

you are the better resolved and furnished for a godly, exemplary, fruitful life.

One thing more I will warn some parents of ; who send their sons to travel to keep them from untimely marrying, lest they have part of their estate too soon : that there are other means better than this, which prudence may find out : if they would keep them low, from fulness and idleness, and bad company, (which a wise, self-denying, diligent man may do, but another cannot,) and engage them to as much study and business (conjunct) as they can well perform, and when they must needs marry, let it be done with prudent, careful choice ; and learn themselves to live somewhat lower, that they may spare that which their son must have, this course would be better than that hazardous one in question.

CHAPTER XX.

Tit. 1. Motives and Directions against Oppression.

OPPRESSION is the injuring of inferiors, who are unable to resist, or to right themselves ; when men use power to bear down right. Yet all is not oppression which is so called by the poor, or by inferiors that suffer : for they are apt to be partial in their own cause as well as others. There may be injustice in the expectations of the poor, as well as the actions of the rich. Some think they are oppressed, if they be justly punished for their crimes ; and some say they are oppressed, if they have not their wills, and unjust desires, and may not be suffered to injure their superiors : and many of the poor do call all that oppression, which they suffer from any that are above them, as if it were enough to prove it an injury, because a rich man doth it ; but yet oppression is a very common and a heinous sin ^a.

There are as many ways of oppressing others, as there are advantages to men of power against them. But the principal are these following.

1. The most common and heinous sort is the malignant

^a In omniscertamine qui opulentior est, etiamsi accipit injuriam, tamen quia plus potest, facere videtur. Salust. in Jugurth.

injuries and cruelties of the ungodly against men that will not be as indifferent in the matters of God and salvation as themselves ; and that will not be of their opinions in religion, and be as bold with sin, and as careless of their souls as they. These are hated, reproached, slandered, abused, and some way or other persecuted commonly wherever they live throughout the world. But of this sort of oppression I have spoken before.

2. A second sort is the oppression of the subjects by their rulers ; either by unrighteous laws, or cruel executions, or unjust impositions or exactions, laying on the people greater taxes, tributes or servitude, than the common good requireth, and than they are able well to bear. Thus did Pharaoh oppress the Israelites, till their groans brought down God's vengeance on him. But I purposely forbear to meddle with the sins of magistrates.

3. Soldiers also are too commonly guilty of the most inhuman, barbarous oppressions ; plundering the poor countrymen, and domineering over them, and robbing them of the fruit of their hard labours, and of the bread which they should maintain their families with, and taking all that they can lay hold on as their own. But (unless it be a few that are a wonder in the world) this sort of men are so barbarous and inhuman, that they will neither read nor regard any counsel that I shall give them. (No man describeth them better than Erasmus.)

4. The oppression of servants by their masters I have said enough to before : and among us, where servants are free to change for better masters, it is not the most common sort of oppression ; but rather servants are usually negligent and unfaithful, because they know that they are free : (except in the case of apprentices).

5. It is too common a sort of oppression for the rich in all places to domineer too insolently over the poor, and force them to follow their wills, and to serve their interest be it right or wrong : so that it is rare to meet with a poor man that dare displeas the rich, though it be in a cause where God and conscience do require it. If a rich man wrong them, they dare not seek their remedy at law, because he will tire them out by the advantage of his friends and wealth ; and either carry it against them, be his cause never

so unjust, or lengthen the suit till he hath undoné them, and forced them to submit to his oppressing will.

6. Especially unmerciful landlords are the common and sore oppressors of the countrymen : if a few men can but get money enough to purchase all the land in a country, they think that they may do with their own as they list, and set such hard bargains of it to their tenants, that they are all but as their servants, yea, and live a more troublesome life than servants do ; when they have laboured hard all the year, they can scarce scrape up enough to pay their landlord's rent ; their necessities are so urgent, that they have not so much as leisure, to pray morning or evening in their families, or to read the Scriptures, or any good book ; nor scarce any room in their thoughts for any holy things : their minds are so distracted with necessities and cares, that even on the Lord's day, or at a time of prayer, they can hardly keep their minds intent upon the sacred work which they have in hand : if the freest minds have much ado to keep their thoughts in seriousness and order, in meditation, or in the worshipping of God ; how hard must it needs be to a poor oppressed man, whose body is tired with wearisome labours, and his mind distracted with continual cares, how to pay his rent, and how to have food and raiment for his family ? How unfit is such a troubled, discontented person, to live in thankfulness to God, and in his joyful praises ? Abundance of the voluptuous great ones of the world, do use their tenants and servants, but as their beasts, as if they had been made only to labour and toil for them, and it were their chief felicity to fulfil their will, and live upon their favour.

Direct. 1. ' The principal means to overcome this sin, is to understand the greatness of it.' For the flesh persuadeth carnal men, to judge of it according to their selfish interest, and not according to the interest of others, nor according to the true principles of charity and equity ; and so they justify themselves in their oppression.

Consid. 1. That oppression is a sin not only contrary to Christian charity and self-denial, but even to humanity itself. We are all made of one earth, and have souls of the same kind : there is as near a kindred betwixt all mankind, as a specifical identity : as between one sheep, one dove, one

angel and another : as between several drops of the same water, and several sparks of the same fire ; which have a natural tendency to union with each other. And as it is an inhuman thing for one brother to oppress another, or one member of the same body to set up a proper interest of its own, and make all the rest, how painfully soever, to serve that private interest : so is it for those men who are children of the same Creator. Much more for them who account themselves members of the same Redeemer, and brethren in Christ by grace and regeneration, with those whom they oppress. " Have we not all one Father ? Hath not one God created us ? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers ^b ?" " If we must not lie to one another, because we are members one of another ^c." " And if all the members must have the same care of one another ^d ;" surely then they must not oppress one another.

2. An oppressor is an antichrist and an antigod ; he is contrary to God, who delighteth to do good, and whose bounty maintaineth all the world ; who is kind to his enemies, and causeth his sun to shine, and his rain to fall on the just and on the unjust : and even when he afflicteth doth it as unwillingly, delighting not to grieve the sons of men ^e. He is contrary to Jesus Christ, who gave himself a ransom for his enemies, and made himself a curse to redeem them from the curse, and condescended in his incarnation to the nature of man, and in his passion to the cross and suffering which they deserved ; and being rich and Lord of all, yet made himself poor, that we by his poverty might be made rich. He endured the cross and despised the shame, and made himself as of no reputation, accounting it his honour and joy to be the Saviour of men's souls, even of the poor and despised of the world. And these oppressors live as if they were made to afflict the just, and to rob them of God's mercies, and to make crosses for other men to bear, and to tread on their brethren as stepping stones of their own advancement. The Holy Ghost is the Comforter of the just and faithful. And these men live as if it were their calling to deprive men of their comfort.

^b Mal. ii. 10.^c Ephes. iv. 25.^d 1 Cor. xii. 25.^e Psal. cxlv. Matt. v. Lam. iii.

3. Yea, an oppressor is not only the agent of the devil but his image : it is the devil that is the destroyer, and the devourer, who maketh it his business to undo men, and bring them into misery and distress. He is the grand oppressor of the world : yet in this he is far short of the malignity of men-devils, 1. That he doth it not by force and violence, but by deceit, and hurteth no man till he hath procured his own consent to sin ; whereas our oppressors do it by their brutish force and power. 2. And the devil destroyeth men, who are not his brethren, nor of the same kind ; but these oppressors never stick at the violating of such relations.

4. Oppression is a sin that greatly serveth the devil, to the damning of men's souls, as well as to the afflicting of their bodies. And it is not a few, but millions that are undone by it. For as I shewed before, it taketh up men's minds and time so wholly, to get them a poor living in the world, that they have neither mind nor time for better things. They are so troubled about many things, that the one thing needful is laid aside. All the labours of many a worthy, able pastor, are frustrated by oppressors : to say nothing of the far greatest part of the world, where the tyranny and oppression of heathen infidels and Mahometan princes, keepeth out the Gospel, and the means of life ; nor yet of any other persecutors : if we exhort a servant to read the Scriptures, and call upon God, and think of his everlasting state, he telleth us that he hath no time to do it, but when his weary body must have rest : if we desire the masters of families to instruct and catechise their children and servants, and pray with them, and read the Scriptures and other good books to them, they tell us the same, that they have no time, but when they should sleep, and that on the Lord's day their tired bodies, and careful minds, are unfit to attend and ply such work : so that necessity quieteth their consciences in their ignorance and neglect of heavenly things, and maketh them think it the work only of gentlemen and rich men, who have leisure (but are farther alienated from it by prosperity, than these are by their poverty) : and thus oppression destroyeth religion, and the people's souls as well as their estates.

5. Oppression further endangereth both the souls of

men, and the public peace, and the safety of princes, by tempting the poor multitude into discontents, sedition and insurrections: every man is naturally a lover of himself above others: and the poor, as well as the rich and rulers have an interest of their own which ruleth them; and they will hardly honour, or love, or think well of them by whom they suffer: it is as natural almost for a man under oppression, to be discontented and complain, as for a man in a fever to complain of sickness, heat and thirst. No kingdom on earth is so holy and happy as to have all or most of the subjects such confirmed, eminent saints, as will be contented to be undone, and will love and honour those that undo them. Therefore men must be taken as they are: if "oppression maketh wise men mad," much more the multitude, who are far from wisdom. Misery maketh men desperate, when they think that they cannot be much worse than they are. How many kingdoms have been thus fired, (as wooden wheels will be when one part rubbeth too hard and long upon the other). Yea, if the prince be never so good and blameless, the cruelty of the nobles and the rich men of the land, may have the same effects. And in these combustions, the peace of the kingdom, the lives and souls of the seditious are made a sacrifice to the lusts of the oppressors.

Direct. 11. 'Consider with fear how oppression turneth the groans and cries of the poor, to the God of revenge against the oppressors.' And go to that man that hath the tears and prayers of oppressed innocents, sounding the alarm to vindictive justice, to awake for their relief. "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night to him, though he bear long with them? I tell you, that he will avenge them speedily^f." "The Lord will be a refuge to the oppressed^g." "To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress^h." "The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressedⁱ." Yea, God is doubly engaged to be revenged upon oppressors, and hath threatened a special execution of his judgment against them above most other sinners: partly as it is an act of mercy and re-

* Eccles. vii. 7.

^h Psal. x. 18.

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^f Luke xviii. 7, 8.

ⁱ Psal. ciii. 6. cxlvi. 7.

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^g Psal. ix. 9.

lief to the oppressed ; so that the matter of threatening and vengeance to the oppressor, is the matter of God's promise and favour to the sufferers : and partly as it is an act of his vindictive justice against such as so heinously break his laws. The oppressor hath indeed his time of power, and in that time the oppressed seem to be forsaken and neglected of God ; as if he did not hear their cries ; but when his patience hath endured the tyranny of the proud, and his wisdom hath tried the patience of the sufferers, to the determined time ; how speedily and terribly then doth vengeance overtake the oppressors, and make them warnings to those that follow them. In the hour of the wicked and of the power of darkness Christ himself was oppressed and afflicted : and " in his humiliation his judgment was taken away ^k." But how quickly did the destroying revenge overtake those bloody zealots, and how grievous is the ruin which they lie under to this day, which they thought by that same murder to have escaped ? Solomon saith, he " considered all the oppressions that are under the sun, and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter ; and on the side of the oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter ^l." Which made him praise the dead and the unborn. But yet he that goeth with David into the sanctuary, and seeth the end of the oppressors, shall perceive them set in slippery places, and tumbling down to destruction in a moment ^m. The Israelites in Egypt seemed long to groan and cry in vain ; but when the determinate time of their deliverance came, God saith, " I have surely seen the affliction of my people, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters ; for I know their sorrows : and I am come down to deliver them.— Behold the cry of the children of Israel is come up unto me, and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them ⁿ." " The Egyptians evil entreated us, and laid upon us hard bondage, and when we cried to the Lord God of our fathers, the Lord heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression ^o." " For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord ; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at

^k Isa. liii. 7. Acts viii.

^l Exod. iii. 7—9.

^m Eccles. iv. 1.

^o Deut. xvi. 6, 7.

ⁿ Psal. xxxvii. lxxiii.

him (or would ensnare him). Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever^p." "Trust not therefore in oppression^q." For God is the avenger and his plagues shall revenge the injuries of the oppressed.

Direct. III. 'Remember what an odious name oppressors commonly leave behind them upon earth.' No sort of men are mentioned by posterity with greater hatred and contempt. For the interest of mankind directeth them hereunto, and may prognosticate it, as well as the justice of God. However the power of proud oppressors, may make men afraid of speaking to their faces what they think, yet those that are out of their reach, will pour out the bitterness of their souls against them. And when once death hath tied their cruel hands, or any judgment of God hath cast them down, and knocked out their teeth, how freely will the distressed vent their grief; and fame will not be afraid to deliver their ugly picture to posterity, according to their desert. Methinks therefore that even pride itself should be a great help to banish oppression from the world. What an honourable name hath a Trajan, a Titus, an Antonine, an Alexander Severus! And what an odious name hath a Nero, a Caligula, a Commodus, a D'Alva, &c. Most proud men affect to be extolled, and to have a glorious name survive them when they are dead; and yet they take the course to make their memory abominable; so much doth sin contradict and disappoint the sinner's hopes!

Direct. IV. 'Be not strangers to the condition or complaints of any that are your inferiors.' It is the misery of many princes and nobles, that they are guarded about with such as keep all the lamentations of their subjects and tenants from their ears; or represent them only as the murmurings of unquiet, discontented men; so that superiors shall know no more of their inferiors' case than their attendants please; nor no more of the reproach that falleth upon themselves. Their case is to be pitied; but the case of their inferiors more: (for it is their own wilful choice which hath imprisoned their understandings, with such informers; and it is their inexcusable negligence, which keepeth them from seeking truer information.) A good landlord will be

^p Psal. xii. 5, 6.

^q Psal. lxxii. 10.

familiar with the meanest of his tenants, and will encourage them freely to open their complaints, and will labour to inform himself, who is in poverty and distress, and how it cometh to pass; that when he hath heard all, he may understand, whether it be his own oppression or his tenants' fault, that is the cause: when proud, self-seeking men disdain such inferior converse, and if they have servants that do but tell them their tenants have a good bargain, and are murmuring, unthrifty, idle persons, they believe them without any more inquiry, and in negligent ignorance oppress the poor.

Direct. v. 'Mortify your own lusts and sinful curiosity, which maketh you think that you need so much, as tempteth you to get it by oppressing others.' Know well how little is truly necessary! And how little nature (well-taught) is contented with! And what a privilege it is to need but little! Pride and curiosity are an insatiable gulf. Their daily trouble seemeth to them a necessary accomodation. Such abundance must be laid out on superfluous recreations, buildings, ornaments, furniture, equipage, attendants, entertainments, visitations, braveries, and a world of need-nots, (called by the names of handsomeness, cleanliness, neatness, conveniences, delights, usefulness, honour, civilities, comeliness, &c.) So much doth carnal concupiscence, pride and curiosity thus devour, that hundreds of the poor must be oppressed to maintain it; and many a man that hath many score or hundred tenants who with all their families daily toil to get him provision for his fleshly lusts, doth find at the year's end, that all will hardly serve the turn; but this greedy devourer could find room for more; when one of his poor tenants could live and maintain all his family comfortably, if he had but so much as his landlord bestoweth upon one suit of clothes, or one proud entertainment, or one horse, or one pack of hounds. I am not persuading the highest to level their garb and expences equal with the lowest; but mortify pride, curiosity and gluttony; and you will find less need to oppress the poor, or to feed your concupiscence with the sweat and groans of the afflicted.

Direct. vi. 'Be not the sole judge of your own actions in a controverted case; but if any complain of you, hear

the judgment of others that are wise and impartial in the case.' For it is easy to misjudge where self-interest is concerned.

Direct. VII. 'Love your poor brethren as yourselves, and delight in their welfare, as if it were your own.' And then you will never oppress them willingly; and if you do it ignorantly, you will quickly feel it and give over upon their just complaint; as you will quickly feel when you hurt yourselves, and need no great exhortation to forbear.

Tit. 2. Cases of Conscience about Oppression, especially of Tenants.

Quest. 1. 'Is it lawful for a mean man, who must needs make the best of it, to purchase tenanted land of a liberal landlord, who setteth his tenants a much better pennyworth than the buyer can afford.'

Answ. Distinguish, 1. Between a seller who understandeth all this, and one that doth not. 2. Between a tenant that hath by custom a half-title to his easier rent, and one that hath not. 3. Between a tenant that consenteth and one that consenteth not. 4. Between buying it when a liberal man might else have bought it, and buying it when a worse else would have bought it. 5. Between a case of scandal, and of no scandal.

And so I answer, 2. If the landlord that selleth it expect that the buyer do use the tenants as well as he hath done, and sell it accordingly, it is unrighteous to do otherwise (ordinarily). 2. In many countries it is the custom not to turn out a tenant, nor to raise his rent; so that many generations have held the same land at the same rent; which though it give no legal title, is yet a half-title in common estimation. In such a case it will be scandalous, and infamous, and injurious, and therefore unlawful to purchase it with a purpose to raise the rent, and to do accordingly. 3. In case that a better landlord would buy it, who would use the tenant better than you can do, it is not (ordinarily) lawful for you to buy it. I either express or imply 'ordinarily' in most of my solutions; because that there are some excep-

tions lie against almost all such answers, in extraordinary cases; which the greatest volume can scarce enumerate.

But if 1. It be the seller's own doing to withdraw his liberality so far from his tenants, as to sell his land on hard rates, on the supposition that the buyer will improve it. 2. And if it be a tenant that cannot either by custom or any other plea, put in a claim in point of equity to his easy-rented land. 3. And if as bad a landlord would buy it if you do not. 4. If it be not a real scandal; I say if all these four concur: 5. Or (alone) if the tenant consent freely to your purchase on these terms; then it is no injury. But the common course is, for a covetous man that hath money, never to consider what a loser the tenant is by his purchase, but to buy and improve the land at his own pleasure; which is no better than oppression.

Quest. 11. 'May not a landlord take as much for his land as it is worth?'

Ans. 1. Sometimes it is land that no man can claim an equitable title to hold upon an easier rent, and sometimes it is otherwise, as aforesaid, by custom and long possession, or other reasons. 2. Sometimes the tenant is one that you are obliged to shew mercy to; and sometimes he is one that no more than commutative justice is due to. And so I answer, 1. If it be an old tenant who by custom or any other ground, can claim an equitable title to his old pennyworth, you may not enhance the rent to the full worth. 2. If it be one that you are obliged to shew mercy as well as justice to, you may not take the full worth. 3. The common case in England is, that the landlords are of the nobility or gentry, and the tenants are poor men, who have nothing but what they get by their hard labour out of the land which they hold; and in this case some abatement of the full worth is but such a necessary mercy, as may be called justice. Note still, that by 'the full worth' I mean, so much as you could set it for to a stranger who expecteth nothing but strict justice, as men buy and sell things in a market.

But 1. If you deal with a tenant as rich or richer than yourself, or with one that needeth not your mercy, or is no fit object of it. 2. And if it be land that no man can by custom claim equitably to hold on lower terms; and so it is no injury to another, nor just scandal, then you may law-

fully raise it to the full worth. Sometimes a poor man setteth a house or land to a rich man, where the scruple hath no place.

Quest. III. 'May a landlord raise his rents, though he take not the full worth?'

Ans. He may do it when there is just reason for it, and none against it. There is just reason for it, when 1. The land was much underset before. 2. Or when the land is proportionably improved. 3. Or when the plenty of money maketh a greater sum to be in effect no more than a lesser heretofore. 4. Or when an increase of persons, or other accident maketh land dearer than it was. But then it must be supposed, 1. That no contract. 2. Nor custom. 3. Nor service and merit, do give the tenant any equitable right to his better pennyworth. And also that mercy prohibit not the change.

Quest. IV. 'How much must a landlord set his land below the full worth, that he may be no oppressor, or unmerciful to his tenants?'

Ans. No one proportion can be determined of; because a great alteration may be made in respect to the tenant's ability, his merit, to the time and place, and other accidents. Some tenants are so rich, as is said, that you are not bound to any abatement. Some are so bad, that you are bound to no more than strict justice and common humanity to them. Some years (like the last, when a longer drought than any man alive had known, burnt up the grass) disableth a tenant to pay his rent; some countries are so scarce of money, that a little abatement is more than in another place; but ordinarily the common sort of tenants in England should have so much abated of the fullest worth, that they may comfortably live on it, and follow their labours with cheerfulness of mind, and liberty to serve God in their families, and to mind the matters of their salvation, and not to be necessitated to such toil, and care, and pinching want, as shall make them more like slaves than freemen, and make their lives uncomfortable to them, and make them unfit to serve God in their families, and seasonably mind eternal things.

Quest. V. 'What if the landlord be in debt, or have some

present want of money, may he not then raise the rent of those lands that were underlet before ?'

Answ. If his pride pretend want where there is none, (as to give extraordinary portions with his daughters, to erect sumptuous buildings, &c.) this is no good excuse for oppression. But if he really fall into want, then all that his tenants hold as mere free gifts from his liberality, he may withdraw (as being no longer able to give). But that which they had by custom an equitable right to, or by contract also a legal title to, he may not withdraw. (And yet all this is his sin, if he brought that poverty culpably on himself; it is his sin in the cause, though, supposing that cause, the raising of his rent be lawful.) But it is not every debt in a rich man, who hath other ways of paying it, which is a true necessity in this case; and if a present debt made it necessary only at that time, it is better (by fine or otherwise) make a present supply, than thereupon to lay a perpetual burden on the tenants, when the cause is ceased.

Quest. VI. 'What if there be abundance of honest people in far greater want than my tenants are, (yea, perhaps preachers of the Gospel,) and I have no other way to relieve them unless I raise my rents; am I not bound rather to give to the best and poorest, than to others?'

Answ. Yes, if it were a case that concerned mere giving; but when you must take away from one to give to another, there is more to be considered in it. Therefore at least in these two cases you may not raise your tenants' rents to relieve the best or poorest whosoever: 1. In case that he have some equitable title to your land, as upon the easier rent. 2. Or in case that the scandal of seeming injustice or cruelty, is like to do more hurt to the interest of religion and men's souls, than your relieving the poor with the addition would do good; (which a prudent man by collation of probable consequents may satisfactorily discern:) but if it were not only to preserve the comforts, but to save the lives of others in their present famine, nature teacheth you to take that which is truly your own, both from your tenants, and your servant, and your own mouths, to relieve men in such extreme distress; and nature will teach all men to judge it your duty, and no scandalous oppression. But

when you cannot relieve the ordinary wants of the poor, without such a scandalous raising of your rents as will do more harm than your alms would do good, God doth not then call you to give such alms ; but you are to be supposed to be unable.

Quest. VII. ' May I raise a tenant's rent, or turn him out of his house, because he is a bad man : by a kind of penalty ?'

Answ. A bad man hath a title to his own, as well as a good man ; and therefore if he hath either legal or equitable title, you may not ; nor yet if the scandal of it is like to do more hurt, than the good can countervail which you intend. Otherwise you may either raise his rent, or turn him out, if he be a wicked, profligate, incorrigible person, after due admonition ; yea, and you ought to do it, lest you be a cherisher of wickedness. If the parents under Moses's law were bound to accuse their own son to the judges in such a case, and say, " This our son is stubborn and rebellious ; he will not obey our voice ; he is a glutton and a drunkard ; and all the men of the city must stone him till he die, to put away evil from among them ". Then surely a wicked tenant is not so far to be spared, as to be cherished by bounty in his sin. It is the magistrate's work to punish him by governing justice ; but it is your work as a prudent benefactor, to withhold your gifts of bounty from him. And I think it is one of the great sins of this age, that this is not done, it being one of the most notable means imaginable to reform the land, and make it happy, if landlords would thus punish or turn out their wicked, incorrigible tenants, it would do much more than the magistrate can do. The vulgar are most effectually ruled by their interest, as we rule our dogs and horses more by the government of their bellies, than by force. They will most obey those on whom they apprehend their good or hurt to have most dependence. If landlords would regard their tenants' souls, so much as to correct them thus for their wickedness, they would be the greatest benefactors and reformers of the land : but alas, who shall first reform the landlords ? And when may it be hoped that many or most great men will be such ?

† Deut. xxi. 18—21.

Quest. VIII. 'May one take a house over another's head (as they speak), or take the land which he is a tenant to, before he be turned out of possession?'

Ans. Not out of a greedy desire to be rich, nor coveting that which is another's: nor yet while he is any way injured by it: nor yet when the act is like to be so scandalous, as to hurt men's souls more than it will profit your body. If you come with the offer of a greater rent than he can give, or than the landlord hath just cause to require of him, to get it out of his hands by over-bidding him, this is mere covetous oppression. But in other cases it is lawful to take the house and land which another tenant hath possession of; as 1. In case that he willingly leave it, and consent. 2. Or if he unwillingly (but justly) be put out; and another tenant must be provided against the time that he is to be dispossessed. 3. Yea, if he be unjustly put out, if he that succeeded him have no hand in it, nor by his taking the house or land do promote the injury, nor scandalously countenance injustice. For when a tenement is void, though by injury, it doth not follow, that no man may ever live in it more: but if the title be his that is turned out, then you may not take it of another; because you will possess another man's habitation. But if it should go for a standing rule, that no man may in any case take a house over another man's head, (as country people would have it,) then every man's house and land must be long untenanted, to please the will of every contentious or unjust possessor; and any one that hath no title, or will play the knave, may injure the true owner at his pleasure.

Quest. IX. 'May a rich man put out his tenants, to lay their tenements to his own demesnes, and so lay house to house, and land to land?'

Ans. In two cases he may not, 1. In case he injure the tenant that is put out, by taking that from him which he hath right to, without his satisfaction and consent. 2. And in case it really tend to the injury of the commonwealth, by depopulation, and diminishing the strength of it: otherwise it is lawful; and done in moderation by a pious man, may be very convenient; 1. By keeping the land from beggary through the multitudes of poor families, that overset it. 2. By keeping the more servants, among whom he may keep up

a better order and more pious government in his own house, (making it as a church,) than can be expected in poor families; and his servants will (for soul and body) have a much better life, than if they married and had families, and small tenements of their own; but in a country that rather wanteth people, it is otherwise.

Quest. x. 'May one man be a tenant to divers tenements?'

Ans. Yes, if it tend not, 1. To the wrong of any other. 2. Nor to depopulation, or to hinder the livelihood of others; while one man engrosseth more than is necessary or meet: for then it is unlawful.

Quest. xi. 'May one man have many trades or callings?'

Ans. Not when he doth, in a covetous desire to grow rich, disable his poor neighbours to live by him on the same callings, seeking to engross all the gain to himself: nor yet when they are callings which are inconsistent: or when he cannot manage one aright, without the sinful neglect of the other. But otherwise it is as lawful to have two trades as one.

Quest. xii. 'Is it lawful for one man to keep shops in several market towns?'

Ans. The same answer will serve as to the foregoing question.

CHAPTER XXI.

Cases about, and Directions against, Prodigality and Sinful Wastefulness.

BECAUSE men's carnal interest and sensuality, is predominant with the greatest part of the world, and therefore governeth them in their judgment about duty and sin, it thence cometh to pass that wastefulness and prodigality are easily believed to be faults, so far as they bring men to shame or beggary, or apparently cross their own pleasure or commodity: but in other cases, they are seldom acknowledged to be any sins at all; yea, all that are gratified by them, account them virtues, and there is scarce any sin which is so