and weakness, with Jeremiah curse the day of our nativity, chap. xx. 14, and cry, Woe worth the time that ever we were born to so troublesome an office ! But a greater woe and curse attends us if we attend it not. Passing corruptions in ourselves, active reproaches, injuries, oppositions of others, impulsive temptations of the devil, may make us weary of our callings ; but his word is in our hearts as fire shut up in our bones, and we

shall be weary of forbearing. We cannot smother the flames of it, but with terms of defiance to the stoutest that bear a forehead, we must declare it. God gives us the prevision of this burden beforehand, that we may stoop the shoulders of patience and zeal to it. Thus to Ezekiel, chap. ii. 3, 'Son of man, I send thee to Israel.' What are they? I will not dissemble with thee: 'They are a rebellious house.' Contumelies against thyself, blasphemies against thy Maker, the hitings, smittings, woundings of tongues, hands, and swords, that is the burden thou must bear; if any lighter and better things come, let them be *præter spem*, beyond thy expectation. Thus is the word a burden to the person that bears it.

[2.] It is no less to them that must suffer it: the judgments of God are heavy on whomsoever they light; a millstone bound to the sinner, and thrown with him into the sea, will not sooner sink him to the bottom than those bound to the soul will sink it to the depth of depths; therefore Christ says, Matt. xviii. 6, 'Better a millstone,' because lighter. The wrath of the Lamb, at the consummation of the world, is acknowledged more heavy than rocks and mountains, Rev. vi. 16; and happy were it for those reprobates, if such intolerable pressures could dissolve them into emptiness! These on the body are more sensible, on the soul more miserable. In the infancy of the world, God's blows were most outward; in this ripe, or rather rotten, age of it, they are most inward and spiritual. We have no bears to devour the mockers, no fiery serpents to strike the murmurers. God's punishments reach most to the conscience: *triplex circa præcordia ferrum*, a sensual and senseless heart, without apprehension of God's incensed anger, *cor nullis violabile telis*, not made of penetrable stuff. If God's finger touch the body, we groan under the weight; let his whole hand lie on the soul, we feel nothing. If this be not our burden and misery, what is?

Like curious visitors, will ye not believe this age to labour of this sickness, unless you behold some symptoms? Let your eyes take notice, and that not without grief of soul, of the deadness of heart among us. We ply the world hard, dally with religion. We serve God in jest, ourselves with all respect and earnest. Our devotions are like winter, frosty, misty, and windy, of many natures, none other than cold. Nothing arms, charms, and confirms our senses with attention, spirits with intention, active powers with contention, but vanity. Are not the benches in taverns and theatres often well replenished when these seats are thin and almost empty? Are not the alleys in this temple often fuller of walkers than the choir of petitioners? Conference with the profane, ostentation of clothes, perhaps plots of mischief, as frequent as suits to God, making it little less than a den of thieves? If men stumble into the church, as company, custom, recreation, or, perchance, sleep invites many, they feed their eyes with vanities; if any drops be admitted into their ears, they are entertained under the nature of conceits. Judgments, they think, be none of their lessons; they will not suffer their consciences to apply them. Mercies they challenge and own, though they have no right to them. If this estate be not a misery, judgment, burden, there is none. The fire of the pestilence is well quenched, the rumours and storms of war are laid, the younger brother of death, famine, doth not tyrannise over us. But here it is: our sins and God's wrath (for them) meet, and the heart is hardened; this is the sorest judgment. Let me speak a paradox, but a truth: it is the plague of many that they are not plagued; even this is their punishment, the want of punishment; and the hand of God is then heaviest when it is lightest—heaviest on the conscience when lightest on the carcase. It is true of them what the philosopher said of

himself, *Perieram nisi periissem*,—They are undone that they are not undone. God suffers their bodies to possess and be possessed of rest: they sing to viols, dance their measures; their heads ache not, much less their consciences; but, as to Israel, fat with quails, God withal sends leanness into their souls; the present indulgence gives sufficient argument of future woes; they surfeit on pleasures till death puts them out of breath. That worthy father* saw this their self-commended estate, and prayed against it: *Domine, hic ure, hic seca, ut in eternum parcas*,—Lord, here plague, cut, massacre, burn me, so that for ever thou wilt spare and save me. This is *onus gravissimum*, the most grievous burden. Security is the very suburbs of hell: *miserius nihil est misero, se non miserante*,—there is nothing more wretched than a wretched man that reck's not his own misery: an insensible heart is the devil's anvil, he fashioneth all sins on it, and the blows are not felt.

You wonder at the frequency of burdens, and that the turtles of this land groan out of this place the sad tunes of woe and misery. Alas! how should we sing the songs of Sion to a strange people? The pulpit, I confess, should be the mercy-seat; but your sins have made it a tribunal or bench of judgment. Nothing but the thunders of Sinai, and scarce those, can waken us from our dead sleep. This is *ima securitas*, deep security, fitly applied to us, whose is *sine cura ætas*, an age without care; or rather, if you will, *se curans ætas*, that love none but ourselves, and that not enough to seek our own peace. Let me speak it in the tune of Juvenal—

'Non habet ulterius, quod nostris moribus addat
Posteritas;'—

We flow with those sins to which no following posterity shall be ever able to add. So spreading an infection of sin is among us, that, as in a great plague, we wonder not so much at them which die as at them which scape; so there is nothing a wonder, a mirror, a miracle in nature but he that lives unspotted of this world. If you think I speak too bitterly, I would to God it were not worse than I speak. I would your reformation would convince us of shame, and give us cause to recant this in the pulpit. This turns the message of Edom upon us; the burden of Dumah, the burden of England. We cast from our shoulders the burden of the law, God lays on us the burden of judgment; we load God with our sins, and press him as a cart with sheaves, Amos ii. 13; we pack up a bundle of lies, blasphemies, adulteries, perjuries, extortions, frauds, and then hasten to the cross of Christ to unload them, as if, pressing our souls to hell with wilful sins, yet Christ on the least warning must ease us. But the promise, Matt. xi. 28, is not to men laden with sin, but with sorrow for sins. It is such a load as must make us weary, or we have no promise to be eased.

But, alas! sin (which is burden enough to sink the world) is made light by custom: as if, resting in man's heart, it did *quiescere in propriam sedem*, settle itself in its own natural place. It is a philosophical axiom, *Nullum elementum suo loco ponderat*,—No element is heavy in its proper place. Though sin be as weighty as a talent of lead, saith the prophet, Zech. v. 7, yet it is at the centre when got into the corrupted heart, and weighs light. And except the wrath of God fall upon the naked conscience, sin lies at the door, and Cain never cries, 'It is greater than I am able to bear.' Judas had burden enough of treason, hypocrisy, malice, covetousness, to sink him down; it was no burden till the finger of God's wrath touched the tender heart-strings, and then it pressed him down to his own place, Acts i. 25. How

* August.

many have incurvate and oppressed souls, bowed down with the 'spirit of infirmity,' (nay, of rank iniquity,) more than eighteen years, that are not yet sensible of their own crookedness, nor the cause thereof? For it cannot be but the devoured patrimonies of many orphans, the ruins and depopulations of towns, the devastation of holy things, should be burdens too heavy for a poor crazy soul to stand under. Piles of usury heavier than Etna, burdens of bribes outbalancing the axle-tree, are more than the giants, Theomachoi, monsters of men and prodigies of nature, were able to bear. We could not see a corrupted lawyer, citizen, cormorant, go so nimbly and so bolt upright under such a mass of sin, if they had not some help. Here it is; the 'strong man Satan' (so it pleaseth Christ to term him) puts under his shoulder, and makes the vessel go tight and easy, with an equal balance, which could not else swim upon the waters without sinking. Pride could not else carry a whole township on his back, which his father, covetousness, had but newly devastate, clambering up to honour, as Jonathan to the garrison of the Philistines, by the ruggedness of these two rocks, Bozez and Seneh, 1 Sam. xiv. 4, so these by the desolation of our two main rocks, the church and commonwealth. The unmerciful monopolies of courtiers, the unreasonable prices of merchants, the hoards (if not transportation) of grain with cormorants, the advantages made of the poor's necessities, unconscionable fines, and rents, wringing the last penny from their purses and drop of blood from their hearts,—*Oh durum et importabile pondus!*—an intolerable weight. These wretches were never able to bear it without the aid of the devil, who, whiles they draw with him in the same yoke, is content to bear all the burden.

At last, when presumption has left the stage, and desperation begins to knit up all with a direful catastrophe, the pulses beating slowly, the head aching vehemently, body and soul refusing all proffered comfort, then the devil casts the whole load on them, that at once they may despair and die; then that which was lighter than cork and feathers becomes heavier than lead and earth. God hath often strove with them by his word; they would never yield a *Vinces*, 'Thou shalt overcome, O Lord.' Now, perhaps with Julian too late, they pant out a *Vicisti*, 'Thou hast overcome.' Our crying in the day could not wake them; that cry at midnight shall fetch them up, with the burden of envy, covetousness, drunkenness, &c. And as it was doomed to Babylon, 'Look how much her glory and pleasure hath been, give her so much torment and sorrow,' Rev. xviii. 7. Nay, then the devil gets up too, like a merciless jailor, with the addition of his own weight, to aggravate their woes. Strive then every one to abate the burden of judgment, by lessening the burden of sin. Every repentant tear that falls, washeth a talent from this burden; every remorseful sigh and faithful prayer diminisheth the load; that which remains may press, shall not oppress, 2 Cor. iv. 9. Christ will put under his shoulder: 'Come, all ye laden,' *exonerate animas*, unload your souls: he bore them on his cross, and our believing souls shall never feel the weight of them. The cross only is left; heavy to blood and flesh, but to a heart made spiritual, 'thy yoke, O Lord, is easy, and thy burden light,' Matt. xi. 30: our own heavy, but thine light.

2. We have perused the map to the end of the *inscription*: the *description* stands next to our speech; where we have an Edomite standing on Mount Seir, and calling to the watchman, with the voice of derision, 'what he saw in the night,' &c. A proud Edomite, securing himself in the strength of his own arms, deriding the prophet of God, which came against him with the burden of war. This is the sense I fasten on. I have read other exposi-

tions, as if it was a question of fear : I approve and dwell on the former. From the persuasion, then, of immunity, impunity, and safe standing out of the reach of earth, of hell, of heaven, proceeds this question. Edom hath shaken off the yoke of Israel, and begins to crown his days with the rosebuds of peace, and not to fear the sword of Egypt, nor Ashur, nor God himself in heaven. Their conceit was, though feignedly, as strong of this Mount Seir as the promise of God was really true to Mount Sion—never to be moved, though the battlements of heaven shot thunder, and the pillars of the earth quaked.

(1.) There is question about the name of this Seir ; some affirm it derived from Esau, as being the place where he and his generation dwelt, Gen. xxxvi. 9. Indeed, the nature of Esau and the name of Seir agree fitly, for both signify *bristled* or *hairy* ; but it had the name of Seir before Esau came thither. Some Hebrews think the mountain was called Seir from the apparition of devils, who shewed themselves in the shapes of hairy men ; such as the Fauns were imagined to be. But most like to take denomination from Seir the Horite, Gen. xxxvi. 20, who inhabited there long before Esau : 'And the Horites in their Mount Seir, unto the plain of Paran,' Gen. xiv. 6 ; it being the country of the Horims or Horites. Esau was drawn hither for many reasons : as, because that corner of Canaan about Hebron, where he and his brother Jacob dwelt, was too scant for their flocks ; because Mount Seir fitted Esau's mind, being a place of excellent hunting ; his wives were of that country ; God's providence so disposed of Esau's removal that Jacob might live in safety. And even in this, God wrought Esau's good by putting him out of Canaan ; for then with the rest of the Canaanites they had been destroyed by Israel ; but God made good that temporal blessing upon Esau and his seed which his father Isaac gave him, Gen. xxvii. 39, 40. Indeed, the Amalekites, though derived from Esau, were destroyed by Israel ; but the reason may be thus gathered, because Amalek was the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, by a concubine ; the Idumeans, that were legitimate successors, were preserved. Such was the different respect to the right and the bastard seed ; for God is said to give Mount Seir to Esau : 'I gave unto Esau Mount Seir to possess it,' Josh. xxiv. 4 ; therefore the Israelites, among their spoils of Canaan, were expressly forbidden to destroy it : 'Ye shall not provoke them ; for I will not give you of their land so much as a foot-breadth, because I have given Mount Seir to Esau for a possession.' Such was God's mercy to Esau for his father's sake, that his posterity was made great and honourable.

But if the Horites first inhabited Mount Seir, how comes the posterity of Esau to enjoy it ? It is answered in Deut. ii. 12, 'The Horims dwelt in Mount Seir beforetime, whom the children of Esau chased out, and destroyed them, and dwelt in their stead.' So doth sin quench the very cinders of natural affection, after it hath put out the flames of religion, that the children of Esau ceased not till they had extinguished their own kindred. The respect of blood must give way to rapine and malice. Too weak is nature to restrain the fury of sin, when it is stung by that fiery serpent, the devil. The Romish mountain doth claim some kin of this Mount Seir, at least in the opinion of the Jews. There is one place in Edom called Magdiel ; this the Rabbins take for Rome, and say, that of the Idumeans came the Romans. It is not so locally, it may be well spiritually ; for, for persecution of the saints, there is no such Edom in the world as Rome. But Magdiel signifies 'praising God.' Oh, blessed were Rome if in this she could be called Magdiel ! This Seir was a mountain of great strength, not infertile ; and, as great

probability gives it, graced with either one or many goodly cities : ' Who will bring me into Edom ? who will lead me into the strong city ? ' Ps. lx. 9. Neither may we think that the offspring of Edom, when once made dukes, nay, kings, contented themselves to dwell in tents.

But what if a mountain, what if a city, or the strength of Edom ; is it able to grapple with the wrath of God, or buckle with his judgments ? If any piece of the broad earth were shot-proof against the anger of God, as they feign the garden of Hesperides against the planets, it would not be unsought, unbought. There have been mountains and cities before and after Seir, prouder and stronger than she, that have measured their length on the ground, and been dissolved to dust and rubbish ; and Edom herself hath danced the same measure. The world hath gloried, in her several ages, of many goodly cities : Nineveh, the pride of Assyria ; Troy, the pillar of Asia ; Babylon, more a region than a city ; Carthage, graced with seventeen tributary kingdoms ; and let not Jerusalem be shut from both the glory and sadness of this relation. May we not say of them all now, *Etiam periere ruinae* ? — That little of them is dissolved to nothing ? Thus God cools and damps the glory of Israel : Amos vi. 2, ' Go you unto Calneh, and see ; and from thence go unto Hamath the great : then go down to Gath of the Philistines : be they better than these kingdoms ? or the border of their land greater than your border ? '

Constantius spake of old Rome, that nature had emptied all her forces on that one city ; the time came, she was overthrown, and her walls made even with the ground. The titles of new Rome are greater, not her privileges. She is called, *urbs æterna* ; yet that eternal Babylon shall fall, and in the decree of heaven she is already fallen, for the more sureness ; and all her merchants, petty leases taken out of her grand lease, shall mourn bitterly for her : she shall be made a cage of unclean birds, owls and vultures, as she is now a den of unclean beasts, lions and tigers. If any city on earth might boast her privileges, let Jerusalem speak ; she was called ' the holy city,' and ' the city of God : ' the temple in her, a figure of the church militant, as Solomon, the builder of it, was a type of Christ. ' Behold, her house is left unto her desolate ! ' Sin laid her pinnacles in the dust. At the murder of his Son, God with his own hands rent the veil, and after gave the whole fabric a spoil to the Gentiles. They that have travelled the lower provinces testify that the rude heaps of ruined churches, monasteries, and religious places are no less frequent then pitied spectacles. Devotion built them, kept them ; sin polluted them, hostility subverted them. Sin prepared the way for ruin and blood ; the idolatry within overthrow the walls without. They could plead more than Dumah ; they and their pleas are perished.

Let me not speak as a prophet, but as an admonisher. Is it impossible for the sin of England to have the like effect ? We are ready to say in pride, what David spake in the assurance of faith, ' I cannot fall ; thou, O Lord, of thy goodness, hast made my hill so strong.' Let us praise God for that we have, and pray that our sins subvert it not. Let Dumah speak with pride ; though our privileges be more, let our presumption be less. It is wise and safe to possess more than we boast of. Though nature hath bound up the loins of our kingdom with a girdle of waves, and policy raised another fence of wooden walls, yet God must put about us a third girdle, the bands or circle of his providence, or our strength is weaker than the waters. It is an old and sure rule against the atheist, against the worldlings : That whole cannot be perpetual whose parts be alterable. If the members of this great body, the world, change, faint, and grow old, it argues a creeping decay to

the whole. Let the cormorant know, that would build his nest here for ever, that parts of this land are alterable, therefore the whole not permanent. If the plague takes away men, the fields grow barren ; nay, the wearied earth, after much industry, is dull in her fruits ; like an unnatural step-dame, she produceth not good things of herself : if a deluge overrun us, we and our glory vanish. God hath more means than one to inflict his judgments. It is with no less admiration than truth reported, that a whole field in England is turned in one month from a fertile soil to a most barren waste. It lies from the danger of inundation, from the reach of the hand of war ; what then can turn it to a perpetual barrenness ? Thus : God raiseth a mighty wind, that uncovers a mountain of sand, which overspreads the fruitful valley to a great thickness ; and it is made worse than Carmel, which God thus threatens : ' I will turn Lebanon into Carmel, and Carmel into a forest.' It lies in the power of man's sins to make God curse his very blessings.

The burden of Dumah is war, Mount Seir fears it not. If the book of our hearts lay open to be read, I think our fear of war is less than theirs. God grant our presumption, our security, be not as great ! ' We sit under our own fig-trees, and eat the fruits of our own vineyards. Our children go out by flocks and dances, and flourish like the olive branches round about our table. Our oxen are strong to labour, our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets. There is no leading into captivity, no dashing of our children against the stones, no complaining in our streets.' If this one blessing exceed not our thankfulness for all, my observation is deceived. But what a bold inference is this : There is no war, therefore may be none, nor can we be overthrown ? It is a speech as common as the stones in our streets, when consideration of war is offered : We need fear no enemies, if we be true amongst ourselves. Vain security, that is built upon *ifs* and *ands* ! Who shall make us true to ourselves, that have been false to God ? Are there no sons of Belial amongst us, that curse the prosperity of Zion, and gape for the day to cry, ' Down with it, down with it, even to the ground ?' We know they have openly and privately, with coat of armour and coat of mail, assaulted the peace of Jerusalem, but, praise to our God, received shame in putting off their harness.

Let this make us thankful, not secure ; as if God could not reach his arm over our narrow seas. Behold France made a cockpit for massacres, by the uncivil civil wars thereof ; think of the unquiet bread long eaten in the Low Countries ; and when thou sayest, We lay our heads on the pillows of peace, and eat the bread of plenty, kiss *his* hand with praises that feeds thee with these blessings, but let not thy own strength make thee careless. The Papists thus re-hearten themselves against all the overthrows given them by this little island, that our time is not yet come, our sins are not yet full. That Ignatian sectary, Pererius, so notes in Gen. xv., ' The wickedness of the Amorites is not yet full,' &c. He gives it by way of comment ; but it is a false gloss, I trust, and carries no more truth with it than other the fictions of Rome. His words are these : ' Let no man wonder why God suffers the persecution of the Catholics in England : the sins of the Amorites are not yet full, their wickedness is not yet complete ; when it is, the divine revenge shall fall.' They expected this day at the last change. God changed their expectation to folly ; and as it was our grief that *sol occubuit*, our sun set, so it is our joy, wonder, *noxx nulla secuta est*, no night followed.

' *Mira cano : sol occubuit, noxx nulla secuta est.*'

I hope his prophecy is as false for the event, as I am sure his application is

for the thing. We are neither those uncircumcised Amorites, unchristened Pagans, nor do we persecute the Catholics; except to have liberty of law, grow rich, purchase lands, beard and brave the ministers of God to their faces, be called persecution. Here I cannot but mention, what is well observed by a most reverend and honoured judge of this land,* that whereas there have been three hundred burnt by Queen Mary for religion, there have scarce thirty Papists been executed by Queen Elizabeth for treason. Yet, I hope, there is some difference betwixt three hundred and thirty, religion and treason; betwixt the five years' reign of the one, and the forty-four of the other. I know their rebellions, treasons, conspiracies, meet with execution; no persecution to their religion. Happy would our martyrs have thought themselves, if on such terms they might have redeemed their consciences! No; the iniquities of Babel have filled up their measure rather, and their judgment long ago was far off, and their damnation sleepeth not. Pererius is his own prophet against us; we speak not against them of ourselves, the Holy Ghost speaks for us, who 'shall shortly consume that man of sin with the breath of his nostrils.' Let their eyes stare for our overthrows till they fall out of their unfortunate heads: God hath blessed, and the Balaam of Rome shall never be able to curse, Num. xxiii. 20. Only let not our zeal be wanting to our God, to our church, to ourselves, and God shall not be wanting to us, nor all the hosts which he fights with; and once again, if need be, *conjurati venient in classica venti*,—the winds and seas shall take our part. Let not our peace make us wanton, nor our wealth proud; our help stands 'in the name of God,' not in forts and swords.

To speak more particularly; be not too confident, whosoever, in thy Mount Seir. Every wicked soul hath her Mount Seir to trust in; they that have no assurance of rest in heaven, have their refuges and mountains of help on earth. David so returns it upon the wicked, Ps. xi. 1, 'In the Lord put I my trust: how then say you to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?' Why should I seek to foreign helps, that have settled myself in the bosom of rest itself? Riches are a Mount Seir to the covetous; they rest on them, as the ark on the mountains of Armenia. Honour is a Mount Seir to the ambitious, against all the besiegings of rivals. Sensuality to the voluptuous, against all the disturbances of a clamorous conscience. Pride, fraud, drunkenness, are a Mount Seir to the lovers of them; but alas, how unsafe! If stronger against, and further removed from the hand of man, yet nearer to God's hand in heaven; though we acknowledge no place *procul à Jove*, or *procul à fulmine*,—far from God, or from his thunder. But we say, it is not the safest sailing on the top of the mast; to live on the mountainous height of a temporal estate is neither wise nor happy. Men standing in the shade of humble valleys, look up and wonder at the height of hills, and think it goodly living there, as Peter thought Tabor, *Bonum est esse hic*; but when with weary limbs they have ascended, and find the beams of the sun melting their spirits, or the cold blasts of wind making their sinews stark, flashes of lightning or cracks of thunder soonest endangering their advanced heads, then they confess, checking their proud conceit, the low valley is safest; for the fruitful dews that fall first on the hills stay least while there, but run down to the valleys. And though on such a promontory a man further sees, and is further seen, yet in the valley, where he sees less, he enjoys more. Take heed, then, lest to raise thy Mount Seir high, thou dejectest thy soul: 'Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria!' Amos vi. 1. If we build our houses by unrighteousness, and our chambers

* L. Coke.

without equity, though as strong as Mount Seir, they shall not be able to stand in the earthquake of judgment. God so threatens Jehoiakim : 'Shalt thou reign, because thou closest thyself in cedar? did not thy father eat and drink and prosper, when he executed judgment and justice?' &c., Jer. xxii. 15. Think not your houses to be fortresses, when your souls are unarmed of Christian weapons—faith and obedience. You had, and shall have peace, whiles you pursue it with righteous endeavours ; whiles you guide all your actions by the line of the sanctuary, and steer your attempts by the compass of the gospel. Plenty shall spread your tables, whiles charity takes away and gives to the poor. These holy courses shall make you continue, in despite of hell and Rome ; your mountain shall be hedged about with the mercies of God, and your children shall defy their enemies in the gates.

(2.) The person must not be omitted to whom this scoffing question is moved : the watchman. It seems the prophet had denounced against Edom war ; they deride his message as a leasing, and his person under the name of a watchman ; nay, therefore they scorn him, because a watchman. I will not insist on the duties of watchmen ; every common soldier can school the watchman. Many presume to teach us our duties, that will be ranged within no order themselves. That which a watchman is to the city, or sentinel to the leagure, a minister is to the people. To watch over yourselves is every particular man's duty ; to watch over all, *opus ministri*, is the work of the ministry. If our eyes be blind in descrying dangers, our tongues dumb to give warning, the city or fort is easily taken. Now, *quam clamoris vocem daturus est præco mutus?*—what warning shall a dumb watchman give? Some will not speak ; the fountain of their knowledge is shut up, like Laban's well, with a great stone of security, saturity, stateliness : others will speak too much, making the pulpit a pasquil to ease their spleens, to traduce superiors. *Medio tutissimus ibis*,—The mean and honest way is the safest.

But what say we to usurpers, wolves, tyrants, that call themselves watchmen? That *bi-nominis, bi-linguis*, double-named, double-tongued, double-sworded, and not single-hearted demi-god of Rome, calls himself sometimes a watchman, sometimes a king, the servant of servants, the king of kings ; as if there was no difference betwixt the serviceable watchman and the commanding prince ; betwixt the sentinel of the leagure and the general of the army. *Ad duo qui tendit, non unum, nec duo prendit*,—Whiles he claims both, usurps one, truth allows him neither. His actions shew him no servant. *Feriendo non ferendo agit*,—He gives blows, but takes none. To be such a watchman as he desires, possibility is denied him, since his eyes cannot look so far as he would extend his arm ; not to watch over Rome only, but so far as the world is christened. Behold, saith he, 'I have two swords.' One of them he lets rust,—I mean the sword of the Spirit,—the other he keeps bright with the blood of saints, and makes it shine with the gall of martyrs. *Principalis principatus à triplici corona*,—The principal principality is from the triple crown. As the sun exceeds the earth, so the Pope all Christian princes ; other kings are but his bailiffs. Did you ever hear a watchman speak thus, or arrogate to himself such a reign : *in foro poli, in foro pluti, in foro conscientie?*—in the court of heaven, in the court of hell, and in the court of every conscience? If any resist his tyranny, he snatcheth from Christ that his word and usurps it : 'Bring those mine enemies, that would not have me reign over them, and slay them before me,' Luke xix. 27. If he cannot behold it in action, he will see it in picture, as the massacre of Paris on St Bartholomew's night was pictured in the Pope's

palace to entertain his holy eye with pleasure. So would the powder treason have been, if the matter had hit right. As horrid as the thought of it is to an honest mind, the hoisting up of buildings, shivering of bodies, tearing up of monuments, dissipation, massacre, murder of old, young, prince, people, senators and senate, drawn to the life by the art of the painter, would have been a contenting spectacle for so holy an eye to contemplate. Sure there is honesty in hell, if this be religion. If the devil can devise more execrable stratagems, let him change seats with the Pope. Christ meddled with neither Herod nor emperor, king nor Cæsar; no emperors held his stirrup, no kings kissed his blessed feet; he only fought with the weapons of the Spirit against sin and Satan. The Pope is a watchman indeed; but he watcheth to invade, besiege, enter, and spoil the city of God. He hath other watchmen under him, unclean birds, fluttering from that vulture of Babylon, and flying like bats and owls under the eaves of night, to vomit the poisons of heresy and treasons from their swollen gorges. Watchmen like the chaplains of Mars, at Rome, in the days of idolatry, that practised to toss firebrands from camp to camp, to inflame evil affections; that care not whose blood they sacrifice to their Roman god, without distinction of Trojan, of Tyrian, nor out of whose sepulchres they dig themselves an estate. They watch indeed, for they keep a register of all our proceedings against them in these halcyon days of ours; and if ever the sun of alteration shine on their faces, they will repay us ten blows for one upon our burgonets. Meantime (our praises to heaven!) they watch their own bane; and, as one writes of Parry, so I may of the end of them all: *Itala gens sceleri te dedit, Angla cruci*,—Italy gives them their villany, England their gallows. This is their *malus*, but *meritus finis*,—the evil, but deserved end of them all. England is sinful enough, but she professeth not herself a schoolmistress of sins, as Rome doth of treason. There it is professed, taught, learned, and (as on the sandy theatre) exercised before it come to the fatal execution.

The priests of perverted Israel were but shadows of those of apostate Rome: 'As thieves wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way by consent,' Hosea vi. 9. Hence that proverb carries no less truth than antiquity with it: 'An Englishman Italianate is a devil incarnate.' These are those Jesuits, Jebusites, incendiaries, traitors, and not less than devils, but that they have bodies. God bless us from such watchmen! If these be watchmen, who are enemies?

We see, then, the vanity of their labours that would undertake to bring us to a composition. If heresy can be made sincerity, idolatry true religion, treason obedience, we may be united; but it is a sure rule—contraries in the abstract can never be reconciled. God put an unappeasable contention betwixt the two seeds, of the woman and serpent, when he put enmity between them; for an enemy may be made a friend, but enmity can never be made friendship: the air that is dark may be made light, but darkness cannot be made brightness: a Papist may be converted to a Christian, but Papistry can never be made Christianity, no more than Antichrist can become Christ. Our strife with them is not for the extension of limits, but for the possession of the inheritance; whether grace or nature, the Pope's law or God's, shall take place in the conscience. So I have read of that audacious and sottish hermit, that would undertake to make God and the devil friends; the impossibility of which attempt the devil could tell him: God is all light, and I am all darkness, so that my foul nature cannot be hidden; our affections, seats, persons are so opposed, that I have no hope of peace. They will not, we may not yield; except the sheep shall compound with the wolf, or the

mice with the cat ; which the old tale forbids, though the cat get on a monk's cowl, and cries demurely through the crevices—

‘Quod fueram, non sum, frater ; caput aspice tonsum.’

‘Good brother mouse, creep out thy house, come forth and let us chat :

Behold, my crown is shaven down ; I'm now a priest, no cat.

When cats say mass, the mice, alas ! must pray against their will :

Kind puss, your pate is smooth of late ; your heart is rugged still.’

Experience would teach us the answer of the verse, though we had never read it—

‘Vix tibi præsto fidem, cor tibi restat idem.’

To leave the incorrigible watchmen of Rome,—since we would have cured Babel, and she would not be cured,—let us look home to ourselves. The wolves of Rome have no more honour than the watchmen of England scorn : the Edomites of the world cannot abide ministers. The best is, they are but Edomites, heirs of Esau, and as profane as their father, that make religion their minstrel to procure them sport and sleep. No jest ends in such laughter as that which is broken on a priest ; the proof is plain in every tavern and theatre. We serve indeed contrary masters : we, Christ ; they, lust and Satan : and *hinc illæ rixæ* of theirs, *hinc illæ lachrymæ* of ours,—hence their flouts and our tears. We bite them with the salt of reproof, hence they storm ; we cast ink and gall on their tethers, hence they startle. *Veritatem lucentem multi diligunt, arguentem rejiciunt : dum se ostendit colimus, dum nos ostendit, odio habemus*.—The truth shining, many love ; reproving, they reject : whiles it shews itself, we embrace it ; whiles it shews us, we cannot endure it. Even in this consists at once our happiness, their damnation : our happiness, ‘Blessed are ye when for me persecuted ;’ their damnation, ‘That light being in the world, they embrace, and are glad of darkness ;’ though their wrongs done us be against the law of arms and nature, for an ambassador should be *inter hostium tela incolumis*,—safe among the weapons of enemies.

But do the Edomites only take up these weapons of scorn against us ? No,—I speak it betwixt shame and grief,—even the Israelites scorn the prophets. There are some sick of a wantonness in religion, so hot about the question *de modo*, that the devil steals the matter of religion from their hearts. If we cannot wrangle with forms and shadows, and shew ourselves refractory to established orders, we shall *male audire* ; our sermons shall be slighted, our persons derided. This, this is the mischief : men of name, professors of note, when they speak bitterly of us, their credit carries it strong with our scandals. One arrow of these Israelites wounds deeper than a hundred cannon-shot of the Edomites. I confess, I speak stones ; but if they hit as they are intended, they shall heal some, hurt none. *Dicatur veritas, rumpatur invidia*.—Let truth be spoken, and envy burst her gall. Let all these scorners remember that the contempt done to us, redounds to God himself : ‘He that despiseth us, despiseth men ; he that despiseth Christ, despiseth his Saviour.’ Is all this nothing ? ‘But he that despiseth me and you, despiseth him that sent me and you.’ It comes to somewhat then ; and more than ever mortal man shall be able to answer. Is it not enough for them, that they have drawn out the life-blood of our livings, but they must expose our persons to contempt ? So the Jews spoiled Christ of his vestments, and then mocked him with baseness. Our poverty is flouted by them that have our livings. Surely, if repentance and restitution pre-

vent it not, they shall have tithe one day which they have more right to—the tenth sheaf of that harvest which is reserved for reprobates in hell. The Turks lay it as an imputation on our religion, that we spoil our gods. For shame! Do not the Turks, and shall the Christians? David would not have Araunah's threshing-floor without money; if these men should have no room in the church but what they pay for, I think they would quietly suffer themselves to be turned forth of doors.

(3.) The last branch of the map, and first of the moral, are not unfitly conjoined—the Edomite, and his question.

II.—1. The question then calls me from the watchman, 'What is in the night?' And to make the derision fuller and fouler, it is doubled, like Pharaoh's dream, 'What is in the night?' Did they seek for some prodigy or portent? some divine revelation, which should be received by vision? Were they like Israel, of whom Christ thus testifies, 'This adulterous generation seeks for a sign?' Matt. xii. 39. Thus Dives despaired of his brethren's belief, except one rose from the dead. I confess we have some in the world sick of this disease; a Jewish infection: 'The Jews require a sign,' &c. *Plus oculo, quam oraculo*. Miseries shall work more on them than mysteries; palpable actions of God's mercy, justice, power, shall convince them, the contemplation of them all in the theory of the word moves them not; astonish them with wonders, heal their disease, open their blind eyes, raise their dead, and they will believe. Are there none among us that couch a willing and close ear to the charms of Rome, in admiration of their feigned miracles? lying apostles, that work strange things by exorcisms? But our church now is not in the cradle of her infancy. One cup of wine brought by Christ is worth all the cups of cold water by Moses: as St Augustine, alluding to that marriage in Galilee, says, 'All the adumbrations, types, figures, signs, were but that cup of cold water; Christ reserved the good wine (of the gospel) till he came himself;' and they that will not believe without a sign, without a sign must perish. But I travel no further in this, lest it bring me out of my way.

It was no sign they inquire for, no prodigy they fear; they are only pleased to make sport with the menaces of God: 'You talk of a night, and an hour of calamity; but threatened men draw long breaths. You pretend visions in the night, which portend our ruin; come, tell us the tale of the night: what is in the night?' There have been in all ages some of these frogs, to throat it out against God so long as the weather was fair, as if he could not send a storm; the tempests of God's wrath have been derided to the last moment of a calm. The venom of prosperity so empisons a carnal mind: *filia divitiarum superbia*,—the daughter of riches is pride. The philosopher could teach us that *facilitas et humilitas divitiarum habent contubernium: raro bona mens et bona fortuna homini datur*,—happiness and humbleness are chamber-fellows: seldom a good mind and a good estate is given to the same man. God seemed to mistrust this in Israel, that the increasing of goods, and multiplying of cattle would lift up their hearts against him, Deut. viii. 13, 14. The peaceable days of the wicked, and their luckily proceedings in this world, by the testimony of Job, enrageth their impudence against heaven: 'Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him?' chap. xxi. 15. 'Depart from us; we will none of thy ways.' That of the psalm is full of strength to this: 'His ways prosper: thy judgments are far above out of his sight; therefore defieth he all his enemies,' Ps. x. 4. Man only? No; God himself: 'I shall never be removed.' Let Malachi for all the prophets, Peter for all the apostles, make up this cloud of witnesses: 'It is

in vain to serve the Lord,' Mal. iii. 14; and, 'Where is the promise of his coming?' 2 Pet. iii. 4. All things are still *statu quo*, continued in the same course; there is no alteration, no new thing done *quocunque sub aze*, under heaven. We say, *Non bonum ludere cum sanctis*,—It is no safe jesting with holy things. It is dangerous for an Edomite to make himself merry with God; this is the way to come short home: thou hadst better have mourned all thy life than made God thy playfellow. When the vessel of dust shall encounter with the arm of omnipotence, *sive percutiat, sive percutiatur, frangi necesse est*,—whether it smite or be smitten, it is sure to be broken. The chair of the scorner is the seat of Satan, *imus gradus et limen inferni*,—the lowest stair and very threshold of hell, as David describes it: Ps. i. 1, 'Blessed is the man that doth not walk,' &c. His first plot is to get us to walk a turn or two with him; having persuaded this, he moves us to stand still a little: but so long as we are standing, we are going; therefore at last he entreats us, for our ease, to sit down: but if we take our seat in that enchanted chair, we grow to that impudence to deride God and his judgments. I will single you out four sorts of these Edomites, scorners,—for I justly parallel them,—and propound their natures and conditions to your pity and detestation:—

(1.) *Atheists*: such as have voluntarily, violently, extinguished to themselves the sunlight of the Scripture, moonlight of the creature, nay, the sparks and cinders of nature, that the more securely, as unseen and unchidden of their own hearts, they might prodigally act the works of darkness: not, Athenian-like, dedicating an altar to an unknown god, but annihilating to themselves, and vilipending to others, altar, religion, God, and suffocating the breath of all motions, arguments, manifest convictions that heaven and earth produced; for the reasons of hell only shall one day evince it, *Deum esse*,—that there is a God. They affirm it impossible that flesh should be turned to rottenness, rottenness to dust, and dust to glory. Against whom, well, St Augustine, *Qui potuit formare novum, non poterit reparare mortuum? Facilior est restitutio constitutione*,—He that could form us of nothing, can reform us decayed: it is easier to repair than prepare. That atheism in the days of Solomon was the same in opinion that ours is in practice. We do not say, but live as if it was better to be 'a living dog than a dead lion;' which I would yield true among beasts, but among men, a dead beast is better than a living atheist. Let them ask nature, it will tell them: *Insculptum est omnibus esse Deum*,—It is engraven on all hearts that there is a Deity. Let them ask the creatures, they will witness they had a Creator. Nay, let the devil speak, to shame and convince the atheist, who believes a God, and trembles at his own belief. The nature of his essence proveth it. To know there is a witch, may satisfy us that there is a God; for if the destroying power were not controlled, manacled, mastered, how stand we undevoured? Let them ask, lastly, their own dying hearts; for the eyes that sin hath shut, damnation shall open. *Qui negat esse deum; mihi negat et tibi, non sibi, &c. Oculos, quos culpa clausit, poena aperiet*.

(2.) *Epicures*: that deny not a God and a day of judgment, but put it far off, Amos vi. 3, with *λάβε σοι τὸ μέλλον*, Give me the present, take thou the hope of future joys. These see a night coming, and therefore make haste to be drunk with pleasures: 1 Cor. xv. 32, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die.' *Cras ridendo moriuntur, hodie bibendo sepehiuntur*,—They will not die till to-morrow, but be buried in riot to-day. They sleep on their beds of down, rise to their tables of surfeit, and from thence to their sports of mischief; sleeping, playing, eating, dancing, drinking, dallying: *motu circulari*,—they

run round in a ring. Only, *nulla intervalla piando*,—no time must be spared from Satan. They invert the order God hath disposed to the times preposterously, making the night day, and the day night; at midnight they revel, at noon they sleep, though the day was created for labour, the night for repose. The sun is scarce beholden to their eyes to look upon him; the moon and stars have only their attendance; the works and the hour of darkness meet; they will be contrary to all men and all things but themselves, because they will be contrary. If ever they begin any work with the day, they dispose it on this fashion: first they visit the tavern, then the ordinary, then the theatre, and end in the stews; from wine to riot, from that to plays, from them to harlots.

‘Iste dies pulchro distinguitur ordine rerum,’—

Here is a day spent in an excellent method. If they were beasts, they could not better sensualise. It would be but lost labour to tell them that their course shall be so proportioned below: from snakes they shall turn upon adders, from both to scorpions, from all to unquenched flames; where they spend not hours but ages, nay, that eternity of time, in wailings and howlings, groans and torments; when for every ounce of vanity, they shall receive, down weight, a whole pound of sorrow. Smokes, blackness, boiling caldrons, fiery burnings of brimstone and sulphur, kindled and continued by the breath of an offended God, shall have their interchanged courses: oft this torment, and then that; and indeed all that a soul and body made immortal can suffer.

‘Iste dies misero distinguitur ordine rerum,’—

Here is a day to be spent in a miserable method. Oh, how, yet, was it some happiness if in a day or set time these woes could be determined!—These are the epicures, not so impudent as to deny the night, not so honest as to part with their sins.

(3.) *Libertines*: that neither affirm no night, nor put it far off, but only the strength of sin prevails over all; and, come sorrow, death, grave, hell, they must have their pleasures. They have a pride in accomplishing their own wills, as she in the poet;—

‘Video meliora proboque
Deteriora sequor;’—

‘I see the good, and give allowance to it:
The evil is my choice, I love and do it.’

They cannot be noted for virtuous, but they will be famous, though for infamy: as that wicked church-robber, that to do some memorable act, pulled all the lead off the church's roof and thatched it; they must be mentioned, though like a traitor's name in the chronicles. These swear away all reproofs, and drink away all the chidings of their own conscience. It shall be the worse for them that ever they had a conscience; their hell shall be the hotter for the multitude of their neglected motions to good. Their mercies have not been more numerous than shall be their miseries. Their nature or learning (to omit those that never read any other book than vanity) at once makes them better and worse; better in understanding, worse in manners; whiles their contemplation is a theatre, and their study new sports, new fashions. Oh, how far better is the simple, honest, innocent soul without knowledge, than that which is beautified with learning and debauched with vices!

'Beatus ille qui procul negotiis,
Paterna rura bobus exercet suis,'—

More happy are those poor wretches, confined and contented with a rural charge. Whiles they know not so much of good, they know less of ill; they skill not what the studying of oaths, the tricks of pride, the policy of atheism means; they make not sense the rule of their belief, with the gallant, but their catechism. Religion is their queen, the gallant's drudge. They have not so much of reason, therefore abuse the less. Their sins proceed most from ignorance, the gallant's from knowing wilfulness. Now, which of these shall be beaten with most stripes? They work out a poor living with the sweat of their brows and nerves; these can play out a rich one from the quickness of their wits. They know not the detractions of slander, underminings of envy, provocations, heats, enlurings of lusts; the foul secrecies of idolatry, hypocrisy, sacrilege, cleave not to their consciences; they have a kind of happiness, in that they are not so miserable. Our impudent, imprudent, insolent youngsters look on these betwixt contempt and anger, call them clowns, idiots, and the dregs of nature, and think themselves angels if these be men, *quorum precordia Titan de pejore luto finxit*,—as if God had tempered them of a baser mould. But whiles Actæon's bond-slave grinds securely (though laboriously) at the mill, his brave, riotous, gallant, hunting master is turned to a beast, and for his sensuality eaten up of his own lusts: you all know the story, this is the moral. This, this is the proper cause that the ancient houses fall; and what long industry of the progenitors hath gotten, the short riot of the gallant wastes. We are loath to hear of this; but it is too true. He needs not drink up all the sea, that will judge of the taste: hence young gentlemen, by wild unthriftiness, become sports to theatres, and cannot sit in their fathers' seats to do good in the commonwealth. They abound with the gifts of nature; but, like fig-trees growing over deep waters, full of fruit, but the jays eat them. Ruffians, harlots, vicious companions, enjoy those graces that might honour God.

(4.) Common *profane* persons: that will suffer themselves to wear God's livery, though they serve the devil. These are they that make the profession of the gospel have an evil name; hence that proverb, *Paternoster* set up churches; 'Our Father' pulls them down. I will not favour with a partial connivance these scornors, though they nestle themselves in the church's bosom. Nay, I will speak most plainly; these are the worst Edomites, if not to themselves, to us. Let the atheist deny, the epicure remove, the libertine forget, that there is any other day of peace or sorrow besides or beyond the present; what is this to believers? We are ready to brand and hoot at them, as they did to the lepers in Israel; nay, to rain them to death with a shower of stones, as they served idolaters and blasphemers. But be our own hands undefiled, that take up these weapons of death against others, as Christ charged the Jews, that charged the adulterous woman? If we be sick, our sickness is more dangerous than theirs. The other diseases are without the body, but this comes nearer the heart of the church. We know what it is to have a sickness come near the heart: *interius, et in cute malum*. There is more grief to the mother of the family in the miscarrying of one of the children, than of many strangers, Edomites, unbelievers or misbelievers. These have learned to speak the language, to scorn the manners of Canaan; for their lives testify that they believe not our report.

2. We have gone the better half of our journey, let not your attentions fail to the end. We have seen the nature of Edom and Mount Seir—atheism, scorn, abomination; we are now entering another mountain, the hill of Zion,

the city of God. The question of the Edomite was not more perverse than the answer of the watchman is grave and sober. The answers of God are not doubtful, like the heathen oracles; nor obscure and tetrical, as Mohammed's riddles; nor ambiguous, like the mixed, the motley, epicene, equivocating conclusions of Rome; but plain, sweet, profitable.

(1.) I call, therefore, the first part of it a *resolution*. They ask as if they despised to know; he resolves them justly, as if he would force them to know against their wills. They ask him what is spiritually seen in the night of vision; he tells them what shall really come in the night of actual desolation: 'The morning cometh, and also the night.' Let your understandings keep pace with me through these four circumstances:—[1.] The length of their peace: one whole day, the space betwixt morning and evening; a short time; *finitum pro indefinito, brevitate temporis dies exprimit*. [2.] The certainty of their judgment; 'The night' infallibly 'cometh.' [3.] The quality of it when it is come; *nox dicitur*, it is called a night. [4.] 'The inversion of this to the righteous.

[1.] The happiness of Edom is but a day; 'The morning comes, and the night' follows: it is but the distance of the sunrising from the setting. There is to all things living such an alteration decreed: a morn, a noon, a night; a beginning, a strong age, a declination or full point. As the historians write of certain flies bred by the river Hispanis, that are generated in the morning, at noon in full strength, and at night make their ends, and are gone: Paul says, 'Our life is but a tabernacle,' it is all, if this stands a year; Isaiah calls it grass, which grows but in summer; David, a flower, hath but his month; here it is called a day, that hath but the sunrising and setting. Nay, Job compares it to a shadow, that hath neither year, nor summer, nor month, nor day, but an hour. Nay, Moses, to a thought, whereof there may be a hundred in an hour. This is none of the shortest comparisons, *mane et vespere*, the measure of one day.

What then mean those 'greedy dogs' in this prophecy, to bark so madly? 'Bring more wine, for to-morrow shall be as to-day; yea, much more abundant,' Isa. lvi. 12. Methinks I hear the gallant epicures, the christened atheists of this city, knock thus in taverns for yet more wine, crowning the day with riots, and blessing the morrow with promised surfeits, as if the night should never come. Alas! *neacis quid serus vesper ferat*,—thou knowest not what sad news the evening will bring. Thou braggest with Cæsar, the day is come; we tell thee, as Cæsar's friend, it is come indeed, and begun; it is not ended. The lease of vanity is but a day, it may be not a moment; the tenure of this world is uncertain.

'Medio de fonte leporum, surgit amari aliquid,'—

From out of the midst of the fount of delicacies ariseth ever some bitterness. When you have spent your strengths, your estates, bloods, souls, upon vanity, all is but *unius diei hilaris insania*,—the merry madness of a day; which to buy with the eternity of insufferable torments is a dear purchase. If they be not short of content and satisfaction, I am sure they are of continuance. They do not always follow a man living, ever forsake him when he dies. *Non semper sequuntur viventem, morientem nunquam.*

[2.] You have measured the shortness of their day; hear the certainty of their night. 'The morning comes, and,' without prevention, 'night follows.' You shall shake off the yoke of Israel, but put on you the yoke of Persia. The Edomites were long tributaries to Israel, according to Isaac's prophecy in the blessing of Esau: 'Thou shalt be thy brother's servant; but it shall

come to pass, when thou shalt get the mastery, thou shalt break his yoke from thy neck,' Gen. xxvii. 40. The prophet here assures them of this mastery. Israel rebels against God, therefore Edom against Israel. Isaac, as God's prophet, subjects Edom to Canaan, the seed of Esau to the seed of Jacob: *intemperantis præfecit sobrium*,*—he sets the sober man over the intemperate; and this service of the elder brother to the younger lasted in the posterity seven hundred years. Yet twice after, they shook off this servitude: the first in Joram's time, 2 Kings viii. 20, which liberty they made a troublesome shift to hold, till Hyrcanus, who subdued them, and made them be circumcised.† This slavery they overcame again, and held it, even till Herod, the son of Antipater, an Idumæan born, obtained to be king of the Jews. Here Edom got the full mastery. The first was this morning the prophet speaks of; this morning of freedom shall come, but last for a day, and then be overclouded with a night, a worse captivity, because to a worse people; *qui Deum et misericordiam nesciunt*,—that know neither God nor mercy: as those privations are inseparable, there is no mercy where no religion.

Edom is but a particular instance of a general doom, which all the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve—I mean all the glories of this world—shall bear: as sure as the evening succeeds the morning, death shall seize upon life, judgment on sin. You have the sap of health in your bones, the riches of the world in your coffers, your life is in the noon of pride, but, we say, praise a fair day at night. Happy are they whose 'life is hid with Christ in God,' Col. iii. 3, that this night may not find them out! Your sun shall set; beauty, riches, glory shall decay. As by the inviolable law of nature, night succeeds day, so by the eternal law of God, death sin. If you could indent with the sun to stand still, as in the days of Joshua, Josh. x. 12, or to go back ten degrees, as to Hezekiah, or with his orb to move slowly, yet it shall set. Be the day never so long, yet at last comes evening-song. The Son of God himself, in this condition of mortal descent, was equal to his brethren. That great Sun of righteousness had his rising and his setting. We must all walk into the west, as well as he; and be our day longer or shorter, night must come; our privileges are not beyond others.

Hear this, ye Edomites, that flout our presagings of a night: You speak of a night and hour of judgment—when comes it? We tell you again, 'The morning cometh, and also the night.' You have had a time of light and delight, and what your hearts could wish; you shall have a time of sorrow and darkness, your noon shall be turned to midnight. Tender and delicate Babylon, that boasted herself 'a queen, free from mourning,' Isa. xlvii. 7, shall weep in the widowhood of her glory; and hear at last, *Advenit finis tuis*,—Thy end is come. You that will not set your minds to these things, nor remember the latter end, miseries shall come on you in their perfection, ver. 9; so absolute as the justice of God and the malice of Satan can make them. So Solomon schools the artless, heartless, supine courses of vain youth: Eccles. xi. 9, 'Rejoice, O young man,' &c. Rejoice in your day of pride, let pleasure rock you on her indulgent knee, you shall be brought to the night of judgment. The surfeits of the old world, the mirth of the Philistines, when Samson was their laughingstock, the carousings of that Chaldean monarch in the sacred bowls of Jerusalem, had their night. Solomon with his thousand wives and concubines, Belshazzar with his thousand princes, Ahasuerus with his hundred and twenty-seven provinces, had their night. High-looking honour and pury riches, the one diseased in his eyes, the other in his lungs, shall have their night. The favour of noble men is the favour of

* Ambros.

† Josephus.

moveable men,—*favor nobilium, favor mobilium*; the *ignis fatuus* of riches is long engendering, soon extinct. Let Joab and Job be our precedents in both these: the first was great and evil, the chiefest captain about David, yet by David designed to execution; the second was great and good, yet, Behold, the mightiest man of the east is poor to a proverb. What ever flourished and had not this night? The rich churl enlarging his barns proportionably to his desires, had his night; he heard that soul-knell, 'Thou fool, this night shall they fetch away thy soul.' The world itself shall have this evening: the morning was in the days of the patriarchs, Christ bore the heat and noon of the day, and we are those 'upon whom the latter ends of the world are come.' 'The world groweth old,' 2 Esd. xiv. 10, and we grow old with it. The bodies of men in old age wax cold, and want the heat of nature; the souls of men in this decrepit age grow cold in zeal,—*deficiente fervore charitatis*. The nourishment of old age turns into crudity, through want of heat to concoct, digest, and drive it into the veins; the nourishment of our souls turns into vanity, because we want the heat of grace to digest it. By all these symptoms, you see the sun of this world ready to set, and the night drawing on, the declination of goodness, the fainting of religion, says that the world lies bedrid, drawing on, looking for the good hour, (to some,) and fetching a thick, sick, and short breath. I am no prophet; or what if I were, yet unable to define the time; but this I conclude, though more particularly, from the rule of my text: We had our morning at the first preaching of the gospel; it now flourisheth with us, as at high noon: who shall say the evening will not follow, or our sun is without setting?

[3.] That it shall come, you hear: hear shortly the quality of it when it is come—a *night*. Misery is not fittler shadowed than under the name of a night: 'Sorrow lasts for a night,' says the Psalmist, 'but joy comes in the morning.' A sad, heavy, and discontented time, full of horror and amazement; when there is no object to withdraw the eye, thereby to divert the mind from the thought and meditation of bitterness. Satan himself is not said to be bound with any other chains but those of darkness; as the joys of heaven are described by that eternal daylight of glory and sunshine of the Lamb, and it is added in express words, 'There shall be no night there,' Rev. xxi. 25. So the torments of hell are called by Christ *αἰὼς ἰζῶρευος*, 'outer darkness,' Matt. xxii. 13. No marvel if there ensue weeping and gnashing of teeth, when misery shall be extreme, and no day-hole of hope to afford one glimpse of comfort. This is that 'night of nights,' worse than the palpable darkness of Egypt, as full of intolerable horror as caliginous blackness. I find not only the time of judgment general, but of temporal and particular calamities, termed by the 'night of horror:' the downfall of Dumah, 'a night;' the destruction of Israel, 'a season of blackness, darkness, clouds and obscurities,' Joel ii. 2. Therefore, as Christ to the Jews, 'Pray that your flight be not in the night;' pray that your departure out of this life be not in the night of your security and ignorance; and then fear not this night, for you are redeemed from the land of eternal darkness.

It was the foolish pride of that Roman emperor, having made a bridge of grappled ships over a narrow arm of the sea, and triumphing at midnight with innumerable torches, to boast that he had wrought two miracles—made the sea dry land, and the night day;* but our emperor of heaven and earth did

* Caligula, (in imitation of Xerxes, that passed his army over the strait of Hellespont upon a wooden bridge,) upon ships moored together with cables and anchors, made a bridge of boards, with so much earth on it that it seemed firm ground, like one of the streets in Rome.—*Dion*.

perform it indeed, when he dried up the red sea of his Father's wrath, and changed our present night of ignorance, and future of torment, into the eternal daylight of his grace and glory.

[4.] The last part of this survey is the inverting of this upon the righteous : where, behold the different beginnings and ends of both holy and unholy. To the children of disobedience, the morning is before the evening ; and this is Dumah's woe at sunset, *fuisse felicem*,—that she had her day. To the faithful, the evening is before the morning ; as at the creation, 'The evening and the morning were the first day,' Gen. i. The Jews were commanded to begin their feast of reconciliation at even ; and, 'From evening to evening shall you celebrate your sabbath,' Lev. xxiii. 32. It was Christ's comfortable answer to his church, intending the date when the profanation of the temple should cease, to set the morning of their peace after the evening of their troubles, by a sweet and mystical allusion : Dan. viii. 14, 'Unto the evening and the morning, two thousand and three hundred ; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed ;' 'and the vision of the evening and morning is true,' ver. 26. The evening of their sorrow precedes the morning of their joys. Our prophet so compares the tempest of the Assyrians' rage to a storm in the night, which vanisheth at the rising sun : Isa. xvii. 14, 'Lo, in the evening there is trouble, but before the morning it is gone.' Our night lasts during this wretched life : the troubles of miseries, storms of persecutions, and rage of that great leviathan, disturb our air, darken our day, and make it a gloomy night ; clouds, tempests, obstacles, stumblingblocks, temptations, machinations of enemies, deceivings of friends ;—

'Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum,
Tendimus in cœlum ;'—

through so many dangers and difficulties sail we to our haven of peace ; our assurance is, that joy comes in the morning, when we shall rise in the east, and behold the sun of glory shine in our faces. The morning of the Edomites, atheists, reprobates, comes first smiling on their brows ; but *nox sequitur*,—they have a night behind.

This disparity consists not only in the counterposition of their order, but in the circumstantial difference of their length and shortness. Our night is irksome, but short : *compensatur acerbitas brevitate*,—what is ill in the bitterness is eased by the shortness. But our day is everlasting ; from new moon to new moon, from sabbath to sabbath, we shall praise the Lord. Myriads of years and ages shall be expired, and our sun as far from setting as at our first entrance ; for time, and mortality, and distinction of age, shall cease : there is nothing but eternity above. It is not more blessed in being a day, than being endless. Their morning is short, their night everlasting, their debt never paid, their fire never quenched. Here is their unhappiness : *florent ad tempus, pereunt in æternum ; florent falsis bonis, pereunt veris tormentis*,—they flourish for a time, they perish for ever ; they flourish with false joys, perish with true and substantial torments. Things that are soonest bred have the shortest continuance ; a puff of wind raiseth the chaff from the earth, and a puff scatters it away ; the wicked are soon raised, and with like speed depressed, Ps. lxxiii. 18, 19. How quickly is Esau's posterity advanced to a kingdom ! How immaturely cast down ! The crown is scarce warm on their temples, their eyes have scarce taken a passing glance of their glories, but all is dispersed. The godly are long kept under covert ; but when they do rise, their elevation is permanent.

Lo, now cast a sober and intelligent eye on this strange opposition, and

let the very enemy of heaven and grace judge whether the vain shadows of joy, and those for a day, liable to true and substantial torments, and those for ever, be comparable with, or desirable before, a momentary affliction, and that not without the best of comforts, followed with an excellent and eternal weight of glory. It is confessed; I speak for you, I think your consciences are convinced. But *ubi signa?*—where are the signs of it? If this be so, and you so acknowledge it, why lead you so dissonant lives? Shall the voice of your own tongues censure your own hearts, witness against you? Tacitus reports that in the civil wars betwixt Vitellius and Vespasian, a soldier had killed his own father, which was of the enemy's army; no sooner was this published, but every man begins to abhor, condemn, execrate that war, the cause of such an unnatural fact: yet how little effect this wrought in their proceedings, that author describes; for their rage, rapine, cruelty, was not lessened in spoiling neighbour, friend, kinsman, brother, father, when they had slain them. We abhor the miseries and sins incident to this life; we love it still, nay, prefer it to heaven: our condemnation will be easy and just, what need is there of more witnesses? *Ex ore tuo*,—thy own lips have spoken against thee. For shame; let our hearts and tongues be cut out of one piece, that what we allow in opinion we may prosecute in practice.

You hear how the day slips from us and the night steals on. No marvel if men sleep in the night; but in the broad day, to shut our eyes with the dormouse is unnatural. There is a night when thou shalt rest, even 'on thy bed of peace,' Isa. lvii. 2; only walk, work, loiter not, in thy day. Christ taught and observed the rule himself, to travel his day, and all his day; 'for the night comes, wherein no man can work.' There are things which if the night finds undone, we are undone, because we have not done them: if we defer to provide lodging, sustenance, safety, the night finds and leaves us destitute. How mad is he, that being bound to some special designment, confined to his day, and then furthered with light, aid, company, and convenience of all things, spends one hour in catching flies, another after feathers, and all the rest in several toys and leasings, that on a sudden the sun sets, and his chief work is not done, nay, not begun!

The work of our day is the working up our salvation; it is a special work. Heaven and our souls are upon it, and we have but our day to work it. *Tempus vite, tempus poenitentiae*,—The time of life is the time of repentance. We spend one piece of our day in covetous scrapings, another in adoring that we have scraped; some hours of our day in working vanity, and some in sleeping security; instantly the night of death comes, and we have neglected the main chance: our salvation is not finished; like courtiers, that having light to bring them to bed, play it out at cards, and go to bed darkling. Woe to them that go to their last rest thus! How unworthy are we of a day, thus to spend it! It is pity that ever the sun of grace shone on our faces! Quake and fear, whatsoever thou art, to suffer the sin of thy soul and the end of thy life to come so near together. If men stumble in the dark, it is not strange; to fall argues wilful neglect, or want of eyes. It is enough for those poor Romanists, that live under that Egyptian darkness of the Inquisition, to fall into grievous absurdities; but where the sun shines, to see men fall in heaps is astonishing. Oh that every bait of drunkenness, object of covetousness, presented glance of vanity, should make us to wander and stumble, stumble and fall, fall and content ourselves therein without rising! What would we, what will we do if our sun sets? For shame! cast away the deeds of darkness with the time; Eph. v. 14, 'Awake and stand up, the light of Jesus Christ' shines on thy face; as men from sleep opening their

eyes and seeing day broke, cast away their clothes, wherein they were wrapt warm, and start up to their several callings. The sins and vanities of this world have kept us warm, and Caiaphas kept Peter, whiles we were folded in them ; but our main work lay dead for want of execution. Provide, then, for this night, O thou whose cheek the sun of mercy and forbearance kisseth : 'The sleep of him that travaileth is sweet, whether he eat little or much : but the satiety of the rich will not suffer him to sleep,' Eccles. v. 12. If the day be well spent, the wearied bones rejoice in their earned repose, and the contented conscience applauds in the thought of her careful obedience ; body and soul receive rest. Whiles the day is slothfully spent, night brings no rejoiceful ease to either spirits or corpse. The day of thy life worn out into the well-disposed hours of a religious obedience, thy body shall rest in a perfumed grave ; and thy soul in the bosom of Abraham, when night comes ; but whiles pride, surfeits, oppressions, wantonness have shared the day, the night comes with no less suddenness than sorrow : thy rest shall be unrest, neither easier than smoke, and thorns, and flames, nor shorter than the eternity of all these can make it. Oh, then, what folly, madness, self-enmity is this, to play out our short day, and howl under the pressure of working tortments for an everlasting night !

(2.) We are come to the last fruit that I shall gather you from this tree, and it grows on three branches ; the whole body of it being applied to the manner, not the matter of the question. The matter is first satisfied : 'The morning comes, and the night.' The manner is now touched : 'If ye will ask, inquire ; return, and come.' You ask in derision ; keep the cloth, but reject the fashion. Ask still, but to repentance ; let your demands manifest your desires of resolution. If ye will ask, and needs be acquainted with your sorrows, 'inquire' with humility, reverence, faith ; 'return' from your sins by repentance ; and 'come' home to God by obedience. *Triplex ex arbore fructus*,—here is a threefold fruit from this tree ; whereon let your souls feed, and then depart to refresh your bodies.

Inquire.—We must not look that God should seek us with his blessing, as Elias was charged to run by the way of the wilderness in quest of Hazeel, to anoint him, 1 Kings xix. 15. No ; 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found.' The rule of the prophet is just : the rich man comes not to the beggar's door with relief in his hand ; but the beggar to his for it. There is small reason to expect from God that he should both give and seek. I confess he doth, as Christ testifies of himself, Luke xix. 10, 'I came to seek and to save that which was lost ;' but withal he conveys into our hearts a preventing grace to seek him. Hence the condition is annexed to the grant, by the giver himself : 'Ask, and you shall have :' inquire, and you shall be satisfied. But if any will be ignorant, let them be ignorant still.

If you ask me, *first*, Where you should inquire ? Our prophet directs you, 'To the law, to the testimony : where should a people inquire, but at their God ?' Isa. viii. 20. *Secondly*, If how ? With humility, reverence, and desire of knowledge. *Inter juvenile judicium, et senile præjudicium, multa veritas corrumpitur.* There must be an equal avoiding of both rashness and prejudice. Young men apprehend not the necessities of knowledge, old men presume of a plerophory and abundance ; hence neither young nor old inquire. *Thirdly*, If when ? The wise man answers, Inquire, seek, 'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.' Begin this search in the morning of thy years. *Mane* is the Lord's adverb, the devil's verb. The Lord saith, *Early* ; the devil saith, *Tarry* : to whom you hearken, judge yourselves. One thing only, take heed you stay not too long. The devil is

a false sexton, and sets the clock too slow, that the night comes ere we be aware. Tarry not, then, till your piles of usuries, heaps of deceits, mountains of blasphemies, have caused God to hide himself, and will not be found. There is a *sera nimis hora*, time too late, which Esau fell unluckily into, when 'he sought the blessing with tears, and could not find it.' It may be the statutes, or the guides, or thy own eyes, may be denied thee, and then too late thou inquirest. Whiles the book of God is not perused, his temples not frequented, nor his throne solicited by prayers, hard-heartedness steals on us, and, like Samson bound by the Philistines, we would break their bonds and cast their cords from us; but our Delilah, our folly, hath beguiled us.

Return.—Is this all? No; there is a second fruit growing on this tree, of equal necessity, greater use. After inquiring, follows returning. You are gone wrong, return into the way of peace; inquire it first, and having found it, return; put your feet into it. God warns you by the revelation of his word, as the wise men by the vision of a dream, Matt. ii. 12, to 'return into your own country,' whither you would arrive, and where only is your rest, 'another way.' If ever this exhortation was necessary for Edom, let me think it fitter for England. As sinful as we are, let me yet say, there is more hope of our repentance than of Edom's. Our iniquities are as great, our instructions greater than theirs; what remains, but our repentance? Never more need. Our sins are not low, slow, few, or slightly done; negligence sins, security sins, contempt sins, presumption and hard-heartedness sins. Here is the scorner's chair, the drunkard's bench, the idle man's cushion, the usurer's study, Oh, where is repentance to rouse these? God is angry; we have been smitten, not in the skirts and suburbs of our commonwealth: our city, body, and whole unity hath been pierced to the soul. 'The whole head hath been sick, and whole heart heavy.' Where is the physic of repentance? I can shew you many actors, presenting themselves on the theatre of this world; I see not repentance play her part. I can point you to usury—robbing, grinding, sucking blood, cutting throats, whiles he sits in the chimney-corner, and hears of his zanies, whelps, underling-thieves ending their days at the gallows. I can shew you covetousness—swearing for gain, crouching, ramping, playing ape, lion, or devil for money. I can discover to you drunkenness rising early to the wine; malice making haste to the death of Amnon; ambition running after honour, faster than Peter to the sepulchre; pride whirling in her chariot, wantonness shutting up the windows; bribery creeping in at the key-hole, even when the door of justice is locked up against her. Among all these I see not repentance. Doth she stay till the last act? I fear the tragedy of many souls will be done first. This land is full of sins,—let me speak impartially,—this city. As many lines meet at the centre, so all sins by a general confluence to this place. *Glomerantur in unum innumere pestes Erebi*,—The mischiefs of hell are swarmed to one crowd, and we have it. I know there are some 'names in Sardis,' some that make conscience of their ways; the same air is drawn by men of as contrary disposition as is the opposition of the two poles: that I may say of the lives of this city, as one doth of Origen's writings, *Ubi bene, nemo melius; ubi male, nemo pejus*,—Those that are good are exceeding good, and those that are evil are unmeasurably evil; nothing was ever so unlike itself. You are as contrary as fire to water; but all the water of the one's devotion will not quench the fire of the other's wickedness. This latter is so monstrously grown on us with the times, that it is all if the idolatry of Rome, or the atheism of Turkey, can go beyond it. They are rare hearts that care not more to seem,

than to be holy, if perhaps they will either seem or be; rare hands that are free and clean from either blood or filthiness; rare tongues that do not vie oaths with words, making scoffs, scorns, flatteries, vain speeches, the greater part of their tongues' exercise, that if their words could be weighed, their prayers of a year are not so substantial and ponderous as their oaths of one day. It were no wonder to see these abominations in Dumah, Egypt, Babylon; to find them in England is matter of amazement. It was an admirable and astonishing speech, (the prophet himself thought, by his advertisement prefixed,) 'The virgin Israel hath done filthily,' Jer. xviii. 13. If harlots and brothels be unchaste, they do not degenerate from their kind; in so pure a virgin, no imagination would have dreamed it. It is no news to find the devil in hell; to have him thrust into paradise, tempting and prevailing with our first parents, is horrible. Let Rome and Turkey swell with the poisons of Satan till they burst, who wonders? To find the sputterings of his venom in the church is grievous. If we be accused for accusing of sins, let the physician be blamed for discovering diseases in the sick body: we must speak. Oh, yet, *si nostra sperem prece posse moveri*, that we could hope with any sayings to move you? If the worst come, I can but speed as others before me. Be there not usurers that say to the gold in secret, 'Thou art my confidence?' *Populus me sibilat, at mihi plaudo ipse domi*,—The world hisseth at me, but I hug and applaud my own soul, and fat my spirits in the sight of my bags. Is there never a broker to comfort himself, in the distress of his conscience, with, 'Usury is no sin, many learned men are of this opinion.' But I ask him if his conscience can be so satisfied; would he not willingly give one hundred-pound bag to be secured in this point? Sure it is, at the least, not safe wading far in a questionable water; if it could be safe to some, yet how many have been drowned in this whirlpool? I confess that flesh and blood puts the bladders of wealth and promotion under their arm-holes, and the devil holds them up by the chin, till they come to the deepest, and then, as the priests served Judas, they bid them shift for themselves; and wanting the help of repentance to swim, down they sink in *profundum inferni*, to the bottomless bottom of hell. These two are not unftly compared to two millstones: the usurer is the nether stone, that lies still; he sits at home in his warm furs, and spends his time in a devilish arithmetic, in numeration of hours, days, and moneys, in subtraction from others' estates, and multiplication of his own, till they have divided the earth to themselves, and themselves to hell; the broker runs round like the upper millstone, and betwixt both these the poor is grinded to powder.

Usury, you say, is exploded among saints. I would you would deal no worse with covetousness. But, alas! this is too general a fault, and without any hope of amendment. He that railed on Beelzebub pulled all Ekron about his ears; he that slighted Melchom provoked the Ammonites; but he that condemns Mammon speaks against all the world. This is the delight, the love, the solace of many, the god of some. Poverty, sickness, age, are all the devils they tremble at, and Belial, Melchom, Mammon, pleasures, honours, riches, all the gods they worship. These three usurping kings, like the three seditious captains in Jerusalem, or those three Roman tyrants, Cæsar, Crassus, and Pompey, have shared the world amongst them, and left God least, who owns all. Lactantius speaks of one Tullus Hostilius, that put Fear and Paleness into the number of gods. It is pity that ever his gods should go from him. It is, not pity, but justice, that these gods, and the true God too, should forsake such reprobates, that give the honour to creatures wherewith they should worship the Creator. But, alas! how is Pharaoh's

dream verified among us : 'The lean kine eat up the fat !' God's lean blessings, riches and pleasures, devour his fat ones, grace and religion. How dishonours it God, disparageth ourselves and our creation, to put lead in a cabinet of gold, base desires in a fair and precious soul ! We never yet attained the top of Mount Seir. He that stands on the tower of divine meditation will judge those pigmies, which below he thought giants ; but we desire not heaven, because we know it not ; we never look beyond our horizon ; we live in our contented slavery of Egypt, and never dream of the freedom of Canaan. *Ubi amor, ibi oculus*,—Where the love is, there is the eye. This St Augustine shortly and soundly reproves : *Si sursum os, cur deorsum cor?*—Hath nature given us an upright face and a grovelling heart ? This is a preposterous dissimilitude of the mind and countenance. Do but compare, as lifting up thy soul with thy eyes, heaven with earth, and thou wilt change thy opinion. Through want of these meditations, these earthly vanities carry away our enchanted hearts to neglect those better things of our eternal peace ; and by the testimony of our Saviour, 'It is hard for a rich man to get into heaven.' The proverb saith, There is no earthly gate but an ass laden with gold can enter ; and this only lading hinders our entering the gates of glory. A wealthy and great man, served up to God's table in his kingdom, is as rare as venison at our boards on earth : there are sometimes such services, not often.

Is this all ? No ; *Vidi ebriosorum sitim, et vomentium famem*,—I have seen drunkenness reeling from tavern to tavern, and, not seldom, from thence to his stews. It was the sin, nay, the shame of beggars ; it is now the glory, the pride of gallants. They should daily be transformed to the image of God ; they come nearer to beasts, let me say, to devils ; for St Bernard saith, *Ebrietas est manifestissimus daemon*,—Drunkenness is a most manifest devil. They that are possessed with Satan, or with drunkenness, fall alike into the fire, into the water ; they gnash alike, alike they foam ; and as all the disciples could not cast out that one sort of devils, so nor all the preachers this, Matt. xvii. 16, 21.

Gluttony is not much less general, no less evil. Drunkenness makes a man so giddy he cannot stand, and gluttony so pursy that he cannot go. That old verse and rule is forgotten in our feasts—

'Too soon, too fine, too daintily,
Too fast, too much, is gluttony.'

There is an appetite natural ; when the stomach can extract no more juice from meats received, it covets more. There is an appetite sensual ; when the rich says, 'My soul, eat,' not my body. Nay, are not some in this city like those Horace speaks of ? When their estate can reach but to herrings, they long for fresh salmon. We desire the strength of bodies and the length of days ; our full dishes forbid it. If ever that verse was true, now is the time—

'Non plures gladio, quam cecidere gula ;'—

'The enemy's sword kills not more than their own throat.'

Swearing and whoredom I will join together, as most sins go by couples : so the prophet, 'The land is full of adulterers, and for oaths the land mourneth.' Add unto swearing the twin-born brother of it, cursing ; a sin that makes God (the *summum bonum*) the base executioner of our revenge. How strange, when men grieve us, to turn our teen upon God, and rend him to pieces ! Blasphemers against mortal princes are killed with the sword, and all their estates confiscate ; against the Prince of heaven it is not regarded.

I must not forget my Edomite, the gallant. If you would see an imposthume, conflate and swollen up with all these and rank corruptions, all the former mischiefs reconciling themselves to a wretched unity in one soul; a pack and bundle of sins, snatched from their several owners,—envy from the malicious, haughtiness from the proud, derision from the scorner, &c.,—and engrossed to one heart; an emblem, a pageant, a commentary of all the devil's proceedings; a map of his walks, plots, and actions;—behold the profane Edomite! I tax not the generous spirit whose birth and accoutrements are worthy and high, his mind humble. Oh, how comely are good clothes to a good soul, when the grace within shall beautify the attire without; and not gay rags impudently bear our wicked actions! Far be it from me to think these Edomites, or any other thing than the diamonds that grace our ring. No, they are the gallant Esauites, the profane roysters, to whom I speak, and that from a text of repentance; desiring from my soul that they may scape the burden of Dumah, by rejecting the manners, and make more account of their birthright than sell it for messes of pottage, lusts, and vanities. But if they will note themselves with the coal and brand of profaneness, they must not look to escape our censures. We cannot hear their oaths, beating the invulnerable breast of heaven; nor see their pride, 'testifying to their face,' Hos. vii. 10, if they should plead innocence; nor be unwillingly conscious of their atheistical jests, libertine feasts, worse than Pagan adulteries, and charm our tongues with silence, when the glory of our God, the price of their redemption, and the danger of their own souls, lie at the stake.

There are other open, and infinite secret sins, which they think no eye sees. But they are witnesses, the angels good and bad, the conscience of the committers, and the Judge of the conscience: *Si nemo, non tamen nullus*,—If no man, yet not none. Therefore what thou darest not to do, thy fellow-servant looking on thee, that dare not to think, thy heavenly Master looking in thee: *Quod non audes facere, aspiciente conseruo: hoc ne cogites, inspiciente Deo*. I confess, we have a face of religion and looks of profession, making toward Jerusalem; but how many make the noble livery of our Master a shelter to these abhorred corruptions! And, till the trial comes, it is not known whom many serve. A man that follows two gentlemen is not discerned which to serve till they part company: so long as wealth and religion go together, it is not apparent to which of them most adhere, till the cross parts them, and then it is plain and easy.

Were these the sins of Edom, and are they not the sins of England? The sins, said I? Nay, the gods of England! For the usurer adores his metals, the epicure his junkets, the drunkard his gallons, the voluptuous his lusts, the adulterer his harlots, the proud and gallant Edomite his gay clothes and studied carriage: and as the Israelites cried to their calf made of golden ear-rings, 'These are thy gods, O Israel!' Exod. xxxii. 4; so we may speak it with horror and amazement of these foolish, bestial, devilish sins, 'These are thy gods, O England!' Weak, wretched, unhelpful gods! For shame! What, where are we? Could Edom ever be worse? Have we devoured so many years of peace, ease, plenty, and saturity (if I may so call it) of God's word, and are we still so lame, lean, and ill-favoured in our lives? What shall I say? Hath the sweet gospel, and the sober preaching of it, made us sensual, senseless, impudent, frantic, as the nature of that country is wonderful, if true, that rain causeth dust, and drought dirt? Have the sweet dews of Hermon made the hill of Zion more barren? Hath the sun of plenty,

* '*Siccitas dat lutum, imbres pulverem.*'—*Plin.*

from the filth of security, bred monsters of sins? Have God's mercies made us worse? What shall I say?

Fathers and brethren, help. Pity the miscarrying souls that have no mercy on themselves. Our words are thought air; let your hands compel them to the service of God. The word of information hath done his best; where is the rod of reformation? Let Moses's rod second Aaron's word. The loves of sinners, the strength of sins, nay, principalities and powers, are against us, and we come armed with a few leaves of paper. The keenest sword is with us, but it is in our lips only, 'the sword of the Spirit;' and though it can 'divide the marrow and the bones' of an awaked conscience, alas! it moves not the stony hearts. It shall sooner double upon ourselves than enter such mailed consciences. Our blows are filliped back in contempt. Be not wanting, ye that have the ordinance of God. You are his surrogates, and the preachers' hopes. Good laws are made; the life-blood of them is the execution. The law is else a wooden dagger in a fair sheath, when those that have the charge imposed, and the sword in their hands, stand like the picture of St George, with his hand up, but never striking. We complain not of the higher magistrates, from the benches of whose judgment impiety departs not without disgrace, without strokes. The blame lies on inferior officers, who think their office well discharged if they threaten offenders: these see, and will not see. Hence beggars laze themselves in the fields of idleness; hence taverns and tap-houses swarm with unthrifths, of whom, whether they put more sin into their bellies, or vomit more forth, is a hard question; I mean, whether their oaths or ebrieties exceed. Hence we look to have vagrants suppressed, idleness whipped, drunkenness spoke withal; but the execution proves too often like the judges' feast—the guests set, the tables furnished, meat in the dishes, wine in flagons; but putting forth their hands to take them, they apprehend nothing but air.

The medicine to heal all this, both for patient and physician, is repentance; not a jaculatory cry of 'Lord, forgive me!' nor the flash of a melancholy passion, but a sound, serious, and substantial repentance. Rome hath a holy water, of virtue, they say, to purge and wash away all her spots; England hath her holy water too, which too many trust in for sufficient. We look up and cry, 'Lord, have mercy!' and wipe our lips, as if we had not sinned; yet by and by to our former vomit. But the repentance that resolves for heaven throws away all impediments: if gold, if pleasure, if a throne were in the way, she would fling them aside; she hath an eye bent on the mercy-seat, and a foot that runs straight to it; she turns not into Samaria, because she is offered lodging there; nor in the court of Egypt, to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; the pleasures of Babylon stay her not, the good-fellows of Sodom make her not look back; she forgets what is behind, and never rests, like the kine that carried the ark, till she come to the fields of Bethshemesh, the harvest of grace and goodness, nor ceaseth lowing with sorrow till she be sped of the mercies of God. She hath felt the weight of sin and sorrow, and abhors the cause of them both; she hateth not the devil worse than her former iniquities, and, if it were possible, she would never more offend. This is to return; what you want of this, you come short of repentance.

Come.—The third degree follows to make up our perfection. If returning might serve, as labour of but indifferent trouble, we could afford it; but we must *come*. You have heard the *whence*; hear the *whither*. Thou hast not done with inquiring, with returning: 'Up and eat, Elias, thou hast a greater journey to go.' Strengthen thy heart, O Christian, *restat tibi tertia meta*,—

thou hast a third mark to aim at! Come home to thy God by a chaste and holy life. It is not current pay with God to part with our vanities, except we embrace a religious conversation. Paul makes it as necessary a part of Christianity to 'put on the new man,' as to 'put off the old.' It is not enough to cease doing evil, but it is damnable not to do well: 'He that gathers not with Christ, scattereth.' It was the threatening doom in John Baptist's sermon, not to the barren, but to the evil-fruited tree.* Christ's speech carries the same sense and force against the Pharisees, though spoken to his disciples: 'Except your righteousness,' &c. He says not, 'Unless your unrighteousness be less than theirs,' but, 'Except your righteousness be more,' exceed, 'you shall not see heaven.' He that inquires the way to heaven, and turns toward it, hath passed two degrees of my text and his own pilgrimage; but he gets little of either praise or comfort except he come home to it. There is extreme wrong, extreme right, and mercy. *Summa injuria, summum jus, et misericordia.* The two first shall be shut out of heaven; the last only hath a promise of entrance. 'Judgment without mercy shall be to him that shews no mercy,' James ii. 13; not to the cruel only, but to him that is but merely just: the want of justice is not only damned, but the want of mercy: the rich churl went to hell for not relieving Lazarus, though he wronged him not. If the usurer part with his extortions, the wanton with his minions, the cheater with his frauds, the tradesman with his oaths, he thinks himself by this time a high Christian, and that God must needs bless him, he is so repentant. If the long persuasions of many sermons can work this on us, that we abate of our former outrageous licentiousness, we strait sponge up ourselves; and with a conceit that we have done much for God, outface all reproofs: but 'he that hath much forgiven him loves much.' The prodigal does not only turn from his harlots and vices, but comes home to his father's house. There was no stint in that sinful woman's penitence, till she had poured floods of tears on the feet of our Saviour. The conscience of Zaccheus was not disburdened by ceasing his extortion, but by restitution to the wronged, commiseration to the distressed, even to one half of his goods. And these are the commended penitents.

How sorts our practice with this doctrine? Shew me a sacrilegious patron, a pirate of the church, that, if his hand cease from spoiling God of his tithes, yet will repair the breaches his rapine hath made: shew me a bribe-guilty officer seek out with wet eyes, and reward with a full hand, the wronged suitors: how many are more cruel-hearted than Judas, that neither on repentance nor despair will bring back the price of the poor's blood, which they have sucked! Behold the earthly churl, to make his son a gentleman, prostituteth his honesty, conscience, soul, and 'forsaketh his own mercy,' (as the proverb is, vile, if ever true, Happy is the son whose father goes to the devil!) After he hath mowed corn, or fattened his ox, on the very place *ubi Troja fuit*, where the town stood; nay, kenneled his dogs within the walls of his sanctuary;† and turned the hall of charity into the parlour of pride; his body sinks to the grave, and (it is to be feared) his soul to hell, being rung thither with the peals of bells and curses. The better-instructed heir, (to omit those that exceed the tyranny of their fathers,) seeing and detesting his dead father's deader courses, withdraws his hand from extortion, from depopulation; but what reasons can make him a restorer?‡ It is enough, he thinks, to cease wronging. But, 'Curse ye Meroz, saith the angel of the Lord, curse

* The opposite is what the author meant to say: not to the evil-fruited, but to the barren, or not-good-fruited tree.—ED.

† Non ignota cano.

‡ Quis talia fando temperet à lachrymis?

the inhabitants thereof, because they came not forth to help the Lord in the day of battle,' Judges v. 23. Did they fight against God? No, they helped him not. The servant was condemned for claiming his own debt, Matt. xviii. The prayers and fastings of the Jews were despised for claiming their own debts, Isa. lviii. 3, and standing upon sacrifice with men, whiles they would have mercy with God. Nehemiah threatened the same people with a stricter taxation, chap. v. : They must restore the extorted lands and houses of their brethren ; nay, remit some part of the debt, or they were cursed with that fearful sacrament, the shaking of the lap of his garment, so to be shaken out of Israel, all the congregation crying, Amen. And, lastly, beyond all exception, the manner of the Lamb's coming to judgment testifies as much. 'Go, ye cursed.' For what cause? Because ye denied the labourer his hire, or took bread from the hungry? &c. No, these are crying sins, and 'hasten before unto judgment : ' but 'You gave them not,' therefore, *Ite maledicti*,—Go, ye cursed. So 'Come, ye blessed.' What, because ye dealt justly, and gave every man his due? No, these virtues may be in mortal men that want faith and Christianity : but 'You gave them your own bread when they were hungry; and clad them, being naked, with your own clothes;' therefore, 'Come, ye blessed.'

What use you will make of this I know not ; what use you should make I know. If the tree without good fruit shall be burned, what shall become of the tree that hath evil? If barrenness be cast into the fire, what doth rapine and robbery deserve? If it be damnation enough to deny our own bread, what is it to take away the only loaf, coat, or cottage of our poor brother? Woe to the back that wears the garment, to the belly that devours the food, they never sweat for! I mean that by force or fraud took them from the owners. If Nabal and Dives burn for not giving their own, what shall become of Ahab and Jezebel for taking away the vineyard of Naboth? 1 Pet. iv. 18, 'If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?'

Now if after this physic given, I should ask many how they feel the pulses of their consciences beat? I presume on this reply : *Notum loqueris*,—You but gild gold, and minister to us such physic as we have taken before. All this we know ; and we do not evermore ply your understandings with new things ; but lay old, almost dead and forgotten, afresh to the conscience. I ask further, how much of this have you practised? and still look for an affirmative answer, 'All this have I kept from my youth.'

Let us reason and discuss this matter a little. To *inquire*, is hearing, or rather hearkening to the word : to *return*, is repenting : to *come*, is believing, or rather looking more towards perfection, proceeding into the ripeness of faith. This latter is so necessary, that we cannot come to God with his acceptance or our comfort if we leave our faith behind us ; without this, 'impossible is it to please him,' to be 'rewarded of him.' This is our charter whereby we hold all our privileges, our title *in capite* to earth and heaven ; but, *sub judice lis est*, the great Judge of heaven shall one day censure it : meantime, give me leave to help thee peruse this evidence of thy faith, whereon thou so presumest. Christ dying, made ^a will, sealed it with his own blood, wherein he bequeathed a certain inheritance to his brethren : the conveyance is the gospel, this his testament ; the executor of this will is the Holy Ghost ; our tenure and evidence is our faith. Now, thou layest title to Jerusalem, for a child's part. What is thy title? In Christ's name and right. What conveyance did Christ ever make thee of such a portion? Yes, he conveyed it to me by will. What, by special name? No, but by a

general title to all believers. That I am one of these, here is my evidence—my faith. Let God alone try thy faith; if thou comest to me for counsel, saith St James, thou must shew another evidence: 'Shew me thy faith by thy works.'

If thy heart be corrupt, thy hands filthy, thy tongue false, thy evidence is but counterfeit; Christ gives no title of inheritance in heaven to such as have no holiness on earth: 1 Cor. vi. 9, 'Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators,' &c. Rev. xxi. 27, 'And there shall enter into it no unclean thing, nor anything that worketh abomination or lies.' Perhaps thou wilt not stand upon it: produce thy witnesses; they are only two—thy life, thy conscience. They cannot speak with thee, against their Maker and thine. Thy life speaks loud and plain: thy pride, drunkenness, oppression, cozenage, lusts, blasphemies, manifest thou hast but a broken title; and Paul pleads against thee, from this clear advantage: Tit. iii. 8, 'Protest to them that believe in God, that they be careful to shew forth good works.' They that have the evidence of faith, must have the witness of works. It is a poor deed without witnesses. Thy conscience speaks plainly too, that thy faith is but a carnal persuasion, bred of security; a forged evidence, made by a false scrivener, the devil, to deceive thine own eyes and the world's, not God's. Now, where is thy claim? Stand upon good assurance, lest when that subtle winnower, Satan, comes to sift thee grain after grain, thou provest chaff. We may come with this carnal persuasion, little better than reprobate hope, to the temples, to the pulpits, to the sacraments; but if we come so to the tribunal of Christ, woe unto us! The too much trusting to a verbal, lean, sick, starved faith, deceives many a soul. Whiles we covet to be solifidians in opinion, we prove nullifidians in practice. No matter for wisdom in the soul, grace in the conscience, honesty in the life, if the profession of faith be in the tongue; but the poor may say as he in the comedy, *Oculatæ mihi sunt manus; credunt quod vident*,—My hands have eyes, and they believe what they see. We carry the forms and outsides of Christians, and think God beholden to us for gracing his material, earthly temples, when in the temples of our own hearts we set up the idols of our own affections; yet are these the temples wherein he is best pleased to dwell. But if we be come to God by faith, he is also come to us by grace: 'The Spirit of Christ is in us, if we be not reprobates,' 2 Cor. xiii. 5. And 'if this Spirit be in us, the body of sin is dead,' Rom. viii. 9, 10; at least hath his death-wound. But, alas, in how many of us doth sin live, dwell,—I would I might stay there,—nay, even reign! As if Christ had come to destroy the devil, and not the works of the devil; to free us from the damnation, and not the dominion of sin. But he that took from sin the power to condemn us, took also from it the power to reign in our mortal bodies. And the second is but a consequent of the first, postscripted with that word of inference, 'Now then,' &c., Rom. vii. 25, viii. 1. Thus Christ came not only to bind the devil, but to 'loose and dissolve his works,' 1 John iii. 8.

I have read and observed in the history of Scotland, a certain controversy betwixt that kingdom and Ireland, for a little island that lay between them; either claims it as their due, and the strife growing hot, was falling from words to blows. But reason moderated both kinds, and they put it to the decision of a Frenchman, who thus judged it: he caused living serpents to be put into that island; if they lived and thrived there, he judged it Scotland's; if they pined and died, he gave it for Ireland. You can apply it easily. If the venomous serpents, poisons, and corruptions of our nature bat-

ten and thrive in us, we are Satan's; if they languish and consume, we are God's. Thus is the title ended for the freehold of our souls, by which sure rule we may know whether they belong to hell or heaven. If our hearts be unstabled of these bestial lusts, and trimmed up with sanctimony to entertain our holy guest, there shall be a reciprocal and interchangeable coming of us to Christ, and Christ to us; and we shall as surely 'sup with him' in his court of glory, as he hath 'supped with us' in our house of obedience, Rev. iii. 20.

Let us only fear lest our want of repentance hinder this. I should have erst observed it as a material instruction from this place; I could not find a fitter time to insert it than here, to draw your coming with more alacrity. There is a reservation to repentance, even to abhorred Edom; let the sons of the profanest Esau repent, and they shall not be forsaken of mercy. 'Return and come,' and your night threatened shall be made a joyful morning. Though it had as certain and defined a time as ever had Jonah's doom against Nineveh, the set bounds of forty days, with a *non ultra*; yet be you humbled, and this judgment shall be dispensed with. If there be such mercy to Edom, let me say boldly, repenting Israel shall not fail of it; the night shall linger, and the sun be kept from setting, if we will return in our day. The threatenings of God have a condition included: that general, that promised, that never-refused interposition of repentance. As absolute as the speech might seem to Abimelech, withholding Abraham's wife, 'Thou art but a dead man;' yet it had but an implicit condition, 'except thou restore her undefiled,' as appears by the sequel. It is a common fountain whereat every repentant soul may drink, 'at what time soever, what sinner soever, repents of what sin soever,' &c. And if yet any feel themselves thirsty, weak, and not thoroughly resolved, let him for ever confute the distrust of his own heart, the malice of Satan, the present difficulties, with that of Jeremiah, where in express words our repentance is said to make God repent, even of his threatened and intended plagues.

God hath threatened to all sinners a night of sorrow, and it shall as surely come as ever evening succeeded day; but there is an *except*, that shall save us, a seasonable and substantial repentance: if we turn from those winding labyrinths of sin, and come home to God, he will save us from this night, that we perish not. There is no coming to God but in and by Jesus Christ; through his Son must God look at us, and we at him, that he may be merciful, we hopeful.

Come then, beloved, to Jesus Christ; behold him with the eyes of faith, standing on the battlements of heaven, and wafting you to him: come freely, come merrily, come with speed; come betimes, lest when you would, you cannot for want of direction, dare not for want of acquaintance with him. He that comes not till the last gasp of extremity, knows not how to come, because he begins but then. How prone are our feet to forbidden paths! The flesh calls, we come; vanity calls, we flock; the world calls, we fly: let Christ call early and late, and either we not come, or unwillingly, or late, or with no purpose to stay. How justly may he take up that complaint against us, as against the Jews: After all my promises, assurances, real performances of mercies, 'you will not come unto me that you might have life!' John v. 40. Perhaps, when we are weary of sin and sin of us, then let God take us; but he will none of the devil's leavings. Some would come but for some impediments: that other child's portion to be made up, such a house to be builded, such a ground to be purchased. This same *but* mars their coming,

as he in the gospel, *but* for burying his father ; and that other, *but* for bidding his friends farewell : so, *but* for Mammon, and that we cannot be rich with a good conscience ; *but* for pleasures, that we cannot be wanton, yet nourish the hope of salvation. *But* for these *veruntamens*, *but*s, they would come, *sed vix sunt visi, qui carne renisi*. We have all one *but*, one exception or other, to keep us from Christ ; yet Paul counts all these but dross, but dung. And if anything seem fairer in thine eye than Christ, *detur digniori*, give thy soul to the worthier. We can extremely affect no earthly thing, but the devil, at one time or other, will bring it into opposition with Christ, as the moon and the sun, to see which of them shall be eclipsed. Alas, how ordinary, yet how vile, is it *postponere Christum bovis*, *qui nos æquavit angelis*,—to set Christ after oxen, that hath made us equal to the angels ! Yet all those friends whom we so trust shall soonest fail us, and at our most need run from us, as vermin from a house on fire. Give me leave to shew you this indignity offered to Christ by a metaphor ; familiar comparisons give the quickest touch to both understanding and conscience.

A certain gallant had three friends : two of them flattered him in his loose humours, if in this I may not rather call them enemies ; the third lovingly dissuaded him from his follies. On the two flatterers he spent his patrimony ; the third he casts off with contempt. His riot and wealth gone, his friends went too, for they were friends to the riches, not to the rich man. Debt was required, he arrested, and the prison not to be avoided. In this calamity he studies refuge ; hence he bethinks himself of his two friends, of whom he desires relief. The first's answer is cold and short, ' Alas ! I cannot spare it, you should have prevented this erst.' The other speaks a little more comfort, ' I have no money to help you, yet I will bear you company to the prison door, and there leave you.' The distressed man finds small satisfaction in all this ; therefore, as his last refuge, he calls to mind his third friend, whom he had ever scorned, wronged ; and, after much wrestling betwixt shame and necessity, he sends to him with no less earnestness than humility, discovers his exigents, requires help. The message scarce delivered, he comes with speed, pays the debt, sets him at liberty, nay, repairs the ruins of his estate. The rioter is man ; two flattering friends are riches and pleasures ; these the soul of man embraceth, spends her strength and time, most precious riches, on them. The third friend, that rebukes his sins, is Christ ; this, because distasteful to blood and flesh, without regard to his saving health, is rejected : at last, all the time of grace spent, the soul, so far in God's debt, is arrested by one of God's serjeants—sickness, or calamity, or an afflicted conscience ; then those friends begin to slink. Pleasure is gone suddenly, so soon as the head begins to ache. Riches, perhaps, will offer to go with him to the prison door, the gates of death, the preparation to the grave. The fainting soul, foreseeing their falsehood, weakness, aggravation of his miseries, with an humbled heart, remorseful conscience, tears in his eyes, prayers and cries on his tongue, solicits his neglected Saviour to pity his distress, and have mercy upon him. These messengers have no sooner pierced the heavens, but down comes the Spirit of grace and mercy, with pardon and free remission, payment of all debts, and discharge of all sorrows.

If ever you meet with friend more able, more willing, more certain, to do you good, reject this counsel : Ps. cxlvi., The breath of men is in their nostrils, and there is no help in them, though they were princes ; when not only their material parts, flesh, blood, bones, and marrow, but even part of the inward man, so far as their worldly intendments went, ' their thoughts perish.'

But God was, is, and is to come ; not only in power, but in mercy, sweetness, protection. 'Jesus Christ yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8.

That Jesus Christ put into our mouths a tongue to *inquire*, into our hearts a purpose to *return*, into our lives a grace to *come* home to holiness and himself : this God grant for his mercy's sake, Jesus Christ for his merit's sake, the Holy Ghost for his name's sake ; to whom be ascribed all honour and praise, for ever and ever ! Amen.