

diligently use the means whereby they may be quickened and strengthened: they are idle, and lie upon the bed of ease, and complain that God doth not give grace; languish for comfort, rather than set about the work of obedience. Christ telleth his disciples, John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and manifest myself to him.'

2. That content themselves with a loitering profession, when their hearts swarm with noisome lusts, and are unfurnished of faith and love, and other necessary graces; and yet think a lazy profession will serve the turn: Mat. vii. 22, 'Many shall say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, we have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works: and then will I profess, I never knew them.' Because they pray, and hear, and receive sacraments, they think all is well, and they have no more to care for. Is this 'working out our salvation with fear and trembling'? Phil. ii. 12; 'Serving God instantly day and night'? Acts xxvi. 7; 'Labouring for the meat that perisheth not'? John vi. 27; 'Denying ourselves'? Luke xiv. 26.

3. That snuff at a little mock-service as if an intolerable burden: Mal. i. 13, 'What a weariness is it!'

4. The children of God may feel this temper coming upon them, when though they do not cast off prayer altogether, yet they cut off or abate and diminish their prayers, either in fervour, or frequency, or continuance and perseverance in prayer; pray without sense, affection, or life; or do not pray so often, or do not continue instant in prayer.

This cutting short of duties in time tendeth to a quitting of them altogether. Man is ready to cast off what he thinketh to be a burden. So when they are backward to meditation, or to withdraw from the delights of the flesh, and the distraction of ordinary employments. In all such cases we should rouse up ourselves. Time is short; our account sure and near; we are labouring for heaven and salvation: shall we tire and faint? 'Be not weary of well-doing.' It is spoken with respect to the duties of piety, Heb. xii. 12; duties of mercy, Gal. vi. 9; duties of our calling, 2 Thes. iii. 13. Oh! then, let us rouse up ourselves.

SERMON XVI.

Take therefore the talent from him, and give it to him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.—MAT. XXV. 28, 29.

WE have seen the arraignment of the evil servant; now followeth the sentence, which intimateth a double punishment—privative and positive, loss and pain. The former is in these two verses; wherein you may observe three things:—

1. The taking the talent from the evil servant.

2. The disposition of the talent so taken from him.

3. The reason of both.

Let me explain these branches, and then draw one point from the whole.

First, The taking the talent from the evil servant, 'Take therefore the talent from him.' Naughty servants either lose the gifts themselves, or the benefit, comfort, and reward of them. Here, in time, they lose their gifts; when time is no more (which is the case in our parable), they lose their reward.

Secondly, The disposition of the talent so taken from him, 'And give it to him that hath ten talents;' that is, five by trust, and five more by gain and improvement. The giving of the talent to the first servant was thought unequal by some, because he had such plenty already; as appeareth, Luke xix. 25, 'They say unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.' But the Lord adhereth to his sentence: 'For I say unto you, Unto every one that hath shall be given,' &c. He giveth most to those that have done most diligent and faithful service, and delighteth to enrich them more and more with the rewards of grace.

Object. But how can we receive other men's talents? Shall the elect receive benefit from the reprobate, and their loss be our gain?

Ans. 1. It is spoken after the manner of men. Nothing more usual among men than to take that from the unfaithful which was committed to them, and to give it to the faithful. It is such another expression as Rev. iii. 11, 'Hold fast that thou hast, that no man take thy crown;' as if that crown which we had lost were taken and worn by others. So Num. xi. 17, 25, God took of the Spirit that was upon Moses, and gave it to the seventy elders; as if what were given to his assistance were taken from him, and his abilities were lessened with his work; whereas it is only meant of the communication of the same graces.

2. The meaning is, he that useth his gifts well shall be amply rewarded; so amply, as if the happiness which others expect should accrue to them, and be put on their account.

Thirdly, The reason of both, in the 29th verse, 'For unto every one that hath shall be given.' That these expressions are proverbial is out of question with the learned. *Habenti dabitur* is an expression verified in all ages and in all countries. The rich have many friends, and he that hath much shall have more; every one will be presenting them: and they have great advantages of laying out themselves, and improving themselves more than others have. So, on the contrary side, by the neglect of others, and their own incapacity to improve themselves, poor men commonly grow poorer. Upon this occasion were the words first used, which our Saviour is pleased to translate and apply to his own purpose. The sense of the words, as they lie here, will be known by taking this copulate axiom and proposition apart. The first branch speaketh of gain, the second of loss.

First branch. 'Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance.' The word *ἔχειν* doth not only signify the possession of a thing, but the use, which is the end of possession: and so he that hath is he that hath to purpose, that occupieth and trafficketh with his grace or gift received, with that care and diligence that belongeth to

so great a treasure and trust: 'To him shall be given;' he shall increase his stock, and accordingly the comfort, benefit, and reward that belongeth to it. Yea, it follows, 'He shall have abundance,' *περισσευθήσεται*; not a single abundance, but a continual increase, even unto perfection; an increase of gifts, graces, and rewards. The sum is, to him that useth and improveth God's grace shall by degrees be given so much as that at last he shall have all abundance.

The second branch of this copulate axiom is, 'From him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.' As he that had one talent, but had it not for his master's use, is counted and reckoned as though he had none. We have not what we have if we use it not well; as we say of a covetous man, *avarus tam deest quod habet, quam quod non habet*. It is as if we had it not: idle gifts and habits lie dead and useless. In Luke it is, chap. viii. 18, 'And from whomsoever hath not, shall be taken that which he seemeth to have.' He maketh no use of his gifts, but lets them lie idle, as if he had not had them. Of grace and righteousness the proposition holdeth most true; of other gifts which they have, they have them not for use, for the Lord's service; and so, in effect, they have them not: therefore, they shall be taken from them; that is, they lose their reward: Ezek. xxxiii. 13, 'If he trust in his righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered;' 2 John 8, 'Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward;' Gal. iii. 4, 'Have you suffered so many things in vain? If it be yet in vain.' Men may suffer many things for the truth who afterward make foul defection from it; but all is vain, lost, and to no purpose, as to anything that can be expected from God. The Nazarite was to begin again if he had defiled himself in the days of his separation, Num. vi. 12. Thus for their putative righteousness; for other common gifts which they really have, they shall be deprived of all the real benefit which otherwise they might have had, if they had laid them out for the glory of God, their own salvation, and the good of their neighbours.

Doct. That all the good gifts which God hath bestowed upon men increase by good use, but wither and are lost by negligence.

For this is the sum of Christ's sentence and reason.

Now, that I may speak distinctly of the point, I must say something as to the increase, and something as to the loss.

First, For the increase, 'To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly, 'I shall deliver my sense of it in these propositions:—

1. That diligence is the means, and God's blessing is the cause, of all increase; and both must be regarded, or else we profit nothing. We cannot expect God's blessing while we sit idle; and it is a wrong to grace to trust merely to endeavours, or without looking up to God. It is said in Prov. x. 4, 'He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the diligent hand maketh rich;' that is, that is the means; for ver. 22, it is said, 'The blessing of the Lord maketh rich;' that is, the blessing of the Lord upon the use of means. God hath ordered it so in his providence, that diligence should be always fruitful and pro-

fitable, both in a way of nature and grace; that the joy of the harvest should recompense the pains and patience of the diligent husbandman, and that the field of the sluggard should be overgrown with thorns. Iron by handling weareth brighter and brighter, but by standing still, or being let alone, it contracteth rust, by which it is darkened and eaten out. Take away use and exercise, and wisdom turneth into folly, and learning into ignorance, health into sickness, riches into poverty. Strength of body and mind are both gotten by use; he that useth his talent with fidelity and sedulity shall increase in it, but such as are idle and negligent shall grow worse and worse. God doth plentifully recompense the diligence and fidelity of his servants; he that maketh use of any degree of grace and knowledge shall have more given him; by exercising what he hath he doth still increase it. Whereas, on the contrary, remiss acts weaken habits, as well as contrary acts; this is a common truth, evident by daily experience; but then God's blessing must not be excluded. God would have us labour, rather to keep us doing, than that he needeth our help. He that made the world without us can preserve it without us, as he that planted the garden of Eden could have preserved it without man's dressing, yet we read that when he had furnished the garden of Eden with all delights, God took the man and put him into it, 'to dress it and to keep it,' Gen. ii. 15; that is, to use husbandry about it, that by sowing, setting, pruning, and watering, he might preserve those fruits where-with God had furnished that pleasant garden, and to bestow his pains upon that whereof he was to receive the benefit, and that by busying himself about the creatures, he might the better observe God in his various works in and by them. And indeed nothing was such a means to convince him of his dependence upon God as this labour of dressing and keeping the garden which God put him into; for he could produce no new plant, but only manure and cherish those which God had planted there already, and all his keeping and planting was nothing without dews and showers and influence from heaven, and the continual interposing of God's providence. And still in every calling he that is sedulous in it seeth more need of God's concurrence than those that are idle; for those that have done their utmost by experience find that the success of all their endeavours dependeth upon his power and goodness, or the effect followeth not. I am sure it holdeth good in the work of grace: none are so practically convinced of the necessity of divine assistance as they that do their utmost; for they see plainly all will not do if God withhold his blessing; and their often disappointments when they lean upon their own strength teacheth them this lesson, that all is of God.

2. That this increase must be understood of the same talent, not in another kind. It holdeth not, that he that useth the talent in one kind shall thrive in another, for what a man soweth that shall he reap. No; the meaning is, the thing used is still increased. It is not intended that by employing his talent in riches he should increase in learning, that by improving his learning he should grow in strength and beauty of body. No; it holdeth good *in eodem genere*, in the same kind. Use common helps well, and you increase as far as common helps will carry you; use moral virtue well, and you increase in

moral virtue ; use that measure of saving grace you have well, and you shall have a great measure given you by God ; set a-work thy knowledge, faith, zeal, and love, and all these graces will increase in you : ‘ Wait on the Lord, and be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart,’ Ps. xlvi. 14 ; and Ps. xxxi. 24, and Isa. lviii. 13, 14, ‘ If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable ; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.’ So Ps. xci. 1, ‘ He that dwelleth in the secret places of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.’ God, that punisheth sin with sin, doth reward grace with grace : they that abuse the light of nature are given up to a reprobate sense ; they that improve the grace they have shall have more ; every act maketh an increase of the habit, and who-soever employeth that spiritual wealth that he hath shall have an addition from God, be more strong in faith and love, and more rich in knowledge.

Object. But may not we enlarge this a little further ? Arminius gathereth from hence that the works of the unregenerate, done by the mere strength of nature, are so accepted with God that by them he is moved and induced to give them supernatural grace. And many others, that will not speak so grossly, think that if we improve the gifts of nature, we shall have common grace, and if we improve common grace, we shall have special and saving grace. And ought we not, and can we not, use these common gifts and graces to this end and purpose, that we may obtain conversion and faith in Christ ; such as the use of reason, the freeing of the mind from brutish passions and affections, good education, the examples of others, the powerful preaching of the gospel, and common illumination, and the knowledge of the truth gained thereby ?

Ans. 1. Those that have common grace ought and are bound to use it for the obtaining of more grace ; there is no doubt of that, for therefore they are accused that ‘ They have ears and hear not, eyes and see not ;’ and God findeth fault with his people that ‘ they will not frame their doings to turn to the Lord,’ Hosea v. 4. So much as put themselves in a posture ; they are threatened that ‘ it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for them ;’ and that ‘ the Ninevites shall rise in judgment against them, and condemn them.’ They are reprovèd for being ‘ idle and slothful servants, and hiding their talents in a napkin.’ Certainly they that are lifted up to heaven in ordinances, that receive so much grace from God, and yet turn it into wantonness, and do not know, nor worship, nor seek after God, they aggravate their own condemnation ; their destruction is of themselves ; they shut themselves out of the kingdom of God, reject the counsels of God against themselves. In short, they put away the word of God from them, and judge themselves unworthy of eternal life. The scripture everywhere speaketh at this rate concerning the folly and negligence of men.

Ans. 2. But if it be asked, whether they that have received common grace not only ought, but also can, use it for the acquiring and getting the special grace of conversion? this question concerneth the manner how the will of God and the will of man meet together in the work of conversion. And here we must use great care in answering, to avoid inconveniences on all hands. Certainly merit they cannot, neither *de congruo*, nor *de condigno*, nor by any covenant oblige God to give them the grace of regeneration; neither can Christ be said to have acquired and purchased this grace for them to whom he is not given as a Mediator; nor by any promise is God bound to give us grace for the good use of our natural abilities. No; the distribution of converting grace is not promised or bound to any works of righteousness that we have or can do, but is reserved and referred to the free disposition, good-will, and pleasure of God: Rom. ix. 16, 'Not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.' So Titus iii. 5. 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.' The first grace is given by God as a sovereign Lord, according to the counsel of his own will. But since the question is propounded, whether a man can by common grace obtain special? the answer must be prudent and cautelous, that of the one side we may not prejudice the truth, nor of the other side give scandal and offence to the weak. For—

[1.] If you answer that an unregenerate man may by the use of common grace acquire and obtain the special grace of regeneration, and that the whole business lies in the good use of his will, you seem to dash upon the eternal purpose and decrees of God, by which he hath determined not to give all men, but only the elect, this special grace; and upon the intention of Christ's dying, which was not to sanctify himself for all, but for those whom the Father had given to him; and you seem to put the whole business upon man, as if he did make himself to differ, and that the good use of common grace doth all; and then the Pelagian axiom will be true, *facienti quod in se est*—that he that doth what he can, God is bound to give him what he cannot; which will run little lower than the merit of congruity. Then we cannot say, God hath made himself a debtor; some would seem to have given him first. All which are against the scripture; and therefore we are justly afraid to enlarge and extend the liberty and power of man in this business.

[2.] If you answer that a man cannot use that common grace which he hath received so as to obtain the grace of regeneration, and that the thing dependeth no way upon his will and choice, or that there is no hope or possibility of doing otherwise than they do, or that, do their duty or do it not, still condemnation rests upon them, then no less difficulties will offer themselves. Flesh and blood will then complain that God is harsh and austere, 'Reaping where he hath not sowed, and gathering where he hath not strawed;' and that he requireth what we cannot do; and when we do it not, doth severely punish us. What shall we answer to the question, whether it be in the power of the creature to acquire the special grace of regeneration by the good use of common grace? The best answer that we can give is, that the question is curious, and needeth no answer. The business is not

whether God will or not, but what I am bound to do. The great rule in all such cases is, God may do what he pleaseth, but I must do what he commandeth. He that is deadly sick doth not refuse physic till he be made certain that it will recover him; but useth it, and committeth the event to God. He that is to plough, and commit his precious seed to the ground, doth not stand to have assurance that the next year will prove fruitful and the seasons kindly, but ventures, because usually God's blessing concurreth with man's industry. So in the business of salvation, we should not dispute of our power, nor the event of our endeavours: it is enough to acknowledge the debt of obedience, to try our power, to endeavour to do what we ought to do, and then leave the event to God. There is no need to dispute of our power; it is much safer to confess our impotency, to humble ourselves before God, and to seek his blessing and grace in the means he hath instituted to that end; but not at all to doubt the counsel and will of God. And the intention of Christ, whatever it be, will be no impediment to us in doing our duty. And it is as certain that no man doth all that he can, but by divers offences and abuse of the gifts received giveth God just cause to be angry and withdraw his help. And it is also out of doubt that it is not for want of God's help, but for their own folly and negligence that they perish. Therefore let us do what we are commanded to do, and leave the event to God, confessing when we have done all that we can that God is not our debtor, but that we remain debtors to God, guilty of eternal condemnation, as long as we are not partakers of regeneration and justification by Christ. If we could learn to suppress our cavils and curiosity by this humble submission, the business of our salvation would soon come to an issue, and we should find God better to us than we could imagine.

3. The next consideration is, that this increase is given in by degrees: we have not all at first, nor all at once; but as our capacities are enlarged, so is God's hand: Ps. lxxxix. 10, 'Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it.' The more we improve the grace received, the more are we strengthened for God's service, and our desires and expectations, which are as the mouth of the soul, are more raised. It is exercise maketh us see the necessity and worth of grace, and so desire more as necessary to bear our burdens, perform our duties, and resist temptations. And the more grace we have, and the more we are acquainted with God, the more hopes have we towards him. By hope and desire the soul is more widened and fitted to receive: as Moses, 'Tell me thy name;' and then, 'Show me thy glory.' None see the want of learning so much as they that have most of it. So for grace, the desire and sense of want increaseth with enjoyment; so doth God's bounty to us. The desires and endeavours of believers after grace are not easily satisfied.

4. This gradual increase is continued, till at length all be full and perfect. The apostle prayeth for the saints, Eph. iv. 19, that they 'might be filled with all the fulness of God.' God keepeth filling still, till grace, begun here, be fully completed in glory hereafter; and in heaven they are filled up with God, as far as finite creatures are capable of enjoying that which is infinite. The reason is, because the riches of God's goodness are inexhaustible. God is never weary of

well-doing; where he hath given, he will give; and delighteth to crown his own gifts. Some gifts of God leave some obligation upon him to give more. *Deus donando debet.* Christ's reasoning implieth so much: Mat. vi. 25, 'Is not life more than meat, and the body than raiment?' That is an argument, as long as God will use us for his glory he will provide for us: Zech. iii. 2, 'Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?' The argument is from a brand almost consumed. Would God so eminently appear for them, not to destroy them? Certainly he will still take care of them. This holdeth universally true in point of grace; for it is given as an earnest; not as *donum*, a gift, as men give a shilling to a beggar; nor as *pignus*, a pledge, to be taken away; but as *arraha*, an earnest of a greater sum, of which that is a part. So that he that hath shall have more, and so abundance in all perfection in heaven.

Secondly, Now I must speak to the loss. Talents may be said to be lost, or taken away, two ways—in this world or in the next. These proverbial speeches are made use of by Christ upon a twofold occasion—after the parable of the sower, Mat. xiii. 12, and here after the parable of the talents: the one relateth to losing in this world, and the other in the world to come. They that rejected the gospel, and would not hear, or heard it carelessly, or would not come under the power and obedience of it, all their external privileges, glittering profession, common gifts of illumination, fasts, partial practice, all will be lost. Only the good and honest heart, that receiveth the good seed so as to keep it, so as to be a principle of life to them, to these shall be given. And then here is the other occasion when Christ speaks this. The taking away of the talents is after the lord had been reckoning with his servants, after he had been a long time absent, and in a far country. Therefore this taking away the talent is not meant of the gift itself, as of the comfort, benefit, and reward of it; for all trading then is at an end; that is the time of recompense, and the talent is lost. It will do us no good to have had estates, and to have lived in pomp and splendour in the world, if we have not made use of it for God. Our fall will be the greater because of our height. It will do us no good to have borne office in the church if we have not been faithful: Mat. vii. 22, 'Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, we have prophesied in thy name.' Such as have taken up office and employment in the church, and made no conscience of doing the duty that belongeth thereto, these will not have, but lose their reward: these are 'idle shepherds,' Zech. xi. 17; their unfaithfulness and idleness in their trust will cost them dear. So for the ordinances and means of grace: Luke xiii. 26, 'Then shall they begin to say, We have ate and drank in thy presence.' It will be no plea that you have been at God's board; nay, you will have the greater judgment: Mat. xi. 23, 'And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell.' A place that enjoyeth the gospel is near heaven, it is the suburbs of heaven; but where not improved, these privileges plunge a man deeper in the state of condemnation. Sins against the law do not weigh so deep in his balance as slighting and neglecting the gospel; that brings on heavy wrath. So for common gifts, good affections, partial reformation; it is all lost, as to any reward, Ezek. xxxiii. 13.

Yea, it is worse: 2 Peter ii. 20, 21, 'For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome; the latter end is worse with them than the beginning; for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment.' The wrath against them that return back to their sins is much greater than if they had never been so enlightened and reformed. Those that have had more light, and some taste of the sweetness of heaven's way, if they fall away, it is hard to renew them to repentance. This is the principal sense intended in this place; yet because the words are so contrived that they comprehend also the loss we may sustain in this world while we are trading for God, I shall show you how God punisheth naughty and slothful servants in this world with the loss of their talents.

1. Sometimes God taketh from them opportunities and liberty of doing good. Nothing is so soon lost as this: Gal. vi. 10, 'As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all men.' There are some fit opportunities offered us by the providence of God for doing our duty in this kind, as are soon gone; and being past and gone, it is hard to say whether ever we may enjoy the like. As when we are specially fitted, and there is a concurring harmony of all circumstances. Therefore, we should take hold of them without delay or fore-slowing. Opportunities are not always as long as life: Ecces. xi. 1, 2, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, and give a portion to seven and to eight; for thou knowest not what evil there may be upon earth.' Embrace the present opportunity; thou canst not foresee how soon thou mayest be deprived of it. Thou mayest die, and leave thy wealth to those that will shut up their bowels. Thou mayest be in want; God may disable thee: therefore, make use of the season for liberality, for doing good, while you have it. So office, authority, respect in the church, is an opportunity. God may cast us out of the vineyard by the malice of men, or as unsavoury salt, Mat. xiii.: Mal. ii. 9, 'Therefore, I have made you contemptible and base before the people;' though all that are cast out are not so. Mat. xxi. 35, the husbandmen took 'his servants, and beat one and killed another.' However, it will be a discomfort if we have been negligent.

2. Ordinances; means of improvement may be lost: Gen. vi. 3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man;' that is, by the ministry of Noah. And God threateneth to take away the hedge of his vineyard when all his cost is lost: Isa. v. 5, 6, 'What could I have done more for my vineyard?' So Luke xiii. 7, 'And he said to the dresser of the vineyard, Lo, these three years came I seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?'

3. Common gifts; God justly taketh them away from those that abuse, or make no good use of them. Many that excelled in gifts, that seemed to have great parts, are pitifully blasted afterwards. It is no hard matter to discern a maim and decay of gifts in them that use them not, as if the Spirit were departed from them: Zech. xi. 17, 'The idol-shepherd's arm shall be dried up, and his eye darkened;'

that is, his gifts shall be taken away, at least, the power and life of them. Many lose the freshness of their gifts of prayer, the liveliness of their knowledge.

4. Initial grace, Heb. vi. Saving gifts and graces are ἀμεταμέλητα, without repentance, Rom. xi. 29. Where there is life begun, it is not quenched; but where there are some hopeful inclinations, they begin to draw off their hearts from the world to God; though they had 'escaped the pollutions of the world, their latter end may be worse than their beginning,' 2 Peter ii. 20.

5. *Dona sanctificantiã* ought still to be improved, that the grace of God be not 'received in vain,' 1 Cor. xv. 10. Grace in some measure may suffer loss by our negligence: 1 Thes. v. 19, 'Quench not the Spirit; despise not prophesying.' Fire is quenched by pouring on water or withdrawing fuel; so the Spirit is quenched by living in sin, which is like pouring on water; or not improving our gifts and grace, which is like withdrawing the fuel. *Gradus remittitur, actus intermittitur, habitus non amittitur.* Though the habit be secured by God's covenant, yet such portions and degrees of grace may be lost as may not easily be recovered again.

Use is to commend to us diligence and industry, especially in the work of our heavenly calling. A man's life is divided between waking and sleeping, so is his waking time divided between labour and rest; for human nature cannot endure continual exercise without intermission. Therefore a spiritual wise man should so govern his life that his labour may answer his great work and trust, and his rest may not infringe his labour, but help it. Our first care should be of labour; for man in this world is born to labour. Here is not the place of his rest and recompense, but of his exercise and trial. Rest is but for labour; therefore doth he rest that he may be refreshed for his labour. Six days are given in the law to labour, but one to rest; and that rest is not carnal, but holy, and to be improved for our main duties. Adam in innocency was not made for idleness. Moses telleth us that God put him into the garden to dress it. That happiness we partook of then was consistent enough with our work. He that looketh upon the beauty of the sun may easily collect that God lighted not such a bright torch for man to sleep by, or to pass over his days in ease and idleness. The law that was given man to labour remained after sin; yea, sin brought grievousness and burden to it: so what was a law before, is turned into a punishment now; for God told Adam that 'in the sweat of his brow he should eat his bread.' In the whole course of nature nothing is idle; the sun and stars do perpetually move and roll up and down; the earth bringeth forth fruit; the seas have their ebbings and flowings, and the rivers their courses; the angels are described with wings, as ready to fulfil God's commandment, and run to do his pleasure. It were an unworthy thing, among so many examples and patterns of diligence, for man alone to be idle. In the least creatures God hath taught us; as by the ant or pismire: Prov. vi. 6, 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard.' Now, as all men must labour, so chiefly a Christian. The scripture compareth our life to a journey, which is a constant motion till it be accomplished; to threshing, which is the painfullest part of husbandry; yea, to a warfare, when the enemy

is at hand ready to fight. We are always to watch and pray. If our enemy did not alarm us, yet our Master will call us to an account for what we have done.

And consider the danger of negligence. It befalleth to the idle and negligent, as those that came after the camp in the wilderness. Amalek smote the weak and the feeble in the rear. Yea, God himself will be angry with us. The idle and slothful servant is cast into utter darkness, the foolish virgins are shut out. If God, by his prophets, curseth them whom he employeth to execute his judgments—'Cursed is he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently,'—what will become of them that are negligent in working out their own salvation? Horses grow resty if they be not used, and impatient of a burden; so all goes to wreck in the soul if we are idle. We should profit when we look on the field of the sluggard, Prov. xxiii. 30, 31, 34. So will my soul be, if I let it alone. Oh! then, shake off your sloth; be not always resolving, never beginning the heavenly course. Nothing can be gotten, nothing kept, nothing to be enjoyed, without industry. The saints in heaven are not idle; but are always lauding, and praising, and glorifying of God for evermore.

THE END OF VOL. IX.