

and drops many very seasonable and necessary cautions upon you, to keep you humble and thankful under prosperity.

And because men will not own God in their success, but sacrifice to their own net; God often teaches them the evil of it, by sad losses and disappointments: Yea, disappointments sometimes follow the best of men, and that in the most just and honest employments. To caution the former sort, and support the latter in such a case, I recommend the *fifth sermon* to your serious consideration, not doubting, if the blessing of God go forth with it, but it may prove a very seasonable and useful discourse to you in that condition.

And, lastly, because it is so common for seamen to forget the many mercies they have received in a voyage, when it is over, and God hath brought them to the havens of desire, and among their relations, I have, in the *last sermon*, instructed them in their duty, and laboured to work in such a sense of mercies upon their hearts, as may engage them to a due and thankful acknowledgment of God in all.

You see, by this brief account, how honest the design is in which I have engaged for you. But I am sensible, that the management is very defective, it being dispatched in haste, and when my hands were filled with other work, and my body clogged with many infirmities. But, such as it is, I heartily devote it to the special service of your souls, and remain

Yours, in all Christian service,

JOHN FLAVEL.

DARTMOUTH, Jan. 21, 1675.



THE

SEAMAN'S FAREWELL.

SERMON I.

Acts xxi. 5, 6. *And we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed; and when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship, and they returned home again.*

THIS scripture gives us an account of the manner of Paul's embarking at Tyre, in his voyage for Jerusalem; and therein an excellent pattern for all that go down into the seas, to do business in the great waters. It is true, his business, in that voyage, was not to get an estate, but to witness to the truths of Jesus Christ with the hazard of his life. Many discouragements he met with in this voyage,

and not the least at Tyre, where he met with certain disciples that said to him, by the Spirit, that he should not go to Jerusalem, though, in that, they followed their own spirit; but he is not to be dissuaded: Like that noble Roman *, and upon a more noble account, 'he judged it necessary to go, but not to live.' The disciples seeing his unalterable resolution, express their affections to him at parting, by bringing him to the ship, and that with their whole families, wives and children, ver. 5. therein giving him the last mark of their dear respects.

In the farewell, their Christian affections are mutually manifested by two sorts of actions,—*viz.* *Sacred* and *Civil*—in prayers and salutations.

1. Prayers; the best office one Christian can do to another. As prayer is the best preface, so certainly it is the best close to any business or enjoyment: In which prayer we may note the place, posture, and matter or scope.

First, The place; it was upon the *shore*, the parting place near to which the ship rode, waiting for Paul: And this was no unusual thing among them in those days. Tertullian † tells us, "they sent their prayers to heaven from every shore;" and elsewhere, he calls them, *orationes littorales*, "shore prayers." So customary it was for holy men, in those days, to be taken into the ship or boat from their knees, not from the tavern or ale-house.

Secondly, The posture; "They kneeled down." As all places, so all postures have been used in prayer. Some have used one posture, and some another; but this is the common and ordinary posture: Knees when they can (as an ingenious author speaks) then they must be bowed.

Thirdly, The matter and scope of the prayer, which though it be not expressed, yet may with great probability be argued from the place and occasion, to be, as Erasmus speaks, *Pro fausta Navigatione*, for a prosperous voyage, and divine protection. He knew to what, and how many hazards of life they are hourly exposed, that border so near unto death, as mariners and passengers at sea do; and therefore would not commit himself to the sea, until first he had solemnly committed himself to God, whose voice the winds and seas obey: Nor was he willing to take his leave of his friends, until he had poured out his heart to God with them, and for them, whose faces he might never see again in this world, and engaged their prayers also for him.

2. As their affections were mutually manifested by this *sacred* action, *prayer*; so by *civil* ones too, affectionate embraces and *salutations*. "When we had taken our leave one of another." Salutations were

* *Necesse est ut eam, non ut vivam.* Cæsar.

† *Per omne litus preces ad cælum mittunt.* Tertul. de Jejun.

used among the Jews, both at their meeting and parting. This latter consisted in words and gestures; the usual words were, "The Lord bless you," Ruth ii. 4. "Peace be unto thee. Grace be with you," &c. The gestures were kissing each other. These were kisses which a Cato might give, and a Vestal receive. In both these, *viz.* their prayers for, and salutations of, each other, they manifested their Christian affections mutually, but especially by their prayers at parting. Hence note,

Doct. *Those that undertake voyages by sea, had need not only to pray earnestly themselves, but also to engage the prayers of other Christians for them.*

They that part praying, may hope to meet again rejoicing; and those designs which are not prefaced with prayer, cannot wind up with a blessing. There are two sorts of prayer, *stated* and *occasional*.

Stated prayer is our conversing with God, either publicly, privately, or secretly, at the constant seasons allotted for it, in the returns of every week and day.

Occasional, is the Christian's address to God at any time upon extraordinary emergencies, and calls of providence; or, when we undertake any solemn business, (and what more solemn than this?) and then the chief matter and scope of prayer is to be suited to the present occasion and design in hand; of this sort is that I am here to speak. Now in opening the point, I will shew,

(1.) What those special mercies are that seamen should pray for, when they are to undertake a voyage.

(2.) What influence prayer hath upon those mercies, and how it must be qualified for that end.

(3.) What aid and assistance the prayers of other Christians may contribute to the procurement of them.

And then make application of all.

(1.) We will inform the seamen, what those special mercies are, he should earnestly pray for, when he undertakes a voyage.

And amongst those mercies to be earnestly requested of God by him, the first and principal is, *the pardon of sin*; a mercy which must make a part of every prayer, and at this time to be earnestly sued for. Guilt is that Jonah in the ship, for whose sake storms, shipwrecks, and ruin pursue it. It is said, Psal. cxlviii. 8. "That the stormy winds fulfil God's word." If the word there spoken of be the word of God's threatening against sin, as some expound it, then the stormy winds and lofty waves, are God's *serjeants* sent out with commission to arrest sinners upon the sea, his water-bailiffs to execute the threatenings of God upon them, in the great deeps. Hence those expressions of scripture, Num. xxxii. 23. "Be sure your sin will find you out;" and Gen. iv. 7. "Sin lieth at the door." In both which places the Spirit of God compares a man's guilt to a blood-hound, that pursues and

follows upon the scent wherever a man goes. And indeed our sins are called *debts*, Matth. vi. 12. Not that we owe them to God, or ought to sin against him; but *metonymically*, because as pecuniary debts oblige him to suffer that hath not wherewith to pay, and expose him to the danger of serjeants and bailiffs wherever he shall be found; so do our sins, in reference to God, who hath reckoned with many thousands of sinners upon the sea, there arrested them by his winds and waves which he sent out after them, and laid their bodies in the bottom of the sea, and their souls in the bottom of hell. Oh! that is a dismal storm, that is sent after a man, to drive soul and body to destruction! with what heart or courage can that man go down into the deeps, and expose himself among the raging waves and roaring winds, that knows God hath a controversy with him; and for ought he knows, the next storm may be sent to hurry him to the judgment-seat of the great and terrible God? Certainly, friends, it is your great concern to get a pardon, and be at peace with God; a thing so indispensable, that you cannot have less; and so comprehensive, that you cannot desire more. If sin be pardoned, you are safe, you need fear no storms within, whatever you find without: But woe to him that finds at once a raging sea, and a roaring conscience; trouble without, and terror within; ship and hope sinking together. You are privy to all the evils and wickedness of your hearts and lives. You know what treasures of guilt you have been heaping up all your days; and think you when distresses and extremities come upon you, conscience will be as quiet and still as it is now? No, no, guilt will fly in your faces then, and stop your mouths. O therefore humble yourselves at the feet of God for all your iniquities; apply yourselves to the blood of sprinkling; pray and plead with God for remission of sin; without which you are in a woeful case to adventure yourselves at sea to those imminent perils of life.

(2.) Another mercy you are earnestly to pray for is, That the *presence* of God may go with you, I mean not his *general presence*, which fills the world; that will be with you, whether you pray for it or no; but his *gracious special presence*, which was that Moses so earnestly sued for in Exod. xxxiii. 15. "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not hence." He and the people were now in a waste howling wilderness, but bound for Canaan, that earthly paradise; yet you see he chuses rather to be in a *wilderness* with God, than in a Canaan without him; and no wonder, for this gracious presence of God, as to *comfort*, is all that a gracious soul hath, or desires to have in this world; and as to security and protection from dangers, it is the only *asylum*, sanctuary, and refuge in the day of trouble. If the presence of God be graciously with us, it will guard the heart against terror in the most imminent distress, as you see, Psal. xxiii. 4. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the

“ shadow of death * i. e. (through the most apparent and imminent “ dangers of death), yet will I fear no evil for thou art with me.” And indeed there is no room for fear; for with whomsoever God is in a gracious and special manner present, these three matchless mercies are secured to that man.

First, That God's special providence shall watch over him in all dangers, Psal. xci. 1,—4. “ He shall abide under the shadow of the “ Almighty; he shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his “ wings shalt thou trust.” As the hen gathers her brood under her wings, not only to cherish, but to defend them from all danger, so God takes his people under his providential wings for their security.

Secondly, He appoints for them a guard of angels, whose office is to watch over, and minister to them in all their straits. So we read, Psal. xci. 11. “ He shall give his angels charge over thee to “ keep thee in all thy ways.” Many invisible services they do for us. Luther tells us the angels have two offices,—*Superius canere, et inferius vigilare*;—to sing above, and watch below. These are as a life guard to that man with whom the Lord is.

Thirdly, He readily hears their cries in a day of distress, and is with them to save and deliver them. So ver. 15. “ He shall call upon “ me, and I will answer him, I will be with him in trouble, I will “ deliver him, and honour him.” O what a matchless mercy is this! how many times, when poor seamen have seen death apparently before their eyes, have they cried, *mercy! mercy!* How ordinary is it for their eyes, on such occasions, to add salt-water, where alas, there was too much before? But now to have God with you in such an hour of straits, to hear, support, and deliver you: O you cannot estimate the worth of such a mercy! Pray therefore, for it is a mercy indispensably necessary for you; and say to him, as Moses, “ Lord, if thy presence may not go with us, carry us not hence.”

(3.) A third mercy you are specially concerned to beg of God, is, that you may be kept from the temptations to sin you will meet with when you are abroad in the world. The whole world lies in wickedness, 1 John v. 19. Every place, every employment, every company hath its snares and temptations attending it: And you know you have corrupt natures, as much disposed to close with temptations as tinder is to catch fire: So that unless the preventing, restraining, and mortifying grace of God be with you, they will but touch and take. If there were no devil to tempt you externally; yet such a corrupt heart meeting with a suitable temptation and occasion, is enough to overcome you; Jam. i. 14. “ Every man is tempted when he is drawn “ away of his own lusts, and enticed.” Alas! you know not what hearts you have till temptations prove them; and what comfort can you take in the success and prosperity of your affairs, be it never so great, if you return with consciences polluted and wounded with sin.

* *Quamvis in summa mortis ipsius pericula incurram.* Gloss. Philol. Sacr.

He that brings home a pack of fine clothes, infected with the plague, hath no such great bargain of it, how cheap soever he purchased them. O therefore beg earnestly of God that you may be kept from sin: pray that you be not led into temptation.

(4) Pray for *divine protection* in all the dangers and hazards to which you shall be exposed. You know not how soon your life and estate shall be in jeopardy: This night you may sleep quietly in your cabin, to-morrow you may be tugging at the pump, and the next night take up your lodging upon a cold rock. How smartly doth the apostle James reprehend the security of trading persons; Jam. iv. 13, 14. "Go to now, ye that say, to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas you know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appears for a little time, and then vanisheth away." How easily can God dash all your designs, and hopeful projects in one hour! You know you are every moment as near death as you are near the water, which is but a remove of one or two inches. How poor a defence is the strongest ship against the lofty seas and lurking rocks? How innumerable are the accidents and contingencies in a voyage, which the most skilful navigator cannot foresee or prevent?

They are, as the Psalmist speaks, at their wit's end, Psal. cvii. 27. But O how secure and safe amidst all dangers, is that man whom the Lord takes into his special protection? And he will not shut out those that sincerely commit themselves to him: The winds and seas obey his voice: he can with a word turn the storm into a calm, Psal. cvii. 29. or order means for your preservation, when you seem lost to the eye of sense and reason. I have heard of a young man, that being in a great storm at sea, was observed to be very cheerful, when all the rest were as dead men; and being asked the reason of his cheerfulness in a case of so much danger? He replied, 'Truly, I have no cause to fear, for the pilot of the ship is my father.' O it is an unspeakable comfort when a man hath committed himself unto the hands of God, as a Father, and trusted him over *all!*

(5.) Pray for counsel and direction in all your affairs and undertakings, and lean not to your own understandings. "I know, O Lord, (saith the prophet) that the way of man is not in himself, neither is it in him that walks, to direct his own steps," Jer. x. 23. Undertake nothing without asking God's leave and counsel. How many that have stronger heads than you, have miserably ruined themselves and their designs by trusting to their own prudence? "A man's heart (saith Solomon) deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps," Prov. xvi. 9. We must still preserve the power of God's providence, saith one; * God would not have us too carnally confi-

* Manton on Jude. It is a robbery to use goods without the owner's leave. We forget to bid ourselves good speed, when we do not acknowledge God's dominion. This is but a piece of religious manners.

dent. The Lord can blast your enterprize, though managed with never so much wisdom and contrivance. You are not only to look to God as the *author of success*, but as the *director and guide of the action*. It is by his conduct and blessing, that all things come to pass. If your designs succeed not, you are presently ready to ascribe it to ill fortune, and say, you had bad luck ; when indeed you ruined it yourselves, in the first moulding it, by undertaking it without asking counsel of God: " In all thy ways acknowledge him," Prov. iii. 6.

(6.) Pray for success upon your lawful employments and designs, and own it to be from the Lord. You have an excellent pattern in Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv. 12. " O Lord God of Abraham thy servant, send me good speed this day." He reverences the sovereignty of providence, and acknowledges success to be a flower of the imperial crown, and the bridle that God hath upon the reasonable creature, to dispose of the success of human affairs. I look on that business or design in a fair and hopeful way to prosper, wherein we have engaged God to be with us, by asking his counsel, and recommending the success to his blessing. These are the mercies you are to pray for.

Secondly, Next I will shew you what influence prayer hath into those mercies you are to pray for ; and it hath much every way. To be short, it hath a threefold influence into them.

(1.) It is a proper and effectual mean to obtain and procure them. God will have every thing fetched out by prayer, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. " I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." God gives not our mercies for prayers, nor will he give them without our prayers. This is the stated method in which our mercies are conveyed to us ; and therein the wisdom and goodness of God are eminently discovered. His wisdom in making us to see the Author of every mercy in the way of receiving it, and securing his own glory in the dispensing of every mercy : His *goodness* to us in sweetening every mercy this way to us, and raising its value in our estimation. Prayer coming between our wants and supplies is a singular mean to raise the price of mercies with us, and engage us to due improvements of them. So that is an idle pretence for any to say, God knows our wants, whether we pray or not ; and if mercies be decreed for us, we shall have them, though we ask them not : for though God knows our wants, yet he will have us to know them too, and sensibly to feel the need of mercy. And though prayer be altogether needless to his *information*, yet it is very necessary to testify our submission ; And though it is true, if God have decreed mercy for us, we shall have it ; yet it is not true, that therefore we need not to pray for it : For decrees exclude not the second means, nor render the creature's duty unnecessary. " I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you," Jee. xxix. 11, 12. So that

it is plain, mercies must be expected in the way of prayer, that being God's appointed way, and stated method in the dispensing of them.

(2.) As prayer hath influence into the procuring of our mercies, so it hath a singular influence into the sweetening of them: no mercies so sweet as those that are received upon the knee. There is a two-fold sweetness men taste in their earthly enjoyments: one is *natural*, and that those that never eye God in them, may relish as much as others; the other is *spiritual* and supernatural, resulting from the consideration of the way in which, and the end for which they are given: and I am confident, such is the refreshing sweetness of mercies coming in the way of prayer, that they derive a thousand times more sweetness from the channel through which they come, than they have in their own natures. So that it was rightly observed by him that said, 'A believer tastes more sweetness in the common bread he eats at his own table, than another can do in the consecrated bread he eats at the Lord's table.' And then,

(3.) Prayer hath a sanctifying influence upon all our enjoyments, and therefore no wonder it makes them so sweet: what you obtain this way, you obtain with a blessing, and that is the sweetest and best part of any enjoyment. So you find, 1 Tim. iv. 5. every creature is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. One mercy of this kind is better than ten thousand promiscuously dispensed in the way of common providence: by these no man knows love or hatred; but these surely come from God's love to us, and end in the increase of our love to him. So that you see prayer hath a manifold influence upon our mercies: But it is not any kind of prayer that doth thus procure, sweeten, and sanctify our mercies to us: some men's prayers rather obstruct than further their mercies; but if it be the fervent prayer of a righteous man, directed by the rule of the word to the glory of God, we may say of such a prayer as David said of Saul's sword, and Jonathan's bow, it never returns empty*.

Thirdly, I shall shew what aid and assistance the prayers of others may give to the procurement of the mercies we desire; for you see this instance in the text, it was the united joint-prayers of the disciples with Paul, that on this occasion was judged necessary.

Now considering prayer according to its use and end, as a mean of obtaining mercy from the Lord; the more disposed, apt, and vigorous the means are, the more *surely* and *easily* the mercies are obtained which we pray for. There may be much zeal, fervency, and strength in the prayer of a single saint: Jacob alone may wrestle with God, and as a prince prevail; but much more in the joint, united force of many Jacobs. *Vis unita fortior*; if one can do much, many can do more. O what may not a blessed combination of holy and humble spirits obtain from the Lord! If one man's heart be dead and out of tune, another's may be lively and full of affection. Besides,

* If the good ask good, it is in a good manner, and for a good end.

God delights in those acts of mercy most, by which many are refreshed and comforted; and where there is a common stock of prayers going, like a common adventure in one ship, there the return of prayer, like the return of such a ship, makes many glad hearts. Certainly it is of great advantage for the people of God, to engage as many as they can to pray for them. When Daniel was to obtain that secret from the God of heaven, Dan. ii. 17, 18. he makes use of his three friends to improve their acquaintance with God, and interest in God for him upon that occasion. "Then Daniel went to his house, and made the thing known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah his companions, that they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret." Some Christians have greater intimacies with God than others, they are special favourites in the court of heaven; and what an advantage is it to be upon their hearts, when they are with God, judge ye. I remember St. Bernard having spoken of the due frames and tempers that Christians should strive to work their hearts into, when they are engaged in this work of prayer, concludes with this request, *Et quam talis fueris, memento mei. And when thy heart (saith he) is in this temper, then remember me.* Oh! it is a singular mercy to be interested in their prayers that are in special favour with God! it is true, Jesus Christ is the great favourite, for whose sake all prayers are heard: and without his intercession, the intercessions of an Abraham, a Moses, a Jacob, signify nothing, but in the virtue of his intercession, the intercessions of others may be singularly advantageous to us. Job's friends were good men, but yet they must go to Job, and get his prayers for them before God would be intreated for them, Job xlii. 8.

And, indeed, upon the contrary, it is a sad sign that God designs not to give us that mercy which he takes off our own hearts, or the hearts of others from praying for. When he saith, Pray not for such a man, or for such a mercy for him, the case then becomes hopeless, the mercy is set, and there is no moving it, Jer. xiv. 11. But if once a spirit of prayer be poured upon you, and upon others too in your behalf, you may look upon the mercy as even at the door, and count it as good as if it were in your hand. And thus you see what the mercies are you should pray for; what influence prayer hath upon them; and what assistance the prayers of other Christians may contribute to the obtaining of them; that so your hearts may be excited and encouraged, not only to pray for yourselves, but to engage as many as you can to seek the Lord for you, as you see Paul here did, when he was undertaking his dangerous voyage. In the next place I shall apply it.

Use 1. And, first, This may serve sharply to reprove the generality of our seamen, who mind every thing necessary to their voyage, except prayer, the principal thing; who go out in voyages without asking God's leave or blessing. And here three sorts of persons fall under conviction, and just rebuke.

First, Such as do but mock God, and delude themselves by heartless, dead and empty formalities. Some there be that dare not altogether slight and neglect prayers, but *pro forma*, they will do something themselves; and it may be as a compliment, or, at most, as a customary thing, will desire the prayers of others: but, alas! there is no heartiness or sincerity in these things; they are no way affected with the sense of their own wants, sins, or dangers; they never understood the use, nature, or end of prayer. We blame the blind Papists, and that justly, for their blind devotions, who reckon their prayers by number, and not by weight; and truly, there is but little difference between theirs, and some of our devotions. It is * St. Augustine's counsel, "Do you learn to have in your hearts what every one hath in his lips." O that you would once learn to be in earnest with God! to pray as men that understand with whom you have to do; and what great things you have to transact with God! ah, my friends, you may believe it, that if ever you had felt the weight of sin upon your consciences, and had had such sick days and nights for it, as some have had, you would not ask a pardon so coldly and indifferently as you do. If you did but know the benefit of God's presence with you in troubles, how sweet it is; or could but apprehend how terrible a thing it is to be left of God, as Saul was in the day of distress, you would weep and make supplication for his gracious presence to go forth with you; and would say, with Moses, "If thy presence may not go with me, then carry me not hence." But, alas! these things appear not to you in their reality and importance. And hence is all that wretched formality and deadness of spirit.

Secondly, It rebukes much more such as wholly slight and neglect prayer, as a useless and vain thing; who undertake designs without prayer, not at all acknowledging God in any of their ways. And it is justly to be suspected, there are multitudes of such practical atheists among seamen, as well as other orders of men. Poor men! my heart mourneth over you; you are certainly a forlorn set of men, who live without God in the world. It was anciently said, "he that would learn to pray, let him go to sea †:" But now, how long may a man be at sea, before he hear a praying seaman! Let your families from which you part, witness what conscience you have made to seek God, as you have been here directed, before your outset: it is said, Deut. xxxiii. 18. to the tribe of seamen, "Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out." But in this case we may invert the words, and say, *Mourn, O ye seamen, in your going out.* How deplorable a case is this? Let your cabins witness what conscience you make of the duty of prayer: you can talk and sleep there, but when did you pray there? You there hear the voice of God in the roaring seas; but when did God hear your voice in prayer? You see the wonders of God in the

* *Discite habere in corde, quod omnis homo habet in lingua.* Aug. in Ps. 52.

† *Qui nescit arare, discat navigare.*

deeps, wonders of *creation*, and wonders of *preservation*; but meantime you yourselves are the greatest wonders that are to be seen in the sea: men immediately depending upon God for their lives, liberties, and estates, every moment, and not once owning or acknowledging him by prayer.

The very * Heathens will rise up in judgment against you, and condemn you. I remember Plato brings in Alcibiades asking Socrates, How he ought to express his resolution and purposes? To whom he thus answereth; "Before every undertaking thou must say, "If God will." And we know the eastern nations would undertake nothing of moment, without first acknowledging God by prayer. The Greeks *συ Θεω*, by the leave or blessing of God is known to all. The Turks will condemn such as you are, for they fail not to pray five times a day, how urgent soever their business be. The blind and superstitious Papists will condemn you, with whom it is a proverb, *Mass and meat hinder no man*. Oh! whither will you turn? And who shall comfort you when trouble comes upon you? Wonder not at crosses and disappointments in your business; how can you expect it should be otherwise, as long as God is neglected, yea, disowned? Say not, this is the fruit of *ill luck*, but of your profane neglects. If the success of all your business depends upon God (as none but Atheists dare deny) then certainly the directest and readiest course a man can take to destroy all, is to disengage God by a sinful neglect of him. The most compendious way to ruin, is to forget God, and cast off prayer. "Pour out thy fury (saith the prophet) upon the heathen "that know thee not, and upon the families that call not upon thy "name," Jer. x. 25. Will nothing less than extremity make you cry to God? Wonder not then, if God bring you unto that extremity which your profaneness makes necessary for your awakening.

Thirdly and lastly, How much sadder, and more deplorable, is the case of those that not only neglect to call upon the name of God by prayer, but do also wound his name through and through by their cursed oaths and blasphemies? who instead of going on board praying, as Paul here did, go on board cursing, swearing, and blaspheming his great and dreadful name; not going from their *bended knees*, but drunken *ale-benches*, to the ship.

O the admirable patience of God! O the power of his long-suffering! that ever that ship should swim one hour above water, that carries such loads of sin and guilt within it! It is noted in Gen. iv. 26. in the days of Seth, "That then men began to call upon the name of the "Lord." Some translate the word *אֱלֹהִים* *invocation*, or prayer, and some profanation; then began profaneness in calling upon the name of the Lord. In a mournful feeling of this dishonour done to God by it, Seth calls the son that was born to him in those times, *Enoch*, or *Sorrowful*. Sure I am, however the word be here to be translated,

* *Αὐτῷ πῶς ἤσκη ληγῆν*; *cui respondet Socrates. Οτι εἰαι Θεῖς εἰδῆν.* Plato in *Timeo*.

there is a vile generation in our days, that instead of calling upon the name of the Lord by prayer, do call upon it profanely, rending and tearing that great and terrible name with the language of hell. Poor man! with what hope or encouragement can those lips of thine, in the day of thy extremity, cry, *Mercy! mercy!* that have struck through the sacred name of God so many times with blasphemy! O that you would lay it to heart! O that this day God would set your sins in order before you.

Is this a beginning that promises a comfortable issue? Do you thus prepare yourselves to meet death and danger? O my soul! come not thou into their secrets! O let God rather strike me perfectly dead whilst I live, than afflict my soul through my ears with these dreadful dialects of the damned.

Use 2. In the next place, this point is exceeding useful, by way of *exhortation*, to persuade all men, and particularly seamen, to be men of prayer; to imitate that noble pattern in the text, and no longer to live in the neglect of a duty so necessary, so sweet, and so beneficial to them, as the duty of prayer is. O that you did but know the excellency of this duty! how would you give yourselves unto prayer! As David speaks, Psal. cix. 4. Now to persuade you to be praying men, and no longer to live in the neglect of so excellent a duty, I will offer these motives to your consideration.

Motive 1. God hath stiled himself a God hearing prayer. For your encouragement to this duty, he hath assumed this title to himself, Psal. lxxv. 2. "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come." You cry not as the Heathens do, to stocks and stones, that cannot help or hear them that seek to them, but to the living and true God, by whom never did any upright soul lose a prayer. And to come home to your case more fully, he is a God that hears the prayers of poor distressed men upon the seas, when all hope and human help have utterly failed them. So you read in Psalm 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 wits end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distress." So that what the Psalmist elsewhere speaks of the mystical depths of trouble, is true here even in a proper literal sense: "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord, hear my voice," Psal. cxxx. 1, 2. Many a prayer hath been heard, and miraculously answered upon the sea. There have men been convinced, and fully satisfied, that it is not in vain to cry to the Lord. So evident and clear have been the appearances of God at the cry of the poor di-

stressed creatures, that they have sensibly and thankfully acknowledged him according to his name; "The hope of the ends of the earth, and the confidence of them that are afar off upon the sea," Psal. lxxv. 5. Who is there among you, that has not either heard of, or himself been an example, and instance of this truth? I might here insert many famous examples to confirm it, but the case is too plain to need them, and it would be too great a digression.

Motive 2. *Prayer is certainly the best relief to the distressed.* We may say of it, as David said of the sword of Goliath, give me that, for there is none like it. You that are seamen, know what the use of the *pump* is, when the waters leak into your ship, and of what use the scupper-holes are to you, when waves break and dash over your necks: why, of the same use is prayer, when sorrow leaks into your hearts, and distresses are ready to overwhelm your souls. This gives a vent to that which else would quickly sink you. "Your heart shall live that seek the Lord," Psal. lxxix. 32. Prayer will buoy up your fainting spirits; it will sensibly ease an oppressed heart. No fear of fainting, while a man continues praying. Luther was wont to call prayers the leeches of his cares and troubles. O but if troubles come in upon a man every way, and he have no vent, no outlet for them when the ordinary vents of reason, courage, and resolution are all choaked (as sometimes they are) and there is no succour or relief coming in from heaven; what a wretched forlorn condition is such a poor creature in? O therefore get acquaintance with this excellent duty.

Motive 3. *All secondary means of deliverance and comfort necessarily depend upon the will and pleasure of God, and signify nothing without him.* What the Psalmist saith of an horse, I may say of a ship, Psal. xxxiii. 17. That it is a vain thing for safety. Alas! what a poor defence is it against those giant-like waves of the sea? And that men (especially seamen) may be convinced of this, God hath many times caused those stately and strong-built ships to perish, and be dashed all to pieces, and preserved those that were not safe in them upon a plank or broken piece of the ship, Acts xxvii. 44. which has carried them more safely to the shore than it could do. And will you not yet see that means signify nothing without God, and that your dependence upon him is necessary in every condition, and the acknowledgment thereof so too? I am persuaded there would not be half so many shipwrecks and disappointments as there are, if your carnal confidence in the means were less, and your reliance upon the Lord more. Therefore it is that you so often receive the sentence of death in yourselves, that you may learn not to trust in yourselves, but in God. Oh! were but your sails filled by prayer, how prosperous would your designs be?

Motive 4. *Whatever deliverances from dangers, or success in business, you receive out of the way of prayer, can yield you but little comfort; for they are not sanctified to you.* You may be delivered, though

you pray not, and success may follow those that seek not God for it; but that which you call deliverance is rather a reservation to future misery; and that you call success, is but a snare to your souls. You have the things, but not the comfort and blessing of them. God may give you your desire to your ruin: your lives may be rescued for a time from death, that you may fill up the measure of your iniquities. Your affairs may prosper, and that prosperity may destroy you, Prov. i. 32. At best it is but an effect of common providence; and of such deliverances you can never say as Hezekiah said of his; and every one that receives the like mercy in the way of prayer, may say of his, Isa. xxxviii. 17. "But thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back." I deny not, but a deliverance by the hand of common providence is a mercy in itself; and it may prove a very great mercy to you in the event, if time thereby added to your life be a space of repentance; else it is but a short reprieve of your damnation, and leaves you to perish under greater guilt than was upon you before. But, on the contrary, how sweet are those mercies that come in the way of prayer; that discover God's love to you, and inflame yours to him? One such mercy is worth a thousand of the former.

Motive 5. *Consider all you that go out without prayer, how soon you may be out of a capacity of prayer.* Now you will not, and shortly you may not, have one opportunity to pray for evermore: now unbelief shuts your mouths, and shortly death may do it. How soon may you be past your prayers, both your own and others, and be fixed by death in your unalterable condition? O seek the Lord therefore whilst he may be found, call upon him whilst he is yet near. Now is your praying season, hereafter there will be no use of prayer. "For this (saith the Psalmist) shall every one that is godly pray unto thee, in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters, they shall not come nigh unto him." Psal. xxxii. 6. i. e. saith Deodate upon the place, in the time of the general destruction of sinners, as it was in the deluge; then there is no coming nigh to God by prayer, nor canst thou come nigh him in the day of thy particular destruction, by the flood of great waters. O therefore live not a day longer in the profane and sinful neglect of this great duty of prayer!

Object. *Why, but I observe those that pray not, generally escape as well as they that do.*

Ans^r. This objection was once made by a soldier in the time of fight, when he was pressed by his companion to pray; and God quickly stopped his blasphemous mouth with a mortal bullet. Have a care of such bold atheistical pleas; they greatly provoke the Lord against you: I had rather die praying, than live prayerless.

Object. *But to what purpose is it for me to pray, if I am unregenerate? God hears not such prayers, if I make them: and, besides, the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.*

Answ. Labour therefore to get into a regenerate state, and be not persuaded to rest a day longer in so sad a condition. However in the mean time you must know, that prayer being a part of natural worship, all men, even the unregenerate, are obliged to it by the light and law of nature; otherwise the neglect of it could not be their sin.

Object. *But many pray, and receive not: I myself have often done so.*

Answ. "You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss," Jam. iv. 3. If we were disposed to receive as God is to give, we should not be long without the answer of our prayers.

(1.) If your persons were accepted through Christ, your prayers should be accepted too, Gen. iv. 4. But you are in a state of nature, destitute of the Spirit, John xv. 7. And so your voice is to God not the voice of a child, but a stranger.

(2.) If your prayers were regulated by the will of God, they could not miss of the desired success; 1 John v. 14. "If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us."

(3.) If your prayers had more faith and fervency, they would not return empty; see Jam. i. 6. and v. 16. Well then, object no more against your duty, but in the fear of God, apply yourselves to it, and dare not to go forth in any design, until thou hast by prayer recommended thyself and thy affairs to God. Go alone, my friends, retire from the world; and say not you cannot spare time for prayer; better any thing else were neglected than this. Tell the Lord, thou art now launching forth into the ocean, and knowest not what this voyage may bring forth. Possibly thou mayest never return to the land of thy nativity any more; but however it shall please him to dispose the event, beseech him with all earnestness, that thou mayest have the pardon of sin sealed to thee before thou go. O beg him to separate guilt from thy person, before thou be separated from thy habitation and relations; lest that stroke that shall separate thy soul from thy body, should eternally separate both soul and body from God.

Desire of the Lord that his presence may go with thee wherever thou shalt go. Tell him it is the fountain both of thy safety and comfort. Desire him if his presence may not go with thee, not to carry thee hence. All the relief thou hast against trouble, is wrapped up in that promise of his, *I will be with him in trouble.* Tell him, those will be tasteless comforts, and succourless troubles, in which he is not.

Intreat the Lord with all importunity, to keep thee by his fear, from the sins and temptations that are in the world. Tell him thou art sensibly affected with the danger which thy own corrupt heart will every where expose thee to: sins in buying and selling, into which thou mayest easily be drawn by an earthly covetous heart: sins in drinking, wherein thou mayest be entangled (except he keep thee) by evil company and an irregular appetite: sins of uncleanness,

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.

THE SEAMAN IN A STORM.

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.

THIS 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