

## SERMON XVIII.

BY THE REV. THOMAS LYE, A. M.

HOW ARE WE TO LIVE BY FAITH ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE ?

*Trust in him at all times, ye people.*—Psalm lxii. 8.

THESE words are a serious and pathetic exhortation to a most important and spiritual duty. In them we observe,

1. *The duty proposed and enjoined.*—That is, trust :\* “Trust in him ;” confide in, or securely repose yourselves upon, him, for assistance, support, direction, protection, provision, deliverance, complete salvation.

2. *The subjects of this trust.*—Or the persons on whom this duty is incumbent, and from whom it is expected ; that is, “ye people.” Wherein we note,

(1.) *The echphonesis* that lies couchant in the words, which is apt to excite intention and affection : as if he had said, “O ye people.” So the Arabic translator renders the word, *O populi*.

(2.) *The universality of its concernment*, to all people.—It is an indefinite expression, and holds parallel with an universal : “Ye people :” † as if he had said, “O all ye people, of what sex, age, degree, condition, relation soever.” Thus the Septuagint render the word, *πασα συναγωγη λαου*, and the Vulgar [Latin] follows them ; that is to say, *Omnis congregatio populi*. ‡

(3.) *The speciality of its obligation*, on some people, more than others, —It is true, all the families of the earth must trust in God ; but there is a *μαλιστα δε*, § “a more special tie” that lies on the household of faith, the commonwealth of Israel, and assemblies of the saints ; those that are the dearly beloved of God’s soul. These are strongly obliged, beyond and above all others, to trust in the Lord their God. Thus the Chaldee paraphrase, *Popule, Domus Israel* : and the Psalmist elsewhere, “O Israel, trust thou in the Lord. Ye that fear the Lord,” whether Jew or Gentile, “trust in the Lord.” (Psalm cxv. 9, 11.)

3. *The grand object of this holy trust*, or the person in whom this trust must be reposed ; namely, “in him,” that is, the Lord Jehovah ; as appears from verse 7. “In him, and in him alone.” || It is an exclusive participle : “In him, and in nothing beside him.”

4. *The modification of this trust*, or the circumstance of the time when, and the duration how long, this trust is to be exerted.

(1.) *Quando* : When must we trust ? “At what time ?”

SOLUTION. At all times, *omni hora*, “every hour :” so the Syriac version. As a true friend is to love, so a sound believer is to trust, at all times. (Prov. xvii. 17.)

\* א פשוט *Confessus est. Fiduciam posuit.* † מ ע *Singulare collectivum pro plurali, per synthesisin Hebraeis usitatissimam.*—MOLLERUS. “A noun of multitude in the singular number, instead of the plural, according to a syntactical form very common with the Hebrews.”—EDIT. ‡ “The whole congregation of the people.”—EDIT. § “Yet more particularly.”—EDIT. || *Ei, id est, Ei soli.*—JUNIUS et TREMELLIUS.

(2.) *Quamdiu* : The duration of this trust : "How long?"

SOLUTION. "All the day long." (Psalm xlv. 8.) All our lives long : all the days of their appointed time must God's Jobs not only "wait," but "trust," till their change come. Yea, "for ever;" (Isai. xxvi. 4;) nay, "for ever and ever." (Psalm lii. 8.)

Having thus unlocked the cabinet; the jewel or truth that we find laid up in it, is this; namely:—

OBSERVATION.

*It is the great indispensable duty of all believers, at all times to trust in the Lord, and in him alone.*

All that I have to say on this practical truth, I shall couch under these six generals:—

I. 'Or*i*, That trusting in God is a believer's duty.

II. What it is to trust in God.

III. What is and ought to be the grand and sole object of a believer's trust?

IV. What are those sure and stable grounds, those corner-stones, on which the faithful may firmly build their trust in God?

V. What are those special and signal seasons which call aloud for the exerting of this trust?

VI. How faith or trust puts forth, exerts, demeans, bestirs itself in such seasons.

I. 'Or*i*, *That trusting in God is a believer's duty.*—The Lord is, or at least he should be, "the confidence\* of all the ends of the earth." (Psalm lxxv. 5.) "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart," (Prov. iii. 5,) on the arm of his power; (Isai. li. 5;) "on the word of his truth,"† in his faithful promises, in his freest mercies; (Psalm lii. 8;) in his full salvation. (Psalm lxxviii. 22.)

II. *What it is to trust in God.*

SOLUTION 1. *Negatively.*—To presume on God, to tempt God, to conceive false hopes of God's gracious favour and protection, whilst in a way of sin, is not to trust in God. To gallop down a precipice, and to say confidently, "I shall not fall;" to cast ourselves down headlong from a pinnacle of the temple, and yet to expect the protection of angels; (Matt. iv. 5—7;) to "teach for hire," and to "divine for money," and yet to "lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us;" (Micah iii. 11;) to bless a man's self in his heart, and to say he shall have peace, though he walk in the imaginations of his evil heart; (Deut. xxix. 19;) all this is not to trust in God, but to "trust in vanity," (Job xv. 31,) and to spin "the spider's web." (Job viii. 13, 14.)

2. *Positively.*—And so more *generally*, and more *particularly*.

(1.) *More generally.* To trust in God, is to cast our burden on the Lord, when it is too heavy for our own shoulder; (Psalm lv. 22;) to dwell "in the secret place of the Most High," when we know not where to lay our heads on earth; (Psalm xci. 1;) to "look to our Maker," and

\* *Metonymiâ adjuncti, actus pro objecto.* "By a metonymy of the adjunct, the act is here put for the object."—EDIT. † *In verbis ejus.* So the Chaldee Paraphrast renders our text.

to "have respect to the Holy One of Israel;" (Isai. xvii. 7;) to lean on our Beloved; (Canticles viii. 5; Isai. xxxvi. 6;) to stay ourselves, when sinking, on the Lord our God; (Isai. xxvi. 3;) in a word, trust in God is that high act or exercise of faith, whereby the soul, looking upon God, and casting of itself on his goodness, power, promises, faithfulness, and providence, is lifted up above carnal fears and discouragements, above perplexing doubts and disquietments, either for the obtaining and continuance of that which is good, or for the preventing or removing of that which is evil.

(2.) *More particularly.* For the clearer discovery of the nature of divine trust, we shall lay before you its *ingredients, concomitants, effects.*

(I.) *The ingredients of trust in God.*—They are three:—

1. *A clear knowledge or right apprehension of God, as revealed in his word and works.*—"They," and they only "that know thy name will put their trust in thee." (Psalm ix. 10.) The grand reason why God is so little trusted, is because he is so little known. Knowledge of God is of such necessity to a right trust, that it is put as a *synonyme* for trust: "I will set him on high, because he hath known," that is, trusted in, "my name." (Psalm xci. 14.)

2. *A full assent of the understanding, and consent of the will, to those divine revelations, as true and good, wherein the Lord proposeth himself as an adequate object for our trust.*—This act the Greeks express by the word *πιστευειν* the Latins, by *credere, fidem habere, testimonium recipere*; the Hebrews, by *אמין*: all importing "believing" or "giving credit to." Thus the Israelites are said to "believe the Lord and his servant Moses;" (Exod. xiv. 31;) and thus the soul that trusts looks upon the words of promise, *ως πιστοι, και πασης αποδοχης αξιοι*, "as faithful and worthy of all acceptance." (1 Tim. i. 15.)

3. *A firm and fixed reliance, resting, or recumbency of the whole soul on God.*—Or a firm persuasion, and special confidence of the heart, whereby a believer particularly applies to himself the faithful promises of God, and certainly concludes and determines with himself, that the Lord is able and willing to make good to him the good promises he hath made. This indeed is the very formality of trust; one of the highest and noblest acts of faith. This is that which the Greeks term *επιστοιθεις*, and which Paul so frequently useth in several of his epistles. Thus Abraham is said to be "strong in faith, giving glory to God;" and was "fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able" and willing "to perform." (Rom. iv. 20, 21.) This the Latins call *fiducia*; ["trust;"] the Schools, *fiducia fidei*; ["the assurance of faith;"] the Hebrews, by a word that signifies "to lean on," or "cast the weight of one's body on, for support and stay." Thus, "The house of Jacob shall no more again stay upon him that smote them; but shall stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth." (Isai. x. 20.)\* Thus for the ingredients of trust.

(II.) *The concomitants of an holy trust.*—And these are,

1. *An holy quietness, security, and peaceableness of spirit springing from a full persuasion of our safety.*—By this the soul is freed from

\* *נשעין, firmiter innitotur, incumbet.*

distracting cares and jealousies about our state and condition. Hence that of the prophet: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." (Isai. xxvi. 3.)\* An holy security, I say, not a carnal security like theirs mentioned, in Zeph. i. 12, that were "settled on their lees: that said in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil;" nor like that of the scarlet whore, that says in heart, "I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow." (Rev. xviii. 7.) No, but an holy security; as we have it Prov. xviii. 10: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it," that is, by the feet of trust, "and is safe:" † as safe as a man judgeth himself to be, when got into an high tower, well fortified, and fears not the sharpest or swiftest darts that can be shot against him, safe as the chickens take themselves to be, "when housed under the covert of their dam's wing;" or safe as the manslayer is from the pursuit of the avenger when lodged in a city of refuge. (Psalm xli. 1.) ‡ Thus, when a man trusts in God, he doth sweetly acquiesce and repose himself in God's bosom, troubles himself no more, casts no jealous thoughts about his condition. Thus David resolves: "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety," or "in trust." (Psalm iv. 8.)§

2. *A steadfast, well-grounded hope.*—Trust and hope are *gemi*, "twins," born together, bred up together. Hence [they are] often conjoined in scripture: "Thou art my hope, O Lord God; thou art my trust from my youth:" (Psalm lxxi. 5:) and, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." (Jer. xvii. 7; Psalm cxix. 42, 43, 49.) Hence the Septuagint usually render the word put for "trust," as also in the text בַּטְחוּ, Ελπιστατε, and Arias Montanus, and divers others, *Sperate*, "Hope ye in the Lord." Hope, then, is that *fidus Achates*, "the faithful companion," of trust. Now, in this hope, there are two things:—

(1.) *A holy and confident expectation and looking out after God's gracious presence.*—Trust believes, and hope expects, to enjoy what God has promised. Thus the prophet: "I will wait upon the Lord, and I will look for him." (Isai. viii. 17.)|| Hope looks, and looks out, as expecting God's appearing; not as Sisera's mother once did, who looked for a victorious success, and expected that her son should have returned a triumphant conqueror, richly laden with spoils and booty, whenas the wretch lay bleeding at the feet of Jael; (Judges v. 28;) nor like those sinful, miserable people, who "looked for peace, but," behold, "no good came." (Jer. viii. 15.) No: such a vain, groundless hope draws a blush into the cheek, and covers the face with confusion. But this is a hope which makes not ashamed; (Rom. v. 5;) whose earnest expectation shall assuredly end in sweet fruition.

\* שלום *pacem* שלום *pacem*. † ונשגב *Et exaltabitur*. "And shall be exalted."  
—EDIT.

*Celsus ab alto*

*Infra te cernes hominum genus.*—SILIUS ITALICUS, lib. xv. 106.

"Shalt see, when stooping from thy lofty seat,  
The common race of men beneath thy feet."—EDIT.

‡ *Ut pulli sub alis gallinae.* § לבטח *confidenter*. || וקיייתי *et expectabo eum*.

(2.) *An humble and constant waiting on God's leisure.*—Looking out, and waiting on God, both put together: “Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.” (Micah vii. 7.) Faith gets up to the top of its watch-tower, looks out, sees whether relief be coming. But suppose none appears in ken;\* suppose help deferred: yet now it waits, and tarries God's time. Faith knocks at heaven's gate; no answer from within. Faith knocks again; still there is silence. However, faith concludes, “My God will hear, yea, and answer too; but it is fit I should wait his time.” “The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry,” I must and will “wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” (Hab. ii. 3.) Thus David: “My soul, wait thou only upon God;” or, keep thou silence unto God; “for my expectation is from him.” (Psalm lxii. 5.) David, when he shuts his mouth, opens his ear; waits and listens what God will say, and concludes, *contra Gentes*,† “The Lord will,” in his own best time, “speak peace.” (Psalm lxxxv. 8.)

3. *An humble, holy, and undaunted confidence.*—Thus Solomon: “In the fear of the Lord,” in the filial, awful, reverential fear of God, “there is strong confidence,‡ and his children shall have a place of refuge.” (Prov. xiv. 26.) This holy confidence is nothing else but faith pegged up to its *E-la*.§ A confident soul moves in an higher orb than other saints, leads up the van of the militia of heaven. As patience is nothing else but hope lengthened; so confidence is nothing less than faith strengthened, the very spirits, the mere elixir, of faith; which carries with it,—

(1.) *Christian courage and fortitude, opposite to carnal fear and despondency of spirit.*—“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength.” (Isai. xii. 2.) “He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.” (Psalm cxii. 7; xci. 5; xlvi. 1—3.) Thus David, undauntedly: “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm xxvii. 1.) His confidence in God quite extinguished in him all base, sneaking fear of man. (Psalm lvi. 4.)

(2.) *Christian boldness and adventurousness, opposite to cowardice.*—Holy confidence steels the heart of Joseph of Arimathea to go in *τολμησας*, boldly to “Pilate, and to beg the body of Jesus.” (Mark xv. 43.) This [it] was that enabled David to encounter Goliath, that made

\* Within sight.—EDIT. † “Against the Gentiles,” in opposition to the wishes of the Heathen by whom the Israelites were oppressed.—EDIT. ‡ *יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ* *fiducia fortitudinis*. “The assurance of strength.”—EDIT. § An allusion to a stringed instrument, stretched up to *e-la*, one of the highest notes in the scale of music.—EDIT. || *Beatus ille, qui undique petitus, firmius stetit: qui exhausit demonis pharetram, nec concedit, imò ne de gradu quidem tantisper motus est.*—NIC. “Blessed is that man who, though attacked on all sides, has maintained his ground with firmness, has exhausted the devil's quiver of all its arrows, and who yet exhibits no symptoms of surrendering; but who, on the contrary, does not recede a footstep from the favourable position which he had previously occupied.” The first syllable only, in the name of the author of this passage, is given by Mr. Lye, like many others in the volume; and, not being able to verify the quotation, I have no means of knowing whether the author's name was Nicæus, Nicephorus, Nicellus, Nicolaus, or Nicetas.—EDIT.

him dare to take a bear by the teeth, and a lion by the beard. It is for sluggards to say, "There is a lion without;" (Prov. xxii. 13;) but let a believer that makes God his trust but once know his duty, it is enough: he will, with a courageous and undaunted mind, cheerfully undertake it,\* and commit both himself and the success to God. (Acts iv. 13, 19; xx. 22; xxii. 13; Jer. xvii. 7, 8; Dan. iii. 17, 18; Esther iv. 16; Heb. xi. 34—40.)

(3.) *Holy and humble boasting, opposite to sinful concealing of what God hath done for us.*—A believer that dares not boast of himself or riches, of any thing within, that "has no confidence in the flesh," yet dares boast of his God. "In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever." (Psalm xlv. 8.) Thus the church challenges the eyes and ears of all that were round about her; saying, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us." (Isai. xxv. 9.)

(III.) *The effects of a holy trust.*—And they are such as these:—

1. *Ferrent, effectual, constant prayer.*—Thus, in our text: "Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your hearts before him." (Psalm lxii. 8.) While Joshua is in the valley, conflicting with Amalek, Moses gets him up into the mount to pray. (Exod. xvii. 9, 11; Psalm lxxxvi. 1, 2; 1 John v. 14; Psalm xviii. 2, 3.) Moses knew full well, that as prayer without faith is but a beating of the air, so trust without prayer was but a presumptuous bravado. He that promises to give, and bids us trust his promises, commands us to pray, and expects obedience to his commands. He will give, but not without our asking. (Ezek. xxxvi. 37; Psalm l. 15.)

2. *Sincere, universal, spiritual, cheerful, constant, obedience.*—They that expect to enjoy what God promises, will be sure to perform what God enjoins. Holy trust takes it for a maxim, that he that contemns the commands of a God as his Sovereign, has no share in the promises of a God as all-sufficient. If we trust in the Son with a faith of confidence, we shall be sure to honour the Son with a kiss of obedience. (Psalm ii. 12.) Thus David: "I have hoped for thy salvation, and done thy commandments." (Psalm cxix. 166.) As faith shows itself by its works, (James ii. 18,) so trust discovers itself by its obedience; especially in the use of such means as God prescribes for the bringing about his appointed end. If Naaman will prove that he trusts the God of Israel, he must go and wash in Jordan. True, indeed, the waters of Bethesda could not cure, unless the Angel stirred those waters; and yet the Angel would not cure without those waters. Paul trusted that himself, and the men with him, should all get safe to land; but then it was with this proviso, that they all kept in the ship. (Acts xxvii. 24, 31.) God's means are to be used, as well as God's blessing to be expected.

3. *Soul-ravishing, heart-enlivening joy.*—Thus David: "I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation." (Psalm xlii. 5.) If the Lord be our trust and strength, he will be (he cannot but be) our joy and song. (Isai. xii. 2.) "In whom believing," (let me add,

\* *Invictus ad labores, fortis ad pericula, rigidus adversus voluptates, durus adversus illecebras.*—AMBROSIIUS. "He remains unconquered by labour, armed with fortitude amid all perils, rigid against pleasures, and severe against all enticing allurements."—EDIT.

in whom trusting,) "ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter i. 8.) Thus trust and joy are linked and lodged together in that: "The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory." (Psalm lxiv. 10.) See to what a cue of joy Habakkuk's trust had raised him. (Hab. iii. 17—19.) The soul that truly trusts cannot but sit down under God's "shadow with great delight: his fruit" must needs be exceeding "sweet to our taste." (Canticles ii. 3.) Is Jonah "exceeding glad" with the shadow of his gourd? (Jonah iv. 6;) how, then, must a saint needs rejoice in the protection of a God! And thus I have despatched the *second* general proposed; namely, a full discovery of the nature of trust in God, what it is, what [are] its ingredients, concomitants, effects. I proceed to the *third*, namely,

III. *What is, or at least ought to be, the grand and sole object of a believer's trust?*

SOLUTION. The text and doctrine tell us, it is the Lord Jehovah, and he alone. He is, or at least should be,

1. *The GRAND object of a believer's trust.*—"Put your trust in the Lord." (Psalm iv. 5.) In whom should a dying creature trust, but in a "living God?" (1 Tim. iv. 10.) In stormy and tempestuous times, though we may not run to the bramble, yet we must to this Rock, for refuge. (Isai. xxvi. 4.) When the sun burns hot, and scorches, a Jonah's gourd will prove insignificant: no shadow like that of a God's wings. (Psalm xxxvi. 7.)

2. *The SOLE object of a believer's trust.*—Holy trust is an act of worship proper and peculiar to a holy God. No creature must share in it: whatever we trust in, unless it be in subordination unto God, we make it our God, or at least our idol. True trust in God takes us off the hinges of all other confidences: as we cannot *serve*, so we cannot *trust*, God and Mammon. There must be but one string to the bow of our trust; and that is the Lord. More particularly, we may not, must not, repose a holy trust in any thing besides God, either *within us*, or *without us*.

(1.) *Not in any thing within us.*—And so,

(i.) *Not in our heads, understanding, wisdom, policy.*—No safe leaning to our own understanding. (Prov. iii. 5.) Carnal wisdom is but an *ignus fatuus*, that misleads into a bog, and there leaves us. "Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee." (Isai. xlvi. 10.) He that is wise in his own eyes, will be found at last to stand in his own light.

(ii.) *Not in our own hearts.*—It is folly, the height of folly, to trust those lumps of flesh, that are so deceitful, so desperately wicked. (Prov. xxviii. 26; Jer. xvii. 9.)

(iii.) *Not in our bodily strength and vigour.*—Those hands, that are now able to break a bow of steel, will eftsoons hang down and faint. (Eccles. xii. 1—3.) The most brawny arm [will be] utterly unable to ward off, or wrestle with, the assaults of death or sickness. Those legs, which now stand like pillars of brass, will shortly appear to be, what indeed they are, but sinking pillars of mouldering clay. Raise the

strength of man to its highest *ακμῆ*, [acmé,] yet even then it cannot make so much as one hair either white or black. (Matt. v. 36.)

(iv.) *Not in any natural or acquired excellences.*—Be they what they will, or should they be far more than they are. Should all the lines of created perfections meet in one man, as in their centre; yet surely that man, in that his best estate, is altogether vanity, (Psalm xxxix. 5,) and therefore not to be trusted in.

(2.) *Not in any thing without us.*—To trust in any creature without us, is to feed not so much on bread as ashes, (Isai. xlv. 20,) or rather on gravel-stones, which may easily break the teeth, but can never fill the belly.

(i.) *Not in riches.* (Jer. ix. 23.)—No, not in the abundance of riches. (Psalm lii. 7.) Though riches increase, our hearts must not be set upon them. Riches, when in their fullest flow, are most uncertain. (1 Tim. vi. 17.) “Wilt thou,” therefore, “set thine eyes on that which is not?” (Prov. xxiii. 5.) Though they seem to have a being, yet they are indeed but fair-faced nothings, gilded vanities. Or, suppose they are, yet the next moment they may not be; like birds on the wing, ready to take their flight. Treasures, then, are not to be made our trust. They cannot “profit in the day of wrath.” (Prov. xi. 4.) Nay, if we trust in our riches on earth, never expect a portion in heaven. Sooner shall the camel go through the eye of a needle, than such an one pass through the gate of glory. (Mark x. 24, 25.)

(ii.) *Not in idols.* (Psalm cxv. 8.)—Baal, Dagon, Ashtaroth, and the whole pack of those senseless abominations, cannot save themselves; much less can they preserve their bewitched votaries.

(iii.) *Not in man, or human allies or assistances.* (Psalm lxii. 9, 10.)—Egypt and all her chariots, when trusted in, prove not supporting-staffs, but broken reeds, which run into the side and bear not up, but wound the body. (2 Kings xviii. 24; Jer. xlvi. 25.) If the shadow of Egypt be our trust, the end of that trust will be our confusion. (Isai. xxx. 2, 3.) Might we build the nest of our trust on the sons of men, reason would bid us pitch on the topmost branches of the tallest cedars; I mean those earthly gods, the princes of this world. But, alas! these, though styled gods, must die like men, (Psalm lxxxii. 6, 7,) yea, like other men. Their breath is in their nostrils; they soon return to their dust, from whence they sprang; and then all their thoughts, and, with them, our hopes on them, perish. (Psalm cxlvi. 4.)

(iv.) *Not in any thing clad in mortal flesh.*—He that presumes to make flesh his arm, will be sure, at a long run, to find the Father of spirits his foe. “Thus saith the Lord: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm.” (Jer. xvii. 5.) And thus we have despatched the third general.

IV. *What are those sure and stable grounds on which saints may firmly and securely build their trust on God?*

SOLUTION. There is nothing which the eye of faith or reason can discover in God, but the arm of trust may safely lean on. But more particularly,—

1. *God's almighty arm and power.*—The Lord hath an arm, an out-

stretched arm; (1 Kings viii. 42;) a hand, an omnipotent hand; a hand that spans the heavens, (Isai. xl. 12,) that stretcheth them out as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in. On this Almighty arm may believers trust. (Isai. li. 5.) The Lord is a strong and mighty God, (Psalm xxiv. 8,) that created the world with a word, (Psalm xxxiii. 9,) and can as easily speak or look it into its first nothing. He is a wonder-working God. (Exod. xv. 11.) [אֱלֹהֵי שָׁדַי,] *El-shaddai*, (Gen. xvii. 1.) "Able to do," ὑπερ ἐκ περισσοῦ, "far more exceeding-abundantly than we can ask or think." (Eph. iii. 20.) His vast power far exceeds our wants, prayers, thoughts, all that we can need, beg, imagine. We want much, can ask great things, can think greater. Our imaginations exceed our expressions; yet God's power far exceeds both. Open we our mouths never so wide, his open hand can more than fill them. (Psalm lxxxi. 10.) God's power, then, is a most firm basis, whereon to fix our trust. "Trust ye in the Lord Jehovah; for in the Lord Jehovah is עוֹלָמְיָו עוֹלָמְיָו everlasting strength."\* Creature-props are not able to bear the weight and stress of an immortal soul. They are sandy foundations, apt to sink and crumble under us. But an almighty God is a Rock, a Rock of Ages; on which he that builds his confidence, though the winds blow, the rain descends, and the storms beat upon him, yet shall he not fall. (Matt. vii. 25.) On this power of God Abraham built his transcendent faith, (Rom. iv. 21,) and David his impregnable trust. (2 Sam. xxii. 2, 3.)

2. *God's infinite and free goodness, mercy, and bounty.*—"The Lord is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works." (Psalm cxlv. 9.) "With the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption." His bowels are as tender as his arm is strong. He is no less willing than able to relieve; therefore, "let Israel hope in the Lord." It is the Psalmist's inference. (Psalm cxxx. 7.) "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." (Psalm ciii. 13.) That father that sees his child in want, and pities not, and pitying, if able, relieves not, forfeits the name of *father*, and may write himself, not *man*, but *monster*. It is enough for our heavenly Father, that he knows we have need of any thing. (Matt. vi. 32.) The Lord is all that to his people, yea, and infinitely more than that, which *Isis Mammosa* was to the Egyptians: "a God full of dugs;" and whilst he hath a breast, let not saints fear the want of milk. The character that the Heathens idolatrously gave their Jupiter, may *far more truly* (indeed *only*) be ascribed to our Jehovah: He alone is that *Eὐς τε, Μεγας τε*, that *Optimus Maximus*, "the Best, as well as the Greatest, of Beings." Goodness is God's darling attribute; it is that which he looks on as his glory. "I beseech thee," saith Moses, "show me thy glory." (Exod. xxxiii. 18.) "Moses, thy prayer is heard, and it shall be answered." But what says God in answer to this request? "I will make all my goodness pass before thee." (Verse 19.) The thing requested was a view of God's glory: the thing promised was a discovery of God's goodness: which hints unto us, that, however all the attributes of God are in themselves glorious, yet the Lord glorieth most in the manifestation

\* *Petra sæculorum*. ["The Rock of Ages."] Isai. xxvi. 4.

of his goodness. So, then, though we have nothing to plead or prevail with God, as in or from ourselves, yet there is an orator in his own bosom that will certainly and effectually intercede for our relief; and that is his goodness. This was that, that buoyed up David; this was the cordial that kept him from fainting: "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." (Psalm xxvii. 13.)

3. *God's many, choice, exceeding great, and precious promises.*—These are the flagons that faith keeps by her, the apples [which] she hath hoarded up in store, to revive and quicken in a day of swooning. Who will not trust the word, the promise, the protest of the King of kings? God hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Heb. xiii. 5.) The Greek here hath five negatives, and may thus be rendered: "I will not, not leave thee; neither will I not, not forsake thee."\* "Five times," as one observes, "is this precious promise renewed, that we may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of its consolations, that we may milk out and be delighted with the abundance of its glory." Leave us God may, to our thinking; but really he doth not, will not. Or if he leaves us for a time, a small moment, yet he will not forsake us utterly. Desert he may, but not disinherit; forsake us, it may be, in regard of vision, not of union; change his dispensation, not his disposition. Dost thou pass through the waters? Thy God hath promised to be with thee: he was so with Noah, and the Israelites in the Red Sea and in Jordan. Dost thou walk through the fire? Warmed thou mayest be, "thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." (Isai. xliii. 2.) The three children were living monuments of this truth; God "sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him." (Dan. iii. 28.) The Lord hath graciously engaged to "create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Sion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day," for her protection, and the shining of a flaming fire by night," for direction; to be a shield and sun, yea, and "a shadow from the heat, and a place of refuge, and a covert from storm and from rain." (Isai. iv. 5, 6.) In such promises as these holy David trusted: this was his comfort in his affliction, the word of his God quickened him. (Psalm cxix. 49, 50.) God's promises are some of his bonds and obligations whereby he is held firmly bound to believers. *These* faith makes bold to put in suit, to plead the security that God hath given. "Lord," saith faith, "here is thy bill obligatory; behold, see here thy hand and seal. Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff." Thus David: "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope." (Psalm cxix. 49.) The word of promise was all that David had to show; and he counts that enough to set his faith on work.

4. *God's inviolable, steadfast, never-failing faithfulness.* (1 Cor. x. 13.)—God's goodness inclines him to make good promises, and his faithfulness engages him to make those promises good. If the word be once gone out of his mouth, "heaven and earth shall sooner pass away, than one

\* Ου μη, ουδε ου μη. "Never, in no wise, in no case; whatever I do, I will not do this, whatever shift I make."

iota of that word fail." (Luke xxi. 33.) This faithfulness of God Joshua asserts to the height: throws down the gauntlet, and does, as it were, challenge all Israel to show but that one thing that God had failed them in, of all the good things that he had promised. (Joshua xxiii. 14, 15.) If God in very faithfulness afflicts, (Psalm cxix. 75,) to make good his threatenings; much more in faithfulness will he preserve, to make good his promises. God never yet did, never will, fail that man that puts his trust in him. (Psalm ix. 10.) It is true, God may frown on, yea, and severely lash, a Solomon, a Jedidiah, when they break his statutes, and keep not his commandments: "Nevertheless, his loving-kindness he will not utterly take from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail." (Psalm lxxxix. 33.) God never yet brake his word by deceiving; nor cracked his credit by compounding, for less than was due, with any mortal living. So faithful is God, so true to his word, that let God but promise a victory, and Jehoshaphat will sound an *Io Triumphe* before the battle. (2 Chron. xx. 17, &c.) And let but him threaten Babylon's ruin, and the angel cries, "Babylon is fallen." (Rev. xiv. 8.) Thus then God's faithfulness calls for saints' trust. (Psalm cxlvi. 5, 6.)

5. *God's most holy, wise, powerful, gracious providence.*—This also is a prop for trust. It is the Lord that "gives unto all life, and breath, and all things." It is "in him we all live, and move, and have our being." (Acts xvii. 25, 28.) "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding" of and providing for "the evil and the good." (Prov. xv. 3.) This Divine Providence the Egyptians acknowledged, and held forth in that significant hieroglyphic of a sun portrayed in a ship tossed with wind and water. (EUSEBIUS *De Prepar. Evang.* lib. iii. c. 3.) God hath an eye in the wheels and motions of all inferior creatures. (Ezek. i. 18, 20.) Ουδεν ακρονοητον ουδ ημελημενον παρα τω Θεω παντα σκοπει ο ακοιμητος Οφθαλμος.\* Hence that holy symbol of our English Josiah, Edward VI.; namely, a celestial globe, with this motto, *Nihil sine Deo*, ["Nothing without God."] It is the Lord that feeds the sparrows that have no barn, and the ravens that have no granary. It is he that so gorgeously clothes the lilies that have no distaff. Not a bird descends from his perch, not an hair falls from the head, without his Father. "Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." (Matt. x. 29—31.) Where God sends mouths, he will not grudge meat. And he that feeds the young ravens, will not starve the young herons.† Faith contemplates what God doeth, recounts what God hath done; and from thence concludes what God will do. Hence it prays with the Psalmist: Psalm xvii. 7, and xxxi. 19. Faith reflects on former experiences, its own and others; and by the holy skill it hath in the physiognomy of providence, clearly reads and collects what God will do, in what God hath done. It casts its eye on,

(1.) *The experiences of others.*—And judges herself to have an interest

\* "There is in God no deficiency of provident solicitude or tender care concerning any of his creatures. That benignant and ever-wakeful Eye brings fully within the range of its observation all things that exist."—EDIT. † [The saying of] Mr. Heron, when dying, to his wife, somewhat desponding by reason of her many children, and small provision for them.

in those very providences of grace which they enjoyed. Thus the church, a thousand years after that heavenly combat betwixt God and Jacob, tells us, that God found Jacob "in Bethel, and there he spake with us," (Hosea xii. 4,) several ages before they were born; yet *with us*, that is, with Jacob for our good, on our account, for our interest. Faith remembers, there was once a Joseph in a prison, a Jeremy in a dungeon, a Daniel in a den, a Peter in chains, a Hezekiah on a supposed death-bed; and Providence assisted them: why not me?"\* "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him;" (Psalm xxxiv. 6;) and, "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them." (Psalm xxii. 4, 5.) "Lord, thou art 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;' why, then, may not I expect salvation from thee?"

(2.) *Its own experiences.*—Thus David confidently replies to Saul, that thought him no match for Goliath: "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this uncircumcised Philistine;" (1 Sam. xvii. 37;) and thus Paul: he had the sentence of death upon him; the black stones were thrown down into the urn against him; but his God had [delivered] and did deliver, and therefore in him he trusts, "that he will still deliver." (2 Cor. i. 10.)

6. And, lastly, I argue from *those dear relations in which the Lord is pleased to stand and own towards his people.*—These cry aloud for their trust in God. Is he not our Creator? (Isai. xl. 28.) Hath he built the house, and will he not keep it up? He that made us will assuredly take care of us. We may safely give up ourselves, our trust, our all, to him, who hath given us ourselves and our all. This relation the apostle makes the ground of trust. (1 Peter iv. 19.) Is he not our Redeemer? Will he part with his blood for us, and yet deny us bread? Is he not our Father? (Isai. lxiii. 16.) Are we not his children? And shall he not provide for his own children? (1 Tim. v. 8.) Hath the great God put such a philostorgy, or "natural affection," into the bear, pelican, dolphin, lioness, [and] eagle, towards their young, and shall not he much more carry his own upon eagles' wings? (Exod. xix. 4.) Is he not our King, Head, and Husband? In a word, all those relations wherein we stand to God, or God to us, are stable grounds of our trust upon him, and strong engagements of his assistance to, and providence over, us. Thus much for the *fourth* general. The *fifth* followeth:—

V. *What are those special and signal seasons which call aloud for the exerting of this divine trust?*

SOLUTION. This holy duty is indeed never out of season. So much the original word עֵת for "time" imports. True, indeed, our Saviour saith, and saith truly, "My time," that is, my time of discovering myself to be a wonder-working God, "is not yet come." (John vii. 6; ii. 4.) Yea, but all time, in respect of trust in God, is an appointed, yea, and an

\* ARROWSMITH'S ["Chain of Principles,"] chain 401, 416; JENKIN "on Jude," part i. p. 286. † א תִּפְּץ *tempestive eloqui*. "To speak a word in season." See Isai. l. 4.—EDIT.

accepted, time. The wise man tells us, there is an appointed time for every purpose under heaven : a time to kill and to heal, to plant and to pluck up, to weep and to laugh, to get and to lose, to be born and to die. (Eccles. iii. 1, &c.) In all these, trust in God is not, like snow in harvest, uncomely, but seasonable, yea, necessary. There may be indeed a time when God will not be found, but no time wherein he must not be trusted. *Nullum tempus occurrit regi*, saith the law. Let me add, *Nec fiducia*,\* and it is sound divinity : “The time of trusting in God cannot be lapsed.” But, more expressly, there are some special instances and nicks of time for trust :—

1. *The time of prosperity*.—When we sit under the warm beams of a meridian sun ; when we “wash our steps in butter, and our feet in oil ; when the candle of the Lord shines on our tabernacle ; when our mountain is made strong :” now, now is a time for trust ; but not in our mountain, (for it is a mountain of ice, and may soon dissolve,) but in our God. Halcyon days to some are temptations to security ; but to saints, times for trust ; to carnal persons, lures and decoys† to pride, but to believers, seasons for dependence. Now it is that a saint owns God as the author, (not chance, or his own wit and industry,) and implores his God to be the preserver and blessing, of his enjoyments. When our cistern is full, our trust must be not in it, but [in] the fountain. (Canticles iv. 15.) At our fullest tables, we must acknowledge that, as bread is the staff of our lives, so that staff cannot support unless held in God’s hand. (Isai. iii. 1.) God’s blessing is the only stay of that staff of bread. Man lives not by bread alone ; indeed not so much by bread, as by the word of blessing that proceeds out of God’s mouth. (Matt. iv. 4.)

2. *The time of adversity*.—This also is a seasonable time for trust ; when we have no bread to eat, but that of carefulness ; nor wine to drink, but that of affliction and astonishment ; no, nor water either, but that of our own tears. Now is a time, not for over-grieving, murmuring, sinking, desponding, despairing, but for trusting.

In a tempest, then, a believer thinks it seasonable to cast anchor upward. Thus did good Jehoshaphat : “O our God ! we know not what to do : but our eyes are unto thee.” (2 Chron. xx. 12.) Thus David : “What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.” (Psalm lvi. 3.) Times of trouble are proper times for trust, be the trouble either spiritual or temporal.

(1.) *Spiritual trouble*.—Doth the child of light walk in darkness ; in such midnight darkness, that he hath no light ? Now is a time to “trust in the name of the Lord, and to stay himself upon his God.” (Isai. l. 10.) Doth God take Job by the neck, and shake him even to pieces ? Doth he set him up for his mark, and shoot such arrows into his soul, that the poison of them drinks up his spirits ? Why now, when God is killing, yea, though he kills, Job will trust. (Job xiii. 15.) His

\* “The king’s rights suffer no injury from lapse of time. Neither does trust or confidence in God suffer any.”—EDIT.

† Instead of *decoys*, all the editions have *DUCKOVS*, a word which was in common use prior to the Revolution, and which bore the same signification as that which, in more modern days, is conveyed by the compound word, *decoy-ducks*.—EDIT.

faith lives in the midst of death. Is a godly Heman so scared with the terrors of God, that he is even distracted? though he be at his wits' end, yet [he is] not at his faith's end. Heman will pray, and trust, and hope even now, in this his day of spiritual trouble. (Psalm lxxxviii. 13, 15.)

(2.) *Temporal.*—Is it an evil time? (Micah vii. 7—9;) a time of personal distress and visitation? a time of wants or weakness? Doth the barrel of meal begin to fail, and the cruse of oil sink? Is there no “fruit in the vine?” Doth “the labour of the olive fail?” “Are the flocks cut off from the fold, and are there no herds in the stall?” Now, now is a time for Habakkuk to believe, believing to trust, and trusting to “rejoice in the Lord, and to joy in the God of his salvation.” (Hab. iii. 17, 18.) Throw a Jonah overboard into the raging sea, bury him alive in the whale's belly, let the floods compass him about, and all God's billows pass over him; yet even then Jonah remembers God, and with the eye of his trust dares look towards his holy temple. (Jonah ii. 1—9.) Let holy Paul have the sentence of death upon him, yet he will trust; (2 Cor. i. 9, 10;) and so will David, though he walk in the very “valley of the shadow of death.” (Psalm xxiii. 4.) Be the trouble what it will be, faith knows what to do, namely, to fly by the wings of trust, to Him that is the hope of Israel, and his Saviour in the time of trouble. (Jer. xiv. 8; Isai. xxxiii. 2.) Trust in God in a sad condition is a believer's *alexipharmacum præstantissimum*, “his choicest medicine, preservative, antidote against faintings, swoonings, sinkings.” It is like that *corneum Indorum poculum*, which Philostrates speaks of; (lib. iii. c. 1;) namely, “a goblet out of which the Indian princes drank,” and then looked on themselves as secure from the assaults either of fire, sword, or poison.

VI. And, lastly: *How faith or trust exerts, puts forth, demeans, and bestirs itself in these signal seasons.* (Psalm xxxvii. 39.)

(I.) *In times of fulness and prosperity.*—When it goes well with us and ours; when the candle of the Lord shines on us and our tabernacle; when our lines fall in pleasant places, and our God makes us to lie down in green and fat pastures: when we are as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold; when, with Judah, we wash our garments in wine, and our clothes in the blood of grapes: now, now, is a fair opportunity for faith or trust to exert itself, yea, and to appear gloriously. And, indeed, it requires no less than the utmost of faith's skill, to steer the soul handsomely in this serene and smooth-faced calm. And so,

1. Faith or trust looks upward, and there fixeth its eye *on God* and on the things of God.

(1.) *On God.*—And so holy faith delivers herself, in such *effata* [“expressions”] as these; namely,

(i.) “*How full soever my large cistern be, it is the Lord, and the Lord alone, that is the grand Fountain, or rather Ocean, of all my enjoyments.*—‘All my springs are in him.’ (Psalm lxxxvii. 7.) All my streams are from him.” Faith freely and humbly acknowledges, that all outward as well as inward blessings, that “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights.” (James i. 17.) Every good gift; not only those transcendentals of grace and glory, of

union with Christ here and full fruition of Christ hereafter ; but also all temporal good things, be they more or less, even to an hoof or shoe-latchet, faith confesseth that it hath nothing, but what it received from God. (1 Cor. iv. 7.) "As God in mercy hath promised, so God in bounty hath given me these earthly enjoyments." (Matt. vi. 33 ; 1 Tim. iv. 8.) "It is the Lord that gave," saith believing Job ; (Job i. 21 ;) riches, honour, advancement, promotion, they all come of God ; "not from the east, nor west, nor south ;" that is, neither this way nor that way, nor any way of man, but "God putteth down one, and setteth up another." (Psalm lxxv. 6, 7.) Faith knows that as all good things come from God, so all success in business, all blessings on our labours, callings, affairs, is only from the Lord. It is the Lord alone that makes whatsoever Joseph doeth to prosper. (Gen. xxxix. 23.) The disciples may fish and tug all night ; but till Christ comes, they can catch nothing. (Matt. iv. 19.) It is the blessing of the Lord alone that maketh rich. (Prov. x. 22.)

(ii.) "Since all that I have is received of God, I may not, I must not, boast, crack, glory, as if I received it not. (1 Cor. iv. 7.)—Let others," saith faith, "thank their own labours, wisdom, policy, parts, wickedly 'sacrifice to their own nets, and burn incense to their own drags, as if by them their portion were fat, and their meat plenteous.'" (Hab. i. 16.) Faith leaves it to the atheist to bless himself in being *fortunæ suæ faber* ;\* or, with that dunghill wretch who, being excited to thank God for a rich crop of corn, replies, "Thank God shall I ! Nay, rather thank my dung-cart !" Faith is of another kind of complexion. "O far be it," saith she, "that I should so much as in my heart say, that 'my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.'" (Deut. viii. 17, 18 ; Dan. iv. 30.)

(iii.) "Inasmuch as all that I have is from God's blessing and bounty, this whole all shall be for his praise and glory.—Since all my enjoyments are of him, it is but just that all should be to him. (Rom. xi. 36.) He that is the Alpha, 'the beginning' of all my mercies, shall be the Omega, 'the end' and centre of all my services.† These earthly treasures," saith faith, "shall be improved for high and heavenly ends : not thrown into the sink of a voluptuous paunch, not so much [as] on a hawk or hound, but laid and locked up in God's treasury ; that is, the backs and bosoms of Christ's poor members." Faith is resolved to improve Satan's greatest weapon (that is, the world and its sweetest enjoyments) against himself : it will break his hairy scalp with his own cudgels, turn his own cannons against him ; that is, by reducing all its worldly enjoyments into a serviceableness and subordination for the glory of God. Faith disdains to take that coarse way of curing the lust of the eyes by plucking them out, and to slake the thirst of riches by a profuse casting of it into

\* "The fabricator of his own fortune."—EDIT.

† *Diis te minorem quod geris, imperas :*

*Hinc omne principium, huc refer exitum.*—HORATII *Carm.*, lib. iii. od. vi. 5, 6.

"You reign by bowing to the gods' commands :

From this your State arose, on this your glory stands."

Translation of Bentley's Horace. (Lintot, 1712.)

the sea, to conquer the world's honour and applause by turning hermit, and hiding of its head in a lonely cave. No; faith prepares the soul for a nobler way of victory, not by slighting the bait, but by digesting of it into food, by using of creature-comforts, as so many rounds in Jacob's ladder, to mount itself and others the nearer heaven. Faith considers that the King of heaven expects his toll, tribute, custom, out of all our receipts; that where much is given, there more is required; (Luke xii. 48;) and justly fears, lest, if it should not pay its God the interest, it should, and that justly, forfeit and lose the principal. Therefore, the more it is dunged, and dressed, and pruned, the more abundant clusters it brings forth, and such as are acceptable to the palate of the vine-dresser. (Isai. v. 2, &c.)

(iv.) "*Because all my enjoyments proceed from God's free-gift, or rather his loan, therefore they must and shall be readily surrendered to God's call.*—If God will continue these outward comforts," saith faith, "I will own and improve his bounty; and yet if he thinks fit to call-in his debts, I will revere, and submit to his sovereignty." Let God give, and give abundantly, Job will bless. Let God take, Job knows he takes but his own, and on that account will bless him then. Job has learnt to bless a *taking* as well as a *giving* God. (Job i. 21.) "Here are lands, houses, children, parents, dear enjoyments indeed; but yet such as are not my fee-simple," saith faith; "I am only a tenant at will. All these, yea, and much more, nay, life, and all must and shall be denied, resigned, when God calls for them." (Luke xiv. 33.) A gracious heart knows that he cannot possibly make so much of his worldly enjoyments any other way as by offering them up for Christ's sake, and resigning them to Christ's call. Mary's ointment could never have been carried to a better market than it was, when poured so freely on her dear Saviour's head. Be a believer's enjoyments what they will, never so great, never so precious, suppose his vessel laden with pearls; yet even these shall [be thrown] overboard, rather than hazard the wreck of faith or a good conscience. (1 Tim. i. 19.)

(v.) "*Now I enjoy most from God, now, even now, it is necessary that I should trust mostly, yea, wholly and only, in God.*"—Thus Jehosaphat; (2 Chron. xx. 12;) thus Asa, though he had an army almost innumerable, no less than five hundred and fourscore thousand men, all of them mighty men of valour; yet he looks on all of them as ciphers, as nothing without a God; and therefore now puts forth his trust in God, and flies to him for help. (2 Chron. xiv. 8, 11.) Here, indeed, was a noble trust. It is difficult to trust God in our greatest wants, but more difficult to trust him in our greatest weal. It was a brave act of trust in Job, when he resolves to trust in God, though he killed him; (Job xiii. 15;) a high attainment in Paul, when he had nothing, to be as one that possessed all things. Yea, but, when God quickens, when we are full and abound, when our cup runs over, now to trust in a God, and not in our cup; when our sails are filled with a trade-wind, then to confide only in our Pilot; when we have all things, and yet then to look on the creature as utterly insufficient, and to lean wholly on God's all-sufficiency:—this speaks the most spiritual and refined trust; and yet this is that which

faith exerts in its fullest enjoyments. Where mercy abounds, trust superabounds; reputed the creature as nothing at all, and esteeming God as all in all.

(vi.) *“These outward enjoyments are indeed sweet; but my God, the author of them, is infinitely more sweet.—They have all, even the most defecate of them, a tang and smack of the cask and channel through which they come. At, at, dulcius ex ipso fonte!\** A single God is infinitely more sweet than the enjoyment of all created good things that come from him. Though, indeed, I can smile, when my corn and wine and oil increaseth, and bear a part with my valleys, when they stand so thick with corn, that they even laugh and sing; alas! this, without the enjoyment of a God, is but a mere *risus Sardonicus*; † the leaping of the head after the soul is gone. True, indeed, these are some of God’s love-tokens; but what are these to his person and presence? These, indeed, are rich cabinets; but, O the light of his countenance! that, that is the jewel! (Psalm iv. 6.) In having these, I can say, with Esau, ‘I have כֹּחַ much!’ But, give me Him, I can exult and, triumphing, say, with Jacob, ‘I have לֵב all.’ (Gen. xxxiii. 9, 11.) These are some of his left-hand favours; some of his bottles of milk and gifts; a fit portion for Ishmael and the sons of Keturah. But it is an Isaac’s inheritance, waters of the upper fountains, [which] my soul thirsts after; those right-hand blessings, his presence, his soul-ravishing presence, in which there is ‘fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.’ (Psalm xvi. 11.) These may serve for my comfortable passage; but nothing but himself can content and satisfy for my all-sufficient portion; (Psalm lxxiii. 26;) according to that, [in] Psalm xxxvi. 8. He alone can fill up all the gaping chinks and chasms of my soul. He is my ‘sun and shield;’ (Psalm lxxxiv. 11;) my root and branch; (Isai. xi. 10;) my ‘foundation and corner-stone;’ (Isai. xxviii. 16;) my ‘sword and shield.’ (Deut. xxxiii. 29.) He only can answer all my desires, all my necessities. *Deus meus et omnia*, ‘My God and my all.’” Thus faith fixes its aspect on God.

(2.) *On the things of God.*—And so faith concludes: “‘I have higher and nobler projects, designs of deeper concernment,’ ‡ than to sit down, ingulf and please myself in these poor, earthly, drossy, dirty things here below.§ I have many corruptions within,—these are to be mortified; many temptations without,—these are to be resisted; many sweet motions and whispers of the Spirit,—these are to be cherished; many weak graces,—these are to be strengthened; many personal, relational duties,—these are to be performed; in a word, an effectual calling and election to be made sure,—this, above all, is to be regarded.” Faith discovers a world beyond the moon, and trades thither; leaving the men of the earth to load themselves with clay and coals, faith pursues its staple commodity, and traffics for grace and glory. Thus David, when he had branded the worldling for “disquieting himself in vain, for

\* “But how much more delightful is it to drink at the fountain itself!”—EDIT.

† “Hysterical laughter.”—EDIT. ‡ *Altiora sapio.* § *Excelsa piæ mentis generositas supra omnem rerum humanarum speciem erecta.* “The elevated generosity of a pious mind is raised far above all the specious variety of human affairs.”—EDIT.

heaping up riches, and knowing not who shall gather them," with an holy disdain turns his back upon the world, as not worth his thoughts; saying, "And now, Lord, what wait I for?" (Psalm xxxix. 6, 7.) As if he had said, "It is true, I have riches, and honour, a crown, a kingdom; but is this the portion I could be content to sit down with? No, no; 'My hope is in thee. Deliver me from all my transgressions.' (Verse 8.) Let them that love the world enjoy it; but, Lord, pay not my portion in such adulterate coin, but in pardon of sin, and peace of conscience: this, this is that I wait for." Thus Luther, having a rich present sent him, "professed, with a holy boldness to God, that such things should not serve his turn." \* He was not taken with pebbles; his nobler soul flew higher, and was fixed on pearls.† It is God's favour that the subjects of the King of heaven desire rather than his preferment; like him that preferred Alexander's kiss before a great sum of money, given by Alexander to another. Thus faith looks upward on God, and the things of God, and acts accordingly.

2. *Faith or trust looks downward, on its fullest and sweetest temporal enjoyments.*—And so it accurately weighs these enjoyments in the balance of the sanctuary, and so makes a just estimate of them as to their worth and value. Faith knows that generally men look at the things which are seen; and therefore the things that seem best, that glitter most, are the best delights of most of the children of men, the desire of their eyes, the joy of their hearts. These they over-rate; and not only esteem them highly, but adore them superstitiously, as a God, or their chiefest good. But now faith brings these to the touchstone and standard, and there interprets them as they are, according to their just value, finds them to be but the delights of sense, *fortunæ ludibria*,‡ the sports of nature, the trials of human folly, at the best but helps of human frailty. Particularly, faith passes a twofold judgment on them, *negative and positive*.

(1.) **NEGATIVE.** And so faith concludes,

(i.) "*These, and all such like, earthly enjoyments, never yet of themselves benefited any man for heaven.*—True, some things are so good in themselves, that he that hath them cannot but be good, and the better for them: such as are the grace of God to us, and the graces of the Spirit in us. These find us evil, but make us good; but no man was ever made good, merely by riches and worldly wealth. These, indeed, have found some really good, and made them less good than they were; and have found many seemingly good, whom they have made stark naught. How often hath a fat preferment spoiled a good preacher, and caused him, (with him,) *when the fish is caught, to lay aside his net!* Usually the more we have of this world, the less we mind the world to come. Our place in Paris makes us forget our portion in paradise. That earth which we tread under our feet, gets up into our hearts, and makes them more earthly than the earth we tread on.

(ii.) "*This high mountain, on whose top I stand, adds not a cubit to my stature in God's eyes.*—God values not, as men do, by the rate- or

\* *Valde protestatus sum, &c.*  
never stoops to catch flies."—EDIT.

† *Aquila non capit muscas.* "The towering eagle  
‡ "The mockery of fortune."—EDIT.

subsidy-book. 'Not many wise, not many noble, not many rich,' &c. ; 'but God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith.' (James ii. 15.)

(iii.) "Therefore my true blessedness doth not, cannot, consist in the fullest confluence of these worldly enjoyments.—I may not, I dare not, with that rich fool, sing a requiem to my soul, and bid it take its ease, for it hath goods laid up for many years. (Luke xii. 19.) Here is not my rest." Faith, like the turtle, finds no rest for the sole of its foot even in a deluge of creature-comforts. Suppose a believer's "sons as plants grown up in their youth," and his "daughters as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace;" suppose his "garners full, affording all manner of store," his "oxen strong to labour," and his "sheep bringing forth thousands and ten thousands in the streets;" though the blear-eyed world should pronounce him happy that is in such a case; how would the believer immediately reply with the Psalmist's *epanorthosis*, (or, "in express contradiction rather to so gross a mistake,") "Yea, happy is that people," they rather, or they only, are blessed, "whose God is the Lord." (Psalm cxliv. 12—15.) Thus faith concludes negatively.

(2.) POSITIVELY. That divine lesson which Solomon, the wisest of mere men, had by such difficult and costly experiments at length learned, faith hath got by heart; and in the face of the world concludes with him: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." (Eccles. i. 2.) The assertion is repeated, as in Pharaoh's dream, to show its certainty, and the term of "vanity" doubled, to manifest the transcendency and multiplicity of this vanity. There is a fivefold vanity, which faith discovers in all its creature-enjoyments; namely, in that they are,

(i.) *Unprofitable*.—Thus the Preacher: "What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?" (Eccles. i. 3.) *What profit?* Why, he hath filled his hands with air, he hath "laboured for the wind." (Eccles. v. 16.) Just so much and no more than Septimius Severus got, who, having run through various and great employments, openly acknowledges: *Omnia fui, sed nihil profuit*.<sup>\*</sup> Creature-comforts are not bread. (Isai. lv. 2, 3.) They profit no more than the dream of a full meal doth an hungry man, or that feast which the magician made the German nobles, who thought they fared very deliciously, but, when they departed, found themselves hungry.† In a day of wrath, sickness, death, can riches profit? (Prov. xi. 4; Ezek. vii. 19.) Just as much as a bag of gold hung about the neck of a drowning man.

(ii.) *Hurtful and pernicious*.—Solomon observed, that "riches were kept for the owners thereof to their hurt." (Eccles. v. 13.) Hence it is that Agur prays against them: "Give me not riches, lest I be full and deny thee;" (Prov. xxx. 8, 9;) as if abundance made way for atheism, in those that know not how to manage it. Maximilian II. was sensible of this, who refused to hoard up a mass of treasure; fearing lest, by falling in love therewith, of a sovereign lord, he should become a

\* "In all public employments I have borne a conspicuous part; but, in the end, none of them yields me relief or satisfaction."—EDIT. † CORNELIUS A LAPIDE, *Comment.* in Isai. lv. 2.

servant to the mammon of unrighteousness. Now, the hurtfulness of creature-comforts shows itself in several particulars:—

First. *Faith knows that they are apt to puff up and swell the heart with the tympany of pride.*—Hence that great caution, Deut. viii. 10—20. The usual attendants on riches are pride and confidence. Hence Paul to Timothy, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded.” (1 Tim. vi. 17.) How apt are men to be lifted up with the things of this lower world! Riches at once sink the mind downward in covetous cares, and lift it upward in proud conceits. To see a man rich in purse, and poor in spirit, is a great rarity.

Secondly. *Faith knows, that great enjoyments are great snares, and powerful temptations, to many other lusts.*—Such as are covetousness, lust, luxury, security, &c. The plenty of places oft occasions much wickedness in persons. Rich Sodom was a nursery of all impiety. Jeshurun, when he waxeth fat, is apt to kick. (Deut. xxxii. 15.) And when Israel is fed to the full, then she commits abomination. (Ezek. xvi. 49, 50.)

Thirdly. *Faith is sensible how apt temporal comforts are to make us slight spiritual graces, and heavenly communion.*

[i.] *Spiritual graces.*—Our digging for silver and searching for gold makes us too, too apt to neglect that which is better than thousands of gold and silver, even durable substance. The radiant splendour of these things here below dazzles our eyes to those things above. While Martha is much cumbered about many things, she forgets to act Mary's part, and to pursue that one thing necessary. (Luke x. 41, 42.) How often do outward comforts entangle the spirits, weaken the graces, strengthen the corruptions, even of good men! There was a serious truth in that atheistical scorn of Julian, who, when he spoiled the Christians of their outward estates, told them, he did it to make them “more ready for the kingdom of heaven.” Many really godly lose much in spirituals by gaining much in temporals; they have been impoverished by their riches. They are indeed rich in grace, whose graces are not hindered by their riches; whose souls prosper when their bodies prosper. To see the daughter of Tyre come with her gift; to see the rich among the people entreat Christ's favour, and give up themselves to him;—this indeed is a rare sight. (Psalm xlv. 12.) To be rich or great in the world, is a great temptation. When we flourish in the flesh, we are apt to wither in the spirit. The scorching sunbeams of prosperity too, too often cause a drought, and then a dearth, a famine in the soul, and make us throw off those robes of righteousness which the wind of affliction makes us to gird on the faster. The world is of an encroaching nature: hard it is to enjoy it, and not come into bondage to it. Let Abraham cast but a little more than ordinary respect on Hagar, and it will not be long ere she begin to contest with, yea, crow over, her mistress.

[ii.] *Spiritual communion with God.*—Worldly comforts are always dogged with worldly business; and this too often eats up our time for communion with God. It is a very difficult thing to make our way into the presence of God through the throng of worldly incumbrances.

Worldly employments and enjoyments are exceeding apt, not only to blunt, but to turn, the edge of our affections from an holy commerce with God. Faith knows what a task, what an Herculean labour, it is, after it hath passed a day amidst worldly profits, and been entertained with the delights and pleasures [which] a full estate affords, now to bring a whole heart to God, when at night it returns into his presence. The world in this case doeth by the saint, as the little child by the mother: if it cannot keep the mother from going out, it will cry after to go with her. If the world cannot keep us from going to religious duties, it will cry to be taken along with us; and much ado there is to part it and our affections. Thus faith discovers the danger and hurtfulness of creature-enjoyments. But, more than this:

(iii.) *Faith knows that these outward things are perishing as well as unprofitable and hurtful.*—Mutable, inconstant, “fading vanities,”\* bubbles, pictures drawn on icy tablets, grass growing on the tops of houses. Faith hath seen and heard the providence of God ring the changes of men’s estates all the world over: now, exalted and lifted up; within a while, depressed and cast down: now, honourable; eftssoon, abased; the rich becoming poor, Naomi becoming Mara, hills levelled into valleys, and great mountains becoming plains. That spoke of the wheel which is now aloft, as the captive king told his conqueror, is quickly turned to the ground and brought low. The best earthly estate is in itself a tottering estate. No mountain so strong but may soon be moved. (Psalm xxx. 6, 7.)† What we call *substance*, faith knows is but “a shadow,” and hath no continuance. There is no assurance in any earthly inheritance. How soon doth God sequester it from us, or us from it! These externals cannot be held with all our care, nor kept with all our policy and power. The best of earthly excellences may soon be taken from us. Job’s crown quickly falls off from Job’s head. (Job xix. 9.) Not only is “all flesh grass,” but “all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field.” (Isai. xl. 6.) Not only is man of a brittle constitution in nature, but all the perfections which he hath, be they either moral or civil accomplishments, on this side grace, are brittle too. Reason, scripture, experience, abundantly attest this truth: “The fashion of this world,” saith the apostle, “passeth away.” (1 Cor. vii. 31.) As fashions in the world alter and change every day, so doth the fashion of this world. Creature-comforts are “not so properly possessions as pageants, which, whilst they please us, pass away from us in a moment.”‡ Those we have here are running banquets, delicate, and served-in with state, but soon over.

(iv.) *Faith makes yet a farther discovery, and finds that these creature-comforts are false, deceitful, lying vanities.*—Which appears,

First. *In the report they make of themselves, and of their own worth.*—If you look upon the bill of the creature, it puts down not only an hundred for fifty, but a million for a mite. Like the title-pages of some empty pamphlets, more in them than in the whole book.

\* *Felicitas umbratilis.* † *Summis negatum est stare diu.* ‡ *Quod miraris pompa est. Ostenduntur istæ res, non possidentur, et dum placent transeunt.*—SENECA, *Epist.* 110.

Secondly. *In the promises which they make to us.*—It promises that in the enjoyment thereof we shall be happy; whereas we are both poor and miserable in the fullest possession of the creature, unless God himself be our portion. It promises to ease us of our cares, yet it doth but multiply them. Like drink to a dropsy-man, so far from slaking, that it inflames the thirst. Riches are not food, but fuel, to our desires; and are so far from satisfying, that they but widen the throat. They do not allay our appetite as bread doth, when received and digested; but inflame it, as oil doth, when cast into the fire. It promiseth to protect us, but performs no more than the great tree doth from a soaking and lasting storm. It promises to continue with us; though father and mother forsake, yet it will not: whereas it usually proves like Absalom's mule,—then apt to go from under us when we most need it. Thus the creatures are deceitful, that is, they are objectively deceitful; through the deceitfulness of our hearts and lusts, we are deceived about them, if not by them. They frustrate our expectation, when our hopes of advantage by them are at the highest; seldom or never make good to the enjoyer what they promised to the expectant. Like Jonah's gourd, when most needed, then they wither; like Esther's invitation of Haman to a banquet with the king, which filled his bladder with windy hopes, but soon after ended in his ruin.

(v.) And lastly. *Faith knows that creature-comforts are unsatisfying vanities.* (Isai. lv. 2.) This the philosopher saw by the dim eye of nature, concluding, that the world, being orbicular, (of a round figure,) could never fill up the corners of a heart, which is triangular. The creature were a god to us, if it could do this to us. Kindle thirstings it may, but quench none; can beget a thousand fears and cares, but quiet none. Here "the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing," (Eccles. i. 8,) the soul still crying out, "Give, give." It is God alone [who] satisfies. (Psalm xxxvi. 8, 9.) It is only a God in Christ that can give the soul rest. (Matt. xi. 29.) God would not rest from his works of creation till man was formed. Man cannot rest from his longing desires till God be enjoyed; and then, and not till then, can a holy David sing a lullaby to his soul: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." (Psalm cxvi. 7.) Faith, having thus expressed her judgment concerning the true nature and worth of creature-comforts, concludes her work in three resolves:—

First. "*In the midst of these my enjoyments, I must take heed that my heart sits loose from them.*"—These handsome pictures must be only hanged on the wall, not glued to it. Though riches increase, I may not, must not, set my heart on them. Thus the Psalmist, Psalm lxii. 10. Use them I may, love them I may not. (1 John ii. 15, 16.) My affections may perchance pitch, but must not fix, on these things below. (Col. iii. 2.) Look upon them I must with an holy indifferency, and use them as if I used them not, possess them as if I possessed them not. (1 Cor. vii. 31.) The zeal of my spirit must be for heaven and heavenly things. My soul must press hard only after God, as David did. (Psalm lxiii. 1, 8.)"

Secondly. "*Though I have all these comforts, yet I may not, must not, inordinately, immoderately, carnally delight and rejoice in them.*"—Thus

the apostle enjoins: 'It remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it.' (1 Cor. vii. 29—31.) As we are apt to *underdo*, to do too little, in heavenly things; so we are apt to *overdo*, or to do too much, in worldly things."

Our two great failings are [these], namely, that we do but make use, as it were, of those things [which] we should enjoy, and that we enjoy those things [which] we should only make use of. O, the divine art of holy moderation in the use of our sweetest worldly enjoyments is known and practised by few!

Thirdly and lastly. "*As I do not over-love them, nor inordinately delight in them,*" saith faith, "*so, least of all, may I put the least trust or confidence in them.*"—I must not in the least lean upon them; not say to gold, to fine gold, 'Thou art my confidence;' (Job xxxi. 24;) that is, My soul may not securely rest and rely on gold, or golden enjoyments; as if these could stand by me, when all friends fail; as if these would not see us want any thing, nor suffer us to be wronged as long as they last, which, God knows, is but for a moment. All these enjoyments can neither make me better nor wiser, nor render my life more safe and comfortable; not sanctify our souls, nor satisfy our desires: 'Therefore,'" saith faith, "I will trust in God only, whom I can never trust too much; not in the creature, which I can never trust too little."

(II.) *In times of sadness, afflictions, wants, sufferings, miseries.*—When the hand of the Lord is gone out against us, and he greatly multiplies our sorrows; when he breaks us with breach upon breach, and runs upon us like a giant; when his arrows stick fast in us, and his hand presseth us sore; when he sows sackcloth on our skin, and defiles our horn in the dust; when we are fain to eat ashes like bread, and to mingle our drink with weeping;—now, now is a time for a saint's trust to bestir itself to purpose. In this storm and tempest, wherein the waves mount up to heaven, and go down again to the depths, faith sits at [the] helm, and preserves the soul from shipwreck. Faith takes this serpent by the tail, handles it, and turns it into an harmless wand, yea, into an Aaron's rod, budding with glory and immortality. Faith encounters this seeming Goliath of affliction, grapples with it, not as a match, but as a vanquished underling. Let misery dress herself like the cruellest fury, come forth guarded with all her dismal attendants,—sighs, groans, tears, wants, woes; faith sets its foot on the neck of this queen of fears, insults and triumphs over her. When the heart and flesh are apt to fail, when soul and spirit are apt to sink and swoon away, faith draws forth its bottle, and administers a reviving cordial. In a word: in a sea, an ocean, a deluge of trouble, amidst all storms, winds, tempests, yea, an hurricane of sorrows and miseries, faith knows where and how to cast anchor. According to that of our Saviour: Μη ταρασσεσθω υμων η καρδια. "Let not your heart be troubled," so troubled, as a ship tossed in a tempest:\* "ye believe in God, believe also in me." [John xiv. 1.] Faith is that great antidote, cordial, *panacea*, *catholicon*, "healer

\* *Ne perturbetur, commoveatur.*

of all diseases." This is *that* that makes a believer live in the midst of death. But, more particularly, in this tempestuous condition, faith doth these three things :—

1. It warily avoids some dangerous rocks and quicksands.
2. It heedfully looks to its bottom in which it sails.
3. It accurately observes its compass by which it steers.

1. *There are some rocks, shelves, quicksands, like Scylla and Charybdis, against which, in such a dark condition, the soul is apt to split itself.*—These faith avoids with utmost care. They are six :—

(1.) *Distracting, distrustful, carking, corroding, heart-dividing, heart-stabbing cares.*—Faith, according to the apostle's command, *μηδεν μεριμνα*, is carkingly "careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication makes its requests known to God." (Phil. iv. 6.) True, indeed, a believer is not, may not, dares not be slothfully, negligently careless of his body, estate, relations, affairs, particular calling. (Rom. xii. 11—17.) Faith knows, that he that endeavours not, by honest, prudent, diligent care and foresight, to "provide for his own, is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. v. 8.) And yet faith is far from all carking cares, such as distract the head, and divide the heart from other and better things. Faith "takes no thought for its life, what it shall eat; nor yet for the body, what it shall put on." (Matt. vi. 25, &c.) Faith leaves that to God, who feeds the sparrows and clothes the lilies. It is for Gentiles and unbelievers to cry out solicitously: "What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" My heavenly Father knows that I have need of all these things. It belongs to him to provide. It is his work: I leave it with him. All that care I cast upon him: he doth and will care for me. (1 Peter v. 7.) "I may not, must not," saith faith, "speak against God, as did the Israelites, saying, 'Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?' As he hath given waters, 'can he give bread also: can he provide flesh for his people?'" (Psalms lxxviii. 19, 20.)

(2.) *Carnal counsel, using unlawful and carnal confidence, trusting in lawful means.*—Say not, when God pursues, "Asshur shall save you, and you will ride on horses." (Hosea xiv. 3.) In sickness faith will not run first to the physician. That was good Asa's great sin. (2 Chron. xvi. 12.) It was holy David's great failing, to say, though but in his heart, "Nothing better for me than that I should escape into the land of the Philistines." (1 Sam. xxvii. 1.) Alas, poor David! to what a shift art thou now driven! What! to the uncircumcised Philistines? Is it because there is not a God in Israel? O, thou wilt quickly find this starting-hole to be only a going out of God's blessing into a warm sun! To think by sinning to avoid suffering, is, by saving the finger, to make way for a stab at the heart. To pursue and obtain deliverance, by unlawful ways, is to fish with, and lose, a hook of gold, and only to catch a gudgeon; to preserve the body, but to destroy the soul.

(3.) *Stinting and limiting the Holy One of Israel to this or that particular means, way, time, and manner of deliverance.*—So as to say, If God help not this way, nothing will do; if not now, never. Faith remembers, this was the Israelites' God-provoking sin. They "limited the

Holy One of Israel." (Psalm lxxviii. 41.) Thus Naaman: "Behold," saith he, "I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call, and strike;" (2 Kings v. 11;) and no other way will serve him. He thought thus, and thus; but the man was no less blind than leprous. He was at once both proud and vain in his imaginations; and he shall know that the Almighty will not sail by his narrow compass, nor dance, as I may so say, after his pipe. God hath more ways to the wood than one; and always more than many out of it, though we at present see them not. God hath extraordinary means to bear up, when ordinary ones fail. God can turn poisons into antidotes, hinderances into furtherances, destructions themselves into deliverances. Has Elijah no meat? Rather than fail, the devouring ravens shall be his caterers. (1 Kings xvii. 6.) Is Jonah in danger of drowning? Rather than sink, a whale shall have commission to be both his ship and pilot too, to set him safe on shore. (Jonah ii. 10.) Faith knows that an Almighty God can work with, yea, and without, above, contrary to, means; and doth on purpose many times stain the pride and glory of some means that seem most probable, that we may observe and adore his wise Providence in finding out and blessing the use of others more unlikely, that we may prefer his Jordan before our Abana.

(4.) *Impatient fretting, murmuring, and quarrelling against God's dispensations.*—This was poor Jonah's great stumble. Peevish man! "Doest thou well to be angry," and that with thy God? "Yea," saith he, "even unto death." (Jonah iv. 9.) The most foolish answer that ever dropped from the mouth of a holy man! Humble Aaron was better-instructed. He knew it was no safe kicking against the pricks; that nothing was to be got by striking again, by repining against God, but more blows; and therefore, when God had killed both his sons at a blow, he humbly "holds his peace," his heart and tongue were both silent. (Lev. x. 2, 3.) True, indeed, we may not be senseless and stupid under sufferings. Had all the martyrs had the dead palsy before they went to the stake, their sufferings had been far less glorious. But yet, though we may not be stupid or stoical, we must be patient and submissive. Though we may not be like the Caspian Sea, that neither ebbs nor flows, yet we must take heed of being like swelling, roaring waves and billows. Though God's turtles may, through infirmity, flutter, yet they may not be like bulls, when caught in a net, raving. "I was dumb," saith David, "because thou didst it." (Psalm xxxix. 9.) Away, then, with those surly looks, that do, as it were, enter a protest against what we suffer; nay, more, beware of those murmuring echoes and replies of spirit within, against God, who, though they seem to yield and run, yet, with the flying Parthian, shoot their arrows backward in discontent against God.

(5.) *All sinful and ungrounded doubting of God's love, in and under sufferings.*—How God's heart inclines, cannot infallibly be gathered from God's hand. Faith many times discovers love in God's heart, when it sees nothing but frowns on God's forehead, and knows that frequently when his tongue chides, his bowels yearn. "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child?" Is he? Alas, no! rather, he is a pettish, untoward, undutiful child. True, but yet a child; and, therefore, "since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; there-

fore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him." (Jer. xxxi. 20.) Yea, more, faith is so far from arguing, that God has thrown his love out of his heart, when he takes his rod into his hand, that it rather from thence argues the quite contrary: "I am now therefore beloved, because chastised." "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." Faith knows, that a Father's correction is so far from being an argument of wrath, that it is one of the clearest evidences of love. Better far to be a chastened son, than an undisciplined bastard. (Rev. iii. 19; Amos iii. 2; Heb. xii. 6, 8.) No anger like that: "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more:" (Isai. i. 5;) and, "I will be quiet, and will be no more angry." (Ezek. xvi. 42.) "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone." (Hosea iv. 17.) "Then is God most angry of all, when he refuseth to be angry." \*

(6.) *Fainting, sinking, desponding, despairing, under God's correction.*—As faith looks upon it as a great sin to despise the Lord's chastening, so it holds it for no small infirmity to faint, when corrected by him. (Heb. xii. 5.) This was that for which David so roundly chid and rated his soul: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God." (Psalm xlii. 11.) "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." (Prov. xxiv. 10.) It argues thee to be a man of a short, narrow, pusillanimous, poor, low soul, to faint and sink in such a day. Thus we have shown you the rocks, the dangerous rocks, which faith warily avoids.

2. *Faith heedfully looks to its ship or bottom, in which it sails.*—Wherein she views the keel, ballast, sails; takes care that these be tight, and in good condition.

(1.) *The keel, bulk, or body of the ship in which faith sails; and that is holy contentation.*—This was the grand and highest lesson that ever a believing Paul learnt and practised; namely, "In every state therewith to be content." (Phil. iv. 11.) What some observe of that earthly angel, that glory of her sex, the Lady Jane Gray, "That she made misery itself seem amiable, and that the night-clothes of adversity did as much become her as her day-dressing," is much more true of holy contentation: it renders every condition, even the blackest, lovely. An afflicted Christian, if contented, may truly say with the spouse, "I am black, but comely." (Canticles i. 5.) Faith, therefore, mainly looks to this, and professes, that though she cannot be satisfied with the whole world for her portion, yet she must, will be, and is contented with the least pittance of it for her passage. Has an Agur food? what, though יקק לם coarse, ordinary commons? (Prov. xxx. 8,) yet it is "food." Has John Baptist raiment? what, though of camel's hair? (Matt. iii. 4,) yet it is "raiment." And so long faith looks upon herself as obliged to be therewith content. (1 Tim. vi. 8.)

(2.) *The ballast that poises the ship; and that is humility.*—This is that that keeps the soul steady, and makes it ride out the storm. Pride is that which swells the heart. Now, when a member is swollen, though it grows bigger, yet it grows weaker, and so the more unfit and unable

\* *Tunc maximè irascitur, quando non irascitur. Super omnem iram miseratio ista.*—BERNARDUS. "This forbearing pity rises far above all anger."—EDIT.

to bear any burden laid upon it. It was humility that steeled Athanasius against all his adversaries and sufferings, in that he was, as Nazianzen reports him, as truly low in heart as really high in worth. The humble soul judges itself "less than the least of mercies," (Gen. xxxii. 10,) justly obnoxious to the greatest judgments; and therefore no wonder if it can patiently want or undergo any thing.

(3.) *The sails whereby this well-ballasted ship is carried; and that is heavenly-mindedness.*—This, indeed, is faith's top, and top-gallant, whereby it sails with a full forewind into its port and haven. Faith minds, savours, sets its affection on things above, not on things below. (Col. iii. 2.) Its heart is, where its treasure is, in heaven. Faith knows, that mixture of earth and dross much weakens the soul, and makes it unable to suffer; whereas a soul quickened with heavenly-mindedness, that flies high, and looks beyond the stars, concludes, that a little, a very little, of the dreggy creature will serve turn to pass it through this worldly pilgrimage; and this greatly enables for suffering; and thus faith heedfully looks to her bottom.

3. *Faith accurately observes its compass by which it steers.*—Now there are several points in faith's compass, or, if you will, there are several choice maxims or axioms of faith, by which a believer sails in and through the blackest storms and tempests. Such as these:—

(1.) *Whatever the stone be that is thrown, it is the hand of Heaven [that] flings it.*—In all the evils we either fear or feel, faith looks beyond the creature, and carries up the heart unto God. No evil in the city, no penal evil, either on me or mine, but the Lord hath done it. (Amos iii. 6.) Thus David: "I was dumb, because thou didst it." (Psalm xxxix. 9.) And the Lord hath bid Shimei curse. (2 Sam. xvi. 10.) David could read God's hand at the foot of the commission, though his commanders could not. "Thou couldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above," saith our Saviour to Pilate. (John xix. 11.) And holy Job, when plundered of all, saith not, "The Lord gave, and the Chaldeans and Sabeans have taken away; the Lord enriched, but Satan hath robbed me:" no; but as if they all had been but ciphers, and mere standers-by, "The Lord gave; and the Lord" only, or at least chiefly, "hath taken away." (Job i. 21.)

(2.) *Let the King of heaven do his worst, yet, even then, he can do no wrong.*—This is a grand maxim in the rolls of eternity; one of the fundamental laws of heaven; and that because,

(i.) *God is the most sovereign God, the supreme Lord, that knows no law but his own will, which is the highest and the most unerring rule of righteousness.*—God's hand is God's only rule; and therefore, whatever line he draws, it must needs be right. Our God is a law to himself, who only can write on his imperial edicts and proceedings,—

STAT PRO RATIONE VOLUNTAS.\*

God doth and may justly do whatsoever pleaseth him, (Dan. iv. 35,) and "can most justly resolve the reason of all his actions into his own will."

\* JUVENALIS *Satir.* vi. 222..... "I command:

"It is my sovereign will! Who dares withstand?"—OWEN'S Translation.

That Great Potter may do with his clay what he pleaseth, and that without the least control or contradiction. (Rom. ix. 20, 21.) On this account, faith counts it wisdom not to play the censorious critic on God's administrations, considering that He alone is *ανευθυνος και ανεπευθυνος*,\* according to that of Elihu: "God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters." (Job xxxiii. 12, 13.)

(ii.) "*God, as he is most just in himself, so also he acts most justly to me,*" saith a believer.—Faith justifies God in all his proceedings; that is, subscribes and gives testimony to the righteousness of God, even in his sharpest corrections. Thus David: "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right." (Psalm cxix. 75.) Thus the church, when under the Babylonish captivity, (the heaviest judgment ever inflicted on any people,) yet then humbly sets her seal to God's justice: "The Lord is righteous; for I have rebelled against him." (Lam. i. 18; Neh. ix. 33.)

(3.) *It is not fit that poor, weak, short-sighted, sinful creatures should be their own carvers.*—If they should, they would, like rash children, cut either too much or too little, or their own fingers. Well for us, that as our times, so our conditions, are not in our own (but in God's) hands. (Psalm xxxi. 15.) "Not what I please," saith faith, "but what my God pleaseth. He knows best what is good for his people; and I know, had God granted my requests, and fulfilled my desires, I had long since been undone. The cooling drink, which I so passionately desired in my burning paroxysm, would have added to my flame, and quickly dispatched me to the house of darkness." Hence it was that the honest shepherd, being asked what weather it should be to-day, replied, "Even what weather I please." "Not so," saith the other; "but what pleaseth God." "Yea so," replies the shepherd; "for whatever pleaseth God, shall be sure to please me."

(4.) *Better to want outward comforts, than enjoy them without my Father's good-will.*—Israel had been better to have been without quails. They had sour sauce to their sweet meat: while the flesh was in their mouths, the plague of God was in their nostrils. (Num. xi. 20.) You will needs have this, and that, and the other thing: "Why, take it," saith God; "but then take my curse with it too; the sack, but poison with it. You shall have it, but in wrath." (See 1 Sam. viii. 5, 6, 10—12; Hosea xiii. 11.) Rachel, you will have children, or else you will take pet and die. (Gen. xxx. 1.) You shall have children, a *Benjamin* to your Joseph, which yet shall prove a *Benoni*. His *intrat* ["entrance"] will prove your *exit*; his life, your death. (Gen. xxxv. 18.) Better were it for David to be without Michal, than that she should, being enjoyed, become a snare. (1 Sam. xviii. 21.)

(5.) *Seem it never so ill, yet it is really well.*—On these two accounts:—

(i.) *It cannot but be well with him with whom God is.*—It was not ill with the three children, though in a fiery furnace, so long as God was there. (Dan. iii. 25.) Suppose David, walking in the suburbs of death

\* "Without any superior to whom he is accountable, or by whom he may be directed and controlled."—EDIT.

and danger; yet [it is] not ill with him, because God [is] with him. (Psalm xxiii. 4.) When God says, "I will be with you," (as he has, Isai. xliii. 2,) "and I feel him," saith faith; "it is infinitely more to me than if he should say, 'Peace, health, credit, honour, plenty, shall be with thee.' God being with me, is all these, and infinitely more. In these I could have but a particular good: in a single God I have all good." Now God, who is with his people at all times, is most with them, and most sweetly with them, in the worst times.\* As their afflictions increase without, so do their consolations within. (2 Cor. i. 5.) When the child is most sick, then it is most dandled on the mother's knee; when it begins to faint, then is the closet ransacked for the choicest cordial. This blessed Baynham found, when at the stake he told the bloody Papists: "O ye Papists," said he, "you talk of miracles; behold here a true one: these flames are to me a bed of roses." God is wont to give believers, in such a time, their *exceedings*, their "five messes." That part of the army which is upon action in the field, and upon hard service, shall be sure to have their pay. What are all the promises, but vessels of cordial wine, tunned on purpose against a groaning hour, when God usually and speedily broacheth them? (Psalm l. 15.)

(ii.) *All is well that ends well.* "Now," saith faith, "all sad and gloomy dispensations have sweet ends, whether I respect God or myself:"—

First. *In respect of God.*—And that,

[i.] *For the manifestation of his infinite wisdom.*—Who so contrives the passages of his providence, as that one shall qualify another. God knows, that should I always prosper, I should have been apt to swell and presume; and therefore he pricks my bladder, to let out that wind. Had I been always fed with sweetmeats, it is very probable I might have surfeited; and therefore he mingles my sweets with these tart ingredients. Were not this bass added to my treble, I should never have made any harmonious music.

[ii.] *For the declaration of his Almighty power.*—God many times brings his people into such a condition, as not to know what to do, that they may know now what the Lord can do. Thus: "The Lord shall judge his people, when he seeth that their power is gone." "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me." (Deut. xxxii. 36, 39.) Thus: "Nevertheless he saved them for his name sake." But what name? even that glorious one of his power: "that he might make his mighty power to be known." (Psalm cvi. 8.)

Secondly. *In respect of believers.*—The life of every saint is a tragedy, and the last act of it crowns the whole play. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace." (Psalm xxxvii. 37.) Out of the eater shall come meat. This affliction and that affliction, yea, the whole series of them, "shall work together for my good." (Rom. viii. 28.) Saints' good is God's aim. As love is the principle [which] he constantly acts from, so the saints' good is the

\* *Domitianus in Jovis sinu.*—SÜETONIUS. "Domitian in the bosom of Jupiter." This phrase is not applied by Suetonius to Domitian. But one somewhat similar in import may be found in lib. ii. 94, referring to Augustus: *Jovem Opt. Max. unum secrevisse, atque in ejus sinum signum reipublice reposuisse; ad, in sequenti, animadvertisse se in gremio Capitolini Jovis eundem puerum, &c.*—EDIT.

end [which] he propounds and aims at, in all his dispensations. From this he never swerves. The fire of love never goes out of his heart, nor the saints' good out of his eye. When he frowns, chides, strikes, yet then his heart burns with love, and his thoughts are to do them good. (Jer. xxiv. 6, 7 ; xxix. 11 ; Deut. viii. 2, 16.) But what good? Much every way, chiefly with respect to their corruptions, graces, services, glory.

[i.] *Saints' corruptions, to purge and subdue them.*—"This is all the fruit, the taking away of their sin." (Isai. xxvii. 9.) Afflictions are God's brine and pickle to preserve the saints from putrefying. Paul's thorn in the flesh was given him to prevent and mortify pride. (2 Cor. xii. 7.) All the harm which the fiery furnace did the young men, in Dan. iii. 24, 25, was but to burn off their cords. Our lusts are cords, cords of vanity: fiery trials [are] sent on purpose to burn and consume them. Adversity, like winter-weather, [is] of great use to kill weeds and vermin, which the summer of prosperity is wont to breed. God is fain to rub hard many times, to fetch out the dirt that is ingrained in our nature. This thunder serves to clear the air from infectious vapours. This bitter potion purges out ill-humours. Be the teeth of thy troubles never so many, never so sharp, it is but to file off thy rust. This tempestuous tossing in the sea will more purge the wine from its lees. It clarifies the soul: according to that, "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined." (Zech. xiii. 9.)

[ii.] *Saints' graces.*—And that,

First. *For their trial and experience.*—"That the trial of your faith," &c. (1 Peter i. 7.) The fire tries the gold as well as the touch-stone. Diseases not only need, but try, the art of the physician; and tempests, the skill of the pilot. The saints' sufferings are but as so many touch-stones. Now, now shall the saint clearly know, whether the conscience be sound or foundered, if it will pace well in rough ways. Here, "here is the faith," that is, the trial of the saints' faith and patience. (Rev. xiii. 10.)

Secondly. *For their increase and growth.*—The snuffing of the candle makes it burn the brighter. Hence it is that the saints "glory in tribulations," (Rom. v. 3,) because their sufferings add strength to their graces. Never are God's spiritual nightingales apt to sing more sweetly, than when the thorn is at their breast. Saints are indeed made of precious metal; and yet they are too, too apt to lose their edge. Hence it is that God by afflictions whets and sharpens them. He beats and bruises his links, to make them burn the brighter; loads his choicest ships with sufficient ballast, to make them sail the steadier; bruises his spices, to make them send out an aromatic savour. (Jer. xxii. 21; Isai. xxvi. 16; Heb. xii. 10.)

OBJECTION. "But I find not this precious benefit."

SOLUTION. Afflictions do not presently work; at least, thou mayest not presently feel their operation. As Christ to Peter: "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." (John xiii. 7.) So afterward it brings forth the fruit of righteousness. (Heb. xii. 11.)

[iii.] *With respect to saints' future services.*—Great sufferings are many times sent to prepare saints for extraordinary services. See it in Joseph and Paul. Joseph thrown into a pit, sold a slave into Egypt, there cast into

a prison, [was] by all fitted for a palace, and to be a nursing-father to the church. (Gen. xli. 40, 41.) God bestows more chopping and hewing on corner-stones, because [that] he intends they shall not only support, but adorn the building. God means to build high upon them ; therefore lays his foundations very low : intends to sell these diamonds at a high rate ; and thence it is he spends so much time and art in cutting them.

[iv.] *With respect to the furtherance of their future glory.*—Christ went from a cross to Paradise ; so do Christians. The Master was made “ perfect through sufferings ; ” (Heb. ii. 10 ;) so are saints his servants. Though the saints’ cross cannot merit, yet it makes way for, a crown of life. (James i. 12.) Their “ light affliction, which is but for a moment,” occasionally works for them “ a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (2 Cor. iv. 17.)

(6.) *Be it really ill, never so ill, yet it might well be worse.*—Be the suffering what it will, yet whilst here, whilst above-ground, it is far less than I have deserved. (Ezra ix. 13.) “ Blessed be God,” cried out that man of God,\* when in the paroxysm of his gout, “ this, though sharp, is not hell.” The worst that we can feel here is not the hundred thousandth part of what we have deserved hereafter. “ Every step on this side hell is mercy,” saith a sensible believer. God is gracious in his greatest severity, remembers mercy in the midst of judgment. As it is said of Asher, “ His shoes were iron and brass, yet he dipped his foot in oil ; ” (Deut. xxxiii. 24, 25 ;) so God tempers his greatest severities with the oil of mercy ; corrects but in measure, (Isai. xvii. 6,) nay, in mercy, in infinite mercy. I that have deserved the blow of an executioner’s axe, am sent away with a lash only of a father’s rod. God only lops off some luxuriant branches, when in justice he might cut up the vine, both root and branch, and cast them into everlasting flames.

(7.) And lastly. *Be it now never so ill, it will certainly be better.* †—Thus the Psalmist : “ All thy waves are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command his loving-kindness.” (Psalm xlii. 7, 8.) Thus the church, Micah vii. 7—9. More particularly, faith concludes :—

(i.) “ *My afflictions, though lasting, will not be everlasting.*—Though the night be dark and long, yet there will come a day-break and comfortable dawn ; my God will not always chide, ‘ neither will he contend for ever.’ ” (Isai. lvii. 16 ; Rev. ii. 10.)

(ii.) “ *My greatest extremity of distress is God’s fairest opportunity for deliverance.*”—When the Cassians are most infested with locusts, then, and not till then, do the Seleucidian birds come-in to their assistance. ‡ (CAUS. *Hier.* l. 6. c. 31.) “ Now will I arise, saith the Lord.” (Psalm

\* MR. WHITAKER.

† *Nemo desperet meliora lapsus.*—SENECÆ *Tragœdiae.*

“ When at the lowest ebb, indulge no fear ;

Soon will the flowing current re-appear.”—EDIT.

‡ The Cassians were the inhabitants of Catieh, near the ancient Pelusium, now Tineh, in Lower Egypt ; and “ the Seleucidian birds ” to which Causin refers in his account of Egyptian antiquities, were those innumerable flights which congregate on the immense plain between the Tigris and the Euphrates, in the immediate neighbourhood of the city of Seleucia, (which was intended, by its celebrated founder, to become the capital of the East,) and Bagdad, the ancient site of which was on this account called by the Turks, *Kushlar Kalasi*, or “ the Castle of Birds.”—EDIT.

xii. 5 ; Deut. xxxii. 36.) *Cum duplicantur lateres, venit Moses.\** In the mount there will God be seen. (Gen. xxii. 14.)

(iii.) And lastly. "*Heaven will pay for all at last.*"—Where every tear shall be wiped off. (Rev. xxi. 4.)—The pleasantness and security of the port will make more than full amends for the danger and difficulty of the passage.† And this is that wherein faith triumphs, as knowing that he that for Christ's sake, in obedience to Christ's will, in conformity to Christ's word, in aiming at Christ's glory, wears the sharpest crown of thorns here, shall, by Christ, have his temples encircled with the fairest crown of glory hereafter.‡ As in this life an hundred fold, so in the world to come, eternal life. (Mark x. 30.)

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## SERMON XIX.

BY THE REV. THOMAS MANTON, D.D.

HOW MAY WE CURE DISTRACTIONS IN HOLY DUTIES?

*Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.—Matthew xv. 7, 8.*

IN this chapter you will find a contest between Christ and the Pharisees, about their traditions and old customs, which they valued above the commandments of God, as it is usual with formal men to love chains of their own making, and to make conscience of a tradition when yet they can dispense with a commandment; and thereby discovering themselves to be very hypocrites, who are more in externals than in internals, in show than substance, minding the formality rather than the spirit and life of service to God. Our Lord confirms his censure by the testimony of the prophet Isaiah, "Ye hypocrites," &c.

I shall not stand explaining the words. *Drawing nigh*—Is a phrase peculiar to worship, especially to invocation. *Mouth and lips*—Are put for all external gestures, and that bodily exercise which is necessary to the worship of God, especially for words. *But their heart is far from me*—It chiefly intendeth their habitual averseness from God, but may also comprise the wandering and roving of the mind in duty, which is a degree and spece § of it. Of that I shall treat at this time; and my note will be,—

\* "When the tale of bricks is doubled to the children of Israel in Egypt, then Moses appears."—EDIT.

† *Superata tellus sydera donat.*—BOETIUS.

"When these realms our spirits leave,  
Heaven the exiles shall receive."—EDIT.

‡ *Felix post fata. Ad delicias juvat ire periculis.* "Happy, after enduring all the emergent ills of life." "Our delights are enhanced when we pass through dangers to their enjoyment." *Ἐκ πονοῦ κλεος.* "Through trouble and difficulty we obtain glory."—EDIT.

§ This word is printed *spece, spive,* and *spice,* in the different editions; but *spece,* the reading of the first, is proper, signifying "a sample, a specimen."—EDIT.