



**Gems from
Matthew Henry**



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Gems from Matthew Henry.



G E M S

FROM

MATTHEW HENRY.

—• 967 •—

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I N D E X.

	Page.
BIBLE, THE	1
CHARITY	4
CONTENTMENT	6
DEATH	9
DUTY	12
FAITH	16
FEAR OF GOD	18
GOD	20
GREATNESS	21
HAPPINESS	24
HEAVEN	26
HOLINESS	28
HOPE	31
HUMILITY	32
KNOWLEDGE	34
LIBERALITY	36
MINISTERS	41
OBEDIENCE	44

	Page.
PRAISE	47
PRAYER	49
PRIDE	50
PROSPERITY	57
PROVIDENCE	60
RELIGION	63
REPENTANCE	68
SERVICE	70
SIN	75
SINCERITY	80
THOUGHTS	92
TROUBLE	91
MISCELLANEOUS	101

Memoir of the Author.

THE honoured subject of this memoir was born at Broad Oak, near Chester, on the 18th of October, 1662, being the eldest surviving son of the celebrated and holy Philip Henry. He early manifested a predilection for books, and it is said he could distinctly read the Bible when only three years old. So close indeed was his application that his excellent mother was often compelled to use a little gentle violence to compel him to give a necessary attention to food and relaxation.

Nothing could be, humanly speaking, more calculated to form and foster holiness and devotion than the moral atmosphere of the pious family at Broad Oak. Philip Henry was no common man, either in the depth of his piety, the impressiveness of his character, or his pastoral industry, and his son grew up to be taught not only the blessedness of a religious life but to feel its happiness in the lovely and loving little circle, of which he composed a part. The softening influences of religion soon penetrated young Matthew's susceptible heart, and his evident affection for the Bible, his establishment of a little prayer meeting with his young sisters on Saturday afternoons, and his continued thoughtful inquiring conversation with his father, who lost no opportunity of filling

his young mind with the best knowledge, were early evidences of that serious holiness of character which he retained to his latest hour.

Manifesting a strong predisposition for the ministry, young Matthew at the age of eighteen was entrusted to the care of the Rev. Mr. Doolittle, who conducted an academy at Islington. Mr. Doolittle, however, being a nonconformist, was not, in these troublesome and tyrannous times, long allowed to remain undisturbed, and was compelled to break up his establishment. Matthew consequently returned to Broad Oak, where he prosecuted his studies with ardour for some time, and in 1685 returned again to London and entered himself a student at law in Gray's Inn.

In 1687 a great change in public measures

took place, and persecution against dissent having somewhat abated, Matthew Henry felt the obstacles to his ministerial predilections removed, and was ordained; and perhaps few men have entered upon the sacred duties of the office with a deeper feeling of seriousness and responsibility than he seems to have done. After a considerable time devoted to self-examination, he became minister of the Presbyterian congregation at Chester, a post which he filled with honour and usefulness for twenty-five years.

In 1687, at the age of about twenty-six, Matthew Henry married Katherine Hardware, of Bromborough Court, who it appears added the charms of beauty and accomplishments to those of piety. The lady died however in less than two years. As a minister Matthew

was more than ordinarily successful. His congregation increased, his chapel was enlarged, men of education were added to his people, and the number of communicants increased to 350. This will not be wondered at when we remember that he devoted an hour every Saturday to publicly catechising the young, that even the prisoners in Chester jail shared his visits and his pastoral admonitions, and that he made frequent journeys to 'those nests of souls,' as he called them, Nantwich and Shrewsbury, as well as Whitechurch, Wem, Market Drayton, and Stafford, preaching everywhere.

Matthew Henry's works are numerous, but his Commentary on the Holy Scriptures stands at their head as the most ambitious and laborious. After many thoughts and prayers

concerning it, he commenced this celebrated work on the night of the 12th of November, 1704, and prosecuted his labours with uncommon assiduity and perseverance. He was an early riser, was usually in his study at five o'clock, sometimes earlier, and was never happier than when among his books.

The publication of the first volumes of his Commentary, though his venerable father, having died before its commencement, was not spared to see his son's honour and usefulness in this particular, soon made his talents known as a divine and an expositor, and he consequently received many offers of a pulpit in London, which however he declined. At length the congregation at Hackney invited him, and after deep and long consideration he consented to go, believing it to be his duty

to fill a wider sphere of usefulness than that at Chester, and in 1712, being fifty years old, removed to Hackney, where his labours were most arduous.

Matthew Henry's sympathies with Chester, where he had been twenty-five years, were of course very strong, and on removing to London he promised to visit his Chester flock annually. In the summer of 1713 he fulfilled this promise, and in May 1714 left Hackney again on the same errand. On his return home, after preaching to the people on the subject of the heavenly rest, his horse threw him. He was not at the time aware of having received any injury, and preached as usual, but was observed to be very sleepy. To one of his friends who was with him he uttered these memorable words:—'You have been

used to take notice of the sayings of dying men; this is mine,—that a life spent in the service of God, and communion with him, is the most comfortable and pleasant life that any one can live in this world.' About five in the morning of the next day, June 22nd, 1714, he was seized with apoplexy, and fell asleep at eight. On the following Friday the remains of the venerable saint were taken to Chester, and buried at Trinity Church, by the side of his first wife.

Of the works of Matthew Henry we can afford space for only a few words. His small treatises, most of which have circulated largely, are all more or less characterised by that heavenly wisdom, that sententious neatness of expression, that forcible homeliness, that antithetical pithy terseness, so well adapted to

impress the mind and remain in the memory. His "Exposition of the Old and New Testament" is however the work on which, though he did not live to complete it, his fame chiefly depends. This has been reprinted again and again,* with increasing popularity, and though commentators more critical, more learned, or more profound might be named, yet no comment has ever succeeded in so thoroughly penetrating the masses as that of Matthew Henry. It is not too much to assert that it has stamped its impress upon our national

* As a proof of the popularity of this work even in the present day, we may remind the reader of the fact that an unabridged illustrated edition has appeared within the last three years, which notwithstanding the many that have preceded it has had an immense circulation. This edition, remarkable for its cheapness as well as its beauty, is edited by the Rev. A. L. Gordon, who has greatly added to its value by an industrious selection of supplementary illustrative notes from various writers.

character, nor too much to prophesy that it will continue to be read and admired while the language in which it is written remains.

Chiefest expounder of the sacred page,
 The glorious comment scarcely less divine,
 Bright doth thy name, thrice-honoured HENRY, shine
 In Britain's galaxy of saint and sage.
 Never did happier pen for truth engage,
 Or holier genius bless the world, than thine ;
 Nor shall thy " Exposition," age by age,
 While Christian bosoms beat, e'er need a shrine.
 Still with fresh bays shall fame thy wreath renew,
 Forgot his nobles base and warriors fell ;
 Earth's latest sons shall pay thee homage due,
 Thy holy sayings to their children tell,
 And bid them spell thy page, thy path pursue,
 Who wrote so wisely, and who lived so well.

S. W. P.

PATERNOSTER ROW.

Gems from Matthew Henry.

THE BIBLE.

As the Word of God, well studied, will help us to understand his providences, so the providence of God, well observed, will help us to understand his Word ; for God is every day fulfilling the Scripture.

They that tremble at the convictions of the Word, may triumph in the consolations of it.

As the rod of God is of use to enforce the Word, so the Word of God is of use to explain the rod, that the voice of both together may be heard and answered.

Woeful is the condition of that man that has the Word of God and the prayers of the poor against him.

If we keep God's Word, God's Word will keep us from everything really hurtful.

To the more wise and thinking, to the more considerate and contemplative, the Bible recommends itself by those innate excellences which are self-evident characteristics of its Divine original. If we look attentively, we shall soon be aware of God's image and super-scription upon it. A mind rightly disposed by an humble sincere subjection to its Maker will easily discover the image of his wisdom in the awful depth of its mysteries; the image of his sovereignty in the commanding majesty of its style; the image of his unity in the wonderful harmony and symmetry of all its parts; the image of his holiness in the unspotted purity of its precepts; and the image of his goodness in the manifest tendency of the whole to the welfare and happiness of mankind in both worlds: in short, it is a work that fathers itself.

Forgetfulness of the law is at the bottom of all our transgressions of it.

Those have best learned the meaning of the Scripture, that have learned how to apply it as a reproof to their own faults, and a rule to their own practice.

As long as we live we must be scholars in Christ's school, and sit at his feet; but we should aim to be head scholars, and to get into the highest form. God's judgments are all righteous, and therefore it is desirable not only to learn them, but to be learned in them; mighty in the Scriptures.

No word of God must be incredible to us, as long as no work of God is impossible to him.

Scripture predictions must be eyed for the directing of our consciences, not the satisfying of our curiosity.

Men's hearts and lives must come up to God's law, and comply with that; for God's law will never come down to them, or comply with them.

The reason why men deny the Scriptures to be the Word of God is, because they are resolved not to conform themselves to Scripture rules, and so an obstinate infidelity is made the sorry subterfuge of a wilful disobedience.

The best evidence of our love to the Word of God is, never to forget it.

If we say as God saith in his word, we may hope that he will say as we say by his providence.

Let us never think strange that which the word of Christ has raised our expectations of, whether the sufferings of this present time, or the glory that is to be revealed. If we remember what Christ hath said to us, we shall be the less surprised at what he doth with us.

CHARITY.

What is good in men we should take all occasions to speak of, and often repeat it; what is evil we should make mention of but sparingly, and no more than is needful.

To judge ourselves is our duty, but to judge our brother is our sin.

How apt we are to judge of men and their character by what they are to us; and to conclude that those are certainly evil men that have never so justly been, or that we never so unjustly think have been, instruments of evil to us.

The perverting of words is the subverting of peace; and a deal of mischief is made by forcing invidious constructions upon what is said and written, and drawing consequences that were never intended.

Men were made to have dealings one with another; but if men, because one worships at one temple and another at another, will deny the offices of humanity and charity and common civility, will be morose and unnatural, scornful and censorious, and this under colour of zeal for religion, they plainly show that however their religion may be true, they are not truly religious; but, pretending to stickle for religion, subvert the design of it.

Were there more of deliberation in our censures and judgments, there would be more of mercy and moderation in them.

The grace of repentance calls our own afflictions punishments; but the grace of charity calls the afflictions of others trials, unless the contrary is very evident,

Those persons or actions we can say no good of, we had best say nothing of.

Charity teaches us to put the most favourable construction upon men's words and actions that they will bear; but piety teacheth us to make a good improvement of them, even contrary to that which they were intended for. If wicked men, in what they do against us, are God's hand to humble and reform us, why may they not in what they say against us be God's mouth to instruct and convince us?

Let us look upon ourselves and one another as the Lord's people, and it will have a mighty influence upon us in the discharge of all our duty both to God and man.

What we charitably forgive will be remembered and recompensed, as well as what we charitably give.

CONTENTMENT.

A little will serve to sustain us comfortably and a great deal can do no more.

God sets bounds to our lot; let us, then, set bounds to our desires, and bring our mind to our condition.

A small estate honestly come by, which a man is content with, enjoys comfortably, serves God with cheerfully, and puts to a right use, is much better and more valuable than a great estate ill got, and then ill kept or ill spent. It carries with it more inward satisfaction, a better reputation with all that are wise and good; it will last longer, and will turn to a better account in the great day, when men will be judged, not according to what they had, but what they did.

Let this for ever stop the mouth of murmuring, that it is daring impiety to murmur at God, because he is God; and gross absurdity to murmur at men, because they are but men.

There is no time lost while we are waiting God's time. It is as acceptable a piece of submission to the will of God to sit still contentedly when our lot requires it, as to work for him when we are called to it.

It is better to live poorly upon the fruits of God's goodness, than live plentifully upon the products of our own sin.

Nature is content with a little, grace with less, but lust with nothing.

It much more deserves and demands our care, what estate we shall go to in the other world when we die, than what estate we shall then leave behind us in this world.

God's presence with a man in his house, though it be but a cottage, makes it both a castle and a palace.

Nature is content with a little, and grace with less. Those that have most, in effect, have no more for themselves than food and raiment; the overplus they have only either the keeping of, or the giving of, not the enjoyment of: if God gives us more, we are bound to be thankful, and to use it for him; if he give us but this, we are bound to be content, and cheerfully to enjoy him in it.

Some have estates and no children to inherit them; others have children, and no estates to leave them. Those that have both have reason to be thankful, those that have neither may the better be content.

We shall have what pleaseth God, and let that please us.

DEATH.

We must expect that death will come, and think much of it. We must desire that it would come, as those that long to be with Christ. We must be willing to tarry until it doth come, as those that believe God's time to be the best. We must give diligence to get ready against it comes, that it may be a blessed change to us.

Those, and those only, may promise themselves comfort in death who are good, and do good, while they live.

Our being ready for death will make it come never the sooner, but much the easier; and those that are fit to die are most fit to live.

We shall not die an hour the sooner, but abundantly the better, for our timely setting of our heart and house in order.

Death is life to a good man.

Those whose conversation in the world is truly holy, shall find their removal out of it truly happy.

Let grace make us willing to part with life whenever God calls; for it may so happen that even sense may make us desirous to part with it before he calls.

The work of life must be done before we die, for it cannot be done after; and it is very desirable when we come to die to have nothing else to do but to die.

Those that have welcomed Christ may welcome death.

Old people will die never the sooner, but may die the better, for reckoning themselves old.

Those that have the least of this earth find a grave in it.

There is nothing we can truly call our own but our sins and our graves.

It is pity the gravestone should forget the grave.

Grace teaches us in the midst of life's greatest comforts to be willing to die, and in the midst of its greatest crosses to be willing to live.

The death of our relations should effectually remind us that we are not at home in this world. When they are gone, say, 'We are going.'

A burying-place was the first spot of ground Abraham was possessed of in Cansan. When we are entering into the world, it is good to think of our going out it; for as soon as we are born we begin to die.

Dying saints may be justly envied, whilst living sinners are justly pitied.

A good man would desire, if it were the will of God, not to outlive his usefulness. Why should we covet to live any longer in this world than while we may do God and our generation some service in it?

The longer we live, the more sensible we should be of God's goodness to us in keeping us alive; his care in prolonging our frail lives; his patience in prolonging our forfeited lives.

To a wicked man death is the end of all his joys: to a godly man, it is the end of all his griefs.

That man lives long enough that has done his work, and is fit for another world.

There are many who desire to die the death of the righteous, but do not endeavour to live the life of the righteous; gladly would they have their end like theirs, but not their way. They would be saints in heaven, but not saints on earth.

Our business is to get ready to die by doing the work of life, and then refer ourselves to God to take away our life when and how he pleases.

D U T Y.

Those who mind their safety more than their duty, are an easy prey to Satan's temptations.

Let us do our duty, and then trust God with our safety.

We must never omit known duty merely for fear it should be misconstrued; but, while we keep a good conscience, let us trust God with our good name.

Many that are very remiss in their duty, if they were but faithfully told of it, would reform, and do better.

While we make God's precepts our rule, his promises our stay, and his providence our guide, we need not dread the greatest difficulties we may meet with in the way of duty.

Many frighten themselves from real duties by imaginary difficulties.

We may comfortably trust God with our safety, while we carefully keep to our duty. If God be our guide, he will be our guard.

When we are in the way of our duty we must trust God both with our credit and with our safety.

What duty God convinceth us of, and calls us to, we should set about it speedily. No season will be more convenient than the present season.

God will appear to them in a way of grace that attend on him in a way of duty.

The way of duty is the way of safety.

They that will not see their duty shall not see their interest.

Poverty, in the way of duty, is to be chosen rather than plenty in the way of sin.

Duty is ours, events are God's.

As, with a good God, the end of one mercy is the beginning of another; so, with a good man, a good minister, the end of one duty is the beginning of another.

Those whom we have been industrious to draw to that which is evil, when God opens their eyes and ours we should be as industrious to follow in that which is good. It will be a holy revenge upon ourselves to become pupils to those in the way of duty to whom we have been tutors in the way of sin.

By this we may know that we find grace in God's sight, if we find grace in our heart to guide and quicken us in the way of our duty. God's good work in us is the surest discovery of his goodwill towards us.

Those that make their duty their main care need not be careful concerning the event.

He that by sinful shifts will save his life, and cannot find in his heart to trust God with it in the way of duty, shall lose it in the way of sin.

Those that will not return to the duties they have left cannot expect to return to the comforts they have lost.

Those that decline the way of duty for fear of reproach, will certainly meet with much greater reproach in the way of disobedience.

Grants of mercy call for returns of duty.

Those will quickly hear their doom that cannot bear to hear their duty.

Our eye upon God, observing his eye upon us, will keep us to our duty, and encourage us in it when difficulties are never so discouraging.

They that adhere to their duty secure their felicity.

Supposing there were not another life after this, yet that is a happy man that keeps in the way of his duty.

People should not only seek comfort at the mouth of their ministers, but seek the law there; for if we be found in the way of duty we shall find it the way of comfort.

If we be careful to do our duty, we may cheerfully trust God with our comfort.

Those have the best knowledge that know their duty.

Whatever new condition God is by his providence bringing us into, we must beg of him to teach us the duty of it, and to enable us to do it, that we may do the work of the day in its day, of the place in its place.

Omissions of duty and in duty are as fatal to the soul as commissions of sin.

FAITH.

Those are always under the eye of God that have God always in their eye.

None live so easily, so pleasantly, as those that live by faith.

When God's way is in the sea, so that he cannot be traced, yet we are sure his way is in the sanctuary, so that he may be trusted.

An active faith can give thanks for a promise, though it be not yet performed; knowing that God's bonds are as good as ready money.

We must encourage our confidence in God with this, that he made heaven and earth, and he that did that can do anything.

The joys of faith are the best remedies against the griefs of sense.

Looking at difficulties with an eye of sense, more than at precepts and promises with an eye of faith, is at the bottom of all our inordinate fears, both as to public and personal concerns.

Temporal mercies are then doubled and sweetened to us when they are fetched in by the prayer of faith, and returned by the praises of faith.

If we had but more faith, we should have less care.

That we may not complain of what is, let us see God's hand in all events: and that we may not be afraid of what shall be, let us see all events in God's hands.

If the eye of our faith be unto God, the eye of his favour will be unto us.

A stedfast faith in God will produce a stedfast faithfulness to God.

Those that will deal with God must deal upon trust, and we may all venture to do so; for, though many have been losers for him, never any were losers by him in the end.

THE FEAR OF GOD.

We must be always so in God's fear as never to be out of it.

Those that truly fear God need not fear man; and those that are afraid of the least sin, need not be afraid of the greatest trouble.

Those are likely to proceed in the favour of God, that begin in the fear of God.

Forgetfulness of God is at the bottom of sin, as the remembrance of our Creator is the happy and hopeful beginning of a holy life.

Those that most fear God's wrath are most likely to feel it.

The best evidence of our fearing God is our being willing to serve and honour him with that which is dearest to us, and with all to him, or for him.

In vain do we pretend to fear God, if we do not make conscience of our duty to him.

If thou fear God and walk in his commandments, whatever befalls thee, good shall be brought out of it; it shall be well with thee while thou livest, better when thou diest, and best to eternity.

Deep security commonly ends in despair; whereas those that keep up a hope at all times have a good hope to support themselves in the worst of times.

The reigning fear of God is the best antidote against the ensnaring fear of man.

Those that will not yield to the fear of God shall be made to yield to the fear of everything else.

Those that would be steady in their adherence to God, must possess themselves with an awe and reverence of God, and always speak of him with solemnity and seriousness; for those that can make a jest of the true God will make a god of anything.

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We may apprehend God, but cannot comprehend him; may know that he is, but cannot know what he is.

We cannot conceive how much good our God doth every day, much less can we conceive how good he is.

Glorious things may be expected from him that is both mighty and holy; who can do everything, and will do everything well and for the best.

No place can either include or exclude God.

All our disquieting fears arise from our ignorance of God, and mistakes concerning him.

Did we consider what a God he is with whom we have to do, we should surely make conscience of our duty to him, and would not dare to sin against him.

Nothing more clear than that God is, nothing more dark than what he is.

Those know not God that do not admire his lovingkindness, and those know not themselves that do not earnestly covet it.

G R E A T N E S S.

What abundance of good may great men do, if they be good men.

Those that are advanced before others in dignity, it is expected they go before others in duty.

They that covet forbidden honours forfeit allowed ones.

God gives men power, not that they may look great with it, but that they may do good with it.

Things are bad, when bad men are not only honoured notwithstanding their wickedness, but honoured for their wickedness, and the vilest men exalted; wickedness is then great, when great men are wicked.

Those that have so much power over others as to be able to oppress them, have seldom so much power over themselves as not to oppress: great might is a very great snare to many,

A great name is what they who have have great reason to be thankful for, and may improve to good purposes, but what they that have not have no reason to be ambitious of: a good name is more desirable.

It is what a man is, more than what he has, that speaks him truly great.

The way to be great is to do good.

Acquaintance with the things of God, and serviceableness to the kingdom of God, puts true honour upon men, and makes them great.

Those whom the grace of God has dignified ought not to dobase themselves. Let God's people be of God's mind.

A family of saints is more truly honourable than a family of nobles; Shem's holy seed than Ham's royal seed, Jacob's twelve patriarchs than Ishmael's twelve princes. Goodness is true greatness.

Our honours then became honours indeed to us, when they are consecrated to God's honour.

Great conquerors are but great hunters. Alexander and Caesar would not make such a figure in Scripture history as they do in common history; the former is represented in prophecy but as a he-goat pushing.

Those who would secure their honour must retain their virtue.

Nothing doth make a man truly great but being truly good, and partaking of God's holiness.

It is well with a kingdom when its great men know how to value its good men.

It is a happy time when those that are above others, in power and dignity, go before them in the service of God.

That is the most valuable glory which ariseth from our relation to Christ, and our interest in him.

H A P P I N E S S.

How sad is the case of man, that he must be importuned to be happy; and how wonderful the grace of Christ, that he will importune him.

Faint desires of happiness, without right choice of the end, and a right use of the means, deceive many into their own ruin. Multitudes go to hell with their mouth full of good wishes.

The gains of the world, and the delights of sense, will surfeit, but never satisfy; but the communication of Divine favour and grace will satisfy, but never surfeit.

Let those that have comfort be afraid of sinning it away.

In God let us always rejoice with a holy triumph, and in other things let us always rejoice with a holy trembling.

We need desire no more to make us easy and happy, wherever we are, than to have God's presence with us, and to be under his protection; it is comfortable, in a journey, to have a guide in an unknown way, a guard in a dangerous way, to be well carried, well provided for, and to have good company in any way; and they that have God with them, have all this in the best manner.

Nothing is a greater prejudice to our joy in God than the love of the world, and the sorrow of the world, the consequence of it.

Then God takes pleasure in our religious exercises when we take pleasure in them. Holy work should be done with holy joy.

None have such cause to be cheerful as good Christians have; it is pity but that they should always have hearts to be so.

None of our comforts are ever lost but what have been a thousand times forfeited.

Joy is forbidden fruit to wicked people.

We are likely to have small joy of any of our creature comforts if we make not God our chief joy.

By enlarging the matters of our joy we increase the occasions of our sorrow.

It is the folly and infirmity of some good people, that they lose much of the pleasantness of their religion by the fretfulness and uneasiness of their natural temper, which they humour and indulge, instead of mortifying it.

HEAVEN.

There are degrees of glory in heaven; every vessel will be alike full, but not alike large. And the degrees of glory there will be according to the degrees of usefulness here.

What God has laid out upon his people is much, but what he has laid up for them is infinitely more. We must mind heaven as our end, and holiness as our way.

Men may go a great way towards heaven, and yet come short, nay, may go to hell with a good reputation.

Oh, if men would be as earnest for heaven while their day of grace lasts, as they will be when it is over,—would be as solicitous to provide themselves with oil while the bridegroom tarries as they will be when the bridegroom cometh, how well were it for them!

The more dead we are to the delights of sense, the better prepared we are for the pleasures of heaven.

Those that are bound for heaven must be willing to swim against the stream, and must not do as the most do, but as the best do.

We mistake if we think our preparation for heaven is carried on only by contemplation and the acts of devotion. Usefulness to others will pass as well in our account as anything.

H O L I N E S S.

Those are truly wise, and none but those, that are universally conscientious.

Holiness is the symmetry of the soul.

Enoch was entirely dead to this world, and did not only walk *after* God, as all good men do, but he walked *with* God, as if he were in heaven already; he lived above the rate, not only of other men, but of other saints; not only good in bad times, but the best in good times.

I have often said, and I must take all occasion to repeat it, that a holy, heavenly life, spent in the service of God, and in communion with him, is, without doubt, the most pleasant, comfortable life that any one can live in this world.

It is a gracious ambition to covet to be really more holy than others: but it is a proud ambition to covet to appear so.

One ill act of a good man may be of more pernicious consequence to others than twenty of a wicked man.

The indwelling of the Word, and Spirit, and grace of God in us, is best tried by the effects of it, particularly by our receiving what he sends; the commands he sends, the messengers, the providences he sends, especially Christ, whom he hath sent.

The only way to be happy is to be holy. Mercies are then perfected when they are sanctified.

How well were it for us if we were always in as good a frame of mind as we are sometimes!

The good we exhort others to, we should ourselves be examples of.

We must walk in Christ as our way, walk in his spirit as our principle, his righteousness as our plea, and his life as our pattern.

Those that would save others must by singular piety distinguish themselves.

Let our make and place, as men, remind us of our duty as Christians, which is, always to keep heaven in our eye, and the earth under our feet.

Those that are good really will be good relatively.

The intention of divine institutions is then well answered, when one religious service helps to fit us for another, and all for heaven.

It is an easier thing to persuade men to assume the form of godliness, than to submit to the power of godliness.

God is not only the former, but the Father, of spirits. Let the soul which God has breathed into us, breathe after him; and let it be for him, since it is from him.

Though good Christians may have many paths, they have but one way, that of serious godliness.

If every one will sweep before his own door, the street will be clean. If every one will mend one, we shall be all mended.

The worse others are, the better we should be.

H O P E.

Hope in God is the best principle of true courage.

Those know not how to value their hope in God who cannot find joy enough in that hope to balance their grievances, and silence their griefs.

The children of this world have their all in hand, and nothing in hope; while the children of God have their all in hope, and next to nothing in hand.

Never any that hoped in God's word were were made ashamed of their hope.

What we have in hope, according to the promise, is as sure, and should be as sweet, as what we have in hand.

We cannot expect too little from man, nor too much from God.

The closer our expectations are confined to God, the higher our expectations may be raised from him.

We do not trust God, but tempt him, if our expectations slacken our endeavours.

From man oftentimes, even when we expect little, yet we have less; but from God, even when we expect much, yet we have more.

Hope the best, and get ready for the worst, and then take what God sends.

The hope of sinners will be cheats, and their gains will be snares.

HUMILITY.

Though the aspiring rise fast, the humble stand fast.

Many preserve themselves by humbling themselves; the bullet flies over him that stoops.

When Christ was here upon earth he distinguished himself, and made himself remarkable, by nothing so much as the instances of his humiliation.

Those that are content to stoop are in the fairest way to rise.

There may be a just occasion for us to vindicate ourselves; but it doth not become us to applaud ourselves.

Those are best prepared for the greatest mercies, that see themselves unworthy of the least.

That will break a proud man's heart that will not break a humble man's sleep.

A humble, tender spirit will turn reproaches into reproofs, and so get good by them, instead of being provoked by them.

Oh, how much hidden worth is there, which in this world is either lost in the dust of contempt, and cannot be known, or wrapped up in the veil of humility, and will not be known.

Though civility teaches us to call others by their highest titles, yet humility and wisdom teach us to call ourselves by the lowest.

Those that are most humble and most serviceable, are really most honourable.

There will never be like-mindedness, where there is not lowly-mindedness.

Let us not think well of ourselves, but do well for ourselves.

God's servants must think nothing below them but sin.

Those that have long served God, and been kept from gross sin, have a great deal to be humbly thankful for, but nothing proudly to boast of.

Those that usurp the honours that do not belong to them, will shortly be filled with the shame that doth.

K N O W L E D G E.

A man may have his head full of good notions, and his mouth full of good expressions, and yet his heart empty of grace, and perish eternally. You that know more than others, what do ye more?

It is not knowledge, but love, that distinguisheth saints from devils.

Many have their eyes open that have not their hearts open; are enlightened, but not sanctified; and that knowledge which puffs up men with pride, will but serve to light them to hell, whither many go with their eyes open.

A man may be full of the knowledge of God, and yet utterly destitute of the grace of God; may receive the truth in the light of it, and yet be a stranger to the love of it.

Those who improve the light they have, and carefully live up to it, shall be secured by divine grace from destructive mistakes.

Knowledge without grace doth but make men the more ingeniously wicked.

Ignorance is so far from being the mother of devotion, that it is the murderer of it.

The way of religion is the way of understanding; those that are not truly pious are not truly intelligent.

Even those that are well taught have need to be still taught, that they may grow in knowledge.

Serious godliness is the best learning.

The due improvement of what we know and own, would help us into the understanding of that which seems difficult and doubtful.

Those that would be wise when they are old, must be inquisitive when they are young.

LIBERALITY.

The miser's feast is his penance.

Many have been beggared by a foolish generosity, but never any by a prudent charity.

If we make our worldly estates serviceable to our religion, we shall find our religion very serviceable to the prosperity of our worldly affairs. We mistake if we think that giving will undo us, and make us poor; no, giving for God's honour will make us rich: what we gave, we have.

What is given in alms in a right manner is put out to the best interest upon the best security.

They that do good with what they have shall have more to do more good with.

Almsgiving is the surest and safest way of thriving.

Whatever we give up to God, he will give it back to us, unspeakably to our advantage. Our hearts, our children, our estates, are never more ours, more truly, more comfortably ours, than when we have offered them up to God.

The abuses put upon our charity, though ordered with never so much discretion, will neither justify our uncharitableness, nor lose us the reward of our charity.

It is an excellent thing when men's religion makes them generous, free-hearted, and open-handed, scorning to do a thing that is paltry and sneaking.

If by charity we trust God with what we have, we put it into good hands against bad times.

When God has had his dues out of our estates, we may expect the comfort of what falls to our share.

The more God bestows upon us, the more he expects from us in works of piety and charity. Great successes call for proportionable returns. When we look over our estates, we should consider, here are convenient things, rich things, it may be, and fine things; but where are the dedicated things?

The more God gives us, the more cheerfully we should serve him. Our abundance should be oil to the wheels of our obedience.

Those that are wealthy should be generous, and devise liberal things; what is an abundance good for, but to do good with it?

Then we have the comfort of our substance, when we have honoured the Lord with it.

God's bounty should make us bountiful.

Niggardliness to-day, out of thoughtfulness for to-morrow, is a complication of corrupt affections that ought to be mortified.

Those that would have wherewith to be charitable, must be provident.

A charitable disposition expects only opportunity, not importunity, to do good.

A distrustful fear of wanting ourselves should not hinder us from needful charity to others.

If we begin with God, he will go on with us; let the first fruits be his, and the after fruits will the more comfortably be ours.

Shall the prospect of advantage in this world make men generous to the rich, and shall not the believing of an abundant recompense in the resurrection of the just make us charitable to the poor?

Many excuse themselves from laying out in charity, under pretence of laying up for charity.

In many cases, it is wisdom for men to make their own hands their executors, and what they find to do, to do it while they live, as far as they can.

Those that by reason of distance, or otherwise, cannot forward a good work by their persons, must, as they are able, forward it by their purses. If some find hands, let others fill them.

Well-wishers to the temple should be well-doers for it.

Those that deny God his part of their estates may justly expect a curse upon their own part of them.

It is an undoubted truth, though little believed, that to be charitable to the poor, and to be free and generous in the support of religion, and any good work, is the surest and safest way of thriving.

Those that starve their religion, either they are poor, or are in a fair way to be so.

Munificence recommends a man more than magnificence.

It becomes Christians to be open-hearted and open-handed, and in every good work to sow plentifully, as those on whom God hath sowed plentifully, and that hope to reap so.

Where, upon a prudent and impartial judgment, we see no cause to suspect ill, charity teacheth us to hope well, and to show kindness accordingly; it is better to feed five drones, or wasps, than to starve one bee.

Those that show favour to men shall find favour with God.

Serving God with our little is the way to make it more; and we must never think that wasted, with which God is honoured.

MINISTERS.

The purity of ministers adds much to the beauty of their ministrations; so doth their unity.

That is preached best, and with most probability of success to others, which is first preached to ourselves.

Ministers must not think it enough to preach before their hearers, but must preach to them.

The business of ministers is to speak from God to his people, and to God for his people.

A scandalous maintenance makes a scandalous ministry.

A wicked man is the worst of creatures, a wicked Christian is the worst of men, and a wicked minister is the worst of Christians.

How many are there in the midst of our assemblies, where the Gospel is preached, that do not sit under the Word, but sit by! It is to them as a tale that is told them, not as a message that is sent them; they are willing we should preach before them, not that we should preach to them.

Many will commend the wit of a sermon that will not be commanded by the divine laws of a sermon.

Those are the best ministers that both do and teach, whose lives are a constant sermon.

Ministers must preach as those that are in earnest, and are themselves affected with those things which they desire to affect others with. Those words are not likely to thaw the hearers' hearts that freeze between the speaker's lips.

Nothing more effectually debaucheth a nation than the debauchery of ministers.

Aiming at the monopoly of honour and respect has been in all ages the bane of the church, and the shame of its members and ministers; as also a vicing of interests, and a jealousy of rivalship and competition.

Those will have a great deal to answer for in the judgment day who take upon them the care of souls and yet take no care of them.

The ministry is the best calling, but the worst trade, in the world.

Those that corrupt the Word of God, while they pretend to preach it, are so far from edifying the church that they do it the greatest mischief imaginable.

Those that will not regard good ministers' preaching cannot expect any benefit by their praying. If you will not hear us when we speak from God to you, God will not hear us when we speak to him for you.

It is possible men may have their fancies pleased by the Word, and yet not have their consciences touched, nor their hearts changed; the itching ear gratified, and yet not the corrupt nature sanctified.

A minister's house should be a church for all his neighbours.

God has given to his ministers diversities of gifts, and calls them out to do diversities of services, so that they have need one of another, should make use one of another, and be helpful to one another.

There is not a more despicable animal upon the face of the earth than a profane, wicked, scandalous minister.

OBEDIENCE.

Christ will not save us unless we be willing he should govern us.

Sincere obedience is universal; and he that from a right principle obeys any of God's precepts will have respect to them all.

If our hearing be not the means of our obedience, it will be the aggravation of our disobedience.

God's work is its own wages, and th a present reward of obedience in obedie

That which we undertake, in obedie God's command, and a humble attes upon his providence, will certainly su and end with comfort at last.

Careful observance is necessary to un obedience.

Our forgetfulness of God's works is bottom of our disobedience to his laws.

We cannot expect the benefit of th mises, unless we make conscience of th cepts.

None cast off the government of thei but those that have first abandoned th derstanding of a man.

By doing obeisance, we are learning ence.

We find it easier to discern the reaso ness and importance of a command wh have occasion to claim the benefit of it when we have occasion to do the duty

Those that profess God's name, if they do not make conscience of keeping his commandments, do but profane his name.

Those are likely to speed well that follow the rule of the Word, the conduct of the Spirit, and the intimations of Providence.

It ought to be the great care of every one of us to follow the Lord fully. We must, in a course of obedience to God's will, and service to his honour, follow him universally, without dividing; uprightly, without dissembling; cheerfully, without disputing; and constantly, without declining: and this is following him fully.

If men did but rightly know the truths of God, they would readily obey the laws of God.

Those that will not be bound by the precepts of the law shall be bound by the sentence of it; for one way or other the word of God will take hold of men.

Those that live a life of conformity to God may live a life of confidence and comfort in him, if it be not their own fault.

Then only we may expect comfortably to enjoy our right in, and government of, both ourselves and others, when we dutifully acknowledge God's title to, and dominion over us, and all we have.

P R A I S E.

This is true thanksgiving, even thanksgiving; and this use we should make of all our deliverances, we should serve God the more closely and cheerfully.

We have learned nothing to purpose, if we have not learned to praise God.

Whatever condition a child of God is in, he doth not want matter for praise, and therefore should not want a heart.

God delights to furnish those with matter for praise that have hearts for it.

All our rejoicings must express themselves in thanksgivings to Him from whom all our comforts are received.

Thanksgiving is good, but thanks-living is better.

Special preservations call for particular thanksgivings.

Do we hope that praising God will be the blessedness of our eternity? surely then we ought to make it the business of our time.

Those that share in mercies ought to join in praises.

Whatever is the matter of our rejoicing ought to be the matter of our thanksgiving.

Whatever we have the joy of, God must have the praise of.

Where we have a tent, God must have an altar.

What pity is it that this earth, which is so full of God's goodness, should be so empty of his praises; and that, of the multitudes that live upon his bounty, there are so few that live to his glory!

In vain do we pretend to be to God for a people if we be not to him for a praise.

Every new mercy in our hand should new song into our mouth.

Those that forget to attend God with praises, may perhaps be compelled to him with their prayers.

PRAYER.

Faithful prayers may presently be into joyful praises, if it be not our own.

When prayers are in our mouths, must be in our hearts.

Lip labour, though never so well laboured if that be all, is but lost labour in God.

Prayer is the midwife of mercy, that to bring it forth.

True saints will make supplication saints.

Those that trade with heaven by grow rich by quick returns.

They that cry in prayer may hope to be heard in prayer, not for their loudness but their liveliness.

Those only seek God acceptably and successfully, that are inward with him, intent upon him, and entire for him, in their seeking of him.

Would we pray better, we should be every way better.

The best way to obtain the benefit of the promises and privileges of the covenant is to be earnest in prayer with God for wisdom and grace to do the duties of it.

What we win by prayer, we must wear with praise.

We lose much of the comfort of our prayers for want of observing the returns of them.

It is good for us to keep some account of our prayers, that we may not unsay in our practices anything that we said in our prayers.

We must pray as earnestly for grace as for comfort.

Then we are like to speed in praying, when we pray in praying.

They that pray for God's grace must aim at God's glory.

Those are not fit to put up good prayers that do not walk in good ways.

What can we say more for ourselves in our prayers than God has said for us in his promises?

It is the fervent prayer that is the effectual prayer.

Those who would wait upon God aright, must learn betimes to do it; the most accomplished courtiers are those who are brought up at court.

The correspondence between earth and heaven is never let fall on God's side.

When we have prayed to God for any mercy, we must second our prayers with our endeavours; else, instead of trusting God, we tempt him: we must so depend upon God's providence as to make use of our own prudence.

We should not indulge ourselves in any desire which we cannot in faith turn into prayer.

Those that pray much will have much to give thanks for.

They who pray constantly when they are well, may pray comfortably when they are sick.

It is of use for private Christians so far to have their hours of prayer, as may serve, though not to bind, yet to mind conscience.

Prayers of faith are filed in heaven, and are not forgotten, though the thing prayed for is not presently given in. Prayers made when we were young, and coming into the world, may be answered when we are old and going out of the world.

The delays of mercy are not to be construed the denials of prayer.

God will have his children, when they want, not only to wait on him, but to wait for him.

Denials in love are better than grants in anger.

It is the will of God that we should in everything make our requests known to him by prayer and supplication; not to inform or move him, but to qualify ourselves for the mercy. The waterman in the boat, that with his hook takes hold of the shore, doth not thereby pull the shore to the boat, but the boat to the shore: so, in prayer, we do not draw the mercy to ourselves, but ourselves to the mercy.

The sovereignty of God should engage, and his all-sufficiency encourage, our attendance on him and our expectations from him at all times.

You may as soon find a living man without breath, as a living Christian without prayer.

God consults our benefit, rather than our desires; for he knows what is good for us better than we do for ourselves, and how long it is fit our restraints should continue, and desired mercies should be delayed.

In vain do we pretend to seek God in our devotions, if we do not seek God in our whole conversation.

They that will not wait God's time cannot expect God's blessing.

When we pray to God for the mercies we want, we must praise him for those we have received.

It is good to have our hours of prayer, not to bind but to mind conscience; and if we think our bodies require refreshment by food thrice a day, can we think seldomer will serve our souls?

God often answers prayer with good words, when he doth not presently appear in great works; and those good words are real answers to prayer.

Our daily devotions must be looked upon as the most needful of our daily works, and the most pleasant of our daily comforts.

When our heads are fullest of care, and our hands of business, yet we must not forget our religion, nor suffer ourselves to be indisposed for acts of devotion.

God hath gracious intentions even in seeming delays.

God is always punctual to his time; though his promised mercies come not at the time that we set, they will certainly come at the time that He sets, and that is the best time.

If we pray in sincerity not to be led into temptation, we shall get and keep as far as we can out of the way of it.

Our business in prayer is not to prescribe, but to subscribe, to the wisdom and will of God; to refer our case to him, and then leave it with him.

Whatever is the matter of our care must be the matter of our prayer.

If we think to secure ourselves by prayer only, without watchfulness, we are slothful, and tempt God; if by watchfulness, without prayer, we are proud, and slight God; and either way we forfeit his protection.

It is good to be much in pious ejaculations, especially upon particular occasions; wherever we are, we have a way open heavenward. This will hinder no business, but further it rather; therefore, let no business hinder this, but give rise to it rather.

P R I D E.

Nothing in men is more odious and offensive to God than a proud conceit of themselves and contempt of others, for commonly those are most unholy of all that think themselves holier than any.

We must aim to be like the Most Holy, and the Most Merciful; but not like the Most High, and Most Mighty.

God will humble those that will not humble themselves.

They that are wise and good, will not look upon any with scorn and disdain.

There is no sin that has in it more of contradiction, and therefore more of offence to God, than pride.

What magnifying glasses do proud men look at their faces in!

Oh what need have good men to take heed of pride, a corruption that ariseth out of the ashes of other corruptions.

Self-conceit is self-dereit.

Perhaps there are more precious souls ruined by pride than by any one lust whatsoever.

Many have unhumbed hearts under humbling providences, and look most haughty then when God is bringing them down.

The proud unhumbed heart of man is one of the most daring enemies God has on this side hell.

It is hard to be great and not to be proud.

Many eminent professors have been ruined by a proud conceitedness of themselves, and confidence in themselves.

P R O S P E R I T Y.

Prosperity is the unhappy cause of much iniquity.

The way to temporal blessings is to be indifferent to them, and to refer ourselves to God concerning them. Solomon had wisdom given him because he did ask it, and wealth because he did not.

Religion and piety are good friends to outward prosperity: the fear of God in a house will help to build it up and establish it.

The surest foundations of a lasting prosperity are those which are laid in an early piety.

God gives and preserves outward blessings to wicked men, to shew that these are not the best things, but he has better in store for his own children.

If rich people have the advantage of the poor while they possess what they have, the poor have the advantage of the rich when they are called to part with it.

The multiplying of our comforts is but the multiplying of our cares and crosses.

Riches are a burden, and they that will be rich do but load themselves with thick clay. There is a burden of care in getting them, fear in keeping them, temptations in using them, guilt in abusing them, sorrow in losing them, and a burden of account, at last, to be given up concerning them.

They that have most, have for the most part but food and raiment and mirth; and they that have least, generally have that, and more.

A rich man has his riches as a camel's burden, he carries it, but it is another's to bear; it is from others, spends it for others, lends it to others; and while he has it, it is his.

When men grow rich, they are tempted to think religion a needless thing; they are happy without it, think it a thing below them, and too hard for them; their dignity forbids them to stoop, and their liberty forbids them to serve. But we are basely ungrateful to the better God is to us, the worse we are to him.

It is a righteous thing with God to tempt the righteous, and it is himself strange to those in the day of trouble who have showed themselves faithful and undutiful to him in their prosperity.

We must look upon all our advancements as designed for our usefulness. We are therefore blessed, that we may be blessing others; we are not born, nor do we live, for ourselves.

We have our all from God's bounty, and therefore ought to use all for his glory. Since we live upon him, we must live to him.

God disposeth of men's estates as he pleaseth, and often makes their wills against their wills.

Riches, honours, and pleasures, are the three great hindrances to godliness, especially to those in high stations.

P R O V I D E N C E.

What God calls us to we may depend upon his providence to furnish us for.

Some way or other Providence shall so order it, that good men shall come honestly by that wealth which the wicked man came dishonestly by.

As the events that shall be we must see in God's hand, so the events that are we must see God's hand in, and acknowledge him with thankfulness when we have reason to call it his good hand.

Those that trust in God and in his providence and promise, though they have great families and small incomes, can cheerfully hope that he that sends mouths, will send meat. He that feeds the brood of the ravens will not starve the seed of the righteous.

It is an instance of the mercy of God's providence, that wherever he has given life, he gives food agreeable, and sufficient; and he is a good housekeeper, that provides for so large a family.

Do we expect God should by his providence keep that which belongs to us? Let us by his grace keep that which belongs to him. Let God's honour and interest be our care, and then we may expect that our lives and comforts will be his.

God's promises, and our own experiences, are sufficient to encourage our dependence upon God, and our expectations from him, in all the affairs of this life.

Man proposeth, but God disposeth, and in his disposal we must acquiesce, and set ourselves to follow providence.

When we find it hard to understand particular providences, we must have recourse to general truths as our first principles, and abide by them.

Many might have prevented destroying providences, by humbling themselves under humbling providences.

Christ is our surety with God; and if he be so, Providence shall be our surety against all the world.

He that provided for Adam without his care, and still provides for all the creatures without their care, will not let those that trust him want any good thing. He that feeds his birds, will not starve his babes.

A prudent observation of the providences of God will contribute very much to the accomplishing of a good Christian.

Oh what a blessed change would it make in our hearts and lives did we but firmly believe this truth, that the best way to be comfortably provided for in this world is to be most intent upon another world!

RELIGION.

Religion is summed up in fearing God and praying to him; the former the most needful principle, the latter the most needful practice.

Would we be safe from evil, and quiet from the fear of it, let religion always rule us, and the Word of God be our counsellor. That is the way to dwell safely in this world, and to be quiet from the fear of evil in the other world.

If we make religion our business, God will make it our blessedness.

There is a reward not only after keeping, but in keeping, God's commandments; a present great reward of obedience in obedience. Religion is health and honour, it is peace and pleasure; it will make our comforts sweet, and our crosses easy; life truly valuable, and death itself truly desirable.

No man will speak against religion that has either duly weighed the proofs and evidences of it, or duly tried the comfort and benefit of it.

The time will come, when piety will have precedence, whatever it has now.

It will not serve us to make religion the subject of our talk, but we must make it the rule of our walk.

Take heed, on the one hand, of bigotry in the circumstantial of religion; and, on the other hand, of lukewarmness and indifference in the essentials of it.

Good men lay the credit of religion, and its profession in the world, nearer their hearts than any private interest or concern of their own; and those are powerful pleas in prayer which are fetched from thence, and great supports to faith.

People speak against religion, because it speaks against them.

Did men know what a difference God puts, and will put to eternity, between those that serve him and those that serve him not, religion would not seem to them such an indifferent thing as they make it, nor would they act in it with so much indifference as they do.

We make nothing of our religion, if we do not make heaven of it.

The boldness of the attacks which profane people make upon religion should sharpen the courage and resolution of its friends and advocates. When vice is daring, it is no time for virtue to be sneaking.

It is much easier to bring ourselves to the external services of religion, and observe all the formalities of devotion, than to live a life of dependence upon and submission to the Divine providence in the course of our conversation.

The most effectual way to take up differences in the lesser matters of religion, is to be more zealous in the greater.

Those rule well whom religion rules.

It is our wisdom and duty so to manage our religious exercises as that they may befriend our worldly business, and so to manage our worldly business as that it may be no enemy to our religious exercises.

Let but reason rule us, and religion will.

Nothing exposes religion more to the reproach of its enemies than the worldliness and hardheartedness of the professors of it.

Let worldly business be postponed to the business of religion, and it will prosper the better.

The ordinances of God are more the strength and safety of a kingdom than its military force; its men of God more than its men of war.

What is done in religion, so as to please God, must be done by no other constraint but that of love.

Next to our care not to be a shame to the gospel, should be our resolution not to be ashamed of the gospel.

The public concerns of God's glory ought to lie nearer our hearts than any private affections of our own.

Righteousness towards men is as much a branch of pure religion as religion towards God is a branch of universal righteousness.

The way to preserve the peace of the church, is to preserve the purity of it.

When Christianity, instead of causing quarrels about itself, makes all other strifes to cease,—when it cools the fiery, smoothes the rugged, and disposeth men to be kind and loving, courteous and beneficent to all men, studious to preserve and promote peace in all relations and societies,—this will recommend it to all that have anything either of natural religion or natural affection in them.

If those that profess religion adorn their profession by eminent civility and serviceableness to all, they shall find it will redound to their own comfort and advantage, as well as to the glory of God.

Those who have experienced the comfort and benefit of religious assemblies will make the reproach of them their burden, the support of them their care, and the prosperity of them their chief joy.

Those know not the worth and value of religion that do not think it worth suffering for.

R E P E N T A N C E.

It becomes penitents to be humble and low in their own eyes, to be thankful for the least mercy, patient under the greatest affliction, to be watchful against all appearances of sin and approaches towards it, to abound in every duty, and to be charitable in judging others.

Sudden resolves and hasty desires make work for a long and leisurely repentance.

Though it is certain that true repentance is never too late, it is as certain that late repentance is seldom true.

Those are not worthy the name of penitents, nor their privileges, who say they are sorry for their sins and yet persist in them.

This is true repentance, not only for sin, but from sin.

There is no way to get the honour and comfort of penitents, but by taking the shame of penitents.

Penitent reflections must produce pious resolutions.

Many deceive themselves into a good opinion of their state by a partial reformation; they think they are as good as they should be, because in some one particular instance they are not so bad as they have been; as if the correcting of one fault would atone for a persisting in all the rest.

Counterfeit repentance commonly cheats men with general promises, and is loth to covenant against particular sins.

Though we must not repent that we have repented, yet we must repent that we have not repented better.

Repentance in God is not, as it is in us, a change of his mind, but a change of his method or dispensation; he doth not alter his will, but wills an alteration.

Penitents may recover their comfort sooner than their credit.

Reformation is not sincere, if it be not universal.

God will be sure to meet them in a way of mercy who return to him in a way of duty.

It is best not to do evil ; but it is next best, when it is done, to undo it again, by repentance, confession, and restitution.

Some are really better than they seem to be ; their faults are known, but their repentance is not.

It is necessary, in repentance, that we not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well ; not only do no wrong to any, but do good to all.

In our returns to God we must covenant against sin.

Wrath comes without remedy against those only that sin without repentance. It is not so much men's turning aside that ruins them, as their not returning.

SERVICE.

When we cannot do what we would, we must do what we can, in the service of God, and be sorry we can do no better.

If we interest God in all our concerns by devoting them to his service, and interest ourselves in all his concerns by laying them near our hearts, we may with satisfaction leave both with him, for he will perfect both.

We must first give our own selves unto the Lord, and then our services.

God's work is its own wages, and his service carries its recompence along with it.

It is more to the honour of a Christian soldier by faith to overcome the world, than by a monastical vow to retreat from it ; and more for the honour of Christ to serve him in a city than to serve him in a cell.

God's grace is not tied to one hand ; he can bury his workmen, and yet carry on his work.

Wherever the providence of God casts us we should desire and endeavour to be useful ; and when we cannot do the good we would, we must be ready to do the good we can.

God's service is not only perfect freedom, but high preferment.

It is far better to have a heart to do good, and want ability for it, than have ability for it, and want a heart to it.

Freedom from service, and liberty to range at pleasure, is but the privilege of a wild ass. It is pity any of the children of men should covet it, or value themselves by it. It is better labour and be good for something, than ramble and be good for nothing.

Let it never be said we left that to be done tomorrow, which we could as well have done today.

The more delight we take in the service of God, the nearer we come to the perfection we should aim at.

We must do good works that may be seen, but not that they may be seen.

Our works are then good, and will bear the test, when the will of God is the rule of them, and the glory of God the end of them; when they are done in his strength, and for his sake; to him, and not to men.

It is not worth while to live for any other purpose but to serve God.

He that will never do a good work till there is nothing to be objected against it, will leave many a good work for ever undone.

Let this reconcile us to the difficulties, and help us over the discouragements we may meet with, both in doing work and suffering work: though we may lose for Christ, we shall not lose by him.

Those whom God calls to any service, he will either find them, or make them, fit for it.

Of the many that add to the numbers of the church, there are comparatively but few that contribute to the service of it.

If a good work be done, and well done, let us not be displeased, nor the work disparaged, though we had no hand in it.

Many a good work would find hands enough to be laid to it, if there were but one good head to lead in it.

Those that are hearty in the service of God shall receive fresh encouragements from him to proceed in it, as their case calls for them. Set the wheels agoing, and God will oil them.

Those that are faithful in well-doing need not fear those that are spiteful in evil-doing; for they have a God to trust to, who has well-doers under the hand of his protection, and evil-doers under the hand of his restraint.

We should not only ask, what must we do, but what may we do, for the glory and honour of God.

Let God's work be done by us, and then God's will be done concerning us.

We should take pleasure in doing good, but not in its being known.

Whatever good we do, we must look upon it as the performance of God's promise to us, rather than the performance of our promises to him. The more we do for God, the more we are indebted to him; for our sufficiency is of him, and not of ourselves.

It is not enough that we do that which is good, but we must do it well.

In the service of God and our generation, let it never be said we left that to be done to-morrow which we could do to-day.

S I N.

There is not a more restless fugitive upon earth than he that is continually pursued by his own guilt; not a viler vagabond than he that is at the beck of his own lusts.

Sinful friendships justly end in mortal feuds: those that unite in wickedness will not unite long.

If the righteous, who do not deserve the least reward, yet have part of their recompence here on earth, much more shall the wicked, who deserve the greatest punishment, have part of their punishment on earth, as an earnest of worse to come. Therefore, stand in awe, and sin not. If those have two heavens that merit none, much more shall they have two hells that merit both.

The guilt of sin is not removed if the gain of sin be not restored.

The sin that humbles us shall not ruin us.

Those that have least sin, are most sensible of it.

Those are wicked indeed that lay the blame of their wickedness upon God.

Those that will not be reasoned out of their sins, sooner or later shall be frightened out of them.

The sins of kings often prove the plagues of kingdoms.

That affair can never end well that begins with sin.

Christ came not to save his people in their sins but from their sins; to purchase for them, not a liberty to sin, but a liberty from sin.

We should be more careful not to do wrong, than not to suffer wrong, because to suffer wrong is only an affliction, but to do wrong is to sin, and sin is always worse than affliction.

It is not sinning that ruins men, but sinning and not repenting.

Many mourn for their own sins that do not truly repent of them; weep bitterly for them, and yet continue in love and league with them.

Many are concerned at the shamefulness of sin, that never lay to heart the sinfulness of it.

They that would be safe from sin should be deaf to temptation.

This should greatly humble us for all our sins, that they have been committed under the eye of God, which argues either a disbelief of his omniscience or a contempt of his justice.

It is possible that sin may be both loathed and left, and yet not truly repented of, loathed because surfeited on, left because no opportunity of committing it; yet not repented of out of any love to God, but only from a slavish fear of his wrath.

Omissions in duty are sins as well as omissions of duty.

Those have reason to fear perishing in their sins that cannot bear to be frightened out of them.

The sins of youth are oftentimes the smart of age, both in respect of sorrow within, and suffering without.

The pleasures of sin will soon surfeit, but never satisfy ; a man may quickly tire himself in the pursuit of them, but can never repose himself in the enjoyment of them.

It is not so much sin, as impenitence in sin, that ruins men ; not so much that they offend, as that they do not humble themselves for their offences ; not the disease but the neglect of the remedy.

As what goes up a vapour comes down a shower, so what goes up sin, if not repented of, will come down wrath.

All the wickedness of the wicked world is owing to the wilfulness of the wicked will.

The greatest blessing, both in our employments and in our enjoyments, is to be kept from sin in them.

The time of God's patience and forbearance towards provoking sinners is sometimes long, but always limited : reprieves are not pardons ; though God bear a great while, he will not bear always.

Let none expect to do ill, and fare well.

Let none think that their external professions and privileges will be their security, either against Satan's temptations to sin, or against God's judgments for sin.

Sometimes God shows men their sin in their punishment.

Ignorance and contempt of God are at the bottom of all the wickedness that is in the world.

The service of sin is perfect slavery, the service of God is perfect liberty. Licentiousness is bondage to the greatest of tyrants, conscientiousness is freedom to the meanest of prisoners.

Many a man sins with regret, that never has any true regret for his sin.

God will deal with sinners, not only according to their deeds, but according to their endeavours.

We must expect trouble and affliction from that, whatever it is, which we sinfully indulge ; that which we are willing should tempt us, we shall find will vex us.

If men did consider as they ought, what would be in the end of sin, they would be afraid of the beginnings of it.

Better our sin should shame us than damn us, and be set in order before us for our conviction than for our condemnation.

It concerns us to find our sins out, that we may repent of them and forsake them, lest our sins find us out to our ruin and confusion.

By the law was the knowledge of sin, but by the Gospel was the conquest of it.

Many are more afraid of the scandal of an ill thing than the sin of it.

It is not enough to repent of sin, but we must be converted from it, and not return to it again.

Sorrow is never more reasonable than when there is sin in the case.

Those do not truly repent of their sins that do not forsake them.

The way to be angry and not to sin, is to be angry, as Christ was, at nothing but sin.

Many leave their sins only because their sins have left them; there seems to be a reformation of the life, but what will that avail, if there be no renovation of the heart?

A sin we call little, if not repented of, will be our ruin, when great sinners that repent shall find mercy.

Our uncleanness separates us from God, but it is our being unclean and not purifying ourselves that will separate us for ever from him; it is not the wound that is fatal, so much as the contempt of the remedy.

Custom in sin is a very great hindrance to conversion from sin.

What we make for a sin God will make for a spoil; for what comfort can we expect in that wherewith God is dishonoured?

Great sinners may recover themselves, and have the benefit of their repentance and yet be denied both the comfort and credit of it; the guilt may be taken away, and yet not the reproach.

Be ashamed of nothing but sin.

A great deal of difference will be made between those that presumptuously rush into sin, and those that through infirmity are surprised into it; between those that overtake the fault that flees from them, and those that are overtaken in the fault they flee from.

We cannot expect that God should take sin away by forgiving it, if we do not put it away by forsaking it.

The malignity of sin appears in the price of pardon.

We do but mock God in saying that we are sorry for our sin, and that it grieves us to the heart, if we continue to indulge it. In vain do we pretend a change of our mind, if we do not evidence it by a change of our way.

Drunkeness, as it makes men forgetful, so it makes them forgotten; and many a name, which otherwise might have been remembered with respect, is buried by it in contempt and oblivion.

As nothing can destroy us, so nothing can defile us, but sin.

There is a great deal of sin devised and designed that is never executed. As bad as things are in the world, they are not so bad as the devil and wicked men would have them. It is God that restrains men from doing the ill they would do; it is not from him that there is sin, but it is from him that there is not more sin, either by his influence upon men's minds, checking their inclination to sin, or, by his providence, taking away the opportunity to sin.

When we observe how ill sin looks in others, we should use that as an argument with ourselves, with the utmost care and caution to preserve our purity.

Divine justice drowned the old world in its filth, but divine grace has provided for the cleansing of this new world from its filth.

God will be a loser in his glory by no man at last; but, sooner or later, will recover his right, either in the repentance of sinners or in their ruin.

Sin, that drowned the old world, will burn this.

God has many ways of preventing ill men from doing the mischief they intended; he can either tie their hands, or turn their hearts.

Unbridled passion is folly proclaimed.

That which is won ill will never wear well, for there is a curse attends it which will waste it; and the same corrupt dispositions which incline men to the sinful ways of getting, will incline them to the like sinful ways of spending.

We often see that scattered by the justice of God which has been gathered together by the injustice of men.

Carnal hearts are apt to think themselves as good as they should be, because perhaps, in some one particular instance, they are not so bad as they have been.

None are ruined by the justice of God, but those that hate to be reformed by the grace of God.

Sin is that which above anything we should dread; and a good preservative it is against sin to be afraid of nothing but sin.

There is nothing got by striving with God Almighty, for he will either break the heart or break the neck of those that contend with him, will bring them either to repentance or ruin.

The preservations of wicked men are but reservations for some further sorer strokes of Divine wrath.

Let all men know it is nothing but sin that separates between them and God; and if that be not sincerely repented of and forsaken, it will separate eternally.

As saints may rejoice in hope of God's mercies, though they see them only in the promise, so sinners must mourn for fear of God's judgments, though they see them only in the threatening.

Their case is very miserable who have brought themselves to such a pass that their corruptions triumph over their convictions; they know they should reform, but own they cannot, and therefore resolve they will not.

Those that hate reproof love ruin.

Malice is heart murder in the account of God.

Every sin against God is a sin against ourselves, and so it will be found sooner or later.

Those that revolt from God will justly be made the scorn of all about them; and having reproached the Lord will themselves be a reproach.

Those often fall soonest and foulest that are most confident of themselves. Those are least safe that are most secure.

Sin is the great mischief-maker between God and a people. It forfeits the benefit of his promises, and spoils the success of their prayers. It defeats his kind intentions concerning them, and baffles their pleasing expectations from him. It ruins their comforts, prolongs their grievances, brings them into straits, and retards their deliverances.

Vain hopes of impunity are the deceitful support of all impiety.

Those that are not disturbed in their sin will be destroyed for their sin.

It is possible a godly man may sin against the commandment, but a wicked man would sin away the commandment,—would repeal God's law and enact his own lusts.

God will justly deny those understanding to keep out of the way of danger that will not use their understanding to keep out of the way of sin.

What is ill got will not be long kept.

They who think to serve themselves by sin will find in the end that they have but enslaved themselves to sin.

What is not honestly got is not likely to be long enjoyed.

Those that would avoid sin must not parley with temptation.

Wilful sin is the effect of willing ignorance.

When we begin to be at war with sin, God will be at peace with us.

As confidence in God is a hopeful presage of approaching deliverance, so security in sin is a sad omen of approaching destruction.

If the grace of God prevail not to destroy the love of sin in us, it is just that the providence of God should destroy the food and fuel of sin about us.

Sin is a reproach to any people, but especially to God's people, that have more eyes upon them, and have more honour to lose, than other people.

If men will not quit the love and service of sin, yet they shall certainly lose all the delight and profits of it.

The declarations of God's wrath against sinners are as inviolable as the assurances he hath given of favour to his people; and the case of such is sad indeed who have brought it to this issue, that either God must be false or they must be damned.

What buds in sin will blossom in some judgment or other.

It is good to frighten ourselves from sin with the consideration of the mischief we shall certainly do to ourselves by it, and the irreparable damage it will be to our own souls.

Those who will not be kept from sin by fear and shame shall by fear and shame be punished for it.

It is not enough to fast for sin, but we must fast from sin.

We should never receive from God the evil of punishment if we did not provoke him by the evil of sin.

Those are the most dangerous seducers who suggest to sinners that which tends to lessen their dread of sin, and their fear of God.

We need often to be minded of the mercies we have received, which are the heaviest aggravations of the sins we have committed.

Sinners are the worst of men, hypocrites the worst of sinners.

S I N G E R I T Y.

As there are many who seem disciples and are not so, so there are many that are disciples and seem not so.

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S I N C E R I T Y.

As there are many who seem disciples and are not so, so there are many that are disciples and seem not so.

Those only experience the pleasure and comfort of religion that are sincere and upright in it. What is done in hypocrisy is a mere drudgery; but if God have the heart, we have the joy.

I know no religion without sincerity.

As there is nothing we should dread more than being hypocrites, so there is nothing we need dread less than being called and counted so without cause.

Dissembled piety is double iniquity.

Saying and doing are not two things with God, whatever they are with us.

Hypocrites often cover their real enmity against the power of godliness with a pretended zeal for the form of it.

We should fear lest we be found but seeming Christians, and so should really come short; nay, lest we be found blemished Christians, and so should seem to come short.

The devil's work has many a time been done in God's livery.

Our comfort in the day of account will be according to our faithfulness, not according to our usefulness; our sincerity, not our success; according to the uprightness of our hearts, not according to the degree of our opportunities.

Hypocrites do the devil's drudgery in Christ's livery.

Many boast of their profession of godliness that are strangers to the power of it; and plead the truth of their religion, who yet are not true to it.

If in sincerity, and with that zeal which the thing requires and deserves, we give up ourselves to God, we will, with ourselves, give up all we have to him, and do our utmost that all ours may be his too.

They that walk in a holy sincerity may walk in a holy security.

They that are as they should be, shall be as they would be; provided they be upright in heart, that they be really as good as they seem to be.

Many follow Christ for loaves, and not for love.

They that are truly wise and good will be continually growing wiser and better. Proficiency in religion is a good sign of sincerity in it.

Piety from the teeth outward is no difficult thing.

It cannot be expected that he who is false to his God should be true to his friend.

A modest dress is a very good thing, if it be the genuine indication of a humble heart, and is to instruct; but an ill thing if it be the hypocritical disguise of a proud, ambitious heart, and is to deceive. Let men be really as good as they seem to be, but not seem to be better than really they are.

THOUGHTS.

Ill thinking is the spring of all our commissions; and unthinking is the spring of all our omissions.

Inconsideration of what we know, is as great a hindrance to practical godliness as ignorance of what we should know.

Keep out bad thoughts; keep up good thoughts; keep the affections upon right objects and in due bounds.

A thinking man is in a fair way to be a wise and a good man.

Thoughts are words to God, and vain thoughts are provocations.

If we would prevent the mischief of un-governed passions, we must redress the grievance of un-governed thoughts.

It is well or ill with us, according as our thoughts are right or wrong concerning Jesus Christ.

Thoughts are words to Christ; we should therefore take heed, not only what we say and do, but what we think.

The truths of Christ are worth keeping; and the way to keep them safe is to ponder them; meditation is the best help to memory.

Consideration is the first step towards conversion.

Every good man makes conscience of his thoughts, for they are words to God.

They that will not consider in time will be made to consider when it is too late.

TROUBLE.

While our troubles do not drive us from our duty to God, we should not suffer them to drive us from our comfort in God; for he will not leave us, if we do not leave him.

Extraordinary afflictions are not always the punishment of extraordinary sins, but sometimes the trial of extraordinary graces.

It is an evidence of great hardness to be more concerned about our sufferings than about our sins.

Our afflictions are but few, and a thousand times deserved; our mercies are many, and a thousand times forfeited.

God will not only deliver his people out of their troubles in due time, but he will sustain them and bear them up under their troubles in the mean time.

Our hearts should be humble under humbling providences; then we accommodate ourselves to them, and answer God's end in them.

If the heart were not polluted with sin, it would not be disturbed and disquieted as it is with trouble.

Our first care must be to get good by our afflictions, and then we may hope to get out of them.

It is not an affliction itself, but an affliction rightly borne, that doth us good.

Afflictions are often sent to bring unthankful people to God.

If we have humbled hearts under humbling providences, the affliction has done its work; and it shall either be removed, or the property of it altered.

Weeping must never hinder worshipping.

We oft perplex ourselves with imaginary troubles; we fancy things worse than they are, and then afflict ourselves more than we need: sometimes there needs no more to comfort us, than to undeceive us. It is good to hope the best.

That which gives us occasion for sorrow should give us occasion for prayer.

It is our duty and interest, when we cannot get out of our troubles, yet to get above our fears, so as that they may only serve to quicken our prayers and endeavours, but may not prevail to silence our faith and hope.

As in our greatest abundance we must not think to live without God, so in our greatest straits we must learn to live upon God.

In difficult times, our care concerning the events of the day should be swallowed up in a care concerning the duty of the day.

God brings us into straits, that he may bring us to our knees.

The communication of sorrows is one good improvement of the communion of saints.

That cause which makes a martyr may well make a joyful sufferer.

The way to forget the sense of our miseries is to remember the God of our mercies.

The strongest consolations in time of trouble are those which are borrowed from Christ, our relation to him, our interest in him, and our expectations of him and from him.

Where sin sits heavy, affliction sits light.

We must not attribute our afflictions to fortune, for they are from God; nor our sins to fate, for they are from ourselves.

While there is such an alloy as there is, of sin in our duties, we must expect an alloy of trouble in our comforts.

Need drives many to God who had set themselves at a distance from him. Those that slighted him in the day of their prosperity will be glad to flee to him in the day of their affliction.

That will break a worldly man's heart which will not break a godly man's sleep.

The terror of the rod often extorts penitent acknowledgments from those who have no penitent affections; under the surprise and smart of an affliction, they start up and say that which is pertinent enough, not because they do think it, but because they know they should, and that it is meet to be said.

God usually works deliverance for his people gradually, that the day of small things may not be despised, nor the day of great things despaired of.

Men in trouble cry, How long will it be ere God return to us in a way of mercy? but they do not hear him ask, How long will it be ere they return to God in a way of duty?

Whatever trouble we are in upon a personal or public account, we may comfort ourselves with this, that God sees it, and sees how to remedy it.

If our troubles were to be thrown into a common stock with those of others, and then an equal dividend made, share and share alike, rather than stand to that, we would each of us say, 'Pray, give me my own again.'

Those are happy afflictions, how grievous soever to flesh and blood, that help to introduce us into, and improve us in, an acquaintance with God.

In the account which impenitent sinners shall be called to, they will be told not only of the mercies for which they have been ungrateful, but of the affliction under which they have been incorrigible.

Inordinate affection lays a foundation for inordinate affliction; and what we are overfond of when we have it, we are apt to overgrieve for when we lose it, and we may see our folly in both.

It is not the suffering, but the cause, that makes the martyr.

An humble believing inquiry into the design and tendency of the darkest dispensations of Providence would help to reconcile us to them, and to grieve the less and fear the less because of them. It will silence us to ask whence they come, but will abundantly satisfy us to ask whither they go; for we know they work for good.

God will find hidingplaces for his people in the day of their distress; nay, he will himself be to them a little sanctuary, and will secure them either under heaven or in heaven.

In those disappointments which to us are very grievous, God has often designs that are very gracious.

When God calls away our dearest relations by death, it becomes us quietly to say, it is well both with us and them; it is well, for all is well that God doth; all is well with them that are gone, if they are gone to heaven, and all well with us that stay behind, if by the affliction we are furthered in our way thither.

There is not a surer presage of ruin than an unhumiliated heart under humbling providences.

Times of fear should be times of prayer.

It ought to support us under our troubles that we have reason to hope they will end well.

The way to get clear of the evil of trouble is to keep clear from the evil of sin: and to them that do so, trouble has no real evil in it.

God is displeased with those that help forward the affliction even of such as suffer justly; for true humanity in such a case is good divinity.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Things never go well when the authority of a parent runs low in a family.

He that will thrive must ask his wife leave.

That we are really which we are relatively.

A man's character is not to be taken from a single act.

Good promises are good things; but good performances are all in all.

It is our wisdom to make no man our enemy, because we know not how soon our distresses may be such as that we may be highly concerned to make him our friend.

It is easier to build temples, than be temples, to God.

Peace and love, though purchased dear, will prove a good bargain to the purchaser.

Self-admirers and self-flatterers are really self-deceivers.

Those that would approve themselves wise must always be watchful.

Anger is a short madness, malice is a long one.

Be not sneaking, and God will make thee daring.

The reason why many come short of grace and glory is, because they rest in a lazy seeking of that which will not be attained without a laborious striving.

Multitudes satisfy themselves, but deceive themselves, with a titular relation to an unknown God.

Those are good indeed that are good in their own place, not that pretend how good they will be in other people's places.

Nothing exalteth folly so much as self-murder doth.

The peace which Christ gives is infinitely more valuable than that which the world gives. The world's peace begins in ignorance, consists with sin, and ends in endless troubles; Christ's peace begins in grace, consists with no allowed sin, and ends at length in everlasting peace.

As we must never presume upon the strength of our resolutions, so neither upon the weakness of our corruptions, so as to be secure and off our guard.

Whatever is God's pleasure should, without dispute, be our choice.

Those that throw away their virtue must not expect to save their reputation.

One may easier deal with ten men's reasons than one man's will.

It is a great honour for any man to yield to the authority of reason and religion against his interest.

Those to whom home is a prison, virtue is a penance.

Grace is glory begun.

Our quarrels with God always begin on our part, but the reconciliation begins on his.

We may then be easy when we resolve that whatever pleaseth God shall please us.

If we use ourselves to deny ourselves, we break the force of most temptations.

He who will not be counselled, cannot be helped.

The opening of God's hand will satisfy the desire of other living things, but it is only the shining of his face that will satisfy the desire of a living soul.

There may be over-doing even in well-doing, a being "righteous over much;" and such an over-doing as may prove an undoing, through the subtilty of Satan.

The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to top him, not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.

Wrong not others, and God shall right thee.

Children are a heritage for the Lord, as well as from him.

If we do what we can, God will not be wanting to do that for us which we cannot.

Let us not be afraid of evil tidings while they want confirmation; but when we hear the worst, hope the best, at least hope better.

He that may need a friend, should not make a foe.

Indulged slothfulness is at the bottom of prevailing self-conceitedness.

Not to go forward is to go backward.

Instability is the ruin of men's excellency. Men do not thrive because they do not fix.

God's will, as it is law sufficient, so it is reason sufficient; for his will is his wisdom.

If the dictates of reason may be heard, the laws of virtue will be obeyed.

The lights of the world, the lights of the church, must shine as lights. Therefore we have light, that we may give light.

Well begun is half ended.

A pretended zeal for that which is good, often serves to cover a real malice against that which is better.

Rituals must give place to morals.

Those have reason to fear affliction in their children who are better pleased with their beauty than with their virtue.

Many have been driven to the mischief they did not intend by being too severely dealt with for what they did intend.

To render good for good is human, evil for evil is brutish, good for evil is Christian, but evil for good is devilish.

Man's extremity is God's opportunity of helping and saving.

A good man is never less alone than when alone with God.

Some men's covetousness loses them more than ever it got them, and, by grudging a little expense, they expose themselves to great damage.

Those are never rich that are always coveting.

God's mercy to us should make us merciful to one another.

There are many who are more solicitous to preserve their reputation with men, than to secure the favour of God, and a good conscience; "lest we be shamed" goes further with them than "lest we be damned."

It is not so much what the dress or apparel is, as what principle ties it on, and with what spirit it is worn.

Those that will not be monuments of mercy shall be monuments of justice.

Whatever we idolize we shall be disappointed in, and then shall despise.

Though, in such a world as this, it is rare to find one good whom all men speak well of; yet it is more rare to find one good whom all men speak ill of.

Self suspicion is the first step towards self deliverance.

We are bidden indeed to speak ill of no man, but never to speak well of ill men.

None lose the Spirit's strivings, but those that have first forfeited them.

The confinement of business is a thousand times better than the liberty of idleness.

As those are most blind who will not see, so their blindness is most dangerous who fancy they do see.

Those that affect to seem rough and rugged in their carriage, put the beast upon the man, and really shame themselves by thus disguising themselves.

Self-admirers are self-deceivers.

We are not to prescribe, but subscribe, to God.

Worldings make gold their god, saints make God their gold.

The church's poorest times were its purest.

It is the second blow that makes the quarrel.

The temple of the Lord is cried up, and the ark of the Lord stickled for, with a great deal of seeming zeal, by multitudes that have no regard at all to the Lord of the temple, and the God of the ark; as if a fiery concern for the name of Christianity would atone for a profane contempt of the thing.

Though God graciously gives us leave to complain to him when there is cause, yet he is justly provoked, and takes it very ill, if we complain of him when there is no cause; we do so, from our inferiors.

Many are hindered from being truly wise and religious by a false and groundless conceit that they are so.

Under the greatest provocations it is our wisdom and duty to keep our temper, and to bridle our passion: a just cause needs not anger to defend it, and a bad one is made never the better by it.

Men fret at God's counsels, but cannot change them.

Many come to ordinances that come not under the power of them.

That which is most plain and natural, and least artful and affected, in the worship of God, he is best pleased with. Man's device can add no beauty to God's institutions.

The serpent's head (provided it be nothing akin to the old serpent) may well become a good Christian's body, especially if it have a dove's eye in it.

The lights of heaven are made to serve us, and they do it faithfully, and shine in their season without fail; but we are set as lights in this world, to serve God, and do we in like manner answer the end of our creation? No, we do not; our light doth not shine before God, as his lights shine before us. We burn our master's candles, but do not mind our master's work.

It is the honour and comfort of a house, when those that are of the same family are of God's family.

Poor people are as much in danger by an inordinate desire towards the wealth of the world as rich people by an inordinate delight in it.

Angry men have good memories.

Those do most inherit the earth (though they do not inherit most of it) that are most like strangers in it.

There is a foolish proneness in those that have rendered themselves unworthy of the substance of Christian privileges, to catch at the signs and shadows of them. Many that like not the terms of the covenant, yet, for their reputation's sake, are fond of the seals of it.

This beggarly world is full of the devil's poor.

God will be deaf to their prayers that are deaf to the poor's cries, which, if they be not heard by us, will be heard against us.

The rich can as ill spare the hands of the poor, as the poor can the purses of the rich.

One good means to keep us from falling is, to keep up a holy fear of falling.

Better know God and be poor, than be rich and ignorant of him.

Self is the great idol that all the world worships, in contempt of God and his sovereignty.

Those will justly lose their comfort in real fears that excuse themselves in sin with pretended fears.

Those that venture in a good cause, with a good heart, are under the special protection of a good God, and have reason to hope for a good issue.

The best evidence of our having kept the sabbath well will be a care to keep a good conscience all the week.

We greatly honour the truth of God when we stagger not at the promise of God.

If God be our friend, no matter who is our enemy.

Where sabbaths are neglected, all religion sensibly goes to decay.

There are those who are called Christians that will in the great day be condemned by the better tempers and better lives of sober heathens.

Keep thy heart, and that will keep thy tongue from sin; keep thy tongue, and that will keep thy heart from trouble.

Those that think to serve both God and mammon, will soon come entirely to forsake God, and to serve mammon only: if God have not all the heart, he will soon have none of it.

There may be idols in the heart, where there are none in the sanctuary.

Ignorance is so far from being the mother of devotion that it is the mother of destruction.

Those make a bad bargain for themselves that part with their wisdom for the gratifying of their gaiety, and to please a vain humour lose a real excellency.

Enemies may part us and our tents, us and our altars, but not us and our God.

Those that will not know the worth of mercies by the improvement of them, will justly be made to know the worth of them by the want of them.

None can be delivered out of the hands of God's justice but those that are delivered into the hands of his grace.

What is unlawfully gained cannot be comfortably used; no, nor that which is inordinately coveted. It is just that the desires that are insatiable should always be unsatisfied, and that those should never have enough who never know when they have enough.

A man may sometimes do a very good work with one good word.

As good be without speech as not use it in praising God; for then our tongue is most our glory when it is employed for God's glory.

Our speech, though it be not always of grace, should be always *with* grace.

Those that have much to do in the world are in great danger of doing much amiss, and it is hard to deal with many without violence to some.

The profanation of the sabbath day is an inlet to all impiety; those who pollute holy time will keep nothing pure.

It is not so much the good words, as the good intention of them, that Christ looks at.

One way or other God's judgments will be executed; the law will take place either in its precept or in its penalty.

We are apt to set our clock before God's dial, and then to quarrel because they do not agree; but the Lord is a God of judgment, and it is fit we should wait for him.

Though the will of God's purpose is the rule of prophecy and patience, the will of his precept is the rule of prayer and practice.

Preservations from present judgments, if a good use be not made of them, are but reservations for greater judgments.

The more moderate our desires are towards earthly things, the better qualified we are for the enjoyment of them, and the more likely to have them.

The privileges of a form of godliness are oftentimes the pride and confidence of those that are strangers and enemies to the power of it.

The heart has its walks, and according as those are the man is.

From yesterday's pardon we should fetch an argument against this day's temptations.

We forfeit the good things of this world if we love them as the best things.

We are not only so disobedient that we have need of precept upon precept to bring us to our duty, but so distrustful that we have need of promise upon promise to bring us to our comfort.

Serious things should be spoken of seriously.

It is the misery of this world that so many who are fit for public stations are buried in obscurity, and so many who are unfit for them are preferred to them.

We could better be without mines of gold than fields of corn. The products of the earth, which may easily be gathered from the surface of it, are much greater blessings to mankind than its treasures, which are with so much difficulty and hazard digged out of its bowels.

All truths are not to be spoken at all times, though an untruth is not to be spoken at any time.

They that keep the way of the Lord shall come forth as gold approved and improved; found to be good, and made to be better.

They that trust God to do his work for them in his own way and time, shall find his providence outdoing all their forecast and contrivance.

We have reason to suspect the truth of that which is backed with rash oaths and imprecations. None but the devil's sayings need the devil's proofs. He that will not be restrained by the third commandment from mocking his God, will not be kept by the ninth from deceiving his brother.

There are many things that appear very frightful that yet do not prove at all hurtful to a good man.

That which pleases God ought not to displease me.

The most glorious victory over an enemy is to turn him into a friend.

We shall find it much easier in itself, and much more pleasant in the reflection, to forgive twenty injuries, than to avenge one.

What God deviseth against his people is designed for them, and so it will be found in the issue.

If we make God our trust we shall not find him our terror.

Those that are enemies to God's church are enemies to themselves, and sooner or later they will be made to see it.

A practical disbelief of God's all-sufficiency is at the bottom of all our treacherous departures from him.

It is of great consequence to us how we improve and employ the hours of our retirement and solitude.

Let the truths of God rule in our heads, and let the peace of God rule in our hearts.

The worse others are, the better we should be; when vice is daring let not virtue be sneaking.

They that are past shame are past cure.

Whatever God will take pleasure in when it is done, we ought to take pleasure in the doing of, and to reckon that inducement enough to set about it, and go on with it, in good earnest; for what greater satisfaction can we have in our own bosoms than in contributing anything towards that which God will take pleasure in?

Many a good work is put by, by being put off.

The sins of sinners are the sorrows of saints. We must mourn for that which we cannot mend.

The surest token of God's good will towards us is his good work in us.

The love of the truth prepares for the light of it.

If God were not more mindful of his promises than we are of his precepts, we were undone.

Half the pains that many take to damn their souls would serve to save them.

When God leads us, he will light us; while we follow his conduct, we shall not want his comforts.

Where God gives righteousness, he certainly designs salvation.

As sometimes God crosseth us in love, so at other times he gratifieth us in wrath.

Great care to avoid bad company is both a good evidence of our integrity, and a good means to preserve us in it.

We must give God all the glory of all the good that is at any time done by ourselves or others. Our own good works must not be the matter of our pride, nor others' good works the matter of our flattery, but both the matter of our praise; for certainly it is the greatest honour and pleasure in the world faithfully to serve God.

It is a sign of guilt to be impatient of reproof; and it is many times easier to persuade the injured to bear the trouble of taking wrong, than the injurious to bear the conviction of having done wrong.

Since no difficulties can be opposed to the arm of God's power, no improbabilities are to be objected against the word of his command.

It is better to have one fountain than a thousand cisterns; one all-sufficient God, than a thousand insufficient ones.

We cannot expect to reap benefit by the prayers of our friends for our salvation, unless we ourselves be diligent and faithful in making use of the means of salvation. For God never promised to save by miracles those that would not save themselves by means.

If all be from God, let all be to him.

If God's goodness to us be like the morning light, which shines more and more to the perfect day, let not ours to him be like the morning cloud and the early dew that passeth away.

Let Christ's gospel rule us, and it will infallibly save us.

Many are taught to lament the loss of those mercies which they would not learn to be thankful for the enjoyment of.

What makes us cheerful, let it make us thankful.

Let this be our first care, that God have no quarrel with us, nor we with him.

As Christ can do what he will, so an active believer may have what he will from Christ. The oil of grace multiplies, and stays not till the vessels of faith fail.

When we complain without cause, it is just with God to give us cause to complain.

A gracious soul, though still desiring more of God, never desires more than God.

Those that will not fly to God will find it in vain to think of flying from him.

Our case would be sad indeed if God were not better to us than we are to ourselves.

Men's rejecting the knowledge of God will not secure them from his knowledge of them.

The honour of God lies nearer the hearts of good men than any interests of their own.

Those who resemble God are most likely to understand him.

To believe the power of Christ, is not only to assure ourselves of it, but to commit ourselves to it, and encourage ourselves in it.

The three qualifications of a good surgeon are very requisite in a reprovor, namely, to have an eagle's eye, a lion's heart, and a lady's hand; that is, that he be endued with a great deal of wisdom, and courage, and meekness.

It is one of the laws of meekness—to despise being despised.

They have corrupt and wicked hearts indeed, who, the nearer they are to the church are the farther from God.

It is a good rule, which should ordinarily be observed among Christians, not to speak of our brethren's faults to others, till we have first spoken of them to themselves: this would make less reproaching, and more reprovor; that is, less sin committed, and more duty done. It will be likely to work upon an offender, when his reprovers are concerned, not only for his salvation, in telling him his fault, but for his reputation, in telling him of it privately.

Reproofs are ordinarily most profitable when they are least provoking.

An humble confidence in the goodness of God's nature is very pleasing to him, as that which turns to the glory of that attribute of his which he most glories in.

A meek and quiet Christian must needs live very comfortably, for he enjoys himself.—he enjoys his friends,—he enjoys his God,—and he puts it out of the reach of his enemies to disturb him in these enjoyments.

If God be not sanctified and glorified by us, he will be sanctified and glorified upon us.

Those who would keep up peace and love, must return soft answers to hard accusations.

A lion in God's cause must be a lamb in his own.

Those we go with we are apt to grow like.

It is said of the dew, that it "tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men," nor should our love to our brethren stay for theirs to us, that is publicans' love; but should prevent it, that is divine love.

As the perfection of love is the blessedness of heaven, so the sincerity of love is the earnest of that blessedness.

The way to have our heart's desire is to make God our heart's delight.

As those that have received kindness must return it, so those that have shewed kindness may expect it.

Mutual helpfulness is brotherly duty.

God judgeth of men by the temper of their minds. We know what man doth, God knows what he is; we know what proceeds from man, God knows what is in man.

The disciples of Christ should show that they love him, by their rejoicing in the glories of his exaltation, rather than by lamenting the sorrows of his humiliation.

There is no man will say "There is no God" till he is so hardened in sin that it is become his interest that there should be none to call him to an account.

Those that would be kept from ill courses, must keep from ill company.

If men would but inquire into the reasons of their infidelity, and examine why they do not believe that which yet they cannot gainsay, they would find themselves reduced to such absurdities as they could not but be ashamed of; for it will be found that the reason why we believe not in Jesus Christ is, because we are not willing to part with our sins, and deny ourselves, and serve God faithfully; that we are not of the Christian religion, because we would not indeed be of any.

None cast off the government of their God, but those that have first abandoned the understanding of a man.

We should every one of us consider for what end God has put us in the place where we are, and study to answer that end; and, when any particular opportunity of serving God and our generation offers itself, we must take care we do not let it slip, for we were intrusted with it that we might improve it.

It is good having fellowship with those that have fellowship with God, and going with those with whom God is.

Men of no conscience will be men of no constancy.

It is our wisdom to get and keep an interest with those that have an interest in heaven; and to make those our friends who are the friends of God.

Conscience is God's deputy in the soul.

Religion doth not make men morose and unconvertible; I am sure it ought not: we must not under colour of shunning bad company, be sour to all company, and jealous of everybody.

There is more ground of fear in mixed marriages that the good will be perverted, than of hope that the bad will be converted.

No man's birth or parentage shall turn either to his advantage or his prejudice in his acceptance with God.

The best of our actions may become the worst of our accusations.

He who lives so, that he wishes there was no God, no providence, no judgment, no future state, will, by degrees, persuade himself that there is none.

No little things should break squares between true friends. When we are tempted to be hot in resenting affronts, high in demanding our rights, or hard in denying a kindness, we should answer the temptation with this question, "What is that between me and my friend?"

It is our wisdom, by keeping a good conscience, to keep all clear between us and heaven, that we may have light from above, when clouds and darkness are round about us.

If we take care to keep a good conscience, we may leave it to God to take care of our good name.

That is a conspiracy, not a union, which doth not centre in God as the end, and Christ as the way.

What will it avail us to be critical in our notions, if we be not conscientious in our conversations?

If we cannot go to the house of the Lord, we may go by faith to the Lord of the house, and in him we shall be happy, and may be easy.

God made the world in six days, but he was forty days in destroying it, for he is "slow to anger."

Those that have one God, should have one heart: they that agree in religion, should strive to agree in everything else.

Nothing recommends religion more to the good opinion of those that look upon it at a distance, than the unity and harmony of its professors.

Christ will be sweet to us if sin be bitter.

It is hard to say which is worse between yoke-fellows and other relations, a discord in good, or concord in evil.

I hate dividing principles and practices, and, whatever others are, I am for peace and healing; and if my blood would be a sufficient balsam, I would gladly part with the last drop of it for the closing up of the bleeding wounds of differences that are amongst true Christians.

Those that will not know God as their law-giver, shall be made to know him as their judge.

The unity of gospel ministers is both the beauty and strength of the gospel interest.

Leave off contention, not only when you see the worst of it, for then it may be too late, but when you see the first of it.

We are never acquainted with true pleasure till we are acquainted with Christ.

If Christ reckons kindnesses to us services to him, we ought to reckon services to him kindnesses to us, and to encourage them, though done by those that follow not with us.

The oneness of the church's enemies should shame the church's friends out of their discords and divisions, and engage them to be one.

What other excellency is there in power, but that it gives men a capacity of doing the more good?

None are sent empty away from Christ, but those that come to him full of themselves.

Those that have God for them yet cannot but tremble to think of the misery of those that have God against them.

Those that are ashamed of Christ in this world, where he is despised, he will be ashamed of them in that world where he is eternally adored. They shall not share with him in his glory then, that were not willing to share with him in his disgrace now.

Christ was himself the altar to his own sacrifice of atonement, and so he is to all our sacrifices of acknowledgment. We must have an eye to him in offering them, as God hath in accepting them.

Those whom Christ saves, he saves from their sins; from the guilt of sin by the merit of his death, from the dominion of sin by the spirit of his grace.

Our bodies could better live without food, than our souls without Christ.

Christ knows not only what we do, but why we do it.

If a great man be a good man, his goodness will be much more his satisfaction than his greatness.

God is not sought truly if he be not sought only, for he will endure no rivals.

The world's threatenings should drive us to God's promises.

All have some benefit by Christ, and some have all benefits.

There is a present reward in the service of Christ, and his work is its own wages.

We reproach our leader, if we follow him trembling.

We do not rightly know God, if we do not know him in Christ.

Those that are devoted to their pleasures put contempt upon their God.

No arts of concealment can hide men from the eye of God, nor deceive his judgment of them.

Those must needs dwell in safety that dwell in God.

They that forsake the worship of God, forsake God.

That is likely to end well which begins with God.

Keep thy way and God will keep thee.

God is pleased with willing worship, but not with will worship.

Nothing can make for those who have God against them.

There is no running from God, but by running to him; no fleeing from his justice but by fleeing to his mercy.

Whatever enemies we have, if we can but make God our friend, we are well enough; they that by faith have power in heaven, have thereby as much power on earth as they have occasion for.

We come in vain to holy ordinances, if we do not in them come to the holy God.

God's mercies to his people have been "ever of old," and therefore they may hope, even then when he seems to have forsaken and forgotten them, that the mercy which was *from* everlasting will be *to* everlasting.

Praising God must be our daily work. No day must pass, though ever so busy a day, though ever so sorrowful a day, without praising God: we ought to reckon it our most needful daily business, and the most delightful of our daily comforts. God is every day blessing us, doing well for us; there is, therefore reason we should be every day blessing him, speaking well of him.

The righteous shall not be as the wicked. Though they may suffer "with" them, yet they do not suffer "like" them. Common calamities are quite another thing to the righteous, than what they are to the wicked.

God often prevents our prayers and expectations with his mercies; let us prevent his mercies with our prayers and expectations.

This ought to be the summary and centre of all our prayers, the alpha and omega of them; begin with "Hallowed be thy name," and end with "Thine is the glory for ever."

Those that have their eye ever towards God, shall not have their feet long in the net.

Fresh favours call for fresh returns of thanks; nay, we must praise God for the mercies we hope for by his promise, as well as those we have received by his providence.

We must hope in God's mercy, his general mercy, even when we cannot find a particular promise to stay ourselves upon.

What God has promised we must pray for; we need not be so unreasonable as to ask more; we need not be so modest as to ask less.

If God be the fountain of all our mercies, he must be the centre of all our joys.

The more thankful we are for God's mercies, the more humbled we shall be for our own sins.

God's proceedings are always to be acquiesced in, but cannot always be accounted for.

Those that with an upright heart put their trust in God, shall never want matter for thanksgiving to him.

The faithful servants of God may be comfortably assured that he will not cast them off in old age, nor forsake them when their strength fails them. He is a master that doth not use to cast off old servants.

The less reason we have to delight in any creature, the more reason we have to delight in God.

Those who expect further mercies, must be thankful for former mercies.

God will not drive us from him, though it is need that drives us to him; nay, it is the more acceptable, because the misery and distress of God's people makes them so much the more the objects of his pity.

God's goodness is his glory, and he will have us to know him by the glory of his mercy, more than by the glory of his majesty.

Our own good works must not be the matter of our pride, nor others' good works the matter of our flattery, but both the matter of our praise; for certainly it is the greatest honour and pleasure in the world faithfully to serve God.

All is well that God doth, and therefore welcome the will of God in every event. While he is mine and I am his, nothing shall come amiss to me.

Whatever is the matter of God's promise, must be the matter of our prayers; for promises are given not only to be the ground of our hope, but also to be the guide of our desire, in prayer.

We are then best prepared to receive temporal mercies, when we are most indifferent to them, and content, if the will of God be so, to be without them.

As we often wrong ourselves by expecting too much from the world, which is vanity and vexation, so we often wrong ourselves by expecting too little from God, whose mercy is upon us, according as we hope in him; and who, in exerting his power, and conferring his gifts, still saith, According to your faith, be it unto you.

Men never begin to be wise till they begin to be religious; and they then leave off to be wise, when they leave off to do good.

Interest is the great governess of the world.

Though we may be losers for our religion, yet we shall not only not be losers by it, but we shall be unspeakable gainers, in the end.

There is not only peace in the end of religion, but peace in the way.

Counterfeit piety can never bring in true pleasure.

They that aim at no more than the credit of their religion before men, justly fall short of the comfort of it in themselves.

That may be right which is not pleasant, and that pleasant which is not right, but religion is both.

Religion brings both pleasure with it, and profit after it.

What disquiet and discomfort Wisdom's children have, is owing, not to Wisdom's ways, those are pleasant, but to their deviations from those ways, or their slothfulness and trifling in those ways; these indeed are unpleasant, and sooner or later will be found so.

If good people are sometimes drooping and in sorrow, it is not because they are good, but because they are not so good as they should be.

There is nothing got by departing from God, and nothing lost by being faithful to him.

The remembrance of sinful pleasures will give us thrilling terrors, but the remembrance of religious pleasures will give us living comforts in dying moments.

Joy is the heart of praise, as praise is the language of joy.

Are the ways of religion pleasant? Let us be pleasant in them, both to ourselves and to those about us.

They that value themselves upon God's smiles, ought not to vex themselves at the world's frowns.



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