

THE

## SEAMAN'S PRESERVATIVE

IN

FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

## SERMON III.

PSALM CXXXIX. 9, 10.

*If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.*

**I**N this psalm the omnipresence and omniscience of God are the subjects of the Psalmist's meditation; and these attributes are here promiscuously discoursed, not only because of the near affinity that is betwixt their natures, but because the one is the demonstration of the other: It is evident God knows all things, because he fills all places. Touching the omniscience of God, he discovers the infinite perfection of that attribute by the particular and exact notion it takes of all our ways: ver. 3. "Thou compasses my paths, and art acquainted with all my ways." Of all our words; verse 4. "There is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether." Yea, of all our thoughts; and that not only in the instant of their conception, but long before they were conceived; verse 2. "Thou understandest my thoughts afar off," even from eternity. Thus he displays the omniscience of God: And then to make demonstration of the truth and certainty of this doctrine of God's omniscience, he proves it from his omnipresence: q. d. He that fills all things cannot but know all things. Now God's presence fills heaven, yea, and hell too, verse 8. And all parts of the earth and sea, even the remotest, verse 9, 10. And therefore no creature, nor action of any creature, can escape his cognizance. It is not here as among men; if a malefactor be condemned by the laws of one kingdom, he may escape by flying into another; but it is far otherwise here; for saith the Psalmist, (personating a guilty fugitive endeavouring to make an escape from the arrest of God's justice), "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

In which words you have these two things mainly remarkable.

1. The greatest security and encouragement to a sinner supposed.
2. That supposed security and encouragement utterly destroyed.
1. The greatest security and encouragement to a sinner supposed;

“ If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea.”\* Where two things seem to offer towards his protection.

*First*, The place; the remotest part of the sea; by which you are to understand the most obscure nook in the creation; farthest removed from an inspection or observation.

And, *Secondly*, his swift and speedy flight after the commission of sin, to this supposed refuge and sanctuary: It is here supposed, that a sinner should fly as swift as the light of the sun, which in a moment shines from the east to the west, and so the meaning is, could I flee with a celerity equal to the sun, or his beams of light, which breaking forth in the morning, do in an instant enlighten the remotest parts of the hemisphere: Could I as swiftly flee to the most obscure, remote, solitary place in all the world. Thus the sinner's security is supposed.

2. This supposed security and encouragement is utterly destroyed; “ Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right-hand shall hold me.” † The leading hand of God is not here to be understood, as a directing or guiding hand, to shew the fugitive sinner the way of his escape; but contrarily, “ Thy hand shall lead me,” as a keeper leads his prisoner back to the place of custody, from which he endeavoured to escape. And the following clause is exigetical: “ Thy right hand shall hold,” or detain *me*, viz. in strict custody. So that the sum of all is this:

*Doct. That the whole world affords no place of secrecy or security for a sinner to escape the observing eye and righteous hand of God.*

Jonah fled from the Lord to Tarshish; but could he escape so? No, the Lord sent a storm after him, which brought back the fugitive, Jonah i. 3, 4. We read, Isa. xxix. 15. of such “ as dig deep, “ to hide their counsels from the Lord,” i. e. They plot, contrive, and study to conceal their wicked designs, to sin with greatest secrecy and security. But what can possibly be a covering from Him to whose sight all things are naked and manifest? Where can a sinner be hid from him whose presence fills heaven and earth? Jer. xxiii. 25. The scripture gives full proof to this great truth. It is clear from Prov. xv. 3. “ The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil “ and the good.” And again, Job xxxiv. 21, 22. “ For his eyes are “ upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings; there is no “ darkness, nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may “ hide themselves.” Whoever goes about to conceal a sin in secret, attempts a foolish and impossible design, Psal. xlv. 21. “ Shall not “ God search this out? For he knoweth the secrets of the heart:

\* He alludes to the swiftest of all motion, even that of light, which springs in a moment from east to west. *Calvin.*

† *Non accipitur deducere pro viam monstrare: sed deducet me manus tua tanquam custos captivum sibi commissum deduxit. Vatab.*

“ For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the whole  
“ earth,” 2 Chron. xvi. 9.

Now in the handling of this point I purpose to shew you,

1. That men are often induced to sin upon hopes of secrecy and concealment.

2. That to sin upon these encouragements, strongly argues their natural atheism: They think they are safe if men know it not; they reckon not upon God's discovery of them.

3. That these encouragements to sin are vain things, it being impossible any place can hide a sinner from God; and how it appears that the eye of God is, and must needs be upon us, and our actions, wherever we are, and how closely soever we endeavour to hide them: And then apply it.

*First*, Men are often induced to commit sin upon the hopes of secrecy and concealment. Sin (especially some sorts of sin) carry so much shame and *odium* in them, that it restrains men from the open practice of them; but if Satan can persuade them they shall never be divulged to their reproach, they will venture upon them. See that text, “ The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, “ no eye shall see me, and disguiseth his face,” Job xxiv. 15. Reckoning himself secure if he can carry his wickedness under a veil of darkness, not caring what wickedness he doth, so he may do it undiscerned: It is not the acting of sin, but the discovery of it that puts them into terrors. So it is added with respect both to the adulterer and the thief, ver. 17. “ The morning is to them as the shadow of “ death, if one know them; they are in the terrors of the shadow of “ death,” i. e. If a man, especially a man in authority, a magistrate meet them, it is as if the image of death passed before them in a vision. So those idolators, Ezek. viii. 12. “ Son of man, hast thou seen what “ the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in “ the house of his imagery? For they say, the Lord seeth it not.” They conclude all is well, if nothing appear. This encouragement of secrecy is the great argument by which Satan prevails with men to commit any sin that hath shame or danger attending it: But his promises of concealment are usually made good, as his promises of great wealth are to witches. This is the encouragement.

*Secondly*, Next I will make evident to you, that to sin upon this encouragement argues atheism in him that commits it. This is plain, for, did men believe the omnipresence and omniscience of God, such an encouragement to sin as secrecy could have no force with them. Thus, when the ancients of Israel practised their idolatry in the dark, it is plain they thought God saw them not, Ezek. viii. 12. “ For they “ say, the Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth;” i. e. They did not really believe God's omnipresence and omniscience. And Job tells us, chap. xxxi. 26, 27, 28. “ That if he had beheld “ the sun in his brightness,” i. e. to admire and worship it as a god;

or, "his heart been secretly enticed, he should have denied the God that is above." Every one that is enticed to sin upon the encouragement of secrecy, doth so far deny the God that is above. If such a man did really believe there is a God that sees him, "whose eyes are as flames of fire," Rev. i. 14. "To whom the darkness and the light are both alike," Psal. cxxxix. 12. it were impossible he should be so terrified at the discovery of a creature, and so secure and wholly unconcerned at the discovery of God: It could not be that the observation of the great God should not so much trouble them, as the observation of a little child.

Thus we find the inward thoughts of men's hearts concerning God discovered by their bold attempts upon secret sins, Isa. xxxix. 15. "Wo to them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark; and they say, who seeth us, and who knoweth us?" They think if their works are shrouded under a vail of darkness, they are safe enough; if they can escape the bar of an earthly god (a magistrate) they shall never be accountable at any other bar. We have another sad instance of the same impiety in Psal. lxxiii. 11. "And they say, how doth God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?" If men did not fancy to themselves there is no God, or (which is all one) that he is like unto themselves, one that cannot see in darkness, they could never encourage themselves as they do, to sin upon such a foolish pretence.

*Thirdly*, But my proper business in this place, is to prove, that these encouragements to sin are vain things: That no sinner can hide himself from the eye of God. This is plain both from scripture and reason.

The scripture speaks full home to this truth. Prov. v. 21. "The ways of a man are before the Lord, and he pondereth all his paths." To ponder or weigh our paths is more than simply to observe and see them. He not only sees the action, but puts it into the balances, with every circumstance belonging to it, and tries how much every ingredient in the action weighs, and what it comes to. So that God hath not only an *universal inspection* upon every action, but he hath a *critical inspection* into it also. "The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed," 1 Sam. ii. 3. So Jer. xiii. 25, 27. "Thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood: I have seen thy adulteries and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredoms and abominations; q. d. Thou forgettest there is a God in the heavens that beheld thee, and didst verily believe all was safe, because secret from man. In this falsehood or cheat put upon thee by the devil and thine own atheistical heart, *thou didst trust*. But I have seen thee, and all thy secret lewdness. It is a proverb among sinners, *Si non caste, tamen caute*. Carry the matter, if not honestly, yet warily: If thou hast a mind to sin, yet order it so that the world may be never the wiser. But how vain a thing is this? If men do not, the Lord doth see it; "I know, and am a witness, saith the Lord," Jer. xxix.

23. Thus the scripture speaks roundly and fully to the point in hand.

But because the atheism of the world is so great, and it is a hard thing to convince men of this great truth, so as to overawe them from any secret sin by it; I will, by rational arguments, demonstrate the truth to every man's conscience, and give you plain and fall evidence, that how secretly soever men carry their sinful designs, yet the Lord must needs be privy to them; and it is impossible they should escape his cognizance.

1. For, *First*, He that formed all cannot but know all: the workman cannot be supposed to be ignorant of any part of his own work. Now God is the former of all things; every place and every person he hath made: where then shall the workers of iniquity hide themselves? You have the folly of sinners, in thinking to conceal themselves from the eye of God, convinced and reprov'd by this very argument, Isa. xxxix. 15, 16. "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsels from the Lord, and their works are in the dark: and they say, who seeth us? And who knoweth us? Surely, your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for, shall the work say to him that made it, he made me not? Or, shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, he hath no understanding?" q. d. Think ye by deep-laid designs, by the advantage of darkness, by the moulding and new-moulding your crafty designs in your heads, as the clay is moulded now unto this, then into the shape by the potter's hand, to hide it from me? O brutish creatures, and without understanding! am not I the God that formed you? And can it be supposed I should not know the most secret thoughts, plots, and designs of mine own creatures, who cannot contrive a design, nor conceive a thought with me? How absurd is this? Find out a place which God made not, or a creature which he formed not; and then your pretences to that creature's concealment from God in such a place, may have some colour: and this argument is again urged to convince the brutish atheist, Psal. xciv. 8, 9, 10. "Understand, ye brutish among the people, and ye fools, when will you be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chasteneth the heathen, shall not he correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know? The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity;" so that it is the vainest of all vanity in the world, to think of hiding your sins from the Lord.

2. He that sustains all cannot but know and discern all. You that seek to hide counsel from the Lord, know ye not, "That in him you live, move, and have your being? Acts xvii. 28. Do not you derive that very power from him, which you abuse by sinning against him; And do you depend necessarily and continually upon God for all? Must he give you the power to move, and by that power can you move beyond him, and get out of his reach? You cannot think a thought without him, and yet can exclude him from those very

thoughts which you had no power to conceive, but from him? Exercise but common reason in the case, and it will hiss at your absurd designs.

3. He that governs all can be ignorant of nothing. There is a perpetual influence of providence, swaying and governing all the creatures, and all their actions; else the very ligaments of nature would crack, and the world break up and disband. This providence extends itself to the least and lowest of creatures and their actions, Luke xii. 6. a sparrow falls not to the ground without it. "The great God hath something to do about the most minute \* and inconsiderable things;" yea, the most contingent and uncertain things, as is the disposal of a lot, Prov. xvi. 33. And indeed this omniscience of God is that which is necessary to this universal government. How shall he rule that person, or in that place which he knows not? Indeed earthly governors may do so; it is not necessary they have a personal immediate cognizance of each place and person in their dominions: it is enough that they be virtually and mediately governed by them; but it is not so with God: it is necessary his eye should immediately see all the parts of his dominion. He could not rule the world, if he were not an omniscient God. Psal. lxvi. 7. "He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold "the nations; let not the rebellious exalt themselves."

4. He that hath set a spy to observe and note what every man doth, cannot but know his actions, how secret soever they be. Now, so it is here; God sends a spy with you, to observe and record your most secret actions and thoughts, in every place, I mean your own consciences, from whose observation none of your ways can possibly be exempt. The sense of this made the heathen say, *Turpe quid ansuruste sine teste time*. When thou art attempting a sinful act, fear thyself without any other witness; conscience is privy to your most secret designs and thoughts; 1 Kings ii. 44. "Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart (i. e. thy conscience) is privy to:" and if conscience know all, God must needs see and know it. So the apostle reasons, from the lesser to the greater, 1 John iii. 20. "If our heart condemn us, (which is there put for conscience) God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." If the spirit of a man knows the things of a man, much more he that formed that spirit, and endowed man with it.

5. He that knows things more secret and unsearchable than our most secret actions can be, must needs know them how secret soever they be. Now there are many things more close and secret than any action of ours can possibly be, and yet God knows them. The thoughts of the heart are more secret than any external action; so secret, that no creature can search them; the devil himself hath but a conjectural guess at them: "But the Lord telleth unto man what is his thought;" as in Amos iv. 13. So Jer. xvii. 10. "I the Lord search the heart, I

“try the reins;” i. e. The most obscure, inward and deep secrets lodged in the heart; nay, which is more, he not only knows our thoughts when they are formed and conceived in the heart, but long before their conception; Psal. cxxxix. 2. “Thou knowest my thoughts afar off.” Divines generally interpret it from eternity; even so long before they were actually thought, he foreknew every thought we should think; and what can be imagined more secret and undiscernible, than a future thought.

Now if this be known to him, how much more are our thoughts formed into projects and designs, and these executed by external actions? O deceive not yourselves with hopes of secrecy! Nothing can be a secret to him that knows the counsels of all hearts.

6. He that providentially brings to light the most secret contrivances of men, and publishes them before all Israel, and before the sun, must needs see them, and know them. How closely had Achan covered his wickedness: He never suspected a discovery, yet God brought it to light. With how much contrivance was the sin of David covered! yet God discovered it: “Thou didst this thing secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun,” 2 Sam. xii. 12. Histories abound with examples of God’s bringing to light murders, so secretly committed, that it was impossible they should ever be revealed in this world, without a miracle of providence; and yet so they have been brought to light. Bessus, having committed such a murder, fancied the swallows that were chattering in the chimney had said, Bessus killed a man, and thereupon confessed the fact. How secure were the contrivers of the popish powder-plot, that Catholic villany, in a double sense having sworn all their accomplices to secrecy, and managed the whole design so closely that Guy Faux, upon the discovery of it, said, *The devil must needs be the discoverer of it.* How easy were it to expatiate upon this theme? But I will not be tiresome in instances: all ages are the witnesses of this truth. Who can then deny or question that great or confessed truth, Dan. ii. 28. “There is a God in heaven that reveals secrets:” and if he reveals them, he must needs know them.

7. He that will judge all secrets, cannot but know them. “Now God will judge the secrets of men in that great day,” Rom. ii. 16. “God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil,” Eccl. xii. *ult.* The Judge of the whole earth will not judge at random; his judgment will be infallible, because his omniscience is so. “His eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings; for he will not lay upon man more than right, that he should enter into judgment with God,” Job xxxiv. 21, 23.

So that the truth of this point is beyond all controversy and contradiction, that the whole world affords no place of secrecy or security for a sinner to escape the observing eye, and righteous hand of God

The uses follow in these inferences.

1. *Inference*, If this be so, then time, place, and opportunity, how much soever they seem to promise secrecy and concealment, should never further a temptation to sin.

Suppose all circumstances concurring, so that in the eye of reason you seem secured from the shameful consequences of sin; yet, methinks, the consideration of this truth should sufficiently deter you from a wicked purpose; Prov. v. 20. "And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings." There be four things which strengthen temptations to sin, and particularly the sin of uncleanness upon seamen. *First*, The absence of lawful remedies. *Secondly*, The presence of alluring objects. *Thirdly*, The instigation of wicked examples. *Fourthly*, And the hopes of concealment, being remote from their acquaintance: so that their sins, in probability, shall never disgrace them. This last circumstance is not the least: O how many hath it prevailed upon! but I hope you will never yield to this temptation, whose heart and strength are broken by this consideration of the eye of God upon you. A chaste woman being once solicited to folly, told him that solicited her, she could never yield to the motion, until he could find a place where God should not see.

Nay, my friends, it should do more than restrain you from the gross acts of sin; it should powerfully curb the very thoughts and first motions of sin in your hearts. That was the use holy Job made of this truth, Job xxxi. 1. "I have made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? Doth he not see my ways, and count all my steps?"

Suppose you should carry your wickedness so close, that none on earth should know it; yet the Lord sees it, and will bring it into judgment, and your own conscience is privy to it. I pray, sirs, tell me, is it not a great comfort to a malefactor, that he acted his crime so closely, that none but the judge, and one authentic witness more, (whose testimony is as good as a thousand) beheld it? Why, this is the case of all secret sinners. But, to press home this great and necessary truth more particularly, I beseech you to consider,

1. God doth not only behold you, but beholds you with detestation and abhorrence in your ways of iniquity: It is a sight that grieves him to the heart, Gen. vi. 5, 6. "And the Lord saw the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Here was wickedness, great wickedness, breaking out externally, and evil, only evil, and that continually, working internally; so that both heart and life were evil extensively, intensively, and protensively. This the Lord saw; and how it affected him, the sixth verse tells you: "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth; and it grieved him at the heart:" Ah! it cuts him to the heart



to see your sinful hearts and courses. Nothing can be so contrary to the pure and holy nature of God as this is: this made the prophet admire how his patience could endure such a sight, Heb. i. 13. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity; wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously?" &c. As if he should say, Lord, how canst thou behold thyself affronted by vile creatures, and hold thy hands from avenging it? O the stupendous patience of God!

2. It doth not only grieve him to the heart, but it puts his patience to the greatest trial and exercise in beholding it: therefore he is said "to endure with much long-suffering," Rom. ix. 22. It doth, as it were, create a conflict betwixt his patience and justice: he is so provoked by your sin, that he expresses it as a difficulty to bear it, Amos ii. 13. "I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves:" burdened till the axle-tree of infinite patience be ready to crack under the weight.

Nay, *Thirdly*, He doth not only see your evils, but he registers and records them, in order to a day of reckoning with you for all together, except ye repent; Deut. xxxii. 34. "Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures?" A metaphor taken from the clerk of the assize, who seals up the bag of indictments against the time of trial. You think if you can blind the eyes of men, all is well, you shall hear no more of it: ah! but it is sealed up among God's treasures; i. e. the things he records and reserves for the day of account.

4. God doth not only see you, but he will also one day make you see yourselves and your ways, and that with horror and consternation. You think you shall taste nothing but the sweet and pleasure of sin; but how are you deceived? The days are coming when sin, that is now pleasant, shall be turned into wormwood and gall. You will not see the evil of it; and because you see it not, you think God doth not. "These things (saith God) hast thou done, and I kept silence, and thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes," Psal. l. 21. God sees them now, and he will make you see them too, by opening your eyes in this world graciously, or in that to come judicially.

5. God doth not only see your ways, but he will make all the world see them too: For, "there is nothing hid that shall not be revealed, nor covered, that shall not be made known," Matth. x. 26. "There is a day when God will make manifest the hidden counsels of the heart," 2 Cor. iv. 5. "When that which hath been spoken in darkness shall be heard in light; and that which ye have spoken in the ears in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the house tops," Luke xii. 3. Well then, whenever the occasions and opportunities of sin are presented to you, under this encouragement of security, I beseech you remember this truth, that no place

can hide you from the eye of God. He sees all your ways, yea, he sees them with abhorrence; the sight of them is the greatest exercise of his patience. His sight of them is not a transient glance, but he sees and records your evils; they are sealed up among his treasures: He sees, and will make you see them too with horror, when he shall set them in order before you: he sees them, and will make angels and men see them in the great day. O then, never let secrecy any more encourage you to sin!

2. *Inference.* What prodigious sinners must they be, that seek no covert from their sin in darkness, but with an impudent face declare, yea, glory in their shame; who are not ashamed to sin openly with a bare face, and a whore's forehead? These are sinners of the first magnitude. "They declare their sin as Sodom, and hide it not," Isa. iii. 9. It is as natural to man to endeavour to hide his sin, as Adam, and you see from the text, guilty sinners fain would, if it were possible, fly to any obscure corner from the observation of God and men; and it is a mercy God hath planted such an affection as shame is, in the soul of man, to be a bridle to restrain his exorbitant lusts. But yet there is a generation of monstrous sinners, who have so far unmanned themselves, "That they are not at all ashamed when they commit abominations, neither can they blush," Jer. vi. 15. If there be any remains of shame left in them, they exercise it upon a wrong object: they are ashamed of that which would be to their glory, and glory in that which is their shame; they add impudence to their sin, and blush not to proclaim that which others study to conceal.

Such a vile temper as this shews a man even ripe for wrath; he hath even filled up his measure, and is come to the very culminating point and top of wickedness. There be some men arrived to such a degree of holiness, that all that converse with them judge them even ripe for heaven: they speak the dialect, and have the very savour of heaven upon them. Others are come to such a prodigious height of impiety, that understanding men cannot but conclude they are nigh unto damnation; they speak the very language, and have the very scent of hell upon them. Such are they that openly declare their sin as Sodom, and glory in their shame.

Thus we see some drunkards will glory in their strength, to pour down wine and strong drink, and can boast of the number of their cups: some adulterers can glory in their acts of wickedness, not suffering themselves to damn their own souls, but labouring to infect and corrupt as many as they can by their filthy tongues, that they may draw them into the same misery. We can hardly tell how to screw up sin one peg higher than this: first to practise sin, then defend it, then boast of it. Sin is first a man's burden, next his custom, next his delight, and then his excellency. Lord, whither is man fallen! that holiness should ever be his disgrace; and sin, yea, the vilest of sins, his glory! O the power of Divine patience!

3. *Inference.* If the eye of God searches every obscure corner in the world, to behold the evil that is committed there, then certainly the eye of God cannot but look into every secret place in the world to see the good that is done there. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good," Prov. xv. 3. The good as well as the evil; yea, he beholds with delight the good done in secret.

As some sinners seek corners to act their wickedness in, and cannot satisfy themselves to commit sin in the light, (for, as our Saviour saith, John iii. 20. "He that doth evil hateth the light;") so, on the contrary, a truly godly man seeks corners to pray in, to meditate in, and to examine his own heart in, and thinks these duties of godliness can never be managed with too great a privacy; not that he is in the least ashamed of his duty; no, that is not the reason, but he is afraid of hypocrisy, when duties lie too open, and exposed to the eyes of men. A sinner takes his full liberty to vent his corruptions when he can do it in secret; and a saint takes his full liberty to vent and exercise his graces, when no eye but the eye of God sees him. "Thou, when thou prayest (saith our Saviour) enter into thy closet and shut thy door, and pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father (which seeth in secret) shall reward thee openly." O how much better is it, both as to your present comfort and future account, to get into a corner to pray, than to whore and drink? To pour out your souls to God graciously, than to pour out your lusts against God so wickedly? How contrary are the principles of grace and corruption? The study of sinners is to hide their evils from the eyes of men: the study of a saint is to hide his duties from the eyes of men: The sinner would not have the world suspect what he hath been about; nor would the saint have all the world know what he hath been about. The way of an adulterer is as the "way of an eagle in the air, or as a serpent upon a rock;" i. e. a secret way, where they leave no prints or tracts behind them. "So is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness," Prov. xxx. 19, 20. By wiping the mouth is there meant preventing all suspicion; suffering no sign of the action to remain upon them: So, contrarily, a gracious person that hath been with God in secret prayer, or fasting, when his duty is ended, he labours to avoid all ostentations. And therefore you have the caution from Christ, Matth. vi. 17, 18. "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face! that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy father which is in secret." The meaning is, carry thy private duties so close, that none may know what passeth between God and thee: When thou hast been entertained in secret with hidden *manna*, a feast of fat things, wipe thy mouth in a holy sense, i. e. wipe off all suspicion of hypocrisy and vanity by a

prudent and humble concealment. \* “Religion doth not lay all open, as we say:” As sinners have their secret pleasures, their stolen waters which are sweet to them; so the saints have their secret delights in God, their hidden *manna*, which no man knows but he that eateth of it. And as the eye of God vindictively beholds the one, so it delightfully beholds the other; and so you find it, Cant. ii. 14. “O my dove, (saith Christ to the church) that art in the clefts of the rocks, in the secret places of the stairs: Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance comely.” Let this encourage you to secret duties; let not others find more pleasure in secret lusts, than you can do in God and secret duties.

4. *Inference.* Doth the eye of God see all the evil and wickedness that is committed in all the secret corners of the world! How admirable then is the patience of God towards the world! Who can imagine how much wickedness is secretly practised in a town or city every day? Or if all the villanies that are perpetrated in a small circumference in one day were known to us, we should admire that God doth not make us like Sodom, for judgment and desolation before the next day. What then are the innumerable swarms of sin, which are as the sands upon the sea-shore, from all the parts and corners of the earth! Alas, there is not the ten thousandth part of the grosser sort of wickednesses committed in the world, that ever comes to our eye or ear; and if it did, we cannot estimate the evil of sin, as God doth; nor feel with that resentment the burden of it, as he doth: and yet the long-suffering God forbears it with infinite patience. Surely his power was not more discovered in making the world, than it is in forbearing to destroy it again for the wickedness that is in it. But the world stands for the church's sake that is in it. “And were it not that the Lord of hosts had left us a small remnant, we had been as Sodom, we had been like unto Gomorrha,” Isa. i. 9. There is also an elect remnant to be called and gathered by the gospel out of it in their several generations: and when that number shall be accomplished, God will set fire to the four quarters of it, and it shall lie in white ashes; till then the long-suffering of God waiteth.

5. *Inference.* If God sees all the secret wickedness that is committed in every corner of the world; how clear is it that there is a judgment to come, and that this judgment will be exact?

That there is a judgment to come, is by this manifest; and also that there is abundance of sin committed in the world, which never comes to light here, nor never will in this world. It is true, men's sins are open; and the judgments of God upon them are as open; but it is not so with all. The apostle saith, 1 Tim. v. 24. “Some men's sins are open before-hand, going before-hand to judgment, and some men's they follow after.” Some men's sins are written,

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\* *Non est religio ubi omnia patent.*

as it were, in their foreheads, every one sees them; but others follow after, are not discovered till the day of the revelation of the secrets of all hearts, and then that which is now done in closets shall be proclaimed as upon house-tops: Though they were never put to shame for their sins, in the places where they committed them, yet God will shame them before men and angels. This is the day to judge secrets, 1 Cor. iv. 5.

And, as it is certain there will be such a judgment, so it is certain this judgment will be exact; for the judge of all hath seen all: Whatever he charges any man with, hath been acted before his face, Psal. xc. 8. "Thou settest our secret sins in the light of thy countenance." Here can be no mistake, the omnipotent God will judge for what he hath seen; "For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings, for he will not lay upon man more than right, that he should enter into judgment with God." The meaning is, he cannot mistake in his judgment being omniscient, and having seen all the ways of man; so that there can be no plea offered by any man for the reverse of his sentence.

O then let us be exact and careful, as well in our secret as in our public actions; for God shall bring every work in judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, Eccl. xii. *ult.*

6. *Inference.* Lastly, if the eye of God be in every place upon us, and all our actions; then let those whose condition of life hath sent them out of the eyes and observations of their parents and masters keep the sense of God's eye upon their hearts, as ever they would escape sin and ruin.

It is no small advantage to young unprincipled persons, to live under the discipline of pious and careful governors; but it often falls out, that they are early transplanted into another soil, sent into foreign countries in order to their education or employment; and as often are there corrupted and debauched by the evil examples of the places where they reside; they learn another language, or drive another trade than what their parents or masters designed them for. But if the sense of this great truth might accompany them where-ever they are, O what a sovereign antidote might it prove against those deadly poisons of temptations! This alone would be a sufficient preservative. If our children and servants have but the awful sense of God's eye upon them, we may turn them loose into the wide world without fear.

If Providence shall direct this discourse to your hands, my heart's desire and prayer for you is, that the Spirit of the Lord would imprint this great truth upon your hearts. And I am the more moved to endeavour your preservation, upon the consideration of the apparent danger you are in, and the manifold disappointments and mischiefs that must unavoidably follow the corrupting of your tender years. The danger you are in is great, whether you consider,

*First*, The infecting, catching nature of sin. No plague is more infectious and insinuating than sin is. Many are the wiles, devices, stratagems, and baits, Satan lays to draw you into sin, 2 Cor. ii. 11.  
Or,

*Secondly*, The proneness that is in your own nature to close with the offers and temptations that you are tried with; it is as great a wonder if you escape, as that one that lives in a pest-house should remain healthy; or that dry tinder should not catch, when thousands of sparks fly about, and light upon it. Or,

*Thirdly*, The absence of all those means by which you have formerly been preserved from sin. You are now without the ordinances of God, the family duties, the admonitions, counsels, examples, and observations of your parents, masters, and friends: All which have been of great use to keep you from sin, and repress the vanities of youth. Or, Lastly,

*Fourthly*, The manifold furtherance or temptations which your age afford; *Childhood and youth are vanity*. Inconsiderateness, rashness, injudiciousness, and the want of experience, do all cast you into the very snare. See how the Holy Ghost hath signified the danger of persons at your age, in Prov. vii. 7.

All these things do greatly endanger you. And if any, or all of them together, prevail to the vitiating and corrupting of you, then what a train of sad consequences will follow upon it! For,

1. The great God will be dishonoured and reproached by you, even that God whose distinguishing mercies are now before your eyes, and should be admired by you; that caused you to spring up in a better soil, and not from idolaters in a land of darkness.

2. Conscience will be wounded and polluted with guilt; and though, at present, you feel not the remorse and gnawings of it, yet now you are preparing for it. The sins of youth are complaints and sorrows of old age, Job xiii. 26.

3. The hearts of your friends, if godly, will be grieved and greatly troubled to find their expectations and hopes disappointed; and all those prayers for you, and counsels bestowed on you to come to nothing. If an unequal match by Esau was such a grief of heart to Isaac and Rebecca, what will profaneness and uncleanness be to your parents? Gen. xxvi. 34.

4. The serviceableness and comfort of your whole life, will, in all probability, be destroyed by the corruption of your youth. If blossoms be withered, and buds nipt, what fruit can be expected? To conclude,

5. Your precious and immortal souls are hazarded to all eternity. And "what shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matth. xvi. 26.

All this mischief may be happily prevented by the serious conside-

ration of this point you have now been reading. For if God shall fix that truth in your hearts by faith, then,

*First*, Instead of running with others into the same excess of riot, you will keep yourselves pure and unspotted in an unclean defiling world. You will answer all temptations to sin, as Joseph did, Gen. xxxix. 9. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

*Secondly*, Instead of joining with others in sin, you will mourn for the sins of others. You will say with David, Psal. cxx. 5. "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshec, that I dwell in the tents of Ke-dar!" Your soul, like Lot's, will be vexed from day to day with the filthy conversations of the wicked, 2 Pet. i. 17, 18.

*Thirdly*, Instead of returning to your country with a wounded name and conscience, you will return full of inward comfort and peace, and to the joy of all your friends and relations.

*Fourthly*, To conclude, You will give fair encouragements to the expectations of all that know you, of becoming useful instruments of the glory of God, and benefit of the world in your generation. O therefore beg of God that this truth may be deeply engraven upon your hearts.



THE

## SUCCESSFUL SEAMAN.

## SERMON IV.

DEUT. viii. 17, 18.

*And thou say in thine heart, My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth; but thou shalt remember the Lord God; for he it is that giveth thee power to get wealth.*

**T**HIS context contains a necessary and very seasonable caution to the Israelites, who were now passing out of the wilderness straits into the rich and fruitful land of Canaan, which abounded with all earthly blessings and comforts. Now, when the Lord was about to give them possession of this good land, he first gives them some wholesome caveats to prevent the abuse of these mercies. He knew how apt they were to forget him in a prosperous estate, and ascribe all their comfortable fruition to their own prudence and valour: to prevent this, he reminds them of their former estate, and warns them about their future estate: he reminds them of their former condition, whilst they subsisted upon his immediate care in the wilderness; verses 15, 16. "Who lead them through the great and terrible wil-