

by which thou mayest be overcome in the absence of lawful remedies, and presence of alluring objects, except his fear quench the temptation, and break the snare.

Be earnest also with the Lord for his gracious protection of thee in all thy dangers. Tell him, thou canst not be in safety any where, but under the shadow of his wings. Tell him, *at what time thou art afraid, thou wilt trust in him*; and beseech him, that when thy heart shall be overwhelmed with fears and troubles, he will lead thee to the rock that is higher than thee. Beseech him also to give thee counsel in all thy straits and difficulties, that thou mayest not lean to thine own understanding, but that he will make thy way plain before thee.

And if it be his good pleasure, that he would bless thy just and honest enterprizes with success and prosperity; which if he shall do, tell him it is thy desire, and beg the assistance of his grace, that thou mayest improve all thy mercies to his praise. If thus you set forth in the fear of God, you may expect a sweet success, and happy issue.

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## THE SEAMAN IN A STORM.

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### SERMON II.

PSAL. cvii. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.

*They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he brings them out of their distress.*

**T**HIS psalm contains an excellent account of the mysterious and admirable effects of providence: and this *paragraph* contains that vein or branch of *divine providence* which respects seamen; a sort of men more immediately depending upon the favour of providence than any men in the world; though all do necessarily and continually depend upon it.

In these verses we have a description, both (1.) of the persons, (2.) of the danger, (3.) of the deliverance, by the wonderful working of *divine providence* for them.

*First*, A description of the persons about whom this wonderful providence is exercised: "They that go down to the sea in ships; that do business in great waters;" the periphrasis of a *seaman*. These

are said *to go down to the sea in ships*, not because the sea is lower than the land, but because it is lower than the shore, which is the rampart raised by providence against its inundations. And their end or design in going down into the sea, is not pleasure and recreation, but to do business, i. e. to export and import such wares and commodities as are necessary, if not to the being, at least to the well-being of the several kingdoms and countries of the world. These are the men here spoken of, who “see (more than any) the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.” Works and wonders by an *εν δια θυον*, an usual figure, is as much as his wonderful works; namely, of *creation*, in the strange and monstrous productions of the sea; and of *preservation*, with respect to themselves, in the dreadful dangers they there encounter. Thus the person or subject is described.

*Secondly*, The danger is likewise described in which these sea-faring men are sometimes involved: and indeed the Psalmist here gives us a very rhetorical and elegant description of their condition in the stormy sea; and shews us how deplorable their state and condition is at such a time. Where we are to note both the causes and effects of these tempests.

1. The causes; and they are twofold.

*First*, The principal cause, the will and pleasure of God. He commandeth and raiseth the stormy winds. This is God’s prerogative: none can raise winds but himself, and if devils or witches do it at any time, yet it is still by his permission; as you see in Job i. 12, 19. the Lord is said to hold the wind in his fists, Prov. xxx. 4. as a man holds a wild fierce beast in a chain, or by a collar: and when they blow, “He brings them out of his treasuries,” Psal. cxxxv. 7. There is indeed a natural cause of winds, of whom philosophers give us this rational account, “That it is a hot and dry exhalation raised from the earth by the power of the heavenly bodies, which being repelled or forced back by the coldness of the middle region, moves obliquely or slantingly, and sometimes very violently through the air.” But though this be the natural cause of the winds, yet this doth not at all restrain the absolute sovereignty of God over them. It is he *that commands and raiseth them*, as the text speaks; and though it be said, John iii. 8. “The wind blows where it listeth;” yet that expression makes it not an arbitrary creature; but the meaning is, either thus, It blows where it listeth, for any opposition that man can make to it, though it cannot blow where it listeth in respect to God. Or thus, such is the great variableness and instability of the winds, blowing now this way, now that, that it seems to move with a kind of spontaneity, as a bird doth in the air: though indeed it doth but seem so, for all its motions are ordered of the Lord. And you cannot say in this sense, as 1 Kings ix. 11. “That God is not in the wind.” Now when it pleaseth the Lord to shew his power upon the great deeps, he sends forth these winds out of his treasure. This is the principal cause. Then next,

2. We have the instrumental, subordinate and next cause of the storm; and that is, the ‘winds lifting up the waves of the ocean.’ There is naturally in the sea a continual agitation and rolling of its waters hither and thither; it *cannot rest*, as the prophet speaks of it; but when a violent wind blows upon it, the ocean is incensed and enraged; and the winds roll moving mountains of water before them. Then, like wild beasts, the waves seem to break loose and rage; not only to be *latrantes undas*, as Virgil calls them, *barking waves*, but *κυματα αργια*, *raging waves*, as Jude speaks, ver. 13. Yea, *roaring waves*, as our Saviour stiles them, Luke xxi. 25. Thus of the causes of the storm principal and subordinate. Next we have,

*Secondly*, The terrible effects of the tempests, and that both upon their bodies and their minds.

(1.) External upon their bodies; it tosses them up and down in a dreadful manner, which the Psalmist elegantly expresses in the text, “They mount up to heaven, they go down to the depths,” a lofty hyperbolical expression; very near unto it is that of Virgil:

*Tollimur in cœlum, curvato gurgite; et iidem,  
Subducta, ad manes imos descendimus, unda!* Æn. 3.

They seem to mix with the very clouds, and then open deep graves for them in the bottom sands. Yea, it moves them not only perpendicularly, lifting them up, and casting them down, but obliquely and circularly also. “They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,” or, as some translate, *agitantur in gyrum*, they run round: they are, indeed, moved according to the unstable motion of the waves, on whose proud backs they are mounted. This is the external effect of the storm upon their bodies.

(2.) The internal effect of it upon their minds, which is far more terrible. For it is said here, *Their soul is melted because of trouble, and they are at their wit’s end*. Both which expressions do import a greater commotion and storm in the passions of the mind, than that is in the waves of the sea. The stoutest spirit quails and melts when it comes to this; and the wisest artist is at his wit’s end. Thus you have the description of the persons, and of their danger, both in the cause and effects upon the body and mind. Next,

(3.) We have their deliverance by the wonderful hand of Divine Providence, in ver. 27. “Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he brings them out of their distress.” Their usual cry in such extraordinary exigencies, is, *mercy! mercy!* Now they can pray that could not pray before. Extremity drives them to their knees, not only with cries, but vows to the Lord, and he delivers them out of their distresses: some delivered one way, and some another, but all in a stupendous way, which cannot but astonish them that are so delivered, and make them acknowledge the finger of God was in it.

From all this we observe,

Doct. *That the preservations and deliverances of seamen in the dreadful storms and tempests at sea, is the wonderful work of Divine Providence.*

“The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein;” Psal. cxi. 2. And, among his providential works, none greater and more admirable than those which seamen daily behold in their great and marvellous protections upon the sea.

Now the glory of Divine Providence towards seamen shines and displays itself in three things especially, *first*, In making the ocean navigable for them at any time. *Secondly*, in preserving them from shipwrecks in the fury and stress of weather. *Thirdly*, In finding out ways, and strangely providing means of safety, when their ships are lost, and broken upon the sea.

1. It is a wonderful providence of God to make the ocean navigable for men at any time; that such a fluid body as water is, which cannot support a stone or bullet of an ounce weight, should yet, by reason of its own saltness, and the innate property of timber\*, be able to support ships of such vast burden, which are carried from place to place, being mounted on the backs of its proud waves. Who can but acknowledge a most wise providence, in gratifying the natural wit and desire of man, which fits him for converse and traffic with foreign nations; with instruments and materials so fit for his purpose as timber, iron, hemp, pitch, the loadstone, and whatever else is necessary for this purpose? I cannot open the wisdom of God’s providence in this respect to better advantage than I find it done by the learned pen of Dr. More, in his Antidote against Atheism, page 58. ‘Navigation (saith he) being of so great consequence to the delight and convenience of human life, and there being both wit and courage in man to attempt the seas, were he but fitted with right materials, and other advantages requisite; when we see there is so pat a provision made for him to this purpose, in large timber for the building of his ship, a thick sea-water to bear the ship’s burden; in the magnet or loadstone for his compass; in the steady and parallel direction of the axis of the earth for his *cynosura*; and then observe his natural wit and courage to make use of them; and how that ingenite desire of knowledge and converse, and of the improving of his own parts and happiness, stir him up to so notable a design: we cannot but conclude from such a train of causes, so fitly and congruously complying together, that it was really the counsel of an universal and eternal mind, that hath the overseeing and guidance of it,’ &c.

2. But (to come home to the case before us) that men should be

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\* Rather by the pressure of the atmosphere upon the mass of water in the ocean. Editor.

preserved at sea from immediate ruin in the dreadful tempests that befall them there; this is a mysterious and admirable work of God: that a poor ship should not be swallowed up by the furious ocean, when mountains of water come rolling towards it with an horrid noise, and give it such dreadful stripes: when seas roll over it, and so cover it with the waves, that for a time they know not whether they sink or swim; to see it emerge out of such fatal dangers, keep up its head, and mount upon the backs of those lofty seas that threaten immediately to overwhelm it: O how great is the power and care of providence in such a case! especially if you consider these following particulars, among many others, which threaten ruin on every side: and should but one of these many contingencies befall them, in the eye of reason they are lost men.

1. Of how many parts, compared together, doth a ship consist? These parts indeed are fastened together with bolts of iron; but being in so many planks, what a wonder is it that none springs, that no bolt gives way, or seams open, whilst every part works with such violence, and so great a stress of weather lies upon it. Should such a thing fall out, (as it is a wonder it should not), how soon would the ship swim within as well as without?

2. How often are they put from their course by stress of weather, and know not where they are; not being able, for many days, to take any observation? so that they must go whither winds and waves will drive them: for there is no dropping anchors in the main, nor resisting the course of the seas, to which they can make no more resistance than a child to a giant. And how is it they are not dashed upon the rocks, or foundered in the sands, seeing the winds shape their course, and not art? But there is a God that steers your course for you when you cannot.

3. How often are you even fallen upon rocks and shores before you see them, and are almost past *hope* before you begin to *fear*? Sometimes almost imbayed, and as much as ever you can do to weather a rock or head-land, which you discerned not until it was almost too late.

I remember Dr. Johnson, in that ingenious and wonderful narrative of his voyage to the Sound, when he had survived two shipwrecks, and was embarked in the third ship, ‘ We had not (saith he) been above two or three hours at sea, but there was a sad distraction among us in the ship, and the mariners crying, *mercy!* *mercy!* for we had almost fallen foul on a rock, which lay so cunning in the water, that we did not espy it till we were upon it; but by the goodness of God we sailed close by it, and so escaped it: the least touch of it had been our ruin.’

4. How often do you ride at anchor in furious weather, near rocks and shores? Your lives, under God, every moment depending upon a cable and anchor: if the one break, or the other come home, you

are lost men. And how wonderful is it they do not! what is a cable in a storm, but as the new cords with which the Philistines bound Samson, and as easily would they be snapt asunder like a thread of tow, were it not for the care of providence over you? These, and an hundred other accidents which hourly threaten you, might, and would send you down to the bottom, but that the Lord permits it not so to be.

5. And yet more wonderful than all this; how often doth God suffer ships to founder and sink under you, and to be dashed to pieces against the rocks, and yet preserve you when the ordinary means of preservation are cut off and gone? Who like these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep?

For, *first*, sometimes a small boat shall save them, when a stout ship could not: thus many of them have been wonderfully preserved; and thus the aforementioned author relates the manner of this wonderful preservation. ‘ Our ship (saith he) had sprung a leak, or rather a plank, and was ready to sink: O how the face of every man was changed at this affrightment! one was at his prayers, another wringing his hands, a third shedding tears, when we had no need of more salt-water. After this fit they fell to work, and (as it is usual in such extremes) we were all busy in doing nothing, and did we knew not what. The master’s mate, whom we sent down to search out the leak, quickly returned to us with a sad countenance, trembling hands, gnashing of teeth, a quivering tongue, and words half spoken, signifying unto us, that the wound was incurable. Here was now no room for counsel, neither had we time to ask one another what was best to be done; but we presently cast out our long-boat, and shot off eight or ten guns, which seemed to be so many tolls of a passing-bell before our death. I leaped into the boat, but leaped short, one leg in the boat, *Alterum in Charontis cymba*. Now were we left in the north seas, which seldom wear a smooth brow; but at this time contending with the wind, swelled into prodigious mountains. It blew half a storm, and we were now in a small vessel: what credit could we give to our safety in a small and open shallop, when so stately a castle of wood, which we but now lost, could not defend itself against the insolency of the waves? We were many leagues from any shore, having no compass to guide us, nor provisions to sustain us, and the night grew black upon us— Nothing but a miracle could preserve us, being out of the reach of human help—We fell to prayer, and our extremity pleaded for us:—For in this moment of death, when we were without the least expectation of deliverance, he sent a ship to us, which we must needs confess to be the finger of God,’ &c. Thus he—And thus has been the wonderful door opened in extremity to multitudes more for their escape: but, oh! how astonishing are these ways of the Lord? Well may we say, “ His ways are in the sea, and his paths

“in the great deep, and his footsteps are not known,” Psal. lxxvii. 19.

*Secondly*, Sometimes they shall be cast upon a rock in the sea, where they shall be preserved until some other way of deliverance come; yea, preserved strangely, God blessing a small matter of provision which they saved to sustain them; though they said of it, as the widow of Sarepta to the prophet, 1 Kings xvii. 12. “I have but an handful of meal, and a little oil, and I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.” Or if they could save nothing, yet a few muscles or birds eggs, with God’s blessing, have sustained them until the time of mercy come. This hath been the case of many. Think upon this you that abuse the good creatures of God by drunkenness: how sweet would a cup of fresh water be to you when reduced to such extremity? Oh! if your hearts be not harder than the rocks you lay upon, how would such extraordinary mercies melt you into love and thankfulness?

*Thirdly*, Sometimes they have been wafted to the shore safely upon the wreck \*, or by making a raft of the broken pieces of the ship, and torn sails, and ropes; and upon this (God knows, a poor security against the boisterous waves) have they ventured themselves: a sinking man (as we say) will catch at a bulrush. Paul, and those that suffered shipwreck with him, were thus saved; “The centurion commanded, that they which could swim, should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land; and the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship; and so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land,” Acts xxvii. 43, 44.

Oh, the miraculous works of the Lord! to save by such contemptible and improbable means! Who can but with great joy see and acknowledge the finger of God to be here? “Lo, these are parts of his way; but how little a portion is heard of him?” Job xxvi. 14.

1. *Use of reproof.* If your preservation in storms at sea, be the wonderful works of Divine Providence, then divers of you deserve to be sharply reprovèd from this truth. And I beseech you suffer the word of reproof meekly and penitently. I shall speak nothing to reproach you; no, it is not to reproach, but to reform you: and if you hate reproof, and mock at counsel, God may shortly speak in such thundering language to your consciences, as will be terrible for you to bear. I remember, it is said of St. Bernard, That whilst he was seriously reprovèd the profaneness of one (and if I misremember not, it was his own brother) who was a soldier, and observing how he slighted his holy and serious counsel, his spirit was greatly grieved at it, and he told him, ‘Brother, God I fear, will shortly make way to your heart with a sword, to which my words can find no access.’ And the event soon verified the sad prediction. I pray God none of

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\* *Tabula post naufragium.*

you may be taught by captivities and shipwrecks what it is to reject faithful reproofs and wholesome counsel, seasonably given for your good. You that read these lines, seriously ask your own consciences these following questions.

(1.) Have you not soon forgotten the works and wonders of the Lord, which your eyes have seen? It may be, for the present, you have been sensibly affected with your danger, and the mercy of God in your deliverance, but hath it remained upon your hearts? I doubt these mercies have been written in the dust, which should have been engraven, as in the rock, for ever. Thus it was with Israel, a people that saw as many wonders wrought for them by the immediate finger of God, as ever did any people in the world: and yet it is said of them, even after the *Red-sea* deliverance, in which "God divided the sea for them, when the waves thereof roared," Isa. li. 15. and with which, for the present, their hearts were greatly affected; for it is said, Psalm cvi. 12. "That they believed his word, and sang his praises;" but in the next verse you read, that a little time easily wiped out the sense of this mercy; for it is said, ver. 13. "They soon forgot his works, and waited not for his counsels." I doubt this was not the sin of Israel only, but is the case of many of you at this day. Well, God did not forget you in the time of extremity, though you so quickly forgot him. Think not to excuse yourselves from this guilt by saying, you do still remember the thing: you may do so, and yet be said to forget his mercy: for a deliverance may be remembered by him that received it two ways; namely, *speculatively* and *affectingly*. A speculative remembrance is only to call to mind the story of such a danger and preservation; this you may do, and yet God account himself forgotten, except you so remember it as still to feel the powerful impressions thereof upon your hearts, softening and melting them into thankfulness, love, and dependence upon the God of your salvations.

(2.) Have you not walked very unanswerably to your deliverances, yea, and to the solemn engagements you made to God in the day of your distress? I fear some of you have walked after God hath rescued you by a wonderful immediate hand from the jaws of death, as if you had been *delivered to do all these abominations*. As it is Jer. vii. 10. It may be the *last* week or month you were reeling to and fro upon the stormy sea, and staggering *like* drunken men; and *this*, reeling and staggering along the streets really drunken. O horrid abomination! do you thus requite the Lord, who pitied you in your distress, and, being full of compassion, saved you when you cried to him? Is this the fruit of your wonderful salvation? If a man should have told you in that day it would have been thus, you yourselves could not have believed it, but would have answered as Hazael did to the prophet, 2 Kings viii. 13. "What! is thy servant a dog, that he should do such things?" Yet so it was, and so it is still: the Lord humble you for this great wickedness. If this be all the fruit of mercy and deliverance, it had



been better for you that you had gone down to the bottom then, rather than to live only to treasure up more wrath against the day of wrath, and fill up your measure.

(3.) Are there not a sort of atheistical seamen, who own not providence at all, either in the raising of these horrid tempests, or in their marvellous preservation in them! but look on all as coming in a natural way, and their escape to be only by good fortune and chance? How wonderful a thing is it in the eyes of all considering men, that providence should take any notice of them in a way of favour, that so wickedly disown it, and so directly disoblige it? How can you possibly shut your eyes against such clear light, and stop your ears against such loud and plain language, whereby the power and goodness of God proclaims itself to you in these providences! Ah! methinks you should most readily and thankfully subscribe that great truth, Psal. lxxviii. 20. "He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death." But though men see signs and wonders they will not believe; yea, though they themselves become wonders to the world by their miraculous deliverances, yet so brutish and stupid are they, that they will not see the hand that saves them. Take heed what you do: you set yourselves in the direct way to destruction by this, and highly provoke the Lord to abandon and cast you out of the care of his providence: and if he once do so, you are lost men.

(4.) And yet more vile (if more vileness can be in sin) than all this: is there not a generation of wretched men among you, that fall a swearing, cursing, and blaspheming God, even when he is uttering his terrible voice in the tempest, and every moment threatening to intomb them in the deep? When you should be upon your knees bewailing your sins, and pleading with God for mercy, (as I doubt not but some of you do) to be yet more and more provoking him, daring him to his face; and yet more incensing his indignation, which is already kindled against you; who, that hears this can chuse but admire the riches of God's patience and forbearance towards such men? The very heathen mariners in a storm *called every man upon his god*, Jonah i. 5. We say, extremity will cause the worst of men to pray, and compose the vainest spirit unto seriousness; but it seems by you it will not. Is this the frame and temper you will meet death in? What! speaking the language of devils and damned spirits before you come among them; hastening on your own ruin as if it were too slack and lingering in its motion? The Lord open the eyes of these miserable creatures, and convince them, that they are not only going to hell as others are, but that they are the forlorn of all that wretched crew that are bound thither; and proportionably will be their misery, except they repent.

2. *Use of exhortation.* This point is yet farther improveable for you by way of exhortation, serving to press you to those proper duties

which God calls you to by his terrible providential voice in the storms, and by your wonderful deliverances.

1. And the first lesson you are to learn from hence is, *To adore the power of God.* O what a manifestation of Divine power is here! you are the men that see more than others the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. It is one of God's ends in shewing you these wonders, "To make his mighty power known," Psal. cvi. 8. O what a terrible voice doth God utter upon the seas when the heavens are black above you, the furious winds and dreadful thunders rattling about you, the seas and waves roaring beneath you! Is not this voice of the Lord full of majesty? Doth it not awe your hearts, and make them tremble? In three things his infinite power is discovered to you.

*First,* In raising these terrible tempests, and that from so small and weak a beginning as a thin vapour from the earth is; this is the wonderful work of God, Psal. cxxxv. 7. "He causeth the vapours "to ascend from the ends of the earth; he maketh lightnings for "the rain, he bringeth wind out of his treasures."

*Secondly,* In limiting and bounding their force and power; what prodigious effects else would follow: The wind is a fierce and boisterous creature, and would (if God did not by his providence restrain it) destroy and overturn all, both by sea and land; or if Satan, who is stiled *The prince, or power of the air*, were left at liberty to execute his malice by such an instrument, not a ship should cross the seas, nor a house be safe at land; as is evident enough by the furious haste he made to overturn the house with an horrible tempest upon Job's children, as soon as he had received a permission from heaven to do it.

And, *Thirdly,* No less visible is the power of God in calming and appeasing the stormy winds, and remanding them into his treasures. Psal. cvii. 29. "He maketh the storm a calm." Yea, he doth so in the very nick of time, when all is concluded lost. Thus you read in Mark iv. 39. "When the waves beat into the ship," so that it was now full, and the disciples cried unto the Lord, "Master, carest thou "not that we perish? He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to "the sea, Peace, be still; and the wind ceased, and there was a "great calm." Just as one would hush a child, *Peace, be still.* O the sovereign power of God! how should it be revered and adored by all that behold it, in these marvellous effects of it?

2. The second lesson you are taught by this doctrine is, *To admire the mercy of God.* Mercy is no less discovered than power; yea, the power of God is put forth to give his mercy a fair occasion to shine forth in your deliverance. God sometimes permits your dangers to grow to an extremity, and delays your deliverances to the last moment, till all hopes of safety are gone, upon the like reason that Lazarus's resurrection was deferred, that the work of God in your preservation may commend itself to you under the greatest advantage.

O that you would view these mercies in all their endearing circum-

stances! I can only hint your duty generally in this case; you may enlarge upon it, if you have hearts fit for such a blessed work. And mark particularly the multitudes of mercies that are complicated and involved in one deliverance. Observe the season when, the manner how, the means by which your salvation was wrought. It is a thousand pities that so much of God's glory and your comfort, as any one, even the smallest circumstance may contain, should ever be lost.

3. *Lastly*, And above all, *See that ye answer God's ends in your deliverance*: If those be lost, God may say concerning you, as David did of Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 21. "Surely, in vain have I kept all that this fellow hath in the wilderness; so that nothing was missed of all that pertained to him; and he hath requited me evil for good." So here, in vain I kept this fellow upon the sea, when I suffered others to sink; in vain have I preserved his life, liberty, and estate so often by an out-stretched arm of power and mercy to him, seeing he requites me evil for good.

O let me intreat you to be careful to comply with the designs and ends of God in these your wonderful preservations! If you enquire what God's ends or designs in your deliverance are, I answer,

*First*, It is to lead you to repentance. "The goodness of God (saith the apostle) leadeth thee to repentance," Rom. ii. 4. Dost thou not know the voice of mercy? Why, it bespeaks thy return to God. It may be thou hast spent all thy life, to this day, in the service of sin: Thou never redeemedst one of all thy precious hours to consider thine own estate, to bewail thy sin and misery, to seek after an interest in Christ. Why, now here is a providence fallen in that doth, as it were, take thee by the hand, and lead thee to this great and necessary work. The end of God in raising this storm was to deliver thee from the more dreadful tempest of his wrath, which, without repentance, must shortly overtake thy soul in the blackness of darkness for ever. Now God hath awakened thy conscience by this fright, made it charge home thy sins upon thee, terrified thee with dismal apprehensions of death and hell. O what a fair opportunity and advantage hath he now put into thy hand for repentance, reformation, and gaining an interest in Jesus Christ! If this season be lost, conscience suffered again to fall into any dead sleep, and thy heart be again hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, thou mayest never have such an opportunity for salvation opened to thee any more.

*Secondly*, If this end be answered, then a farther design God hath in thy deliverance, is to engage and encourage thy soul to a dependence upon God in future straits and dangers. This is food for faith; and now you are furnished with experience of the power, mercy, and goodness of God, to enable you to rest yourselves upon him when new exigencies befall you. If God exercise you with such extremities another time, you may say with the apostle, 2 Cor. i. 10. "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust, he will yet deliver us."

If your first deliverance were a deliverance without a promise, when you were without Christ, what encouragement have you to depend upon him, when his end is answered in your repentance and conversion; and, being in Christ, are entitled to all the promises.

*Thirdly, and lastly,* God's end in your marvellous preservations and deliverances is to furnish you for, and to engage you to a life of praise. O how should the high praises of God be ever in your mouths! you have seen his works and wonders in the deeps; and this is it which the Psalmist presses upon you as a becoming return for your mercies, in the words following my text; "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

O with what warm and enlarged affections should you express your thankfulness to the God of your salvation! and say as David, "What am I, O Lord God, and what is my father's house, that thou shouldst do such great things for me?" Was such a life as mine worth the working of so many wonders to save it? O Lord, thou knowest it has been a life spent in vanity. Thy glory hath not been precious in mine eyes, but my life hath been precious in thine eyes. Many more useful, and less sinful than myself have perished, and I am saved. O Lord, shew me the designs and gracious ends of these deliverances. Surely there is some great thing to be done by me, or else so great a salvation had not been wrought for me. The Lord saw in what a sad case my poor soul was, to be summoned immediately before his judgment-seat: that if I had gone down under all my guilt, I had sunk to the bottom of hell: But thou, in love to my soul, hast delivered it from the pit of corruption, that I might yet enjoy a season for salvation, and be once more entrusted with the precious talents of time and means. O that I may not reject or abuse the grace of God in this new instrument, as I have too often done in the former! let me not live as one delivered to commit all these abominations!

And now after all that is come upon me for my evils, seeing thou, my God, hast punished me so much less than my iniquities deserve; and hast given me such a deliverance as this, should I again dare to break thy commandments? Ezra ix. 13, 14. "O let this new mercy produce a new heart and life!"