

## PRESUMPTION RUNNING INTO DESPAIR.

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*'They said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.—*  
REV. vi. 16.

THIS verse may be distinguished into error and terror; the error of the reprobate, the terror of the judge. Their error is manifested in their invocation, in which we may observe: to what? mountains and rocks; for what? to fall on them, to hide them.

Thus their amazed error and ignorance is expressed in their prayer. For the terror the Judge is described by his omniscience, 'from the face of him that sitteth on the throne;' his omnipotence, 'from the wrath of the Lamb.'

Every circumstance serves to aggravate their folly and desperate fear. 1. They fear God, but too late. 2. They open their lips to confess the invincible power of Christ; before they were either dumb in silence or blasphemous in contumelies. 3. They pray to the mountains and rocks, which hear them not. 4. To fall on them, which they dare not. 5. To hide them, which they cannot. 6. They beg to be concealed from him that is all eye, from the face of him that sits on the throne. 7. To be protected from him that is all power, 'from the wrath of the Lamb.'

Before we come to their error and matter of their invocation, let us examine two things: what they were, and what they did.

1. The persons thus amazed\* with error and amazed with terror are described in the precedent verse: 'The kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, the bond, and the free, hid themselves in the dens and rocks of the mountains.' The greatness of man, when it comes to encounter with God, is weakness and vanity. Is the reprobate a king? The crown on his head is not thunderproof; lift he his sceptre never so high, there is a sceptre of justice shall smite it down.

Is he great in his country, that (as they write of the sea about the castle of Mina) the current goes ever with the wind of his will? Be he never so high, there is one 'higher than he, and the Highest of all regardeth it,' Eccles. viii. 5, and will subject it.

Is he rich? Were he the eldest son of Mammon, and sole heir to all the usurers in the world, can his gold save him? Is vengeance afraid to strike

\* That is, 'mated.'—Ed.

his vessel because his sails be of silk and it is ballasted with refined ore? Shall he buy out his damnation with coin? No, the Samuel of heaven will never take bribes.\*

Is he a chief captain? Be his looks never so stern, his speech never so imperious, impetuous, he may command here and go without. Were he general of Xerxes' army, yet he shall find the words of the psalm truth, 'Man is not saved by the multitude of an host.'

Is he mighty? Were he, as Alexander thought himself, till he saw his own blood, the son of Jupiter Hammon, yet woe to man when he shall wrestle with his Maker. Proud worm, he may dare to lift up his head, but shall quickly be trodden into slime. When the Lord of hosts is angry, whose wrath shakes the earth and burns to the bottom of hell, who shall proudly without confusion look him in the face? Silly giant of men, that thou shouldst dare to grapple, to parley, yea, so much as to look at God! Lo, greatness!

Time was when, if a friend in the court shall say to thee, as Elisha to the Shunamite, 'What is to be done for thee? Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host?' 2 Kings iv. 18, it would have seemed as high a gratifying and ratifying of his love to thee as thou couldst have desired or he expressed. What favour will it be at this day to be spoken for to all the kings of the earth, 'great men, rich men, mighty captains?' Alas! they have need to be spoken for themselves. The greatest potentate, if reprobate, hath now his honour laid in the dust, and from a public throne he creeps into a hole. As ambitious Herod received his pride and glory (with derogation to God, *vox Dei*) in a theatre, so now his shame and confusion is in the sight of the whole world, of good and bad angels, of good and bad men. Sennacherib, in his ruff, could once say, 'Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Zena, and Ivah?' Isa. xxxvii. 18. But now where is the king of Ashur? Thus 'God leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty,' Job xii. 19, 21. For their wickedness, 'he poureth contempt upon princes.' Then shall be manifest the irresistible power and unblameable justice of God, 'who sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers: stretching out the heavens as a curtain, and spreading them as a tent to dwell in. He bringeth the princes to nothing, and maketh the judges of the earth as vanity,' Isa. xl. 22, 28.

What privilege, then, do these inferior authorities bring with them, that the bondman should thus strive to be free, the freeman to be mighty, the mighty to be a chief captain, the chief captain to be rich, the rich to be great, the great to be kings, till, in their opinion, *nil restat quod præstat*, nothing remains to be aspired to. Whereas to these men, *omnia in præsentis parva, in fine nulla, post finem mala*, all is for the present little; for *ut luna, sic sublunaria*, as the moon itself, so all things under it are subject to eclipses and changes. In the end they are nothing; death, when the game is done, shuffling king and pawn into one bag. After the end found evil things; for *et perduntur et perdunt*, they are both lost themselves, and lose their owners.

These so popular wonders, the terror of slaves and mirror of fools, on whom the eye of the world was fixed with admiration, are glad to hide themselves in holes. Where are you, ye great men, that were so ambitious of fame, and made human praise stand in competition with conscience, as if it were the better mistress and worthy of more servants? Alas! glad to

\* 1 Sam. xii. 2.—Ed.

be shrouded in holes; your greatness now wisheth itself so little that it might not be seen. You insatiate covetous, that never ceased joining house to house, land to land, and possessing whole countries, yet whined for lack of elbow-room; lo, you shall at this day be glad of a hole, a dark hollow cave in a rock, for your parlour, or more glad if you might be dissolved into nothing.

2. 'They said:' We have described the persons, what they were. Let us see what they did. They said: They open their lips to confess the invincible and inevitable power of Christ. Whence derive we two observations.

(1.) The sense of present misery takes away atheism. Before, their mouths were either shut by silence or opened by blasphemies; possessed either with a dumb or a roaring devil. 'God was not in all their thoughts,' Ps. x. 4; or if in their thoughts, not in their lips; or if in their lips, but to his dishonour; not named but in their oaths. Now, lo, they speak, and make a desperate acknowledgment of that power they erst derided. The day of judgment, when it comes, shall find no atheist. What those degenerate creatures would not believe they shall see; they would not acknowledge their Maker, they shall find their Judge, and cry to the mountains, Fall on us, &c.

Consider this 'ye that forget God, lest you be torn in pieces when there is none to deliver you,' Ps. l. 22. You may forget him during your short pleasure, you shall remember him for ever in torture. Proceed to 'speak of him wickedly, and like enemies to take his name in vain,' Ps. cxxxix. 20, you shall one day fall low before his footstool, not with a voluntary, but enforced, reverence. You that have denied God on earth, the first voice that shall come from your lips shall be a hopeless acknowledgment of his majesty.

(2.) The saying that comes from them is desperate; whence note that, in God's just punishment, desperation is the reward of presumption. They that erst feared too little, shall now fear too much. Before, they thought not of God's justice, now they shall not conceive his mercy. Consciences that are without remorse are not without horror. It is the kindness which presumptuous sin doeth the heart, to make it at last despair of forgiveness. 'They say.'

Behold, God accuseth not, they accuse themselves. God loves to have a sinner accuse himself, and therefore sets his deputy in the breast of man; which, though it be a neuter when the act is doing, is an adversary afterwards. The conscience is like the poise of a clock; the poise being down, all motion ceaseth, the wheels stir not; wound up, all is set on going. Whiles conscience is down there is no noise or moving in the heart, all is quiet; but when it is wound up by the justice of God, it sets all the wheels on working,—tongue to confess, eyes to weep, hands to wring, breast to be beaten, heart to ache, voice to cry; and that, where mercy steps not in, a fatal cry, to the hills, 'Fall on us, and hide us.'

Sin and judgment for sin make the most cruel men cowardly. Tyrants whose frowns have been death, oppressors that have made their poor tenants quake at their looks, now tremble themselves, and would change firmness with an aspen leaf. They that care not for the act of sin shall care for the punishment. *Tumidi faciendo, timidi patiendo*. Nero, that could not be tired in cutting throats, is soon weary of his own torment. They that have made others weep, shall desperately howl themselves. Cain, that durst kill the fourth part of the world at a blow, even his own brother, dares afterwards not look a man in the face, lest he should be slain, Gen. iv. 14.

Who durst be more impudently bold with God than Judas, when he betrayed his only Son to murderers? Yet, after the treason, who more cowardly than Judas? He becomes his own hangman. The curse that follows sin makes presumption itself to shudder. But what madness is it not to complain till too late. If our foresight were but half as sharp as our sense, we should not dare to sin. The issue of wickedness would appear a thousand times more horrible than the act is pleasant.

Let this teach us now to think of the justice of God as well as his mercy, that hereafter we may think of his mercy as well as his justice. The mercy of God is abused to encourage lewdness, and wretched men by Christ's merits are emboldened to commit that for which he died; but so men may run with mercy in their mouths to hell. They that in life will give no obedience to the law, shall in death have no benefit by the gospel. When they gave themselves over to lying, swearing, coveting, &c., they were wont to cry, Mercy, mercy; now, lo, they feel what those sins are, and cry nothing but Justice, justice; they cannot think on mercy. They that have abused mercy, must be quitted with vengeance. The good now sing, 'With thee, O Lord, is mercy; therefore thou shalt be feared.' The reprobates sing at last, With thee, O Lord, is judgment; with thee is storm and tempest, indignation and wrath, confusion and vengeance, and therefore art thou feared.

These necessary occurrences thus considered, let us pass to their invocation, wherein is exemplified their error. Here we must observe, To what; For what they call.

1. To what.—They are mountains and rocks, unreasonable, yea, insensible creatures. Whence we may deduce two inferences, a negative and an affirmative.

(1.) Negatively, it is clear, that they have no acquaintance with God, therefore know not how to direct their prayers unto him. If their trust had been in God, they needed not to fly to the mountains. So David sweetly, Ps. xi., 'In the Lord put I my trust: how then say you to my soul, Flee as a bird to your mountain?' It is God's charge; 'Call upon me in the day of trouble; and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me,' Ps. l. 15. But, Rom. x., 'How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?' Or believe in him they have not known? And how should they know him but by his word? Alas, those mutual passages and intercourse of means they have ever debarred themselves. They would neither suffer God to trouble them by his word, nor would they offer to trouble him by their prayers. 'They will not call upon him,' Ps. xiv. 4, nor will they hear him calling upon them.

Therefore as those that never were in the company of God, they know not how to address themselves to him, but rather to rocks and mountains. As extremity discerneth friends, *verè amat, qui miserum amat*, so it distinguisheth a man in himself. A sudden disturbance gives a great trial of a Christian's disposition. For, as in a natural man at such an affrightment, all the blood runs to the heart, to guard the part that is principal, so in a good man, at such an instance, all the powers and faculties run to the soul, to save that which is principal. The blood and spirits strive to save the life of the body; faith and hope to save the life of the soul. So that at the sudden assault of some danger a man shall best judge of his own heart. It may be at other times a dissembler, for 'man's heart is false, who can know it?' yet at such time it will manifest itself, and cannot deceive.

If God hath been our familiar friend and accustomed helper, danger doth not sooner assault us than we salute him by our prayers. The first thought

of our hearts is Jesus Christ; the first voice of our lips is Peter's on the sea in such an extremity, 'Lord, save me,' Matt. xiv 30; our faith is reposed on his wonted mercy and protection, 'We know whom we have believed.' Daniel calls on God ere he falls to the lions; this stops their mouths.

The wicked, in such misery, are either heavy and heartless, as Nabal, whose 'heart died within him, and he became as a stone,' 1 Sam. xxv. 37. Or desperate, as Julian, throwing his blood up into the air, with a blasphemous confession. Or sottish, as these here, running to the mountains, unprofitable, impossible helps. When the blow of vengeance strikes the covetous, he runs to his counting-house; if his bags can give him no succour, he is distracted. If any broken reed be their confidence, in these overwhelming woes, they catch drowning hold of that; so they and their hopes perish together. There are some whose tongues are so poisoned with blasphemy, that, in an unexpected accident, the very first breath of their lips is a curse or an oath. As if they would swear away destruction, which every ungodly speech draws on nearer. If these men had been acquainted with God in fair weather, they would not forget him in a storm. But they that will have no familiarity with God in peace, shall have him to seek in extremity.

When therefore some sudden peril hath threatened thee with terror, note seriously how thou art affected. Though the danger came unlooked for, let it not pass unthought of; but as thou blessest God for delivery, so examine the good or ill-disposedness of thine own heart. If thou find thyself courageous and heavenly-minded on thy confidence in God, take at once assurance of thy faith and God's mercy. He that now stood by thee, will never leave thee. If otherwise, lament thy sins which darken thy soul's way to the mercy-seat, and beseech Jesus Christ to store thy heart with better comforts. If thy treasure be in heaven, and thy soul hath been used to travel often thither, when danger comes, it knows the way so well that it cannot miss it.

(2.) Affirmatively, this presents a soul amazed with fear and folly. They call to the mountains, that can neither hear nor answer. When the world was destroyed with water, men climbed up to the tops of the mountains; when it shall be dissolved with fire, they will desire the holes of the rocks, to lie under the hills. The mountains are but swellings of the earth, and the rocks are surd things, that have no ears: can they hear? or if they hear, can they answer? or if they answer, can they save? When the graves must vomit up their dead, shall the rocks conceal the living? Those five kings could not be hid in the cave of Makkedah from Joshua, Josh. x. 17, and shall any cave hide from Jesus?

Whiles guilt and fear consult of refuge, how vain shifts they imagine! Adam would hide his disobedience in the bushes; Saul his rebellion in the crowd of the people. So the hood-winked fool seeing nobody, thinks nobody sees him. Helpless evasions! When Adonijah heard the trumpets sounding at Solomon's coronation, he quaked, and 'fled to the horns of the altar,' 1 Kings i. 50. When the ungodly shall hear the archangel's trump proclaiming the coronation of Christ, they have no sanctuary (they never loved it in all their lives), but fly to the rocks and mountains.

The grave is a dark and privative place: yet as a prisoner that comes out of a sordid and stinking dungeon, into the open air for his trial in a desperate cause, had rather keep the prison still; so these reprobates newly raised from the earth, cry to it to receive them again, glad to remain (though not on the face of it with pleasure) in the bowels of it with rottenness and

solitude, rather than in the open light to come before the judgment-seat of Christ. The grave is a down-bed to hell. They suddenly start out of their sleep, and meet with ghastly amazedness at the mouth of their sepulchres : beholding on the one side sins accusing, on another side hellish fiends vexing, an anguished conscience burning within, heaven and earth without ; above them the countenance of an angry Judge, below them a lake of unquenchable fire, round about howling and bitter lamentation : no marvel then if at the world's end they be at their wits end, and cry to the mountains, ' Fall on us.'

Let all this declare to men the vanity of their worldly hopes. God is the Preserver of men, not hills and rocks. The rich man is brought in upon a *premunire*, can his gold acquit him in this star chamber ? The epicure thinks to drown sorrow in lusty wines ; the oppressor mistrusts not the power of his own hand ; the proud refugeth his troubled heart in his trunks, the lustful in his punks ; what is this but running to rocks and mountains ? Thus madly do men commit two errors. They ' forsake the Creator, which would never forsake them, and adhere to the creatures, which can never help them,' Jer. ii. 18. ' O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and all that depart from thee shall be written in the earth,' Jer. xvii. 18. Now at this day, perhaps, they would seek to the Lord, but they are answered, Go to the gods whom ye have served. Lo, then, of these gods they shall be weary, as in Isa. ii., where these very words of my text are delivered, ver. 19, ' They shall go into the holes of the rocks,' &c., it is immediately added, ' In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which he made for himself to worship, to the moles, and to the bats.' Even the spiritual idolater, the covetous, shall throw his images, golden or silver shrines for the Diana of his avarice, his damned coin to combustion, with a *væ*, Woe unto it, it hath lost my soul ; as the sick stomach loathes the meat, whereof it surfeited.

Well, let us leave invocation to these rocks, worldly refuges, and remember that there is One to be called on, who is only able to defend us, a spiritual, holy, and happy rock, Jesus Christ. David often calls God his ' Rock and his Refuge,' Ps. xviii. 2, and xxviii. 1. A rock that bears up the pillars of the world, ' Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges,' Deut. xxxii. 31. He that builds his house of assurance on this Rock, shall stand immovable to wind or weather ; he needs not the shelter of mountains, ' for he shall stand like Mount Sion, that abideth fast for ever,' Psal. cxxv. 1. They that despise him, shall find him a Rock also, ' If they fall on it, they shall be broken : if it fall on them, it will grind them to powder,' Matt. xxi. 44. He is a stone, the stone, the ' head-stone of the corner,' Ps. cxviii. 22. cut out of the quarry of heaven, ' without hands,' Dan ii. 45, of whom we are made ' living stones,' 1 Pet. ii. 5. He is strong without all things ; all things weak without him ; trust in him, and you shall have no need to fly to rocks and mountains.

2. For what.—The benefit that they would have the rocks and the mountains do them, is to fall on them and hide them. Whence we derive three observations.

(1.) Despair is ever wishing for death, often impatiently snatching at it in this world ; but when the last day comes, so greedily longing for it, that to be sure of it, they desire the mountains to dispatch them. Death by the wicked is now most feared, death at the last shall be the thing most wished ; ' they shall desire death, and shall not find it.' They that sit in the warm nest of riches, hatching up their brood of lusts, quake at the hearing

of death. There are some fear to die, others not so much to die as to be dead. The former are cowardly, the other unbelieving souls. Some fear both, to whom nothing in life than life is more desirable. But when this last extremity comes, *mori cupiunt*, they desire to die. And that death, like a merciless executioner, might not have too many strokes at their lives, they beg help of the mountains, that they may be thoroughly dispatched at once, without need of a second blow. Cain, at his arraignment for his brother, would needs live; God grants it, as if it were too much favour for him to die. But he yields it for a curse, as if he heard his prayer in anger. He lives, but banished from God, carrying his hell in his bosom, and the brand of vengeance in his forehead. God rejects him, 'he earth repines at him, and men abhor him. Lo now Cain would die; himself now wisheth the death he feared, and no man dares pleasure him with a murder. As Nero in the like case, *Nec amicum, nec inimicum habeo*, I have neither friend nor enemy; or as Saul found in his armour-bearer not a will to kill him, though he had a will to be killed by him. Death these reprobates feared, and only death is now desired. 'They cry to the mountains, Fall on us.'

(2.) Observe that rocks and mountains are far lighter than sin. Zachariah compares it to a talent of lead, Zach. 5; Isaiah calls it a burden, Isa. xxi. Such a weight bore our Saviour, that he groaned under it. 'I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves,' Amos ii. 13. The wicked, that, like Babel-builders, think to aspire to heaven by multiplying of earth, would be glad if, *cumuli tumuli*, their bodies might be buried under their heaps of wealth, where their souls had been buried long before. But what is a load of earth, a mountain huger than Etna, under which Jupiter was said *subter fulminare gigantes*, what is the whole massy body of the earth, to the weight of sin?

Think of it, ye *Theomachoi*, that strive in your rebellions *imponere Pelion ossa*, ye rapacious covetous, that 'load yourselves with thick clay,' Hab. ii. You lay heavy burdens on the poor, heavier on your consciences. Sin may seem light for a season, as a pack made up, but not assayed, with one of your fingers. When Satan shall lay it on you, it will break your backs. You bear it now like cork and feathers; at that day you shall judge it heavier than rocks and mountains.

Now, in contempt of law and gospel, honesty and conscience, earth and heaven, they call to pride, ambition, blasphemy, ebriety, luxury, oppression, 'Fall on us, and cover us,' wearing 'pride as a chain, and covering themselves with cruelty as with a garment,' Ps. lxxiii. 6. Sin lies at the door, and they easily take it up. The devil puts his shoulders under the weight, and, thus supported, they feel it not. But when God's justice shall 'reprove them, and set their sins in order before their eyes,' Ps. l. 21, yea, impose them on their weak and yielding consciences, how different will their cry be? 'Mountains, fall on us; rocks, cover us.' The swearer saying to these heavy creatures, You are lighter than my oaths; the covetous, You are not so ponderous as my oppressions; the adulterer, The whole earth is a gentle pressure to the burden of my lusts.

Custom in sin obstupefies a man's sense, and still, like that Roman Milo, his strength increasing with his burden. He that first carried sin a wanton calf, can at last bear it a goading ox. Men lock up their iniquities, as the usurer his money in a chest, where the light of reproof may not find them out. They pack all their iniquities upon Him that will bear them for none but His; or reserve them to an hour's repentance, setting them a day of

cancelling, but they break it, as if their last breath could dispel and scatter them all into air. But, alas! sins then are found heaviest of all, and here, like malefactors pressing to death, they cry out for more weight, the accession of rocks and mountains, to dispatch them. Lo, they are to come before the Judge, therefore would be pressed to death by these ponderous and massy creatures.

The mountains have not been more barren than they of goodness, the rocks not so hard as their hearts. The cross of Christ hath been held too heavy, repentance too troublesome a guest for their houses, faith and obedience have been cast off as poor friends, all godliness too weighty; now rocks and hills are light. Christ's yoke was not for their shoulders; Satan's must. His law might not be borne, it was so heavy; his wrath must be borne, and that is heavier. Oh, then, thrice-blessed they whose sins God bindeth up in a bundle, and sinks them in the whirlpool of forgetfulness, that they may never be imposed, for they are too heavy to be borne.

(8.) Observe that before these wicked were lords of nations and countries (for they are said to be princes, captains, conquerors, rich men); now they would be glad of one hole to hide them. Of all their dominions they beg but the barrenest parcel, a rock or mountain; and that to do them a poor office, to conceal them. How much doth man's avarice and ambition covet here, how little contents him hereafter! In death the wickedest potentate must be content with a grave. After death he would be content with a grave still; yea, glad if in the bottom of a mountain he might be hidden.

Hear this, ye covetous, that 'join house to house, and land to land,' by disjoining the societies of men, as if you would leave the whole earth to your babes. *Excudit natura redeuntem, sicut intrantem,\** Nature shall as strictly examine your going out as it did your coming in. *Nonne telluris tres tantum cubiti te expectant?†* Do not only three cubits of ground allot themselves to receive you? Only a grave remains, and all you that boast of your great lands shall at that day say, *Hæc terra mea, et terra tua,* this is all my land; this is all thy land; even so much room as thy dusts will take up, and all the remainder of mighty Hercules will scarce fill a little pitcher. A little quantity of ground hath nature proportioned thee, didst thou possess as much as ever the tempter shewed Christ? When certain philosophers intently beheld the tomb of Alexander, saith one, *Heri fecit ex auro thesaurum; hodie aurum ex eo facit thesaurum,‡* 'Yesterday he treasured up gold, to-day gold treasures up him.' Another, 'Yesterday the world did not content him, to-day ten cubits contain him.' Socrates carried Alcibiades, bragging of his lands, to a map of the world, and bade him demonstrate them. Alcibiades could not find them, for, alas! Athens itself was but a small and scarce discernible point. A wiser man spake otherwise of his lands, *O Ager, quàm multorum fuisti et eris! nunc meus, et postea nescio cujus,* 'O, land, how many men's hast thou been, and shalt be! now mine, and hereafter I know not whose.' So little ground contents us when we are dead.

But when the wicked shall rise again, would it not serve them still with all their hearts? Had they not rather lie in rottenness than combustion? Were not a cold grave more welcome than a hot furnace? Yes, rather had they be dead without sense than alive in torment. Now they beg not a city, though a little one as Zoar; not a house, though poor and bleak as Codrus's; not an open air, though sharp and irksome, scorched with the

\* Sen.

† Basil.

‡ Alphons.



Indian sun, or frozen with the Russian cold. There is no hope of these favours. Give them but a mountain to fall on them, and a rock to hide them, and they are highly pleased. Here is a strange alteration for the wicked, when they shall go from a glorious mansion to a loathsome dungeon, from the table of surfeit to the table of vengeance, from fawning obsequants to afflicting spirits, from a bed of down to a bed of fire, from soft linen and silken coverings to wish a rock for their pillow and a mountain for their coverlet! Nay, and yet they that commanded so far on earth cannot command this piece of earth to do them such a kindness. They could in the days of their pride speak imperiously enough, 'This land is mine, this town is mine;' as Nabal said, 'Shall I take my meat and my drink?' &c.; but now they feel it was none of theirs, not one hole must shelter them, not one hillock do them service.

Nothing helps when God will smite; mountains and rocks are no defence when God pursues. 'Dost thou think to reign because thou clothest thyself in cedar?' Jer. xxii. 15. What is cedar against thunder? God hath a hand that can strike through forts, rocks, and bulwarks. The sevenfold walls of Babylon cannot defend the tyrant within them. The heavens 'melt at the presence of the Lord; if he touch the mountains, they smoke' for it. The offspring of the revived world offer to build a tower whose top might reach to heaven. What security could be in it? Are not things nearer to heaven more subject to the violences of heaven, lightning, thunder, and those higher inflammations! *Ferunt summos fulgura montes. In se magna ruunt, summisque negatum est stare diu.* God soon made it a monument of their folly and his power. He gives confusion of their voices and their work at once. When God rained from heaven that greatest shower that ever the earth did or shall sustain, you know their shifts. They think to overclimb the judgment, and, being got up to the highest mountains, look down with some hope on the swimming valleys. When the water began to ascend up to their refuted hills, and the place of their hope became an island, lo, now they hitch up higher to the tops of the tallest trees, till at last the waters overtake them, half dead with hunger and horror. The mountains could not save them in that day of water, nor shall the mountains in this day of fire. It is not then the defence of forts and ports, the secrecy of caves or graves, the bottom-burrows of hills, or vaulty dens of rocks; not a league with all the elements of the world, beasts of the earth, stones of the street, that can secure them. Be hidden they cannot; what should they then wish but death? They that once trembled to die do now more quake to live; they would be glad of a riddance, and kiss the instrument of their annihilation. They would prize and embrace it as the best happiness that ever saluted them, if, like beasts, they might perish to nothing. Here they envy the stork, stag, raven, oak for long life, and chide nature for their own shortness; but at this day they would change with any flower, though the continuance thereof were not so much as Jonah's gourd's, and think not to be was to be happy. The pangs of the first death are pleasures in respect of the second.

But what hope is there of their security or refuge in mountains, when, ver. 14, 'the very heaven shall depart as a scroll that is rolled up together, and every mountain and island shall be moved out of their places?' So Isa. xxxiv. 4. Heaven is *expansum tanquam linteam, et diducta lamina*; but shall then be 'folded up like a garment,' whose beauty is not seen; or 'rolled together like a volume,' Heb. i. 12, whose large contents are, as it were, abridged. Not that the matter of the world shall be quite

abolished; for, as we say now of grace, *Adolet non abolet naturam gratia*, so we may say of justice, *Perficit non destruit mundum iustitia*. Corruption shall be taken away, not all the matter that was corrupted. But if all things be thus narrowly searched, how shall the ungodly hope to lie hidden?

II. We have now considered the horror of the reprobates; let us look to the Judge, from whom they desire to be hidden. 'From the presence of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;' in whom we find an omniscience, and an omnipotence, which circumstances the time allows me but to mention. First, for his all-knowing wisdom:—

1. 'From the face.'—It was ever the fashion of guiltiness, to fly from the presence of God. Adam had no sooner sinned, but he thrusts his head in a bush. Sin's inevitable effect is shame. Though impudence bear it out for a time, 'They were not ashamed when they had committed abomination,' Jer. vi. 15; yet they shall one day 'bear the reproach of their sins, and be ashamed, yea even confounded,' xxxi. 19. Shame must come, either first to repentance, 'What fruit had you then in those things, whereof you are now ashamed,' Rom. vi. 21; or at last in vengeance, 'Let them be ashamed that transgress without a cause,' Ps. xxv. 8. Let this teach us how to judge rightly of sin, that drives us from the face of God.

But doth not the glory of the Lord fill all the earth? 'Whither then shall they go from his face: whither fly from his presence?' Ps. cxxxix. 7. We shall find the prophet concluding in that psalm, that there is neither heaven nor hell, nor uttermost part of the sea, nor day nor night, light nor darkness, that can hide us from his face. Our sitting, lying down, rising up, the words of our tongues, ways of our feet, thoughts of our heart, our reins, bones, and mothers' wombs, wherein we lay in our first infirmity, are well known to him. Let us not flatter ourselves, as if we would pluck out the eye of knowledge. 'God hideth his face, he will never see us,' Ps. x. 11. For there is neither couch in chamber, nor vault in the ground; neither bottoms of mountains, nor holes of rocks; neither secret friend, nor more secret conscience; neither heaven nor hell, that can conceal us.

'Of him that sitteth.'—Christ now sits in glory. While he was on earth, how little rested he! He dearly earned that voice before he heard it, 'Sit thou at my right hand:' now behold he sits. Good rest is the reward of good labour. The week of our days spent, we shall have an eternal Sabbath: 'Enter into God's rest,' Heb. iii. 11. 'Rest from our labours,' Rev. xiv. 13. Hast thou laboured? thou shalt have ease: hast thou travelled in the ways of grace? thou shalt sit on the seat of glory.

'On the throne.'—Christ at this day shall appear in his true majesty. On earth he would not be crowned. The reason of his refusal was, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' Now he sits in his throne. He hath a kingdom here, but it is secret in the conscience: then it shall be conspicuous, 'sitting in his throne.' His majesty hath been despised; but now, 'Bring those mine enemies that would not have me reign over them, and slay them before me,' Luke xix. 27.

Thus differs Christ's first coming and his second. Then in humility, now in glory; then with poor shepherds, now with mighty angels; then the contempt of nations, now the terror of the world; then crowned with thorns, now with majesty; then judged by one man, now judging all men; then in a cratch, now in a throne. You see his all-knowledge; now for his almightiness.

2. 'From the wrath.'—The wrath of Christ in his justice: *Attribuit ira Deo per effectum*. As man offended seeks revenge, so when God executes

judgment, it is called his wrath. But passion in us, perfection in him. He hath long been provoked ; give him now leave to strike. You that made so light to trample his blood under your sensual feet, shall now find what his wrath is. Let us now think of this wrath, that we may escape it. The commination of hell doth not less commend God's providence, than the promise of heaven. *Nisi intentata esset gehenna, omnes in gehennam caderemus.\** Now or never is this wrath to be escaped : therefore, ' Kiss the son lest he be angry, and so ye perish from the way ; if his wrath be kindled, yea but a little, blessed are they that put their trust in him,' Ps. ii. 12.

' Of the Lamb.'—Christ was called a Lamb in his passion ; so here in his coming to judgment, not that he should suffer any more, but to shew that the same Lamb that was slain shall give sentence on his murderers. ' The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. And hath given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man,' John v. 22–27, so Acts xvii. 31, and Rev. i. 7. It shall aggravate their vexation, that the Lamb, who offered his blood for their redemption, shall now censure them for despising it. He that would have been their mediator to pray for them, and their advocate to plead for them, must now be their judge to sentence them. The Lamb that saveth the sheep on the right hand, shall cast off the goats on the left. The Lamb they have contemned, by this Lamb they shall be condemned. Woful men, whom the wrath of the Lamb lights on ; for he shall give them an *Ite, maledicti*. What shall then become of them, but to knock at the gates of heaven whiles those gates are standing, and cry for ever to God, but to no purpose ?

I have no will to end with a terror ; yet no time to sweeten your thoughts with those comforts which faith might suck from this last word, ' the Lamb.' I say no more. The godly shall find him a Lamb indeed, as willing now to save them, as before to suffer for them. He hath purchased, promised, and prepared a kingdom ; and they shall ' reign with him that sits on the throne, and with the Lamb for evermore.' To whom be eternal glory ! Amen.

\* Chrys.