

not believe that they have any influence even upon those that offer them, and therefore I am convinced that this bill must be the result of considerations which have been hitherto concealed, and is intended to promote designs which are never to be discovered by the authors before their execution.

With regard to these motives and designs, however artfully concealed, every lord in this House is at liberty to offer his conjectures.

When I consider, my Lords, the tendency of this bill, I find it calculated only for the propagation of diseases, the suppression of industry, and the destruction of mankind. I find it the most fatal engine that ever was pointed at a people—an engine by which those who are not killed will be disabled, and those who preserve their limbs will be deprived of their senses.

This bill, therefore, appears to be designed only to thin the ranks of mankind, and to disburden the world of the multitudes that inhabit it; and is perhaps the strongest proof of political sagacity that our new ministers have yet exhibited. They well know, my Lords, that they are universally detested, and that whenever a Briton is destroyed, they are freed from an enemy; they have therefore opened the flood-gates of gin upon the nation, that, when it is less numerous, it may be more easily governed.

Other ministers, my Lords, who had not attained to so great a knowledge in the art of making war upon their country, when they found their enemies clamorous and bold, used to awe them with prosecutions and penalties, or destroy them like burglars, with prisons and with gibbets. But every age, my Lords, produces some improvement; and every nation, however degenerate, gives birth, at some happy period of time, to men of great and enterprising genius. It is our fortune to be witnesses of a new discovery in politics. We may congratulate ourselves upon being contemporaries with those men who have shown that hangmen and

halters are unnecessary in a state; and that ministers may escape the reproach of destroying their enemies by inciting them to destroy themselves.

This new method may, indeed, have upon different constitutions a different operation; it may destroy the lives of some and the senses of others; but either of these effects will answer the purposes of the ministry, to whom it is indifferent, provided the nation becomes insensible whether pestilence or lunacy prevails among them. Either mad or dead the greatest part of the people must quickly be, or there is no hope of the continuance of the present ministry.

For this purpose, my Lords, what could have been invented more efficacious than an establishment of a certain number of shops at which poison may be vended—poison so prepared as to please the palate, while it wastes the strength, and only kills by intoxication? From the first instant that any of the enemies of the ministry shall grow clamorous and turbulent, a crafty hireling may lead him to the ministerial slaughter-house, and ply him with their wonder-working liquor till he is no longer able to speak or think; and, my Lords, no man can be more agreeable to our ministers than he that can neither speak nor think, except those who *speaks without thinking*.

But, my Lords, the ministers ought to reflect, that though all the people of the present age are their enemies, yet they have made no trial of the temper and inclinations of posterity. Our successors may be of opinions very different from ours. They may *perhaps* approve of wars on the Continent, while our plantations are insulted and our trade obstructed; they may think the support of the house of Austria of more importance to us than our own defence; and may perhaps so far differ from their fathers, as to imagine the treasures of Britain very properly employed in supporting the troops, and increasing the splendour, of a foreign Electorate.

## PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

1702-1751.

## CAPERNAUM.\*

AND now, methinks, I am ready to interrupt my discourse, and could rather, were I sure you would attend me in it, sit down and cover my face and weep. For if these are indeed the words of the Son of God, they are big with a terrible tempest; and it hangs over what we call the Christian world; it hangs over this island, which is in many respects the glory of it. And have we no forebodings where the

heaviest part of it might justly fall? Is there no city that rises to our thoughts far superior to Capernaum in its wealth and magnificence, and in some respects more than equal to it in its guilt? O London, London! dear city of my birth and education, seat of so many of my friends, seat of our princes and senators, centre of our commerce, heart of our island, which must feel and languish, must tremble, and, I had almost said, die with thee. How art thou lifted up to heaven. How high do thy glories rise; and how bright do they shine. How great is thy magnificence. How extensive thy commerce.

\* Matt. xi. 23.



How numerous, how free, how happy thy inhabitants. How happy, above all, in their religious opportunities. In the uncorrupted Gospel, so long, so faithfully preached in thy synagogues, displayed in so many peculiar glories, which were but beginning to dawn when Jesus himself dwelt in Capernaum, and preached repentance there. But while we survey these heights of elevation, must we not tremble, lest thou shouldst fall so much the lower, lest thou shouldst plunge so much the deeper in ruin?

My situation, sirs, is not such as to render me most capable of judging concerning the moral character of this our justly-celebrated metropolis. But who can hear what seems the most credible reports of it—yea, I will add, who can walk its streets but for a few days with observation and not take an alarm, and be ready to meditate terror? Whose spirit must not, like that of Paul at Athens, be stirred, when he sees the city so abandoned to profaneness, luxury, and vanity? Is it indeed false all that we hear? Is it indeed accidental all that we see? Is London wronged, when it is said, that great licentiousness reigns amongst most of its inhabitants, and great indolence and indifference to religion, even among those who are not licentious? That assemblies for divine worship are much neglected, or frequented with little appearance of seriousness or solemnity; while assemblies for pleasure are thronged, and attended with such an eagerness, that all the heart and soul seems to be given to them, rather than to God? That most of its families are prayerless, wanting time, it seems, or rather wanting heart, for those social devotions; while many hours of every day can be given to recreations or amusements at home, if by any accident it is impracticable to seek them abroad? That the Sabbath, instead of being religiously observed, is given to jaunts of pleasure into neighbouring villages, or wasted on beds of sloth, or at tables of excess? That not only persons in the highest ranks of life, but that the trading part of its citizens, affect such an excessive gaiety, and grandeur, and delicacy, the very reverse of that frugality of our ancestors, who raised the city to what it is? That men in almost every rank are ambitious of appearing to be something more than those who stand in the next rank above them could conveniently allow themselves to appear; and in consequence of this are grasping at business they cannot manage, entering into engagements for what they cannot answer; and so, after a vain and contemptible blaze, drawing bankruptcy upon themselves and exposing to the danger of it honest, industrious persons, who are won by that suspicious face of plenty to repose a confidence in them, on that very account so much the less reasonable and safe? That the poorer sort of people are so grossly ignorant as to know hardly anything of religion, but the sacred names which they continually profane;

so wretchedly depraved, as to consume their time and strength in reaching at those low and pernicious luxuries which they may hope to attain; and so abandoned as to sink unchastised into the most brutal sensualities and impurities; while those who could exert any remarkable zeal to remedy these evils, by introducing a deep and warm sense of religion into the minds of others, are suspected and censured as whimsical and enthusiastical, if not designing men? In a word, that the religion of our Divine Master is, by multitudes, of the great and the vulgar, openly renounced and blasphemed; and by others but coldly defended, as if it were grown a matter of mere indifference, which men might, without any degree of mischief, reject at their pleasure—yea, as if it were a matter of great doubt and uncertainty, whether men's souls were immortal, or whether they were extinguished with so empty and insignificant a life? Men and brethren, are these things indeed to be so? I take not upon me to answer absolutely that they are; but I will venture to say, that if they are indeed thus, London, as rich and grand, and glorious as it is, has reason to tremble, and to tremble so much the more for its abused riches, grandeur, and glory.

#### ON SEEING HIM THAT IS INVISIBLE.

Endeavour to get a firm and rational persuasion of the existence, providence, and presence of God. You all allow the thing at first hearing; but have you a firm persuasion of it in your own minds? do you consider how evident, how apparent, how certain it is? look about you, look within you, and reflect seriously. Could these things be without a God? Could I be without Him? Did I call myself into being? Did another creature create me? if he were the means of producing me, how came he by that power? how was he himself produced by another, and another? Still you will come to him who was the son of him, who was the son of God. How were the sun and moon formed, and the host of heaven? who gave to them all their lustre? who fixed them in their orbs? who moves them with that swiftness and steadiness, so that all the process and order of them is the same from generation to generation? look upon the tokens of His goodness, as well as of His power, in the formation of your body and your mind. Thou hast possessed my reins. Thou enterest, as it were, into the most vital parts of my frame, and there Thou dwellest and actest continually; and there Thou, Lord, art doing I know not particularly and assuredly what. But that which, because I know not, it is plain that I do not myself; and yet that which, if it be not done, I must die in a moment, and this poor body sink and drop under its own weight. Look about into the world: wherever you direct your eyes, you may trace the footsteps of Deity, and you must say, I am sure that God has been



here, by the blessings which He has scattered and left behind Him; or rather, I am sure that He is here, by the blessings which at every moment He is dealing out. How does the grass grow, the fruit ripen, the animals live? it is because God gives grass for the cattle, and corn and herb for the service of man; it is because God feeds the fowls of the air, and they fly by His power.

I will not, then, set it down among possibilities, among probabilities, that there may probably or possibly be a God, but among the greatest certainties, of which the mind of man is capable; as a thing of which I have as much evidence, as that there is any visible being at all, as great as that I have myself the power of thought.

Endeavour to view the blessed God in the light in which the Gospel of His Son has placed him. It is so noble and so amiable to view, that if you accustom yourselves to it, you will delight to dwell upon it, and to review it again and again. It represents God, not as slighting this world of ours, even when it had offended Him, not as immediately destroying it, or as marking its inhabitants for a day of slaughter, as traitors, and maintained at the expense of the king till their execution day is come; but as entertaining thoughts of love and mercy toward poor, sinful man, as caring for us with a great care, and employing His counsels, even long before we were born, for our deliverance, and for our salvation. It represents Him as busying Himself so much (if I may use the expression) about us and our concerns, as to send His own Son to inform us who He himself is, and what He would have us to be, what He expects from us on the one hand, and what we may expect from Him on the other. Yea, as sending His Son in a mortal body that He might converse with us for a long time, and might sow the seeds of true religion in our world, seeds which were to last as long as this world itself, and that He might at length die for us too, and redeem us to God, by pouring forth His own blood, and that He might leave a Gospel behind Him, written by the inspiration of His Spirit, which, under Divine blessing and grace, might be the food and comfort of souls from one generation to another: that Gospel which He brought down from heaven. Oh! did those poor blind heathens reverence and adore a senseless image of deity because they supposed it of heavenly original, the image that fell down from Jupiter out of heaven! What reason have we to value Christ and His Gospel as of celestial original indeed; and to love that God who sent us such a present, a blessing so much more valuable than the sun in the firmament. And how delightful should it be to us to look to the blessed God in this, as "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and, in and through Him, as "the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolation."

Labour to secure an interest in God through Christ, and then it will be pleasant to maintain a sight of Him. The great reason why men look at God no more is because they dread the sight of Him, their consciences telling them that He is their enemy, or at least that He may be so; that it is at best a very dubious case whether they have any interest in Him or not. Labour, therefore, I beseech you, to make it out to your own souls, as a plain and evident thing, that you have a covenant interest in God. And how can this be done but by solemnly laying hold of His covenant in Christ, and by setting your seal to it? Wilt thou not, says God, from this time cry unto me, My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth! And surely it is a pleasant thing for a dutiful and affectionate child to look upon his Father. View Him not merely as reconcilable, as one who may, perhaps, lay aside His wrath and become your friend, but as one who is actually reconciled. Go to Him, therefore, this day and say, "Lord, I have been a rebel, and I have deserved to die for my rebellion. I deserve that He who made me should not have mercy on me, and that He who formed me should show me no favour. But I have heard that Thou art a merciful God. I have been told that Thou didst condescend to say, and even to swear, that 'Thou desirest not the death of a sinner.' I have been told that Thou didst send Thine own dear and gracious Son into this world of ours to call back poor lost creatures to Thee, and to purchase pardon for them, and to declare it to them; yea, that Thou hast assured us by Him that he 'who believes shall have eternal life.' 'Now, Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief.' I have been told that Thou hast been pleased to make a covenant, a new and better covenant, with poor sinners, of which He is the surety. I desire to enter myself into this covenant; I am heartily willing to be saved by Thee in Thine own way, and therefore I beseech Thee that Thou wouldst save me. I beseech Thee that Thou wouldst become my God and Father in Christ, and I present myself to Thee in token of this desire, and would gladly, whenever Thou shalt give me an opportunity, do it at Thy table. Yea, I desire daily to repeat it as my own act and deed, to give myself to Thee, and to receive Thee, through Christ, into my soul as my portion, and hope, and God." When you are conscious of this temper you will view God not only with pleasure, but I had almost said, in allusion to the common form of our expressing ourselves, with pride (but that were improper), with humble joy and triumph, as the Psalmist, "Behold this God is our God!" O how I delight to fix my eyes upon Him, and survey Him in this view! This God, with all His infinite wisdom and almighty power, and immense inexhaustible treasure of goodness, and mercy, and faithfulness, and love, is mine, and mine for ever. Shall one man view his estate, and another his



honour with satisfaction! and another perhaps his person, and another even his dress, and inwardly congratulate himself that he is so rich, and so powerful, and so beautiful, and so fine? And shall not I, with infinitely greater satisfaction, view my God, and congratulate my own soul that I am so happy as to possess Him, and to stand in such a relation to Him? I would do it every day and every hour.

If you desire to maintain such views of Him, who is invisible, then guard against an undue attachment to all things that are seen, to this world and its interests.

These things, do, as it were, stand in the way of God; they make such a crowd about us that we cannot see Him. It alienates the heart from His love and service; so says the apostle in those remarkable words, "Love not the world nor the things of the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii. 15). If you are much attached to worldly interests, you will venture to displease God for the sake of them, and then, when you have displeased Him, you will not care to see Him with those marks of displeasure which His awful countenance will wear. As our Lord says, "No man can serve two masters; you cannot serve God and Mammon;" and the soul that serves not God with some degree of zeal as well as of fidelity, loves not to see Him, and thus the world concludes. Whereas the heart in which God has dwelt, and which has been used to live in the sight of Him, when flesh and heart fail, has something for "the strength of its heart and its portion for ever." What then will you say, must we needs go out of the world, and betake ourselves to the life of hermits, that we may preserve religion in our hearts? By no means. We may do it with much greater honour to religion by abiding in the converse of the world, even though we had it in our power to quit it, which many of us have not. We may show more of the force of it, and we may spread more of the spirit of it, by a social and conversable life. But then let us take heed that business and conversation do not possess our minds so much as to leave in them no room for God. Let us take care that we be often looking at the blessed God while we are conversing in the world; and let us guard against a fond affection for anything in this world which would give us a disrelish of devotion and the exercises of it. The greatest and noblest exercise is not to fly from the world, but to meet and conquer it; nor can it be better expressed than by the apostle, that "those who rejoice should be as though they rejoiced not."

If we would maintain habitual intercourse with God, let us think frequently and solemnly of the invisible world to which we are going. This advice stands in connection with the former, both giving and receiving strength, and therefore they are joined by the apostle, "Look not at the

things which are seen, but at those things which are unseen." How happy would it be for us in this respect if we could look at the things which are unseen! Is there not a world of spirits of a nature quite different from and vastly superior to this world of bodies in which we dwell? Expatriate, my thoughts, in this immense region. And what inhabitants dost thou see here? I see on the one hand the paradise of God, where Jehovah dwells; on the other, millions of bright and happy creatures who, during the many thousand years for which they have existed (and God only knows how many thousand), have never known a sentiment of guilt or a perception of misery. Is there not such a species of beings? I certainly know from the Word of God that there is, and that among them there are human spirits, who once dwelt in such bodies as mine, and having broken their way through the entanglements, temptations, and dangers of life, are received by the angels as their brethren and friends, and dwell with them, sharing, in some considerable degree, in their business and their pleasures. And is there not another kind of a region, of darkness and despair, where the fallen spirits dwell? "The angels that kept not their first state," but sinned, and upon that were cast down from heaven! And are there not, likewise, among them vast numbers that once dwelt upon earth, who saw the sun, and tasted but abused the bounty of their Creator? Thousands, ten thousands, no doubt, who heard His word, but trifled with the grace of His Gospel during the certain time which God had allotted to them for their trial, and who are cut off, and are under condemnation, to whom "nothing remains but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation." And are these scenes which have no connection with my *concerns*? I see one and another of my fellow-creatures drop the body and disappear. The invisible spirit flies off, and the poor abandoned carcass is laid in the dust, that it may not affect the living world thus it becomes invisible too as to know a sun remainder which can be traced of it; angels so gait I shortly take my turn! I am even surrounded by these invisible beings; the angels await to guard me, and are the instruments of merciful providence for my preservation; the devils are near too, and wait opportunities of mischief, and ere long I shall see myself in the hands of the one or of the other, and know that they are bearing me on my way to heaven or to hell as my final, as my everlasting abode. When this thought enters deep into the mind it will be natural to look to an invisible God, the great Lord of both these worlds, and of all their various inhabitants: it is natural to commit a soul, an immortal soul (the importance of which will then be felt), to His powerful and faithful care.

That we should often be setting ourselves to think expressly of God, and to speak directly to Him.



Visible objects have a great advantage over us. We must, therefore, have our proper seasons of retirement, our proper times for calling our thoughts from the world, for charging them to have done with it, that we may converse with God and Divine things; that we should summon up our souls to the work, as David, "Bless the Lord, O my soul," etc. (Psalm ciii. 1, 2); so should we say, "View the Lord, O my soul, contemplate Him and His glories. O think what a mysterious, what a marvellous, what an amiable being He is! Look through the whole creation, and see what deserves thy esteem, thy love, and thy trust, in comparison with Him: He is accessible through Christ, He hears prayers, He listens to the cry of His servants and His people. Resolve, therefore, that thou wilt converse with Him: address Him, therefore, by daily prayer, and particularly in secret. Enter into thy closet, it will assist thy conceptions of Him, it will remind thee of His existence, and of thy business with Him there; and see to it that this part of duty do not degenerate into a form, that the soul be right with God while it is performed: and I do not doubt but it will have a most happy influence; and will bring the mind to such a temper and disposition that you may often be able to direct the eye of the soul to God in the intervals of such solemnities; as a pious native of France expresses it, that when he passed through the streets of Paris, where one may well imagine there would be diversions enough, his soul was no more moved than if he were in a desert.

Let us cry earnestly to the great Father of spirits to direct our fallen and degenerate minds to Himself, if we desire to maintain our frequent views of Him.

We might, says that excellent person to whom I have just referred, as soon bring down fire from heaven, or draw the stars from their orbits, as kindle devotion in our own cold dead hearts without a Divine agency and operation. The Lord opened the eyes of Hagar, and she saw the relief which He had prepared for her in

the wilderness. He must open our eyes, or we shall not see Him. Cry, therefore, to Him with all your souls, and if you feel your hearts raised to Him, look upon it as a token for good, as an assurance not only of His providential but gracious presence. "O thou King eternal, immortal, and invisible! Thou art ever with me, and yet I see Thee not: ever near to me, and yet I do not perceive Thee: and important as Thy presence is, I am often insensible of it: and shall it be always thus? Lord! I cannot bear it. I am persuaded that I see; and, blessed be Thy name, I feel it, that it were better to die than to live as at a distance from Thee: better to have no being at all than to lose God among His creatures, though it were the most excellent of them: and, therefore, O Lord, I earnestly entreat this favour of Thee, not that Thou wouldst make me rich and great, that Thou wouldst prosper me in my worldly affairs, though I desire such prosperity as Thou shalt see best, but that the eye of my soul may be directed to Thee. I would say as Thy servant Moses, 'O Lord! I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory' (Exod. xxxiii. 18), in a spiritual sense! Give me such a view of Thee as may fix my roving mind upon Thee more than ever! Let me see Thee so as to rejoice, if it be Thy blessed will; but if not, let me see Thee, so as to fear Thee, and to love Thee, and to conduct myself in a manner that may be agreeable to Thee: that in whatever darkness I now walk, I may at last come to see light in Thy light, so to behold Thy face in righteousness, as to be satisfied with Thy complete likeness; and, when my foolish heart would lose sight of Thee in the midst of these surrounding vanities, let me rather be made to feel Thine hand smiting me than to live in a forgetfulness of Thy presence."

Is there a heart in this assembly that can say amen to these petitions? If there be, I will be humbly bold to say it is a heart that has already seen God, a heart that, persisting in these sentiments, will see and enjoy Him for ever.

## JOHN WESLEY.

1703-1791.

## FREE GRACE.\*

How freely does God love the world! While we were yet sinners, "Christ died for the ungodly." While we were "dead in sin," God

\* "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32)?

Preached at Bristol, in the year 1740.

"spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." And how freely with Him does He "give us all things!" Verily, Free Grace is all in all.

The grace or love of God, whence cometh our salvation, is free in all, and free for all.

First, It is free in all to whom it is given. It does not depend on any power or merit in man; no, not in any degree, neither in whole, nor in part. It does not in anywise depend either on