

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.



commonly incident to none but the great; though a poor oppressor (as he is unkindly, so he) is he a monster of mercilessness. Oh, the loud shrieks and clamours of this crying sin! What grinding of faces, what racking of rents, what detention of wages, what enclosing of commons, what engrossing of commodities, what griping exactions, what straining the advantages of greatness, what unequal levies of legal payments, what spiteful suits, what depopulations, what usuries, what violences abound everywhere! The sighs, the tears, the blood of the poor, pierce the heavens and call for a fearful retribution. This is a sour grape indeed, and that makes God to wring His face in an angry detestation.

Drunkenness is the next—not so odious in the weakness of it, as in the strength. Oh, woful glory! *Strong to drink.* Woe is me! how is the world turned beast! What bousing and quaffing, and whiffing, and healthing is there on every bench, and what reeling and staggering in our streets! What drinking by the yard, the die, the dozen! What forcing of pledges! what quarrels for measure and form! How is that become an excuse of villainy, which any villainy might rather excuse—"I was drunk!" How hath this torrent, yea, this deluge of excess in meats and drinks drowned the face of the earth, and risen many cubits above the highest mountains of religion and good laws! Yea, would God I might not say that which I fear and shame and grieve to say, that even some of them which square the ark for others, have been inwardly drowned, and discovered their nakedness. That other inundation scoured the world; this impures it. And what but a deluge of fire can wash it from so abominable filthiness?

Let no popish eavesdropper now smile to think what advantage I give by so deep a censure of our own profession. Alas! these sins know no difference of religions. Would God they themselves were not rather more deep in these foul enormities! We extenuate not our guilt—whatever we sin, we condemn it as mortal; they palliate wickedness with the fair pretence of veniality. Shortly, they accuse us; we, them; God, both.

But where am I? How easy is it for a man to lose himself in the sins of the time! It is not for me to have my habitation in these black tents; let me pass through them running. Where can a man cast his eye, not to see that which may vex his soul?

Here, bribery and corruption in the seats of judicature; there, perjuries at the bar; here, partiality and unjust connivancy in magistrates; there, disorder in those that should be teachers; here, sacrilege in patrons; there, simoniacal contracts in unconscionable Levites; here, bloody oaths and execrations; there, scurril profaneness; here, cozening in bargains; there, breaking of promises; here, perfidious underminings; there, flattering supparasitations; here, pride in

both sexes, but especially the weaker; there, luxury and wantonness; here, contempt of God's messengers; there, neglect of His ordinances, and violation of His days. The time and my breath would sooner fail me than this woful bead-roll of wickedness.

#### FASHIONS OF THE WORLD.\*

If we love the world more than God, if we hate any enemy more than sin, if we grieve at any loss more than of the favour of God, if we joy in anything more than the writing of our names in heaven, if we fear anything more than offence, if we hope for anything more than salvation, and, much more, if we change objects, loving what we should hate, joying in what we should grieve at, hoping for what we should fear, and the contrary—in one word, if our desires and affections be earthly, grovelling, sensual, not spiritual, sublime, heavenly, we fall into the fashion of the world. Let the world dote upon vanity, and follow after lies; let our affections and conversation be above, where Christ Jesus sitteth at the right hand of God. Let the base earthworms of this world be taken up with the best of this vain trash, the desires of us Christians must soar aloft, and fix themselves upon those objects which may make us perfectly and unchangeably blessed. Thus fashion not your hearts to the carnal desires and affections of the world.

#### LIFE A SOJOURNING.†

A man that sojourns abroad in a strange country finds himself no way interested in their designs and proceedings. What cares he who rises or falls at their court? who is in favour, and who in disgrace, what ordinances or laws are made, and what are repealed? He says still to himself as our Saviour said to Peter, "What is that to thee?" Thus doth the Christian here. He must use the world as if he used it not; he must pass through the affairs of this life without being entangled in them, as remembering who and where he is—that he is but a sojourner here.

No man that goes to sojourn in a strange country will carry his lumber along with him, but makes over his money, by exchange, to receive it where he is going. Ye rich men that cannot think to carry your pelf with you into heaven; no, it were well if you could get in yourselves without that cumbrous load; it may keep you out—it cannot carry you in.

If we be strangers and pilgrims here, we cannot but have a good mind homeward. It is

\* "Fashion not yourselves like to this world" (Rom. xii. 2).

† "If ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work; pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (1 Peter i. 17).



natural to us all to be dearly affectioned to our home. I must tell you it is no good sign if we be loath to go home to our Father's house.

It is a true observation of Seneca, *Velocitas temporis*, saith he, "The quick speed of time is best discerned when we look at it past and gone;" and this I can confirm to you by experience. It hath pleased the providence of my God so to contrive it that this day, this very morning, four-score years ago, I was born into the world. "A great time since," you are ready to say, and so indeed it seems to you that look at it forward; but to me, that look at it as past, it seems so short that it is gone like a tale that is told, or a dream by night, and looks but like yesterday.

It can be no offence for me to say that many of you who hear me this day are not like to see so many suns walk over your heads as I have done; yea, what speak I of this! There is not one of us that can assure himself of his continuance here one day. We are all tenants at will, and, for aught we know, may be turned out of these clay cottages at an hour's warning. Oh then, what should we do, but, as wise farmers who know the time of their lease is expiring and cannot be renewed, carefully and seasonably provide ourselves of a surer and more during tenure?

I remember our witty countryman, Bromiard, tells us of a lord in his time that had a fool in his house, as many great men in those days had for their pleasure, to whom this lord gave a staff, and charged him to keep it till he should meet with one that were more fool than himself, and if he met with such a one, to deliver it over to him. Not many years after, this lord fell sick, and indeed was sick unto death. His fool came to see him, and was told by his sick lord that he must now shortly leave him. "And whither wilt thou go?" said the fool. "Into another world," said the lord. "And when wilt thou come again? within a month?" "No."

"Within a year?" "No." "When, then?" "Never." "Never! and what provision hast thou made for thy entertainment there whither thou goest?" "None at all." "No!" said the fool, "none at all! Here, take my staff. Art thou going away for ever, and hast taken no order nor care how thou shalt speed in that other world, whence thou shalt never return? Take my staff, for I am not guilty of any such folly as this."

And, indeed, there cannot be a greater folly, or madness rather, than to be so wholly taken up with an eager regard for these earthly vanities, which we cannot hold, as to utterly neglect the care of that eternity which we can never forego. And, consider well of it, upon this moment of our life depends that eternity either way.

My dear brethren, it is a great way to heaven, and we have but a little time to get thither. God says to us, as the angel said to Elijah, "Up, for thou hast a great journey to go;" and if, as I fear, we have loitered in the way, and trifled away any part of the time in vain impertinences, we have so much more need to gird up our loins and hasten our pace. Let us, therefore, in the fear of God, be exhorted to recollect ourselves; and since we find ourselves guilty of the sinful misspence of our good hours, let us, while we have pace, obtain of ourselves to be careful of redeeming that precious time we have lost. As the widow of Sarepta, when she had but a little oil left in her cruse and a little meal in her barrel, was careful of spending that to the best advantage, so let us, considering that we have but a little sand left in our glass, a short remainder of our mortal life, be sure to employ it unto the best profit of our souls, so that every one of our hours may carry up with it a happy testimony of our gainful improvement, that so, when our day cometh, we may change our time for eternity, the time of our sojourning for the eternity of glory and blessedness.

## SIR JOHN ELIOT.

1590-1632.

### RELIGION AND THE STATE.\*

THE strength of all government is religion; for though policy may secure a kingdom against

\* This was Elliot's first speech after the accession of Charles I., and was delivered in Parliament, June 1625. Speaking of his style of oratory, John Forster remarks: "His vivacity was equal to his earnestness, yet never so displayed as to detract from it. He had in great perfection some of the highest qualities of an orator, singular power of statement, clearness and facility in handling details, pointed classical allusion, keen and logical argument, forcible and rich declama-

foreigners (and so I pray God this kingdom may always stand secure), and wisdom may provide all necessaries for the rule and government at home; yet if religion season not the affections of the people, the danger is as much in our own Achitophels, as from Moab and all the armies of the Philistines. Religion it is that keeps the subject in obedience, as being taught by God to

tion; but in none of these does he at any time seem, however briefly, to indulge merely for its own sake. All are subordinated to the design and the matter in hand."