

temptations!" Surely if we look to stand in the faith of the sons of God, we must hourly, continually, be providing and setting ourselves to strive. It was not the meaning of our Lord and Saviour in saying, "Father, keep them in Thy name" (John xvii. 11), that we should be careless to keep ourselves. To our own safety, our own sedulity is required. And then blessed for ever and ever be that mother's child whose faith hath made him the child of God. The earth may shake, the pillars of the world may tremble under us, the countenance of the heaven may be appalled, the sun may lose his light, the moon her beauty, the stars their glory; but concerning the man that trusteth in God, if the fire have proclaimed itself unable as much as to singe a hair of his head, if lions, beasts ravenous by nature, and keen with hunger, being set to devour, have, as it were, religiously adored the very flesh of the faithful man; what is there in the world that shall change his heart, overthrow his faith, alter his affection towards God, or the affection of

God to him? If I be of this note, who shall make a separation between me and my God? "Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39.) No; "I am persuaded that neither tribulation, nor anguish, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, nor death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature," shall ever prevail so far over me. "I know in whom I have believed;" I am not ignorant whose precious blood hath been shed for me; I have a Shepherd full of kindness, full of care, and full of power: unto Him I commit myself; His own finger hath engraven this sentence in the tables of my heart, "Satan hath desired to winnow thee as wheat, but I have prayed that thy faith fail not:" therefore the assurance of my hope I will labour to keep as a jewel unto the end; and by labour, through the gracious mediation of His prayer, I shall keep it.

JOHN DONNE*

1573-1631.

HEAVEN.

IN this house of His Father's, thus by Him made ours, there are mansions; in which word, the consolation is not placed (I do not say that there is not truth in it), but the consolation is not placed in this, that some of these mansions are below, some above stairs, some better seated, better lighted, better vaulted, better fretted, better furnished than others; but only in this, that they are mansions, which word, in the original, and Latin, and our language, signifies a remaining, and denotes the perpetuity, the everlastingness of that state. A state but of one day, because no night shall overtake or determine it, but such a day as is not of a thousand years, which is the longest measure in the Scriptures, but of a thousand millions of millions of generations: *Qui nec preceditur hesterno, nec excluditur crastino* (Augustine), a day that hath no *pridie*, nor *postridie*, yesterday doth

not usher it in, nor to-morrow shall not drive it out. Methuselah, with all his hundreds of years, was but a mushroom of a night's growth to this day; and all the four monarchies, with all their thousands of years, and all the powerful kings, and all the beautiful queens of this world, were but as a bed of flowers, some gathered at six, some at seven, some at eight, all in one morning, in respect of this day. In all the two thousand years of nature, before the law given by Moses, and the two thousand years of law, before the Gospel given by Christ, and the two thousand of grace, which are running now (of which last hour we have heard three-quarters strike, more than fifteen hundred of this last two thousand spent), in all this six thousand, and in all those which God may be pleased to add, in *devo patris*, in this house of His Father's, there was never heard quarter clock to strike, never seen minute glass to turn. No time less than itself would serve to express this time, which is intended in this word mansions; which is also exalted with another beam, that they are *Multa*—"In my Father's house there are many mansions."

* "A preacher in earnest, weeping sometimes for his auditory, sometimes with them; always preaching to himself like an angel from a cloud, but in none; carrying some, as St Paul was, to heaven in holy raptures, and enticing others by a sacred art and courtship to amend their lives; here picturing a vice so as to make it ugly to those that practised it, and a virtue so as to make it beloved even by those that loved it not; and all this with a most particular grace, and an inexpressible addition of comeliness."—Isaac Walton.

In this circumstance, an essential, a substantial circumstance, we would consider the joy of our society and conversation in heaven, since society and conversation is one great element and ingredient into the joy which we have in this world. We shall have an association with

Christ himself; for where He is, it is His promise that we also shall be. We shall have an association with the angels, and such a one as we shall be such as they. We shall have an association with the saints, and not only so, to be such as they, but to be they: and with all "who come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. viii. 11). Where we shall be so far from being enemies to one another, as that we shall not be strangers to one another: and so far from envying one another, as that all that every one hath shall be every other's possession: where all souls shall be so entirely knit together as if all were but one soul, and God so entirely knit to every soul as if there were as many Gods as souls.

Be comforted, then, says Christ to them, for this, which is a house, and not a ship, not subject to storms by the way, nor wrecks in the end; my Father's house, not a stranger's, in whom I had no interest, a house of mansions, a dwelling, not a sojourning, and of many mansions, not an abridgment, a model of a house, not a monastery of many cells, but an extension of many houses, into the city of the living God. this house shall be yours, though I depart from you. Christ is nearer us when we behold Him with the eyes of faith in heaven than when we seek Him in a piece of bread, or in a sacramental box here. Drive Him not away from thee by wrangling and disputing how He is present with thee; unnecessary doubts of His presence may induce fearful assurances of His absence: the best determination of the real presence is to be sure that thou be really present with Him, by an ascending faith: make sure thine own real presence, and doubt not of His: thou art not the further from Him by His being gone thither before thee.

No, nor though Peter be gone thither before thee neither, which was the other point, in which the apostles needed consolation; they were troubled that Christ would go, and none of them, and troubled that Peter might go, and none but he. What men soever God takes into heaven before thee, though thy father that should give thee thy education, though thy pastor that should give thee thy instruction, though these men may be such in the State, and such in the Church, as thou mayest think the Church and State cannot subsist without them, discourage not thyself, neither admit a jealousy or suspicion of the providence and good purpose of God; for, as God hath His pannier full of manna and of quails, and can pour out to-morrow, though He have poured them out plentifully upon His friends before; so God hath His quiver full of arrows, and can shoot as powerfully as heretofore upon His enemies. I forbid thee not St Paul's wish, *cupio dissolvi*, to desire to be dissolved, therefore, that thou mayest be

with Christ; I forbid thee not David's sigh, *Hei mihi*—"Woe is me that I must dwell so long with them that love not peace!" I only enjoin thee thy Saviour's *Veruntamen*—"Yet not mine, but Thy will, O Father, be done;" that all thy wishes may have relation to His purposes, and all thy prayers may be inanimated with that—Lord, manifest Thy will unto me, and conform my will unto Thine. So shalt thou not be affrighted, as though God aimed at thee, when He shoots about the mark, and thou seest a thousand fall at thy right hand, and ten thousand at thy left; nor discouraged as though God had left out thee, when thou seest Him take others into garrison, and leave thee in the field, assume others to triumph, and leave thee in the battle still. For as Christ Jesus would have come down from heaven to have died for thee, though there had been no soul to have been saved but thine; so is He gone up to heaven to prepare a place for thee, though all the souls in this world were to be saved as well as thine. Trouble not thyself with dignity, and priority, and precedency in heaven, for consolation and devotion consist not in that, and thou wilt be the less troubled with dignity, and priority, and precedency in this world, for rest and quietness consist not in that.*

SEEING GOD.

No man ever saw God and lived; and yet, I shall not live till I see God; and when I have seen Him I shall never die. What have I ever seen in this world, that hath been truly the same thing that it seemed to me? I have seen marble buildings, and a chip, a crust, a plaster, a face of marble hath pilled off, and I see brick bowels within. I have seen beauty, and a strong breath from another tells me that that complexion is from without, not from a sound constitution within. I have seen the state of princes, and all that is but ceremony; and I would be loath to put a master of ceremonies to define ceremony, and tell me what it is, and to include so various a thing as ceremony, in so constant a thing as a definition. I see a great officer, and I see a man of mine own profession, of great revenues, and I see not the interest of the money that was paid for it; I see not the pensions nor the annuities that are charged upon that office or that church. As he that fears God fears nothing else, so he that sees God sees everything else. When we shall see God, *sicuti est*, as He is (1 John iii. 2), we shall see all things *secuti sunt*, as they are; for that is their essence, as they conduce to His glory. We shall be no more deluded with outward appearances; for when this sight, which we intend here, comes, there will be no delusory thing to be seen. All that we have made as though we saw, in this world, will be vanished,

* Works, vol. iii., pp. 325-323.

and I shall see nothing but God, and what is in Him, and Him I shall see, *in carne*—"in the flesh," which is another degree of exaltation in mine exinanition.

I shall see Him, *in carne sua*—"in His flesh," and this was one branch in St Augustine's great wish, that he might have seen Rome in her state, that he might have heard St Paul preach, that he might have seen Christ in the flesh. St Augustine hath seen Christ in the flesh one thousand two hundred years, in Christ's glorified flesh; but it is with the eyes of his understanding, and in his soul. Our flesh, even in the resurrection, cannot be a spectacle, a perspective glass to our soul. We shall see the humanity of Christ with our bodily eyes, then glorified; but that flesh, though glorified, cannot make us see God better nor clearer than the soul alone hath done, all the time from our death to our resurrection. But, as an indulgent father, or as a tender mother, when they go to see the king in any solemnity, or any other thing of observation and curiosity, delights to carry their child, which is flesh of their flesh, and bone of their bone, with them, and though the child cannot comprehend it as well as they, they are as glad that the child sees it as that they see it themselves; such a gladness shall my soul have that this flesh (which she will no longer call her prison nor her tempter, but her friend, her companion, her wife), that this flesh, that is I, in the reunion and redintegration of both parts, shall see God; for then one principal clause in her rejoicing and acclamation shall be, that this flesh is her flesh; *In carne mea*—"In my flesh I shall see God."

It was the flesh of every wanton object here, that would allure it in the petulancy of mine eye. It was the flesh of every satirical libeller, and defamer, and calumniator of other men, that would call upon it, and tickle mine ear with aspersions and slanders of persons in authority. And in the grave, it is the flesh of the worm; the possession it transferred to him. But in heaven it is *caro mea*—"my flesh," my soul's flesh, my Saviour's flesh. As my meat is assimilated to my flesh, and made one flesh with it—as my soul is assimilated to my God, and made partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter i. 4), and *idem spiritus*, the same spirit with it (1 Cor. vi. 17), so there my flesh shall be assimilated to the flesh of my Saviour, and made the same flesh with Him too. *Verbum caro factum ut caro resurgeret* (Athanasius); therefore the Word was made flesh, therefore God was made man, that that union might exalt the flesh of man to the right hand of God. That is spoken of the flesh of Christ; and then to facilitate the passage for us, *Reformat ad immortalitatem suam participes sui* (Cyril); those who are worthy receivers of His flesh here, are the same flesh with Him; and God shall quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you (Rom. viii. 11). But this is not in consummation, in full accomplish-

ment, till this resurrection, when it shall be *caro mea*, my flesh, so as that nothing can draw it from the allegiance of my God; and *caro mea*—"my flesh," so as that nothing can divest me of it. Here a bullet will ask a man, where's your arm? and a wolf will ask a woman, where's your breast? A sentence in the Star Chamber will ask him, where's your ear! and a month's close prison will ask him, where's your flesh! A fever will ask him, where's your red! and a morpew will ask him, where's your white! But when after all this, when "After my skin worms shall destroy my body, I shall see God," I shall see Him in my flesh, which shall be mine as inseparably (in the effect, though not in the manner), as the hypostatical union of God and man in Christ, makes our nature and the Godhead one person in Him. My flesh shall no more be none of mine, than Christ shall not be man, as well as God.

SIN.*

Sin is so far from being nothing, as that there is nothing else but sin in us; sin hath not only a place, but a palace, a throne, not only a being, but a dominion, even in our best actions: and if every action of ours must needs be denominated from the degrees of good or of bad that are in it, howsoever there may be some tincture of some moral goodness, in some actions, every action will prove a sin, that is, vitiated and depraved with more ill, than rectified with good conditions. And then every sin will prove *læsis Dei*, a violence, a wound inflicted upon God himself, and therefore it is not nothing.

God spake not only of the beasts of the forest, but of those beasts, that is, those brutish affections, that are in us, when He said, *Subjicite et dominamini*—"Subdue and govern the world;" and in sinning we lose this dominion over ourselves, and forfeit our dominion over the creature too. *Qui peccat, quatenus peccat, seipso deterior*; Every sin leaves us worse than it found us, and we rise poorer, ignobler, weaker, for every night's sin than we lay down. *Plerumque non implemus bonum propositum, ne offendamus eos quibuscum vivimus* (Augustine); If any good purpose arise in us, we dare not pursue it, for fear of displeasing those with whom we live, and to whom we have a relation, and a dependence upon them. We sin, and sin, and sin, lest our abstinence from sin should work as an increpation, as a rebuke upon them that do sin; for this they will call an ambition in us that being their inferiors, we go about to be their betters, if we will needs be better, that is, less vicious than they. First then, personally in himself, prophetically in us, David laments our state, *quia peccata*, because we are under sin, sin which is a depravation of man in himself, and a deprivation of God from

* Works, vol. iv., p. 362.

man. And then our next cause of lamentation is the propriety in sin, that they are *nostra*, our own, *Iniquitates meæ*, says David—My sins, mine iniquities are gone over my head.

We are not all Davids, *amabiles*, lovely and beloved in that measure that David was, men according to God's heart; but we are all Adams, *terrestres*, and *lutosi*, earth, and dirty earth, red, and bloody earth, and therefore in ourselves, as derived from him, let us find, and lament all these numbers, and all these weights of sin. Here we are all born to a patrimony, to an inheritance; an inheritance, a patrimony of sin; and we are all good husbands, and thrive too fast upon that stock, upon the increase of sin, even to the treasuring up of sin, and the wrath of God for sin. How naked soever we came out of our mother's womb, otherwise, thus we came all apparelled, apparelled and invested in sin; and we multiply this wardrobe with new habits, habits of customary sins, every day. Every man hath an answer to that question of the apostle. "What hast thou, that thou hast not received from God?" Every man must say, "I have pride in my heart, wantonness in mine eyes, oppression in my hands; and that I never received from God." Our sins are our own; and we have a covetousness of more; a way to make other men's sins ours too, by drawing them to a fellowship in our sins. I must be beholden to the loyalty and honesty of my wife, whether my children be mine own or no; for he whose eye waiteth for the evening, the adulterer, may rob me of that propriety. I must be beholden to the protection of the law, whether my goods shall be mine or no; a potent adversary, a corrupt judge, may rob me of that propriety. I must be beholden to my physician, whether my health and strength shall be mine or no; a garment negligently left off, a disorderly meal may rob me of that propriety. But without asking any man leave, my sins will be my own. When the presumptuous men say—"Our lips are our own, and our tongues are our own" (Psalm xii. 4), the Lord threatens to cut off those lips, and those tongues. But except we do come to say our sins are our own, God will never cut up that root in us, God will never blot out the memory in Himself of those sins. Nothing can make them none of ours, but the avowing of them, the confessing of them to be ours. Only in this way, I am a holy liar, and in this the God of truth will reward my lie; for, if I say my sins are mine own, they are none of mine, but by that confessing and appropriating of those sins to myself, they are made the sins of Him who hath suffered enough for all, my blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Therefore, that servant of God, St Augustine, confesses those sins, which he never did, to be his sins, and to have been forgiven him; *Peccata mihi dimissa fateor, et quæ mea sponte feci, et quæ te duce non feci*; "Those sins which I have done, and those

which, but for Thy grace, I should have done, are all my sins. Alas, I may die here, and die under an everlasting condemnation of fornication with that woman that lives and dies a virgin, and be damned for a murderer of that man that outlives me, and for a robbery, and oppression, where no man is damnified nor any penny lost. The sin that I have done, the sin that I would have done, is my sin. We must not, therefore, transfer our sins upon any other. We must not think to discharge ourselves upon a *peccata patris*; to come to say, "My father thrived well in this course, why should not I proceed in it? My father was of this religion, why should not I continue in it?" How often is it said in the Scriptures of evil kings, He did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked *in via patris*, in the way of his father? father in the singular; it is never said plurally, *in via patrum*—in the way of his fathers. God's blessings in this world are expressed so, in the plural, Thou gavest this land *patribus*, to their fathers, says Solomon (1 Kings viii. 48), in the dedication of the temple; and Thou broughtest *patres*, our fathers, out of Egypt; and again, Be with us, Lord, as Thou wast with our fathers; so in Ezekiel (Ezek. xxxvii. 25), Where your fathers dwelt, you, their children, shall dwell too, and your children, and their children's children for ever. His blessings upon His saints, His holy ones in this world, are expressed so, plurally; and so is the transmigration of His saints out of this world also; Thou shalt sleep *cum patribus*, with thy fathers, says God to Moses (Deut. xxxi. 13); and David slept *cum patribus*, with his fathers (1 Kings ii. 10); and Jacob had that care of himself, as of that in which consisted, or in which was testified the blessing of God. I will lie *cum patribus*, with my fathers, and be buried in their burying-place, says Jacob to his son Joseph (Gen. xlviii. 30). Good ways and good ends are in the plural, and have many examples, else they are not good; but sins are in the singular; he walked in the way of his father is in an ill way, but carry our manners, or carry our religion high enough, and we shall find a good rule in our fathers. "Stand in the way," says God in Jeremiah, "and ask for the old way, which is the good way" (Jer. vi. 16). We must put off *veterem hominem*, but not *antiquum*; we may put off that religion which we think old, because it is a little elder than ourselves, and not rely upon that it was the religion of my father. But *antiquissimum dierum*, Him, whose name is He that is, and was, and is for ever, and so involves and enwraps in Himself all the fathers, Him we must put on. Be that our issue with our adversaries at Rome, by the fathers, the fathers in the plural, when those fathers unanimously deliver anything dogmatically for matter of faith, we are content to be tried by the fathers, the fathers in that plural. But by that one father, who begets his children not upon the true mother, the Church, but upon the

court, and so produces articles of faith according as state businesses and civil occasions invite him —by that father we must refuse to be tried; for to limit it in particular to my father, we must say with Nehemiah, *Ego et domus patris mei* (Neh. i. 6). If I make my father's house my church, my father my bishop, I and my father's house have sinned, says he; and with Mordecai to Esther (Esther iv. 14), Thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed.

They are not *peccata patris*, I cannot excuse my sins upon the example of my father; nor are they *peccata temporis*, I cannot discharge my sins upon the times, and upon the present ill disposition that reigns in men now, and do ill because everybody else does so. To say, there is a rot, and therefore the sheep must perish; corruptions in religion are crept in, and work in every corner, and therefore God's sheep, simple souls, must be content to admit the infection of this rot. That there is a murrain, and therefore cattle must die; superstition practised in many places, and therefore the strong servants of God must come to sacrifice their obedience to it, or their blood for it. There is no such rot, no such murrain, no such corruption of times, as can lay a necessity, or can afford an excuse to them who are corrupted with the times. As it is not *pax temporis*, such a state peace, as takes away honour, that secures a nation, nor such a church peace as takes away zeal, that secures a conscience, so neither is it *peccatum temporis*, an observation what other men incline to, but what truth, what integrity thou declinest from, that appertains to thy consideration.

It is not *peccatum ætatis*, not the sin of thy father, not the sin of the times, not the sin of thine own years. That thou shouldst say in thy old age, in excuse of thy covetousness, "All these things have I observed from my youth;" I have lived temperately, continently all my life, and therefore may be allowed one sin for mine ease in mine age. Or that thou shouldst say in thy youth, "I will retire myself in mine age, and live contentedly with a little then; but now, how vain were it to go about to keep out a tide, or to quench the heats and impetuous violence of youth?" But *Fuge juvenilia desideria*—"Fly also youthful lusts" (2 Tim. ii. 22); and lest God hear not thee at last, when thou comest with that petition, "Remember not the sins of my youth" (Psalm xxv. 7); "Remember thou thy Creator now in the days of thy youth" (Eccles. xii. 1); for if thou think it enough to say, "I have but lived as other men have lived, wantonly," thou wilt find some examples to die by too; and die as other old men, old in years and old in sin, have died too, negligently or fearfully, without any sense at all, or all their sense turned into fearful apprehensions and desperation.

They are not *peccata ætatis*, such sins as men of that age must needs commit, nor *peccata artis*, such sins as men of thy calling or thy profession

cannot avoid; that thou shouldst say, "I shall not be believed to understand my profession as well as other men, if I live not by it as well as other men do." Is there no being a carpenter but that after he hath warmed him by the chips, and baked and roasted by it, he must needs make an idol of his wood, and worship it? (Isa. xlv. 13.) Is there no being a silversmith, but he must needs make shrines for Diana of the Ephesians, as Demetrius did? (Acts .xix. 24.) No being a lawyer without serving the passion of the client? No being a divine without sowing pillows under great men's elbows? It is not the sin of thy calling that oppresses thee; as a man may commit a massacre in a single murder, and kill many in one man, if he kill one upon whom many depended, so is that man a general libeller that defames a lawful calling by his abusing thereof; that lives so scandalously in the ministry as to defame the ministry itself; or so imperiously in the magistracy as to defame the magistracy itself, as though it were but an engine, an instrument of oppression; or so unjustly in any calling, as his abuse dishonours the calling itself. God hath instituted callings for the conservation of order in general, not for the justification of disorders in any particular. For he that justifies his faults by his calling hath not yet received that calling from above, whereby he must be justified and sanctified in the way, and glorified in the end. There is no lawful calling in which a man may not be an honest man.

It is not *peccatum magistratus*, thou canst not excuse thyself upon the unjust command of thy superior; that is the blind and implicit obedience practised in the Church of Rome; nor *peccatum pastoris*, the ill example of thy pastor, whose life counter-preaches his doctrine, for that shall aggravate his, but not excuse thy sin; nor *peccata cæli*, the influence of stars, concluding a fatality, amongst the Gentiles, or such a working of a necessary and inevitable and unconditioned decree of God, as may shut up the ways of a religious walking in this life, or a happy meeting in the life to come. It is none of these; not the sin of thy father, not the sin of the present times, not the sin of thy years and age, nor of thy calling, nor of the magistrates, nor of thy pastor, nor of destiny, nor of decrees, but it is *peccatum tuum*, thy sin, thy own sin. And not only thy sin, so as Adam's sin is communicated to thee by propagation of original sin, for so thou mightest have some colour to discharge thyself upon him, as he did upon Eve, and Eve upon the serpent, though in truth it make no difference, in this spiritual debt of that sin, who is first in the bond. Adam may stand first, but yet thou art no surety, but a principal, and for thyself, and he and thou are equally subject to the penalty. For though St Augustine confess that there are many things concerning original sin of which he is utterly ignorant, yet of this he would have no man ignorant, that to the guiltiness of

original sin our own wills concur, as well as to any actual sin. An involuntary act cannot be a sinful act; and though our will work not now in the admitting of origin, which enters with our soul in our conception, or in our inanimation and quickening, yet, at first, *Sicut omnium natura, ita omnium voluntates erant in Adam*—As every man was in Adam, so every faculty of every man, and consequently the will of every man, concurred to that sin, which, therefore, lies upon every man now, so that that debt, original sin, is as much thine as his; and for the other debts, which grow out of this debt (as nothing is so generative, so multiplying, as debts are, especially spiritual debts, sins), for actual sins, they are thine, out of thine own choice. Thou mightest have left them undone, and wouldst needs do them; for God never induces any man into a perplexity—that is, into a necessity of doing any particular sin. Thou couldst have dissuaded a son, or a friend, or a servant, from that sin which thou hast embraced thyself; thou hast been so far from having been forced to those sins which thou hast done, as that thou hast been sorry thou couldst not do them in a greater measure. They are thine—thine own, so as that thou canst not discharge thyself upon the devil, but art, by the habit of sin, become *spontaneus dæmon* (Chrysostom), a devil to thyself, and wouldst minister temptations to thyself, though there were no other devil. And this is our propriety in sin; they are our own.

This is the propriety of thy sin; the next is the plurality, the multiplicity, *iniquitates*; not only the committing of one sin often; and yet he deceives himself in his account dangerously that reckons but upon one sin, because he is guilty but of one kind of sin. Would a man say he had but one wound if he were shot seven times in the same place? Could the Jews deny that they flayed Christ with their second, or third, or twentieth blow, because they had torn skin and flesh with their former scourges, and had left nothing but bones to wound? But it is not only that, the repeating of the same sin often, but it is the multiplicity of divers kinds of sins that is here lamented in all our behalfs. It is not when the conscience is tender, and afraid of every sin, and every appearance of sin. When Naaman desired pardon of God by the prophet, for sustaining the king upon his knees in the house of Rimmon the idol, and the prophet bade him “go in peace” (2 Kings v. 19), it is not that he allows him any peace under the conscience and guiltiness of a sin; that was indispensable (*i.e.*, not within the power of a dispensation). Neither is there any dispensation in Naaman’s case, but only a rectifying of a tender and timorous conscience, that thought that to be a sin which was not if it went no further, but to the exhibiting of a civil duty to his master, in what place soever, religious or profane, that service of kneeling were to be done.

Naaman’s service was truly no sin; but it had been a sin in him to have done it when he thought it to be a sin. And therefore the prophet’s phrase, “Go in peace,” may well be interpreted so,—Set thy mind at rest; for all that, that thou requirest may be done without sin. Now that tenderness is not in our case in the text. He that proceeds so to examine all his actions, may meet scruples all the way that may give him some anxiety and vexation, but he shall never come to that overflowing of sin intended in this plurality and multiplicity here. For this plurality, this multiplicity of sin, hath found first a sponginess in the soul, an aptness to receive any liquor, to embrace any sin, that is offered to it; and after a while, a hunger and thirst in the soul, to hunt, and pant, and draw after a temptation, and not to be able to endure any *vacuum*, any discontinuance, or intermission of sin: and he will come to think it a melancholic thing still to stand in fear of hell; a sordid, a yeomanly thing, still to be ploughing, and weeding, and worming a conscience; a mechanical thing, still to be removing logs, or filing iron, still to be busied in removing occasions of temptation, or filing and clearing particular actions: and at last he will come to that case which St Augustine, out of an abundant ingenuity, and tenderness, and compunction, confesses of himself—*Ne vituperarer, vitiosior fiebam*, I was fain to sin, lest I should lose my credit, and be undervalued; *Et ubi non suberat, quo admissio, acquarer perditis*, When I had no means to do some sins, whereby I might be equal to my fellow, *Fingebam ne fecisse quod non feceram, ne viderer abjectior, quo innocentior*, I would belie myself, and say I had done that which I never did, lest I should be undervalued for not having done it. *Audiebam eos, exaltantes flagitia*, says that tender, blessed father, I saw it was thought wit to make sonnets of their own sins, *Et libebat facere, non libidine facti, sed libidine laudis*, I sinned, not for the pleasure I had in the sin, but for the pride that I had to write feelingly of it. O what a leviathan is sin, how vast, how immense a body! And then what a spawner, how numerous! Between these two, the denying of sins which we have done, and the bragging of sins which we have not done, what a space, what a compass is there, for millions of millions of sins! And so have you the nature of sin, which was our first; the propriety of sin, which was our second; and the plurality, the multiplicity of sin, which was our third branch; and follows next the exaltation thereof; *Supergressæ sunt*—“My sins are gone over my head.”

They are, that is, they are already got above us; for in that case we consider this plural, this manifold sinner, that he hath slipped his time of preventing, or resisting his sins; his habits of sins are got, already got above him. Elijah bids his man look towards the sea, and he saw

nothing; he bids him look again, and again to a seventh time, and he saw nothing (1 Kings xviii. 43). After all, he sees but a little cloud, like a man's hand; and yet, upon that little appearance, the prophet warns the king, to get him into his chariot, and make good haste away, lest the rain stopped his passage, for instantly the heaven was black with clouds and rain. The sinner will see nothing, till he can see nothing; and, when he sees anything (as to the blindest conscience something will appear), he thinks it but a little cloud, but a melancholic fit, and, in an instant (for seven years make but an instant to that man, that thinks of himself but once in seven years), *supergressæ sunt*, his sins are got above him, and his way out is stopped. The sun is got over us now, though we saw none of his motions, and so are our sins, though we saw not their steps. You know how confident our adversaries are in that argument, "Why do ye oppugn our doctrine of prayer for the dead, or of invocation of saints, or of the fire of purgatory, since you cannot assign us a time when these doctrines came into the Church, or that they were opposed or contradicted when they entered?" When a conscience comes to that inquisition, to an *iniquitates supergressæ*, to consider that our sins are gone over our head in any of those ways which we have spoken of, if we offer to awaken that conscience further, it startles, and it answers us drowsily, or frowardly, like a new waked man, "Can you remember when you sinned this sin first, or did you resist it then, or since?" Whence comes this troublesome singularity now? Pray let me sleep still, says this startled conscience. Beloved, if we fear not the wetting of our foot in sin, it will be too late, when we are over head and ears. God's deliverance of His children was *sicco pede*, He made the sea dry land, and "they wet not their foot" (Exod. xiv. 22). At first, in the creation, *Subjecit omnia sub pedibus*—"God put all things under their feet" (Psalm viii. 7); in man's ways, in this world, His angels bear us up in their hands; why? *Ne impingamus pedem*—"That we should not hurt our foot against a stone, but have a care of every step we make." If thou have defiled thy feet (strayed into any unclean ways) wash them again, and stop there, and that will bring thee to the consideration of the spouse, "I have washed my feet, how shall I then defile them again?" (Cant. v. 3.) I have found mercy for my former sins, how shall I dare to provoke God with more? Still God appoints us a permanent means to tread sin under our feet here, in this life; the woman, that is, the Church, hath the moon, that is, all transitory things (and so, all temptations) under her feet (Rev. xii. 1); as Christ himself expressed His care of Peter to consist in that, that if his feet were washed all was clean; and as in His own person He admitted nails in His feet, as well as in His hands, so crucify thy hands,

abstain from unjust actions, but crucify thy feet too, make not one step towards the way of idolaters, or other sinners. If we watch not the *ingressus sum*, we shall be insensible of the *supergressæ sunt*; if we look not to a sin when it comes towards us, we shall not be able to look towards it when it is got over us: for, if a man come to walk in the counsel of the ungodly, he will come to sit in the seat of the scornful; for that is the sinner's progress, in the first warning that David gives in the beginning of his first psalm. If he give himself leave to enter into sinful ways, he will sit and sin at ease, and make a jest of sin; and he that loveth danger shall perish therein. So have you then the nature of sin; it was sin that oppressed him; and the propriety of sin, it was his sin, actual sin; and the plurality of sin, habitual, customary sin; and the victory of sin, they had been long climbing, and were now got up to a height; and this height and exaltation of theirs is expressed thus, *Super caput*—"Mine iniquities are got above my head."

THE ELECT.*

But who are this *We*? why, they are the elect of God. But who are they, who are these elect? *Qui timide rogat, docet negare*; if a man ask me with a diffidence, Can I be the adopted son of God that have rebelled against Him in all my affections, that have trodden upon His commandments in all mine actions, that have divorced myself from Him in preferring the love of His creatures before Himself; that have murmured at His corrections, and thought them too much; that have undervalued His benefits, and thought them too little; that have abandoned and prostituted my body, His temple, to all uncleanness, and my spirit to indevotion and contempt of His ordinances; can I be the adopted son of God that have done this? *Ne timide roges*, ask me not this with a diffidence and distrust in God's mercy, as if thou thoughtest, with Cain, thy iniquities were greater than could be forgiven; but ask me with that holy confidence which belongs to a true convert, Am not I, who though I am never without sin, yet am never without hearty remorse and repentance for my sins; though the weakness of my flesh sometimes betrays me, the strength of His Spirit still recovers me; though my body be under the paw of that lion that seeks whom he may devour, yet the Lion of Judah raises again and upholds my soul; though I wound my Saviour with many sins, yet all these, be they never so many, I strive against, I lament, confess, and forsake as far as I am able; am not I the child of God, and His adopted son in this state? *Roga fidenter*, ask me with a holy confidence in thine and my God, *et doces affirmare*, thy very question gives me mine answer to thee; thou teachest me to

* Works, p. 333.

say, thou art. God teaches me to say so by His apostle, The foundation of God is sure, and this is the seal; God knoweth who are His, and let them that call upon His name depart from all iniquity. He that departs so far, as to repent former sins, and shut up the ways which he knows in his conscience do lead him into temptations, he is one of this *quorum*; one of us, one of them who are adopted by Christ to be the sons of God. I am of this *quorum*, if I preach the Gospel sincerely, and live thereafter (for he preaches twice a day that follows his own doctrine, and does as he says), and you are of this *quorum*, if you preach over the sermons which you hear, to your own souls in your meditation, to your families in your relation, to the world in your conversation. If you come to this

place to meet the Spirit of God, and not to meet one another; if you have sat in this place with a delight in the Word of God, and not in the word of any speaker; if you go out of this place in such a disposition as that, if you should meet the last trumpets at the gates, and Christ Jesus in the clouds, you would not entreat Him to go back, and stay another year; to enwrap all in one, if you have a religious and sober assurance that you are His, and walk according to your belief, you are His; and, as the fulness of time, so the fulness of grace is come upon you, and you are not only within the first commission, of those who were under the law, and so redeemed, but of this *quorum*, who are selected out of them, the adopted sons of that God, who never disinherits those that forsake not Him.

JOSEPH HALL.

1574-1656.

GOD'S VINEYARD.*

LAY now all these together, *And what could have been done more for our vineyard, O God, that Thou hast not done?* Look about you, honourable and Christian hearers, and see whether God hath done thus with any nation. Oh, never, never was any people so bound to a God. Other neighbouring regions would think themselves happy in one drop of those blessings which have poured down thick upon us. Alas! they are in a vaporous and marish vale, while we are seated on the fruitful hill; they lie open to the massacring knife of an enemy, while we are fenced; they are clogged with miserable encumbrances, while we are free; briars and brambles overspread them, while we are choicely planted; their tower is of offence, their wine-press is of blood. Oh, the lamentable condition of more likely vineyards than our own! Who can but weep and bleed to see those woful calamities that are fallen upon the late famous and flourishing churches of Reformed Christendom? Oh, for that Palatine vine, late inoculated with a precious bud of our royal stem—that vine, not long since rich in goodly clusters, now the insultation of boars and prey of foxes! Oh, for those poor distressed Christians in France, Bohemia, Silesia, Moravia, Germany, Austria, the Valteline, that groan now under the tyrannous yoke of anti-Christian oppression! How glad would they be of the crumbs of our feasts! How rich would they esteem themselves with the very gleanings of our plentiful crop of prosperity! How do they look up at us, as even

now militantly triumphant, while they are miserably wallowing in dust and blood, and wonder to see the sunshine upon our hill, while they are drenched with storm and tempest in the valley!

What are we, O God, what are we that Thou shouldest be thus rich in Thy mercies to us, while Thou art so severe in Thy judgments upon them? It is too much, Lord, it is too much that Thou hast done for so sinful and rebellious a people.

2. Cast now your eyes aside a little, and, after the view of God's favours, see some little glimpse of our REQUITAL. Say then, say, *O nation not worthy to be beloved*, what fruit have ye returned to your beneficent God? Sin is impudent; but let me challenge the impudent forehead of sin itself. Are they not sour and wild grapes that we have yielded? Are we less deep in the sins of Israel than in Israel's blessings? Complaints, I know, are displeasing, however just, but now not more displeasing than necessary. "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of contention" (Jer. xv. 10). I must cry out in this sad day of the sins of my people.

The searchers of Canaan, when they came to the brook of Eshcol, they cut down a branch, with a cluster of grapes, and carried it on a staff between two, to show Israel the fruit of the land (Num. xiii. 23). Give me leave, in the search of our Israel, to present your eyes with some of the wild grapes that grow there on every hedge. And what if they be the very same that grew in this degenerated vineyard of Israel?

Where we meet, first, with oppression, a lordly sin, and that challengeth precedency, as being

* From a Sermon preached before the House of Lords.