

APPLES OF GOLD.

NOTE.

'Apples of Gold' was originally preached as a 'funeral sermon,' and published in 1657. See Appendix to our reprint, where will be found, (1.) Copy of the first title-page, as it states the circumstances; (2.) The original 'Epistle Dedicatory,' afterwards withdrawn and another substituted; but reprinted thus as being very characteristic and pungent.

Our text is taken from the 'third edition, *corrected*.' Its title-page will be found below.* The '17th' edition appeared in 1693, and 'Apples of Gold' has always ranked with 'Precious Remedies' and the 'Mute Christian,' in acceptance.—G.

* APPLES OF GOLD

FOR

Young Men and Women,

AND,

A CROWN of GLORY for

Old Men and Women.

OR,

The Happiness of being Good betimes.

And the Honour of being an Old Disciple.

Clearly and fully discovered, and closely
and faithfully applied.

ALSO,

The Young Mans Objections answered.

And the Old Mans Doubts resolved.

By THOMAS BROOKS Preacher of the Gospel
at Margarets New Fishstreet-hill.

The Third Edition corrected.

But I thy Servant fear the Lord from my youth, 1 Kings
18. 12.

The hoary head is a Crown of Glory, if it bee found in a
way of Righteousness, Prov. 16. 31.

London, Printed by R. I. for John Hancock, to be sold
at the first Shop in Popes-head-Alley, next to Corn-
hill, near the Exchange. 1660.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

TO ALL YOUNG PERSONS THROUGHOUT THE NATIONS,
especially those, of both sexes, who begin to turn their faces
towards Zion.

DEAR HEARTS, — ‘A word spoken in due season, how good is it!’¹ Prov. xv. 23. ‘It is’ often ‘like apples of gold in pictures of silver,’ Prov. xxv. 11. Many times such a word is sweet, precious, pleasing, delectable, and strong in its operation. A company of near friends dining together one Sabbath day, one that was at table, to prevent impertinent² discourse, said ‘that it was a question whether they should all go to heaven or no,’ which struck them all into a dump, and caused every one to enter into a serious consideration with themselves. One thought, if any of this company go to hell, it must be I; and so thought another and another, and indeed so thought almost every one then present, as well servants that waited as those that sat at table, as it was afterwards acknowledged; and through the mercy and blessing of God this speech so wrought upon the spirits of most of them, that it proved the first instrumental means of their conversion.

I have my hopes, through grace, that this treatise, though it be sown in weakness, yet by the blessing of the Most High upon it, it may rise in power, and be an instrumental means of the winning of souls to Christ, which is my highest ambition in this world; and therefore I have broke through all difficulties and carnal reasonings that might otherwise have stifled this babe in the womb, and kept it from ever seeing of the light.

I have read of an emperor that delighted in no undertakings so much as those which in the esteem of his counsellors and captains were deemed most difficult and impossible. If they said such or such an enterprise would never be accomplished, it was argument enough to him to make the adventure; and he usually prospered, he seldom miscarried.

I have never found greater and choicer blessings to attend any of my poor weak labours than those that have been brought forth into the world through the greatest straits and difficulties.

¹ ‘A word spoken (*gnal ophnah*) upon his wheels,’ that is, with a due concurrence and observation of all circumstances of time, place, person, all which are as the wheels upon which our words and speeches should run, such a word is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.

² ‘Not pertinent,’ = irrelevant or frivolous.—G.

Valerius Maximus reports,¹ that one telling a soldier going to war against the Persians, that they would hide the sun with their arrows, he answered, We shall fight best in the shade. Nothing should discourage nor dishearten a soldier of Christ, 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4. Christ saith to all his soldiers (as the Black Prince his father said to him, fighting as it were in blood to the knees, and in great distress), Either vanquish or die.² Men of no resolution, or of weak resolution, will be but little serviceable to the good of souls. Such watchmen as will be free from the blood of souls, and be serviceable to the interest of Christ in turning sinners from darkness to light, must be men of spirit and resolution.

I remember Austin beginneth one of his sermons thus: *Ad vos mihi sermo, O juvenes flos ætatis, periculum mentis*, To you is my speech, O young men, the flower of age, the danger of the mind.³

So say I, To you, O young men! do I dedicate the ensuing treatise, and that, first, Because the matter contained therein doth primarily and eminently concern you.

And secondly, Because of an earnest desire that I have of your internal and eternal welfare.

And thirdly, Because of some late impulses that have been upon my spirit to leave this treatise in your hands as a legacy of my love, and as a testimony and witness of my great ambition to help forward your everlasting salvation.

And fourthly, Because there is most hope of doing good amongst you, as I evidence more at large in the following treatise.

And fifthly, To countermine the great underminer of your souls, whose great design is to poison you, and to possess you, in the morning of your days.

Sixthly, To provoke others that are more able and worthy to be more serviceable to you in declaring themselves fully on this very subject, which none yet have done that I know of, though it be a point of as great concernment to young persons especially, as any I know in all the Scriptures, Eph. iv. 14.

Seventhly, and lastly, Because there are very many that do lie in wait to deceive, corrupt, and poison your persons with God-dishonouring, Christ-denying, conscience-wasting, and soul-damning opinions, principles, and blasphemies.⁴

I have read of one who boasted and gloried in this, that he had spent thirty years in corrupting and poisoning of youth. Doubtless, many wretches, many monsters there be among us, who make it their business, their glory, their all, to delude and draw young persons to those dangerous errors and blasphemies that lead to destruction. Error and folly, saith one very well, be the knots of Satan wherewith he ties children to the stake to be burned in hell.

There is a truth in what the tragedian [Terence?] said long since, '*Venenum in auro bibitur*,' poison is commonly drunk out of a cup of gold. So is an error or by-notion soonest taken into the judgment and conscience from persons of the fairest carriage and smoothest conversations.

¹ Valerius Maximus, lib. 3. c. *de Fiducia*.

² Hist. of France, p. 196.

³ Augustine, *de tempore*, serm. 256.

⁴ A blind eye is worse than a lame foot. He that had the leprosy in his head, was to be pronounced utterly unclean.

Error is so foul an hag, that if it should come in its own shape, a man would loathe it, and fly from it as from hell.¹

If Jezebel had not painted her face, she had not gotten so many young doating adulterers to have followed her to their own ruin.

Ah! young men, young men, the blessing of the Lord upon your serious and diligent perusal of this treatise may be a happy means to preserve you from being ensnared and deluded by those monsters 'who compass sea and land to make proselytes for hell,' Mat. xxiii. 15.

And thus I have given you the reasons of my dedicating this treatise to the service of your souls. I would willingly presume that it will be as kindly taken as it is cordially tendered. I hope none of you into whose hands it may fall, will say as one Antipater, king of Macedonia, did; when one presented him with a book treating of happiness, his answer was, *Ου σχολάζω*,² I have no leisure.

Ah! Young men and women, young men and virgins, as you tender³ the everlasting welfare of your souls; as you would escape hell and come to heaven; as you would have an interest in Christ, a pardon in your bosoms; as you would be blessed here and glorious hereafter; find time, find leisure, to read over and over the following treatise, which is purposely calculated for your eternal good.

But before I go further, I think it needful, in some respects, to give the world some further account of other reasons or motives that hath prevailed with me to appear once more in print; and they are these:

First, Having preached a sermon occasionally⁴ upon these words, on which this following discourse is built, I was earnestly importuned to print the sermon by some worthy friends. I did as long as in modesty I could, withstand their desires, judging it not worthy of them; but being at last overcome, and setting about the work, the breathings and comings in of God were such as hath occasioned that one sermon to multiply into many. Luther tells us, that when he first began to turn his back upon popery, he intended no more but to withstand popish pardons and selling indulgences; yet neither would God or his enemies let him alone till he resolved with Moses not to leave a hoof of popery unopposed, Exod. x. 26, &c. God many times in the things of the gospel carries forth his servants beyond their intentions, beyond their resolutions. But,

Secondly, The kind acceptance and good quarter that my other pieces have found in the world, and those signal and multiplied blessings that have followed them, to the winning of many over to Christ, and to the building up of others in Christ, hath encouraged me to present this treatise to the world, hoping that the Lord hath a blessing in store for this also. Gracious experiences are beyond notions and impressions; they are very quickening and encouraging.

¹ This anticipates by nearly a century Pope's famous couplet:—

'Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen.'

It may be well to add what follows:—

'Yet seen too oft familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.'

Epistle ii. lines 217-220.—G.

² Cf. Sibbes's Works, vol. ii. p. 440.—G.

³ 'Care for.'—G.

⁴ 'On a particular occasion.'—G.

Thirdly, That I might in some measure make up other neglects, whose age, whose parts, whose experiences, whose graces hath long called upon them to do something considerable in this way, and that they may be provoked by my weak assay¹ to do better, and to make up what is wanting through my invincible infirmities and spiritual wants and weaknesses, which are so many as may well make a sufficient apology for all the defects and weaknesses that in this treatise shall appear to a serious judicious eye. But,

Fourthly, The love of Christ and souls hath constrained me to it. As there is an attractive, so there is a compulsive, virtue in divine love. Love to Christ and souls will make a man willing to spend and be spent.² He that prays himself to death, that preaches himself to death, that studies himself to death, that sweats himself to death, for the honour of Christ and good of souls, shall be no loser in the end. Divine love is like a rod of myrtle, which, as Pliny reports, makes the traveller that carries it in his hand that he shall never be faint or weary.³ Divine love is very operative; *si non operatur, non est*, if it do not work, it is an argument it is not at all. Divine love, like fire, is not idle, but active. He that loves cannot be barren. Love will make the soul constant and abundant in well-doing. God admits none to heaven, saith Justin Martyr, but such as can persuade him by their works that they love him. The very heathen Seneca hath observed, that God doth not love his children with a weak, womanish affection, but with a strong, masculine love; and certainly, they that love the Lord strongly, that love him with a masculine love, they cannot but lay out their little all for him and his glory. But,

Fifthly, I observe that Satan and his instruments are exceeding busy and unwearied in their designs, attempts, and endeavours in these days to corrupt and poison, to defile and destroy the young, the tender, the most hopeful, and most flourishing plants among us.

Latimer told the clergy in his time, that if they would not learn diligence and vigilance of the prophets and apostles, they should learn it of the devil,⁴ who goes up and down his dioceses, and acts by an untired power, seeking whom he may destroy. When the wolves are abroad, the shepherd should not sleep, but watch; yea, double his watch, remembering that he were better have all the blood of all the men in the world upon him than the blood of one soul upon him by his negligence, or otherwise.

Satan is a lion, not a lamb; a roaring lion, not a sleepy lion; not a lion standing still, but a lion going up and down. As not being contented with the prey, the many millions of souls he hath got, 'he seeks whom he may sip up at a draught,' as that word, *καταπιη*, in the 1 Peter v. 8 imports; his greatest design is to fill hell with souls; which should awaken every one to be active, and to do all that may be done to prevent his design, and to help forward the salvation of souls.

Chrysostom compares good pastors to fountains that ever send forth

¹ 'Essay, or attempt.'—G.

² 2 Cor. v. 14, 2 Cor. xii. 15. *Solus amor nescit difficultates*, love knows no difficulties.

³ Myrtle: lib. xv. 35–38.—G.

⁴ It is said of Marcellus the Roman general, that he could not be quiet, *Nec victor, nec victus*, neither conquered nor conqueror; such a one is Satan. [Plutarch, *Marcellus*.—G.]

waters, or conduits that are always running, though no pail be put under.¹ But,

Sixthly and lastly, I know the whole life of man is but an hour to work in; and the more work any man doth for Christ on earth, the better pay he shall have when he comes to heaven. Every man shall at last 'reap as he sows.' Opportunities of doing service for Christ, and souls, are more worth than a world; therefore I was willing to take hold on this, not knowing how soon 'I may put off this earthly tabernacle;' and remembering, that as there is no believing nor repenting in the grave, so there is no praying, preaching, writing, nor printing in the grave; we had need to be up and doing, to put both hands to it, and to do all we do with all our might, knowing that 'the night draws on upon us, wherein no man can work.'² A Christian's dying day is the Lord's pay-day; that is, a time to receive wages, not to do work.

And thus I have given the world a true account of the reasons that moved me to print the following discourse. Before I close up, I desire to speak a word to young persons, and another to aged persons, and then I shall take leave of both.

My request to you who are in the primrose³ of your days is this, If ever the Lord shall be pleased so to own and crown, so to bless and follow this following discourse, as to make it an effectual means of turning you to the Lord, of winning you to Christ, of changing your natures, and converting your souls—for such a thing as that I pray, hope, and believe—that then you would do two things for me.

First, That you would never cease bearing of me upon your hearts when you are in the mount, that I may be very much under the pourings out of the Spirit, that I may be clear, high, and full in my communion with God, and that I may be always close, holy, humble, harmless, and blameless in my walkings with God, and that his work may more and more prosper in my hand.

Secondly, That you would by word of mouth, letter, or some other way, acquaint me with what the Lord hath done for your souls, if he shall make me a spiritual father to you.⁴ Do not hide his grace from me, but acquaint me how he hath made the seed that was sown in weakness to rise in power upon you, and that

(*First*) That I may do what I can to help on that work begun upon you; that your penny may become a pound, your mite a million, your drop an ocean.

(*Secondly*) That I may the better English some impressions that have been upon my own spirit since I began this work.

(*Thirdly*), That my joy and thankfulness may be increased, and my soul more abundantly engaged to that God, who hath blessed the day of small things to you, 1 Thes. ii. 19, 20; 2 Cor. ix. 2. Ponder these scriptures—2 Cor. vii. 3, 4, 13; Philip. ii. 2; iv. 1; Philem. 7; 2 John 3, 4—and then be ashamed to declare what the Lord hath done for you, if you can.

(*Fourthly*) It is better to convert one, than to civilise a thousand;

¹ Chrys. in Mat. Ho. 15.

² 1 Cor. xv. 58; 2 Cor. ix. 6; 2 Peter i. 13, 14; Eccles. ix. 10; John ix. 4.—G.

³ That is, 'in the early spring of life.' A frequent word in the Elizabethan writers.

⁴ The primrose path of dalliance, Hamlet, i. 3.—G.

⁵ Ps. lxxvi. 16, and 1 Peter iii. 15.—G.

and will turn more at last to a minister's account in that day, wherein he shall say, 'Lo, here am I, and the children that thou hast given me,' Isa. viii. 18.¹ Such a man, with his spiritual children about him, shall look on God with more comfort and boldness, than those that are only able to say, 'Lo, here am I, and the many benefices;' 'Here am I, and the many ecclesiastical dignities and glories;' 'Here am I, and the many hundreds a year that man had given, and I have gotten.' But,

(*Fifthly and lastly*) The conversion of others is a secondary and more remote evidence of a man's own renovation and conversion. Paul was converted himself before God made him instrumental for others' conversion. God's usual method is, to convert by them who are converted.²

I do not remember any one instance in all the Scripture of God's converting any by such who have not been converted first themselves; yet I know his grace is free, and the wind blows where it lists, when it lists, and as it lists.

To aged persons I have a word, and then I have done.

First, To grey-headed saints. Ah, friends! ah, fathers! would you see your honour, your happiness, your blessedness? Then look into this treatise, and there you will find what an unspeakable honour it is to be an old disciple, what a glory it is to be good betimes, and to continue so to old age.

Secondly, To white-headed sinners whose spring is past, whose summer is overpast, and who are arrived at the fall of the leaf, and yet have a hell to escape, a Christ to believe in, sins to pardon, hearts to change, souls to save, and heaven to make sure; would such be encouraged from Scripture grounds to repent, believe, and hope, that yet there is mercy for such, let them seriously peruse this treatise, especially the latter part of it, and there they may find enough to keep them from despairing, and to encourage them to adventure their souls upon him that is mighty to save.

There are many things in this treatise that are of use to all, and several things of moment, that are not every day preached nor read. I have made it as pleasurable as time would permit, that so it might be the more profitable to the reader, and that I might the better take the young man by a holy craft; which is a high point of heavenly wisdom, there being no wisdom to that of winning of souls, 2 Cor. xii. 16; Prov. xi. 13. I shall now follow this poor piece with my weak prayers, that it may be so blest from heaven, as that it may bring in some, and build up others, and do good to all. And so rest,

Your friend and servant in the Gospel of Christ,

THOMAS BROOKS.

¹ Mat. xxv. 23; Dan. xii. 3; Prov. xi. 30.

² Acts ix. 3; Isa. vi. 5; Mal. ii. 5-7, &c.

THE YOUNG MAN'S DUTY AND EXCELLENCY.

And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him; for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.—1 KINGS XIV. 13.

I SHALL only stand upon the latter part of this verse, because that affords me matter most suitable to my design.

‘Because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.’

These words are a commendation of Abijah’s life, ‘in him was found some good thing toward the Lord,’ &c. When Abijah was a child, vers. 3, 12, when he was in his young and tender years, he had the seeds of grace in him, he had the image of God upon him, he could discern between good and evil, and he did that which pleased the Lord.

The Hebrew word [*Nagnar*] translated child, ver. 3, is very often applied to such as we call youth, or young men; Exod. xxiv. 5; Num. xi. 28; 1 Sam. ii. 17, &c.¹

Of such age and prudence was Abijah, as that he could choose good and refuse evil. He was a Lot in Sodom, he was good among the bad. The bent and frame of his heart was towards that which was good, when the heart both of his father and mother was set upon evil. Abijah began to be good betimes. He crossed that pestilent proverb, ‘a young saint and an old devil.’ It is the glory and goodness of God that he will take notice of the least good that is in any of his. There was but one good word in Sarah’s speech to Abraham, and that was this, she called him Lord; and this God mentions for her honour and commendation, ‘She called him lord,’ 1 Peter iii. 6. God looks more upon one grain of wheat, than upon a heap of chaff, upon one shining pearl than upon a heap of rubbish. God finds a pearl in Abijah, and he puts it into his crown, to his eternal commendation, ‘There was found in him some good thing toward the Lord,’ &c. For the words, ‘There was found in him,’ the Hebrew word *Matsa*, sometimes signifies

¹ נער, is used for a young man, or stripling, Gen. xxii. 5, and often for a servant, though he be a man of ripe years, Esther ii. 2. Such as one evangelist calleth young men, Luke xii. 45, another calleth fellow-servants, Mat. xxiv. 49.

finding without seeking: Isa. lxx. 1, 'I am found of them that sought me not;' so Ps. cxvi. 3, 'The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me, I found trouble and sorrow.' I found trouble which I looked not for; I was not searching after sorrow, but I found it. There is an elegance in the original; 'The pains of hell got hold upon me,' so we read, but the Hebrew is, 'The pains of hell found me.' One word signifies both. They found me, I did not find them. 'There was *found* in Abijah some good thing towards the Lord,' *i. e.* there was found in him, without searching or seeking, some good thing towards the Lord. It was plain and visible enough. Men might see and observe it without inquiring or seeking. They might run and read some good thing in him towards the Lord.

Secondly, The word sometimes signifies finding by seeking or inquiry: Isa. lv. 6, 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found,' &c. So upon search and inquiry there was found in Abijah, though young, 'some good thing toward the Lord.'

Thirdly, Sometimes the word notes the obtaining of that which is sufficient: Joshua xvii. 16; Num. xi. 22; Judges xxi. 14. In Abijah there was that good in him towards the Lord that was sufficient to evidence the work of grace upon him, sufficient to satisfy himself and others of the goodness and happiness of his condition, though he died in the prime and flower of his days, &c.

'And in him was found some good thing.' The Hebrew word *Tob*, that is here rendered good, signifies,

First, That which is right and just: 2 Sam. xv. 3, 'See thy matters are good and right,' *i. e.* just and right.

Secondly, That which is profitable: Deut. vi. 11, 'Houses full of all good things,' *i. e.* houses full of all profitable things.

Thirdly, That which is pleasing: 2 Sam. xix. 27, 'Do what is good in thine eyes,' *i. e.* do what is pleasing in thine eyes.

Fourthly, That which is full and complete: Gen. xv. 15, 'Thou shalt be buried in a good old age,' *i. e.* thou shalt be buried when thine age is full and complete.

Fifthly, That which is joyful and delightful: 1 Sam. xxv. 8, 'We come in a good day,' *i. e.* we come in a joyful and delightful day.

Now put all together, and you may see that there was found in Abijah, when he was young, that which was right and just, that which was pleasing and profitable, and that which was matter of joy and delight.

In the words you have two things that are most considerable.

First, *That this young man's goodness was towards the Lord God of Israel.* Many there are that are good, nay, very good towards men, who yet are bad, yea, very bad towards God.¹ Some there are who are very kind to the creature, and yet very unkind to their Creator. Many men's goodness towards the creature is like the rising sun, but their goodness towards the Lord is like a morning cloud, or as the early dew, which is soon dried up by the sunbeams, Hosea vi. 4; but Abijah's goodness was towards the Lord, his goodness faced the Lord, it looked towards the glory of God. Two things makes a good Christian, good actions and good aims; and though a good aim doth not make a bad

¹ This age affords many such hypocrites, such monsters, &c.

action good, as in Uzzah, yet a bad aim makes a good action bad, as in Jehu, whose justice was approved, but his policy punished, the first chapter of Hosea, and the fourth verse. Doubtless Abijah's actions were good, and his aims good, and this was indeed his glory, that his goodness was 'towards the Lord.'¹

It is recorded of the Catanenses, that they made a stately monument, of kingly magnificence, in remembrance of two sons, who took their aged parents upon their backs, and carried them through the fire, when their father's house was all in a flame.² These young men were good towards their parents; but what is this to Abijah's goodness 'towards the Lord'? &c. A man cannot be good towards the Lord but he will be good towards others; but a man may be good towards others, that is not good towards the Lord. Oh that men's practices did not give too loud a testimony every day to this assertion! &c.³

Secondly, *He was good among the bad.* He was good 'in the house of Jeroboam.' It is in fashion to seem at least to be good among the good; but to be really good among those that are bad, that are eminently bad, argues not only a truth of goodness, but a great degree of goodness. This young man was good 'in the house of Jeroboam, who made all Israel to sin; who was naught, who was very naught, who was stark naught; and yet Abijah, as the fishes which live in the salt sea are fresh, so though he lived in a sink, a sea, of wickedness, yet he retained his 'goodness towards the Lord.'

They say roses grow the sweeter when they are planted by garlic. They are sweet and rare Christians indeed who hold their goodness, and grow in goodness, where wickedness sits on the throne; and such a one the young man in the text was.

To be wheat among tares, corn among chaff, pearls among cockles, and roses among thorns, is excellent.

To be a Jonathan in Saul's court, to be an Obadiah in Ahab's court, to be an Ebed-melech in Zedekiah's court, and to be an Abijah in Jeroboam's court, is a wonder, a miracle.

To be a Lot in Sodom, to be an Abraham in Chaldea, to be a Daniel in Babylon, to be a Nehemiah in Damascus, and to be a Job in the land of Husse,⁴ is to be a saint among devils; and such a one the young man in the text was.

The poets affirm that Venus never appeared so beauteous as when she sat by black Vulcan's side. Gracious souls shine most clear when they be set by black-conditioned persons. Stephen's face never shined so angelically, so gloriously, in the church where all were virtuous, as before the council where all were vicious and malicious. So Abijah was a bright star, a shining sun, in Jeroboam's court, which for profaneness and wickedness was a very hell.

¹ There may be *malum opus in bona materia*, as in Jehu's zeal.

² The allusion is to the imperishable legend of the 'Pii Fratres,' Amphinomus and Anapias, who, on an eruption of Ætna, acted as above. The place of their burial was known as 'Campus Piorum.'—G.

³ Happy are those souls that, with the sturgeon or crab-fish, can swim against the stream of custom and example; and with Atticus, can cleave to the right, though losing, side. [Atticus, bishop of Constantinople, who sided with Chrysostom.—G.]

⁴ 'Uz.'—G.

The words that I have chosen to insist upon will afford us several observations, but I shall only name one, which I intend to prosecute at this time, and that is this, viz. :

CHAPTER I.

Doct. That it is a very desirable and commendable thing for young men to be really good betimes.

Other scriptures speak out this to be a truth, besides what you have in the text to confirm it ; as that of the second of Chronicles, chap. xxxiv. 1-3, 'Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand nor to the left ; for in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father ; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem, from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.' It was Obadiah's honour that he feared the Lord from his youth, 1 Kings xviii. 3 ; and Timothy's crown that he knew the Scripture from a child, 2 Tim. vi. 1, 5, 15 ; and John's joy that he found children walking in the truth, 2 John 4, 5 ; this revived his good old heart, and made it dance for joy in his bosom. To spend further time in the proving of this truth, would be but to light candles to see the sun at noon.

The grounds and reasons of this point, viz. :

That it is a very desirable and commendable thing for young men to be really good betimes, are these that follow :¹

Reason 1. First, Because the Lord commands it ; and divine commands are not to be disputed, but obeyed. In the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes, and the first verse, 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.' Remember now ; I say, now. Now is an atom ; it will puzzle the wisdom of a philosopher, the skill of an angel, to divide. Now is a monosyllable in all learned languages : 'Remember *now* thy Creator.' Remember him presently, instantly, for thou dost not know what a day, what an hour, may bring forth ; thou canst not tell what deadly sin, what deadly temptation, what deadly judgment, may overtake thee, if thou dost not now, even now, 'remember thy Creator.'

'Remember now thy Creator.' Remember to know him, remember to love him, remember to desire him, remember to delight in him, remember to depend upon him, remember to get an interest in him, remember to live to him, and remember to walk with him. 'Remember now thy Creator ;' the Hebrew is Creators, Father, Son, and Spirit. To the making of man, a council was called in heaven, in the first of Genesis, and 26th verse. 'Remember thy Creators :' Remember the Father, so as to know him, so as to be inwardly acquainted with him. Remember the

¹ Deut. vi. 5, xi. 13. Augustine beginneth one of his sermons thus : 'Ad vos mihi sermo, O juvenes, flos ætatis, periculum mentis.'—August. de Tempore, serm. 246. To you is my speech, O young men, the flower of age, the danger of the mind.

Son, so as to believe in him, so as to rest upon him, so as to embrace him, and so as to make a complete resignation of thyself to him. Remember the Spirit, so as to hear his voice, so as to obey his voice, so as to feel his presence, and so as to experience his influence, &c.

‘Remember now thy Creator *in the days of thy youth.*’ He doth not say in the time of thy youth, but ‘in the days of thy youth,’ to note, that our life is but as a few days. It is but as a vapour, a span, a flower, a shadow, a dream; and therefore Seneca saith well, that ‘though death be before the old man’s face, yet he may be as near the young man’s back,’ &c.

Man’s life is the shadow of smoke, the dream of a shadow. One doubteth whether to call it a dying life, or a living death.¹

Ah! young men, God commands you to be good betimes. Remember, young men, that it is a dangerous thing to neglect any of his commands, who by another is able to command you into nothing, or into hell. To act or run cross to God’s command, though under pretence of revelation from God, is as much as a man’s life is worth, as you may see in that sad story, 1 Kings, xiii. 24, &c.

Let young men put all their carnal reasons, though never so many and weighty, into one scale, and God’s absolute command in the other, and then write Tekel upon all their reasons, they are ‘weighed in the balance and found too light.’

Ah, sirs! what God commands must be put in speedy execution, without denying or delaying, or disputing the difficulties that attend it.² Most young men in these days do as the heathens: when their gods called for a man, they offered a candle; or, as Hercules, offered up a painted man instead of a living. When God calls upon young men to serve him with the primrose of their youth, they usually put him off till they are overtaken with trembling joints, dazzled eyes, fainting hearts, failing hands, and feeble knees; but this will be bitterness in the end, &c.

Reason (2). Because they have means and opportunities of being good betimes.

Never had men better means and greater opportunities of being good, of doing good, and of receiving good, than now. Ah, Lord! how knowing, how believing, how holy, how heavenly, how humble, might young men be, were they not wanting to their own souls. Young men might be good, very good, yea, eminently good, would they but improve the means of grace, the tenders of mercy, and the knockings of Christ, by his word, works, and Spirit.

The ancients painted opportunity with a hairy forehead, but bald behind, to signify, that while a man hath opportunity before him, he may lay hold on it, but if he suffer it to slip away, he cannot pull it back again.³

How many young men are now in everlasting chains, who would give ten thousand worlds, had they so many in their hands to give, to enjoy but an opportunity to hear one sermon more, to make one prayer more, to keep one Sabbath more, but cannot! This is their hell, their torment; this is the scorpion that is still biting, this is the worm that is

¹ Aug. Confess. lib. i.

² *Obedientia non discutit Dei mandata sed facit.*—Prosper.

³ Erasmus [and ‘The Emblems’].—G.

always gnawing. Woe! woe! to us, that we have neglected and trifled away those golden opportunities that once we had to get our sins pardoned, our natures changed, our hearts bettered, our consciences purged, and our souls saved, &c. I have read of a king,¹ who having no issue to succeed him, espying one day a well-favoured youth, took him to court, and committed him to tutors to instruct him, providing by his will, that if he proved fit for government, he should be crowned king; if not, he should be bound in chains and made a galley-slave. Now when he grew to years, the king's executors, perceiving that he had sadly neglected those means and opportunities, whereby he might have been fit for state-government, called him before them, and declared the king's will and pleasure concerning him, which was accordingly performed, for they caused him to be fettered, and committed to the galleys. Now what tongue can express how much he was affected and afflicted, with his sad and miserable state, especially when he considered with himself, that now he is chained, who might have walked at liberty; now he is a slave, who might have been a king; now he is overruled by Turks, who might once have ruled over Christians. The application is easy.

Ah! young men! young men! shall Satan take all opportunities to tempt you? shall the world take all opportunities to allure you? shall wicked men take all opportunities to ensnare you, and to undo you? and shall Christian friends take all opportunities to better you? and shall God's faithful messengers take all opportunities to save you? and will you, will you 'neglect so great salvation'? Heb. ii. 3. Plutarch writes of Hannibal, that when he could have taken Rome he would not, and when he would have taken Rome he could not.² Many, in their youthful days, when they might have mercy, Christ, pardon, heaven, they will not; and in old age, when they would have Christ, pardon, peace, heaven, they cannot, they may not. God seems to say, as Theseus said once, Go, says he, and tell Creon, Theseus offers thee a gracious offer. Yet I am pleased to be friends, if thou wilt submit; this is my first message; but if this offer prevail not, look for me to be up in arms.

Reason (3). Because, when they have fewer and lesser sins to answer for and repent of, multitudes of sins and sorrows are prevented by being good betimes.

The more we number our days, the fewer sins we shall have to number.³ As a copy is then safest from blotting when dust is put upon it, so are we from sinning when, in the time of our youth, we remember that we are but dust. The tears of young penitents do more scorch the devils than all the flames of hell; for hereby all their hopes are blasted, and the great underminer countermined and blown up. *Mane* is the devil's verb; he bids tarry, time enough to repent; but *mane* is God's adverb; he bids repent early, in the morning of thy youth, for then thy

¹ Bellarm[ine]. *In consione de cruciatibus Gehennæ.*

² It is storied of Charles, king of Sicily and Jerusalem, that he was called *Carolus Cunctator*, Charles the lingerer. This age affords many such lingerers, &c. [The agnomen *above* is very much earlier, having been applied to and accepted by the Dictator Q. Fabius Maximus. Cf. Livy, 30, 26; Quint., 3, 2, 11.—G.]

³ Lord, saith Austin, I have loved thee late. The greater was his sins, and the more were his sorrows.—[Confessions, Book x. (xxvii.) 38. —G.]

sins will be fewer and lesser. Well! young men, remember this: he that will not at the first-hand buy good counsel cheap, shall at the second-hand buy repentance over dear.

Ah! young men! young men! if you do not begin to be good betimes, those sins that are now as jewels sparkling in your eyes, will at last be millstones about your necks, to sink you for ever.¹ Among many things that Beza, in his last will and testament, gave God thanks for, this was the first and chief, that he, at the age of sixteen years, had called him to the knowledge of the truth, and so prevented many sins and sorrows that otherwise would have overtaken him, and have made his life less happy and more miserable. Young saints often prove old angels, but old sinners seldom prove good saints, &c.²

Reason 4. Because time is a precious talent, that young men must be countable for. The sooner they begin to be good, the more easy will be their accounts, especially as to that great talent of time. Cato and other heathens held that account must be given, not only of our labour, but also of our leisure. At the great day, it will appear that they that have spent their time in mourning have done better than they that have spent their time in dancing; and they that have spent many days in humiliation, than they that have spent many days in idle recreations.

I have read of a devout man who, when he heard a clock strike, he would say, Here is one hour more past that I have to answer for. Ah! young men, as time is very precious, so it is very short. Time is very swift; it is suddenly gone. In the 9th of Job, and the 25th verse, 'My days are swifter than a post, they flee away, they see no good.' The Hebrew word (*kalal*) translated 'swifter than a post,' signifies anything that is light, because light things are quick in motion.

The ancients emblemed time with wings, as it were, not running, but flying.³ Time is like the sun, that never stands still, but is still a-running his race. The sun did once stand still, yea, went back, but so did never time. Time is still running and flying. It is a bubble, a shadow, a dream. Can you seriously consider of this, young men, and not begin to be good betimes? Surely you cannot. Sirs! if the whole earth whereupon we tread were turned into a lump of gold, it were not able to purchase one minute of time. Oh! the regrettings of the damned for misspending precious time!⁴ Oh! what would they not give to be free, and to enjoy the means of grace one hour! Ah! with what attention, with what intention,⁵ with what trembling and melting of heart, with what hungering and thirsting, would they hear the word! Time, saith Bernard, were a good commodity in hell, and the traffic of it most gainful, where for one day a man would give ten thousand worlds, if he had them. Young men, can you in good earnest believe this, and not begin to be good betimes?

Ah! young men and women, as you love your precious immortal

¹ Ps. xxv. 7, Job xiii. 26.

² There is nothing puts a more serious frame into a man's spirit, than to know the worth of his time.

³ Sophocles, *Phocildes*. [Query, 'Philoctetes'?—G.]

⁴ Who is there among us that knows how to value time, and prize a day at a due rate? [Senec., *Epist. i.*—G.]

⁵ Intentness, earnestness.—G.

souls, as you would escape hell, and come to heaven, as you would be happy in life, and blessed in death, and glorious after death, don't spend any more of your precious time in drinking and drabbing,¹ in carding, dicing, and dancing; don't trifle away your time, don't swear away your time, don't whore away your time, do not lie away your time, but begin to be good betimes, because time is a talent that God will reckon with you for.² Ah! young men and women, you may reckon upon years, many years yet to come, when possibly you have not so many hours to make ready your accounts. It may be this night you may have a summons, and then, if your time be done, and your work to be begun, in what a sad case will you be. Will you not wish that you had never been born?

Seneca was wont to jeer the Jews for their ill husbandry, in that they lost one day in seven, meaning their Sabbath.³ Oh that it were not too true of the most of professors, both young and old, that they lose not only one day in seven, but several days in seven.

Sirs! Time let slip cannot be recalled. The foolish virgins found it so, and Saul found it so, and Herod found it so, and Nero found it so. The Israelites found it so; yea, and Jacob, and Josiah, and David, though good men, yet they found it so to their cost.⁴

The Egyptians draw the picture of time with three heads: the first of a greedy wolf, gaping, for time past, because it hath ravenously devoured the memory of so many things past recalling; the second of a crowned lion, roaring, for time present, because it hath the principality of all actions, for which it calls loud; the third of a deceitful dog, fawning, for time to come, because it feeds some men with many flattering hopes to their eternal undoing. Ah! young men and women, as you would give up your accounts at last with joy, concerning this talent of time, with which God hath trusted you, begin to be good betimes, &c.

*Reason (5). Because they will have the greater comfort and joy when they come to be old.*⁵

The 71st psalm, 5, 17, 18, compared, 'Thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth. O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto I have declared thy wondrous works. Now also, when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not, until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power unto every one that is to come.'

Polycarpus could say, when old, 'Thus many years have I served my Master Christ, and hitherto hath he dealt well with me.'⁶ If early converts live to be old, no joy to their joy. Their joy will be the greatest joy, a joy like to the joy of harvest, a joy like to their joy that divide the spoil. Their joy will be soundest joy, the weightiest joy, the holiest joy, the purest joy, the strongest joy, and the most lasting joy,' Isa. ix. 3. The carnal joy of the wicked, the glistening golden joy of the

¹ 'Licentiousness.' See Halliwell, *sub voce*.—G.

² A heathen said he lived no day without a line; that is, he did something remarkable every day.—[Zeuxis, the Painter.—G.]

³ Query, 'Tacitus,' not Seneca? Cf. Annals, ii. 85; xii. 3; xv. 44; Hist. i. 10; ii. 4; ii. 79; v. 1, 2, *et alibi*.—G.

⁴ Mat. xxv. 5; Heb. iii. 17-19.

⁵ Seneca, though a heathen, could say, Believe me, true joy is no light thing. [Epist. xxiii.—G.]

⁶ *Martyrium S. Polycarpi*. Hefele, as before.—G.

worldling, and the flashing joy of the hypocrite, is but as the crackling of thorns under a pot, to the joy and comfort of such, who, when old, can say with good Obadiah, that they 'feared the Lord from their youth.' If, when you are young, your eyes shall be full of tears for sin, when you are old, your heart shall be full of joys. Such shall have the best wine at last.

Oh! that young men would begin to be good betimes, that so they may have the greater harvest of joy when they come to be old, &c. It is sad to be sowing your seed when you should be reaping your harvest; it is best to gather in the summer of youth against the winter of old age.

Reason 6. Because an eternity of felicity and glory hangs upon those few moments that are allotted to them.

It was a good question the young man proposed, 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' Luke x. 25. I know I shall be eternally happy or eternally miserable, eternally blessed or eternally cursed, eternally saved or eternally damned, &c.

'Oh! what shall I do to inherit eternal life!' My cares, my fears, my troubles are all about eternity! No time can reach eternity, no age can extend to eternity, no tongue can express eternity. Eternity is that *unum perpetuum hodie*, one perpetual day which shall never have end; what shall I do, what shall I not do, that I may be happy to all eternity?¹

I am now young, and in the flower of my days; but who knows what a day may bring forth? The greatest weight hangs upon the smallest wires,² an eternity depends upon those few hours I am to breathe in this world. Oh! what cause have I therefore to be good betimes, to know God betimes, to believe betimes, to repent betimes, to get my peace made and my pardon sealed betimes, to get my nature changed, my conscience purged, and my interest in Christ cleared betimes, before eternity overtakes me, before my glass be out, my sun set, my race run, lest the dark night of eternity should overtake me, and I made miserable for ever.

I have read of one Myrogenes, who, when great gifts were sent unto him, he sent them all back again, saying, I only desire this one thing at your master's hand: to pray for me that I may be saved for eternity. Oh! that all young men and women, who make earth their heaven, pleasures their paradise, that eat the fat and drink the sweet, that clothe themselves richly, and crown their heads with rose-buds, that they would seriously consider of eternity, so as to hear as for eternity, and pray as for eternity, and live as for eternity, and provide as for eternity! Luke xv. 12-20. That they might say with that famous painter Zeuxis, *Æternitati pingo*, I paint for eternity.³ We do all for eternity, we believe for eternity, we repent for eternity, we obey for eternity, &c.

¹ *Æternitas est semper et immutabile esse.* The old Romans were out, that thought eternity dwelt in statues and in marble monuments.

² This is a favourite 'Emblem' of the Puritans, and is prefixed to several of their books, e. g. John Goodwin's.—G.

³ The proverb is more accurately *Pingo in æternitatem*, from the great artist's reply to Agatharcus, preserved by Plutarch (*De Amic. Mult.* v. p. 94 f.), 'I confess that I take a long time to paint; for I paint works to last a long time.'—G.

Oh! that you would not make those things eternal for punishment that cannot be eternal for use.¹

Ah! young men and women, God calls, and the blood of Jesus Christ calls, and the Spirit of Christ in the gospel calls, and the rage of Satan calls, and your sad state and condition calls, and the happiness and blessedness of glorified saints calls; these all call aloud upon you to make sure a glorious eternity, before you fall out into that dreadful ocean. All your eternal good depends upon the short and uncertain moments of your lives; and if the thread of your lives should be cut before a happy eternity is made sure, woe to you that ever you were born! Do not say, O young man, that thou art young, and hereafter will be time enough to provide for eternity, for eternity may be at the door, ready to carry thee away for ever. Every day's experience speaks out eternity to be as near the young man's back as it is before the old man's face.

Oh grasp to-day the diadem of a blessed eternity, lest thou art cut off before the morning comes! Though there is but one way to come into this world, yet there is a thousand thousand ways to be sent out of this world. Well! young men and women, remember this, as the motions of the soul are quick, so are the motions of divine justice quick also; and if you will not hear the voice of God to-day, if you will not provide for eternity to-day, God may swear to-morrow that you shall never enter into his rest, Heb. iii. 7, 8, 15, 16, 18, 19. It is a very sad and dangerous thing to trifle and dally with God, his word, his offers, our own souls, and eternity. Therefore, let all young people labour to be good betimes, and not to let him that is goodness itself alone till he hath made them good, till he hath given them those hopes of eternity that will both make them good and keep them good; that will make them happy, and keep them happy, and that for ever. If all this will not do, then know that ere long those fears of eternity, of misery, that beget that monster Despair, which, like Medusa's head, astonisheth with its very aspect, and strangles hope, which is the breath of the soul, will certainly overtake you; as it is said, *Dum Spiro, Spero*, so it may be inverted *Dum Spero, Spiro*; other miseries may wound the spirit, but despair kills it dead. My prayer shall be, that none of you may ever experience this sad truth, but that you may all be good in good earnest, betimes, which will yield you two heavens, a heaven on earth, and a heaven after death.

Reason 8. Because they do not begin to live till they begin to be really good.

Till they begin to be good, they are dead God-wards, and Christ-wards, and heaven-wards, and holiness-wards. Till a man begins to be really good, he is really dead, and that first in respect of working; his works are called dead works, Heb. ix. 14. The most glistering services of unregenerate persons are but dead works, because they proceed not from a principle of life, and they lead to death, Rom. vi. 23, and leave a sentence of death upon the soul, till it be washed off by the blood of the Lamb. Secondly, he is dead in respect of honour; he is dead to all privileges, he is not fit to inherit mercy. Who will set the crown of

¹ *Cur ea quæ ad usum diuturna esse non possunt, ad supplicium diuturna deposeset?*—Ambrose in Luke iv. 5.

life upon a dead man? The crown of life is only for living Christians, Rev. ii. 10. The young prodigal was dead till he begun to be good, till he begun to remember his father's house, and to resolve to return home: 'My son was dead, but is alive,' Luke xv. 24; and the widow that 'liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth,' 1 Tim. v. 6.

When Joshaphat asked Barlaam how old he was, he answered, Five and forty years old; to whom Joshaphat replied, Thou seemest to be seventy. True, saith he, if you reckon ever since I was born; but I count not those years which were spent in vanity.¹

Ah, sirs! you never begin to live till you begin to be good, in good earnest. There is the life of vegetation, and that is the life of plants; secondly, there is the life of sense, and that is the life of beasts; thirdly, there is the life of reason, and that is the life of man; fourthly, there is the life of grace, and that is the life of saints; and this life you do not begin to live till you begin to be good. If 'a living dog is better than a dead lion,' as the wise man speaks, Eccles. ix. 4, and if a fly is more excellent than the heavens, because the fly hath life, which the heavens have not, as the philosopher saith, what a sad, dead, poor nothing is that person that is a stranger to the life of grace and goodness, that is dead even whilst he is alive!

Most men will bleed, sweat, vomit, purge, part with an estate, yea, with a limb, ay, limbs, yea, and many a better thing, viz., the honour of God and a good conscience, to preserve their natural lives; as he cries out, Give me any deformity, any torment, any misery, so you spare my life; and yet how few, how very few, are to be found who make it their work, their business, to attain to a life of goodness, or to begin to be good betimes, or to be dead to the world and alive to God, rather than to be dead to God and alive to the world. This is for a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation, that natural life is so highly prized, and spiritual life so little regarded, &c.²

Reason 9. Because the promise of finding God, of enjoying God, is made over to an early seeking of God.

Prov. viii. 17, 'I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me;' or, as the Hebrew hath it, they that 'seek me in the morning shall find me.' By the benefit of the morning light we come to find the things we seek. *Shahhar* [שַׁהַר] signifies to seek inquisitively, to seek diligently, to seek timely in the morning. As the Israelites went early in the morning to seek for manna, Exod. xvi. 21, and as students rise early in the morning and sit close to it to get knowledge, so saith wisdom, they that 'seek me in the spring and morning of their youth, shall find me.'³

Now, to seek the Lord early is to seek the Lord *firstly*. God hath in himself all the good of angels, of men, and universal nature; he hath all glories, all dignities, all riches, all treasures, all pleasures, all comforts, all delights, all joys, all beatitudes. God is that one infinite

¹ As it is a reproach to an old man to be in coats, so it is a disgrace to be an old babe, i. e. to be but a babe in grace when old in years, Heb. v. 12-14.

² Mæcenas in Seneca had rather live in many diseases than die. [Epist. CI.—G.] And Homer reporteth of his Achilles, that he had rather be a servant to a poor country clown here than to be a king to all the souls departed. [Odyssey, xi. 488.—G.]

³ Scipio went first to the capitol and then to the senate. Tully, an heathen, frequently called God *Optimum maximum*, the best and greatest. God is *omnis super omnia*.

perfection in himself, which is eminently and virtually all perfections of the creatures, and therefore he is firstly to be sought. Abstracts do better express him than concretes and adjectives; he is being, bonity, power, wisdom, justice, mercy, goodness, and love itself, and therefore worthy to be sought before all other things. Seek ye first the good things of the mind, saith philosophy, and doth not divinity say as much?

Again, To seek early is to seek *opportunately*, to seek while the opportunity does present: Judges ix. 33, 'Thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city,' that is, thou shalt opportunely set upon the city.¹

Such there have been who, by having a glass of water opportunely, have obtained a kingdom, as you may see in the story of Thaumastus and king Agrippa.

Ah! young men and women, you do not know but that by an early, by an opportune, seeking of God, you may obtain a kingdom that shakes not, and glory that passeth not away, Heb. xii. 28.

There is a season wherein God may be found: 'Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near,' Isa. lv. 6; and if you slip this season, you may seek him and miss him: 'Though they cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them; 'When ye make many prayers, I will not hear;' 'Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear;' 'Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but shall not find me.'² This was Saul's misery: 'The Philistines are upon me, and God will not answer me,' 1 Sam. xxviii. 15. It is justice that they should seek and not find at all last, who might have found had they but sought seasonably and opportunely, &c.

Again, To seek early is to seek *earnestly, affectionately*: 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early,' Isa. xxvi. 9. The Hebrew word signifies both an earnest and an early seeking. In the morning the spirits are up, and men are earnest, lively, and affectionate.

Ah! such a seeking shall certainly be crowned with finding: 'My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord! in the morning will I direct [Heb. *marshal*] my prayer unto thee, and will look up' [Hebrew, *look out like a watchman*]. 'Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice, let them ever shout for joy; because thou defendest them' [Hebrew, *thou coverest over, or protectest them*]. 'Let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee: for thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him [Hebrew, *'crown him'*] as with a shield.'³ None have ever thus sought the Lord, but they have, or certainly shall find him: 'Seek and ye shall find,' Mat. vii. 7; 'your hearts shall live that seek God,' Ps. lxxix. 32; 'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,' Jas. v. 16, or, as the Greek hath it, 'The working prayer of a righteous man availeth much.'⁴ That prayer that sets the whole man a-work will work wonders in heaven, in the heart, and in the earth. Earnest prayer, like Saul's sword and Jonathan's bow, never returns empty.

¹ Days of grace have their dates; therefore take heed of saying *cras, cras*, to-morrow, to-morrow.

² Jer. xi. 11, Isa. i. 15, Micah iii. 4, Prov. i. 28.

³ Ps. v. 3, xi. 12. אֶעֱרָךְ וְאֶצַּפֶּה.

⁴ ἐργαζομένη, it signifies such a working as notes the liveliest activity that can be.

One speaking of Luther, who was a man very earnest in prayer, said, *Hic homo potuit apud Deum quod voluit*, this man could have what he would of God, &c.

Again, to seek early is to seek *chiefly, primarily*, after this or that thing. What we first seek, we seek as chief.¹ Now, to seek the Lord early is to seek him primarily, chiefly; in the 63d psalm, and the 1st verse, 'Thou art my God, early will I seek thee,' that is, I will seek thee as my choicest and my chiefest good. God is *Alpha*, the fountain from whence all grace springs, and *Omega*, the sea to which all glory runs, and therefore early and primarily to be sought. God is a perfect good, a solid good, *Id bonum perfectum dicitur, cui nil accedere, solidum, cui nil decedere potest* (Lactantius), That is a perfect good, to which nothing can be added; that a solid, from which nothing can be spared. Such a good God is, and therefore early and chiefly to be sought. God is a pure and simple good; he is a light in whom there is no darkness, a good in whom there is no evil, 1 John i. 5. The goodness of the creature is mixed, yea, that little goodness that is in the creature is mixed with much evil; but God is an unmixed good; he is good, he is pure good, he is all over good, he is nothing but good.² God is an all-sufficient good: 'Walk before me, and be upright: I am God all-sufficient,' in the 17th of Genesis and the first verse. *Habet omnia, qui habet habentem omnia*, (Augustine), He hath all that hath the haver of all. God hath in himself all power to defend you, all wisdom to direct you, all mercy to pardon you, all grace to enrich you, all righteousness to clothe you, all goodness to supply you, and all happiness to crown you. God is a satisfying good, a good that fills the heart and quiets the soul, Cant. ii. 3. In the 33d of Genesis, and the 11th verse, 'I have enough,' saith good Jacob; 'I have all,' saith Jacob, for so the Hebrew hath it (*Cholli*), I have all, I have all comforts, all delights, all contents, &c. In having nothing, I have all things, because I have Christ; having therefore all things in him, 'I seek no other reward, for he is the universal reward,' saith one. As the worth and value of many pieces of silver is to be found in one piece of gold, so all the petty excellencies that are scattered abroad in the creatures are to be found in God, yea, all the whole volume of perfections, which is spread through heaven and earth, is epitomised in him. No good below him that is the greatest good, can satisfy the soul. A good wife, a good child, a good name, a good estate, a good friend, cannot satisfy the soul. These may please, but they cannot satisfy. 'All abundance, if it be not my God, is to me nothing but poverty and want,' said one.

Ah! that young men and women would but in the morning of their youth seek, yea, seek early, seek earnestly, seek affectionately, seek diligently, seek primarily, and seek unweariedly this God, who is the greatest good, the best good, the most desirable good; who is a suitable good, a pure good, a satisfying good, a total good, and an eternal good.³

Reason 10. Because the time of youth is the choicest and fittest time for service.

Now your parts are lively, senses fresh, memory strong, and nature vigorous. The days of your youth are the spring and morning of your

¹ *Omne bonum in summo bono.*

² *Quicquid est in Deo, est ipse Deus.*

³ *Omnis copia quæ non est Deus meus, mihi egestas est.*—Aug [ustine] Soliloq. c. 13.

time, they are the first-born of your strength; therefore God requires your non-age, as well as your dotage, the wine of your times as well as the lees, as you may see typified to you in the first-fruits, which were dedicated to the Lord, and the first-born, Exod. xxiii. 16, Num. iii. 13. The time of youth is the time of salvation, it is the acceptable time; it is thy summer, thy harvest-time.¹ O young man! therefore do not sleep, but up and be doing; awaken thy heart, rouse up thy soul, and improve all thou hast; put out thy reason, thy strength, thy all, to the treasuring up of heavenly graces, precious promises, divine experiences, and spiritual comforts, against the winter of old age; and then old age will not be to thee an evil age, but as it was to Abraham, 'a good old age,' Gen. xv. 15; do not put off God with fair promises, and large pretences, till your last sands are running, and the days of dotage have overtaken you. That is a sad word of the prophet, 'Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and yet offereth to the Lord a corrupt thing,' Mal. i. 14.

Ah! young men and women, who are like the almond tree;² you have many males in the flock, your strength is a male in your flock, your time is a male in the flock, your reason is a male in the flock, your parts are a male in the flock, and your gifts are a male in the flock. Now, if he be cursed that hath but one male in his flock, and shall offer to God a corrupt thing, a thing of no worth, of no value, how will you be cursed, and cursed, cursed at home, and cursed abroad, cursed temporally, cursed spiritually, and cursed eternally, who have many males in your flock, and yet deal so unworthily, so fraudulently, and false-heartedly with God, as to put him off with the dregs of your time and strength, while you spend the primrose of your youth in the service of the world, the flesh, and the devil, Mat. xxi. 20.

The fig-tree in the Gospel, that did not bring forth fruit timely and seasonably, was cursed to admiration.³ The time of youth is the time and season for bringing forth the fruits of righteousness and holiness, and if these fruits be not brought forth in their season, you may justly fear, that the curses of heaven will secretly and insensibly soak and sink into your souls, and then woe! woe! to you that ever you were born. The best way to prevent this hell of hells, is to give God the cream and flower of your youth, your strength, your time, your talents. Vessels that are betimes seasoned with the savour of life never lose it, Prov. xxii. 6.

Reason 11. Because death may suddenly and unexpectedly seize upon you; you have no lease of your lives.

Youth is as fickle as old age. The young man may find graves enough of his length in burial places. As green wood and old logs meet in one fire, so young sinners and old sinners meet in one hell and burn together. When the young man is in his spring and prime, then he is cut off and dies; 'One dying in his full strength (or in the strength of his perfection, as the Hebrew hath it) being wholly at ease and quiet, his breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow,'

¹ The days of youth are called *atas bona*, in Cicero, and *atas optima*, in Seneca. [Epist. xlix.—G.]

² Jer. i. 11, the almond tree blossoms in January, while it is yet winter, and the fruit is ripe in March.

³ 'Amazement.'—G.

Job xxi. 23, 24. David's children die when young, so did Job's and Jeroboam's, &c. Every day's experience tells us, that the young man's life is as much a vapour as the old man's is.¹

I have read of an Italian poet, who brings in a proper young man, rich and potent, discoursing with death in the habit of a mower, with his scythe in his hand, cutting down the life of man, 'For all flesh is grass,' Isa. xl. 6. And wilt thou not spare any man's person, saith the young man? I spare none, saith death; man's life is but a day, a short day, a winter's day. Ofttimes the sun goes down upon a man before it be well up. Your day is short, your work is great, your journey long, and therefore you should rise early, and set forward towards heaven betimes, as that man doth that hath a long journey to go in a winter's day.²

The life of man is absolutely short: 'Behold, thou hast made my days as an hand's-breadth,' Ps. xxxix. 5. The life of man is comparatively short, and that if you compare man's life now to what he might have reached had he continued in innocency. Sin brought in death; death is a fall, that came in by a fall. Or if you compare man's life now to what they did reach to before the flood: then several lived six, seven, eight, nine hundred years, Gen. i. 9; or if you compare men's days with the days of God, 'Mine age is as nothing before thee,' Ps. xxxix. 5; or if you compare the days of man to the days of eternity.³

Ah! young men, young men! can you seriously consider of the brevity of man's life, and trifle away your time, the offers of grace, your precious souls, and eternity? &c. Surely you cannot, surely you dare not, if you do but in good earnest ponder upon the shortness of man's life. It is recorded of Philip, king of Macedon, that he gave a pension to one to come to him every day at dinner, and to cry to him, *Memento te esse mortalem*, Remember thou art but mortal.⁴

Ah! young men and old had need be often put in mind of their mortality; they are too apt to forget that day, yea, to put far from them the thoughts of that day. I have read of three that could not endure to hear that bitter word death mentioned in their ears; and surely this age is full of such monsters.

And as the life of man is very short, so it is very uncertain: now well, now sick; alive this hour, and dead the next. Death doth not always give warning beforehand; sometimes he gives the mortal blow suddenly; he comes behind with his dart, and strikes a man at the heart, before he saith, 'Have I found thee, O mine enemy?' 1 Kings xxi. 30. Eutychus fell down dead suddenly, Acts xx. 9;⁵ death suddenly arrested David's sons and Job's sons; Augustus died in a compliment, Galba with a sentence, Vespasian with a jest;⁶ Zeuxis died

¹ *Pares nascuntur, pares moriuntur*, in the womb and in the tomb they are all alike, Job xxi. 23, 24. It is an allegorical description of the highest prosperity.

² Death's motto is, *Nulli cedo*, I yield to none.

³ The heathen could say that the whole life of man should be nothing else but *meditatio mortis*, a meditation of death. [That rare little Puritan book by the Earl of Manchester, 'Almondo, or Contemplatio Mortis et Immortalitatis' (5th edition, 1642), illustrates and unfolds *above* very suggestively.—G.]

⁴ Cf. Sibbes's Works, vol. ii. pp. 433, 435.—G.

⁵ Petrarch telleth of one who, being invited to dinner the next day, answered, *Ego à multis annis crastinum non habui*. I have not had a morrow for this many years.

⁶ See Bacon's Essays. On Death.—G.

laughing at the picture of an old woman which he drew with his own hand ; Sophocles was choked with the stone in a grape ; Diodorus the logician died for shame that he could not answer a jocular question propounded at the table by Stilpo ; Joannes Measius, preaching upon the raising of the woman of Nain's son from the dead, within three hours after died himself.

Ah ! young men and women, have you not cause, great cause, to be good betimes ? for death is sudden in his approaches. Nothing more sure than death, and nothing more uncertain than life. Therefore know the Lord betimes, turn from your sins betimes ; lay hold on the Lord, and make peace with him betimes, that you may never say, as Cæsar Borgias said when he was sick to death, ' When I lived,' said he, ' I provided for everything but death ; now I must die, and am unprovided to die,' &c.¹

Reason (12). Because it is ten to one, nay, a hundred to ten, if ever they are converted, if they are not converted when they are young.

God usually begins with such betimes that he hath had thoughts of love and mercy towards them from everlasting.² The instances cited to prove the doctrine confirms this argument ; and if you look abroad in the world, you shall hardly find one saint among a thousand but dates his conversion from the time of his youth. It was the young ones that got through the wilderness into Canaan, Num. xxvi.³ If the tree do not bud and blossom, and bring forth fruit in the spring, it is commonly dead all the year after. If, in the spring and morning of your days, you do not bring forth fruit to God, it is an hundred to one that ever you bring forth fruit to him when the evil days of old age shall ' overtake you, wherein you shall say you have no pleasure,' Eccles. xii. 1. For, as the son of Sirach observes, if thou hast gathered nothing in thy youth, what canst thou find in thy age ?⁴ It is rare, very rare, that God sows and reaps in old age. Usually God sows the seed of grace in youth, that yields the harvest of joy in age.

Though true repentance be never too late, yet late repentance is seldom true. Millions are now in hell, who have pleased themselves with the thoughts of after-repentance. The Lord hath made a promise to late repentance, but where hath he made a promise of late repentance ? Yea, what can be more just and equal, that such should seek and not find, who might have found but would not seek ; and that he should shut his ears against their late prayers, who have stopped their ears against his early calls ? Prov. i. 24-32. The ancient warriors would not accept an old man into their army, as being unfit for service ; and dost thou think that God will accept of thy dry bones, when Satan hath sucked out all the marrow ? What lord, what master, will take such into their service, who have all their days served their enemies ? and will God ? will God ? The Circassians, a kind of mongrel Christians, are said to divide their life betwixt sin and devotion, dedicating their

¹ Much earlier than Borgia, being recorded of the dying emperor Septimus Severus as follows : ' Omnia fui, nihil expedit.'—G.

² Hosea xi. 1, ' When Israel was a child, then I loved him,' &c.

³ An Hebrew doctor observes, that of those six hundred thousand that went out of Egypt, there were but two persons that entered Canaan.

⁴ Ecclesiasticus xxv. 3 ; the first quotation by Brooks thus far from the Apocrypha.—G.

youth to rapine, and their old age to repentance.¹ If this be thy case, I would not be in thy case for ten thousand worlds.

I have read of a certain great man that was admonished in his sickness to repent, who answered, that he would not repent yet, for if he should recover, his companions would laugh at him; but growing sicker and sicker, his friends pressed him again to repent, but then he told them that it was too late, *Quia jam judicatus sum, et condemnatus*, for now, said he, I am judged and condemned.²

CHAPTER II.

Reason 13. Because else they will never attain to the honour of being old disciples.

It is a very great honour to be an old disciple.

Now this honour none reach to, but such as are converted betimes, but such as turn to the Lord in the spring and morning of their youth. It is no honour for an old man to be in coats, nor for an old man to be a babe in grace. An A B C old man is a sad and shameful sight. Oh! but it is a mighty honour to be a man, when he is old, that he can date his conversion from the morning of his youth. Now that it is an honour to be an old disciple, I shall prove by an induction of particulars.³ As,

Particular 1. All men will honour an old disciple: Prov. xvi. 31, 'The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.'⁴ God requires that the aged should be honoured: Lev. xix. 32, 'Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man' (the old man here is by some expounded the wise man), 'and fear thy God, I am the Lord.' Hoariness is only honourable when found in a way of righteousness. A white head, accompanied with a holy heart, makes a man truly honourable. There are two glorious sights in the world: the one is, a young man walking in his uprightness; and the other is, an old man walking in ways of righteousness. It was Abraham's honour that he went to his grave in a good old age, or rather, as the Hebrew hath it, with a good grey head, Gen. xxv. 8. Many there be that go to their graves with a grey head, but this was Abraham's crown, that he went to his grave with a good grey head. Had Abraham's head been never so grey, if it had not been good, it would have been no honour to him. A hoary head, when coupled with an unsanctified heart, is rather a curse than a blessing. When the head is as white as snow, and the soul as black as hell, God usually gives up such to the greatest scorn and contempt. 'Princes are hanged up by their hands, the faces of elders were not honoured,' Lam. v. 12, and this God had threatened long before. 'The Lord shall bring against thee a nation from far, a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young,' Deut. xxviii. 49, 50.

¹ Breerw. *Enqui.* [This is Edward Brerewood's 'Enquiries touching the diversity of languages,' &c. 1614.—G.]

² Bede hath this story.

³ What more ridiculous than *puer centum annorum*, a child of an hundred years old?

⁴ A crown is a very glorious thing, but there are but few of them.

I have read of Cleanthes, who was wont sometimes to chide himself. Ariston wondering thereat, asked him, Whom chidest thou? Cleanthes laughed, and answered, I chide an old fellow, *Qui canos quidem habet, sed mentem non habet*, who hath grey hairs indeed, but wants understanding, and prudence worthy of them.¹ The application I will leave to the grey heads and grey beards of our time, who have little else to commend them to the world but their hoary heads and snowy beards.

Particular 2. God usually reveals himself most to old disciples, to old saints: Job xii. 12, 'With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.'² God usually manifests most of himself to aged saints. They usually pray most and pay most, they labour most and long most after the choicest manifestations of himself and of his grace; and therefore he opens his bosom most to them, and makes them of his cabinet council. Gen. xviii. 17-19, 'And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; for I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.' Abraham was an old friend, and therefore God makes him both of his court and council. We usually open our hearts most freely, fully, and familiarly, to old friends. So doth God to his ancient friends. Ah, what a blessed sight and enjoyment of Christ had old Simeon, that made his very heart to dance in him! 'Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation,' &c., Luke ii. 25-28. I have seen him, who is my light, my life, my love, my joy, my crown, my heaven, my all; therefore now 'Let thy servant depart in peace,' verses 36-38. So Anna, when she was fourscore and four years old, was so filled with the discoveries and enjoyments of Christ, that she could not but declare what she had tasted, felt, seen, heard, and received from the Lord. She was ripe and ready to discover the fulness, sweetness, goodness, excellency, and glory of that Christ whom she had long loved, feared, and served. So Paul lived in the light, sight, and sweet enjoyments of Christ, when he was aged in years and in grace, Philip. iv. 5, 7, 9. So, when had John that glorious vision of Christ among the golden candlesticks, and those discoveries and manifestations of the ruin of Rome, the fall of antichrist, the casting the beast and false prophet into a lake of fire, the conquest of the kingdoms of the world by Christ's bow and sword, the binding up of Satan, and the new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, Rev. i. 7, *seq.*, but when he was old, when he was aged in years and in grace? The Lord speaks many a secret in the ears of saints, of old Christians, which young Christians are not acquainted with, as that phrase imports, 2 Sam. vii. 27, 'Thou, O Lord God of hosts, hast revealed to thy servant;' so you read it in your books, but in the Hebrew it is, 'Lord, thou hast revealed this to the ear of thy servant.'³ Some wonder how that word 'to the ear' comes to be left out in your books, in which indeed the emphasis lies. We will tell many things in an old friend's

¹ The 'quaint penitence' of above saying, as it has been described, belongs to the Stoic of the name. Cf. Bp. Cotton's *Memoirs in Smith's 'Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology.'*—G.

² בִּישִׁימִים In the ancient is wisdom. Valentianus the emperor's motto was, *Amicus veterinus optimus*, an old friend is best.

³ גִּלְתָּה אֶת־אָזְנוֹן *Galitha ethozen.*

ear, which we will not acquaint young ones with. So doth God many times whisper an old disciple in the ear, and acquaints him with such things that he hides from those that are of younger years. And by this you may see what an honour it is to be an old disciple.

Particular 3. An old disciple, an old Christian, *he hath got the art of serving God, the art of religion; got the art of hearing, the art of praying, the art of meditating, the art of repenting, the art of believing, the art of denying his natural self, his sinful self, his religious self.*¹

All trades have their mystery and difficulty, so hath the trade of Christianity. Young Christians usually bungle in religious works, but old Christians acquit themselves like workmen that 'need not be ashamed.' A young carpenter gives more blows and makes more chips, but an old artist doth the most and best work. A young Christian may make most noise in religious duties, but an old Christian makes the best work. A young musician may play more quick and nimble upon an instrument than an old, but an old musician hath more skill and judgment than a young. The application is easy, and by this you may also see what an honour it is to be an old Christian, &c.

Particular 4. An old disciple, an old Christian, *is rich in spiritual experiences.* Oh! the experiences that he hath of the ways of God, of the workings of God, of the word of God, of the love of God! 1 John ii. 1. Oh! the divine stories that old Christians can tell of the power of the word, of the sweetness of the word, of the usefulness of the word! Ps. cxix. 49, 50, as a light to lead the soul, as a staff to support the soul, as a spur to quicken the soul, as an anchor to stay the soul, and as a cordial to comfort and strengthen the soul!² Oh! the stories that he can tell you concerning the love of Christ, the blood of Christ, the offices of Christ, the merits of Christ, the righteousness of Christ, the graces of Christ, and the influence of Christ! Oh! the stories that an old disciple can tell you of the indwellings of the Spirit, of the operations of the Spirit, of the teachings of the Spirit, of the leadings of the Spirit, of the sealings of the Spirit, of the witnessings of the Spirit, and of the comforts and joys of the Spirit! Oh! the stories that an old Christian can tell you of the evil of sin, the bitterness of sin, the deceitfulness of sin, the prevalency of sin, and the happiness of conquest over sin! Oh! the stories that he can tell you of the snares of Satan, the devices of Satan, the temptations of Satan, the rage of Satan, the malice of Satan, the watchfulness of Satan, and the ways of triumphing over Satan! As an old soldier can tell you of many battles, many scars, many wounds, many losses, and many victories, even to admiration;³ so an old saint is able to tell you many divine stories even to admiration.

Pliny writes of the crocodile, that she grows to her last day, Hosea xiv. 5-7.⁴ So aged saints, they grow rich in spiritual experiences to the last. An old Christian being once asked if he grew in goodness,

¹ Heb. v. 11-14. Yet as Solon was not ashamed to say that in his old age he was a learner, so those that are the greatest artists in Christianity will confess, that they are still but learners. [Plutarch's *Solon*.—G.]

² Old men love to speak of ancient things.

³ 'Wonder.'—G.

⁴ The following are references in Pliny to the crocodile: lib. viii. c. 37, 38, 40, 72; xxviii. 29. Probably Brooks's is a vague recollection of the first.—G.

answered, Yea, doubtless I do; for God hath said, 'The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree,' Ps. xcii. 12-14, (now the palm tree never loseth his leaf or fruit, saith Pliny); 'he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing.' A fellow to this promise Isaiah mentions, Isa. xlv. 3, 4, 'Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: and even to your old age I am he; and even to hoary hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.'

There is nothing more commendable in fulness of age than fulness of knowledge and experience, nor nothing more honourable than to see ancient Christians very much acquainted with the Ancient of days, Dan. vii. 9, 13-22.

It is a brave sight to see ancient Christians like the almond tree. Now the almond tree doth flourish and is full of blossoms in the winter of old age; for as Pliny tells us, the almond tree doth blossom in the month of January. Experiments¹ in religion are beyond notions and impressions. A sanctified heart is better than a silver tongue. No man so rich, so honourable, so happy as the old disciple, that is rich in spiritual experiences; and yet there is no Christian so rich in his experiences but he would be richer.

As Julianus said, that when he had one foot in the grave, he would have the other in the school; so, though an old disciple hath one foot in the grave, yet he will have the other in Christ's school, that he may still be treasuring up more and more divine experiments. And by this also you see what an honour it is to be an old disciple, &c.

Particular 5. An old disciple is very stout, courageous, firm, and fixed in his resolution. An old Christian is like a pillar, a rock; nothing can move him, nothing can shake him, Ps. xlv. 9, 26. What is sucked in in youth will abide in old age. Old soldiers are stout and courageous; nothing can daunt nor discourage them. When Joshua was an hundred and ten years old, oh how courageous and resolute was he! Joshua xxiv. 15, 29, 'And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve: whether the gods that your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood; or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. And it came to pass, after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old.'

[Q.] Considius, a senator of Rome, told Cæsar boldly that the senators durst not come to council for fear of his soldiers. He replied, Why then dost thou go to the senate? He answered, Because my age takes away my fear.²

Ah! none so courageous, none so divinely fearless, none so careless in evil days, as ancient Christians. An old Christian knows that that good will do him no good which is not made good by perseverance; his resolution is like that of Gonsalvo, who protested to his soldiers, shewing them Naples, that he had rather die one foot forwards, than to have

¹ 'Experiences.'—G.

² Plutarch, *Cæsar*, 14; Cicero, *ad Att.*, ii. 24.—G.

his life secured for long by one foot of retreat. Shall such a man as I am flee? said undaunted Nehemiah, chap. vi. 11. He will courageously venture life and limb rather than by one foot of retreat discredit profession with the reproach of fearfulness. It was a brave, magnanimous speech of Luther, when dangers from opposers did threaten him and his associates, Come, saith he, let us sing the forty-sixth psalm, and then let them do their worst.

When Polycarpus was fourscore and six years old, he suffered martyrdom courageously, resolutely, and undauntedly.¹

When one of the ancient martyrs was very much threatened by his persecutors, he replied, There is nothing of things visible, nothing of things invisible, that I fear. I will stand to my profession of the name of Christ, and 'contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,' Jude 3, come on it what will.²

Old disciples, old soldiers of Christ, that have the heart and courage of Shammah, one of David's worthies, who stood and defended the field when all the rest fled, 2 Sam. xxiii. 11, 12. The Hebrews call a young man *Nagar*, which springs from a root that signifies to *shake off*, or to *be tossed to and fro*, to note how fickle and how constant in inconstancy young men are, Mat. xix. 20-22. They usually are persons either of no resolution for good, or of weak resolution; they are too often won with a nut, and lost with an apple. But now, aged Christians in all earthquakes they stand fast, 'like mount Sion, that cannot be removed.' And by this also you may see what an honour it is to be an old disciple, an old Christian.

Particular 6. An old disciple, an old Christian, *is prepared for death; he hath been long a-dying to sin, to the world, to friends, to self, to revelations, to all, and no man so prepared to die as he that thus daily dies.*³

An old disciple hath lived sincerely to Christ, he hath lived eminently to Christ, he hath lived in all conditions,⁴ and under all changes, to Christ; he hath lived exemplarily to Christ, he hath lived long to Christ, and therefore the more prepared to die and be with Christ. An old disciple hath a crown in his eye, a pardon in his bosom, and a Christ in his arms, and therefore may sweetly sing it out with old Simeon, 'Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace,' Luke ii. 29. As Hilary said to his soul, Soul, thou hast served Christ this seventy years, and art thou afraid of death? Go out, soul, go out.⁵

'Many a day,' said old Cowper, 'have I sought death with tears, not out of impatience, distrust, or perturbation, but because I am weary of sin, and fearful to fall into it.' Nazianzen calls upon the king of terrors, Devour me, devour me. And Austin, when old, could say, Shall I die ever? yes, or shall I die at all? yes. Why, then, Lord, if ever, why not now?⁶ So when Modestus, the emperor's lieutenant, threatened to kill Basil, he answered, If that be all, I fear not; yea, your master cannot

¹ As before.—G.

² Aristotle, though heathen, could say that in some cases a man had better lose his life than be cowardly.—*Arist., Ethic. 3, cap. 1.*

³ Rom. vi. 6, Gal. v. 24, vi. 14.

⁴ Rom. xiv. 7, 8; Philip. ii. 21-23.

⁵ The correspondent of Augustine—G.

⁶ Zeno, a wise heathen, said, I have no fear but of old age. Cyprian could receive the cruellest sentence of death with a *Deo gratias*, God, I thank thee.

more pleasure me than in sending me unto my heavenly Father, to whom I now live, and to whom I desire to hasten.

I cannot say as he, said old Mr Stephen Martial¹ a little before his death. I have not so lived that I should now² be afraid to die; but this I can say, I have so learned Christ that I am not afraid to die. Old Christians have made no more to die than to dine. It is nothing to die when the Comforter stands by, Isa. lvii. 1, 2. Old disciples know that to die is but to lie down in their beds; they know that their dying day is better than their birthday; and this made Solomon to prefer his coffin before his crown, the day of his dissolution before the day of his coronation, Eccles. vii. 1.

The ancients were wont to call the days of their death *Natalia*, not dying days, but birthdays.

The Jews to this day stick not to call their Golgothas *Batle Cuim*, the houses or places of the living. Old Christians know that death is but an entrance into life; it is but a passover, a jubilee; it is but the Lord's gentleman-usher to conduct them to heaven; and this prepares them to die, and makes death more desirable than life; and by this you may see that it is an honour to be an old disciple.

Particular 7. An old disciple, an old Christian, *shall have a great reward in heaven.*

Old Christians have done much and suffered much for Christ; and the more any man doth or suffers for Christ here, the more glory he shall have hereafter.³ It was the saying of an old disciple upon his dying bed, 'He is come, he is come'—meaning the Lord—with a great reward for a little work.' Agrippa having suffered imprisonment for wishing Caius emperor, the first thing Caius did when he came to the empire, was to prefer Agrippa to a kingdom; he gave him also a chain of gold, as heavy as the chain of iron that was upon him in prison. And will not Christ richly reward all his suffering saints? Surely he will. Christ will at last pay a Christian for every prayer he hath made, for every sermon he hath heard, for every tear he hath shed, for every morsel he hath given, for every burden he hath borne, for every battle he hath fought, for every enemy he hath slain, and for every temptation that he hath overcome.

Cyrus, in a great expedition against his enemies, the better to encourage his soldiers to fight, in an oration that he made at the head of his army, promised upon the victory, to make every foot-soldier an horseman, and every horseman a commander, and that no officer that did valiantly should be unrewarded; but what are Cyrus his rewards to the rewards that Christ our general promises to his?⁴ Rev. iii. 21, 'To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.' As there is no lord to Christ, so there is no rewards to Christ's. His rewards are the greatest rewards. He gives kingdoms, crowns, thrones; he gives grace and glory, Ps. xlviii. 11.

¹ Misprint undoubtedly for 'Marshall,' not at all uncommon. Marshall was one of the holiest, as he was one of the most venerable and revered, of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. His life was published in 1680, 4to.—G.

² Qu. 'not'?—Ed.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 58; 2 Cor. ix. 6; Mat. v. 10–12. God will reward his servants *secundum laborem*, according to their labour, though not *secundum proventum*, according to the success of their labour.

⁴ Mat. xix. 28; Luke xxii. 30; Mat. v. 12.

It is said of Araunah, that noble Jebusite, renowned for his bounty, that he had but a subject's purse, but a king's heart; but Jesus Christ hath a king's purse as well as a king's heart, and accordingly he gives.

And as Christ's rewards are the greatest rewards, so his rewards are the surest rewards: 'He is faithful that hath promised,' 1 Thes. v. 24.¹

Antiochus promised often but seldom gave, upon which he was called, in way of derision, a great promiser; but Jesus Christ never made any promise, but he hath or will perform it, 2 Cor. i. 20, nay, he is often better than his word, 1 Cor. ii. 9, he gives many times more than we ask. The sick man of the palsy asked but health, and Christ gave him health and a pardon to boot, Mat. ix. 2. Solomon desired but wisdom, and the Lord gave him wisdom, and honour, and riches, and the favour of creatures, as paper and pack-thread into the bargain, 2 Chron. i. 10-15. Jacob asked him but clothes to wear, and bread to eat, and the Lord gave him these things, and riches, and other mercies into the bargain.²

Christ doth not measure his gifts by our petitions, but by his own riches and mercies. Gracious souls many times receive many gifts and favours from God that they never dreamt of, nor durst presume to beg, which others extremely strive after and go without.

Archelaus being much importuned by a covetous courtier for a cup of gold wherein he drank, gave it unto Euripides that stood by, saying, Thou art worthy to ask, and be denied, but Euripides is worthy of gifts, although he ask not.

The prodigal craves no more but the place of a hired servant, but he is entertained as a son, he is clad with the best robe, and fed with the fatted calf, he hath a ring for his hand, and shoes for his feet, rich supplies more than he deserved, Luke xv. 19-25. Jacob's sons, in a time of famine, desired only corn, and they return with corn and money in their sacks, and with good news too—Joseph is alive, and governor of all Egypt, Gen. xlii.

And as his rewards are greater and surer than other rewards, so they are more durable and lasting than other rewards. The kingdom that he gives is a kingdom that shakes not; the treasures that he gives are treasures that corrupt not; and the glory that he gives is glory that fadeth not away; but the rewards that men give are like themselves, fickle and unconstant, they are withering and fading.³

Xerxes crowned his steersman in the morning, and beheaded him in the evening of the same day.

And Andronicus, the Greek emperor, crowned his admiral in the morning, and then took off his head in the afternoon.

Rossensis⁴ had a cardinal's hat sent him, but his head was cut off before it came to him. Most may say of their crowns as that king said of his, O crown! more noble than happy. It was a just complaint which long ago was made against the heathen gods, *O faciles dare summa deos, caulemque tueri difficiles*, they could give their favourites great gifts, but they could not maintain them in the possession of them.

¹ As the King in Plutarch said of a groat, it is no kingly gift, and of a talent, it is no base bribe.

² Gen. xxviii. 20 compared with Gen. xxxii. 10.

³ Heb. xii. 28; Mat. vi. 19, 20; 1 Peter i. 4.

⁴ Qu. 'Rossensis'?—ED.

The world may give you great things, but the world cannot maintain you in the possession of them; but the great things, the great rewards that Christ gives his, he will for ever maintain them in the possession of them, otherwise heaven would not be heaven, glory would not be glory. Now by all these things you see that it is a very great honour to be an old disciple, an old Christian; and this honour you will never attain to, except you begin to be really good betimes, except in the morning of your youth you return to the Lord, and get an interest in him.

I shall now come to make some use and application of this weighty truth to ourselves.

You see, beloved, that it is the great duty and concernment of young men to be really good betimes. If this be so, then,

Use 1. First, This truth looks sourly and sadly upon such young men that are only seemingly good, that make some shows of goodness, but are not right towards God at the root.

As Joash, when he was young, he seemed to have good things in him towards the Lord, whilst good Jehoiada lived; but when Jehoiada was dead, Joash his goodness was buried with him, 2 Chron. xxiv. 1-6, 13-16.

Ah! how many in these days, that have been seemingly good, have turned to be naught, very naught, yea, stark naught!

It is said of Tiberius, that whilst Augustus ruled, he was no ways tainted in his reputation; and that, whilst Drusus and Germanicus were alive, he feigned those virtues which he had not, to maintain a good opinion of himself in the hearts of the people; but after he had got himself out of the reach of contradiction and controlment, there was no fact in which he was not faulty, no crime to which he was not accessory.¹

Oh! that this were not applicable to many young persons in these days, who have made great shows and taken upon them a great name, who have begun to outshine the stars, but are now gone out like so many snuffs, to the dishonour of God, the reproach of the gospel, the grief of others, and the hazard of their own souls.

It was a custom of old, when any was baptized, the minister delivered a white garment to be put on, saying, Take thou this white vestment, and see thou bring it forth without spot at the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ; whereupon one Maritta baptizing one Elpidophorus, who, when he was grown up, proved a profane wretch, he brings forth the white garment, and holding it up, shakes it against him, saying, This linen garment, Elpidophorus, shall accuse thee at the coming of Christ, which I have kept by me as a witness of thy apostasy.²

Ah! young men and women, your former professions will be a sad witness against you in the great day of our Lord Jesus, except you repent and return in good earnest to the Lord, Prov. xiv. 14.

Oh! it had been better that you had never made profession, that you

¹ Nero's first five years are famous, but afterwards who more cruel? There are some that write that, after Demas had forsaken Paul, he became a priest in an idol-temple. [The one authority for such apostasy is an over-pressing of the following in Epiphanius: Καὶ Δημῶν, καὶ Ῥεμογίνην, τοὺς ἀγαπήσαντας τὸν ἑνταῦθα αἰῶνα, καὶ καταλείψαντας τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἁλληλίας.—*Haer.* xli. 6.—G.]

² Crabs that go backwards are reckoned among the unclean creatures, Lev. xi. 10.

had never set your faces towards heaven, that you had never pretended to God and Christ, that you had never known the way of righteousness, than, after you have known it, to turn from the holy commandment.

Cyprian, in his sermon *de lapsis*, reporteth of divers who, forsaking the faith, were given over to evil spirits and died fearfully.

Oh! the delusions and the Christ-dethroning, conscience-wasting, and soul-undoing opinions and principles that many young ones, who once were hopeful ones, are given up to! That dreadful scripture seems to be made good in power upon them: 'All you that forsake the Lord shall come to be ashamed, and they that depart from him shall be written upon the dust,' Jer. xvii. 13. To begin well and not to proceed, is but to aspire to a higher pitch, that the fall may be the more desperate. Backsliding is a wounding sin, Hos. iv. 14. You read of no arms for the back, though you do for the breast, Eph. vi. 11-18. He that is but seemingly good will prove at last exceeding bad: 2 Tim. iii. 13, 'They wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.'

The wolf, though he often dissembles and closely hides his nature, yet he will one time or other shew himself to be a wolf.

In the days of Hadrian the emperor, there was one *Ben-cosbi*, who, gathering a multitude of Jews together, called himself *Ben-cocuba*, the son of a star, applying that prophecy to himself, Num. xxiii. 17; but his mask was taken off, his hypocrisy discovered, and he found to be *Bar-chosaba*, the son of a lie.^{1 2} This age hath afforded many such monsters, but their folly is discovered, and their practices abhorred. This was the young man's commendation in the text, 'That there was found in him some real good towards the Lord.'

Use 2. This truth looks sourly and sadly upon such young men who are so far from having good things in them towards the Lord, *that they give themselves up to those youthful lusts and vanities that are dishonouring, provoking, and displeasing to the Lord, who roar and revel, and gad,³ and game, and dice, and drink, and drab,⁴ and what not.* These make work with a witness for repentance, or hell, or the physician of souls.

I shall but touch upon the evils of youth, and then come to that which is mostly intended.

CHAPTER III.

The first evil that most properly attends youth is pride.

Evil 1. Pride of heart, pride of apparel, pride of parts, 1 Tim. iii. 6. Young men are apt to be proud of health, strength, friends, relations, wit, wealth, wisdom. Two things are very rare: the one is, to see a young man humble and watchful; and the other is, to see an old man contented and cheerful.

Bernard saith, that pride is the rich man's cozen, and experience every day speaks out pride to be the young man's cozen.⁵ God, said

¹ For vivid account of the different 'False Christs,' see Hepworth Dixon's 'Holy Land,' 2 vols. 8vo. 1865.—G.

² Comets make a greater blaze than fixed stars.

³ 'To go about giddily.'—G.

⁴ Are 'licentious.'—G.

⁵ 'Cheat.'—G.

one, had three sons, Lucifer, Adam, and Christ ; the first aspired to be like God in power, and was therefore thrown down from heaven ; the second to be like him in knowledge, and was therefore deservedly driven out of Eden when young ; the third did altogether imitate and follow Him in his goodness, mercy, and humility, and by so doing obtained everlasting inheritance.¹

Remember this, young men, and as you would get a paradise, and keep a paradise, get humble, and keep humble. Pride is an evil that puts men upon all manner of evil. Accius the poet, though he were a dwarf, yet would be pictured tall of stature.²

Psaphon, a proud Lybian, would needs be a god, and having caught some birds, he taught them to speak and prattle : the great god Psaphon.³

Menecrates, a proud physician, wrote thus to king Philip : Menecrates a god, to Philip a king.⁴

Proud Simon in Lucian, having got a little wealth, changed his name from Simon to Simonides, for that there were so many beggars of his kin ; and set the house on fire wherein he was born, because nobody should point at it.⁵

What sad evils Pharaoh's pride, and Haman's pride, and Herod's pride, and Belshazzar's pride, put them upon, I shall not now mention.⁶

Ah ! young men, young men, had others a window to look into your breasts, or did your hearts stand where your faces do, you would even be afraid of yourselves, you would loathe and abhor yourselves.

Ah ! young men, young men, as you would have God to keep house with you, as you would have his mind and secrets made known to you, as you would have Christ to delight in you, and the Spirit to dwell in you, as you would be honoured among saints, and attended and guarded by angels, get humble, and keep humble.

Tertullian's counsel to the young gallants of those times was excellent : ' Clothe yourselves,' said he, ' with the silk of piety, with the satin of sanctity, and with the purple of modesty ; so shall you have God himself to be your suitor.'⁷

Evil 2. The second evil that youth is subject to is, *sensual pleasures and delights*.⁸ ' Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes,' Eccles. xi. 9. The wise man, by an ironical concession, bids him rejoice, &c., sin, &c. Thou art wilful, and resolved upon taking thy pleasure ; go on, take thy course. This he speaks by way of mockage and bitter scoff, &c. ; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. So Samson ' made a feast ; for so used the young men to do,' Judges xiv. 10. The hearts of young men usually are much given up to pleasure. I have read of a young man, who was very much given up to pleasures ; he

¹ Pride cannot climb so high, but justice will sit above.

² Mentioned by Cicero, *Brutus*, 28.—G.

³ Qu. ' Psaon' ?—G.

⁴ The letter to Philip beginning, Μενεκράτης Ζεύς Φιλίσπηκ, χαίρειν, received this answer, Φιλίσπηκ Μενεκράτην ὑγιαίνειν. Cf. Athenæus, vii. p. 289 ; Aelian, *Var. Hist.*, xii. 51, and Suidas, s. v. Μενεκράτης.—G.

⁵ Cf. Suidas, *sub nomine*.—G.

⁶ Acco, an old woman, seeing her deformity in a glass, went mad, &c. [Qu. ' Acca Laurentia' ?—G.]

⁷ Tertullian de Cult. fem. cap. 18.

⁸ 2 Sam. xiii. 23–29. ἡδονὴ δόλος κακῶν. Pleasure is the bait of sin, saith Plato.

standing by St Ambrose, and seeing his excellent death, turned to other young men by him, and said, 'Oh, that I might live with you, and die with him.'

Sensual pleasures are like to those locusts, Rev. ix. 7, the crowns upon whose heads are said to be only as it were such, or such in appearance, and like gold; but verse 10, it is said there were—not as it were, but—stings in their tails.

Sensual pleasures are but seeming and appearing pleasures,¹ but the pains that attend them are true and real. He that delights in sensual pleasures, shall find his greatest pleasures become his bitterest pains.

The heathens looked upon the back parts of pleasure, and saw it going away from them, and leaving a sting behind.

Pleasures pass away as soon as they have wearied out the body, and leave it as a bunch of grapes whose juice has been pressed out; which made one to say, *Nulla major voluptas, quam voluptatis fastidium*, I see no greater pleasure in this world than the contempt of pleasure.

Julian, though an apostate, yet professed that the pleasures of the body were far below a great spirit; and Tully saith, he is not worthy of the name of man, *qui unum diem velit esse in voluptate*, that would entirely spend one whole day in pleasures. It is better not to desire pleasures, than to enjoy them. 'I said of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, What dost thou? Eccles. ii. 2. The interrogation bids a challenge to all the masters of mirth, to produce any one satisfactory fruit which it affordeth, if they could.

Xerxes, being weary of all pleasures, promised rewards to the inventors of new pleasures, which being invented, he nevertheless remained unsatisfied. As a bee flieth from flower to flower and is not satisfied, and as a sick man removes from one bed to another, from one seat to another, from one chamber to another for ease, and finds none; so men given up to sensual pleasures go from one pleasure to another, but can find no content, no satisfaction in their pleasures: 'The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing,' Eccles. i. 8. There is a curse of unsatisfiability upon the creature. Honours cannot satisfy the ambitious man, nor riches the covetous man, nor pleasures the voluptuous man. Man cannot take off the weariness of one pleasure by another, for after a few evaporated minutes are spent in pleasures, the body presently fails the mind, and the mind the desire, and the desire the satisfaction, and all the man.

Pleasures are Junos in the pursuit, and but clouds in the enjoyment. Pleasure is a beautiful harlot sitting in her chariot, whose four wheels are pride, gluttony, lust, and idleness. The two horses are prosperity and abundance, the two drivers are idleness and security, her attendants and followers are guilt, grief, late repentance, if any, and oft death and ruin. Many great men, and many strong men, and many rich men, and many hopeful men, and many young men, have come to their ends by her; but never any enjoyed full satisfaction and content in her.²

Ah! young men, young men, avoid this harlot, and come not near the door of her house. And as for lawful pleasures, let me only say this,

¹ They were much out that held pleasure to be man's *summum bonum*.

² Becanus saith, that the fruit of the tree of knowledge is sweet, but in the end it breeds *choler*; so do worldly pleasures.

it is your wisdom only to touch them, to taste them, and to use them, as Mithridates used poison, to fortify yourselves against casual extremities and maladies. When Mr Roger Ascham asked the Lady Jane Grey how she could lose such pastime, her father with the duchess being a-hunting in the park, smilingly answered, All the sport in the park is but a shadow of that pleasure I find in this book,—having a good book in her hand.¹

Augustine, before his conversion, could not tell how to live without those pleasures which he delighted much in, but when his nature was changed, and his heart graciously turned to the Lord, Oh! how sweet, saith he, is it to be without those sweet delights.

Ah! young men, when once you come to experience the goodness and sweetness that is in the Lord, and in his word and ways, you will then sit down and grieve that you have spent more wine in the cup than oil in the lamp.

There are no pleasures so delighting, so satisfying, so ravishing, so engaging, and so abiding as those that spring from union and communion with God, as those that flow from a sense of interest in God, and from an humble and holy walking with God.

Evil 3. The third sin of youth is *rashness*.

They many times know little and fear less, and so are apt rashly to run on, and run out often to their hurt, but more often to their hazard.² 'Exhort young men to be sober-minded or discreet,' Titus ii. 6. They are apt to be rash, to be Hotspurs. As you may see in Rehoboam's young counsellors, who counselled him to tell the people, 1 Kings xii. 8-11, that groaned under their burdens, that 'his little finger should be thicker than his father's loins, and that he would add to their yoke; and that whereas his father had chastised them with whips, he would chastise them with scorpions.' This rash counsel proved Rehoboam's ruin; yea, David himself, though a good man, yet being in his warm blood and young, how sadly was he overtaken with rashness! 'As the Lord God of Israel liveth,' saith he, 'except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal, by to-morrow light, any that pisseth against the wall,' 1 Sam. xxv. 34, 35. And this he binds with an oath. Because the master was foolishly wilful, the innocent servants must all be woful; and because Nabal had been niggardly of his bread, David would be prodigal of his blood.³

Ah! how unlike a Christian, yea, how below a man doth David carry it when his blood is up, and he is a captive to rashness and passion! Rashness will admit of nought for reason, but what unreasonable self shall dictate for reason. As sloth seldom bringeth actions to good birth, so rashness makes them always abortive ere well formed. A rash spirit is an ungodlike spirit; a rash spirit is a weak spirit, it is an effeminate spirit. 'A man of understanding is of an excellent spirit,' or as the Hebrew will bear, is of a cool spirit, not rash and hot, ready at every turn to put out his soul in wrath, Prov. xvii. 27. Rashness unmans a man, it will put a man upon things below manhood. Ero-

¹ The memorable scene when Lady Jane was reading Plato, as quaintly told by the old 'Schoolmaster.'—G.

² Arist. Polit.

³ *Dis proximus ille est, quem ratio, non ira, movet*, He is next to God, whom reason, not anger, moveth.—Seneca. [*De Ira*, very often.—G.]

stratus, a hotspur, an obscure base fellow, did in one night by fire destroy the temple of Diana at Ephesus, which was two hundred and twenty years in building, of all Asia, at the cost of so many princes, and beautified with the labours and cunning of so many excellent workmen. The truth is, there would be no end were I to discover the many sad and great evils that are ushered into the world by that one evil, rashness, which usually attends youth, &c. ; and therefore, young men, decline it, and arm yourselves against it, &c.

Evil 4. The fourth sin that ordinarily attends on youth is, *Mocking and scoffing at religious men and religious things.*

They were young ones that scoffingly and scornfully said to the prophet, 'Go up, thou bald-head; go up, thou bald-head,' 2 Kings ii. 23, 24. And the young men derided and mocked Job: 'But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock. Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction,' &c., Job. xxx. 1, 12-15. And oh! that this age did not afford many such monsters, who are notable, who are infamous in this black art of scoffing and deriding the people of God, and the ways of God!

The Athenians once scoffed at Sylla's [Sulla] wife, and it had well nigh cost the razing of their city, he was so provoked with the indignity;¹ and will you think it safe to scoff at the people of God, who are the spouse of Christ, who are as the apple of his eye, who are the signet on his right hand, his portion, his pleasant portion, his inheritance, his jewels, his royal diadem?² Ah! young men, young men! will you seriously consider how sadly and sorely he hath punished other scoffers and mockers, and by his judgments on them, be warned never to scoff at the people of God or his ways more? Julian the emperor was a great scoffer of Christians; but at last he was struck with an arrow from heaven, that made him cry out, *Vicisti, Galilæe*, thou Galilean—meaning our Saviour Christ—hast overcome me.³ Felix, for one malicious scoff, did nothing day and night but vomit blood, till his unhappy soul was separated from his wretched body. Pherecydes was consumed by worms alive, for giving religion but a nickname. Lucian, for barking against religion like a dog, was, by the just judgment of God, devoured of dogs.⁴ Remember these dreadful judgments of God on scoffers, and if you like them, then mock on, scoff on; but know, that justice will at last be even with you, nay, above you.

Evil 5. The fifth and last evil that I shall mention that attends and waits on youth is, *lustfulness and wantonness.*

Which occasioned aged Paul to caution his young Timothy to 'flee youthful lusts,' 2 Tim. ii. 22. Timothy was a chaste and chastened piece; he was much sanctified and mortified; his graces were high, and corruptions low; he walked up and down this world with dying thoughts, and with a weak, distempered, declining, dying body; his heart was in heaven, and his foot in the grave; and yet youth is such

¹ Plutarch, *Sulla*.—G.

² Cant. v. 1; Zech. ii. 8; Deut. xxxii. 9; Isa. xix. 25; Joel ii. 17; Ps. xxxiii. 12; Isa. lxii. 3.

³ A commonplace of quotation ascribed to Julian.—G.

⁴ Very doubtful.—G.

a slippery age, that Paul commands him to flee, to post from, youthful lusts. Though Timothy was a good man, a weak, sickly man, a marvellous temperate man, drinking water rather than wine, yet he was but a man, yea, a young man; and therefore Paul's counsel and command is, that he 'flee youthful lusts.' And Solomon, who had sadly experienced the slipperiness of youth, gives this counsel: 'Put away the evils of thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity,' Eccles. xi. 10. He was a young man that followed the harlot to her house; he was young in years, and young in knowledge, Prov. vii. 7-11, &c. Salazar upon the words saith: That was a happy age that afforded but one simple young man among many, whereas late times afford greater store. Ah! too many of the youths of this age, instead of flying from youthful lusts, they post and pursue after youthful lusts.

Chrysostom, speaking of youth, saith, it is *difficilem, jactabilem, fallibilem, vehementissimisque egentem frenis*,¹ hard to be ruled, easy to be drawn away, apt to be deceived, and standing in need of very violent reins.

The ancients did picture youth like a young man naked, with a veil over his face; his right hand bound behind him, his left hand loose, and Time behind him pulling one thread out of his veil every day; intimating that young men are void of knowledge, and blind, unfit to do good, ready to do evil; till time, by little and little, make them wiser.² Well! young man, remember this, that the least sparklings and kindlings of lusts will, first or last, cost thee groans and griefs, tears and terrors enough.

These five are the sins that usually are waiting and attending on youth; but from these the young man in the text was by grace preserved and secured, which is more than I dare affirm of all into whose hand this treatise shall fall. But though these five are the sins of youth, yet they are not all the sins of youth; for youth is capable of and subject to all other sins whatsoever; but these are the special sins that most usually wait and attend on young men when they are in the spring and morning of their youth.

CHAPTER IV.

I shall now hasten to the main *use* that I intend to stand upon, and that is an use of *exhortation to all young persons*.

Ah, sirs! as you tender³ the glory of God, the good of your bodies, the joy of your Christian friends, and the salvation of your own souls, be exhorted and persuaded to be really good betimes. It was the praise and honour of Abijah, that 'there was found in him some good thing towards the Lord' in the primrose of his childhood.⁴

Oh! that it might be your honour and happiness to be really good betimes, that it might be to you a praise and a name, that in the morning of your youth you have begun to seek the Lord, and to know and

¹ Chrysost. Homil. i. *Ad populum*.

² A Lapide.

³ 'Regard.'—G.

⁴ Other sins attend youth, as (1.) Ignorance, 1 Cor. xiv. 20; (2.) Falsehood, Ps. lvi. 3; (3.) Excessive love of liberty; (4.) Impatience of counsels and reproofs, Jer. xxxi. 18, 19; (5.) Impudence [insolence], Isa. iii. 5; (6.) A trifling spirit, Eccles. xi. 10; (7.) Prodigality.

love the Lord, and to get an interest and propriety¹ in the Lord. Now that this exhortation may stick and take, I beseech you seriously to weigh and ponder these following motives or considerations :

Motive (1). First consider, *It is an honour to be good betimes*. A young saint is like the morning star ; he is like a pearl in a gold ring. It is mentioned as a singular honour to the believing Jews, that they first trusted in Christ ; 'that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ,' Eph. i. 12. This was their praise, their glory, their crown, that they were first converted and turned to Christ and Christianity. So Paul, mentioning Andronicus and Junia, doth not omit this circumstance of praise and honour, that they were in Christ 'before him,' Rom. xvi. 7. 'Salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow-prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.'

And so it was the honour of the house of Stephanas, that they were the first-fruits of Achaia, 1 Cor. xvi. 15. It was their glory that they were the first that received and welcomed the gospel in Achaia. It is a greater honour for a young man to outwrestle sin, Satan, temptation, the world, and lust, than ever Alexander the Great could attain unto. It was Judah his praise and honour, that they were first in fetching home David their king, 2 Sam. xix. 15.

Ah, young men and women ! it will be your eternal praise and honour if you shall be before others, if you shall be the first among many, who shall know the Lord and seek the Lord ; who shall receive the Lord, and embrace him ; who shall cleave to the Lord, and serve him ; who shall honour the Lord, and obey him ; who shall delight in the Lord, and walk with him. The Romans built Virtue's and Honour's temple close together, to shew that the way to honour was by virtue ; and, indeed, there is no crown to that which goodness sets upon a man's head : all other honour is fading and withering. Adoni-bezek, a mighty prince, is suddenly made fellow-commoner with the dogs, Judges i. 7 ; and Nebuchadnezzar, a mighty conqueror, turned a-grazing among the oxen, Dan. iv. 28 ; and Herod, reduced from a conceited god to be the most loathsome of men, living carrion, arrested by the vilest of creatures, upon the suit of his affronted Creator, Acts xii. 23 ; and Haman, feasted with the king one day, and made a feast for crows the next, Esth. vii. 10. I might tell you of Bajazet and Belisarius, two of the greatest commanders in the world, and many others, who have suddenly fallen from the top of worldly honour and felicity, into the greatest contempt and misery, but I shall not at this time. But that honour that arises from men's being gracious betimes, is such honour that the world can neither give nor take ; it is honour, it is a crown that will still be green and flourishing ; it is honour that will bed and board with a man, that will abide with a man under all trials and changes, that will to the grave, that will to heaven with a man.

Ah, sirs ! it is no small honour to you, who are in the spring and morning of your days, that the Lord hath left upon record several instances of his love and delight in young men. He chose David, a younger brother, and passes by his elder brothers, 1 Sam. xvi. 11-13 ; he frowns upon Esau, and passes by his door, and sets his love and de-

¹ 'Property.'—G.

light upon Jacob the younger brother, Rom. ix. 12, 13 ; he kindly and lovingly accepts of Abel's person and sacrifice, and rejects both Cain's person and sacrifice, though he was the elder brother, Gen. iv. 3-6. Among all the disciples, John was the youngest and the most and best beloved, John xiii. 23. There was but one 'young man' that came to Christ, and he came not aright, Mark x. 19-21 ; and all the good that was in him was but some moral good, and yet Christ loved him with a love of pity and compassion. The Greek word (*ἀγαπᾶν*) signifies, to speak friendly and deal gently with one ; and so did Christ with him, all which should exceedingly encourage young men to be good betimes, to be gracious in the morning of their youth. No way to true honour like this, but,

Motive (2). Secondly, consider, *Christ loved poor sinners and gave himself for them, when he was in the prime of his age* (being supposed to be about thirty and three), *and will you put him off with the worst of your time?*

Ah! young men, young men, Christ gave himself up to death, he made himself an offering for your sins, for your sakes, when he was in the prime and flower of his age;¹ and why then should you put off Christ to an old age? Did he die for sin in the prime of his age? and will not you die to sin in the prime of your age? Did he offer himself for you in the spring and morning of his years? and will not you offer up yourselves to him in the spring and morning of your years? Rom. xii. 1, 2. Oh give not Christ cause to say, I died for you betimes, but you have not lived to me betimes ; I was early in my suffering for you, but you have not been early in your returning to me ; I made haste to complete your redemption, but you have made no haste to make sure your vocation and election, 2 Pet. i. 10 ; I stayed not, I lingered not, but soon suffered what I was to suffer, and quickly did what was to be done for your eternal welfare ; but you have stayed and lingered, like Lot in Sodom, Gen. xix. 16, and have not done what you might have done in order to your everlasting good. In the primrose of my days, I sweat for you, I wept for you, I bled for you, I hung on the cross for you, I bore the wrath of my Father for you ; but you have not in the primrose of your days sweat under the sense of divine displeasure, nor wept over your sins, nor mourned over me, whom you have so often grieved and pierced, Zech. xii. 10. I could not be quiet nor satisfied till I had put you into a capacity, into a possibility of salvation, and yet you are well enough quieted and satisfied, though you do not know whether ever you shall be saved.

Ah, sirs! how sad would it be with you, if Jesus Christ should secretly thus expostulate with your consciences in this your day.

Oh! how terrible would it be with you, if Christ should thus visibly plead against you in his great day. Ah! young men, young men and women, who but souls much left of God, blinded by Satan, and hardened in sin, 2 Cor. 3, 4, can hear Jesus Christ speaking thus to them : I suffered for sinners betimes, I laid down a ransom for souls betimes, I pacified my Father's wrath betimes, I satisfied my Father's justice betimes, I merited grace and mercy for sinners betimes, I brought in

¹ The sacrifices in the law were young lambs and young kids, to shew that Christ our sacrifice should die and suffer for our sins, in the flower of his age.

an everlasting righteousness upon the world betimes, &c. ; I say, who can hear Jesus Christ speaking thus, and his heart not fall in love and league with Christ, and his soul not unite to Christ and resign to Christ, and cleave to Christ, and for ever be one with Christ, except it be such that are for ever left by Christ ? Well, remember this, *Quanto pro nobis vilior, tanto nobis charior*, the more vile Christ made himself for us, the more dear he ought to be unto us.

Ah ! young men, remember this, when Christ was young, he was tempted and tried ; when he was in the morning of his days, his wounds were deep, his burden weighty, his cup bitter, his sweat painful, his agony and torment above conception, beyond expression ; when he was young, that blessed head of his was crowned with thorns ; and those eyes of his, that were purer than the sun, were put out by the darkness of death ;¹ and those ears of his which now hear nothing but hallelujahs of saints and angels, were filled with the blasphemies of the multitude ; and that blessed beautiful face of his, which was fairer than the sons of men, was spit on by beastly filthy wretches ; and that gracious mouth and tongue, that spake as never man spake, was slandered and accused of blasphemy ; and those hands of his, which healed the sick, which gave out pardons, which swayed a sceptre in heaven and another on earth, were nailed to the cross ; and those feet, that were beautiful upon the mountains, that brought the glad tidings of peace and salvation into the world, and that were like unto fine brass, were also nailed to the cross : all these great and sad things did Jesus Christ suffer for you in the prime and flower of his days, and oh ! what an unspeakable provocation² should this be to all young ones, to give up themselves betimes to Christ, to serve, love, honour, and obey him betimes, even in the spring and morning of their youth.

Let the thoughts of a crucified Christ, saith one, be never out of your mind, let them be meat and drink unto you, let them be your sweetness and consolation, your honey and your desire, your reading and your meditation, your life, death, and resurrection.

Motive (3). The third motive or consideration to provoke you to begin to be good betimes, is this, viz., *That it is the best and choicest way in the world, to be rich in gracious experiences betimes*,³ which are the best riches in all the world. As he that sets up for himself betimes is in the most hopeful way to be rich betimes, so he that is good in good earnest betimes, he is in the ready way, the highway of being rich in grace and rich in goodness. They usually prove men of great observation and great experience. God loves to shew these his 'beauty and his glory in his sanctuary.'⁴ He delights to cause 'his glory and his goodness to pass before' such. These shall find all his 'paths drop marrow and fatness.' For these 'the Lord of hosts will make a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.' These shall have all man-

¹ *Nolo vivere sine vulnere, cum te video vulneratum.*—Bonaventura. O my God, as long as I see thy wounds, I will never live without wounds. *Aut Deus naturæ patitur, aut mundi machina dissolvitur*, said Dionysius Alexandrinus ; either the God of nature suffered, or the frame of the world will be dissolved. [Epist. ad Polycarp. : ascribed also to the astronomer Ptolemy.—G.]

² 'Stirring up.'—G.

³ The philosopher once said, *solus sapiens dives*, only the wise man is the rich man.

⁴ Ps. lxxiii. 1, 2 ; Exod. iii. 3, xix. 22, &c. ; Ps. lxx. 11, 12 ; Isa. xxv. 6 ; Cant. vii. 13.

ner of 'pleasant fruits' laid up 'at their gates for their well-beloved.' None have so many choice pledges of Christ's love, nor so many sweet kisses of Christ's mouth, nor so many embraces in Christ's arms, as those souls that are good betimes. Oh the grace, the goodness, the sweetness, the fatness that Christ is still a-dropping into their hearts! Christ will make their hearts his largest treasury, he will lay up most of his heavenly treasure in their souls. There he will store up mercies new and old; there he will treasure up all plenty, rarity, and variety; there he will lay up all that heart can wish or need require. Oh the many drops of myrrh that falls from Christ's fingers upon their hearts! Oh the many secrets that Christ reveals in their ears! Oh the many love-letters that Christ sends to these! Oh the many visits that he gives to these! Oh the turns, the walks, that he hath in paradise with these! There are none in the world for experience and intelligence to these. Ah! young men, young men, as you would be rich in the best riches, begin to be good betimes;¹ as there is no riches to spiritual riches, so there is no way to be rich in these riches, but by beginning to be good, in good earnest, betimes.

As for worldly riches, philosophers have contemned them, and preferred a contemplative life above them, and shall not Christians much more?² The prophet calls them 'thick clay,' which will sooner break the back than lighten the heart; they cannot better the soul, they cannot enrich the soul, Hab. ii. 6. Ah! how many threadbare souls are to be found under silken cloaks and gowns! How often are worldly riches like hangmen, they hide men's faces with a covering, that they may not see their own end, and then they hang them. And if they do not hang you, they will shortly leave you, they 'make themselves wings and fly away,' Prov. xxiii. 5. When one was a-commending the riches and wealth of merchants, I do not love that wealth, said a heathen, that hangs upon ropes; if they break, the ship miscarrieth, and all is lost. He is rich enough, saith Jerome, that lacketh not bread, and high enough in dignity that is not forced to serve.

'This world's wealth, that men so much desire,
May well be likened to a burning fire,
Whereof a little can do little harm,
But profit much our bodies well to warm;
But take too much, and surely thou shalt burn;
So too much wealth to too much woe does turn.'

It was an excellent saying of Lewis of Bauyer,³ emperor of Germany, *Hujusmodi comparanda sunt opes quæ cum naufragio simul enantent*; such goods are worth getting and owning as will not sink or wash away if a shipwreck happen, but will wade and swim out with us. We see such are the spiritual riches that will attend those who, in the spring and morning of their youth, shall know the Lord and serve the Lord, and get an interest in the Lord; and thus much for the third motive.

Motive (4). The fourth motive to provoke young ones to be really good betimes is, to consider that *The present time, the present day, is the only season that you are sure of.*

¹ Earthly riches are full of poverty. *Divitiæ corporales paupertatis plenæ sunt.*

² If there were any happiness in riches, the gods would not want them, saith Seneca. [A frequent sentiment in his Letters.—G.]

³ Bavaria?—G.

Time past cannot be recalled, and time to come cannot be ascertained : 'To-day, if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts,' Heb. iii. 15 ; 'Behold, now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation,' 2 Cor. vi. 2. Some there be that trifle away their time, and fool away their souls and their salvation.¹ To prevent this, the apostle beats upon the *τὸ νῦν*, the present opportunity, because if that be once past, there is no recovering of it. Therefore, as the mariner takes the first fair wind to sail, and as the merchant takes his first opportunity of buying and selling, and as the husbandman takes the first opportunity of sowing and reaping, so should young men take the present season, the present day, which is their day, to be good towards the Lord, to seek him and serve him, and not to post off the present season, for they know not what another day, another hour, another moment, may bring forth. That door of grace that is open to-day may be shut to-morrow ; that golden sceptre of mercy that is held forth in the gospel this day may be taken in the next day : hat love that this hour is upon the bare knee entreating and beseeching young men to break off their sins by repentance, 'to return to the Lord, to lay hold on his strength, and be at peace with him,' may the next hour be turned into wrath, Isa. xxvii. 4, 5.

Ah! the noble motions that have been lost, the good purposes that have withered, the immortal souls that have miscarried, by putting off the present season, the present day. Paul discoursing before Felix of righteousness and temperance and judgment to come, Acts xxiv. 25, and in this discourse striking at two special vices that Felix was particularly guilty of, he falls a-trembling, and being upon the rack to hear such doctrine, he bids Paul 'depart for that time, and he would call for him at a convenient season.' Here Felix neglects his present season, and we never read that ever after this he found a convenient time or season to hear Paul make an end of the subject he had begun. So Christ made a very fair offer to the young man in the Gospel, 'Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven,' Mat. xix. 21-24. Here Christ offers heavenly treasures for earthly treasures, unmixed treasures for mixed treasures, perfect treasures for imperfect treasures, satisfying treasures for unsatisfying treasures, lasting treasures for fading treasures ; but the young man slips his opportunity, his season, and goes away sorrowful, and we never read more of him.

Ah! young men, young men, do not put off the present season, do not neglect the present day. There is no time yours but the present time, no day yours but the present day ; and therefore do not please yourselves and feed yourselves with hopes of time to come, and that you will repent, but not yet, and lay hold on mercy, but not yet, and give up yourselves to the Lord next week, next month, or next year, for that God that hath promised you mercy and favour upon the day of your return, he hath not promised to prolong your lives till that day comes.² When a soldier was brought before Lamacus,³ a commander, for a misbehaviour, and pleaded he would do so no more, Lamacus answered, *Non licet in*

¹ The whole earth hangs on a point ; so doth heaven and eternity on an inch of opportunity.

² Often consider what the damned would give, were it in their hands, for one season of grace, for one opportunity of mercy.

³ Lamachus. Plutarch, *Pericles*.—G.

bello bis peccare, no man must offend twice in war ; so God, especially in these gospel days, wherein the motions of divine justice are more smart and quick than in former days, happily will not suffer men twice to neglect the day of grace, and let slip the season of mercy, Heb. iii. 2.

Ah ! young men, young men, you say you will be good towards the Lord before you die, but if you are not good towards the Lord to-day, you may die to-morrow, nay, justice may leave him to be his own executioner to-morrow, who will not repent, nor seek the Lord to-day. I have read of a certain young man, who, being admonished of the evil of his way and course, and pressed to leave his wickedness by the consideration of death, judgment, and eternity that was a-coming, he answered, What do you tell me of these things? I will do well enough ; for when death comes, I will speak but three words, and will help all ; and so still he went on in his sinful ways, but in the end, coming to a bridge on horseback, to go over a deep water, the horse stumbling, and he labouring to recover his horse, but could not ; at last, he let go the bridle, and gave up himself and horse to the waters, and was heard to say these three words, Devil take all, *Diabolus capiat omnia* ! Here was three dreadful words indeed, and an example, with a witness, for all young men to beware who think to repent with a three-word repentance at last.

Otho, the emperor, slew himself with his own hands, but slept so soundly the night before, that the grooms of his chamber heard him snort.^{1 2}

Young men, I will suppose you to be good accountants ; now if you please to count the number and mark the age of the sacrifices in the Old Testament, you shall find more kids and lambs offered than goats and old sheep. You have no lease of your lives, you are not sure that you shall live to Isaac's age, to live till your eyes wax dim, Gen. xxvii. 1 ; you are not sure that you shall live to Jacob's years, and die leaning upon the top of a staff, Heb. xi. 21. You read of them who 'die in their youth, and whose lives are among the unclean,' Job xxxvi. 14. Slip not the present season, neglect not this day of grace, let not Satan keep your souls and Christ any longer asunder, by telling of you that you are too young, that hereafter will be time enough.³ Austin tells us, that by this very temptation the devil kept him off from receiving of Christ, from closing with Christ seven years together ; he could no sooner think of inquiring after Christ, of getting an interest in Christ, of leaving off his sinful courses, &c., but Satan would be still a-suggesting, Thou art too young to leave thy drunkenness, thou art too young to leave thy Delilahs, to leave thy harlots ; till at last he cried out, How long shall I say it is too soon? why may I not repent to-day? and lay hold on Jesus Christ to-day? &c. Ah ! young men, this is your day, this is your season ; if you will not now hearken and obey, you may perish for ever. Cæsar had a letter given him by Artemidorus that morning he went to the senate, wherein notice was given him of all the conspiracy of his murderers, so that with ease he might have prevented

¹ Suetonius and Plutarch, *Otho*; Dion Cassius, lxiv.—G.

² Plutarch reporteth the like of Cato. [*Sub nomine, i. e.* Cato the younger.—G.]

³ As out of the boughs of a tree are taken wedges to cleave it in pieces, so out of our own lusts Satan works engines to destroy us.

his death, but neglecting the reading of it, was slain; he slipped his season, and dies for it.¹ Ah! how many for slipping gracious seasons and opportunities, have died for ever! Soul-opportunities are more worth than a thousand worlds; mercy is in them, grace and glory is in them, heaven and eternity is in them.

Motive (5). Fifthly, To provoke you to be good betimes, consider, *How just it is with God to reserve the dregs of his wrath for them who reserve the dregs of their days for him.*

How can a husband embrace that wife in her old age, who hath spent all the time of her youth in following after strangers? Will any man receive such into his service, who hath all their days served his enemies, and received such wounds, blows, and bruises, that renders them unfit for his service?

Ah! young men, young men, do not thus 'foolishly and unwisely requite the Lord,' Deut. xxxii. 6, for all his patient waiting, his gracious wooing, and his merciful dealing with you. Ah! do not put off God to old age; for old, lame, and sick sacrifices rarely reach as high as heaven. Is not old age very unteachable? in old age are not men very unapt to take in, and as unapt to give out? In old age, oftentimes, men are men, and no men; they have eyes, but see not, ears, but hear not, tongues, but speak not, feet, but walk not.² An aged man is but a moving anatomy, or a living mortuary. Now how unlovely, how uncomely, how unworthy, nay, how incensing, how provoking a thing must this needs be, when men will dally with God, and put him off till their doating days have overtaken them, till their spring is past, their summer overpast, and they arrived at the fall of the leaf, yea, till winter colours have stained their heads with gray and hoary hairs! How provoking this is, you may see in those sad words of Jeremiah: Jer. xxii. 21, 22, 'I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear: this hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyest not my voice.' But will God put up this at their hands? No. Therefore it follows in the next verse, 'Surely thou shalt be ashamed and confounded for all thy wickedness.'

Oh! that young men would let this scripture lie warm every morning upon their hearts, that so they may not dare to put off God and provoke him to their own commission.³ Though you are young and in your strength, yet are you stronger than God, can you make your party good with him? If you will needs be a-provoking, provoke them that are your matches, and do not contend with him that is mightier than you, that can command you into nothing, or into hell at pleasure.

Motive (6). Sixthly, consider, *That the sooner you are good on earth, the greater will be your reward in heaven.*

The sooner you are gracious, the more at last you will be glorious. You read in the Scripture of a reward, of a great reward, and of a full

¹ Plutarch, *Cæs.* 65; Zonaras, vol. i. p. 491, ed. Paris.—G.

² *Multa senem circumveniunt incommoda, Horatius*, 'Many are the inconveniences that do encompass an old man.' [*Ars Poetica*, 169.—G.] The reproach of the evil of wickedness is not to be added to old age; *Solet enim senectus esse deformis, infirma, obliuiosa, edentula, lucrosa, indocilis et molesta*, saith Plutarch, in *Apothegm Rom.* For old age useth to be deformed, weak, forgetful, toothless, covetous, unteachable, unquiet. [Brooks seems, in the description of 'old age,' to remember Shakespeare's 'sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste,' &c.—*As you like it*, ii. 7. The careful reader will trace numerous tacit references of this kind in Brooks.—G.]

³ Qu. 'confusion'?—Ed.

reward. Now those that are good betimes, that know, seek, serve, and love the Lord in the spring and morning of their youth, they are in the fairest way of gaining the greatest and the fullest reward.¹

And this I shall make clear by that which follows.

(1.) *First, The sooner any man begins to be really good, the more good he will do in this world.* Now, the more good any man doth on earth, the more glory he shall have in heaven. Therefore, my beloved brethren, 'Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord,' 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Man's wages, man's reward, shall be according to his works. He that doth most work here shall have most reward hereafter. God will at last proportion the one to the other, the reward to the work: 'He which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully,' 2 Cor. ix. 6. Though no man shall be rewarded *for* his works, yet God will at last measure out happiness and blessedness to his people *according to* their service, faithfulness, diligence, and work in this world, Rom. ii. 5-7. Grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace at the full; glory is nothing else but a bright constellation of graces; happiness nothing but the quintessence of holiness. Grace and glory differ *non specie, sed gradu*, in degree, not kind, as the learned speak. Grace and glory differ very little; the one is the seed, the other is the flower; grace is glory militant, and glory is grace triumphant; and a man may as well plead for equal degrees of grace in this world, as he may plead for equal degrees of glory in the other world. Surely the more grace here, the more glory hereafter; and the more work Christians do on earth, the more glory they shall have in heaven; and the sooner men begin to be good, the more good they will do in this world; and the more they do here, the more they shall have hereafter. Philosophers seem to weigh our virtues with our vices, and according to the preponderation of either, denominate us good or bad, and so deliver us up to reward or punishment.

No man can commend good works magnificently enough, saith Luther, for one work of a Christian is more precious than heaven and earth; and therefore all the world cannot sufficiently reward one good work. And in another place, saith the same author, 'If I might have my desire, I would rather choose the meanest work of a country Christian or poor maid, than all the victories and triumphs of Alexander the Great, and of Julius Cæsar.'

And, again, whatsoever the saints do, though never so small and mean, it is great and glorious; because they do all in faith and by the word, saith the same author. To prevent mistakes, you must remember, that the works that Jesus Christ will reward at last are supernatural works: they are, 1, works of God; 2, wrought from God; 3, for God; 4, in God; 5, according to God. They are works that flow from supernatural principles, and they are directed to supernatural ends, and performed in a supernatural way. Now the sooner a man begins to be good, the more he will abound in these good works; and the more doubtless any man abounds in such good works on earth, the greater reward he shall have in heaven. Yet it must not be forgotten

¹ Ps. lvi. 11; Gen. xv. 1; Ps. xix. 11; Mat. v. 12; Heb. x. 35; John ii. 8.

that the best actions, the best works of hypocrites, and all men out of Christ, are but *splendida peccata*, fair and shining sins, beautiful abominations. And as the phoenix in Arabia gathers sweet odoriferous sticks together, and then blows them with her wings, and burns herself with them, so many a carnal professor burns himself with his own good works, that is, by his expecting and trusting to receive that by his works that is only to be received and expected from Jesus Christ.¹ Though all that man can do towards the meriting of heaven is no more than the lifting up of a festraw² towards the meriting of a kingdom, yet such a proud piece man is, that he is ready enough to say with proud Vega, *Cælum gratis non accipiam*, I will not have heaven of free cost.³ A proud heart would fain have that of debt which is merely of grace, and desires that to be of purchase which God hath intended to be of free mercy; which made one to say, that he would swim through a sea of brimstone, that he might come to heaven at last; but he that swims not thither through the sea of Christ's blood, shall never come there. Man must swim thither, not through brimstone, but through blood, or he miscarries for ever.

(2.) Again, *the sooner a man begins to be good, the more serviceable he will be to others, and the more he will provoke others to good.* Now, all the good that you provoke others to by counsel or carriage,⁴ shall be put down to your account, as all the sins that men provoke others to is put down to their accounts. David did but send a letter concerning the death of Uriah, and the charge cometh, 'Thou hast slain Uriah with the sword,' 2 Sam. xii. 8, 9. The more I stir up others to sow, the more at last I shall reap, Isa. xxxviii. 3, Neh. xiii. 14. The sooner a man begins to be good, the more good he will do, the more serviceable he will be in the town or city where he dwells, in the family where he lives, among his relations, wife, children, kindred, servants, &c., with whom he converses.⁵

The sooner a man begins to be gracious, the sooner and the more useful will his arts, his parts, his gifts, his graces, his mercies, his experiences, his life, his labours, his prayers, his counsels, his examples, be to all that are with him, to all that are about him.

Lilmod lelammed, we therefore learn that we may teach, is a proverb among the Rabbins. And I do therefore lay in and lay up, saith the heathen, that I may draw forth again, and lay out for the good of many.

Ah! young men, young men! as you would be useful and serviceable to many, begin to be good betimes, and to lay in and lay up and lay out betimes, for the profit and advantage of others. Augustine accounted nothing his own that he did not communicate to others. The bee doth store her hive out of all sorts of flowers for the common benefit. It is a base and unworthy spirit for a man to make himself the centre of all his actions. The very heathen man could say that a man's country, and his friends, and others, challenge a great part of him. And indeed

¹ David made use of his bow. but did not trust to his bow. The dove made use of her wings, but did not trust in her wings, but in the ark.

² That is, 'fescue.' Latin, *festuca*, a wire or straw used to teach the letters = a trifle. Cf. Wright, *sub voce*.—G.

³ *Mercēs non est debita, sed gratuita.*

⁴ 'Life or example.'—G.

⁵ Synesius speaks of some who, having a treasure of rare abilities in them, would as soon part with their hearts as their conceptions; but such are rather monsters than men.

the best way to do ourselves good is to be a-doing good to others ; the best way to gather is to scatter. Memorable is that story of Pyrrhias, a merchant of Ithaca, who at sea espying an aged man, a captive in a pirate's ship, took compassion of him, and redeemed him, and bought his commodities which the pirate had taken from him, which were certain barrels of pitch. The old man perceiving that not for any good service he could do him, nor for the gain of that commodity, but merely out of charity and pity he had done this, discovered a great mass of treasure hidden in the pitch, whereby the merchant in a very short time became very rich ; at which very time God made that word good, 'He that soweth liberally shall reap liberally,' 2 Cor. ix. 6 ; and that word, 'The liberal soul shall be made fat,' Prov. xi. 25 ; and that word, 'The liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand,' Isa. xxxii. 8. It is fabled of Midas, that whatever he touched he turned it into gold. It is certain that a liberal hand, a liberal heart, turns all into gold, into gain, as Scripture and experience do abundantly evidence. Now, if you put all these things together, nothing is more evident than that those that begin to be good betimes are in the ready way, the high way, to be high in heaven when they shall cease from breathing on earth. And therefore, young men, as you would be high in heaven, as you would have a great reward, a full reward, a massy, weighty crown, oh labour to be good betimes ; labour to get acquainted with the Lord, and an interest in the Lord, in the spring and morning of your days !

Motive (7). The seventh motive or consideration to provoke and incite you to be good betimes, is to consider, *That the Lord is very much affected and taken with your seeking of him, and following after him, in the spring and morning of your youth.*

Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, 'I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown,' Jer. ii. 2.

Ah ! how kindly, how sweetly did the Lord take this at their hands, that they followed him in their youth, while their 'bones were full of marrow,' while they were strong and fit for service, while nature was fresh, lively, and vigorous. In the law, God called for the first of all things ; he required not only the first-fruits, but the very first of the first : 'The first of the first fruits of thy land, thou shalt bring into the house of the Lord thy God,' Exod. xxiii. 19. God is the first being, the first good, and therefore deserves the first of the first, and the best of the best ; the first and the best is not too good for him, who is goodness itself.¹ God, in that of Leviticus ii. 14, is so passionately set upon having the first of the first, that he will not stay till the green ears of corn be ripe, but will have the green ears of corn dried in the fire, lest he should lose his longing.

As many young women and sickly children cannot stay till the fruit be ripe, but must have it while it is green ; even so, saith God, my heart, my desires, are so vehemently set upon the first-fruits, the first things, that I cannot stay, I cannot satisfy myself without them ; and what would God teach us by all this, but to serve him with the first-fruits of our age, the primrose of our childhood, the morning of your youth. God hath given you of the best, do not put him off with the worst, with the

¹ It is truly said of God, that he is *Omnia super omnia*.

worst of your time, the worst of your days, the worst of your strength, lest he swear in his wrath that 'you shall never enter into his rest,' Heb. iii. 18.

Motive (8). The eighth motive or consideration to provoke you to be good betimes, to seek and serve the Lord in the morning of your youth, is to consider, that *This may be a special means to prevent many black temptations, and an encouragement to withstand all temptations that you may meet with from a tempting devil and a tempting world.*

An early turning to the Lord will prevent many temptations to despair, many temptations to neglect the means openly, to despise the means secretly ; many temptations about the being of God, the goodness, faithfulness, truth and justice of God ; temptations to despair, temptations to lay violent hands on a man's self. Temptations to question all that God hath said, and that Christ hath suffered, arises many times from men's delaying and putting off of God to the last ; all which, with many others, are prevented by a man's seeking and serving of the Lord in the spring and morning of his youth.¹ It is reported of the harts of Scythia, that they teach their young ones to leap from bank to bank, from rock to rock, from one turf to another, by leaping before them, by which means, when they are hunted, no beast of prey can ever take them ; so when persons exercise themselves in godliness when they are young, when they leap from one measure of holiness to another, when they are in the morning of their days, Satan, that mighty hunter after souls, may pursue them with his temptations, but he shall not overtake them, he shall not prevail over them. As you see in Moses, Joseph, Daniel, and the three children, these knew the Lord, and gave up themselves to the Lord in the prime and primrose of their youth, and these were all temptation-proof, Heb. xi., Gen. xxxix., Dan. iii. Satan and the world pursued them, but could not overtake them. When the devil and the world had done their worst, the young men's bows abode in strength, and their hands to resist were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 23, 24. *Ego non sum ego*, said that young convert when tempted, I am not the man that I was.

Luther tells of a young virgin that used to resist all temptations with this, *Christianus sum*, I am a Christian. Early converts may say, when tempted, as he, Tell me not, Satan, what I have been, but what I am and will be ; or as he in the like case, Whatsoever I was, I am now in Christ a new creature, and that is it which troubleth thee ; or as he, The more desperate my disease was, the more I admire the physician.² Yea, thou mayest yet strain it a peg higher, and say, The greater my sins were, the greater is my honour, as the devils which once Mary Magdalene had, are mentioned for her glory. When Pyrrhus tempted Fabricius the first day with an elephant, so huge and monstrous a beast, as before he had not seen, the next day with money and

¹ Early converts will never have cause to say, as that despairing pope said, the cross could do him no good, because he had so often sold it away.

² Bernard, Beza, Augustine. Such as thou art now, I was once, but such as I am now, thou wilt never be, said Diogenes to a base fellow that told him he had once been a forger of money.

promises of honour, he answered, I fear not thy force, I am too wise for thy fraud.

Ah ! young men, young men, as you would be free from the saddest and darkest temptations, and as you would be armed against all temptations, oh labour as for life to be good betimes ! seek and serve the Lord in the morning of your youth. No way like this for the preventing earthquakes, heartquakes, stormy days, and winter nights, &c.

Motive (9). The ninth motive or consideration to stir up young men to be good betimes, to seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of their youth, is, *To consider the worth and excellency of souls.*

A soul is a spiritual, immortal substance, it is capable of the knowledge of God, it is capable of union with God, of communion with God, and of a blessed and happy fruition of God, Mat. xix. 28 ; Acts vii. 59, 60 ; Philip. i. 23.

Christ left his Father's bosom for the good of souls ; he assumed man's nature for the salvation of man's soul. Christ prayed for souls, he sweat for souls, he wept for souls, he bled for souls, he hung on the cross for souls, he trode the wine-press of his Father's wrath for souls, he died for souls, he rose again from death for souls, he ascended for souls, he intercedes for souls, and all the glorious preparations that he hath been a-making in heaven these sixteen hundred years is for souls, Heb. ii. 13-16 ; Isa. lxiii. 3 ; John xiv. 1-3.

Ah ! young men, young men, do not play the courtier with your precious souls. The courtier doth all things late ; he rises late, dines late, sups late, goes to bed late, repents late.

Ah ! sirs, the good of your souls is before all, and above all other things in the world ; to be first regarded and provided for, and that partly because it is the best and more noble part of man, and partly because therein mostly and properly is the image of God stamped, and partly because it is the first converted, and partly because it shall be the first and most glorified.¹

Ah ! young men, young men, if they be worse than infidels, that make no provision for their families, 1 Tim. v. 8 ; what monsters are they that make not provision for their own souls ! This will be bitterness in the end.

Cæsar Borgias being sick to death, lamentably said, 'When I lived, I provided for everything but death ; now I must die, and am unprovided to die.' This was a dart at his heart, and it will at last be a dagger at yours, who feast your bodies, but starve your souls ; who make liberal provision for your ignoble part, but no provision for your more noble part.

If they deserve a hanging, who feast their slaves, and starve their wives ; that make provision for their enemies, but none for their friend ; how will you escape hanging in hell, who make provision for everything, yea, for your very lusts, but make no provision for your immortal souls ? James iv. 2, 3 ; Hos. vii. 13, 14. We hate the Turks for selling Christians for slaves, and what shall we think then of those who sell themselves, their precious souls, for toys and trifles that cannot profit ? who practically say, what once a profane nobleman of

¹ *O anima 'Dei insignita imagine, desponsata fide, donata spiritu.*—Bernard.

Naples verbally said, viz., that he had two souls in his body, one for God, and another for whosoever would buy it.¹

Ah! young men, young men, do not pawn your souls, do not sell your souls, do not exchange away your souls, do not trifle and fool away your precious souls; they are jewels, more worth than a thousand worlds, yea, than heaven and earth. If they are safe, all is safe; but if they are lost, all is lost: God lost, and Christ lost, and the society of glorious angels and blessed saints lost, and heaven lost, and that for ever. Granetensis tells of a woman that was so affected with souls' miscarryings, that she besought God to stop up the passage into hell with her soul and body, that none might have entrance.

Ah! that all young persons were so affected with the worth and excellency of their souls, and so alarmed with the hazard and danger of losing their souls, as that they may in the spring and morning of their days inquire after the Lord, and seek him, and serve him with all their might, that so their precious and immortal souls may be safe and happy for ever. But if all this will not do, then in the last place,

Motive (10). Tenthly, Consider, young men, *That God will at last bring you to a reckoning.* He will at last bring you to judgment. 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee unto judgment,' Eccles. xi. 9. In these words you have two things: (1.) An ironical concession; he bids him rejoice, &c.; he yields him what he would have, by an irony, by way of mockage and bitter scoff. Now thou art young and strong, lively and lusty, and thy bones are full of marrow; thou art resolved to be proud and scornful, to indulge the flesh, and to follow thy delights and pleasures. Well! take thy course if thou darest, or if thou hast a mind to it, if thy heart be so set upon it. 'Rejoice in thy youth,' &c. (2.) The second is a commination, or a sad and severe premonition:² 'But know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment. 'Will bring thee;' these words import two things: first, the unwillingness of youth to come to judgment; secondly, the unavoidableness that youth must come to judgment; but how soon you shall be brought to judgment, is only known to God.

Augustine confesses in one of his books, that as long as his conscience was gnawed with the guilt of some youthful lust he was once ensnared with, the very hearing of a day of judgment, was even a hell to him.

Histories tell us of a young man, who being for some capital offence condemned to die, grew grey in one night's space, and was therefore pitied and spared.

Ah! young men, young men, that the serious thoughts of this great day, may put you upon breaking off the sins of your youth; and the dedicating of yourselves to the knowledge, love, and service of the Lord, in the spring and flower of your days. Ah! young men, consider the errors of your lives, the wickedness of your hearts, the sinfulness of

¹ *Callenuceus* relates this story.

² Jerome still thought that that noise was in his ears, *Surgite mortui, et venite ad judicium*, Arise, you dead, and come to judgment.

your ways, and that strict account that ere long you must be brought to before the judge of all the world.

The heathens themselves had some kind of dread and expectation of such a day; and therefore, when Paul spake of judgment to come, Felix trembled, though a heathen, Acts xxiv. 25.

The bringing into judgment is a thing which is known by reason, and is clear by the light of nature;¹ wherefore, in Austria, one of the nobles dying, who had lived fourscore and thirteen years, and had spent all his life in pleasures and delights, never being troubled with any infirmity, and this being told to Frederick the emperor, From hence, saith he, we may conclude the soul's immortality; for if there be a God that ruleth this world, as divines and philosophers do teach, and that he is just no one denieth, surely there are other places to which souls after death do go, and do receive for their deeds either reward or punishment, for here we see that neither rewards are given to the good, nor punishments to the evil.²

Ah, young men! 'knowing therefore the terror of the Lord,' 2 Cor. v. 9-11, and the terror of this day, oh! that you would be persuaded to flee from the wrath to come, to cast away the idols of your souls, to repent and be converted in the primrose of your youth, that your sins may be blotted out when 'the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord,' Acts iii. 19, or else woe! woe! to you that ever you were born! I have read a story of one who, being risen from the dead, and being asked in what condition he was, he made answer, No man doth believe, no man doth believe, no man doth believe. And being further asked what he meant by that repetition, he answered, No man doth believe how exactly God examineth, how strictly God judgeth, how severely he punisheth. Oh that the ways of most young persons did not declare to all the world that they do not, and that they will not believe the dread and terror of that day that will admit of no plea, nor place for apology or appeal! The highest and last tribunal can never be appealed from, or repealed.³

Now if, for all that hath been said, you are resolved to spend the flower of your days, and the prime of your strength, in the service of sin and the world, then know that no tongue can express, no heart can conceive that trouble of mind, that terror of soul, that horror of conscience, that fear and amazement, that weeping and wailing, that crying and roaring, that sighing and groaning, that cursing and banning, that stamping and tearing, that wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth, that shall certainly attend you, when God shall bring you into judgment for all your looseness and lightness, for all your wickedness and wantonness, for all your profaneness and baseness, for all your neglect of God, your grieving the Comforter, your trampling under foot the blood of a Saviour, for your despising of the means, for your prizing earth above heaven, and the pleasures of this world above the pleasures that be at God's right hand.⁴

¹ The philosophers had some dreams of a severe day of accounts, as appeareth by Plato's *Georgi* [*Gorgias*], and many passages in Tully, &c.

² Æneas Sylvius.

³ The Turks have a tradition and frantic opinion, that wicked men shall at the great day carry their sins in hutchets [Qu. 'satchels'?—G.] after their captain, Cain; but well would it be for them if this should be all their punishment in that great day.

⁴ Chrysostom, speaking of this day, saith, For Christ at this day to say, Depart from me, is a thing more terrible than a thousand hells.—*Chrys. Hom. ad Pop. Antioch.*

Oh ! how will you wish in that day when your sins shall be charged on you, when justice shall be armed against you, when conscience shall be gnawing within you, when the world shall be a flaming fire about you, when the gates of heaven shall be shut against you, and the flame of hell ready to take hold of you, when angels and saints shall sit in judgment upon you, and for ever turn their faces from you, when evil spirits shall be terrifying of you, and Jesus Christ for ever disowning of you ; how will you, I say, wish in that day that you had never been born, or that you might now be unborn, or that your mothers' wombs had proved your tombs ! Oh, how will you then wish to be turned into a bird, a beast, a stock, a stone, a toad, a tree ! Oh that our immortal souls were mortal ! Oh that we were nothing ! Oh that we were anything but what we are !

I have read a remarkable story of a king¹ that was heavy and sad, and wept, which, when his brother saw, he asked him why he was so pensive ? Because, saith he, I have judged others, and now I must be judged myself. And why, saith his brother, do you so take on for this ? it will, happily, be a long time ere that day come, and besides that, it is but a slight matter. The king said little to it for the present. Now, it was a custom in that country, when any had committed treason, there was a trumpet sounded at his door in the night time, and he was next day brought out to be executed. Now, the king commanded a trumpet to be sounded at his brother's door in the night-time, who, awakening out of his sleep, when he heard it, arose, and came quaking and trembling to the king. How now ? saith the king ; what's the matter you are so affrighted ? I am, saith he, attached of treason, and next morning I shall be executed. Why, saith the king to him again, are you so troubled at that, knowing that you shall be judged by your brother, and for a matter that your conscience tells you you are clear of ? How much more, therefore, may I be afraid, seeing that God shall judge me, and not in a matter that my conscience frees me of, but of that whereof I am guilty ? And beside this, if the worst come, it is but a temporary² death you shall die, but I am liable to death eternal, both of body and soul. I will leave the application to those young persons that put this day afar off, and whom no arguments will move to be good betimes, and to acquaint themselves with the Lord in the morning of their youth.

But now to those young men and women who begin to seek, serve, and love the Lord in the primrose of their days, the day of judgment will be to them *melodia in aure, jubilum in corde*, like music in the ear, and a jubilee in the heart. This day will be to them 'a day of refreshing,' a 'day of redemption,' a day of vindication, a day of coronation, a day of consolation, a day of salvation ; it will be to them a marriage-day, a harvest-day, a pay-day.³ Now the Lord will pay them for all the prayers they have made, for all the sermons they have heard, for all the tears they have shed. In this great day Christ will remember all the individual offices of love and friendship shewed to any of his. Now he will mention many things for their honour and comfort

¹ Joan. Damasc. et Author. Anonym. *De quat. Noviss. Impress. Daven.* Ann. 1494.

² 'Temporal.'—G.

³ Acts iii. 19–22, Micah vii. 7–11, Rev. xix. 6–10, Mat. xxv. 34–41.

that they never minded, now the least and lowest acts of love and pity towards his shall be interpreted as a special kindness shewed to himself. Now the crown shall be set upon their heads, and the royal robes put upon their backs; now all the world shall see that they have not served the Lord for nought.¹ Now Christ will pass over all their weaknesses, and make honourable mention of all the services they have performed, of all the mercies they have improved, and of all the great things that for his name and glory they have suffered.

CHAPTER V.

Quest. But here an apt question may be moved, viz., *Whether at this great day, the sins of the saints shall be brought into the judgment of discussion and discovery, or no? Whether the Lord will in this day publicly manifest, proclaim, and make mention of the sins of his people, or no?*

I humbly judge, according to my present light, that he will not; and my reasons for it are these, viz.:

1. The first is drawn from Christ's judicial proceedings in the last day, set down largely and clearly in the 25th of Matthew, where he enumerateth only the good works they had done, but takes no notice of the spots and blots, of the stains and blemishes, of the infirmities and enormities, of the weaknesses and wickednesses of his people, Deut. xxxii. 4-6. My,

2. Second reason is taken from Christ's vehement protestations that they shall not come into judgment: John v. 24, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.' Those words, 'shall not come into condemnation,' are not rightly translated; the original is, *οὐκ ᾔσθαι*, shall not come into judgment, not into damnation, as you read it in all your English books. I will not say what should put men upon this exposition rather than a true translation of the original word.² Further, it is very observable, that no evangelist useth this double asseveration but John, and he never useth it but in matters of the greatest weight and importance, and to shew the earnestness of his spirit, and to stir us up to better attention, and to put the thing asserted out of all question, and beyond all contradiction;³ as when we would put a thing for ever out of all question, we do it by a double asseveration, Verily, verily, it is so, &c.

3 Thirdly, Because his not bringing their sins into judgment doth most and best agree with many precious expressions that we find scattered, as so many shining, sparkling pearls, up and down in Scripture, as, *First*, (1.) With those of God's blotting out the sins of his people: 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' 'I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins,' Isa. xlii. 25, xlv. 22. Who is this that blots out transgressions? He that hath the keys of heaven

¹ 2 Tim. iv 8, Mal. iii, 17, 18.

² Vide Aquin 87, Suppl. Estius. in l. iv. Sen. dist. 47.

³ John i. 51; iii. 3, 11; vi. 26, 32, 47, 53, &c.

and hell at his girdle, that opens and no man shuts, that shuts and no man opens ; he that hath the power of life and death, of condemning and absolving, of killing and making alive, he it is that blots out transgressions. If an under-officer should blot out an indictment, that perhaps might do a man no good, a man might for all that be at last cast by the judge ; but when the judge or king shall blot out the indictment with their own hand, then the indictment cannot return. Now this is every believer's case and happiness. (2.) *Secondly*, To those glorious expressions of God's not remembering of their sins any more : Isa. xliii. 25, 'And I will not remember thy sins.' 'And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord : for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more,' Jer. xxxi. 34. So the apostle, 'For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more,' Heb. viii. 12.

And again the same apostle saith, 'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them ; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more,' Heb. x. 17.

The meaning is, their iniquities shall quite be forgiven, I will never mention them more, I will never take notice of them more, they shall never hear more of them from me. Though God hath an iron memory to remember the sins of the wicked, yet he hath no memory to remember the sins of the righteous.' (3.) *Thirdly*, His not bringing their sins into judgment doth most and best agree with those blessed expressions of his casting their sins into the depth of the sea, and of his casting them behind his back : 'He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea,' Micah vii. 19. Where sin is once pardoned, the remission stands never to be repealed. Pardoned sins shall never come in account against the pardoned man before God any more, for so much doth this borrowed speech import. If a thing were cast into a river, it might be brought up again ; or if it were cast upon the sea, it might be discerned and taken up again ; but when it is cast into the depths, the bottom of the sea, it can never be buoyed up again.

By the metaphor in the text, the Lord would have us to know the sins pardoned shall rise no more, they shall never be seen more, they shall never come on the account more ; he will so drown their sins, that they shall never come up before him the second time.

And so much that other scripture imports : 'Behold, for peace I had great bitterness, but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption ; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back,' Isa. xxxviii. 17. These last words are a borrowed speech, taken from the manner of men, who are wont to cast behind their backs such things as they have no mind to see, regard, or remember. A gracious soul hath always his sins before his face : 'I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me ;' and therefore no wonder if the Lord cast them behind his back. The father soon forgets and casts behind his back

¹ That which Cicero said flatteringly of Cæsar is truly affirmed of God, *Nil oblivisciet præter injurias*, he forgetteth nothing but the wrongs that daily are done him by his.

those faults that the child remembers and hath always in his eyes ; so doth the Father of spirits. (4.) Fourthly, His not bringing their sins into judgment doth best agree with that sweet and choice expression of God's pardoning the sins of his people : ' And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me ; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me,' Jer. xxxiii. 8. So Micah : ' Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passes by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage (as though he would not see it, but wink at it), he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy,' Micah vii. 18. The Hebrew word *rose*, from *nasa*, that is here rendered *pardoneth*, signifies a taking away. When God pardons sin, he takes it sheer away : that it should be sought for, yet it could not be found, as the prophet speaks : ' In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none ; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found ; for I will pardon them whom I reserve,' Jer. i. 20 ; and those words, ' and passeth by,' in the a'fore-cited 7th of Micah, and the 18th, according to the Hebrew *Veg-nobher Gnal*, is, and ' passeth over ;' God passeth over the transgression of his heritage, that is, he takes no notice of it. As a man in a deep muse, or as one that hath haste of business, seeth not things before him, his mind being busied about other matters, he neglects all to mind his business ; as David, when he saw in Mephibosheth the feature of his friend Jonathan, took no notice of his lameness, or any other defect or deformity ; so God, beholding in his people the glorious image of his Son, winks at all their faults and deformities, which made Luther say, ' Do with me what thou wilt, since thou hast pardoned my sin ;' and what is it to pardon sin but not to mention sin ? Isa. xl. 1, 2. (5.) Fifthly, In his not bringing their sins into the judgment of discussion and discovery, doth best agree to those expressions of forgiving and covering : ' Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered,' Ps. xxxii. 1. In the original it is in the plural, blessednesses. So here is a plurality of blessings, a chain of pearls.

The like expression you have in the 85th psalm, and the 2d verse : ' Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.' For the understanding of these scriptures aright, take notice that to ' cover ' is a metaphorical expression. Covering is such an action which is opposed to disclosure.² To be covered is to be so hid and closed as not to appear. Some make the metaphor from filthy, loathsome objects, which are covered from our eyes, as dead carcases are buried under the ground ; some from garments, that are put upon us to cover our nakedness ; others from the Egyptians, that were drowned in the Red Sea, and so covered with water ; others from a great gulf in the earth, that is filled up and covered with earth injected into it ; and others make it in the last place an allusive expression to the mercy-seat, over which was a covering. Now, all these metaphors in the general tend to shew this, that the Lord will not look, he will not see, he will not take notice of the sins he hath pardoned, to call them any more to a judicial account.

As when a prince reads over many treasons and rebellions, and meets with such and such which he hath pardoned, he reads on, he passeth

¹ עבר, Gnabar, he passed over.

² Sic velantur, ut in judicio non revelentur.

by, he takes no notice of them : the pardoned person shall never hear more of them, he will never call him to account for those sins more ; so here, &c. When Cæsar was painted, he put his finger upon his scar, his wart. God puts his fingers upon all his people's scars and warts, upon all their weaknesses and infirmities, that nothing can be seen but what is fair and lovely : 'Thou art all fair, my love ; and there is no spot in thee,' Cant. iv. 7. (6.) Sixthly, It best agrees to that expression of not imputing of sin : 'Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile,' Ps. xxxii. 2. So the apostle in that Rom. iv. 6-8. Now, not to impute iniquity is not to charge iniquity, not to set iniquity upon his score, who is blessed and pardoned, &c. (7.) Seventhly and lastly, It best agrees with that expression that you have in the 103d Psalm, and the 11th and 12th verses : 'For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.' What a vast distance is there betwixt the east and the west ! Of all visible latitudes, this is the greatest ; and thus much for the third argument. The

4. Fourth argument that prevails with me, to judge that Jesus Christ will not bring the sins of the saints into the judgment of discussion and discovery in the great day, is because it seems unsuitable to three considerable things, for Jesus Christ to proclaim the infirmities and mis-carriages of his people to all the world.

(1.) First, It seems to be unsuitable to the glory and solemnity of that day, which to the saints will be a day of refreshing, a day of restitution, a day of redemption, a day of coronation, as hath been already proved. Now how suitable to this great day of solemnity the proclamation of the saints' sins will be, I leave the reader to judge.

(2.) Secondly, It seems unsuitable to all those near and dear relations that Jesus Christ stands in towards his. He stands in the relation of a father, a brother, a head, a husband, a friend, an advocate. Now are not all these, by the law of relations, bound rather to hide and keep secret, at least from the world, the weaknesses and infirmities of their near and dear relations ? and is not Christ ? Is not Christ much more ? By how much he is more a father, a brother, a head, a husband, &c., in a spiritual way, than any others can be in a natural way, &c.¹

(3.) Thirdly, It seems very unsuitable to what the Lord Jesus requires of his in this world. The Lord requires that his people should cast a mantle of love, of wisdom, of silence, and secrecy over one another's weaknesses and infirmities.

Hatred stirreth up strifes, but love covereth all sins, Prov. x. 12, 1 Pet. iv. 8. Love's mantle is very large ; love will find a hand, a plaster to clap upon every sore. Flavius Vespasianus, the emperor, was very ready to conceal his friends' vices, and as ready to reveal their virtues. So is divine love in the hearts of the saints : 'If thy brother offend thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone : if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother,' Mat. xviii. 15. As the pills of reprehension are to be gilded and sugared over with much gentleness and softness, so they are to be given in secret ; tell him between him and thee alone. Tale-bearers and tale-hearers are alike abominable,

¹ Isa. ix. 6 ; Heb. ii. 11, 12 ; Ephes. i. 21, 22 ; Rev. xix. 7 ; John xv. 1 ; John ii. 1, 2.

heaven is too hot and too holy a place for them, Ps. xv. 3. Now will Jesus Christ have us carry it thus towards offending Christians, and will he himself act otherwise? Nay, is it an evil in us to lay open the weaknesses and infirmities of the saints to the world? and will it be an excellency, a glory, a virtue in Christ to do it in the great day? &c.

A fifth argument is this: It is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression: 'The discretion of a man deferreth his anger: and it is his glory to pass over a transgression,' Prov. xix. 11, or to pass by it, as we do by persons or things we know not, or would take no notice of. Now 'is it the glory of a man to pass over a transgression,' and will it not much more be the glory of Christ, silently to pass over the transgressions of his people in that great day? The greater the treasons and rebellions are that a prince passes over and takes no notice of, the more is it his honour and glory; and so, doubtless, it will be Christ's in that great day, to pass over all the treasons and rebellions of his people, to take no notice of them, to forget them, as well as to forgive them.

The heathens have long since observed, that in nothing man came nearer to the glory and perfection of God himself, than in goodness and clemency. Surely if it be such an honour to man, 'to pass over a transgression,' it cannot be a dishonour to Christ to pass over the transgressions of his people, he having already buried them in the sea of his blood. Again, saith Solomon, 'It is the glory of God to conceal a thing,' Prov. xxv. 2. And why it should not make for the glory of divine love to conceal the sins of the saints in that great day, I know not; and whether the concealing the sins of the saints in that great day will not make most for their joy, and wicked men's sorrow, for their comfort and wicked men's terror and torment, I will leave you to judge, and time and experience to decide. And thus much for the resolution of that great question. Having done with the motives that may encourage and provoke young men to be good betimes, to know, love, seek, and serve the Lord, in the spring and morning of their days.

CHAPTER VI.

I shall now come to those directions and helps that must, by assistance from heaven, be put in practice, if ever you would be good betimes, and serve the Lord in the primrose of your days. Now all that I shall say will fall under these two heads.

First, Some things you must carefully and warily decline, and arm yourselves against; and

Secondly, There are other things that you must prosecute and follow. 1st, *There are some things that you must warily decline*, and they are these.

Direction (1). First, If ever you would be good betimes, if you would be gracious in the spring and morning of your youth, oh! then, *take heed of putting the day of death far from you*, Amos vi. 3.

Young men are very prone to look upon death afar off, to put it at a great distance from them. They are apt to say to death as Pharaoh said to Moses, 'Get thee from me, and let me see thy face no more,'

¹ *Non amo quemquam nisi offendam*, said a heathen.

Exod. x. 28. If old men discourse to them of death, they are ready to answer, as the high priest did Judas in a different case, Mat. xxvii. 4, 'What is that to us? look you unto it.' We know sickness will come, and death is a debt that we must all pay, but surely these guests are a great way from us; for doth not David say, 'The days of a man are threescore years and ten'? Ps. xc. 10. We have calculated our nativities, and we cannot abate a day, a minute, a moment, of 'threescore and ten;' and therefore it is even a death to think of death; there being so great a distance between our birth-day and our dying day, as we have cast up the account.

Ah! young men, it is sad, it is very sad, when you are so wittily wicked as to say with those in Ezekiel, 'Behold they of the house of Israel say, the vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are afar off,' Ezek. xii. 27.

Ah! young men, young men, by putting far away this day you gratify Satan, you strengthen sin, you provoke the Lord, you make the work of faith and repentance more hard and difficult, you lay a sad foundation for the greatest fears and doubts.

Ah! how soon may that sad word be fulfilled upon you, 'The Lord of that servant (that saith his Lord delayeth his coming) shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder (or cut him off), and appoint him his portion with hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,' Mat. xxiv. 48-51. When Sodom, when Pharaoh, when Agag, when Amalek, when Haman, when Herod, when Nebuchadnezzar, when Belshazzar, when Dives, when the fool in the Gospel, were all in their prime, their pride, when they were all in a flourishing state, and upon the very top of their glory, how strangely, how suddenly, how sadly, how fearfully, how wonderfully, were they brought down to the grave, to hell!

Ah! young man, who art thou? and what is thy name or fame? what is thy power or place? what is thy dignity or glory? that thou dardest promise thyself an exemption from sharing in as sad a portion as ever justice gave to those who were once very high, who were seated among the stars, but are now brought down to the sides of the pit, Isa. xiii. 10-17. I have read a story of one that gave a young prodigal a ring with a death's head, on this condition, that he should one hour daily, for seven days together, look and think upon it; which bred a great change in his life.

Ah! young men, the serious thoughts of death may do that for you that neither friends, counsel, examples, prayers, sermons, tears, have not done to this very day. Well! remember this; to labour not to die is labour in vain, and to put this day far from you, and to live without fear of death, is to die living. Death seizeth on old men, and lays wait for the youngest. Death is oftentimes as near to the young man's back as it is to the old man's face.¹

It is storied of Charles the Fourth, king of France, that being one time affected with the sense of his many and great sins, he fetched a deep sigh, and said to his wife, By the help of God I will now so carry

¹ *Senibus mors in januis; adolescentibus in insidiis.*—Bernard. *De convers. ad Cler.*, c. 14.

myself all my life long, that I will never offend him more ; which words he had no sooner uttered, but he fell down dead and died.¹

Do not, young men, put this day far from you, lest you are suddenly surprised, and then you cry out, when too late, 'A kingdom for a Christ, a kingdom for a Christ ; as once crooked-backed Richard the Third in his distress, 'A kingdom for a horse, a kingdom for a horse.'²

Ah ! young men, did you never hear of a young man that cried out, 'Oh ! I am so sick, that I cannot live, and yet, woful wretch that I am ! so sinful, that I dare not die. Oh that I might live ! oh that I might die ! oh that I might do neither !' Well ! young men, remember this, the frequent, the serious thoughts of death will prevent many a sin, it will arm you against many temptations, it will secure you from many afflictions, it will keep you from doating on the world, it will make you do much in a little time, it will make death easy when it comes, and it will make you look out betimes for a kingdom that shakes not, for riches that corrupt not, and for glory that fadeth not away. Therefore do not, Oh do not put the day of death far from you. Take heed of crying *Cras, cras*, to-morrow, to-morrow, saith Luther ; for a man lives forty years before he knows himself to be a fool, and by that time he sees his folly his life is finished. So men die before they begin to live.

Direction (2). Secondly, If you would be good betimes, then take heed of *leaning to your own understanding*.

This counsel wise Solomon gives to his son (or the young men in his time) : 'My son, forget not my law ; but let thy heart keep my commandments. Trust in the Lord with all thy heart ; and lean not to thy own understanding,' Prov. iii. 1, 5.

Youth is the age of folly, of vain hopes, and overgrown confidence. Ah ! how wise might many have been, had they not been too early wise in their own opinion.

Rehoboam's young counsellors proved the overthrow of his kingdom. It is brave for youth at all times to be discreet and sober-minded. Three virtues, they say, are prime ornaments of youth, modesty, silence, and obedience.

Ah ! young men, keep close in every action to this one principle, viz., in every action resolve to be discreet and wise, rather than affectionate³ and singular.

I remember that a young gentleman of Athens, being to answer for his life, hired an orator to make his defence, and it pleased him well at his first reading ; but when the young man by often reading it, that he might recite it publicly by heart, begun to grow weary and displeased with it, the orator bid him consider that the judges and the people were to hear it but once : and then it was likely that they at the first instant might be as well pleased as he.

Ah ! young men, your leaning upon yourselves, or upon others, will in the end be bitterness and vexation of spirit. Young men are very apt to lean on their own wit, wisdom, arts, parts, as old men are to lean

¹ Doubtful.—G.

² Another tacit Shakesperian reminiscence probably. Cf. Richard III. v. 4. 'A horse ! a horse ! my kingdom for a horse !'—G.

³ Affected.—G.

on a staff to support them (as the Hebrew word [פֶּרֶךְ, *shagnan*] signifies, that is rendered *lean*, in that of Prov. iii. 5). This hath been the bane of many a choice wit, the loss of many a brave head, the ruin of many a subtle pate.

Ajax thought it was only for cowards and weaklings to lean upon the Lord for succour, not for him when he was foiled; lean not to great parts, lean not to natural or acquired accomplishments, lest you lose them and yourselves too. Leaning to natural or moral excellencies, is the ready way to be stripped of all. Babylon, that bore herself bold upon her high towers, thick walls, and twenty years' provision laid in for a siege, was surprised by Cyrus.¹

It was said of Cæsar, that he received not his wounds from the swords of enemies, but from the hands of friends; that is, from trusting in them.

Ah! how many young men have been wounded, yea slain, by trusting to their own understandings, their own abilities!

It was an excellent saying of Austin, *In te stas, et non stas*, he that stands upon his own strength shall never stand. A creature is like a single drop left to itself, it spends and wastes itself presently, but if like a drop in the fountain and ocean of being, it hath abundance of security.

Ah! young men, young men, if you will needs be leaning, then lean upon precious promises, 2 Peter i. 4, Ps. xxvii. 1; lean upon the rock that is higher than yourselves, lean upon the Lord Jesus Christ, as John did, who was the youngest of all the disciples, and the most beloved of all the disciples, John xxi. 20, chap. xiii. 23. John leaned much, and Christ loved him much. Oh lean upon Christ's wisdom for direction, lean upon his power for protection, lean upon his purse, his fulness, for provision, Cant. viii. 5; lean upon his eye for approbation, lean upon his righteousness for justification, lean upon his blood for remission, lean upon his merits for salvation. As the young vine, without her wall to support her, will fall and sink, so will you, young men, without Christ puts under his everlasting arms to support you, and uphold you; therefore, above all leanings, lean upon him. By leaning on him, you will engage him; by leaning on him, you will gain more honour than you can give; by leaning on him, you may even command him, and make him eternally yours, &c.

Direction (3). Thirdly, If you would be good betimes, if you would seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your days, then *take heed of flatterers and flattery*. Ah! how many young men might have been very good, who are now exceeding bad, by hearkening to flatterers, and affecting² flattery! Flattery undid young Rehoboam, Ahab, Herod, Nero, Alexander, &c. Flatterers are soul-murderers; they are soul-undoers; they are like evil chirurgeons, that skin over the wound, but never heal it.

Anastasius the emperor's motto was, *mellitum venenum blanda oratio*, smooth talk proves often sweet poison. Flattery is the very spring and mother of all impiety; it blows the trumpet, and draws poor souls into rebellion against God, as Sheba drew Israel to rebel against David. It put our first parents upon tasting the forbidden

¹ Cf. Sibbes's Works, Vol. II. pp. 217, 248.—G.

² 'Courting.'—G.

fruit; it put Absalom upon dethroning of his father; it put Haman upon plotting the ruin of the Jews; it put Korah, Dathan, and Abiram upon rebelling against Moses; it makes men call evil good and good evil, darkness light and light darkness, &c.; it puts persons upon neglecting the means of grace, upon undervaluing the means of grace, and upon contemning the means of grace; it puts men upon abasing God, slighting Christ, and vexing the Spirit; it unmans a man; it makes him call black white and white black; it makes a man change pearls for pebbles, and gold for counters; it makes a man judge himself wise when he is foolish; knowing, when he is ignorant; holy, when he is profane; free, when he is a prisoner; rich, when he is poor; high, when he is low; full, when he is empty; happy, when he is miserable,¹ Rev. iii. 17, 18. Ah! young men, young men, take heed of flatterers; they are the very worst of sinners; they are left of God, blinded by Satan, hardened in sin, and ripened for hell. God declares sadly against them, and that in his word and in his works: in his word, as you may see by comparing these scriptures together, Deut. xxix. 18–20; Ps. lxxviii. 36, xxxvi. 1, 3; Job xvii. 5; Ezek. xii. 24; Dan. xi. 21, 32, 34. Ps. xii. 2, 3, ‘They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips, and with a double heart, do they speak. The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things.’² And as God declares sadly against them in his word, so he hath declared terribly against them in his works, as you may run and read in his judgments executed upon Ahab’s flattering prophets, and upon Haman, and upon Daniel’s princely false accusers, &c. And why, then, will not you stop your ears against those wretches, that the hand and heart of God is so much against?

Again, as God declares against them, so good men detest them and declare against them, as you may see by comparing these scriptures together, Ps. v. 8–10; Prov. ii. 16, vii. 21, xxviii. 23; Job xxxii. 21, 22; 1 Thes. ii. 5, 10. Prov. xx. 19, ‘Meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.’ Why so? Why! Because a man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet, Prov. xxix. 5. The Hebrew word *Mahhalik*, from *hhalak*, that is here rendered flatterer, signifies a smooth-boots, a soft butter-spoken man, because flatterers use smooth, soft speeches. Also the word signifies ‘to divide,’ because a flatterer’s tongue is divided from his heart. Flatterers have their nets, and those that give ear to them will be taken to their ruin.³ A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it, ‘and a flattering mouth worketh ruin,’ Prov. xxvi. 28. A flattering mouth ruins name, fame, estate, body, soul, life.⁴

Valerian, the Roman emperor, used to say, *Non acerba, sed blanda*, not bitter, but flattering words do all the mischief.

When Alexander the Great was hit with an arrow in the siege of an Indian city, which would not heal, he said to his parasites, You say that I am Jupiter’s son, but this wound cries that I am but a man.

¹ The flatterers told Dionysius that his spittle was as sweet as honey.

² *Karah* signifies any cutting off, either by death or banishment, &c.

³ A preacher in Constantine’s time presumed to call the emperor saint to his face, but he went away with a check.—*Euseb. de vit. Const.* l. 44.

⁴ The Hebrew word *דָּהָהָה*, *Dahhah*, signifies such a violent forcing of one as he cannot stand it, signifies to throw down, to drive on forwards till a man fall into destruction.

Now shall good men detest them and abhor them, as they are the pest of pests, the plague of plagues, and will you own them, will you take pleasure in them, to your ruin here and hereafter? The Lord forbid! Oh say to all flatterers, as he to his idols, 'Get you hence, for what have I more to do with you?' Hosea xiv. 8.

Nay, once more consider, that not only the good, but the bad, not only the best, but some of the worst of men, have manifested their detestation of flatterers and flattery.

Leo the emperor used to say, *Occulti inimici pessimi*, a close enemy is far worse than an open. When a court parasite praised Sigismund the emperor above measure, the emperor gave him a sound box on the ear.

When Aristobulus the historian presented to Alexander, the great book that he had written of his glorious acts, wherein he had flatteringly made him greater than he was, Alexander, after he had read the book, threw it into the river Hydaspes, and said to the author, It were a good deed to throw thee after it.

When the flatterers flattered Antigonus, he cried out, *Mentiris, mentiris in gutture, hæ virtutes non latent in me*, thou liest, thou liest in thy throat; these virtues that thou speakest of I have not in me, but I am like a leopard, that have ten black spots to one white.

Augustus Cæsar and Tiberius Cæsar were deadly enemies to flatterers, insomuch that they would not be called lords by their own children.

A good symbol is attributed to Trebonianus Gallus,¹ viz. *Nemo amicus idem et adulator*, no flatterer can be a true friend.

Aristippus, the philosopher, seeing Diogenes washing of herbs for his dinner, said, If Diogenes knew how to make use of kings, he need not live upon raw herbs, as he doth; to which Diogenes replied, that if Aristippus could content himself with herbs, he need not to turn spaniel, or to flatter king Dionysius for a meal's meat.

Ah! young men, young men, shall God, shall good men, shall bad men, detest and declare against flatterers and flattery, and will not you turn a deaf ear upon them, yea, fly from them as from a serpent, and shun them as you would shun hell itself? If you do not, the very heathens but now cited will rise in judgment against you.

Flatterers are the very worst of sinners. The flatterers told Cæsar, that his freckles in his face were like the stars in the firmament; they bought and sold Aurelius the emperor at pleasure. And Augustus complained, when Varrus was dead, that he had none now left that would deal plainly and faithfully with him.

So men may gain by flattery; they will be like Harpalus, who said, *Quod regi placet, mihi placet*, that which pleaseth the king pleaseth me, when Astyages set his own son before him to feed upon him.

Oh! but let every young man say, into whose hands this treatise shall fall, *Quod Deo placet, mihi placet*, that which pleaseth God pleaseth me.

I have been the longer upon this, out of love to young men's souls, who are so apt to be ensnared in the flatterer's net. If ever you would be good in good earnest, you must abhor flatterers as the first-born of

¹ Roman emperor, A.D. 251-254.—G.

the devil, and as such as are most pernicious to men's happiness both here and hereafter.¹

It is reported of one Oramazes, that he had an enchanted egg, in which, as he boasted himself, he had enclosed all the happiness of the world; but being broken, nothing was found in it but wind. Flatterers are the greatest cheaters, the greatest deceivers in the world.

They say of the crocodile, that when he hath killed a man, he will weep over him, as if he were sorry, and did repent for what he had done; the application is easy.

Direction (4). Fourthly, If you would be good betimes, if you would seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your days, then *take heed of engaged affections to the things of the world.*

The young man in the Gospel took many a step towards heaven: 'All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?' Mat. xix. 16-24. Christ makes a very fair offer to him in the next words: 'Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.' Thou shalt have heaven for earth, a sea for a drop, a treasure for a mite, a crown for a crumb. Ay, but the young man's affections were strongly engaged to the things of the world; and therefore he turns his back upon Christ, and goes away sorrowful, because he had great possessions.² Oh the madness, the folly of this young man, who, to enjoy a little temporal felicity, hath bid an everlasting farewell to Christ and glory! In that Gen. xiii. 2, it is said, that Abraham was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold; the Hebrew word *cabedh*, that is here rendered rich, signifies heavy; it signifies a burden, to shew us that riches are a heavy burden and an hindrance many times to heaven and happiness; and this young man in the Gospel found it so to his eternal undoing. Though the loadstone cannot draw the iron when the diamond is in presence, yet earthly possessions did draw this young man's soul away when Christ the pearl of price was present. The world is a silken net, and this young man found it so; the world is like golden fetters, and this young man found it so; the world is like sweet poison,³ and this young man found it so; for he had drunk so large a draught of it, that there was no room in his soul for Christ or heaven, for grace or glory. Some say, that when the serpent Scytale cannot overtake the flying passenger, she doth with her beautiful colours so astonish and amaze them, that they have no power to pass away till she have stung them; such a serpent the world proved to the young man in the Gospel; it did so affect him and take him, so amaze him and amuse him, that he could not stir till it stung him to death.

When the moon is fullest, it is furthest from the sun; so the more men have of the world, the further commonly they are from God; and this the young man in the Gospel made good.

Many have ventured life and limb, and many a better thing, to gain the things of this world; and yet, after all, they have got nothing at

¹ Whilst an ass is stroked under the belly, you may lay on his back what burden you please.

² *Multi amando res noxias sunt miseri, habendo miscriores.*—August. in Ps. xxvi.

³ They are *dulce venenum*, a sweet poison.—Bernard.

all. Achan's golden wedge proved a wedge to cleave him, and his garment a garment to shroud him.¹

The whole world is circular, the heart of a man is triangular, and we know a circle cannot fill a triangle; yea, if it be not filled with the three persons in Trinity, it will be filled with the world, the flesh, and the devil. The world may be resembled to the fruit that undid us all, which was fair to the sight, smooth in handling, sweet in taste, but deadly in effect and operation.

Ah! young men, young men, have none of you found it so?

The world in all its bravery is no better than the cities which Solomon gave to Hiram, which he called *Cabul*, that is to say, displeasing or dirty, 1 Kings ix. 13; the world will afford nothing but trivial flowers, surrounded with many briers. Oh the vanity, the uncertainty, the imperfection of all things below! If a man should weigh his pay and his pains together, his miseries and his pleasures together, his joys and his sorrows together, his mercies and his crosses together, his good days and his bad days together, will he not conclude, Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity?

It was a wise and Christian speech of Charles the Fifth to the Duke of Venice, who, when he had shewed him the glory of his princely palace and earthly paradise, instead of admiring it, or him for it, only returned him this grave and serious *memento*, *Hæc sunt quæ faciunt invitos mori*, these are the things which make us unwilling to die. It was a good saying of one to a great lord, upon his shewing him his stately house and pleasant gardens, Sir, you had need make sure of heaven, or else when you die you will be a very great loser.²

Ah! young men, young men, it is only heaven that is above all winds, storms, and tempests; nor hath God cast man out of paradise for him to think to find out another paradise in this world. The main reason why many young men doat upon the world is, because they are not acquainted with a greater glory. Men ate acorns till they were acquainted with the use of wheat. The woman had the moon under her feet when she was clothed with the sun, and had a crown of twelve stars upon her head, Rev. xii. 1.

Ah! young men, were you but clothed with the Sun of righteousness, and had you a crown set upon your heads by the hand of faith, you would have all the things of this world which are as low, bespotted, and mutable as the moon, under your feet, Heb. xi. 24-27, 35, x. 34. Well! young men, as ever you would be good betimes, sit loose from the things of this world, be no longer worshippers of this golden calf, and never let the world, that shall be but your servant, become your Lord. Oh! let not the devil and the world have more service for an ounce of gold, than Christ shall have for the kingdom of heaven!

Ah, young men! the world and you must part, or Christ and you will never meet, 'you cannot serve God and mammon,' Mat. vi. 24. The two poles shall sooner meet, than the love of Christ and the love of the world.

¹ If money were thrown to the dogs, they would not so much as smell at it; the greater is their folly and madness that will go to hell-gates for it.

² In my other treatises, you may read more of the vanity, insufficiency, impotency, immutability, uncertainty, and inconstancy of the world; and to them I refer you.

Direction (5). Fifthly, If you would be good betimes, if you would know, seek, and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your youth, then *take heed betimes of carnal reason, take heed of consulting with flesh and blood*, Gal. i. 15, 16.

Many a hopeful young man hath been undone temporally and undone eternally, by hearkening to those evil counsellors.

Carnal reason is an enemy, yea, an utter enemy, nay, it is not only an utter enemy, but it is enmity, yea, enmities, Rom. viii. 7.¹ An enemy may be reconciled, but enmity can never be reconciled. Carnal reason is not only averse, but it is utterly averse to all goodness; it builds strongholds and syllogisms against the most glorious gospel truths, and accounts the precious things of Christ as a strange thing. Carnal reason will make God and gospel do homage to it. When carnal reason is in the throne, Christ and his truths must all bow or be judged before its bar.

Ah! young men, young men, as ever you would be good betimes, stop your ears against all carnal reasonings within you. Carnal reason judges the choicest things of the gospel to be mere foolishness, 1 Cor. i. 23. It is purblind, and cannot see how to make a right judgment of Christ, his word, his ways, and yet will control all.

If you are resolved to be still scholars to this master, then you must resolve to be unhappy here and miserable hereafter. But it is safer and better for you to imitate those young men, who in the morning of their days have graciously, wisely, and resolutely withstood those evil counsellors, carnal reason, flesh and blood; Joseph and Moses, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, all these in the primrose of their youth were good at turning the deaf ear to carnal counsel and carnal counsellors, Gen. xxxix. 7–11, &c; Heb. xi. 24–26; Dan. i.

Cassianus reports of a young man that had given himself up to a Christian life, and his parents misliking that way, they wrote letters to him to persuade him from it; and when he knew there were letters come from them, he would not open them, but threw them into the fire. This example is worth a following.

Another famous example you have in the story of King Edward the Sixth, when Crammer and Ridley came to him, and were very earnest to have him give way to his sister the Lady Mary to have mass. He stood out and pleaded the case with them, that it was a sin against God, and provoking to the eyes of his glory, &c., but they still continued to use many carnal arguments to persuade the king, who was but a child about fifteen years of age, but he withstood them a great while; but at length when he saw he could not prevail with all his pleading against those brave men, but that they still continued their suit, he burst out into bitter weeping and sobbing, desiring them to desist. The motioners seeing his zeal and constancy, went as fast as he, and being overcome, they went away and told one that the king had more divinity in his little finger, than they had in all their bodies.

Ah! young men, it will be your safety and your glory to write after this princely copy, when you are surrounded with carnal reason and carnal counsellors, &c.

¹ Cicero, a heathen, could say, that man would not be so wicked, and do so wickedly, were it not for his reason.

Direction (6). Sixthly and lastly, If you would be good betimes, then take heed of comparing yourselves with those that are worse than yourselves.

Young men are very apt to compare themselves with those that are worse than themselves, and this proves a snare unto them, yea, oftentimes their bane, their ruin, John ix. 39, 40, as it did the young pharisee in the Gospel, who pleaded his negative righteousness; he was not as other men are, 'extortioners, unjust, adulterers,' and stood on his comparative goodness, 'nor as this publican;' he stands not only upon his comparisons, but upon his disparisons, being blind at home, and too quick-sighted abroad; he contemneth and condemneth this poor publican, who was better than himself, Luke xviii. 11-14,¹ making good that saying of Seneca, 'The nature of man,' saith he, 'is very apt, *utimur perspicillis magis quam speculis*, to use spectacles to behold other men's faults, rather than looking-glasses to behold our own.' Such pharisees do justly incur the censure which that sour philosopher passed upon grammarians, that they were better acquainted with the evil of Ulysses than with their own.²

Ah! young man, young man, you know, he that drinks poison, though he drinks not so much as another, and he that commits treason, though not so great, so high treason as another, shall yet as certainly be poisoned, and hanged, as he that hath drunk a greater quantity of poison, and committed higher acts of treason.³

Sirs! do not delude and befool your own souls; if you are not as wicked as others, you shall not be as much tormented as others, but yet you shall be as certainly damned as others; you shall as certain to hell as others; you shall as sure be shut out for ever from God, Christ, saints, angels, and all the treasures, pleasures, and glories of heaven, as others, except it be prevented by timely repentance on your side, and pardoning mercy on God's. Wilt thou count it madness, O young man! in him that is sick, to reason thus? I am not so sick as such and such, and therefore I will not send to the physician; and in the wounded man to say, I am not so desperately wounded as such and such, and therefore I will not send to the surgeon; and in the traitor to say, I am not guilty of so many foul and heinous treasons as such and such, and therefore I will not look after a pardon; and in the necessitous man to say, I am not so hard put to it as such and such, and therefore I will not welcome a hand of charity? And wilt thou not count it the greatest madness in the world for thee to put off thy repentance, and thy returning to the Lord in the spring and morning of thy youth, because that thou art not as sinful, as wicked as such and such. If to have a softer bed, a milder punishment in hell than others, will satisfy thee, then go on; but if thou art afraid of the worm that never dies, and of the fire that never goes out, being like that stone in Arcadia, which being once kindled could not be quenched, oh, then, begin to be good betimes! Oh seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your days!

¹ Thales, one of the seven sages, being asked what was the easiest thing in the world to do? answered, to know other men's faults, and none of our own.

² Diogenes apud Laertium. lib. vi.

³ Mat. xi. 22-25. As in heaven, one is more glorious than another, so in hell, one shall be more miserable than another.--Aug[ustine].

To think often of hell, is the way to be preserved from falling into hell.¹ Ah! young men, young men, that you would often consider of the bitterness of the damned's torments, and of the pitilessness of their torments, and of the diversity of their torments, and of the caselessness of their torments, and of the remedilessness of their torments. *Momentaneum est quod delectat, æternum quod cruciat*, The sinner's delight here is momentary, that which torments hereafter is perpetual. When a sinner is in hell, dost thou think, O young man! that another Christ shall be found to die for him, or that the same Christ will be crucified again for him, or that another gospel should be preached to him? Surely no.

Ah! why then wilt thou not betimes return and seek out after the things that belong to thy everlasting peace? I have read of Pope Clement the Fifth, that when a young nephew of his died, he sent his chaplain to a necromancer, to know of him how it fared with him in the other world; the conjuror shewed him to the chaplain, lying in a fiery bed in hell, which, when the pope understood, he never joyed more, &c.²

Ah! young man, that these occasional hints of hell may be a means to preserve thee from lying in those everlasting flames.

Bellarmino tells us of a certain advocate of the court of Rome, that being at the point of death, was stirred up by them that stood by, to repent and call upon God for mercy; he, with a constant countenance, and without sign of fear, turned his speech to God, and said, Lord! I have a desire to speak unto thee, not for myself, but for my wife and children, for I am hastening to hell, neither is there anything that thou shouldst do for me; and this he spake, saith Bellarmine, who was present, and heard it, as if he had spoken of a journey to some village or town, and was no more affrighted.³

Sir Francis Bacon also, in his History of Henry the Seventh, relates how it was a common byword of the Lord Cordes, that he would be content to live seven years in hell, so he might win Calice [Calais] from the English;⁴ but if thou, O young man, art given up to such desperate atheism, and carnal apprehensions of hell, I am afraid God will confute thee one day by fire and brimstone; but I would willingly hope better things of all those young persons, into whose hands this treatise shall fall; and thus you see what things must be declined and avoided, if ever you would be good betimes, if ever you would seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your days.

CHAPTER VII.

But in the second place, *as those things must be declined, so other things must carefully and diligently be practised, if ever you would be good betimes.* I shall instance only in those that are most considerable and weighty; as,

First, If ever you would be good betimes, &c., then you must *labour to be acquainted with four things betimes.*

¹ Chrysostom. Hom. 44. in Mat.

² Jac. Rev. Hist Pont. Rom., 199.

³ Bellar. *De arte Moriendi*, lib. ii. cap. 10.

⁴ Works, by Spedding, Ellis, and Heath, vol. vi. p. 100.—G.

Duty (1). First, You must labour to acquaint yourselves with the Scripture betimes. You must study the word betimes. David studied the word in the morning of his days, in the primrose of his youth; and this made him wiser than his enemies, yea, than his teachers; this made him as much excel the ancients, as the sun excels the moon, or as the moon excels the twinkling stars, Ps. cxix. 97–103. Timothy was good betimes; and no wonder, for in the primrose of his days he was acquainted with the Scripture; he was inured to the word from his childhood, yea, from his infancy, as the word properly signifies.¹ So in that 119th Psalm, the 9th verse, ‘Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to thy word.’ There is no way to a holy heart and a clean life but by acquainting yourselves with the word betimes. One hath long since observed, that God hath bowed down the Scriptures to the capacity even of babes and sucklings, that all excuse may be taken away, and that young men may be encouraged to study the Scripture betimes.² Ah, young men! no histories are comparable to the histories of the Scriptures: 1, for antiquity; 2, rarity; 3, variety; 4, brevity; 5, perspicuity; 6, harmony; 7, verity. All other books cannot equal God’s, either in age or authority, in dignity or excellency, in sufficiency or glory.³

Moses is found more ancient and more honourable than all those whom the Grecians make most ancient and honourable; as Homer, Hesiod, and Jupiter himself, whom the Greeks have seated in the top of their divinity.

The whole Scripture is but one entire love-letter, despatched from the Lord Christ to his beloved spouse; and who then but would still be a reading in this love-letter? Like Cæcilia, a Roman maiden of noble parentage, who carried always about her the New Testament, that she might still be a-reading in Christ’s love-letter, and behold the sweet workings of his love and heart towards his dear and precious ones.⁴

Luther found so much sweetness in the word, in Christ’s love-letter, that made him say he would not live in paradise, if he might, without the word; *at cum verbo etiam in inferno facile est vivere*, but with the word he could live in hell itself.

The word is like the stone garamantides, that hath drops of gold in itself, enriching of the believing soul. This the martyrs found, which made them willing to give a load of hay for a few leaves of the Bible in English.

Augustine professeth that the sacred Scriptures were his whole delight.

And Jerome tells us of one Nepotianus, who, by long and assiduous meditation on the holy Scriptures, had made his breasts the library of Jesus Christ.⁵

And Rabbi Chiia, in the *Jerusalem Talmud*, saith that in his account all the world is not of equal value with one word out of the law. That which a papist reports lyingly of their sacrament of the mass, viz.

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 15, ἀπὸ Βούφους, from a suckling.

² Augustine.—G.

³ *Adoro plenitudinem Scripturarum*.—Tertullian. Gregory calls the Scripture *cor et animam Dei*, the heart and soul of God.

⁴ Cf. Clarke’s ‘Martyrologie,’ 3d edition, 1677, p. 35.—G.

⁵ Hier. Epistola ad Heliod. in Epitaphium Nepotiani.

that there are as many mysteries in it as there be drops in the sea, dust on the earth, angels in heaven, stars in the sky, atoms in the sunbeams, or sands on the sea-shore, &c., may be truly asserted of the Holy Scriptures.

Oh! the mysteries, the excellencies, the glories that are in the word! Ah! no book to this book; none so useful, none so needful, none so delightful, none so necessary to make you happy and to keep you happy as this. It is said of Caesar, *major fuit cura Cæsari libellorum, quam purpure*, that he had a greater care of his books than of his royal robes; for, swimming through the waters to escape his enemies, he carried his books in his hand above the waters, but lost his robe. Now, what are Caesar's books to God's books?

Ah! young men, young men! the word of the Lord is a light to guide you, a counsellor to counsel you, a comforter to comfort you, a staff to support you, a sword to defend you, and a physician to cure you. The word is a mine to enrich you, a robe to clothe you, and a crown to crown you. It is bread to strengthen you, and wine to cheer you, and a honeycomb to feast you, and music to delight you, and a paradise to entertain you.¹

Oh! therefore, before all and above all, search the Scripture, study the Scripture, dwell on the Scripture, delight in the Scripture, treasure up the Scripture; no wisdom to Scripture wisdom, no knowledge to Scripture knowledge, no experience to Scripture experience, no comforts to Scripture comforts, no delights to Scripture delights, no convictions to Scripture convictions, nor no conversion to Scripture conversion.

Augustine hearing a voice from heaven, that bade him take and read, *tolle et lege*, whereupon, turning open the New Testament, he fell upon that place, 'Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof,' Rom. xiii. 13, 14. This scripture so sunk into his heart, as that it proved the means of his conversion, as himself reports. This Augustine, as he was once preaching, his memory failing of him, contrary to his purpose, he fell upon reproving the Manicheans, and by a scripture or two, not before thought of, to confute their heresies, he converted Firmus, a Manichean, as he after acknowledged to Augustine, blessing God for that sermon.²

It is reported of one Adrianus, who seeing the martyrs suffer such grievous things in the cause of God, he asked what was that which caused them to suffer such things? and one of them named that text, 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,' 1 Cor. ii. 9. And this text was set home with such a power upon him, as that it converted him and made him to profess religion, and not only to profess it, but to die a martyr for it.

Cyprian was converted by reading the prophecy of Jonah. Junius was converted by reading the first chapter of John the evangelist.

I have read of a scandalous minister that was struck at the heart,

¹ The Jewish Rabbins were wont to say, that upon every letter of the law there hangs mountains of profitable matter.

² Lib. viii. Confes. cap. xi. *Possidon. de vita.*—Augustine.

and converted, in reading that scripture : 'Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?' &c., Rom. ii. 21.

We read that Paphnutius converted Thais and Ephron, two famous strumpets, from uncleanness, only with this scripture argument, 'That God seeth all things in the dark, when the doors are fast, the windows shut, the curtains drawn,' Heb. iv. 13.

I have read of a poor man who persuaded a young scholar to leave reading of poetry, &c., and fall upon reading of the Scripture, which accordingly he did; and it pleased the Lord, before he had read out Genesis, to change his heart and to turn him to the Lord in the primrose of his days, he being then but twenty years of age.

I have read of a young lady,¹ called Potamia, of a very illustrious family, who endured very much in her martyrdom, by the extreme cruelty of Basilides her executioner, yet, after her death, he bethinking himself of the holy words and scripture-expressions that were uttered by her, during her cruel torments, became a Christian, and within few days after was himself likewise crowned with martyrdom.

James Andreas, a godly minister, hearing of a Jew that for theft was hanged by the heels, with his head downward, having not seen that kind of punishment, he went to the place where he was hanging between two dogs that were always snatching at him to eat his flesh; the poor wretch repeated in Hebrew some verses of the Psalms, wherein he cried to God for mercy, whereupon Andreas went near to him and instructed him in the principles of Christian religion, about Christ the Messiah, &c., exhorting him to believe in him, and it pleased God so to bless his Scripture exhortations to him, that the dogs gave over tearing of his flesh, and the poor Jew desired him to procure that he might be taken down and baptized, and hung by the neck for the quicker despatch, which was done accordingly.

I might produce other instances, but let these suffice to provoke all young persons to a speedy, serious, diligent, and constant study of the Scripture.² Ah! sirs, you do not know how soon your blind minds may be enlightened, your hard hearts softened, your proud spirits humbled, your sinful natures changed, your defiled consciences purged, your disordered affections regulated, and your poor souls saved, by searching into the Scriptures, by reading the Scripture, and by pondering upon the Scripture. You should lay up the manna of God's word in your hearts, as Moses laid up the manna in the golden pot, Heb. ix. 4. And as Tamar did with the staff and signet that she received from Judah, she laid them up till she came to save her life, and did save her life by it, as you may see in holy story, Gen. xxxviii. 18-36. The laying up of the word now, may be the saving of your souls another day.

I have read of little bees, that when they go out in stormy weather, they will carry a little of their comb or gravel with them, that they may be balanced and not carried away with the wind.

Ah! young men, young men, you had need to have your thoughts and hearts balanced with the precious Word, that you may not be carried

¹ Origen was her schoolmaster. [Potamiana, not Potamia. See Clarke's 'Martyrologie,' as before, page 35, on Basilides.—G.]

² Much in the word is wrapped up in a little. It is more to be admired than to have Homer's Iliads comprised in a nutshell.

away with 'every wind of doctrine,' as many have been in these days, to their destruction and confusion.

Narcissus, a beautiful youth, though he would not love them that loved him, yet afterwards fell in love with his own shadow.¹ Ah, how many young men in these days, who were once lovely and hopeful, are now fallen in love with their own and others' shadows, with high, empty, airy notions, and with strange monstrous speculations to their own damnation! 2 Thess. ii. 10-12.

Holy Melanethon, being newly converted, thought it impossible for his hearers to withstand the evidence of the gospel, but soon after he complained that old Adam was too hard for young Melanethon.²

Ah! young men, young men, if you do not in good earnest give up yourselves to the reading, to the studying, to the pondering, to the believing, to the affecting, to the applying, and to the living up to the Scripture, Satan will be too hard for you, the world will be too hard for you, your lusts will be too hard for you, temptations will be too hard for you, and deceivers will be too hard for you, and in the end you will be miserable; and thus much for the first thing, &c.

Duty (2). Secondly, If you would be good betimes, then you must *acquaint yourselves with yourselves betimes.*

If you would be gracious in the spring and morning of your days, then you must see betimes how bad you are, how vile, how sinful, how wretched you are. No man begins to be good till he sees himself to be bad. The young prodigal never began to mend, he never thought of returning to his father, till he came to himself, till he began to return into his own soul, and saw himself in an undone condition, Luke xv. 12-22.

Ah! young men, young men, You must see yourselves to be children of wrath, to be enemies, to be strangers, to be afar off from God, from Christ, from the covenant, from heaven, to be sin's servants, and Satan's bond-slaves.³ The ready way to be found, is to see yourselves lost; the first step to mercy, is to see your misery; the first step towards heaven is to see yourselves near to hell. You won't look after the physician of souls, you won't prize the physician of souls, you won't desire the physician of souls, you won't match with the physician of souls, you won't fall in love, in league with the physician of souls, you won't resign up yourselves to the physician of souls, till you come to see your wounds, till you come to feel your diseases, till you see the tokens, the plague-sores of divine wrath and displeasure upon you. As the whole do not need the physician, so they do not desire, they do not care for the physician.⁴

Ah! young men, as you would be good betimes, begin to acquaint yourselves with your sinful selves betimes, begin to acquaint yourselves betimes with your natural and undone condition.⁵

There is a threefold self.

(1.) There is a *natural self*; as a man's parts, wit, reason, will, affections, and inclinations, &c.

¹ Ovid. *Met.* iii. 341, *seq.*—G.

² Melch. Adam, *sub nomine*.—G.

³ Eph. ii. 1-3, 12, 13; Rom. vi. 16; John viii. 44; 2 Tim. ii. 26.

⁴ Austin saith, he would willingly go through hell to Christ, so will all that see their need of Christ.

⁵ Zanchius writ a tractate, *Quod nihil scitur.*

(2.) A *religious self*; and so a man's duties, graces, obedience, righteousness, holiness, are called one's self.

(3.) There is a *sinful self*; and so a man's corruptions, lusts, sinful nature, and dispositions, are called one's self. Now, if ever you would be good betimes, you must acquaint yourselves with your sinful selves betimes.¹

Demonicus being asked at what time he began to be a philosopher, answered, When I began to know myself. So a man never begins to be a Christian till he begins to know himself. And indeed, for a man to know himself, to acquaint himself with himself, is one of the hardest works in all the world. For as the eye can see all things but itself, so most can discern all faults but their own. Henry, the Fourth, emperor of Germany, his usual speech was *Multi multa sciunt, se autem nemo*, many know much, but few know themselves.

The very heathens did admire that saying as an oracle, *nosce te ipsum*, know and be acquainted with thy own self. The main exhortation of Chilo, one of the seven sages, was 'Know thyself.' And Plato recordeth that this saying of Chilo, 'Know thyself,' was written in letters of gold upon the portal of Apollo's temple.

Juvenal saith that this saying, 'Know thyself,' came from heaven. Macrobius saith that the oracle of Apollo, being demanded what course should be taken for attaining to felicity, answered, only teach a man to 'know himself.'²

Thus you see that both divinity and philosophy doth agree in this, that the best and surest way to true felicity is, to know ourselves, to acquaint ourselves with ourselves.

This duty the apostle charges upon the Ephesians, 'Remember that you, being in times past Gentiles in the flesh, that at that time you were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world,' Eph. ii. 11, 12.

Here are five *withouts*: without Christ, without the church, without the promise, without hope, and without God in the world.

Man in his natural state is afar off; he is without, three manner of ways:

- (1.) In point of opinion and apprehension.
- (2.) In point of fellowship and communion.
- (3.) In point of grace and conversion.

As you would be good betimes, dwell much upon your corrupt nature betimes.³ Ah! such is the corruption of our nature, that propound any divine good to it, it is entertained as fire by water, or wet wood with hissing; propound any evil, then it is like fire to straw; it is like the foolish satyr, that made haste to kiss the fire; it is like that unctuous matter which the naturalists say sucks and snatches the fire to it, with

¹ Luther said, that if a man could perfectly see his own faults, the sight thereof would be a very hell unto him.

² The precept, *Γινῶθι σεαυτόν*, has gathered around it a little literature of its own. It has been assigned to Chilo, *as above*; but also to Pythagoras, Thales, Cleobulus, Bias, and Socrates, and to Phæmonœ, a Greek poetess of the pre-Homeric period. The reference to Juvenal is found in Sat. xi. 27, *Eccolo descendit γινῶθι σεαυτόν*.—G.

³ Of dull and insensible men, one long since thus complained, *Patientius ferre Christi jacturam quam suam*, that they did more calmly pass by the injuries done to Christ than those that were done unto themselves. Oh the plague of insensibleness!

which it is consumed. Till you come to be sensible of this, you will never begin to be good ; you will never look to have your hearts changed, and your souls saved.

The Ethiopians paint angels black, and devils white, in favour of their own complexion ; and they say that if the brute creatures could draw a picture of the divine nature, they would make their shape the copy, and thus they flatter and delude themselves. Take heed, young men, take heed that you do not put the like cheats upon your own souls ; take heed that you be not like those limners who, so as they can make a man's picture gay and gaudy, care not to draw it so as to resemble him. It is safest and best, O young man ! to know the worst of thyself, and to know thyself as thou art in thyself, and not as thy own flattering heart, or as other flatterers, may represent thee to thyself.

Duty (3). Thirdly, If you would be good betimes, then you must acquaint yourselves with Jesus Christ betimes.

You must know him betimes. A man never begins to be good till he begins to know him that is the fountain of all goodness : 'This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent,' John xvii. 3.

The knowledge of Christ is the beginning of eternal life ; it is the way to eternal life, it is a taste of eternal life, it is a sure pledge and pawn to the soul of eternal life.

The Spaniards say of Aquinas, that he that knows not him knows not anything, but he that knows him knows all things. He that knows Jesus Christ not notionally only, but practically, not apprehensively only, but affectively, he knows all things that may make him happy ; but he that knows not Jesus Christ knows nothing that will stand him in stead, when he shall lie upon a dying bed, and stand before a judgment seat.

Justin Martyr relates that when, in his discourse with Trypho, he mentioned the knowledge of Christ as conducing to our happiness and perfection, Trypho's friends laughed at it ; but I hope better things of all those into whose hands this treatise shall fall.

Sirs ! the sun is not more necessary to the world, the eye to the body, the pilot to the ship, the general to the army, &c., than the knowledge of Christ betimes is necessary for all those that would be good betimes.

Dear hearts, as ever you would be good betimes, you must labour, even as for life, to know and be thoroughly acquainted with these six things concerning Jesus Christ betimes.

(1.) *First*, If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes that there is everything in Christ that may encourage you to seek him and serve him, to love him and obey him, to believe on him and to marry with him.¹

If you look upon his names, his natures, his offices, his graces, his dignities, his excellencies, his royalties, his glories, his fulnesses, they all speak out as much.

Are you poor ? Why, Christ hath tried gold to enrich you, Rev. iii. 18. Are you naked ? Christ hath white raiment to clothe you. Are you spiritually blind ? Christ hath eye-salve to enlighten you. Are

¹ *Nec Christus, nec calum, patitur hyperbolem.*

you in straits? He hath wisdom to counsel you. Are you unrighteous? He will be righteousness to you? Are you unholy? He will be holiness and sanctification to you, 1 Cor. i. 30. Are you hungry? He is bread to feed you. Are you thirsty? He is wine and milk to satisfy you. Are you weary? He is a bed, a seat, to rest you. Are you sick? Why, he is a physician to cure you, &c. *Omne bonum in summo bono*, All good is in the chiefest good.¹

The creatures have their particular goodness, health hath its particular goodness, and wealth hath its particular goodness, and learning hath its, and the favour of the creature hath its, &c., but now Jesus Christ he is an universal good.² All the petty excellencies that are scattered abroad in the creatures are united to Christ; yea, all the whole volume of perfections which is spread through heaven and earth is epitomised in him. *Ipsè unus erit tibi omnia, quia in ipso uno bono, bona sunt omnia*—[Augustine], One Christ will be to thee instead of all things else, because in him are all good things to be found. Abraham's servant brought forth jewels of silver and jewels of gold, to win Rebekah's heart to Isaac; so should you, O young men! be often in presenting to your own view all those amiable and excellent things that be in Christ, to win your hearts over to Christ betimes.

Secondly, If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes that *Jesus Christ is mighty to save*.

'He is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto him, that believe in him, and that cast themselves upon him.'³ The Lord hath laid help upon one that is mighty. Christ saves perfectly, thoroughly, perpetually, them that come unto him.

The three tongues that were written upon the cross, in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, to witness Christ to be the king of the Jews, do each of them, in their several idioms, avouch this axiom, that Christ is an all-sufficient Saviour; and 'a threefold cord is not easily broken.' They say it is true of the oil at Rheims, that though it be continually spent in the [in]auguration of their kings of France, yet it never wasteth. Christ is that pot of manna, that cruse of oil, that bottomless ocean, that never fails his people. There is in Christ an all-sufficiency for all creatures at all times, in all places.⁴

The great Cham is said to have a tree full of pearls hanging by clusters; but what is the great Cham's tree to Christ, our tree of life, who hath all variety and plenty of fruit upon him.⁵ The happinesses that come to believers by Christ are so many, that they cannot be numbered; so great, that they cannot be measured; so copious, that they cannot be defined; so precious, that they cannot be valued; all which speaks out the fulness and all-sufficiency of Christ.

There is in Christ *plenitudo abundantie*, and *plenitudo redundantie*, a fulness of abundance, and a fulness of redundancy, as well as a fulness of sufficiency.

¹ John vi. 48; Isa. lv. 1; Matt. xi. 28, ix. 12. ² Christ is the *bonum in quo omnia bona*.

³ Heb. vii. 25, *εις το παντελεις*, perpetually, constantly. Matt. ix. 28, Isa. lxiii. 1. Mighty to save.

⁴ Christ is never *vacuis manibus* empty-handed.

⁵ Rev. xxii. 2. Christ is like the trees of the sanctuary, which were both for meat and for medicine, Ezek. xlvii. 12.

There is in Christ,

1. The fulness of the Spirit.
2. The fulness of grace.
3. The fulness of the image of God.
4. The fulness of the Godhead.
5. The fulness of glory.

But I must not now open nor dilate on these things, lest I should tire both myself and the reader.

Plutarch, in the life of Phocion, tells us of a certain gentlewoman of Ionia, who shewed the wife of Phocion all the rich jewels and precious stones she had. She answered her again, All my riches and jewels is my husband Phocion. So may a penitent sinner say of his blessed Saviour, Christ is all my jewels, my riches, my treasures, my pleasures, &c.; his sufficiency is all these, and more than these, to me.

The Spanish ambassador, coming to see the treasury of St Mark in Venice, which is cried up throughout the world, fell a-groping to find whether it had any bottom, and being asked why, answered, In this amongst other things, my great Master's treasure differs from yours, in that his hath no bottom, as I find yours to have,—alluding to the mines in Mexico and Potosi. But what are the Spaniard's treasures to Christ's treasures? A man may, without much groping, find the bottom of all earthly treasures, but who can find the bottom of Christ's treasures? Should all created excellencies meet in one glorified breast, yet they could not enable that glorious God-like creature to sound the bottom of those riches and treasures which are in Christ, Ephes. iii. 8; all which speaks out Christ's all-sufficiency; and thus much for the second thing.

(3.) Thirdly, If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes, *That there is a marvellous willingness and readiness in Christ to embrace, to entertain, to welcome returning sinners, and to shew mercy and favour to them.*

The young prodigal did but think of returning to his father, and he ran and met him, and instead of kicking or killing him, he kissed him and embraced him, his bowels rolled within him, and his compassions flowed out freely to him, Luke xv. 20–22. 'Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price,' Isa. lv. 1.² Nazianzen improveth this place thus: 'Oh, this easy way of contract, he giveth more willingly than others sell; if thou wilt but accept, that is all the price; though you have no merits, though you have nothing in yourselves to encourage you, yet will you accept? If you will, all is freely yours; the waters shall be yours to cleanse you, and the milk yours to nourish you, and the bread yours to strengthen you, and the wine yours to comfort you. Here poor sinners are called three times to come: Come, saith Christ, come, come, to shew how marvellous ready and willing he is that poor sinners should taste of gospel delicacies.³ So in that John vii. 37, 'Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink;' so in that Rev. xxii. 17, 'Let

¹ *Ipse Deus sufficit ad præmium.*—Bernard.

² The meaning is, sell thyself, thine own wit, reason, self-worth; and that is all Christ desires, saith Augustine upon the words.

³ Cant. ii. 8. Christ comes leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills, to shew his readiness and willingness to do good to souls.

him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely'; so in that Rev. iii. 20, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me;' and so in that Luke xiv. 21, 'The master of the house said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.' Here is no man of quality, of dignity, of worldly pomp or glory, or of any self-sufficiency, that is invited to the feast, but a company of poor, ragged, deformed, slighted, neglected, impoverished, wounded sinners; these are invited to feast with Christ.

Concerning this willingness of Christ, I shall speak more when I come to deal with old sinners in the close of this discourse, and to that I refer you for further and fuller satisfaction concerning the great readiness and willingness of Jesus Christ to entertain returning sinners.

(4.) Fourthly, If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes, *That Jesus Christ is designed, sealed, and appointed by the Father to the office of a Mediator.*¹

'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed.' God the Father hath made Christ's commission authentical, as men do theirs by their seal. It is a metaphor, a simile taken from them who give commissions under hand and seal. God the Father hath given it under his hand and seal, that Jesus Christ is the only person that he hath appointed and sealed, allowed and confirmed, to the office of our redemption. If Jesus Christ were never so able to save, and never so willing and ready to save poor sinners, yet if he were not appointed, designed, and sealed, for that work, the awakened sinner would never look out after him, nor desire union with him, nor interest in him; and therefore it is of very great consequence to know that God the Father hath sent and sealed Christ to be a Saviour to his people: 'Him hath God the Father sealed.' Sealed by way of destination and sealed by way of qualification, sealed by his doctrine, sealed by his miracles, sealed by his baptism, sealed by his resurrection, but above all, sealed by his glorious unction. 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness: that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified,' Isa. lxi. 1-3, Luke iv. 18.² Neither saints nor angels are sealed and anointed to the great work of redemption, but the Lord Jesus is. You should always look upon the Lord Jesus as sealed and anointed to the office of a Mediator, and accordingly plead with him.

¹ John vi. 27, The Father sealed, even God; so the Greek hath it.

² Christ was anointed of God, 1, by way of designation; 2, by way of qualification; 3, by way of inauguration. This anointing was ordinarily used in the installing men to offices of any eminence.

Ah, Lord! it is thy office, as thou art a sealed and an anointed Saviour and Redeemer, to subdue my sins, to change my nature, to sanctify my heart, to reform my life, and to save my soul; and therefore do it for thy name's sake, oh do it for thy office's sake, do it for thy glory's sake!

'Thou art anointed with the oil of gladness above thy fellows,' Ps. xlv. 8, Acts iv. 27. Thou hast a larger effusion of the Spirit upon thee than others; thou art anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power after an extraordinary measure and manner; thou art endued with all heroical gifts and excellencies, plentifully, abundantly, transcendently; thou art sealed and predestinated;¹ thou art invested into this office of Mediatorship under the Father's hand and seal: and therefore whither should I go for salvation, for remission, for redemption, for grace, for glory, but to thee?

(5.) Fifthly, If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes, *that there is no way to salvation but by Jesus Christ.*

'Neither is there salvation in any other'² (speaking of Christ), 'for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved,' Acts iv. 12. If ever you are saved, you must be saved by him, and him only; you must not look for another saviour, nor you must not look for a co-saviour; you must be saved wholly by Christ and only by Christ, or you shall never be saved; you must cry out, as Lambert did when he was in the fire, and lifted up his hands, and fingers'—ends flaming, 'None but Christ, none but Christ!'³ When Augustus Caesar desired the senate to join two consuls with him for the better government of the state, the senate answered, that they held it as a diminution of his dignity, and a disparagement of their own judgment, to join any with so incomparable a man as Augustus.⁴

Ah! friends, it is a diminution of Christ's dignity, sufficiency, and glory, in the business of your salvation, to join anything with the Lord Jesus; and it is the greatest disparagement in the world to your own judgments, knowledge, prudence, and wisdom, to yoke any with Christ in the work of redemption, in the business of salvation.

Augustine saith, that Marcellina hung Christ's picture and the picture of Pythagoras together; many there are, not only in Rome, but in England (yea, I am afraid in London), who join Christ and their works together, Christ and their prayers together, Christ and their teachers together, Christ and their mournings together, Christ and their hearings together, Christ and their alms together.

Ah, what a poor, what a weak, what an impotent, what an insufficient Saviour doth these men make Jesus Christ to be! Except these men come off from these things, and come up only to Jesus Christ, in the great business of salvation, they will as certainly and as eternally perish, notwithstanding their hearing, knowing, and talking much of Christ, as those that never heard of Jesus Christ.

In the Old Testament, God commands them not to wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together, 'neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee,' Deut. xxii. 11.

This law was figurative, and shews us that in the case of our justification, acceptance, and salvation, we are not to join our works, our

¹ John i. 16, iii. 34.

² *ἢ δι' ἄλλω*, that is, by or through the mediation of any other.

³ Act. and Mon. [Foxe, *sub nomine*—G.]

⁴ Suetonius.

services, with the righteousness of Christ. God abhors a linsey-woolsey righteousness. And as by the letter of this law, in the Hebrews' account, one thread of wool in a linen garment, or one linen thread in a woollen garment, made it unlawful, so the least manner of mixture in the business of justification makes all null and void.¹ 'And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work.'² He that shall mix his righteousness with Christ's, he that shall mix his puddle with Christ's purple blood, his rags with Christ's royal robes, his copper with Christ's gold, his water with Christ's wine, &c., is in the ready way to perish for ever.

On earth kings love no consorts; power is impatient of participation. Christ will be Alexander or *Nemo*, nobody; he will be all in all in the business of justification, or he will be nothing at all. We must say of Christ, as it was once said of Cæsar, *Socium habet neminem*, He may have a companion, &c., but he must not have a competitor, 1 Cor. i. 30, Rom. v. 19, 20.

Let us say of Christ, as the heathen once said of his petty gods, *Contemno minutulos istos deos, modo Jovem propitium habeam*, so long as he had his Jupiter to friend, he regarded them not. So, so long as we have our Jesus to friend, and his righteousness and blood to friend, we shall condemn all other things, and abhor the bringing of any thing into competition with him. A real Christian cares not for any thing that hath not *aliquid Christi*, something of Christ in it. He that holds not wholly with Christ, doth very shamefully neglect Christ, *Aut totum mecum tene, aut totum omitte*, saith Gregory Nazianzen. (Eph. iii. 9, 10, Ps. lxxi. 15, 16, 19, compared.)

There is no other name, no other nature, no other blood, no other merits, no other person to be justified and saved by, but Jesus Christ. You may run from creature to creature, and from duty to duty, and from ordinance to ordinance, and when you have wearied and tired out yourselves in seeking ease and rest, satisfaction and remission, justification and salvation, in one way and another, you will be forced after all to come to Christ, and to cry out, Ah! none but Christ, none but Christ! Isa. lv. 2, Rom. x. 3. Ah! none to Christ, none to Christ; no works to Christ; no duties, no services to Christ; no prayers, no tears to Christ; no righteousness, no holiness to Christ. Well! friends, remember this, that all the tears in the world cannot wipe off meritoriously one sin, nor all the grace and holiness that is in angels and men buy out the pardon of the least transgression. All remission is only by the blood of Christ.

(6.) Sixthly and lastly, If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes, *that the heart of Jesus Christ is as much set upon sinners now he is in heaven, as ever it was when he was upon earth.*

Christ is no less loving, less mindful, less desirous of sinners' eternal welfare now he is heaven in a far country, than he was when he lived on earth. Witness his continuing the ministry of reconciliation among poor sinners in all ages; witness the constant treaties, that by his ambassadors and Spirit he still hath with poor sinners, about the things

¹ Philip. iii. 9, 10; Rev. xix. 8; Gal. iii. 28, ii. 16.

² Rom. xi. 6; Eph. ii. 5; Rom. v. 15-18.

of their peace, the things of eternity; witness his continual knockings, his continual callings upon poor sinners by his word, rod, Spirit, to open, to repent, to lay hold on mercy, and to be at peace with him; witness his continual wooing of poor sinners in the face of all neglects and put-offs, in the face of all delays and denials, in the face of all harsh entertainment and churlish answers, in the face of all gainsayings and carnal reasonings, in the face of all the scorn and contempt that wretched sinners put upon him,¹ and witness that plain word, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever,' Heb. xiii. 8. Christ is the same afore time, in time, and after time, he is unchangeable in his essence, in his promises, and in his affections: 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come,' Rev. i. 8, 11, xxi. 6, xxii. 13.²

The phrase is taken from the Greek letters, whereof Alpha is the first and Omega is the last. The first and last letter of the Greek alphabet is a description of me, saith Christ, who am before all and after all, who am above all and in all, who am unchangeable in myself, and in my thoughts and good will to poor sinners. Therefore do not, poor souls, entertain any hard thoughts concerning Jesus Christ, as if he was less mindful, less pitiful, and less merciful to poor souls now he is in heaven, than he was when his abode was in this world.

And thus I have gone over those six things that you must know concerning Christ betimes, if ever you be good betimes. When Pope Leo lay upon his death-bed, Cardinal Bembus citing a text of Scripture to comfort him, he replied, '*A page has nugas de Christo*, away with these baubles concerning Christ!' But I hope better things of you, and do desire that you will say of all things below this knowledge of Christ that I have opened to you, as that devout pilgrim, who, travelling to Jerusalem, and by the way visiting many brave cities, with their rare monuments, and meeting with many friendly entertainments, would often say, I must not stay here, this is not Jerusalem. Ah! so do you, young men and women, in the midst of all your worldly delights and contents, cry out, Oh! we must not stay here, this is not Jerusalem, this is not that knowledge of Christ that I must have, if ever I am happy here and blessed hereafter.

Duty (4). Fourthly and lastly, If you would be good betimes, then you must *acquaint yourselves with those that are good betimes*.

Direction (1). *First*, If you would be gracious in the spring and morning of your youth, then you must begin betimes to be much in with them who are much in with Christ, who lie near his heart and know much of his mind. 'He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed,' or, as the Hebrew hath it, shall be broken in pieces, as when an army is broken and routed by an enemy.³ *Holech* from *Halech*, walking with the wise, he shall be wise, for so the original hath it. It is not talking with the wise, but walking with the wise, that will make you wise; it is not your commending and praising of the wise, but your walking with the wise, that

¹ 2 Cor. v. 20; Rev. iii. 20; Isa. xxvii. 5, lvi. 4; Cant. v. 2; Prov. vi. 9; Matt. xxii. 4, 23, 27.

² It was a custom among the Turks, to cry out every morning from an high tower, God always was, and always will be, and so salute their Mahomet.

³ Prov. xiii. 20, ירוע, shall be broken, or shall be worse, from רוע, to be naught.

will make you wise ; it is not your taking a few turns with the wise that will make you wise, but your walking with the wise that will make you wise. There is no getting much good by them that are good, but by making them your ordinary and constant companions.¹

Ah, friends ! you should do as Joseph in Egypt, of whom the Scripture saith, Ps. cv. 22 (according to the Hebrew phrase), that he tied the princes of Pharaoh's court about his heart.

If ever you would gain by the saints, you must bind them upon your souls, you must labour to have very near, close, and intimate communion with them.

The Jews have a proverb, that two dry sticks put to a green one will kindle it. The best way to be in a flame God-ward, Christ-ward, heaven-ward, and holiness-ward, is to be among the dry sticks, the kindle-coals,² the saints ; for as live coals kindle those that are dead, so lively Christians will heat and enliven those that are dead God-wards, Christ-wards, heaven-wards, and holiness-wards. 'As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the face of a man his friend,' Prov. xxvii. 17.

Men's wits, parts, and gifts, and industry, commonly grow more strong, vigorous, and quick, by friendly conference and communion.

And as he that comes where sweet spices and ointments are stirring, carries away a sweet savour with him, so he that converseth with those that are good shall carry away that goodness and sweetness with him that shall render him sweet, desirable, and delectable to others. Polemon, that Augustine speaks of, who was all for wine and play, &c., became a brave man when he came acquainted with the philosopher's school.³ So many young men, that have been all for wine and women, for playing and toying, for vanity and folly, have become brave men, precious men, by the company, counsel, and example of those who were gracious. Doctor Taylor, the martyr, rejoiced that ever he came into prison, because he came thither to have acquaintance with that angel of God John Bradford, as he calls him : so, doubtless, many young persons there be that have much cause to rejoice, and for ever to bless the Lord, that ever they came acquainted with such and such who fear the Lord, and who walk in his ways, for the good that they have received by them.

Algerius, an Italian martyr, said he had rather be in prison with Cato, than with Cæsar in the senate house.^{4,5}

Ah ! young men, young men, you were better be with the people of God, when they are in the lowest and most contemptible condition, than with the great wicked ones of the world, when they are in all their royalty and glory. In the day of account you will find that they have made the best market, who have rather chosen to keep company with Lazarus, though in his rags, than they would with others keep company with Dives, though in his purple robes.

Well ! young men, remember this, clothes and company do oftentimes tell tales, in a mute but significant language.

¹ It was the saying of one, As oft as I have been among wicked men, I return home less a man than I was before. [Bernard.—G.]

² 'Kindling-coal,' or piece left over night in the fire-place.—G.

³ Augustine, Ep. 130.

⁴ See interesting account of Algerius in Clarke's 'Martyrologie,' as before, p. 187.—G.

⁵ Moses was of the same mind and metal, Heb. xi. 24-27.

Tell me with whom thou goest, and I will tell thee what thou art, saith the Spanish proverb.¹ Cicero, though a heathen, had rather to have no companion, than a bad one. The Lord grant that this heathen, and others among them, that were of the same mind with him, may never rise up in judgment against any of you, into whose hands this treatise may fall.

And thus I have despatched those four things that you must be acquainted with betimes, viz., the Scripture, your own hearts and conditions, the Lord Jesus Christ, and those that fear him, if ever you would be good betimes.

Direction (2). Secondly, If you would be good betimes, if you would seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your days, Then you must *shun the occasions of sin betimes*. A man will never begin to be good, till he begin to decline those occasions that have made him bad: 1 Thes. v. 22, 'Abstain from all appearances of evil.'²

You must shun and be shy of the very appearance of sin, of the very shows and shadows of sin. The word *εἰδός*, which is ordinarily rendered appearance, signifies kind, or sort; and so the meaning of the apostle seems to be this, 'Abstain from all sort, or the whole kind of evil;' from all that is truly so, be it never so small.

The least sin is dangerous. Cæsar was stabbed with bodkins, and many have been eaten up of mice and lice.

The least spark may consume the greatest house, the least leak may sink the greatest ship, the least sin is enough to undo thy soul; and therefore shun all the occasions that lead unto it.

Job made a covenant with his eyes, Job xxxi. 1; Joseph would not be in the room where his mistress was, Gen. xxxix. 10; and David, when himself, would not sit with vain persons, Ps. xxvi. 3-7. As long as there is fuel in our hearts for a temptation, we cannot be secure; he that hath gunpowder about him, had need keep far enough off from sparkles; he that is either tender of his credit abroad, or comfort at home, had need shun, and be shy of the very show and shadow of sin; he that would neither wound conscience nor credit, God nor gospel, had need hate 'the garment spotted with the flesh,' Jude 23.³

In the law, God commanded his people, not only that they should worship no idol, but that they should demolish all the monuments of them, and that they should make no covenant nor affinity with those who worshipped them, and all lest they should be drawn by those occasions to commit idolatry with them. He that would not taste of the forbidden fruit, must not so much as gaze on it; and he that would not be bit by the serpent, must not so much as parley with the serpent.

It is very observable, that in the law, the Nazarite was not only commanded to abstain from wine and strong drink, but also he might not eat grapes, whether moist or dry, or anything that is made of the vine

¹ Those that keep ill company, are like those that walk in the sun, who are tanned insensibly.

² We must shun, *quicquid fuerit male coloratum*, whatsoever looks but ill-favouredly, as Bernard hath it.

³ The sin and the coat of the sin is to be hated, saith Ambrose. *Latet anguis inherba*. Snakes are found among roses, Num. vi. 3, 4. *Quid est vitare peccata, nisi vitare occasiones peccatorum?*—Melan[cthon]. What is it to avoid sin, but to avoid the occasions of sin?

tree, from the kernels even to the husk. But why not these small things, in which there could be no danger of drunkenness? Surely, lest by the contentment of these, he might be drawn to desire the wine, and so be brought on to sin, to break his vow, and so make work for hell, or for the physician of souls. God hereby forbidding the most remote occasions, shews how wary and exactly careful men should be to shun and avoid all occasions, provocations, and appearances of evil; and indeed we had need to keep off from slippery places who can hardly stand fast on dry ground; he that ventures upon the occasion of sin and then prays, 'Lord, lead me not into temptation,' is like him that thrusts his finger into the fire, and then prays that it may not be burnt; or like him that is resolved to quench the fire with oil, which, instead of quenching it, is as fuel to feed it and increase it. It was a notable saying of one, *Majus est miraculum inter vehementes occasiones non cadere, quam mortuos suscitare*.¹ It is a greater miracle not to fall, being among strong occasions, than it is to raise up the dead; he that would not be defiled, must not touch pitch; he that would not be burnt, must not carry fire in his bosom; he that would not eat the meat, must not meddle with the broth; he that would not fall into the pit, must not dance upon the brink; he that would not feel the blow, must keep off from the train:² 'Keep thee far from a false matter,' Exod. xxiii. 7. He that will not fly from the occasions and allurements of sin, though they may seem never so pleasant to the eye, or sweet to the taste, shall find them in the end more sharp than vinegar, more bitter than wormwood, more deadly than poison.

There is a great truth in that saying of the son of Sirach, 'He that loveth danger, shall perish therein; he that will not decline danger, shall not be able to decline destruction,' Eccclus. iii. 26, 27.³

Socrates speaks of two young men that flung away their belts when, being in an idol temple, the lustrating water fell upon them, detesting, saith the historian, 'the garment spotted by the flesh;' and will you, O young men, play and toy with the occasions of sin? The Lord forbid.

There are stories of several heathens that have shunned and avoided the occasions of sin, and will you dare to venture upon the occasions of sin?

Alexander would not see the woman after whom he might have lusted.

Scipio Africanus, warring in Spain, took New Carthage by storm, at which time a beautiful and noble virgin fled to him for succour to preserve her chastity. He being but four and twenty years old, and so in the heat of youth, hearing of it, would not suffer her to come into his sight for fear of temptation, but caused her to be restored in safety to her father.⁴

Livia counselled her husband Augustus, not only not to do wrong, but not to seem to do so, &c.

¹ Bernard in Cant. serm. 65.

² Prov. vi. 27-29. *Non diu tutus est, periculo proximus*.—Cyprian, He is not long safe that is near to danger.

³ Brooks's second quotation from the Apocrypha thus far.—G.

⁴ Aure: Victor. Dio, Laert. *in vita*.

Cæsar would not search Pompey's cabinet, lest he should find new matters of revenge.

Plato mounted upon his horse, and judging himself a little moved with pride, did presently light from his horse, lest he should be overtaken with loftiness in riding.

Theseus is said to cut off his golden locks, lest his enemies should take advantage by taking hold of them.

Ah! young men, young men, shall the very heathens thus shun and fly from the occasion of sin, and will not you? will not you who sit under the sunshine of the gospel? These will in the great day of account be sad and sore witnesses against those that dally and play with the occasions of sin.

To prevent carnal carefulness, Christ sends his disciples to school, to the irrational creatures (Matt. vi. 26-32). And to prevent your closing with the occasions of sin, let me send you to school to the like creatures, that you may learn by them to shun and avoid the occasions of sin.

The *Sepiæ*, a certain kind of fish, perceiving themselves in danger of taking, by an instinct which they have, they do darken the water, and so many times escape the net which is laid for them.

Geese, they say, when they fly over Taurus they keep stones in their mouths, lest by gagging¹ they should discover themselves to the eagles, which are amongst the mountains waiting for them.² Now, if all these considerations put together will not work you to decline the occasions of sin, I know not what will. There is a truth in that old saying—

He that will no evil do,
Must do nothing belongs thereto.

The Israelites must have no leaven in their houses till the Passover be done, lest they should be tempted to eat of it, Exod. xiii.

Direction (3). Thirdly, If you would be good betimes, then you must remember the eye of God betimes.

If you would seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of your days, then you must study God's omnipresence betimes. 'Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?' 'For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves,' Ps. cxxxix. 2-14; Job xxxi. 4, 21, 22.

I have read that Paphnutius converted two famous young strumpets, Thais and Ephron, from uncleanness only with this argument, that God seeth all things in the dark, when the doors are fast, the windows shut, and the curtains drawn.³ By this very argument Solomon labours to take off his young men from carnal and sinful courses: 'And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger! For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings,' Prov. v. 20, 21. Thou mayest deceive all the world, like that counterfeit Alexander in Josephus his

¹ 'Gabbling.'—G.

² Pliny has much curious lore on the 'goose' which Brooks here and elsewhere records. See *sub voce*.—G.

³ *Non se putent adulteri noctis tenebris vel parietum obtegi.*—Bede.

story, but Augustus will not be deceived ; he hath quicker and sharper eyes.¹

Ah ! young men, young men, you may deceive this man and that, and as easily deceive yourselves, but you cannot deceive him, who is *πανόφθαλμος*, *totus oculus*, all-eye. As the eyes of a well drawn picture are fastened upon thee which way soever thou turnest, so are the eyes of the Lord. I have read of one who, being tempted to adultery, said they could not be private enough, and being carried from room to room, answered, We are not yet private enough, God is here.

Ah, friends ! His eyes, which are ten thousand times brighter than the sun, compasseth thy words, thy ways, thy works, thy thoughts, thy bed, thy board, thy bench. The Egyptian hieroglyphic for God was an eye on a sceptre, shewing that he sees and rules all things, Jer. xiii. 27, xxix. 23.

Ah, friends ! All thoughts, words, hopes, and hearts, are naked, opened, dissected and quartered before that God with whom you have to do. God is very curious and exact in marking and observing what is done by men, that he may render to every man according to his works.²

Augustine speaks of an old comedian, when having no other spectators, went usually into the theatre, and acted before the statues of the gods.³

Ah ! young men and women, the eye of God should be more to you than all the world besides. Oh that the Scripture might be written with the pen of a diamond upon your hearts. ‘Hear ye not me,’ saith the Lord, ‘and will you not tremble at my presence ?’ Jer. v. 21, 22. There is a great truth in that saying of his, *Magna nobis ex hac indita est probitatis necessitas, quia omnia ante oculos judicis facimus cuncta cernentis*.⁴ A great necessity of goodness is from hence put into us, because we do all things before the eyes of a judge that sees all things.

Direction (4). *Fourthly*, If you would be good betimes, then you must *hearken to the voice of conscience betimes*, 2 Tim. i. 3.

A man will never begin to be good till he begins to hearken to what conscience speaks. So long as a man turns a deaf ear to conscience, he is a safe prisoner to Satan, and a sure enemy to good, Ps. lviii. 4, John iii. 20, 21.

Ah ! how good might many have been had they but begun betimes to hearken to conscience !

Ah ! young men, do not dally with conscience, do not play, do not trifle with conscience, do not stop your ears against conscience. He that will not in his youth give conscience audience, shall at last be forced to hear such lectures from conscience, as shall make his life a very hell. A sleepy conscience is like a sleepy lion, when he awakes, he roars and tears ; so will conscience, Mark ix. 22. Conscience is *mille testes*, a thousand witnesses for or against a man.⁵ He that hath long turned the deaf ear to conscience, shall at last find his conscience like Prome-

¹ *Noli peccare ; Deus videt, angeli astant, &c.* Take heed what thou doest, God beholds thee, angels observe thee.

² Heb. iv. 13, *παραχρησμένα*.

³ Aug. *de civ. Dei*. l. vi. c. x.

⁴ Boetius *de consol.* l. v.

⁵ Such shall find conscience to be *judex, index, vindex*.

theus's vulture, that lies ever a-gnawing. Judas found it so, and Spira found it so, and Blair, a great councillor of Scotland, found it so.

I have read of one *John Hofmeister*, that fell sick in his inn, as he was travelling towards Auspurge in Germany, and grew to that horror of conscience, that they were fain to bind him in his bed with chains, where he cried out, that he was for ever cast off by God, and that the promises that were set before him would do him no good, and all because he had wounded his conscience, and turned a deaf ear to conscience.¹

Well! young men, if you will not betimes hearken to conscience, you shall at last hear conscience saying to you, as the probationer disciple said to Christ, 'Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest,' Mat. viii. 19; so saith conscience, Sinner, I have called upon thee many a thousand times, and told thee, that I must by commission be thy best friend, or thy worst enemy, but thou wouldst not hear; and therefore now I will follow thee whither ever thou goest;² fast, and I will follow thee, and fill thee with horrors and terrors; feast, and I will follow thee, and shew thee such a handwriting upon the wall, as shall cause thy countenance to change, thy thoughts to be troubled, the joints of thy loins to be loosed, and thy knees dashed one against another, Dan. v. 5, 6; stay at home, and I will follow thee from bed to board; go abroad, and I will follow thee into all places and companies, and thou shalt know that it is an evil and a bitter thing, that thou hast so often and so long neglected my calls, and disobeyed my voice, and walked contrary to me; how thou shalt find a truth in that saying of Luther, *una guttula male conscientie totum mare*, &c., one drop of an evil conscience swallows up the whole sea of worldly joy.

Well! young men, there is a day coming wherein a good conscience will be better than a good purse, for then the Judge will not be put off with a suit of compliments or fair words, nor drawn aside with hope of reward; and therefore, as you would be able to hold up your heads in that day, make conscience of hearkening to the voice of conscience in this your day.

Direction (5). Fifthly, If you would be good betimes, then you must know betimes wherein true happiness lies.

For a man will never begin to be good till he begins to understand wherein his happiness consists.

The philosophers, speaking of happiness, were divided into two hundred and eighty-eight opinions, every one intending something, and yet resolving nothing.³ Therefore the man in Plutarch, hearing them wrangle about man's *summum bonum*, chiefest good, one placing it in this, and another in that, he went to the market and bought up all that was good, hoping, among all, he should not miss of it, but he did. Many look for happiness in sin, others look for it in the creatures, but they must all say, It is not in us, Isa. lvi. 12, Job xxviii. 14: *Nil dat quod non habet*, nothing can give what it hath not. If the conduit pipe hath no water, it can give no water; if a man hath no money, he can give no money; if the creatures have no happiness, they can give

¹ Jo. Wolf. lect mem. To. II. ad. an. 1547. [Augsburg.—G.]

² *Tolle conscientiam, tolle omnia*, take away conscience, and take away all, said the heathen.

³ *Quot homines, tot sententia*: so many men, so many minds.

no happiness. Now this jewel, this pearl, happiness, is not to be found in the breast, in the bosom of creatures. In a word, because I must hasten to a close, man's happiness lies,

First, In his communion with God, as experience and Scripture demonstrates. 'Happy is that people that is in such a case (but give me that word again), yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord,' Ps. cxliv. 15. A man whose soul is in communion with God shall find more pleasure in a desert, in a dungeon, in a den, yea, in death, than in the palace of a prince, than in all worldly delights and contents, &c.

Secondly, In pardon of sin. 'Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered : blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile,' Ps. xxxii. 1, 2. It is not, blessed is the honourable man, but blessed is the pardoned man. It is not, blessed is the rich man, but blessed is the pardoned man. It is not, blessed is the learned man, but blessed is the pardoned man. It is not, blessed is the politic man, but blessed is the pardoned man. It is not, blessed is the victorious man, but blessed is the pardoned man. Do with me what thou wilt, since thou hast pardoned my sins, saith Luther.

Thirdly, In a complete fruition and enjoyment of God, when we shall be here no more. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God, Mat. v. 8 ; 'Now they see him but darkly, but in heaven they shall see him face to face ; they shall know as they are known,' 1 Cor. xiii. 12. But of these things I have spoken largely elsewhere, and therefore shall satisfy myself with these hints.

Direction (6). Lastly, If you would be good betimes, then you must break your covenant with sin betimes.

You must fall out with your lusts betimes ; you must arm and fence yourselves against sin betimes, Isa. xxviii. 15-18. A man never begins to fall in with Christ till he begins to fall out with his sins. Till sin and the soul be two, Christ and the soul cannot be one. Now, to work your hearts to this, you should always look upon sin under these notions :

Notion (1). First, If you would have the league dissolved betwixt sin and your souls betimes, then look upon sin under the notion of an enemy betimes.

'Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul,' 1 Peter ii. 11. As the viper is killed by the young ones in her belly, so are poor sinners betrayed and killed by their own lusts, that are nourished in their bosoms.¹

Pittacus, a philosopher, challenged Phylon² the Athenian captain, in their wars against them, to single combat, carried a net privily, and so caught him, and overcame him ; so doth sin with poor sinners, the dangerous, pernicious, malignant nature of sin. You may see in the story of the Italian, who first made his enemy deny God, and then

¹ Sins, especially against knowledge, are *peccata vulnerantia et devastantia*, wounding and wasting.

² Rather, Phrynon ; the above feat is recorded by Diog. Laërtius, i. 75 : Herodotus, v. 94, 95, &c., &c.—G.

stabbed him to the heart, and so at once murdered both body and soul. Sin betrays us into the hand of the devil, as Delilah did Samson into the hands of the Philistines.

Sugared poisons go down pleasantly. Oh! but when they are down, they gall and gnaw, and gripe the very heart-strings asunder; it is so with sin. Ah! souls, have not you often found it so?

When Phocas the murderer thought to secure himself by building high walls, he heard a voice from heaven telling him, that though he built his bulwarks never so high, yet sin within would soon undermine all.¹

Ambrose reports of one Theotimus, that having a disease upon his body, the physician told him, that except he did abstain from intemperance, drunkenness, uncleanness, he would lose his eyes; his heart was so desperately set upon his sins, that he cries out, then, *Vale lumen amicum*, farewell, sweet light. Ah, how did his lusts war both against body and soul!

The 'old man' is like a treacherous friend, and a friendly traitor. Though it be a harder thing to fight with a man's lusts, than it is to fight with the cross, yet you must fight or die; if you are not the death of your sins, they will prove the death of your souls.

The oracle told the Cyrreans, *noctesque diesque belligerandum*, they could not be happy, unless they waged war night and day; no more can we, except we live and die fighting against our lusts.²

Ah! young men, can you look upon sin under the notion of an enemy, and not break with it, and not arm against it?

Well! remember this, the pleasure and sweetness that follows victory over sin, is a thousand times beyond that seeming sweetness that is in sin; and as victory over sin is the sweetest victory, so it is the greatest victory. There is no conquest to that which is gotten over a man's own corruptions. 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty: and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city,' Prov. xvi. 32.

It is noble to overcome an enemy without, but it is more noble to overcome an enemy within; it is honourable to overcome fiery flames, but it is far more honourable to overcome fiery lusts.

When Valentinian the emperor was upon his dying-bed, among all his victories only one comforted him, and that was victory over his worst enemy, viz., his own naughty heart.³

Ah! young men, young men, your worst enemies are within you, and all their plots, designs, and assaults are upon your souls, your most noble part. They know if that fort-royal be won, all is their own, and you are undone, and shall be their slaves for ever; and therefore it stands upon you to arm yourselves against these inbred enemies; and if you engage Christ in the quarrel, you will carry the day; and when you shall lie upon your dying-beds, you will then find that there is no comfort to that which ariseth from the conquests of your own hearts, your own lusts.

Notion (2). Secondly, If you would break covenant with sin, if you

¹ The 'monster' emperor of Constantinople, A.D. 602-610.—G.

² As one of the dukes of Venice died fighting against the Nauratines, with his weapons in his hand.

³ Rom. vii. 22, 23; 2 Cor. x. 3-6; Gal. v. 17.

would arm and fence yourselves against sin betimes, then *look upon sin as the soul's bonds*, Gal. iii. 10, John viii. 34.

For as bonds tie things together, so doth sin tie the sinner and the curse together. It binds the sinner and wrath together, it links the sinner and hell together: 'I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity,' Acts viii. 23. Iniquity is a chain, a bond. Now, bonds and chains gall the body, and so doth sin the soul; and as poor captives are held fast in their chains, so are sinners in their sins; they cannot redeem themselves by price, nor by power, 2 Tim. ii. 26.

Ah! young men, young men! no bondage to soul bondage, no slavery to soul slavery. The Israelites' bondage under Pharaoh, and the Christians' bondage under the Turks, is but the bondage of the body, of the baser and ignoble part of man; but yours is soul bondage, and soul slavery, which is the saddest and greatest of all.¹

Ah, friends! you should never look upon your sins but you should look upon them as your bonds; yea, as the worst bonds that ever were. All other chains are golden chains, chains of pearl, compared to those chains of iron and brass, those chains of lust, with which you are bound. Ah! who can thus look upon his chains, his sins, and not loathe them, and not labour for freedom from them? Justinus the emperor's motto was *Libertas res inestimabilis*, liberty is invaluable. If civil liberty be, surely spiritual liberty is much more. If you ask souls that were once in a state of bondage, but are now Christ's free men, they will tell you so.

It was a good observation of Chrysostom, that Joseph was the free man and his mistress was the servant, when she was at the beck of her own lusts, when she tempted and he refused.² Such as live most above sin and temptation, are the greatest freemen; others, that live under the power of their lusts, are but slaves, and in bonds, though they dream and talk of freedom, Titus iii. 3.

Notion (3). Thirdly, If you would break league with sin, and arm and fence yourselves against it, then look always upon sin under the notion of fire.

'And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire,' Jude 23.³ Oh, snatch them out of their sins, as you would snatch a child, a friend, out of the fire, or as the angel snatched Lot out of Sodom, hastily, and with a holy violence. Natural fire may burn the house, the goods, the treasure, the servant, the child, the wife, the body; but this fire burns the soul, it destroys and consumes that noble part which is more worth than all the treasures of a thousand worlds. Every man hath a hand and a heart to quench the fire which burns his neighbour's house, but few men have either hands or hearts to quench the fire that burns their neighbour's souls; this is, and this shall be, for a lamentation.

I have read of one who, upon the violence of any temptation to sin, would lay his hand upon burning coals, and being not able to abide it, would say to himself, Oh, how unable shall I be to endure the pains of

¹ Augustine saith of Rome, that she was the great mistress of the world, and the great drudge of sin. ² Chrysost. Hom. xix. in prior. Epist. ad Corinth.

³ *ἀσπάζοντες*, signifies a violent snatching, as the tender-hearted mother, to save the life of her child, pulls it hastily, and with violence, out of the fire.

hell ! and this restrained him from evil.¹ But what is the fire of hell to the fire of sin ? Now, to provoke you to look upon sin under the notion of fire, consider with me the sundry resemblances between material and immaterial fire, between corporeal common fire and between this spiritual fire, sin. As,

[1.] *First, Fire is terrible and dreadful.* A ship on fire, an house on fire, oh how dreadful is it ! So sin set home upon the conscience is exceeding terrible and dreadful. 'Mine iniquity,' so the Hebrew, 'is greater than I can bear.' Sin or iniquity is often put for the punishment of sin, by a metonymy of the efficient for the effect ; for sin is the natural parent of punishment. 'Mine iniquity,' saith Cain, 'is so great, and lies so heavy, so terrible and dreadful upon my conscience, that it cannot be forgiven,' Gen. iv. 13, and thus, by his diffidence, he stabs two at once, the mercy of God, and his own soul.² So Judas, 'I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood ; and he went and hanged himself,' Mat. xxvii. 3-5.

As there is no fighting with a mighty fire, so there is no bearing up when God sets home sin upon the conscience ; a man will then choose strangling or hanging, rather than living under such wounds and lashes of conscience. Histories abound with instances of this nature ; but I must hasten to a close.

[2.] *Secondly, Fire is most dangerous and pernicious* when it breaks forth of the chimney, or of the house ; so it is with sin. Sin is bad in the eye, worse in the tongue, worser in the heart, but worst of all in the life. Fire, when out of its proper place, may do much hurt in the house, but when it flames abroad, then it doth most mischief to others, 2 Sam. xii. 9-15.

Sin in the heart may undo a man, but sin in the life may undo others as well as a man's self. Set a guard upon the eye, a greater upon thy heart, but the greatest of all upon thy life, Job xxxi. 1, Prov. iv. 23, Eph. v. 15.

Salvian relates how the heathen did reproach some Christians, who by their lewd lives made the gospel of Christ to be a reproach. 'Where,' said they, 'is that good law which they do believe ? Where are those rules of godliness which they do learn ? They read the holy Gospel, and yet are unclean ; they hear the apostles' writings, and yet are drunk ; they follow Christ, and yet disobey Christ ; they profess a holy law, and yet do lead impure lives.'³

But the lives of other Christians have been so holy, that the very heathens observing them, have said, Surely this is a good God, whose servants are so good.

It is brave⁴ when the life of a Christian is a commentary upon Christ's life.

One speaking of the Scripture, saith [Augustine], *verba vivenda, non legenda*, they are words to be lived, and practised, not read only.

A heathen [Plutarch] adviseth us to demean ourselves so circumspectly, as if our enemies did always behold us. And said another [Epictetus], For shame, either live as Stoics, or leave off the name of Stoics ; sirs, live as Christians, or lay down the name of Christians.

¹ Dr Denison's 'Threefold Resolution,' par. ii. sect. 2.

² *Mentiris, Cain, 'Thou liest, Cain, saith one on the text.*

³ Salvianus, de G. D. l. 4.

⁴ Noble, good.—G.

[3.] Thirdly, *Fire hardens*, it makes the weak and limber clay to become stiff and strong for the potter's use. So sin hardens : it hardens the heart against the commands of God, the calls of Christ, and the wrestlings of the Spirit. And as you see in Pharaoh, the Jews, and most that are under the sound of the gospel, Jer. v. 3, xix. 15 ; Isa. ix. 13.

Ah ! how many hath this fire—sin—hardened in these days, by working them to slight soul-softening means, and by drawing them to entertain hardening thoughts of God, and to fall in with soul-hardening company, and soul-hardening principles, and soul-hardening examples of hardened and unsensible sinners, Jer. ii. 25, xviii. 12. One long since thus complained, that they did, *patientius ferre Christi jacturam, quam suam*, more calmly pass by the injuries done to Christ, than those which are done unto themselves. This age is full of such hardened unsensible souls.

[4.] Fourthly, *Fire is a lively active element*, so is sin.

Ah ! how lively and active was this fire in Abraham, David, Job, Peter, Paul, and other saints ! Though Christ by his death hath given it its mortal wound, yet it lives, and is and will be active in the dearest saints. Though sin and grace were not born together, neither shall they die together ; yet while believers live in this world, they must live together. There is a history that speaks of a fig-tree that grew in a stone-wall, and all means was used to kill it. They cut off the branches and it grew again, they cut down the body and it grew again, they cut it up by the root and still it lived and grew, until they pulled down the stone-wall ; till death shall pull down our stone-walls, sin will live, this fire will burn.¹

We may say of sin as some say of cats, that they have many lives ; kill them and they will live again, kill them again and they will live again ; so kill sin once and it will live again, kill it again and it will live again, &c. Sin oftentimes is like that monster Hydra, cut off one head and many will rise up in its room.²

[5.] Fifthly, *Fire is of a penetrating nature*, it pierceth and windeth itself into every corner and chink, and so doth sin wind itself into our thoughts, words, and works. It will wind itself into our understandings to darken them, and into our judgments to pervert them, and into our wills to poison them, and into our affections to disorder them, and into our consciences to corrupt them, and into our carriages³ to debase them. Sin will wind itself into every duty and every mercy, it will wind itself into every one of our enjoyments and concernments.

Hannibal having overcome the Romans, put on their armour on his soldiers, and so by that policy, they being taken for Romans, won a city ; but what are Hannibal's wiles to sin's wiles or Satan's wiles ? If you have a mind to be acquainted with their wiles, look over my treatise, called, 'Precious Remedies against Satan's Devices.'

[6.] Sixth and lastly, *Fire is a devouring, a consuming element*,

¹ Isidore the monk was very much out, who vaunted that he had felt in himself no motion to sin forty years together.

² Isa. i. 5, 6, Rom. vii. 13, 17. Sin is *malum catholicum*, a catholic evil. *Quodcumque in peccato, peccatum est*, whatsoever is in sin is sin.

³ 'Walk and conversation' = conduct or actions.—G.

Ps. xxi. 9. It turns all fuel into ashes. It is a wolf that eats up all. So sin is a fire that devours and consumes all; it turned Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes; it hath destroyed the Chaldean, Persian, and Grecian kingdoms, and will at last destroy the Roman kingdom also. This wolf ate up Samson's strength, Absalom's beauty, Ahithophel's policy, and Herod's glory, &c. It hath drowned one world already, and will at last burn another, even this.¹ Oh the hopes, the hearts, the happiness, the joys, the comforts, the souls that this fire, sin, hath consumed and destroyed! &c.

Peter Camois, a bishop of Berry in France, in his Draught of Eternity, tells us, that some devout personages caused those words of the prophet Isaiah to be written in letters of gold upon their chimney-pieces: 'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?' Isa. xxxiii. 14.

Ah! young men, young men, I desire that you may always look upon sin under the notion of fire, yea, as such fire as lays the foundation for everlasting fire, for everlasting burnings; and this may work when other things will not.

I have read of a grave and chaste matron, who being moved to commit folly with a lewd Russian, after some discourse, she called for a pan of burning coals, requesting him for her sake to hold his finger in them but one hour; he answered, it is an unkind request; to whom she replied, that seeing he would not do so much as to put one finger upon the coals for one hour, she could not yield to do that for which she should be tormented, both body and soul, in hell-fire for ever. The application is easy, &c.

Notion (4). Fourthly, If you would break with sin betimes, if you would arm against sin in the spring and morning of your days, then you should *look upon sin under the notion of a thief*.

And, indeed, sin is the greatest thief, the greatest robber in the world. It robbed the angels of all their glory, 2 Pet. ii. 4; it robbed Adam of his paradise and felicity, Gen. iii., and it hath robbed all the sons of Adam of five precious jewels, the least of which was more worth than heaven and earth.

(1.) It hath robbed them of the *holy and glorious image of God*, which would have been fairly engraven upon them, had Adam stood, &c.

(2.) It hath robbed them of their *sonship*; and of sons hath made them slaves.

(3.) It hath robbed them of their *friendship*, and made them enemies.

(4.) It hath robbed them of their *communion and fellowship* with Father, Son, and Spirit, and made them strangers and aliens.

(5.) It hath robbed them of their *glory*, and made them vile and miserable. It hath robbed many a nation of the gospel, and many a parish of many a happy guide, and many a Christian of the favour of God, the joys of the Spirit, and the peace of conscience.²

Oh! the health, the wealth, the honour, the friends, the relations that sin hath robbed thousands of.

Nay, It hath robbed many of their gifts, their arts, their parts, their

¹ 2 Pet. ii. 5, 6; Prov. vi. 32; Eccl. ix. 18; Prov. xiii. 13, xi. 3, xv. 25, xxi. 7.

² Well did one of the fathers call pride and vain-glory, the sweet spoiler of spiritual excellencies, and a pleasant thief.

memory, their judgment, yea, their very reason, as you may see in Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Ahithophel, Haman, Herod, and those Babylonish princes that accused Daniel.

And so in Menippus of Phœnicia, who, having lost his goods, strangled himself. And so Dinareus Phidon, at a certain loss, cut his own throat to save the charge of a cord. And so Augustus Cæsar, in whose time Christ was born, was so troubled and astonished at the relation of an overthrow from Varus, that for certain months together, he let the hair of his head and beard grow still, and wore it long; yea, and other whiles would run his head against the doors, crying out, Quintilius Varus, deliver up my legions again;¹ by all which it is most apparent that sin is the greatest thief in all the world.

Oh! then, who would not break league and covenant with it, and be still in pressing of God to do justice upon it! &c.

Notion (5). Fifthly, If you would break with sin, and arm and fence yourselves against sin betimes, then you must *look upon sin under the notion of a burden betimes.*²

And indeed, sin of all burdens is the heaviest burden in all the world: ‘Innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me,’ Ps. xl. 12.

And again, ‘Mine iniquities are gone over my head,’ saith the same person; ‘as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me to bear,’ Ps. xxxviii. 4. Sin is a ‘weight that easily besets,’ Heb. xii. 1, poor souls; it is a burden that so troubles them and puzzles them, that so curbs them and girds them, that so presses and oppresses them, as that it wrings many bitter tears from their eyes, and many sad and grievous sighs and groans from their hearts, Rom. vii. 13.

Again, as sin is a burden to Christians, so it is a burden to heaven. It made heaven weary to bear the angels that fell; no sooner had they sinned but heaven groans to be eased of them, and it never left groaning till justice had turned them a-groaning to hell, Jude 6.

Again, as sin is a burden to heaven, so it is a burden to the earth. Witness her swallowing up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, their wives, children, goods, servants, &c., Num. xvi. 26–35. Ah, sinners! your sins makes the very earth to groan, they make the earth weary of bearing you. Oh, how doth the earth groan and long to swallow up those earthly wretches, whose hopes, whose hearts, are buried in the earth! These shall have little of heaven, but enough of earth when they come to die.

Cornelius à Lapide tells a story, that he heard of a famous preacher, who, shewing the bondage of the creature, Rom. viii. 19–23, brings in the creature complaining thus: Oh, that we could serve such as are godly; oh, that our substance and our flesh might be incorporated into godly people, that so we might rise into glory with them; oh, that our flesh might not be incorporated into the flesh of sinners, for if it be, we shall go to hell, and would any creatures go to hell? oh, we are weary of bearing sinners! we are weary of serving of sinners! Thus the creatures groan, thus the creatures complain, the sinner’s sins forcing them to it, &c.

¹ Suetonius.

² Nah. i. 1; Hab. i. 1; Mal. i. 1.

Again, sin is a burden to God: 'Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves,' Amos ii. 13. By this plain, pithy, country comparison, God shews how sadly he is pressed and oppressed, how sorely he is wearied and tired with those people's sins. Divine patience is even worn out. Justice hath lift up her hand, and will bear with them no longer. God seems to groan under the pressure of their sins, as a cart seems to do under a heavy load. Of this God complains by the prophet Isaiah: 'Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities,' Isa. xliii. 24. I am as weary of your sins as a travelling woman is weary of her pains, saith God. Sin was such a burden to God, that he sweeps it off with a sweeping flood, Gen. vii., &c.

Again, sin is a burden to Christ: It made him sweat as never man sweat; it made him sweat great drops of clotted or congealed blood. Luke xxii. 44.¹ Sin put Christ's whole body into a bloody sweat; it made him groan piteously, when he bare our sins in his body on the tree. Sin made his soul heavy even to the death, and had he not been one that was mighty, yea, that was Almighty, he had fainted and failed under his burden, 1 Pet. ii. 24, Isa. ix. 6. And thus you see what a burden sin is to man, to the creatures, to heaven, to earth, to God, to Christ; and therefore, as you would break with sin betimes, look always upon it as a burden, yea, as the greatest and heaviest burden in all the world, &c.

Notion (6). Sixthly and lastly, If you would break covenant with sin, and arm and fence yourselves against it betimes, then you must *look upon it betimes under the notion of a tyrant.*

And indeed, sin is the worst and greatest tyrant in the world, Titus iii. 3. Other tyrants can but tyrannize over our bodies, but sin is a tyrant that tyrannizes over both body and soul, as you may see in the sixth and seventh of the Romans. Sin is a tyrant that hath a kind of jurisdiction in most men's hearts; it sets up the law of pride, the law of passion, the law of oppression, the law of formality, the law of hypocrisy, the law of carnality, the law of self-love, the law of carnal reason, the law of unbelief, and strictly commands subjection to them, and proclaims fire and sword to all that stand out. This saints and sinners, good men and bad, do sufficiently experience.

Sin is a tyrant of many thousand years' standing, and though it hath had many a wound, and many a foil, and received much opposition, yet still it plays the tyrant all the world over! Oh, the hearts that this tyrant makes to ache! the souls that this tyrant makes to bleed!

Pharaoh's tyranny was nothing to sin's tyranny. This tyrant will not so much as suffer his slaves to sleep. They sleep not, except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away unless they cause some to fall, Prov. iv. 16. 'The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace to the wicked, saith my God,' Isa. lvii. 20, 21.

Other tyrants have been brought down and brought under by a human power, but this cannot but by a divine. The power of man

¹ A strange watering of a garden.—Bernard.

² Thales, one of the seven sages, used to say, that few tyrants lived to be old; but it is far otherwise with this tyrant sin.

hath brought down many of the tyrants of this world, but it is only the power of Christ that can bring down this tyrant, that can cast down his strongholds, 2 Cor. x. 3-6, &c. Therefore, engage Christ in the conflict, draw him into the battle, and in the end the conquest will be yours.

Vitellius, who had been emperor of all the world, yet was driven through the streets of Rome stark naked, and thrown into the river Tiber, &c.¹

Andronicus the emperor, for his cruelty towards his people, was by them at last shamefully deposed, and, after many contumelies, hanged up by his heels.²

Ptolemy was put on a cross; Bajazet in an iron cage; Phocas broken on the wheel; Lycaon cast to the dogs, as well as Jezebel; Attalus thrust into a forge; King Gath into a beer barrel, &c. But none of these that have tamed these tyrants, that have brought down these mighty Nimrods, have been able to tame, to bring under the tyrants, the sins, the lusts, that have been in their own bosoms. Many a man hath had a hand in bringing down of worldly tyrants, who, notwithstanding, have died for ever by the hand of a tyrant within, &c.

CHAPTER VIII.

And thus much for the directions that young men must follow, if they would be good betimes, if they would seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of their days. I shall now give some brief answers to the young man's objections and the old man's scruples, and so close up this discourse.

Obj. 1. But some young men may object, and say, You would have us to be good betimes, and to seek and serve the Lord in the primrose of our days. But it may be time enough hereafter to follow this counsel; we are young, and it may be time enough for us to mind these things hereafter, when we have satisfied the flesh so and so, or when we have got enough of the world, and laid up something that will stand us in stead, and that may oil our joints when we are old. Now,

To this objection I answer,

1. First, *That it is the greatest folly and madness in the world to put off God and the great things of eternity with may-bes.* What tradesman, what merchant, what mariner, so mad, so foolish, so blockish, as to put off a present season, a present opportunity of profit and advantage, upon the account of a may-be? It may be I have as good a season, it may be I shall have as golden an opportunity to get, and to enrich myself as this is; and therefore farewell to this. No men that are in their right minds will argue thus; and why then should you, especially in the things that are of an everlasting concernment to you?

I have read of one monarch, a frantic Italian, who thought that all the kings of the earth were his vassals; and as frantic are they who wilfully neglect present seasons of grace, upon the account of a future may-be, &c.

¹ Previously dragged to the Gemoniæ Scalæ, where the body of Sabinus had been exposed. Cf. Tillemont, *Histoire des Empereurs*, i.—G.

² Doubtful.—G.

2. Secondly, I answer, *It may be if thou neglectest this present season and opportunity of grace, thou mayest never have another.*¹ It may be mercy may never knock more, if thou dost not open; it may be Christ shall never be offered to thee more, if now thou dost not close with him, and accept of him; it may be the Spirit will never strive more with thee, if now thou dost resist him and withstand him; it may be a pardon shall never be offered to thee more, if now thou wilt not take it; it may be the gospel shall never sound more in thy ears, if now thou wilt not hear it. Now set one may-be against another may-be, set God's may-be against thine own may-be; but,

3. Thirdly, *Doubtless there are many thousand thousands now in hell, who have pleased themselves and put off God and the seasons of grace with a may-be, hereafter may be time enough.* It may be when I have gratified such a lust, and when I have treasured so much of the world, I will return, and seek, and serve the Lord; but before ever this season or opportunity came, justice hath cut the thread of their lives, and they are now miserable for ever; and now they are still a-cursing themselves, because they have slipped their golden opportunities upon the account of a may-be,² &c. But,

4. Fourthly, and lastly, *This putting off God and the present seasons of grace with a may-be, is very provoking to God, as you may see, if you will but read from the 20th verse to the 33d of the first of Proverbs.* Nothing stirs and provokes a master more than his servants putting off his service or his commands with a may-be; it may be I will, it may be I may do this and that; nothing puts a master sooner into a heat, a flame, than this; nor nothing puts God more into a flame than this, as you may see by comparing Ps. xcv. ver. 6 to the end, with that 3d of the Hebrews, and the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th. Read the words, and tremble at the thoughts of a may-be, at the thoughts of putting off of God and the seasons of grace.

I have read of two who cut off their right hand one for another, and then made it an excuse, a put off, they were lame, and so could not serve in the galleys of Francis the First, King of France; but this practice of theirs did so provoke the king that he sent them both to the gallows. I suppose the reader is not so young but knows how to apply it.

Object 2. If I should begin to be good betimes, and to seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of my days, I should lose my friends, I should lose their favours; for they are carnal and worldly, and had rather I should seek after gold than God, the creature than Christ, earth than heaven. &c.

Now to this I answer, Surely you are out, for

1. First, *This is the highway, the ready way, to gain the best, the surest, and the soundest friends.* 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him,' Prov. xvi. 7. When a man falls in with God, God will work the creatures to fall in with him, Job lii. 23-28. Joseph found it so, and Jacob found it so,

¹ Young men, if you will but go into burial places, you shall find graves exactly of your length.

² It was an unspeakable vexation to King Lysimachus, that his staying to drink one draught of water lost him his kingdom. [As before.—G.]

and Job found it so, the three children found it so, and Daniel found it so, as you all know that have but read the Scripture. And many in this age, as bad as it is, have found, that the best way to make friends is, first to make God our friend. Ah! young men, young men, you shall not lose your friends by seeking and serving of the Lord in the spring and morning of your days, but only exchange bad ones for good ones, the worst for the best. He that gives up himself betimes to the Lord shall have God for his friend, and Christ for his friend, and the angels for his friends, and the saints for his friends. Christ will be to such, first, an omnipotent friend; secondly, an omniscient friend; thirdly, an omnipresent friend; fourthly, an indeficient friend; fifthly, an independent friend; sixthly, an immutable friend; seventhly, a watchful friend; eighthly, a loving friend; ninthly, a faithful friend; tenthly, a compassionate friend; eleventhly, a close friend, 'There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother,' Prov. xviii. 24. Such a friend is Christ, and such a friend is as one's own soul, a rare happiness, hardly to be matched. Twelfthly, an universal friend; a friend in all cases and a friend in all places. Christ is so a friend to every one of his, as if he were a friend to none besides. Hence it is that they say, not only our Lord, our God, but my Lord, and my God. Christ is such an universal friend, as that he supplies the place, and acts the part of every friend. Thirteenthly, 'He is our first friend,' Ps. xc. 1; before we had a friend in all the world he was our friend, Prov. viii. 21. Lastly, he is a constant friend: 'Whom he loves, he loves to the end,' John xiii. 1.^{1 2}

Augustus Cæsar would not suddenly entertain a league of friendship with any, but was a constant friend to those he loved, *Amare nec cito desisto, nec temere incipio*, late ere I love, as long ere I leave. Where Christ begins to love, he always loves, Jer. xxxi. 3, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love.' Now who would not venture the loss of all friends in the world to gain such a friend as this is?

Ah! young men and women, let me say to you what Seneca said to his friend Polibius, *Fas tibi non est de fortuna conqueri, salvo Cæsare*, never complain of thy hard fortune as long as Cæsar is thy friend. So say I; never complain of your loss of friends so long as by losing of them you gain Christ to be your friend.

2. Secondly, *Thou wert better be without their friendship and favour than to enjoy it upon any sinful and unworthy accounts.* Thou wert better run the hazard of losing thy friends and their favour by seeking and serving the Lord in the primrose of thy days, than to run the hazard of losing God, Christ, heaven, eternity, and thy soul for ever by neglecting the things of thy peace, Matt. xvi. 26, Mark viii. 36.

It was a gallant return which the noble Rutilius made his friend, requesting of him an unlawful favour in such language as this: I had as good be without such a friend as with him who will not let me speed in what I ask; to whom he replied, I can want such a friend as you, if

¹ Luke xv. 7: Isa. vi. 7-9; Heb. iv. 13; Isa. lix. 16, 17, xlv. 24; Mal. iii. 6; Ps. cxxi. 4-6; 1 John iv. 16; Titus i. 2; Isa. lxiii. 9; Luke i. 45; John xx. 28; Philip. iv. 19.

² Alexander the Great cannot cut that knot of friendship that is tied betwixt Christ and his. [The allusion is to the sword-cut Gordian knot. —G.]

for your sake I must do that which is not honest. The application is easy.

Well! young men, remember this, the torments of a thousand hells, were there so many, comes far short of this one voice, to be turned out of God's presence with a *Non novi vos*, I know you not, Mat. vii. 23.

Ah, young man, young man! thou wert better ten thousand thousand times to be cast out of the thoughts and hearts of thy carnal friends and relations, than to be cast out of God's presence with cursed Cain, Gen. iv., for ever, than to be excommunicated out of 'the general assembly of the saints, and congregation of the first-born which are written in heaven,' Heb. xii. 23; and therefore away with this objection. But,

3. Thirdly, *The favour and friendship of such carnal persons is very fickle and inconstant; it is very fading and withering.* Now they stroke, and anon they strike; now they lift up, and anon they cast down; now they smile, and anon they frown; now they kiss, and anon they kill; now they cry, 'Hosannah! hosannah!' and anon they cry, 'Crucify him, crucify him!' Haman is one day feasted with the king, and the next day made a feast for crows, Esther vii. The princes of Babylon were highly in king Darius his favour one day, and cast into the lion's den the next, Dan. vi. The scribes and pharisees that cried up Judas one day, did in effect bid him go and hang himself the next day, Mat. xxvii. 3-5.

Such men's favour and friendship are as Venice glasses, quickly broken, and therefore not much to be prized or minded. Histories abound with instances of this nature.¹ But I must hasten: only remember this, that every day's experience tells us that wicked men can soon turn tables, and cross their books; their favour and friendship is usually like to a morning cloud, or like to Jonah's gourd: one hour flourishing and the next hour withering; and why then shouldst thou set thy heart upon that which is more changeable than the moon? But,

4. Fourthly and lastly, *Who but a bad man would adventure the loss of the king's favour to gain the favour of his page?* Who but a stark Bedlam would run the hazard of losing the judge's favour upon the bench, to purchase the good will of the prisoner at the bar?

Socrates preferred the king's countenance before his coin; and so must you prefer the favour of God, the countenance of Christ, Ps. iv. 6, 7, and the things of eternity, above all the favour and friendship of all the men in the world. When your nearest friends and dearest relations stands in competition with Christ, or the things above, you must shake them off, you must turn your backs upon them, and welcome Christ and the things of your peace. He that forsakes all relations for Christ, shall certainly find all relations in Christ;² he will be father, friend, husband, child; he will be everything to thee, who takest him for thy great all.

Object. 3. Aye, but I shall meet with many reproaches from one and other, if I should labour to be good betimes, if I should seek and

¹ Valerian, Valens, Belisarius, Bajazet, Pythias, Dionysius, Pompey, William the Conqueror, and many others, have found it so. Glaucus, who changed his armour of gold with Diomedes, for his armour of brass, stands upon record for a fool.

² Ps. xlv. 10; Mat. x. 37; Luke xiv. 26, 27.

serve the Lord in the spring and morning of my youth. Now, to this I answer,

1. First, *What are reproaches to the great things that others have suffered for Christ his gospel, and the maintaining of a good conscience?* What is a prick of a pin to a stab at the heart? what is a chiding to a hanging, a whipping to a burning? No more are all the reproaches thou canst meet with, to the great things that others have suffered for Christ's sake.¹

Ah, young men! you should be like the Scythian that went naked in the snow, and when Alexander wondered how he could endure it, answered, I am not ashamed, for I am all forehead.

So should you in the cause and way of Christ; you should not be ashamed, you should be all forehead, you should be stout and bold.

Colonus, the Dutch martyr, under all his reproaches, called to the judge that had sentenced him to death, and desired him to lay his hand upon his heart, and then asked him, Whose heart did most beat, his or the judge's? All the reproaches in the world should not so much as make a Christian's heart beat; they should not in the least trouble him nor disturb him. But,

2. Secondly, I answer, *That all the reproaches thou meetest with in the way of Christ, and for the sake of Christ, they do but add pearls to thy crown; they are all additions to thy happiness and blessedness.* If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory, and of God, resteth upon you; on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified, 1 Peter iv. 14. The more you are reproached for Christ's sake on earth, the greater shall be your reward in heaven; they that are most loaded with reproaches here, shall be most laden with glory hereafter, Mat. v. 11, 12. Christ hath written their names in golden letters in his book of life, that are written in black letters of reproach for his sake on earth. It was a good saying of one [Chrysostom]: A reproacher, saith he, is beneath a man, but the reproached that bear it well, are equal to angels; of all crowns, the reproached man's crown will weigh heaviest in heaven.² But,

3. Thirdly, I answer, *the best men have been mostly reproached.* David was, Ps. lxxix. 7, lxxxix. 50, cxix. 22, xxxi. 11, cix. 25; and Job was, Job xix. 31, xx. 3,³ xvi. 10; and Jeremiah was, Jer. xx. 7, 10. Yea, this hath been the common portion of the people of God in all ages of the world. In Nehemiah's time it was so: Neh. i. 3, 'And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity, are in great affliction and reproach.' In David's time it was so, Ps. lxxix. 4, and Ps. xlv. 13, 14; and in Jeremiah's time it was so: Lam. v. 1, 'Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us: consider, and behold our reproach.' And in Daniel's time it was so: Dan. ix. 16, 'Thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us;' and it was so in the apostle's time: Rom. iii. 8, 'And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come; whose damna-

¹ Hebrews xi. 33. Read of the ten persecutions. [See Sibbes's Works, vol. i. p. 384.—G.]

² So was Joseph, Mephibosheth, Naboth, and in latter times Luther, whom they said died despairing, when he was alive to confute it; and that Beza run away with another man's wife; and that Calvin was branded on the shoulder for a rogue: but there would be no end to this stuff, should I say all that might be said.

³ The speaker here is Zophar, not Job.—G.

tion is just ; 2 Cor. vi. 8, ' By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report : as deceivers and yet true ; ' so in that, 1 Tim. iv. 10, ' For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, ' &c. And it was so in the primitive times, for when the Christians met together before sun[rise] to pray, the heathens reported of them that they worshipped the sun, and aspired after monarchy, and committed adulteries and unnatural uncleannesses.¹ Now, who is troubled, who complains of that which is a common lot, as cold, winter, sickness, death ? &c. No more should any complain of reproaches, it being the common lot of the people of God in all ages ; yea, Christ himself was sadly reproached, falsely accused, and strangely traduced, disgraced, and scandalized. He was called a glutton, a drunkard, a friend of publicans and sinners, and judged to use the black art, casting out devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils, Mat. ix. 34, xii. 24. Christ hath suffered the greatest and the worst reproaches ; why then should you be afraid to wear that crown of thorns that Christ hath worn before you ? There is a great truth in what he said, *Non potest qui pati timet, ejus esse qui passus est*,² he that is afraid to suffer cannot be his disciple, who suffered so much. If the master hath been marked with a black coal, let not the servant think to go free. I am heartily angry, saith Luther, with those that speak of my sufferings, which, if compared with that which Christ suffered for me, are not once to be mentioned in the same day. But,

4. Fourthly, I answer, *That all reproachers shall at last be arraigned at the highest bar of justice, for all the reproaches that they have cast upon the people of God.*

They think it strange, for they think it a new world, that you ' run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you, who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead, ' 1 Pet. iv. 4.³

I am in ecstasy, saith Picus Mirandula, to think how profane men rail upon those now, whom one day they will wish they had imitated. It was excellent counsel that the heathen orator gave his hearers, *ita vivamus, ut rationem nobis reddendam arbitremur*, let us live as those that must give an account of all at last.⁴

Chrysostom brings in Christ comforting his disciples against reproaches, speaking thus unto them, What ! is the wrong grievous to you that they now call you seducers and conjurors ? It will not be long before they shall openly call you the saviours and blessings of the whole world ; that time that shall declare all things that are now hid, shall rebuke them for their lying words against you, and shall kindle the splendour of your virtue ; so they shall be found liars, evil speakers, false accusers of others ; but you shall be more clear and illustrious than the sun, and you shall have all men witnesses of your glory. Such as wisely and humbly bear reproaches now, shall judge reproachers at last.⁵ But,

5. Fifthly, I answer, *That God doth many times, even in this life, bear sad witness and testimony against the reproachers of his people.*

¹ Tertullian.

² Tertul. *de fuga in persecut.*

³ ζηνίζονται . . . βλασφηημοῦντες.

⁴ Cicero iv. in Verr.

⁵ Mal. iii. 17 ; Micah 7-11 ; 1 Cor. vi. 3, 4.

'I will bless them that bless thee, and I will curse them that curse thee,' Gen. xii. 3, and 2 Sam. xvi. 11-13. God will even in this life curse them with a witness, who curse them that he blesseth. Pharaoh found it so, and Saul found it so, and Jezebel found it so, and Haman found it so, and the princes of Babylon found it so, and the Jews find it so to this very day.¹

And oh the dreadful judgments and curses that God hath poured out upon the reproachers of his name, of his Son, of his Spirit, of his word, of his ordinances, and of his people, in these days wherein we live ! I might give you many sad instances of such in our days, whose feet justice hath taken in the snare, men of abstracted conceits and sublime speculations ; and indeed such usually prove the great wise fools, who, like the lark, soareth higher and higher, peering and peering, till at length they fall into the net of the fowler ; and no wonder, for such persons usually are as censorious as they are curious.

6. Sixthly, I answer, *Paul rejoiceth more in his suffering reproaches for Christ's sake, than he did in his being rapt up in the third heaven* : 2 Cor. xii. 10, 'Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake ; for when I am weak, then am I strong.' And therefore you have him often a-singing this song, 'I Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ ;' not I Paul, rapt up in the third heaven. He looked upon all his sufferings as God's love-tokens ; he looked upon all reproaches as pledges and badges of his sonship ; and therefore joys and glories under all. Christ shewed his glory to him in rapping him up in the third heaven, and he shewed his love to Christ, in his joyful bearing of reproaches for his sake. Paul rattles his chain, which he bears for the gospel, and was proud of it, as a woman of her ornaments, saith Chrysostom.²

Now why should that be matter of trouble and discouragement to you, that was matter of joy and rejoicing to him ? Shall he look upon reproaches as a crown of honour, and will you look upon reproaches as a crown of thorns ?

Oh ! look upon reproach as a royal diadem, look upon it as Christ's livery, and count it your highest ambition in this world to wear this livery for his sake, who once wore a crown of thorns for your sakes. When Babybas was to die, he required this favour, to have his chains buried with him as the ensigns of his honour.³ But,

7. Seventhly, I answer, *That by a wise and gracious behaviour under the reproaches thou meetest with for Christ's sake, thou mayest be instrumental to win others to Christ.*⁴

It was a noble saying of Luther, *Ecclesia totum mundum convertit sanguine et oratione*, the church converted the whole world by blood and prayer.

¹ Divine justice is like Vulcan's iron net that took the gods ; it apprehends and condemns all that are reproachers and enemies to his people. [Vulcan, or rather Hephaestus : *Odyssey*, VIII. 266-358.—G.]

² *Crudelitas vestra gloria nostra*, your cruelty is our glory, said they in Tertullian ; fire, sword, prison, famine, are all delightful to me, saith Basil.

³ Sufferings are the ensigns of heavenly nobility, saith Calvin. [On Luke iv. 1-10.—G.]

⁴ It was an observation of Mr John Lindsay, that the very smoke of Mr Hamilton converted as many as it blew upon. [That is, Patrick Hamilton, the proto-martyr of Scotland, 1527.—G.]

Divers have been won to Christ by beholding the gracious carriages of Christians under their sufferings and reproaches for Christ.

We read of Cecilia, a poor virgin, who, by her gracious behaviour under all her sufferings and reproaches for Christ, was the means of converting four hundred to Christ.¹

Adrianus, beholding the gracious, cheerful carriages of the martyrs under all their sufferings and reproaches, was converted to Christ, and afterwards suffered martyrdom for Christ.

Justin Martyr was also converted by observing the holy and cheerful behaviour of the saints under all their sufferings and reproaches for Christ.² During the cruel persecutions of the heathen emperors, the Christian faith was spread through all places of the empire,³ because the oftener they were mown down, saith Tertullian, the more they grew.

And Austin observed, that though there were many thousands put to death for professing Christ, yet they were never the fewer for being slain.

Ah! young men, you may, by a wise and gracious bearing of reproaches for Christ, be instrumental to win others to Christ; and therefore never plead there is a lion in the way. But I must hasten; and therefore,

8. In the eighth and last place, consider, *How bravely several of the very heathens have bore reproaches; and let that provoke you, in the face of all reproaches, to seek and serve the Lord in the morning of your youth, &c.*

When Demosthenes was reproached by one, I will not, saith he, strive with thee in this kind of fight, in which he that is overcome is the better man.

When one came and reproached Xenophon, says he, You have learned how to reproach, and I have learned how to bear reproach.

And Aristippus, the philosopher,⁴ said, You are fit to cast reproaches, and I am fit to bear reproaches.

Demochares, an Athenian orator,⁵ was sent to king Philip as ambassador. Philip asked him how he might pleasure the Athenians? Forsooth, said he, if you will hang yourself. The prince patiently sent him home again, and bid him ask, Whether were more noble, the patient hearer or venter of such unseemly language?

When one wondered at the patience of Socrates towards one who reviled and reproached him, If we should meet one, saith he, whose body were more unsound than ours, should we be angry with him, and not rather pity him? Why, then, should we not do the like to him whose soul is more diseased than ours?

Augustus Caesar, in whose time Christ was born, bid Catullus the railing poet to supper, to shew that he had forgiven him.

It is a notable example that we find of one Pericles,⁶ who, as he was

¹ Clarke's 'Martyrologie,' as before, pp. 35, 36.—G.

² His words are worth giving: 'I myself, when I took pleasure in the doctrines of Plato, and heard the Christians slandered, seeing them to be fearless of death, and of everything else that was thought dreadful, considered that it was impossible that they should live in wickedness,' &c., &c. (Apolog. ii. 12).—G.

³ See also the History of the Council of Trent, 418, 2d edit.

⁴ Founder of the Cyrenaic Philosophy.—G.

⁵ The pupil of Demosthenes, and friend of Zeno.—Diog. Laërtius, iv 41, vii. 14.—G.

⁶ Plutarch in *vita* Pericles.

sitting with others in a great meeting, a foul-mouthed fellow bitterly reproached him, and railed all the day long upon him; and at night, when it was dark, and the meeting up, the fellow followed him, and railed at him even to his door, and he took no notice of him; but when he came at home, this is all he said, Friend, it is dark, I pray let my man light you home.¹

Josephus reports of that Herod that is made mention of in Acts xii. 23, that when one Simon, a lawyer, had grievously reproached and scandalised him before the people, he sent for him, and caused him to sit down next to him, and in a kind manner he spake thus to him: Tell me, I pray thee, what thing thou seest fault-worthy or contrary to the law in me. Simon not having anything to answer, besought him to pardon him, which the king did, and was friends with him, and dismissed him, bestowing gifts on him.

Ah! young men, young men, shall the very heathen make nothing of reproaches? shall they bear up so prudently and bravely under the greatest loads of reproaches, and will not you? Will not you, who in your light, in your mercies, and in all gospel engagements, are so highly advanced above them? Oh! that none of them may be called to the bar in the great day to witness against any of you into whose hands this treatise shall fall. And so much by way of answer to the third objection. But,

Objection 4. Fourthly, The young man objects, and says, You press us to be good betimes, and to seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of our days; but we observe that most men mind not these things, but rather give liberty to themselves to walk in ways that are most pleasing to the flesh; and why, then, should we be singular and nice? We were better do as the most do, &c. Now to this I answer,

1. *That though bad examples are dangerous to all, yet usually they prove most dangerous and pernicious to young persons, who are more easily drawn to follow examples than precepts, especially those examples that tend most to undo them:* 2 Kings xv. 9, it is said of Zachariah, the king of Israel, that 'he did evil in the sight of the Lord, as his fathers had done; he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam;' he would be as his father was, and do as his father did, whatever came on it.²

So the Samaritans, of whom it is said, 2 Kings xvii. 41, 'These nations feared the Lord' (that is, they made some kind of profession of the true religion, as the ten tribes had done), 'and served their graven images (too); both their children and their children's children (did thus); as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.' By evil examples they were both drawn to idolatry, and rooted and confirmed in it. So the main reason why the kingdom and church of Judah were so settled in their idolatry, that there was no hope of reclaiming them, was this, that their children remembered their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills, Jer. xvii. 1, 2. Tinder is not apter to

¹ Themistocles professed that if two ways were shewed him, one to hell, and the other to the Bar, he would choose that which went to hell, and forsake the other.

² *Præcepta docent, exempla movent*, Precepts may instruct, but examples do persuade. [As before.—G.]

take fire, nor wax the impression of the seal, nor paper the ink, than youth is to follow ill examples.

You may see in Radbad, king of Phrisia,¹ who coming to the font to be baptized, asked what was become of his ancestors? answer was made, that they died in a fearful state unbaptized; he replied that he would rather perish with the multitude than go to heaven with a few.

I remember the heathen brings in a young man who, hearing of the adulteries and wickednesses of the gods, said, What! do they so? and shall I stick at it? No, I will not. Sinful examples are very drawing and very encouraging; many have found it so to their eternal undoing. Those that have no ears to hear what you say, have many eyes to see what you do. Bad princes make bad subjects; bad masters make bad servants; bad parents make bad children; and bad husbands make bad wives. It is easier for the bad to corrupt the good, than for the good to convert the bad; it is easier to run down the hill with company, than to run up the hill alone.²

I would desire all young men often to remember that saying of Laetantius, *Qui malum imitatur, bonus esse non potest*, he who imitates the bad cannot be good. Young men, in these professing times, stand between good and bad examples, as Hercules in his dream stood between virtue and vice. Solicited by both, choose you must who to follow. Oh that you were all so wise as to follow the best; as a woman that hath many suitors is very careful to take the best, so should you. Life, heaven, happiness, eternity, hangs upon it.

But before I come to the second answer, let me leave this note or notion with those who make no conscience of undoing others by their examples,³ viz.,

That a more grievous punishment is reserved for them who cause others to offend, than for them which sin by their occasion or example.

Thus the serpent was punished more than Eve, and Eve more than Adam.

So Jezebel felt a greater and sorer judgment than Ahab. To sin, saith one, hath not so much perdition in it as to cause others to sin. Friends, you have sins enough of your own to make you for ever miserable; why should you, by giving bad examples to others, make yourselves far more miserable? The lowest, the darkest, the hottest place in hell, will be for them that have drawn others thither by their example, Mat. xxiii. 15. Dives knew that if his brethren were damned, he should be double damned, because he had largely contributed to the bringing of them to hell by his wicked example; and therefore he desires that they might be kept out of hell, not out of any love or good will to them, but because their coming thither would have made his hell more hot, his torments more insufferable, Luke xvi. 28. But,

2. Secondly, I answer, *If you sin with others, you shall suffer with others*; if you will partake of other men's sins, you shall also partake

¹ Query—Frisia, i.e. the Frisii of North-western Germany?—G.

² Ethiopians lame themselves if their king be lame, saith Diodorus. Ælian reports that there was a whore that did boast that she could easily get scholars away from Socrates, but Socrates could get away no scholars from her.

³ Sin is bad in the eye, worse in the tongue, worsen in the heart, but worst of all in the life; and that because it then endangers other men's souls, as well as a man's own.

of other men's plagues, Rev. xviii. 4. They that have been, like Simeon and Levi, brethren in iniquity, they shall be brethren in misery; they that have sinned together impenitently shall be sent to hell jointly, they shall perish together eternally. If you will needs be companions with others in their sins, you shall be sure to be companions with them in their sorrows.¹ The old world sin together and are drowned together, Gen. vi.; the Sodomites, burning in lusts together, were burnt with fire and brimstone together, Gen. xix. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, they sin together, they murmur and provoke the Lord together, and the earth opens her mouth and swallows them up together, Num. xvi. 26-34. Pharaoh and his hosts pursue Israel together, and they are drowned in the sea together, Exod. xiv. Zimri and Cosbi commit folly, uncleanness together, and Phinehas stabs them both together, Num. xxv. The Hebrew doctors have a very pretty parable to this purpose:—A man planted an orchard, and, going from home, was careful to leave such watchmen as might both keep it from strangers and not deceive him themselves; therefore he appointed one blind, but strong of his limbs, and the other seeing, but a cripple. These two, in their master's absence, conspired together, and the blind took the lame on his shoulders, and so gathered the fruit; their master returning and finding out their subtilty, punished them both together.

So will justice deal with you at last, who sin with others; therefore take heed, young men, of doing as others do. But,

3. Thirdly, I answer, *You must not live by examples, but by precepts.*² You are not to look so much at what others do, as at what God requires you to do: Exod. xxiii. 2, 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil, neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment;' Rom. xii. 2, 'Fashion not yourselves like unto this world;' that is, do not fashion and conform yourselves to the corrupt customs and courses of wretched worldlings, who have made gold their god, and gain their glory. The running cross to a divine command cost the young prophet his life, though he did it under pretence of revelation from God, as you may see in that sad story, 1 Kings xiii., &c., *Non parentum, aut majorum auctoritas, sed Dei docentis imperium*, the command of God must outweigh all authority and example of men [Jerome].

And we must be as careful in the keeping of a light commandment as an heavy commandment. Saith a Rabbi, Divine commands must be obeyed against all contrary reasonings, wranglings, and examples. Austin brings in some excusing their compliance with the sinful customs and examples of those times in drinking healths thus: Great personages urged it, and it was at the king's banquet, where they judged of loyalty by luxury, and put us upon this election, drink or die. The not drinking of a health had been our death. He gives this answer, that God who sees that for love to him and his commands thou wouldst not conform to their drunken customs, will give thee favour in their eyes, who thus threatened thee to drink.³

Ah! young men, you that doat so much upon examples now, will find

¹ *Non minus ardebit, qui cum multis ardebit.*—Augustine, He burns no less that burns with company.

² *Obedientia non discutit Dei mandata, sed facit.*—Prosper.

³ The complaint is ancient in Seneca, that commonly men live, not *ad rationem* but *ad similitudinem*.—Seneca, *de vita beata*, c. i.

that a stinging terrifying question, when put home by God or conscience, Who hath required those things at your hands? Isa. i. 12. But,

4. Fourthly, I answer, *Company and allurements to sin will be found no sufficient excuse for sin.*

If Eve lay her fault on the serpent, and Adam lay his on Eve, Gen. iii., God will take it off, and lay the curse on both. Saul's provocation by his people, and by Samuel's long stay to offer sacrifice, would not bear him out; but for his disobedience he must lose both his crown and life, 1 Sam. xv. 14, 15, 26, 27. The young man in the Proverbs, though tempted and solicited by the harlot, yet hath a dart struck through his heart, Prov. vii. 14, 15, 21. Though Jonah did plead God's gracious inclinations to shew mercy, and his fear of being disproved; yea, and though he might have pleaded his fear of cruel and savage usage from the Ninevites, whose hearts were desperately set upon wickedness, and his despair of ever doing good upon a people so blinded and hardened, and that they were Gentiles and he a Jew; and why should he then be sent with so strange, so terrible a message to such a people, nothing being more hateful and distasteful to a Jewish palate? But all these pleas and excuses will not bear off the blow. Jonah must into the sea for all this; yea, he must to 'the bottom of hell,' as himself phrases it. It is in vain for the bird to complain, that it saw the corn but not the pitfall; or for the fish to plead, it saw the bait but not the hook. So it will be in vain for sinners at last, when they are taken in an infernal pitfall, to plead company and allurements by which they have been enticed to undo their soul for ever.¹

Dionysius, the Sicilian king, to excuse himself from the present delivery of the golden garment he took from his god Apollo, answered, that such a robe as that was could not be at any season of the year useful to his god, for it would not keep him warm in the winter, and it was too heavy for the summer, and so put off his idol god. But the God of spirits, the God of all flesh, will not be put off with any excuses or pretences, when he shall try and judge the children of men. But,

5. Fifthly and lastly, I answer, *That it is a very great judgment to be given up to follow evil examples*, Mat. xviii. 7. A man given up to evil examples is a man sadly left of God, wofully blinded by Satan, and desperately hardened in sin. It speaks a man ripe for wrath, for ruin, for hell: Jer. vi. 21, 'Behold,² I will lay stumbling-blocks before this people, and the fathers and the sons together shall fall upon them; the neighbour and his friend shall perish.' Oh! it is a dreadful thing when God shall make the sinful examples of others to be stumbling-blocks to a people, at which they shall stumble, and fall, and perish for ever; good had it been for such persons that they had never been born, as Christ once spake concerning Judas, Mat. xxvi. 24.

The Rhodians and Lydians enacted several laws, that those sons which followed not their fathers in their virtues, but followed vicious examples, should be disinherited, and their lands given to the most

¹ *Oculos quos peccatum claudit, poena aperit.*—Gregory, The eyes that sin shuts, affliction opens; and Jonah found it so.

² This particle, Behold, is sometimes, (1.) a note of derision, Gen. iii. 22; (2.) a note of attention often, Isa. xxviii. 2; Mal. i. 13; Luke i. 20; (3.) a note of admiration often; (4.) a note of asseveration; (5.) a note of castigation; in all these senses we may take it here.—*Varro.*

virtuous of that race, not admitting any impious heir whatsoever to inherit; and do you think that God will not disinherit all those of heaven and happiness who follow vicious examples? Doubtless he will, 1 Cor. x. 5-12.

Objection (5). The fifth and last objection I shall mention is this, *God is a God of mercy; in him are bowels of mercy, yea, a sea, an ocean of mercy; he loves mercy, he delights in mercy, and he is ready to shew mercy to poor sinners, when they are even at the last cast, when there is but a short stride between them and the grave, between them and eternity; as we see in his extending mercy to the thief, and in his giving a pardon into his hand, and the assurance of paradise into his bosom, when he was ready to be turned off the ladder of life; and therefore I may spend the primrose of my days in following sin, and the delights, profits, vanities, and contents of this world, and at last cast I may have mercy as well as the thief. God is a God made up of mercy, and surely he will not deny some crumbs of mercy to a poor sinner in misery, &c.*

Now to this objection I shall give these following answers.

1. First, *God is as just as he is merciful*; ¹ witness his casting the angels out of heaven, and Adam out of paradise; witness all the threatenings, the curses, the woes, that the Bible is filled with, from one end to the other; witness the hell, the horror, the terror and amazement that he raises in the consciences of sinners; witness the devastations that he hath made of the most stately and flourishing towns, cities, countries, and kingdoms, that have been in all the world; witness the variety of diseases, calamities, miseries, dangers, deaths, and hells, that always attend the inhabitants of the world; but above all, witness Christ's treading the wine-press of his Father's wrath; witness his hiding his face from him, and the pouring out of all his displeasure and vengeance upon him.

Zealeucus, the Locrenian lawgiver, thrust out one of his own son's eyes, for his transgressing of a wholesome law which he had enacted,² but God the Father thrust out both Christ's eyes for our transgressing of his royal law. Oh! the justice and severity of God. But,

2. Secondly, I answer, *That there is not a greater evidence of blindness, profaneness, hard-heartedness, spiritual madness, and hellish desperateness in all the world, than to make that an argument, an encouragement to sin, viz. the mercy of God, which should be the greatest argument under heaven to keep a man from sin*: as all know that have but read the Scripture; neither are there any sinners in the world that God delights to rain hell out of heaven upon, as upon such, who by their abuse of mercy, turn the God of mercy into a God of clouts,³ and go on out-daring justice itself:⁴ Deut. xxix. 19, 20, 'And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace (God is a God of mercy), though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.' The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord,

¹ God is as well all hand to punish, as he is all grace to pardon.

² Valerius [Max.] lib. v. cap. 5 [§ 3]. [Rather Zealeucus. Besides Val. Max., see Aelian, V. H. xiii. 24.—G.] ³ A mere scare-crow, to threaten without accomplishing.

⁴ Read Isa. xxii. 12-15, and Ezek. xxiv. 11-14.

and his jealousy, shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven.' In these words you may observe, that God is absolute in his threatening, to shew that he will be resolute in punishing:¹ Ps. xi. 5, 6, 'The wicked, and him that loveth iniquity, doth his soul hate. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.'

Ah! that all poor sinners would make these two scriptures their companions, their constant bed-fellows, till they are got above that sad temptation of turning the mercy of God into an encouragement to sin.

Whilst Milo Crotoniates was tearing asunder the stock of an oak, his strength failing him,—the cleft suddenly closing,—was held so fast by the hands, that he became a prey to the beasts of the field.² All the abusers of mercy will certainly and suddenly become a prey to the justice of God, that will rend and tear them in pieces, as the Psalmist speaks: Ps. l. 22, 'Woe, woe, to that soul that fights against God with his own mercies;' that will be bad, because he is good; that will be sinful, because he is merciful; that will turn all the kindness of God, that should be as so many silver cords, to tie him to love and obedience, into arrows, and to shoot them back into the heart of God. Abused mercy will at last turn into a lion, a fierce lion; and then woe to the abusers and despisers of it! But,

3. Thirdly, In answer to that part of the objection concerning the thief on the cross, I offer these things briefly to your thoughts.

(1.) First, *That as one was saved to teach sinners not to despair, so another was damned to teach them not to presume.*³

A pardon is sometimes given to one upon the gallows, but whose trusts to that, the rope may be his hire. It is not good, saith one, to put it upon the psalm of *miserere*, and the neck-verse,⁴ for sometimes he proves no clerk, and so hangs for it.

(2.) Secondly, *It is an example without a promise.* Here is an example of late repentance, but where is there a promise of late repentance?

Oh! let not his late and sudden conversion be to thee a temptation, till thou hast found a promise for late and sudden conversion. It is not examples, but promises, that are foundations for faith to rest on, He that walks by an example of mercy without a precept to guide him, and a promise to support him, walks but by a dark lanthorn, that will deceive him. Well! young man, remember this, examples of mercy increase wrath, when the heart is not bettered by them. But,

(3.) Thirdly, *This was a rare miracle of mercy, with the glory whereof Christ did honour the ignominy of his cross*, and therefore we may as well look for another crucifying of Christ as look for a sinner's conversion, when he hath scarce time enough to reckon up all those particuliar duties which make up the integrity of its constitution. But,

¹ A lover of iniquity is a liver in iniquity upon choice.

² For above incident see Diod. xii. 9; Paus. vi. 14, § 5-8, &c., &c.—G.

³ *Exemplum latronis servati est admirandum, non imitandum.*

⁴ On the 'neck-verse' see our Note in Sibbes's Works, vol. v. page 408.—G.

(4). Fourthly, I answer, *This thief knew not Christ before; he had not refused, neglected, nor slighted Christ before.* The sermon on the cross was the first sermon that ever he heard Christ preach, and Christ's prayer on the cross was the first prayer that ever he heard Christ make. He knew not Christ till he met him on the cross, which proved to him a happy meeting. His case was as if a Turk or a heathen should now be converted to the faith; and therefore thou hast little reason, O young man, to plead this example to keep Christ and thy soul asunder, who art every day under the call, the entreaties, and wooings of Christ. But,

(5). Fifthly, and lastly, I answer, *The circumstances of time and place are rightly to be considered.* Now when Christ was triumphing on the cross over sin, Satan, and the world; when he had made the devils a public spectacle of scorn and derision; when he was taking his leave of the world and entering into his glory; now he puts a pardon into the thief's hand, and crowds other favours and kindnesses upon him.

As in the Roman triumphs, the victor being ascended up to the capitol in a chariot of state, used to cast certain pieces of coin among the people for them to pick up, which he used not to do at other times; so our Lord Jesus Christ, in the day of his triumph and solemn inauguration into his heavenly kingdom, scatters some heavenly jewels that this thief might pick up, which he doth not, nor will not do every day. Or, as in these days it is usual with princes to save some notorious malefactors at their coronations when they enter upon their kingdoms in triumph, which they do not use to do afterwards, so did Jesus Christ carry it toward this thief. But this is not his ordinary way of saving and bringing souls to glory; and therefore do not, O young man! let not the thief's late conversion prove a temptation or an occasion of thy delaying thy repentance, and trifling away the primrose of thy days in vanity and folly. And this much may suffice to have spoken by way of answer to the young man's objections. I shall now speak a few words to old men, and so close up. Now,

CHAPTER IX.

Is it so commendable, so desirable, and so necessary for young men to be good betimes, to seek and serve the Lord in the spring and morning of their youth, as has been sufficiently demonstrated in this treatise? Oh, then, that I could so woo aged persons as to win them who yet have put off this great work to seek and serve the Lord before their glass be out, their sun set, and their souls lost for ever!

Oh, that that counsel of the prophet might take hold upon your hearts! 'Give glory to the Lord your God before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble,' Jer. xiii. 16, through age 'upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.'

Ay, but aged sinners may reply, *Is there any hope, any help for us?* Is there any probability, is there any possibility, that ever such as we are should return and find mercy and favour with the Lord? We who have lived so long without him! we that have sinned so much against him! we that to this day are strangers to him, yea, in arms against him!

Is there any hope that we white-headed sinners, who have withstood so many thousand offers of grace, and so many thousand motions of the Spirit, and so many thousand checks of conscience, and so many thousand tenders¹ of Christ and heaven, that ever we should obtain mercy, that ever we should have our old hearts turned, our millions of sins pardoned, our vile natures changed, and poor souls saved, &c.

I answer, That there is hope even for such as you are. All the angels in heaven and all the men on earth cannot tell, but that you, even you, may obtain mercy and favour, that your souls die not. With the Lord nothing is impossible, and for the grace of the gospel nothing is too hard. Now this I shall make evident by an induction of particulars. Thus,

(1.) First, *All were not called nor sent to work in the vineyard at the first hour*; some were called at the third hour, others at the sixth, others at the ninth, and some at the eleventh. God hath his several times of calling souls to himself. The eleventh hour was about five in the afternoon, an hour before sunset; when it was even time to leave work; and yet at this hour some were called, employed, and rewarded with the rest.²

Some of the fathers, by the several hours mentioned in this parable, do understand the several ages of man, viz., childhood, youth, middle age, and old age, wherein poor souls are called and converted to Christ. The scope of the parable is to signify the free grace of God in the calling of some in the spring and morning of their days, and in the calling of others in their old age, in the evening of their days. But,

(2.) Secondly, *Abraham in the Old Testament, and Nicodemus in the New, were called and converted in their old age*, when there were but a few steps between them and the grave, between them and eternity.³

I have read of one Caius Marius Victorius, who was an old man, three hundred years after the apostles' time, and had been a pagan all his days, and in his old age he inquired and hearkened after Christ, and said he would be a Christian. Simplicianus hearing him say so, would not believe him, but when the church saw a work of grace indeed upon him, there was shouting and dancing for gladness, and psalms were sung in every church, Caius Marius Victorius is become a Christian. And this was written for a wonder, that he in his old age, and in his grey hairs, should become a gracious Christian.

Aretius also speaks of a certain man in his time. It is no feigned story, saith he, for I saw the man with my own eyes: he was one that had been a most vile and desperate sinner, a drunkard, a swearer, a wanton, a gamester, and so he continued to his grey hairs; but at last it pleased God to set his sins in order before him, and the man was so troubled in conscience that he threw himself down upon the ground, calling unto Satan to take him away, provoking Satan to take him away: Devil, take thy own; devil, take thy own; I am thy own, take thy own: whereupon, saith Aretius, prayer was made for him; Christians prayed, they fasted and prayed, they prayed night and day; and it pleased God at last that this poor aged sinner revived, converted to God, lived a godly life afterwards, and died comfortably.

¹ 'Offers.'—G.

² Matt. xx. 1-17.

The Roman penny was sevenpence halfpenny.

³ Gen. xii. 4, John iii. 1-4, vii. 50.

Therefore, let not the grey-headed sinner despair, though his spring be past, his summer overpast, and he arrived at the fall of the leaf. But,

(3.) Thirdly, *Divine promises shall be made good to returning souls, to repenting souls, to believing souls, be they young or old.* 2 Chron. xxx. 9, 'The Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if you return unto him.' Joel ii. 13, 'And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.' Isa. lv. 7, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon:' or he will multiply to pardon. More of this you may see by reading of the scriptures in the margin.¹ All sorts of sin shall be pardoned to all sorts of believing and repenting sinners.

The New Jerusalem hath twelve gates, to shew that there is every way access for all sorts and ranks of sinners to come to Christ. He was born in an inn, to shew that he receives all comers, young and old, poor and rich, &c. But,

(4.) Fourthly, *The Lord hath declared by oath a greater delight in the conversion and salvation of poor sinners, whether they are young or old, than in the destruction and damnation of such.* Ezek. xxxiii. 11, 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O ye house of Israel?' Two things make a thing more credible.

[1.] The quality or dignity of the person speaking.

[2.] The manner of the speech. Now here you have the great God, not only speaking, promising, but solemnly swearing that he had rather poor sinners should live than die, be happy than miserable; therefore, despair not, O aged sinner! but return unto the Lord, and thou shalt be happy for ever. But,

(5.) Fifthly, *There is virtue enough in the precious blood of Jesus Christ, to wash and cleanse away all sin;*² not only to cleanse away the young man's sins, but also to cleanse away the old man's sins; not only to cleanse a sinner of twenty years, but to cleanse a sinner of fifty, sixty, yea, a hundred years old: 1 John i. 7, 'The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin;' not simply from sin, but from all sin. There is such a power and efficacy in the blood of Christ, as is sufficient to cleanse all sorts of sinners from all sorts of sins. There is a virtue in the blood of the Lamb to wash out all the spots that are in the oldest sinners' hearts; and therefore let not old sinners despair, let them not say there is no hope, there is no help, as long as this fountain, the blood of Jesus Christ, is open for all sorts of sinners to wash in. But,

(6.) Sixthly, *The call and invitation of Christ in the gospel are general and indefinite, excluding no sort of sinners.* Rev. iii. 20, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man' (mark the inde-

¹ Isa. i. 18; Jer. iii. 12; Isa. xliii. 22-25; lvii. 17, 18; Jer. li. 5; John iii. 16; Mark xvi. 16.

² *Una guttula plus valet, quam cælum et terra.*—Luther, One little drop is more worth than heaven and earth.

finiteness of personal admittance) 'hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' Let the sinner be old or young, a green head, or a grey head, if he will but open the door, Christ will come in and have communion and fellowship with him. So in that Mat. xi. 28. Turn to these scriptures, Isa. lv. 1, John vii. 37, Rev. xxii. 17, and dwell upon them; they all clearly evidence the call and gracious invitations of Christ to be to all sinners, to every sinner; he excepts not a man, no, though never so old. Nothing shall hinder the sinner, any sinner, the worst and most aged sinner, from obtaining mercy, if he be willing to open to Christ, and to receive him as his Lord and king, John vi. 37. But,

(7.) Seventhly, *Christ's pathetic lamentation over all sorts and ranks of sinners, declares his willingness to shew mercy to them.* 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,' saith Christ, weeping over it, 'that thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace,' &c., Luke xix. 41, 42. 'Oh that my people had hearkened unto me!' Ps. lxxxi. 13. Christ weeps over Jerusalem; so did Titus, and so did Marcellus over Syracuse, and so did Scipio over Carthage; but they shed tears for them whose blood they were to shed; but Christ weeps over the necks of those young and old sinners who were to shed his blood. As a tender-hearted father weeps over his rebellious children, when neither smiles nor frowns, neither counsels nor entreaties, will win them, or turn them from their evil ways, so doth Jesus Christ over these rebellious Jews, upon whom nothing would work. But,

(8.) Eighthly, and lastly, *Though aged sinners have given Christ many thousand denials, yet he hath not taken them, but after all, and in the face of all denials, he still re-enforces his suit, and continues to beseech them by his Spirit, by his word, by his wounds, by his blood, by his messengers, and by his rebukes, to turn home to him, to embrace him, to believe in him, and to watch with him, that they may be saved eternally by him.* All which bespeaks grey-headed sinners not to despair, nor to dispute, but to repent, return, and believe, that it may go well with them for ever. Consider seriously what hath been spoken, and the Lord make you wise for eternity!¹

¹ Ps. lxxv. 1, 2; Rom. x. 21, and 1 John v. 2, 3.

APPENDIX.

Agreeably to Note prefixed to 'Apples of Gold,' there is here added,

1. The title-page of the original edition.
2. The original 'Epistle Dedicatory.'—G.

APPLES OF GOLD

for Young Men,

AND

A Crown of Honour

for Old Men :

OR,

*The Young Mans Work, and
the Old Mans Reward.*

DISCOVERED

In a Sermon (with enlargements since)
Preached at *Clapham* at the interrment of
the Corps of Mr. *John Wood*, Mercer; and
Citizen of *London*, the 13. of *Novemb.* 1656.

By *THOMAS BROOKS*, Preacher of the
Gospel at *Margarets Fishstreet-hill*.

*But I thy Servant fear the Lord from my
Youth.* 1 King. 18. 12.

*The hoary head is a crown of Glory, if it bee
found in a way of righteousness,* Prov. 16. 31.

LONDON,

Printed by *R. I.* for *John Hancock*, to be sold
at the first Shop in *Popeshead-Alley* next
to *Corn-hill* neer the *Exchange*. 1657.

EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

To his honoured and worthily esteemed friends, Mrs Susan Wood (disconsolate widow to the late pious Mr John Wood, deceased), and Mr John Arthur (minister of the gospel at Clapham), and Mrs Dorothy, his wife; and to Mr John Wood, Esq. and Mrs Margaret, his wife (parents to the late deceased gentleman); and to Mr John Humfreys, Esq., and Mrs Elizabeth, his wife: all grace and peace, all consolation and supportation from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Honoured and beloved in our dearest Lord,

It was your earnest desires and serious importunity that midwived this little treatise into the world. If it do not in all things answer expectation, you know who to thank. I look upon the following discourse as a comment upon his life and death, who is now entered upon a blessed state of eternity. I confess your loss is very very great; yet to prevent the breaking in of an irresistible torrent of sorrow and sadness upon your drooping spirits, be pleased to consider these four things:

1. Though your loss be great, yet there are six greater losses than yours.

(1.) First, *The loss of the soul* is a greater loss than the loss of a husband, a child, a kinsman, &c. The loss of the soul is an incomparable loss, it is an irreparable loss, it is an eternal loss. Francis Xaverius, counselled John the Third, King of Portugal, to meditate every day a quarter of an hour upon that text, What shall it profit a man to gain the world, and lose his soul? Mat. xvi. 26. Of the sadness and greatness of this loss, you may read more in the following discourse.

(2.) Secondly, *The loss of Christ* is a loss infinitely beyond the loss of the nearest and dearest relations. This made Luther say, that he had rather live in hell with Christ, than in heaven without him. He is the greatest good, and therefore the loss of him must needs be the greatest evil, *qui te non habet Domine Deus, totum perdidit* [Bernard]. He that hath not thee, and thy Christ, he hath lost all; for Christ is all in all, Col. iii. 11. John Ardley professed to Bonner, when he told him of burning, that if he had as many lives as he had hairs on his head, he would lose them all in the fire, before he would lose his Christ.¹

(3.) Thirdly, *The loss of the gospel* is a greater loss than all worldly comforts. Eli bore up sweetly till the ark was taken, and that news broke both his heart and neck.

Luther would not take all the world for one leaf of the Bible; nay, a gracious heart that hath experienced the sweetness of the word, will not take all the world for one line of the Bible.² The tabernacle was covered over with red,—and the purple-feathers tell us, they take that habit for the same intent,—to note that we must defend the truth even

¹ Clarke's 'Martyrologie,' as before, pages 452, 453.—G.

² *Si veritas est causa discordiæ, mori possum, tacere non possum*, said Jerome to Helvetius.

to the effusion of blood, and rather lose our lives than lose the truth. We must say, as the Spartan mother said to her son, either live in religion, or die for religion. When the gospel is lost, the glory of a nation is lost; yea, the glory of souls is lost.

(4.) Fourthly, *The loss of God's favour* is a greater loss than any worldly loss. If his loving-kindness be better than life, yea, than lives, as the Hebrew hath it,¹ then the loss of it is worse than death, yea, than deaths. Augustine, upon that answer of God to Moses, Thou canst not see my face and live, Exod. xxxiii. 20, makes this quick and sweet reply, 'Then, Lord! let me die, that I may see thy face.' It is divine favour that makes heaven to be heaven, and it is the want of that which makes hell to be hell. A Christian that hath been under the shinings of God's face, had rather suffer death, yea, any death, yea, all deaths, than to have the face of God clouded and covered.

(5.) Fifthly, *The loss of peace of conscience* is a greater loss than any worldly loss. If you ask souls that have experienced the sweetness of peace of conscience, but are now under terrors and horrors, what is the greatest loss? they will answer, loss of peace of conscience. If you ask them again what is the saddest loss? they will answer, loss of peace of conscience: no loss to this loss. *Una guttula malæ conscientię totum mare, mundum gaudii absorbet* (Luther), One drop of an evil conscience swallows up the whole sea of worldly joy.²

(6.) Sixthly, and lastly, *The loss of eternity* is a greater loss than any, than all worldly losses. No worldly loss is to be mentioned in the day wherein the loss of eternity is named. The loss of eternity compriseth all varieties of privative miseries, the loss of whatever we have enjoyed, and the loss of whatever we might have enjoyed; as God, Christ, the Comforter, the society of saints, angels, the treasures and pleasures that be at his right hand. It was a notable saying of Ambrose, *Cur ea quæ ad usum diuturna esse non possunt, ad supplicium diuturna deposces*, Why will you make that which cannot be eternal for use be eternal for punishment?³ The loss of eternity is a comprehensive loss, a loss that takes in all losses; and therefore no loss to the loss of a happy eternity. And thus you see, beloved, that though your loss be very great, yet there be far greater losses than yours; and this should bear up your spirits from fainting and sinking under this sad dispensation. Though I have a will, yet I have not skill to express your loss and your sorrows to the life. Sorrows for near and dear relations are oftentimes so great, that they cannot be expressed.

Psammeticus, king of Egypt, being prisoner to Cambyses, king of Persia, seeing his own daughter passing before him in base array, being sent to draw water, at which sight his friends about him wept, but himself wept not; presently after his son was carried to execution before his face, neither did this move him to shew any passion; but afterwards, when a friend of his was to suffer, then he wept, and tare his hair, and shewed great sorrow. Being demanded the reason of this his carriage, he answered that the loss of a friend might be expressed, but not the grief for the loss of a child.

I have read of a certain painter, who being to express the sorrow of

¹ Ps. lxxiii. 3, *Mehhaim*.

² *Tolle conscientiam, tolle omnia*, said the heathen.

³ Ambrose in Luc. iv. 5.

a weeping father, and having spent his skill before in setting forth of the passions and affections of his children, he thought it best to present him upon his table to the beholders' view with his face covered, that so he might have that grief to be imagined by them which he found himself unable to set out to the full.¹ I know I am not able to paint out your grief and sorrow for your sad loss, yet having proved that this your loss is no loss compared with the fore-mentioned sad losses, I cannot but hope that you will labour to bear up like those whose hopes, whose hearts, whose treasures are in heaven, &c.

2. Consider all outward losses may be made up; nay, God doth usually one way or another make up to his people all their outward losses. He did so to David, to Job, and many others; nay, they were great gainers by their losses. And so were the disciples, who, for the loss of Christ's personal presence, had abundance of the Spirit's influence. If he takes away a husband, and lies himself in his room, and fills up that relation, is not the loss made up? Will not the light and heat of the sun make up the loss of the light and heat of a twinkling star? If he take away a son, and give out more of himself, will you not say he is better than ten thousand sons? 1 Sam. i. 8. If he take away your only son, and give out to you more of his only Son, will you not say, that though your loss be very great, yet the great God hath made it up, by giving out more of the light, life, love, and glory of his only Son unto you? If, in the room of an only son, God shall give you a name that is better than sons and daughters, Isa. lvi. 5, will you not say, your loss is made up with advantage? *Hujusmodi lucris dulcis odor*, the smell of this gain is sweet to many. It was an apt saying of Tertullian,² *Negotiatio est aliquid amittere ut majora lucreris*, that is right and good merchandise, when something is parted with to gain more. He applies it to the martyrs' sufferings, wherein though the flesh lost something, yet the spirit got much more. Ah! dear friends, if your fleshly losses shall be made up in spiritual advantages, have you any cause to say, No loss to our loss, no sorrow to our sorrow? Surely no. When that noble Zedislaus had lost his hand in the wars of the King of Poland, the king sent him a golden hand for it.

Ah, friends! if God give you silver for brass, and gold for iron; if he give you spirituals for temporals, have you not more cause of rejoicing than of mourning?

When Paulinus Nolanus his city, was taken by the barbarians, he prayed thus to God: Lord! let me not be troubled at the loss of my gold, silver, honour, &c., for thou art all, and much more than all, these unto me. There is nothing beyond remedy but the tears of the damned. Those that are in the way to paradise should not place themselves in the condition of a little hell; and they that may or can hope for that great all, ought not to be dejected for any thing.

3. Thirdly, Consider that though your loss be great, yet his gain is greater: 'for him to live was Christ, and to die was gain,' Philip. i. 21. He hath exchanged mortality for immortality, the society of men for the society of angels, the sight of friends for the sight of God, a house made

¹ The allusion is to Agamemnon, on the sacrifice of Iphigenia.—G.

² Tertullian, in his book to the martyrs.

³ The sooner I die, the sooner I shall be happy, said one.

with hands for one eternal in the heavens, the streams for the fountain, an earthly father for a heavenly Father; a careful, loving, sweet, suitable, tender-hearted, wise, yokefellow for to lie in the arms, the bosom, of a loving, gracious, tender-hearted Saviour. If you would but eye more his crown than your own cross, his gain than your own loss, you would divinely quench the burning flame of your passionate affections. It was a good saying of Francisco Soyit to his adversaries: You deprive me of this life, said he, and promote me to a better, which is as if you should rob me of counters, and furnish me with gold. Your deceased relation hath exchanged his counters for gold, his imperfection for perfection, and his earthly possession for a heavenly possession.

4. Fourthly and lastly, Consider how sweetly, how wisely, how bravely others have carried it, when the Lord hath passed the sentence of death upon their nearest and dearest relations; read the proofs in the margin,¹ and then never leave pressing those golden examples upon your own hearts, till they are brought over sweetly and quietly to lie down in the will of God, and to say amen to God's amen. When it was told Anaxagoras that both his sons, which was all he had, were dead, he being nothing terrified therewith, answered, *Sciebam me genuisse mortales*, I knew I begat mortal creatures.

Ah, friends! shall a heathen bear it out thus bravely, and shall not you much more? Pulvillus, another heathen [Pet. Mart.], when he was about to consecrate a temple to Jupiter, and news was brought to him of the death of his son, desisted not from his enterprise; but with a composed mind gave order for decent burial. Shall nature do this, and shall not grace do as much, nay, more? What a shame is it, saith Jerome, that faith should not be able to do that which infidelity hath done! What! not better fruit in the vineyard, in the garden of the Lord, than in the wilderness? What! not better fruit grown upon the tree of life than upon the root of nature?

Dear friends! since I yielded to your desires, and set about this work, I begun to consider that I had never heard nor read of any that had treated on this subject; also I seriously considered of the usefulness of it, especially in these times, wherein so many young persons have their faces towards Sion; which considerations, with the breaking in of God upon me beyond my expectation, has occasioned that sermon you heard to swell into a little treatise, which in all love I present unto you. The very same things that sounded in your ears I here present to your eyes, with enlargements and additions to what I first intended. The pains hath been mine; the profit that will redound to you and others, into whose hands it may fall, I hope will be such as will turn to all our accounts in the day of Christ.

I have read of an emperor's son who used to say, The longer the cooks are preparing the meat, the better will be the cheer; his meaning was, the longer he stayed for the empire, the greater it would be. The longer you have waited for this discourse, the better I desire it may prove. It had been in your hands long before this, if others that should have made more haste had not been more to blame than myself; yet I know it is not a child so late born that I need question your fathering of it. And

¹ Lev. x. 1-3; 1 Sam. iii, 11-19; 2 Sam. xii. 18-25; Job i., the whole chapter.

now I commend you all to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified, Acts xx. 32.

Your servant in the work of Christ,

THOMAS BROOKS.