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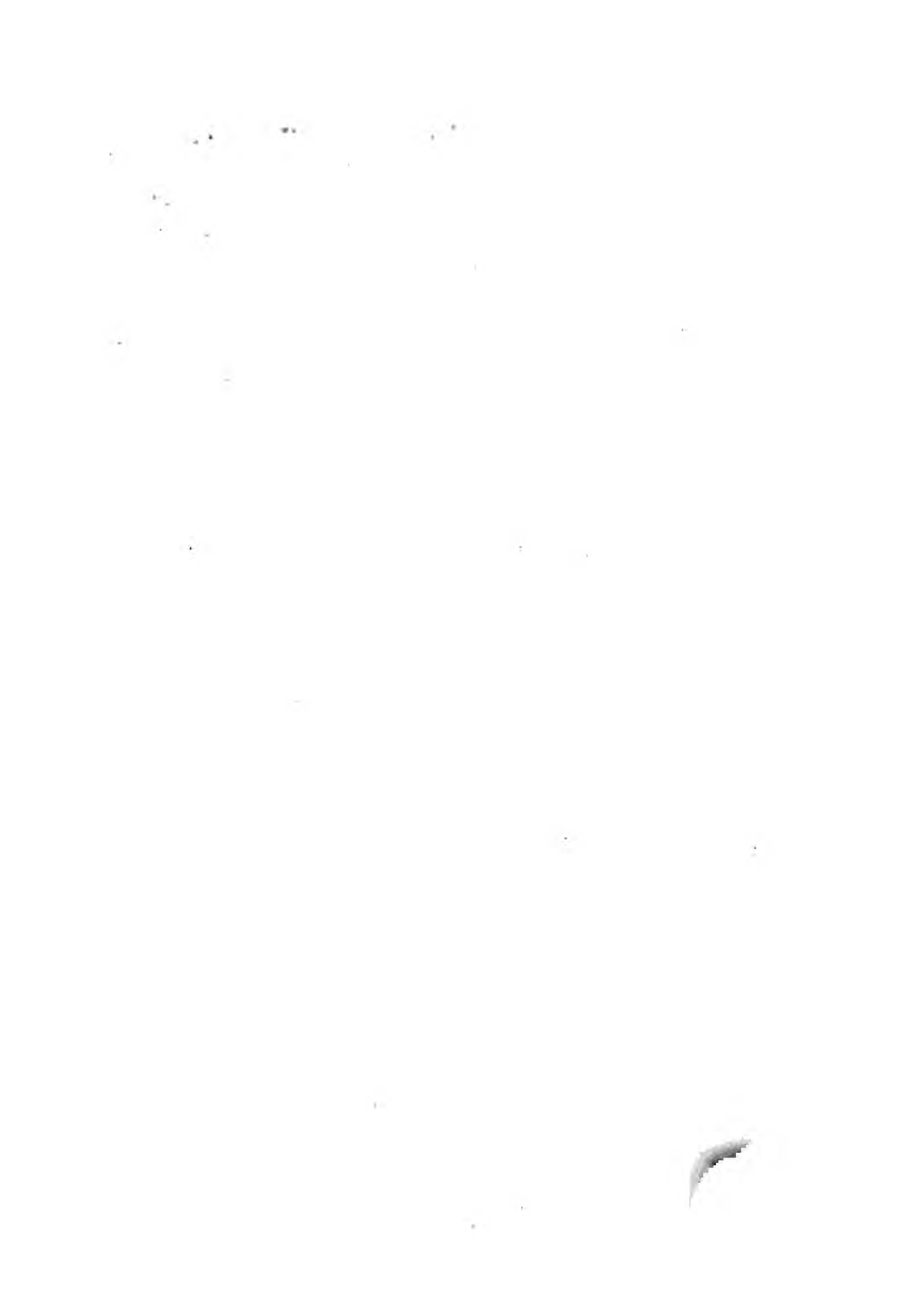
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GEMS
FROM
MATTHEW HENRY

**Gems from
Matthew Henry
[compiled by
H.A. from his
Exposition ...**

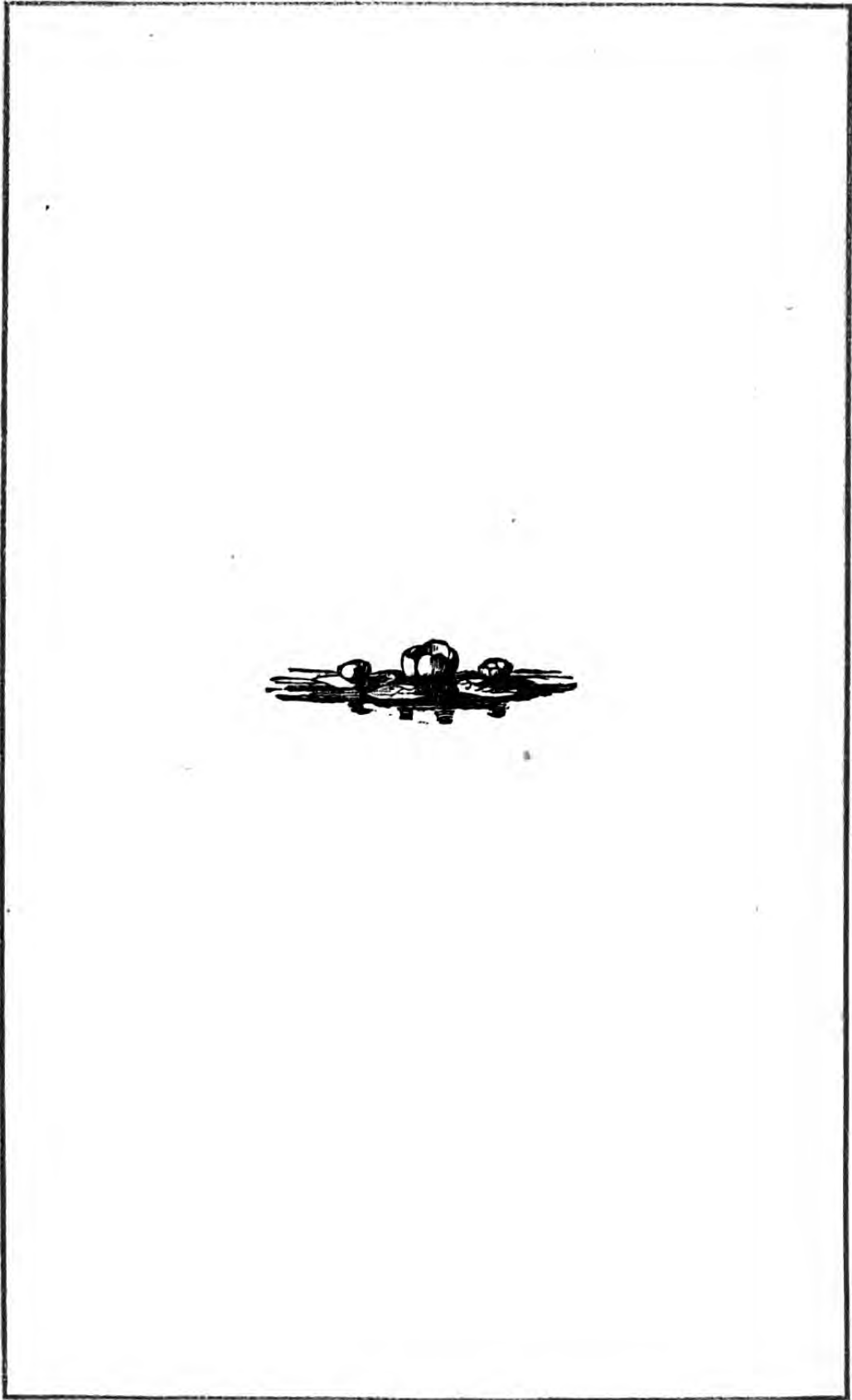
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Gems from Matthew Henry.



G E M S

FROM

 ATTHEW  ENRY

—:O:—

“WORDS THAT MAKE TRUTH TO SPANGLE AND ITS RAYS
TO SHINE.”—BUNYAN.

—:O:—

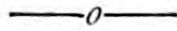
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JAMES NISBET & CO., BERNERS STREET.

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141. m. 334.



INTRODUCTORY NOTE.



THE name of MATTHEW HENRY has long been embalmed in the hearts of the Christian people of his country. His well-known Commentary was, for many a day, almost the only one that had a place in Christian households. His influence upon individual and family life came, in this way, to be of the most important kind, —the sound and scriptural views of truth and duty, still happily prevalent among many in all classes of society, being largely attributable to his wholesome teaching. More recently, the introduction of a multitude of books of a lighter description has thrown older and more substantial works into the background, and any attempt to keep them from falling altogether out of sight is to be welcomed.

The extracts which are contained in this volume have an intrinsic value, and furnish a short and pleasant portion for those who have not time or taste for more lengthened reading. They are characterised by

all the pithy quaintness and homeliness for which the writer was so remarkable, giving instruction on many important subjects in a sententious and attractive form. Besides this, the reading of these extracts may lead many to the larger volumes from which they have been selected, to take advantage of the treasures which are to be found there.

The esteemed friend who has made this compilation will not have laboured in vain if, to any considerable extent, these ends shall be served.

J. H. W.





THE Gatherer of these "Gems" has some hopes that, in the hands of Parents, District Visitors, or Sabbath-school Teachers, it may be of service in guiding to a passage of Scripture fitted to illustrate the subject of which they wish to speak, in the Family, the District Meeting, or the Class.

Family worship, which "gives, as it were, the key-note to every temper, and attunes every spirit to harmony," might to the young have some additional interest, were a junior member to "read aloud in a voice full of music," the "Gem" in connection with the passage of Scripture founded on.

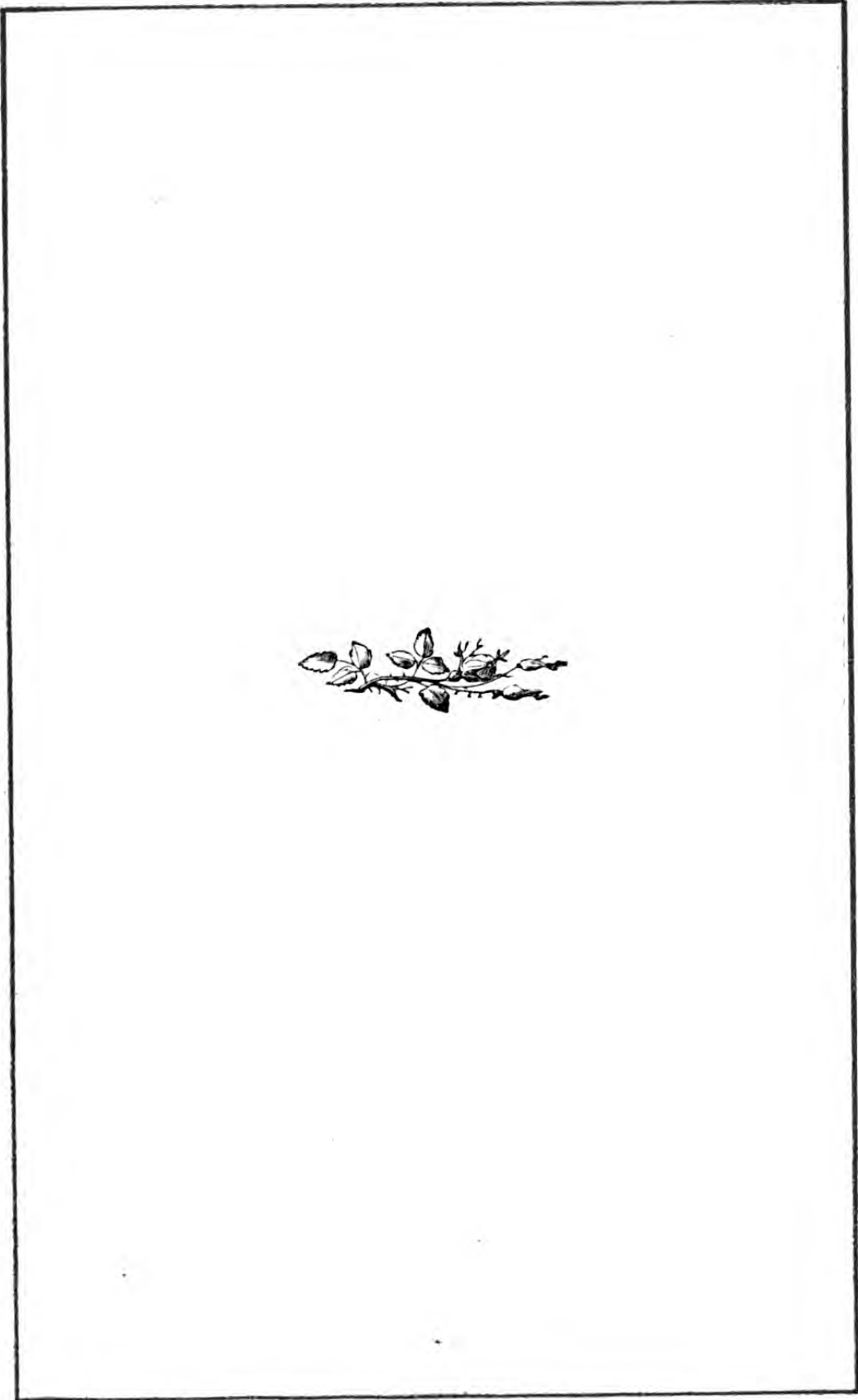
For facility of reference, a pretty full Index has been constructed.

The quotations having been originally made more for private use than with a view to publication, the language is, for the sake of brevity, occasionally abridged and a little altered, without, it is hoped, obscuring or altering the meaning.

H. A.

IRVINE.







GEMS FROM MATTHEW HENRY.

—o—

GENESIS.

(1.)

i. 31.—When we have finished a day's work, and are entering on the rest of the night, we should commune with our own hearts about what we have been doing that day.

(2.)

ii. 8.—The better we can accommodate ourselves to plain things, the nearer we approach a state of innocency ; nature is content with little, grace with less, but lust with nothing.

(3.)

ii. 15.—None of us were sent into the world to be idle. The sons and heirs of heaven, while they are here in this world, have something to do about this earth which must have its share of their time and thoughts ; and if they do it with an eye to

God, they are as truly serving Him in it as when they are upon their knees. While Adam's hands were about his trees, his heart might be with his God.

(4.)

ii. 18.—He that has a good God, a good heart, and a good wife to converse with, and yet complains he wants conversation, would not have been easy and content in paradise, for Adam himself had no more.

(5.)

iii. 6.—Those that have themselves done ill, are commonly willing to draw in others to do the same.

(6.)

iii. 15.—Sinful friendships justly end in mortal feuds; those that unite in wickedness will not unite long.

(7.)

iv. 3.—Evil-doers may be found going as far as the best of God's people in the external services of religion.

(8.)

v. 24.—God often takes those soonest whom he loves best.

(9.)

vi. 14.—God did not bid him paint it, but pitch it. If God give us habitations that are safe and warm and wholesome, we are to be thankful, though they be not magnificent or nice.

(10.)

vii. 1.—What we do in obedience to the command of God and in faith, we shall certainly have the comfort of first or last.

(11.)

In Noah's family there was a Ham, in Christ's there was a Judas; there is no perfect purity on this side heaven.

(12.)

vii. 18.—That which to unbelievers is a savour of death unto death, is to the faithful a savour of life unto life: the more the waters increased, the higher the ark was lifted up towards heaven. Thus sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions.

(13.)

viii. 9.—The dove is an emblem of a gracious soul, which, finding no rest for its foot, no solid peace or satisfaction in this world—this deluged defiling world—returns to Christ as to its ark.

(14.)

viii. 20.—Though his stock of cattle was so small, and that rescued from ruin at so great an expense of care and pains, yet he did not grudge to give God his dues out of it. Serving God with our little is the way to make it more.

(15.)

xi. 4.—It is just with God to bury those names in the dust which are raised by sin. These Babel builders put themselves to a great deal of foolish expense to make them a name.

(16.)

xii. 1.—If God loves us, and has mercy in store for us, He will not suffer us to take up our rest anywhere short of Canaan, but will graciously repeat His calls till the good work begun be performed, and our souls repose in God only.

(17.)

xii. 4.—To have thrown away his substance because God had promised to bless him, had been to tempt God, not to trust him.

(18.)

xii. 7.—God reveals Himself and His favours to His people by degrees; before, He had promised

to shew him this land, now to give it him,—as grace is growing, so is comfort.

(19.)

xii. 10.—It pleases God sometimes to try those with great affliction that are but young beginners in religion.

(20.)

xii. 18.—We have often found more of virtue, honour, and conscience in some people than we thought there was, and it ought to be a pleasure to us to be thus disappointed. Abram found Pharaoh a better man than he expected.

(21.)

xiii. 2.—There is a burthen of care in getting riches, fear in keeping them, temptations in using them, guilt in abusing them, sorrow in losing them, and a burthen of account at last to be given up concerning them.

(22.)

xiii. 6.—Every comfort in this world has its cross.

Wants and wanderings could not separate between Abram and Lot, but riches did it.

(23.)

xiii. 14.—God will abundantly make up in spiritual peace what we lose for the preserving of neighbourly peace.

(24.)

xiv. 12.—They took Lot's goods, those goods which had occasioned his contest with Abram and separation from him.

It is just with God to deprive us of those enjoyments, by which we have suffered ourselves to be deprived of our enjoyment of him.

(25.)

xiv. 20.—God must always have His dues out of our substance, especially when by any particular providence He has either preserved or increased it to us.

(26.)

xiv. 23.—A lively faith enables a man to look upon the wealth of this world with a holy contempt.

The people of God must, for their credit's sake, take heed of doing anything that looks mean or mercenary, or that savours of covetousness and self-seeking.

(27.)

xv. 11.—When vain thoughts, like these fowls, come down upon our sacrifices, we must drive them away, and attend on God without distraction.

(28.)

xv. 14.—God may suffer persecutors to trample on His people a great while, yet He will certainly reckon with them at last.

(29.)

xviii. 2.—Religion doth not destroy, but improves good manners, and teaches us to honour all men. Decent civility is a great ornament to piety.

(30.)

xviii. 6.—We ought not to be curious in our diet ; let us be thankful for food convenient, though it be homely and common.

(31.)

xviii. 33.—God did not leave off granting till Abraham left off asking ; such is the power of prayer.

(32.)

xix. 3.—Good people should be (with prudence) generous people.

(33.)

xix. 9.—It is common for reprovers to be unjustly upbraided as usurpers ; and for offering the kindness of a friend, to be charged with assuming the authority of a judge.

(34.)

xix. 12.—Those who, through grace, are themselves delivered out of a sinful state and condition, should do what they can for the deliverance of others, especially relations.

It is good being akin to a godly man.

(35.)

xx. 2.—The fairest marbles have their flaws; while there are spots in the moon, we must not expect anything spotless under it.

(36.)

xxi. 19.—Many that have reason enough to be comforted, go mourning from day to day, because they do not see the reason they have for comfort. There is a well of water by them in the covenant of grace; but they have not the benefit of it till God, who opened their eyes to see their wound, opens them to see their remedy.

(37.)

xxi. 24.—We must not, under colour of shunning bad company, be sour to all company, and jealous of everybody.

(38.)

xxii. 3.—God's commands are not to be dis-

puted, but obeyed. God calls us to part with an Isaac sometimes, and we must do it with cheerful resignation and submission to His holy will.

(39.)

xxiii. 13.—Honesty as well as honour forbids us to sponge upon our neighbours.

(40.)

xxiv. 63.—Holy souls love retirement. It will do us good to be often alone ; and if we have the art of improving solitude, we shall find we are never less alone than when alone.

(41.)

xxvi. 18.—In our searches after truth—that fountain of living water—it is good to make use of the discoveries of former ages which have been clouded by the corruptions of later times.

(42.)

xxvii. 43.—Yielding pacifies great offences ; and even those that have a good cause, and God on their side, yet must use that with other prudent expedients for their own preservation.

(43.)

xxviii. 2.—Jacob gets the blessing confirmed,

yet smarts for his indirect course. While there is such an alloy as there is of sin in our duties, we must expect an alloy of trouble in our comforts.

(44.)

xxviii. 4.—Even now, those do most inherit the earth (though they do not inherit most of it) that are most like strangers in it.

(45.)

xxviii. 11.—Any Israelite indeed would be willing to take up with Jacob's pillow, provided he might have but Jacob's dream.

God's time to visit His people with His comforts is when they are most destitute of other comforts and other comforters.

(46.)

xxviii. 18.—Grants of mercy call for returns of duty, and the sweet communion we have with God ought to be remembered.

(47.)

xxix. 4.—Those that shew respect ordinarily have respect shewed them.

(48.)

xxix. 9.—Honest, useful labour, is that which nobody needs to be ashamed of.

(49.)

xxx. 27.—Good men are blessings to the places where they live, even where they live meanly and obscurely, as Jacob in the field, and Joseph in the prison.

(50.)

xxxi. 1.—Those that are ever so careful to keep a good conscience, yet cannot always be sure of a good name.

(51.)

xxxi. 13.—When the world begins to smile upon us, we must remember it is not our home.

(52.)

xxxi. 31.—Those that commit their cause to God, yet are not forbidden to plead it themselves, with meekness and fear.

(53.)

xxxii. 7.—Jacob, though a man of great faith, yet was now greatly afraid ; a lively apprehension of danger, and a quickening fear arising from it, may very well exist with a humble confidence in God's power and promise.

(54.)

xxxii. 10.—Self-abasement becomes us in all our approaches to the throne of grace. Christ never

commended any of his petitioners so much as him who said, "Lord, I am not worthy," &c., and her who said, "Truth, Lord," &c.

Jacob, in treating with Laban, had justly insisted on his merits, but not before God.

(55.)

xxxii. 24. — Wrestling believers may obtain glorious victories, and yet come off with broken bones. Our comforts in this world have their alloys.

(56.)

xxxii. 30.—The name Jacob gives the place perpetuates not the honour of his victory, but the honour of God's free grace.

(57.)

xxxv. 13.—The sweetest communions the saints have with God in this world are short and transient.

(58.)

xxxvii. 5.—Joseph dreamed of his preferment, but not of his imprisonment. Thus many young people, when they are setting out in the world, think of nothing but prosperity and pleasure, and never dream of trouble.

(59.)

xxxvii. 25.—Daring sinners are secure ones ; but

the consciences of Joseph's brethren, though asleep now, were awakened long after.

(60.)

xxxvii. 36.—It is the wisdom of parents not to bring up their children too delicately, because they know not what hardships providence may reduce them to before they die. Jacob little thought his beloved Joseph should be bought and sold for a servant.

(61.)

xxxix. 14.—Every one that keeps a good conscience cannot keep a good name.

It is no new thing for the best of men to be falsely accused of the worst of crimes, by those who themselves are the worst of criminals.

(62.)

xxxix. 23.—A good man will do good wherever he is.

(63.)

xl. 15.—When called to vindicate ourselves, we should (like Joseph) avoid as much as may be speaking ill of others.

(64.)

xli. 1-7.—Now, God no longer speaks to us in

that way ; foolish dreams related can make no better than foolish talk.

(65.)

xli. 16.—Great gifts then appear most graceful and illustrious, when those that have them use them humbly.

(66.)

xlii. 1.—All the three patriarchs to whom Canaan was the land of promise, met with famine in that land, which was not only to try their faith, but to teach them to seek the better country, that is the heavenly.

(67.)

xlii. 36.—We often apprehend that to be against us which is really for us.

(68.)

xliii. 12.—Honesty obliges us to make restitution, not only of that which comes to us by our own fault, but of that which comes to us by others' mistakes. In the stating of accounts, errors must be excepted, even those which make for us, as well as those that make against us. Jacob's words furnish us with a favourable construction to put upon that which we are tempted to resent as an affront,—“Peradventure it was an oversight.”

(69.)

xl. 30.—Tears of tenderness and affection are no disparagement, even to great and wise men.

(70.)

xl. 22.—What is an abundance good for, but to do good with it?

(71.)

xlvi. 34.—Better be the credit of a mean post, than the shame of a high one.

(72.)

xlvii. 3.—All that have a place in the world, should have an employment in it, mental or manual.

(73.)

xlviii. 1.—Visiting the sick, to whom we may have opportunity of doing good, either for body or soul, is our duty.

(74.)

xlviii. 7.—Strong affections in the enjoyment cause long afflictions in the loss.

(75.)

xlix.—Among God's Israel there is to be found a great variety of dispositions. Let not those of different tempers and gifts envy one another, or censure one another.

EXODUS.

(76.)

i. 8.—The place of our satisfaction may soon become the place of our affliction.

(77.)

i. 20, 21.—Religion and piety are good friends to outward prosperity ; the fear of God in a house will help to build it up.

(78.)

ii. 3.—That which is most our fear, oftentimes proves in the issue most our joy.

When men are projecting the church's ruin, God is preparing for its salvation.

To have exposed their child while they might have preserved it, had been to tempt providence ; but when they could not, it was brave to trust providence.

(79.)

ii. 14.—It is no new thing for the church's best

friends to meet with a great deal of opposition and discouragement, even from their own mother's children.

(80.)

ii. 22.—God humbles those first whom He intends to exalt.

(81.)

iii. 1-6.—Sometimes it is long before God calls His servants out to that work which of old He designed them for; Moses was to be Israel's deliverer, yet not a word is said of it till he is eighty years of age.

Moses was keeping the flock, a poor employment for a man of his parts and education, yet he rests satisfied with it.

Even those that are qualified for great employments, must not think it strange if they be confined to obscurity.

(82.)

iii. 8.—God often comes for the salvation of His people then when they have done looking for Him.

(83.)

iii. 11.—The more fit any person is for service, commonly the less opinion he has of himself.

Modest beginnings are very good presages.

(84.)

v. 14.—God often brings His people to the utmost straits then when He is just ready to appear for them ; cloudy mornings commonly introduce the fairest days.

(85.)

vii. 17.—Never any thirsted after blood, but sooner or later they had enough of it.

One of the first miracles of Moses was to turn water to blood ; one of the first of Jesus was turning water to wine.

Grace and truth, which like wine makes “glad the heart,” came by Jesus Christ.

(86.)

viii. 15.—Till the heart is renewed by the grace of God, the impressions made by the force of affliction do not abide, and the promises that are extorted are forgotten.

(87.)

ix. 12.—Wilful hardness is commonly punished with judicial hardness.

(88.)

ix. 33, 34.—Moses prevailed with God, but he could not prevail with Pharaoh.

(89.)

xi. 8.—Thus to be angry at nothing but sin, is the way not to sin in anger.

(90.)

xii. 43.—We must be born again by the word ere we can be nourished by it ; nor shall any partake of the benefit of Christ's sacrifice, nor feast upon it, who are not first circumcised in heart.

(91.)

xiii. 3.—Scripture tells us not expressly what day of the year Christ rose, as He told the Israelites what day of the year they were brought out of Egypt, that they might remember it yearly ; but very particularly what day of the week it was, intimating it should be remembered weekly.

(92.)

xiii. 14.—If ever the knowledge of God cover the earth, the fountains of family instruction must first be broken up.

We should be able to shew *cause* for what we do in religion.

(93.)

xiii. 17.—God proportions his people's trials to their strength.

(94.)

xiv. 10.—We may be in the way of duty, and yet in great straits—troubled on every side.

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

(95.)

xiv. 13.—If God bring His people into straits, He will find out a way to bring them out again.

(96.)

xiv. 15.—When we are in the way of our duty, though we meet with difficulties, we must go forward.

(97.)

xv. 23.—God can embitter that to us which we promise ourselves most satisfaction from, and often does so in the wilderness of this world, that our disappointments in the creature may drive us to the Creator.

(98.)

xvi. 3.—The worst colours are sometimes put upon the best actions.

(99.)

xvi. 16.—God's bounty leaves room for man's duty : it did so even when manna was rained ; they must not eat till they have gathered.

(100.)

xvii. 12.—We do not find that Joshua's hands were heavy in fighting, but Moses's hands were heavy in praying; the more spiritual any service is, the more apt are we to flag in it.

We should not be shy of asking help from others, or giving help to others.

(101.)

xviii. 17.—There may be overdoing even in well-doing.

(102.)

xx. 15.—This command forbids us to rob ourselves of what we have by sinful spending, or of the use and comfort of it by sinful sparing.

(103.)

xxiii. 30.—It is in real kindness to the church that its enemies are subdued by little and little, for thus we are kept on our guard and in a continual dependence upon God; corruptions are thus driven out of the hearts of God's people, not all at once, lest they should grow proud and secure.

(104.)

xxx. 20.—This is the preparation we are to make for solemn ordinances; cleanse your hands and purify your hearts, and then draw nigh to God.

(105.)

xxx. 6.—When God hath work to do, He will never want instruments.

God dispenseth His gifts variously : Moses was fittest to govern Israel, but Bezaleel was fitter than he to build the tabernacle.

(106.)

xxxii. 3.—Let their readiness to part with their rings to make an idol of, shame us out of our niggardliness in the service of the true God.

(107.)

xxxii. 17.—Though Moses had been so long in immediate converse with God, yet he did not disdain to talk freely with his servant Joshua. Those whom God advanceth, He preserves from being puffed up. Paul was not the less mindful of the church on earth for his having been in the third heavens.

(108.)

xxxiii. 12.—Those that sincerely design to do their duty may, in faith, beg of God direction and strength for the doing of it.

(109.)

xxxiii. 17.—God grants as long as Moses asks.

(110.)

xxxiv. 9.—It is a strange plea Moses urges, “For it is a stiff-necked people.” God had given this as a reason why He would *not* go with them (xxxiii. 3). Yea, saith Moses, the rather go with us ; for the worse they are, the more they need thy presence and grace.

(111.)

xxxiv. 33.—We must be content to have our excellencies obscured and a veil drawn over them : not coveting to make a fair show in the flesh.

(112.)

xxxv. 22.—The offerings were of divers kinds—some brought gold, some brought goats’ hair. God hath an eye to the heart of the giver more than to the value of the gift.

(113.)

xl. 34.—God will dwell with those that prepare Him a habitation.

One chapter alone is occupied by Moses in describing the structure of the visible world, more than six in describing that of the tabernacle ; thus we are taught that the latter is not less to be attended to than the former, since from the considering thereof the marvels of God in Christ are made known to us.—*Witsius*.

LEVITICUS.

(114.)

iv. 27.—Even sins of ignorance need to be atoned for by sacrifice.

(115.)

ix. 23.—They that dwell in God's house, with an eye of faith, may "behold the beauty of the Lord."

(116.)

x. 3.—The most quieting considerations under affliction are those that are fetched from the word of God.

(117.)

x. 16.—Though Moses was the meekest man in the world, it seems he could be angry; and when he thought God was disobeyed, he would be angry.

(118.)

xiii.—It is a work of great importance, but of great difficulty, to judge of our spiritual state.

(119.)

xix. 9.—We must not be covetous and griping, and greedy of everything we can lay any claim to, nor insist upon our right in things small and trivial.

(120.)

xix. 17.—Friendly reproof is a duty, and we ought both to give it and take it in love.

(121.)

xxii. 21.—If our devotions be ignorant, cold, and trifling, and full of distractions, we offer the blind, the lame, the sick for sacrifice.

(122.)

xxiii. 28-31.—The humbling of our souls for sin and the making of our peace with God, is work that requires the whole man, and the closest application of mind—and all little enough.

(123.)

xxiii. 34.—The afflicting of their souls, on the day of atonement, prepared them for the joy of the feast of tabernacles.

The more we are humbled for sin, the better are we qualified for the comforts of the Holy Ghost.

(124.)

xxiv. 2. — Ministers are as shining lights in

Christ's Church, but it is the duty of the people to provide for them as Israel for the lamps. Scandalous maintenance makes a scandalous ministry.

(125.)

xxiv. 8, 9.—Christ's ministers should provide new bread for His house every Sabbath day, the products of their fresh studies in the Scriptures.

(126.)

xxiv. 16.—God never made any law to compel strangers to be circumcised and embrace the Jewish religion; proselytes made by force would be no honour to the God of Israel: but He made a law to restrain strangers from speaking evil of the God of Israel.

(127.)

xxv. 10. — A man might purchase lands in another tribe, yet he could not retain them longer than till the year of jubilee, and then they would revert, that none should grow exorbitantly rich by adding field to field.

The wisdom of the Roman commonwealth sometime provided that no man should be master of above five hundred acres.

(128.)

xxvi. 14.—Those are hastening apace to their own ruin who think it below them to be religious.

NUMBERS.

(129.)

i. 47.—They that minister about holy things should neither entangle themselves, nor be entangled, in secular affairs.

(130.)

ii. 3.—Our being all the children of one Adam is so far from justifying the levellers, and taking away the distinctions of place and honour, that even among the children of the same Abraham, and Jacob, and Judah, God appointed that one should be captain.

(131.)

vi. 3.—Drinking a little wine for the stomach's sake is allowed (1 Tim. v. 23), but drinking much wine for the palate's sake doth by no means become those who profess to walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

(132.)

vii. 3.—No sooner is the tabernacle fully set up,

but this provision is made for the removal of it. Even when we are but just settled in the world, and think we are beginning to take root, we must be preparing for changes and removes, especially for the great change.

(133.)

x. 12.—All our removes in this world are but from one wilderness to another.

(134.)

x. 29.—Those that are bound for the heavenly Canaan should invite and encourage all their friends to go along with them. We shall have never the less for others coming to share with us.

(135.)

xi. 1-3.—Those that are of a fretful spirit will always find something to quarrel with.

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

(136.)

xi. 15.—The best have their infirmities, and fail sometimes in the exercise of that grace which they are most eminent for.

(137.)

xi. 21, 22.—Even true and great believers sometimes find it hard to trust God under the discouragements of second causes.

Moses himself can scarce forbear saying, “Can God furnish a table in the wilderness,” when this was become the common cry.

(138.)

xi. 33.—God often grants the desire of sinners in wrath, while he denies the desires of his own people in love.

(139.)

xiii. 23.—That famous cluster was to Israel the earnest and specimen of the fruits of Canaan. Such are the present comforts which we have in communion with God, foretastes of the fulness of joy we expect in the heavenly Canaan.

(140.)

xiv. 1.—Unbelief is a sin that is its own punishment. Those that do not trust God vex themselves.

(141.)

xiv. 5.—Those that are zealous friends to precious souls will stoop to anything for their salvation.

(142.)

xiv. 10.—They who hate to be reformed, hate those who would reform them.

(143.)

xv. 15.—In civil things there was a difference between strangers and Israelites, but not in the things of God.

(144.)

xvi. 9, 10.—Instead of fretting that any are preferred before us in honour, estate, gifts, usefulness, we have reason to bless God if we are not put hindmost.

(145.)

xvi. 14.—Those often fall under the highest censure who have merited the highest applause.

(146.)

xvi. 25.—Dathan and Abiram had contumaciously refused to come to Moses, yet he humbly condescends to go down to them.

(147.)

xvi. 46.—Moses and Aaron had been charged with killing the people of the Lord; but these good men have taught us here, by their example,

not to be sullen toward those that are peevish with us.

(148.)

xvii. 8.—Fruitfulness is the best evidence of a divine call.—*Bishop Hall.*

(149.)

xviii. 8–10.—The maintenance of the priests was such as left them disentangled from the affairs of this life. Thus God ordered it, that they might be more entirely addicted to their ministry, and not diverted from it.

(150.)

xx. 2.—We live in a wanting world.

(151.)

xxii. 18.—How respectfully Balaam speaks of the Word of God, how slightly of the wealth of the world; yet he loved the wages of unrighteousness. It is an easy thing for bad men to speak very good words.

(152.)

xxiii. 10.—Many would be saints in heaven but not saints on earth.

(153.)

xxv. 1-3.—We are in more danger by the charms of a smiling world, than by the terrors of a frowning world.

(154.)

xxxi. 50.—The oblation was out of that which “every man had gotten” where God sows plentifully; in the gifts of His bounty He expects to reap accordingly in the fruits of our piety.

(155.)

xxxvi. 6.—So parents must consult the affections of their children in disposing of them, and not compel them to marry such as they cannot love.

DEUTERONOMY.

(156.)

ii. 1-19.—The children of “righteous” Lot were not to be distressed. Children often fare the better in this world for the piety of their ancestors.

(157.)

iii. 26.—God takes such a pleasure in the prayer of the upright that it is no pleasure to Him to give a denial to it.

(158.)

vi. 12.—When the world smiles, we are apt to make our court to it, and expect our happiness from it; and so we forget Him who is our only portion.

(159.)

vii. 2.—Thus we must deal with our lusts that war against our souls.

(160.)

vii. 22.—We must not think that because the deliverance of the church is not effected presently, therefore it will never be effected. God will do His own work in His own method and time.

(161.)

viii. 2.—It is very good for us to remember all the ways both of God's providence and grace, by which He hath led us hitherto through this wilderness.

(162.)

ix. 4.—Our gaining possession of the heavenly Canaan, as it must be attributed to God's power, and not to our own might, so it must be ascribed to God's grace and not to our own merit.

(163.)

ix. 13-24.—It is good for us often to remember against ourselves with sorrow and shame our former sins, and to review the records conscience keeps of them, that we may see how much we are indebted to free grace, and may humbly own that we never merited anything at God's hand but wrath.

(164.)

xiv. 21.—What they might not eat themselves they might give to a stranger. It is plain, therefore, the law belonged only to the Jews, and was not moral nor of perpetual obligation.

(165.)

xiv. 22.—The products of their ground were twice tithed (first for the Levites, Numbers xviii. 24, &c. ;

second, as ver. 22), so that putting both together, a fifth part was devoted to God.

(166.)

xiv. 26.—The comfortable cheerful using of what God hath given us, with temperance and sobriety, is really the honouring of God with it. Contentment, holy joy, and thankfulness, make every meal a religious feast.

(167.)

xiv. 29.—To be charitable to the poor, and free and generous in the support of religion and any good work, is the surest and safest way of thriving.

(168.)

xvii. 18.—It is of great use for each of us to write down what we observe as most affecting and edifying to us out of the scriptures and good books, and the sermons we hear.

(169.)

xviii. 6-8.—A hearty pious zeal to serve God and His church, though it may a little encroach upon a settled order, and there may be somewhat in it that looks irregular, yet ought to be gratified.

(170.)

xix. 14.—It is the will of God that every one

should know his own, and that all good means should be used to prevent encroachments and the doing and suffering of wrong.

(171.)

xxi. 8.—We must empty the measure by our prayers which others are filling by their sins.

(172.)

xxii. 1, 2.—Religion teaches us to be neighbourly, and to be ready to do all good offices as we have opportunity.

(173.)

xxiii. 19, 20.—By this it appears usury is not in itself oppressive; for they must not oppress a stranger, and yet might exact usury from him.

(174.)

xxiii. 24, 25.—This law teacheth us not to insist upon property in a small matter, of which it is easy to say, "What is that between me and thee?"

(175.)

xxvi. 1, 2.—They that consecrate the days of their youth and the prime of their time to the service and honour of God, bring Him their first fruits.

(176.)

xxviii. 47, 48.—They deserve to have cause given them to complain, who complain without a cause.

(177.)

xxxii. 2.—The word preached is then likely to profit when it comes gently, and sweetly insinuates itself into the hearts and affections of the hearers.

(178.)

xxxii. 7.—The authentic histories of ancient times are of singular use, especially the history of the church in its infancy.

(179.)

xxxii. 10.—It is said (Psa. cvii. 7) that “He led them forth by the right way,” and yet here that He “led them about;” for God always leads His people the right way, however to us it may seem about, so that the farthest way about proves, if not the next way, yet the best way home to Canaan.

(180.)

xxxii. 11.—Eagles not only protect their young, but teach them to fly. An example to parents to train up their children to business, and not indulge them in idleness and love of ease. God did thus

by Israel when they were in love with their slavery, and loth to leave it, God, by Moses, stirred them up to aspire after liberty.

(181.)

xxxii. 36.—God's time to appear for the deliverance of His people is when things are at the worst with them.

(182.)

xxxii. 51.—God reminds Moses of the sin he had been guilty of. It is good for the best of men to die repenting of the infirmities they are conscious to themselves of.

(183.)

xxxiii. 16.—Many a time had God appeared to Moses ; but now he is just dying, he seems to have the most pleasing remembrance of that which was the first time, when his correspondence with heaven was first settled ; that was a time of love never to be forgotten.

(184.)

xxxiv. 1-4.—Moses saw all this just before his death. Sometimes God reserves the brightest discoveries of His grace to His people to be the support of their dying moments.

JOSHUA.

(185.)

i. 1.—Joshua was Moses's minister. Those are fittest to rule that have learned to obey.

(186.)

ii. 1.—Faith in God's promise ought not to supersede but encourage our diligence in the use of proper means.

(187.)

ii. 19.—Covenants must be made with care. They that will be conscientious in keeping their promises, will be cautious in making them, and perhaps may insert conditions which others may think frivolous.

(188.)

iii. 1.—Joshua rose early, which intimates how little he loved his ease, how much he loved his business, and what pains he was willing to take in it.

(189.)

iv. 21.—Those that will be wise when they are

old, must be inquisitive when they are young. Our Lord Jesus has, by His example, taught young people to hear and ask questions.

(190.)

v. 12.—The manna continued as long as they had occasion for it, and no longer. To teach us not to expect extraordinary supplies, when they may be had in an ordinary way.

The word and ordinances of God are spiritual manna with which God nourisheth His people in this wilderness; and though often forfeited, yet they are continued while we are here: but when we come to the heavenly Canaan, this manna will cease, for we shall have no longer need of it.

(191.)

vii. 19.—An example to treat even offenders with the spirit of meekness, not knowing what we ourselves should have been and done if God had put us into the hand of our own counsels.

(192.)

viii. 1-22.—The stratagem here used, we are sure, was lawful. Here was no league broken or promise violated. No; these are sacred things not to be jested with.

(193.)

ix. 22-25.—Joshua reproves very mildly. Under the greatest provocations, it is our wisdom and duty to keep our temper. A good cause needs not anger to defend it; and a bad one is made never the better by it.

(194.)

xi. 21, 22.—This struggle with the Anakim was reserved for the latter end of the war. God sometimes reserves the sharpest trials of His people by affliction and temptation for the latter end of their days.

(195.)

xiii. 7.—The land must be divided among the tribes. Which way soever a just property is acquired, it is the will of God that there should be such a thing, and that every man should know his own, and not invade that which is another's.

(196.)

xiv. 6.—Caleb would not seem to flatter Joshua; it was enough to say, "Thou knowest what the Lord spake concerning me and thee."

(197.)

xv. 13-19.—It is no breach of the tenth commandment moderately to desire those comforts and

conveniences of this life which we see attainable in a fair and regular way.

(198.)

xviii. 1.—Here the ark continued 325 years, till the sin of Eli's house ruined Shiloh ; and its ruins were long after made use of as warnings to Jerusalem. (Jer. vii. 12.)

(199.)

xix. 49.—Joshua was last served. Though the eldest, and greatest man of all Israel, he was content to be unfixed till he saw them all placed ; and herein is a great example to all in public places, to prefer the common welfare before their particular satisfaction.

(200.)

xxi. 1, 2.—It is an instance of their humility, modesty, and patience (and Levites should be examples of these and other virtues), that they were willing to be served last, and they fared never the worse for it.

(201.)

xxiv. 15.—Those that resolve to serve God must not stick at being singular in it. Those bound for heaven must be willing to swim against the stream, and must not do as the most do, but as the best do.

JUDGES.

(202.)

i. 7.—Thus the righteous God sometimes in His providence makes the punishment to answer the sin.

(203.)

iii. 1, 2.—The soldiers of Christ must endure hardness. Corruption is therefore left remaining in the hearts, even of good Christians, that they may learn war.

(204.)

vi. 8.—We have reason to hope God is designing mercy for us, if we find He is by His grace preparing us for it.

The furnishing of a land with faithful ministers is a token for good.

(205.)

vi. 11, 12.—God often manifests Himself to His people when they are out of the noise and hurry of

this world. Silence and solitude befriend our communion with God.

We put ourselves in the way of divine visits when we employ ourselves in honest business ; tidings of Christ's birth were brought to the shepherds when they were keeping their flocks.

(206.)

vi. 15.—God often chooseth to do great things by those that are little, especially that are so in their own eyes.

(207.)

vi. 31.—Let us do our duty, and then trust God with our safety.

(208.)

vii. 4.—God saith they are too many ; and when diminished to a third part, they are yet too many,—which may help us to understand those providences which sometimes seem to weaken the church and its interests ; its friends are too many, too mighty, too wise for God to work deliverance by. God is taking a course to lessen them, that He may be exalted in His own strength.

(209.)

viii. 2, 3.—Gideon mildly reasons the case with

them, and he won as true honour by this command which he had over his own passion as by his victory over the Midianites. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty."

(210.)

viii. 28.—Hitherto the times of Israel had been reckoned by forties.

Israel in the wilderness	.	40	years.
Othniel judged	.	40	„
Ehud, twice forty	.	80	„
Barak	.	40	„
Gideon	.	40	„
After these,—			
Eli ruled	.	40	„
Samuel and Saul	.	40	„
David	.	40	„
Solomon	.	40	„

(211.)

ix. 2.—Those who design ill themselves are commonly most apt to suspect that others design ill.

(212.)

ix. 23.—It is just with God, that those who tempt others to be perfidious should afterwards be themselves betrayed by those whom they have taught to be perfidious.

(213.)

ix. 24-49.—Thus, when God makes use of men as instruments in His hand to do His work, He means one thing and they another. (Isa. x. 6, 7.)

(214.)

x. 1-5.—Quiet and peaceable reigns, though the best to live in, are the worst to write of, as yielding least variety of matter for the historian to entertain his reader with.

(215.)

xi. 7.—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.

(216.)

xii. 1, 2.—It is no new thing for those that are themselves most culpable to be most clamorous in accusing the innocent.

(217.)

xiii. 6.—Thus should yoke-fellows communicate to each other their experiences of communion with God.

(218.)

xiv. 10.—It is no part of religion to go contrary to the innocent usages of the places where we live.

(219.)

xvii. 2.—Outward losses drive good people to their prayers, but bad people to their curses. This woman's silver was her god before it was made into an image, else the loss of it would not have put her into such a passion.

(220.)

xix. 16.—He that was honestly diligent in his business all day was disposed to be generously hospitable to these poor strangers at night. Let men labour that they may have to give.

(221.)

xx. 18–25.—We may be sure of the righteousness, when we cannot see the reasons of God's proceedings.

R U T H.

(222.)

i. 1.—It seems there was plenty in the country of Moab when there was scarcity of bread in the land of Israel. Common gifts of providence are often bestowed in greater plenty upon those that are strangers to God, than upon those that know and worship Him.

(223.)

i. 3-5.—Death, when it comes into a family, often makes breach upon breach.

(224.)

i. 13.—Earth is embittered to us, that heaven may be endeared.

(225.)

ii. 1.—Boaz, though a rich and great man, had poor relations ; every branch of the tree is not a top branch.

Naomi, a poor widow, had rich relations, whom yet she neither boasted of, nor was burthensome to.

(226.)

ii. 4.—Learn to use courteous salutations and pious ejaculations, only take heed that they degenerate not into a formality, lest we take the name of God in vain.

(227.)

ii. 8.—Boaz encouraged her to go on in gleaning, for the greatest kindness we can do our poor relations is to assist and encourage their industry.

(228.)

ii. 13.—Those that are in high places know not how much good they may do their inferiors with a kind look, or by speaking friendly to them.

(229.)

ii. 19.—Ruth did not tell her mother-in-law how Boaz had commended her. Humility teacheth us not only not to praise ourselves, but not to be forward to publish other's praises of us.

(230.)

iii. 8.—Boaz went to bed so early that by midnight he had his first sleep, thus he would be fit for his business betimes next morning.

I. SAMUEL.

(231.)

i. 8.—We ought to take notice of our comforts, to keep us from over-grieving for our crosses ; for our crosses we deserve, but our comforts we have forfeited.

(232.)

i. 13.—Prayer is not a thing we have reason to be ashamed of, but we must avoid all appearances of ostentation.

It is no new thing for those who do well to be ill thought of.

(233.)

i. 17.—By our meek and humble carriage towards those that reproach us, because they do not know us, we may turn their censures of us into prayers for us.

(234.)

ii. 17.—Nothing brings a greater reproach upon

religion than ministers' covetousness, sensuality, and imperiousness.

(235.)

iii. 9.—Thus the elder should, without grudging, do their utmost to assist and improve the younger that are rising up, though they see themselves likely to be eclipsed by them.

(236.)

iii. 13.—Those that do not restrain the sins of others when it is in the power of their hand to do it, make themselves partakers of the guilt.

(237.)

iii. 15.—Samuel tells the vision to no man, but silently goes on in his business. Our secret communion with God is not to be proclaimed upon the house tops.

(238.)

iv. 3-5.—It is common for those that have estranged themselves from the vitals of religion, to discover a great fondness for the rituals and external observances of it.

(239.)

iv. 13.—Good men lay the interests of God's

church nearer their hearts than any secular interest of their own.

(240.)

vi. 13.—The devil visits idle men with his temptations. God visits industrious men with His favours.

(241.)

vii. 2.—It was better with the Israelites when they wanted the ark and were lamenting after it, than when they had the ark and were prying into it or priding themselves in it. Better see people longing in the scarcity of the means of grace, than loathing in the abundance of them.

(242.)

ix. 3.—Pride and wantonness have marred our times. Great parents count it disreputable to employ their sons in courses of frugality, and their pampered children think it a shame to do anything, and so bear themselves as those that hold it the only glory to be either idle or wicked.—*Bishop Hall*.

(243.)

ix. 6.—If it were the business of the men of God to direct for the recovery of lost asses, they would be consulted much more than they are ; now it is their business to direct for the recovery of lost souls, —so preposterous is the care of most men.

(244.)

x. 11.—Saul among the prophets is Saul still.

(245.)

x. 22, 23.—Honour, like the shadow, follows those that flee from it; but flies from those that pursue it.

(246.)

xii. 3.—There is a just debt which every man owes to his own good name, especially men in public stations, which is, to guard it against unjust aspersions and suspicions, that we may finish our course with honour as well as joy.

(247.)

xii. 7.—The work of ministers is to reason with people,—not only to exhort and direct, but to persuade, to convince their judgments, and so to gain their wills and affections.

(248.)

xiv. 35.—Saul was turning aside from God, and yet now he begins to build altars; being most zealous, as many are, for the form of godliness then when he was denying the power of it.

(249.)

xiv. 41.—Lots should be cast with prayer,

because they are a solemn appeal to Providence ; for which reason some have condemned games that depend purely upon chance, as making too bold with a sacred thing.

(250.)

xv. 2.—Injuries done to God's Israel will be reckoned for sooner or later. God often bears long with those that are marked for ruin.

(251.)

xv. 6.—Jethro had been helpful to Israel in the wilderness, and this is remembered to their posterity many ages after. Thus those that come after us may be reaping the benefit of our good works when we are in our graves.

(252.)

xvi. 2.—The best men are not perfect in their faith, nor will fear be wholly cast out anywhere on this side of heaven.

It was not inconsistent with the laws of truth to say he came to sacrifice, when really he did so ; though he had also a further end which he thought fit to conceal.

(253.)

xvii. 28, 29.—Those that undertake great and

public services, must not think it strange if they be discountenanced and opposed by those from whom they had reason to expect support and assistance.

(254.)

xvii. 34.—Whatever our calling or profession is, we should aim to excel in it, and do the business of it in the best manner.

(255.)

xvii. 37.—Our experiences ought to be improved by us as our encouragement to trust in God.

(256.)

xviii. 6–9.—David's troubles not only tread on the heels of his triumphs, but take rise from them, such is the vanity of that in this world which seems greatest.

(257.)

xviii. 12–15.—The way to be feared is not to hector and threaten, but to behave ourselves wisely. Wisdom commands respect.

(258.)

xix. 8.—Those that are ill paid for doing good, yet must not be weary of well-doing.

(259.)

xx. 5-6.—Saul was rejected of God, yet he kept up his observance of the holy feasts (new moons). There may be the remains of external devotion where there is nothing but the ruins of real virtue.

The family David was of was a very religious family,—a house that had a church in it.

(260.)

xxi. 10.—David though king elect is here an exile. God's providences sometimes seem to run counter to His promises.

God's persecuted people have often found better usage from Philistines than from Israelites. The king of Judah imprisoned Jeremiah, and the king of Babylon set him at liberty.

(261.)

xxiv. 16.—Many mourn for their sins that do not truly repent of them. Weep bitterly for them, and yet continue in love and league with them.

(262.)

xxv. 2.—What little reason have we to value the wealth of this world, when so great a sot as Nabal was abounds, and so great a saint as David was suffers want.

(263.)

xxv. 36.—Sinners are often most secure when they are most in danger, and destruction is at the door.

It is very common for those that are most niggardly in any act of charity or piety, to be most profuse in gratifying a vain humour or base lust.

(264.)

xxvii. 2.—We may blush to think that the city of Gath should be a place of refuge for a good man, when the cities of Israel were made too hot for him.

(265.)

xxviii. 8, 9.—It is common for men to inveigh severely against those sins which they are in no temptation to, but afterwards themselves to be overcome by them.

(266.)

xxviii. 11.—Many that despise and persecute God's saints and ministers when they are living, would be glad to have them again when they are gone. "Send Lazarus to my father's house."

(267.)

xxix. 6.—God's people should behave themselves always so inoffensively, as, if possible, to get the good word of all they have dealings with.

(268.)

xxx. 6.—Great faith must expect such severe exercises. It is observable David was reduced to this extremity, just before his accession to the throne. Things are sometimes at the worst with the people of God just before they begin to mend.

(269.)

xxx. 13–15.—It is a good reason why we should neither do any injury, nor deny a kindness to any man, because we know not but sometime or other it may be in his power to return either a kindness or an injury.

(270.)

xxx. 22, 23.—A while ago they would gladly have given half their own to recover the other half, but now they have all their own they are not content unless they can have their brethren's too, so soon do men forget their low estate.

Superiors often lose their authority by haughtiness, but seldom by courtesy and condescension.

(271.)

xxxi. 6.—They that forsake God, will be forsaken by God.

II. SAMUEL.

(272.)

ii. 26.—How easy it is for men to use reason when it makes for them, that would not use it if it made against them.

(273.)

iii. 38.—When he could not call him a saint and good man, he said nothing of that ; but what was true, he gave him the praise of, though he had been his enemy.

(274.)

v. 21.—When the ark fell into the hands of the Philistines, it consumed them ; but when these images fell into the hands of Israel, they could not save themselves from being consumed.

(275.)

vii. 5.—Better a tent of God's appointing, than a temple of our own inventing.

(276.)

ix. 1-8.—If providence has raised us, and our friends and their families are brought low, we must not forget former acquaintance, but rather look upon that as giving us so much fairer opportunity of being kind to them.

Mephibosheth, though the son of a prince, calls himself a dead dog. It is good to have the heart humble under humbling providences.

(277.)

xiii. 8.—Good housewifery is not a thing below the greatest ladies.

(278.)

xv. 4, 5.—Those are commonly most ambitious of preferment that are least fit for it. The best qualified are the most modest and self-diffident.

Absalom knew what a grace it put upon greatness to be affable and courteous, and how much it wins upon common people. Had he been sincere in it, it had been his praise.

(279.)

xix. 11.—Many will follow that will not lead in a good work, and would do it if they were but spoken to.

(280.)

xix. 35-37.—They that are old must not grudge

young people those delights which they themselves are past the enjoyment of.

(281.)

xx. 1.—This happened immediately upon the crushing of Absalom's rebellion. We must not think it strange while in this world, if the end of one trouble be the beginning of another.

(282.)

xxiv. 13.—Those who truly repent of their sins and have them pardoned, yet are often made to smart for them in this world.

(283.)

xxiv. 24.—Those know not what religion is, all whose care it is to make it cheap and easy to themselves, and are best pleased with that which costs them least of pains and expense.

I. KINGS.

(284.)

i. 10.—A man that has given proofs of his resolute adherence to that which is good, shall not be asked to do an ill thing.

(285.)

ii. 26, 27.—Those that shew kindness to God's people, shall have it remembered to their advantage one time or other.

(286.)

iii. 7-9.—Absalom, that was a fool, wished himself a judge. Solomon, that was a wise man, trembles at the undertaking, and suspects his own fitness for it. The more knowing and considerate men are, the better acquainted they are with their own weakness, and the more jealous of themselves.

(287.)

v. 8.—Those do not lose time, who take time to consider.

(288.)

viii. 41, 42.—So far is Solomon from mono-

polising the knowledge and service of God, and wishing to have them confined to Israel only (which was the envious desire of the Jews in the days of Christ); that he prays that all people might fear God as Israel did.

(289.)

viii. 61.—Let your obedience be universal without dividing, upright without dissembling, and constant without declining: this is evangelical perfection.

(290.)

xi. 1-8.—See the danger of a prosperous condition, and how hard it is to overcome the temptations of it.

(291.)

xi. 22.—Peter Martyr has a pious reflection upon this, that heaven is our home, and we ought to keep up a holy affection to that, and desire towards it, even then when the world, the place of our banishment, smiles most upon us.

(292.)

xiii. 4.—When his hand was stretched to burn incense to his calves, it was not withered; but when it was stretched out against a prophet, he shall have no use of it till he humble himself.

(293.)

xiii. 6.—The time may come when those that hate the preaching, would be glad of the prayers of faithful ministers.

(294.)

xv. 11.—If we come up to the graces of those that are gone before us, it will be our praise with God, though we come short of their gifts.

(295.)

xvii. 3.—If Providence calls us to solitude and retirement, it becomes us to acquiesce; when we cannot be useful, we must be patient.

(296.)

xvii. 17.—We must not think it strange if we meet with very sharp afflictions, even then when we are in the way of duty; when we have the clearest manifestations of God's favour towards us, even then we must prepare for the rebukes of Providence.

(297.)

xviii. 3-12.—Early piety, it is to be hoped, will be eminent piety; he that feared God from his youth, came to fear Him greatly. He that will thrive must rise at five.

(298.)

xviii. 17.—It has been the lot of the best and

most useful men to be called and counted the troublers of the land.

(299.)

xviii. 42-44.—Though the answer of our fervent and believing supplications do not come presently, yet we must continue instant in prayer.

Great blessings often arise from small beginnings, and showers of plenty from a cloud of a span long.

(300.)

xix. 2.—Carnal hearts are hardened and enraged against God by that which should convince and conquer them.

(301.)

xix. 9.—It concerns us often to inquire whether we be in our place, and in the way of our duty.

(302.)

xix. 19.—Elijah found him not in the schools of the prophets, not reading or praying, but ploughing. Idleness is no man's honour, nor is husbandry any man's disgrace. An honest calling in the world doth not put us out of the way of our heavenly calling.

(303.)

xx. 32.—Many repent of their wrong-doing, when it doth not succeed, who, if they had prospered in it, would have gloried in it.

(304.)

xxi. 29.—This teaches us to take notice of that which is good, even in those that are not so good as they should be.

(305.)

xxii. 4.—Too great a complaisance to evil-doers, has brought many good people into a dangerous fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.

II. KINGS.

(306.)

ii. 11.—When his Lord came, He found him doing—talking with and instructing Elisha. We mistake if we think our preparation for heaven is carried on only by contemplation and acts of devotion.

(307.)

iv. 2-7.—This was done by miracle ; but it is an indication to us what is the best method of charity, and the greatest kindness one can do to poor people, which is, if possible, to help them into a way of improving what little they have by their own industry and ingenuity.

(308.)

iv. 13.—They that receive courtesies, should study to return them. It ill becomes men of God to be ungrateful, or to sponge upon the generous.

(309.)

iv. 31.—In raising of dead souls to spiritual life,

ministers can do no more by their own power than Gehazi here could.

(310.)

v. 7.—We often create a great deal of uneasiness to ourselves by misinterpreting the words and actions of others, that are well intended. It is a charity to ourselves to think no evil.

(311.)

v. 8.—The captive maid had the prophet more in her thoughts than the king had.

(312.)

v. 11.—Many have their hearts unhumbled, under humbling providences.

(313.)

v. 13.—It is a great mercy to have those about us that will faithfully tell us our faults and follies, though they be our inferiors.

(314.)

v. 20-27.—They that heard of Elisha at a distance honoured him, and got good by what they heard, but he that stood continually before him had no good impressions made upon him.

One would expect Elisha's servant to be a saint—even Ahab's servant Obadiah was, but even Christ had a Judas among his followers. The means of grace cannot give grace.

(315.)

vi. 16, 17.—They whose faith is strong, ought tenderly to consider and compassionate those who are weak, and of a timorous spirit.

(316.)

ix. 30.—There is not a surer presage of ruin than an unhumbled heart under humbling providences.

(317.)

xii. 5-7.—Many have been zealous for building and beautifying churches, who yet have been strangers to the power of godliness.

(318.)

xii. 15.—Let all that are intrusted with public money learn to deal faithfully.

(319.)

xv. 33.—None of the kings of Judah reached David's age—70. (Asa's not given.)

(320.)

xviii. 36.—There is a time to keep silence, as well as a time to speak; and there are those to whom to offer anything religious or rational, is to cast pearls before swine.

(321.)

xxii. 19.—Those that most fear divine wrath, are least likely to feel it.

(322.)

xxiii. 2.—Josiah thinks it not below him to be a reader, no more than Solomon did to be a preacher; nay, and David himself to be a doorkeeper in the house of God.

(323.)

xxiv. 3, 4.—See what a provoking sin murder is,—how loud it cries, and how long.

I. CHRONICLES.

(324.)

xiii. 2.—David calls the common people brethren, which speaks his humility and condescension, notwithstanding his advancement.

(325.)

xiii. 3.—David makes no peevish reflections upon Saul. He says “we inquired not” at it—making himself, with others, guilty of the neglect. Humble good men lament their own share in national guilt.

(326.)

xvi. 1.—David that pitched a tent for the ark, and stuck to it, did far better than Solomon that built a temple for it, and yet in his latter end turned his back upon it.

(327.)

xix. 3.—They that are ill, and design ill, are apt to be jealous, and suspect ill of others without cause.

(328)

xxii. 9-10.—Where God gives rest He expects work.

(329.)

xxiii. 13.—Aaron never insisted on his seniority, but readily took the inferior post God put him in, and submitted to Moses ; and because he thus submitted in compliance with God's will, God exalted his family even above that of Moses. Those that are content to stoop, are in the fairest way to rise ; before honour is humility.

(330.)

xxvi. 27.—The more God bestows on us, the more He expects from us in works of piety and charity.

(331.)

xxvii. 25-31.—Here are no officers for state, no master of the ceremonies, no master of the hounds, but all for substance agreeable to the simplicity of those times.

(332.)

xxix. 2.—Work for God must be done with all our might.

(333.)

xxix. 1-9.—This David gives them an account of, to stir them up to do likewise. Those that would draw others to that which is good, must lead themselves. Those especially that are advanced above others in place and dignity should contrive how to make their light shine before men, because the influence of their example is more powerful and extensive than that of other people.

(334.)

xxix. 13, 14.—It is a great instance of the power of God's grace in us, to be able to do the work of God willingly.

II. CHRONICLES.

(335.)

ix. 7.—Those are happy who have the opportunity of a constant converse with such as are knowing, wise, and good.

(336.)

x. 7.—Good words cost nothing but a little self-denial, yet they purchase great things.

Gentleness will do what violence will not do.

(337.)

xvii. 5, 6.—Riches and honour in abundance prove to many a clog and a hindrance in the ways of the Lord,—an occasion of pride and sensuality. Not so Jehoshaphat: his abundance was oil to the wheels of his obedience.

(338.)

xx. 1-13.—If we meet with trouble in the way of duty, we may believe it is that God may have an opportunity of shewing us so much the more of His marvellous loving-kindness.

(339.)

xxiv. 6.—Joash, who has but the form of godliness, is more zealous about the repair of the temple than Jehoiada himself. It is easier to build temples, than be temples to God.

The repairing of churches is a good work.

Many a good work would be done that now lies undone, if there were but a few active men to put it forward. When Joash found that money did not come in as he expected one way, he tried another, and that answered the intention.

(340.)

xxv. 6-10.—Rashness makes work for repentance.

(341.)

xxx. 21-24.—What is a great estate good for, but that it puts men into a capacity of doing so much the more good. Holy duties should be performed with holy gladness.

(342)

xxxii. 1.—We may be in the way of our duty, and yet meet with trouble and danger.

(343.)

xxxv. 24.—Pious useful men will be manifested in the consciences even of those that will not be influenced by their example.

E Z R A.

(344.)

ii. 69.—Let none complain of the necessary expenses of their religion, but believe that when they come to balance the account, they will find it quit cost.

(345.)

iv. 3.—In doing good there is need of the wisdom of the serpent : while we trust God with a pious confidence, we must trust man with a prudent jealousy and caution.

(346.)

iv. 12.—Thus was Elijah charged with troubling Israel ; the apostles with turning the world upside down ; Christ Himself with perverting the nation.

NEHEMIAH.

(347.)

i. 1.—God has his remnant in all places—Obadiah in the house of Ahab ; Saints in Cæsar's household ; and a devout Nehemiah in Shushan, the palace.

(348.)

i. 2.—We should inquire concerning the state of the church and religion, not that, like the Athenians, we may have something to talk about, but that we may know how to direct our prayers and praises.

(349.)

i. 4.—The desolations and distresses of the church ought to be the matter of our grief.

(350.)

i. 8, 9.—If God were not more mindful of His promises, than we are of His precepts, we were undone.

(351.)

ii. 4.—Wherever we are, we have a way open heavenward.

Pious ejaculation will hinder no business.

(352.)

iii. 1.—Ministers should be first and foremost in every good work ; for their office obligeth them to teach and quicken by their example, as well as by their doctrine.

(353.)

v. 4, 5.—If men borrow large sums to trade with, or purchase land, there is no reason but the lender should share with the borrower in his profit.

(354.)

v. 6.—When Ezra was told of the sin of the rulers, he wept and prayed, and was hardly persuaded to attempt a reformation, fearing it impracticable, for he was of a mild spirit. When Nehemiah was told of as ill a thing he warmed presently ; he was of a hot and eager spirit. Holy men may differ much in natural temper. God's work may be done well and successfully, and yet different methods taken in doing of it.

(355.)

v. 7.—Reproof must be given with great con-

sideration, that what is well meant may not come short of its end for want of being well managed. It is the reproof of instruction that giveth life.

(356.)

v. 10.—“Let *us* leave off this usury,” putting himself in as becomes reprovers, though far from being guilty of the crime.

(357.)

v. 14.—He might have used the common excuse for rigour in such cases, that it would be a wrong to his successors not to demand his dues; but let them look to themselves. He considers the present state of the Jews, and while they groaned under so much hardship, he could not find in his heart to add to their burden.

(358.)

v. 18.—In our demands, we must consider not only the justice of them, but the ability of those on whom we make them.

(359.)

vii. 2.—Among those who fear God truly, there are some who fear him greatly, and excel others in the expressions and instances of that fear.

(360.)

viii. 3.—Upon special occasions we must be willing to attend for many hours together on the reading and expounding of the word of God. They here were thus employed six hours.

(361.)

viii. 9-11.—Even sorrow for sin must not grow so excessive as to hinder our joy in God, and our cheerfulness in His service.

(362.)

ix. 3.—Three hours they spent in reading and expounding Scripture, and three hours in confessing sin. Six hours in the solemn acts of religion, without saying, “Behold what a weariness is it.”

(363.)

xi. 16.—Those that take care of the *τα εξω*, “the outward concerns” of the church,—the serving of its tables, the collecting of the contributions,—are as necessary in their place as those that take care of its *τα εσω*, its inward concerns—who give themselves to the word and prayer.

(364.)

xiii. 3.—See the benefit of the public reading of the word of God. When it is duly attended

to, it discovers to us sin and duty, good and evil, and shews us wherein we have erred.

(365.)

xiii. 12.—The better church work is done, the better will church dues be paid.

(366.)

xiii. 14.—Nehemiah was a man much in pious ejaculation.

Deeds done for the house of God, and the offices of it, for the support of religion and the encouragement of it, are good deeds.

(367.)

xiii. 26.—The falls of great and good men are recorded, that we may take warning by them, to shun the temptations which they were overcome by.

E S T H E R.

(368.)

vi. 1.—He that commanded one hundred and twenty-seven provinces could not command one hour's sleep.

JOB.

(369.)

i. 9-11.—Job's friends charged him with hypocrisy, because he was greatly afflicted ; Satan, because he greatly prospered.

It is no hard matter for those to calumniate that seek an occasion.

(370.)

i. 16.—The fire of God fell upon Job's honest servants, not upon the Sabean robbers. God's judgments are unsearchable.

(371.)

ii. 11.—It is good manners to be an unbidden guest in the house of mourning.—(*Caryl.*)

(372.)

iii. 20-26.—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.

(373.)

iv. 3.—Job, though a man of business, found

time to instruct others ; he went among his neighbours, talked to them about their souls, and gave them good counsel.

(374.)

iv. 20.—The deaths of others are much the subject of common talk, but little the subject of serious thought.

(375.)

v. 13.—Though in everything which Job's friends said, they were not directed by the Spirit of God, for they spake both of God and Job some things that were not right, yet the general doctrines they laid down speak the pious sense of the patriarchal age, and Paul quotes verse 13 for canonical Scripture.

(376.)

ix. 25, 26.—What little need have we of pastimes, and what great need to redeem time, when time runs on so fast towards eternity, which comes as time goes.

(377.)

xi. 3.—They that engage in controversy will find it very hard to keep their temper.

(378.)

xi. 5.—We are commonly ready to conclude that

if God would speak, He would speak for us,—as Zophar here. When God did speak, He opened His lips for Job, against his three friends.

(379.)

xii. 6.—We cannot judge of men's piety by their plenty, nor of what they have in their heart by what they have in their hand.

(380.)

xii. 12.—It were well if wise and good men that differ in their apprehensions about lesser things would see it to be for their honour and comfort, and the edification of others, to dwell most upon those great things in which they are agreed. Job here speaks like himself—no passionate complaints, everything masculine and great.

(381.)

xiii. 24-26.—The holy God sometimes denies His favours, and discovers His terrors to the best and dearest of His saints.

(382.)

xvii. 9.—Proficiency in religion is a good sign of sincerity in it.

(383.)

xvii. 13.—Whatever we expect, let us be sure to

expect death, for that may prevent other things we expect, but nothing will prevent that.

(384.)

xxii. 18.—Many have their houses full of goods, but their hearts empty of grace, and thereby are marked for ruin.

(385.)

xxiii. 7.—There is no flying from God's justice, but by flying to His mercy.

(386.)

xxiii. 10.—It is a great comfort to those who mean honestly, that God understands their meaning, though men do not, cannot, or will not.

(387.)

xxviii. 1, 2.—What is for necessity, is had with a little labour from the surface of the earth ; but what is for ornament must be digged with a great deal of pains out of the bowels of it. To be fed is cheap, to be fine is chargeable.

(388.)

xxix. 5.—God's presence with a man in his house, though it be but a cottage, makes it both a castle and a palace.

(389.)

xxx. 25.—They who mourn with them that mourn will bear their own sorrows the better when it comes to their turn to drink of the bitter cup.

(390.)

xxxi. 13.—Job did not despise the cause of his man or maid-servant ; nay, if they complained of any hardship he put upon them, he did not brow-beat them, and bid them hold their tongues, but gave them leave to tell their story, and redress their grievances so far as it appeared they had right on their side.

(391.)

xxxi. 23.—Even when salvation from God is a comfort to us, yet destruction from God should be a terror to us. Adam, in innocency, was awed with a threatening.

(392.)

xxxi. 24.—It is hard to have riches and not to trust in riches ; and that is it which makes it so difficult for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

(393.)

xxxiii. 20.—Those who live in luxury when they are well, if ever they come by reason of sickness to

loathe dainty meat, may, with grief and shame, read their sin in their punishment.

(394.)

xxxvi. 12.—Those whom God's rod is not the cure of, His sword will be the death of; and the consuming fire will prevail, if the refining fire do not.

(395.)

xxxvi. 18.—xix. 20.—Contenders are apt with too much boldness to bind one another over to the judgment of God.

(396.)

xxxviii. 4.—God did not consult us in making the world, yet it is well made; why should we expect then that He should take His measures from us in governing it?

(397.)

xxxix. 13.—Other birds do not envy the peacock or the ostrich their gaudy colours: why should we repine if we see others wear better clothes than we can afford to wear?

(398.)

xlii. 5.—By the teachings of man, God reveals

His Son *to* us ; but by the teachings of His Spirit, He reveals His Son *in* us.

(399.)

xlii. 6.—Even good people that have no gross enormities to repent of, yet must be greatly afflicted in soul for the workings and breaking out of pride, passion, peevishness, and discontent.

(400.)

xlii. 7.—After the Lord had convinced and humbled Job, and brought him to repentance, then He owned him in what he had said well, and comforted him. Not till then—for we are not ready for God's approbation till we judge and condemn ourselves.

(401.)

xlii. 7, 8.—They had represented God fighting against Job as an enemy, when really he was only trying him as a friend. It is a dangerous thing to judge uncharitably of the spiritual state of others, for in so doing we may perhaps condemn those whom God has accepted.

P S A L M S.

(402.)

ii. 1.—Christ's church is built upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The moon walks in brightness, though the dogs bark at it.

(403.)

ii. 11.—Whatever we rejoice in in this world, it must always be with trembling, lest we grow vain in our joy.

(404.)

iii. Title and 1-3.—True Christian fortitude consists more in a gracious security and serenity of mind, in patient bearing and waiting, than in daring enterprises with sword in hand.

(405.)

v. 1.—As meditation is the best preparation for prayer, so prayer is the best issue of meditation.

(406.)

vi. 6.—David, that could face Goliath with un-

daunted bravery, yet melts into tears at the remembrance of sin.

(407.)

x. 6.—Those are nearest ruin who set it farthest from them.

(408.)

xiii. 1.—God sometimes hides His face from His own children, and leaves them in the dark concerning their interest in Him.

(409.)

xiv. 5.—They that will not fear God perhaps may be made to fear at the shaking of a leaf.

(410.)

xvi. 6.—Gracious souls, though they still covet more of God, never covet more than God.

(411.)

xvii. 6.—Not that God needs to be thus pressed with our importunity, but He gives us leave thus to express our earnest desires of His gracious answers to our prayers.

(412.)

xviii. 17, 18.—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.

(413.)

xxi. 8.—There is no escaping God's avenging eye. Rocks and mountains will be no better shelter at the last than fig leaves were at first.

(414.)

xxii. 1, 2.—Spiritual desertions are the saint's sorest afflictions. When their evidences are clouded, divine consolations suspended, their communion with God interrupted, and the terrors of God set themselves in array against them, how sapless all their comforts !

(415.)

xxvi. 4.—David shunned the company not only of wicked persons, but of vain persons that were wholly addicted to mirth and gaiety, and had nothing solid or serious in them. The company of such may perhaps be the more pernicious of the two to a good man, because he will not be so ready to stand upon his guard against the contagion of vanity, as against that of downright wickedness.

(416.)

xxvii. 4.—It greatly encouraged his confidence in God, that he was conscious to himself of an entire

affection to God and to His ordinances, and that he was in his element when in the way of his duty.

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.

They that truly desire communion with God, will set themselves with all diligence to seek after it.

(417.)

xxviii. 4.—If God go by this rule in dealing with the wicked, sure He will do so in dealing with the righteous, and will reward them not only for the good they have done, but for the good they have endeavoured to do, though they could not compass it.

(418.)

xxxii. 5.—God is more ready to pardon sin upon our repentance than we are to repent. “I did but say, I will confess, and Thou forgavest.”

(419.)

xxxiv. 9.—Those that live by faith in God’s all-sufficiency want nothing, for in Him they have enough.

(420.)

xxxvii. 1.—That is preached best, and with most

probability of success to others, which is first preached to ourselves.

(421.)

xxxvii. 6.—If we take care to keep a good conscience, we may leave it to God to take care of our good name.

(422.)

xxxvii. 23.—God doth not always shew him (a good man) his way at a distance, but leads him step by step, as children are led, and so keeps him in continual dependence on his conduct.

(423.)

xxxviii. 13, 14.—The less notice we take of the unkindness and injuries that are done us, the more we consult the quiet of our own minds. He was as silent as if he had nothing to say for himself, for fear of putting himself into a heat, and incensing his enemies yet more against him.

(424.)

xlii. 1, 2.—Lamenting after God is as sure an evidence that we love Him as rejoicing in God.

(425.)

xlii. 5.—Those that commune much with their

own hearts, will often have occasion to chide them, as David here.

(426.)

xliii. 4.—We come in vain to holy ordinances, if we do not in them come to the holy God.

(427.)

xliv. 1.—We must not only make mention of the work God has done in our own days, but must also acquaint ourselves and our children with what He did in the times of old.

(428.)

xlix. 6.—It is not men's having riches that denominates them worldly, but their setting their hearts upon them as the best things.

(429.)

l. 20.—Those that do ill themselves commonly delight in speaking ill of others.

(430.)

l. 23.—Thanksgiving is good, but thanksgiving is better.

(431.)

li. 5.—Acts of repentance, even for the same sin, must be often repeated.

(432.)

lv. 7, 8.—Gracious souls wish to retire from the hurry and bustle of this world, where they may sweetly enjoy God; and if there be any true peace on this side heaven, it is they that enjoy it in those retirements.

(433.)

lix. 3.—Though our innocency will not secure us from troubles, yet it will greatly support and comfort us under our troubles.

(434.)

lxii. 10.—It is a smiling world that is most likely to draw the heart away from God, on whom only it should be set.

(435.)

lxvi. 16.—I will declare, not to vain carnal people that will banter and make a jest of it (pearls are not to be cast before swine), but to those that fear God, what God hath done for my soul.

(436.)

lxviii. 7.—If God bring His people into a wilderness, He will be sure to go before them in it and bring them out of it.

(437.)

lxix. 4.—We are apt to use this in justification of

our passion against those that hate us, that we never gave them cause to hate us; but it is rather an argument why we should bear it patiently, because then we suffer as Christ did.

(438.)

lxxiii. 2.—The faith, even of strong believers, may sometimes be sorely shaken. There are storms that will try the firmest anchors.

(439.)

lxxviii. 54.—God could have turned the uncultivated wilderness into fruitful soil, and have planted Israel there; but the land he designed them was to be a type of heaven, and must be fought for,—“The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence.”

(440.)

lxxx. 5.—There are many that spend their time in sorrow, who yet shall spend their eternity in joy.

(441.)

lxxxv. 1-3.—The sense of present afflictions should not drown the remembrance of former mercies.

(442.)

lxxxv. 9.—When the tale of bricks is doubled, then Moses comes.

(443.)

xcv. 16.—Who would wish to live a day longer than God has work to do, either by him or upon him ?

(444.)

xcv. 8-11.—Is an exhortation to those that sing gospel psalms to live gospel lives.

(445.)

xcv. 10.—See the patience of God,—He was grieved with them forty years, yet these forty years ended in a triumphant entrance into Canaan, made by the next generation.

(446.)

cv. 40, 41.—Common providence fetcheth water from heaven and bread out of the earth ; but for Israel, the divine power brings bread from the clouds and water from the rocks.

(447.)

cvii. 7.—It is said (Deut. xxxii. 10), God led them about, and yet here He led them by the right way.

(448.)

cxii. 3.—Wealth and riches shall be in the up-

right man's house, not in his heart, for he is none of those in whom the love of money reigns.

(449.)

cxii. 9.—That which shall especially turn to the honour of good men, is their liberality and bounty to the poor.

(450.)

cxvi. 12.—They that live in hope of the kingdom of glory must neither be ashamed nor afraid to own their obligation to Him that purchased it for them.

(451.)

cxix.—This psalm is a chest of gold rings, not a chain of gold links.

(452.)

cxix. 107.—He laboured under many discouragements,—without were fightings, within were fears. This is often the lot of the best saints.

(453.)

cxxvi. 5.—Weeping must not hinder sowing.

(454.)

cxxxviii. 3.—Those that trade with heaven by prayer grow rich by quick returns.

(455.)

cxlii. 4.—Such swallow-friends how many good men have been deceived by, that are gone when winter comes.

(456.)

cxliii. 4.—David was not only a great saint, but a great soldier, yet even he was sometimes ready to faint in a day of adversity.

P R O V E R B S.

(457.)

i. 26.—Those that will not admit the fear of God, lay themselves open to all other fears, and their fears will not prove causeless.

(458.)

iii. 6.—They that faithfully follow the pillar of cloud and fire, shall find, though it may lead them about, it leads them the right way, and will bring them to Canaan at last.

(459.)

iii. 10.—They that do good with what they have, shall have more to do more good with.

(460.)

iv. 1, 2.—We have reason to think that thousands have got more good by Solomon's proverbs than his own son did.

(461.)

iv. 8.—*Nobilitas sola est atque unica virtus.*—Virtue is the only nobility.

(462.)

iv. 26.—Be nice and critical in examining whether thy way be good before the Lord, and whether it will end well.

(463.)

vi. 8.—We must, in gathering time, treasure up for a spending time.

(464.)

vii. 11.—Those to whom home is a prison, virtue is a penance.

(465.)

ix. 8.—It is as great an instance of wisdom to take a reproof well as to give it well.

(466.)

x. 2.—We often see that scattered by the justice of God which has been gathered by the injustice of men.

(467.)

xi. 24.—God blesseth the giving hand, and so makes it a getting hand.

(468.)

xii. 16.—It contributes to the repose of our own

minds to extenuate and excuse injuries and affronts, instead of making the worst of them, as we are apt to do.

(469.)

xii. 23.—Knowing men, if prudent, will carefully avoid everything that savours of ostentation, and not take all occasions to shew their learning, but only use it for good purposes; and then let their own works praise them.

(470.)

xiii. 11.—Riches wear as they are won and woven. Ill-gotten wealth will scarcely be enjoyed by the third generation.

(471.)

xiv. 7.—Sometimes the only way we have of reproving wicked discourse, and witnessing against it, is by leaving the company.

(472.)

xiv. 24.—If men be wise and good, riches make them so much the more honourable and useful.

(473.)

xv. 1.—Hard arguments do best with soft words.

(474.)

xvii. 10.—David is softened with “Thou art the man!” — Pharaoh remains hard under all the plagues of Egypt.

(475.)

xviii. 11.—Only in his own conceit.

(476.)

xviii. 24.—The way to be beloved is to be lovely.—(*Ovid.*)

(477.)

xix. 11.—Plato said to his servant “I would beat thee, but that I am angry.”

(478.)

xxi. 23.—Keep thy heart, and that will keep thy tongue from sin; keep thy tongue, and that will keep thy heart from trouble.

(479.)

xxi. 24.—Most of the wrath that inflames the spirits and societies of men is proud wrath: men cannot bear the least slight, nor in anything to be crossed and contradicted, but they are out of humour and in a heat presently.

(480.)

xxi. 27.—When holiness is pretended, but some

wickedness intended, then especially the performance is an abomination.

(481.)

xxiii. 31.—Those that would be kept from any sin must keep themselves from all the occasions and beginnings of it.

(482.)

xxiv. 7.—Let young men take pains to get wisdom, that they may be qualified for public business, and do it with reputation.

(483.)

xxiv. 17.—There may be a holy joy in the destruction of God's enemies ; but in the ruin of our enemies as such, we must by no means rejoice, not so much as letting our hearts be secretly glad at their calamities.

(484.)

xxv. 16.—We are allowed a sober and moderate use of the delights of sense.

(485.)

xxv. 17.—After the third day fish and company become distasteful.

(486.)

xxvi. 13.—It is a foolish thing to frighten ourselves from real duties by fancied difficulties.

(487.)

xxvii. 2.—Every one will be forward to run him down that cries himself up.

(488.)

xxvii. 21.—A man is tried by praising him ; let him be extolled and preferred, and then he will shew what he is.

(489.)

xxviii. 20.—Usefulness shall be the reward of faithfulness, and it is a good reward.

(490.)

xxxi. 10.—He that will thrive must ask his wife leave.

(491.)

xxxi. 19.—The spindle and the distaff are here mentioned as her honour, while the ornaments of the daughters of Zion are (Isa. iii. 8) reckoned up to their reproach.

(492.)

xxx. 13-31.—The standard of godliness here exhibited is not that of a religious recluse shut up from active obligations under pretence of greater sanctity. One half, at least, of the picture of the virtuous woman is occupied with her personal and domestic industry.—(A. L. G.)

ECCLESIASTES.

(493.)

ii. 11.—God reviewed His works, and behold “all was very good.” Solomon reviewed the works his hands had wrought, and behold “all was vanity and vexation of spirit.”

(494.)

v. 10—Corrupt desires are insatiable.

(495.)

v. 20.—A cheerful spirit is a great blessing : it makes the yoke of our employments easy, and the burthen of our afflictions light.

(496.)

vi. 9.—He is much happier that is always content, though he has never so little, than he that is always coveting, though he has never so much.

(497.)

vii. 1-6.—In these verses Solomon lays down some great truths which seem paradoxes to the unthinking—that is, the far greatest part of mankind.

(498.)

vii. 9.—That will break a proud man's heart which will not break an humble man's sleep.

(499.)

vii. 22.—We must shew all meekness towards all men, for we ourselves were sometimes foolish.

(500.)

ix. 8.—What God has given us we must make a comfortable use of as we can afford, under the limitations of sobriety and wisdom, and not forgetting the poor.

(501.)

x. 1.—Those that make a great profession of religion have need to walk very circumspectly, because many eyes are upon them that watch for their halting. Their character is soon sullied.

(502.)

xi. 1.—Seneca could say "I possess nothing so completely as that which I have given away."

SOLOMON'S SONG.

(503.)

i. 7.—They whose souls love Christ, earnestly desire to have communion with Him by His Word, in which He speaks to us, and by prayer, in which we speak to Him.

(504.)

ii. 5.—Oh, how much better is it with the soul when it is sick of love to Christ, than when it is surfeited with the love of this world !

(505.)

iii. 3.—Those only who have seen Christ themselves are likely to direct others to a sight of Him.

(506.)

iii. 4.—Those that continue seeking Christ shall find Him at last, and when, perhaps, almost ready to despair. The comfort that comes after long waiting is sweet at last.

(507.)

v. 6.—There are those who have a true love for

Christ, and yet have not immediate answers to their prayers for His smiles ; but He gives them an equivalent, if He strengthens them with strength in their souls to continue seeking Him.

(508.)

vi. 2.—The more we withdraw from the hurry of the world, the more likely we are to have acquaintance with Christ, who took His disciples into a garden, there to be witnesses of the agonies of His love.

(509.)

vii. 12.—By going about our worldly affairs with heavenly, holy hearts, mixing pious thoughts with common actions, we may take Christ with us wherever we go, nor should we go where we cannot in faith ask Him to go with us.

I S A I A H.

(510.)

The Gentiles never treated their false prophets so ill as the Jews did their true prophets.

(511.)

i. 5.—There are those who are made worse by the methods God takes to make them better.

(512.)

i. 17.—We are truly honouring God when we are doing good in the world.

(513.)

vi. 5.—Those are fittest to be employed for God that are low in their own eyes, and are made deeply sensible of their own unworthiness.

(514.)

vii. 3.—God appointed the prophet to Ahaz, though he did not desire the prophet to inquire of the Lord for him. God is often found of those that seek Him not; much more will He be found of those that seek Him diligently.

(515.)

x. 12.—When God lets loose the enemies of His church and people, and suffers them for a time to prevail, it is in order to the performing of some good work upon them ; and when that is done, and not till then, He will work deliverance for them.

(516.)

xvi. 8, 9.—In God let us always rejoice with a holy triumph, and in other things with a holy trembling.

(517.)

xxii. 20.—Eliakim is God's servant, has approved himself faithfully so in other employments, and therefore God will call him to this high station. Those that are diligent in doing the duty of a low sphere, stand fairest for preferment in God's books.

(518.)

xxvi. 16–18.—A righteous cause may be strenuously pleaded both by prayer and endeavour, both with God and man, and yet for a great while go by the worse.

(519.)

xxviii. 27, 28.—Afflictions are God's threshing

instruments, designed to loosen us from the world, to part between us and our chaff, and to prepare us for use.

(520.)

xxix. 2.—Those that are most merry and jovial, when they come to be in distress, are commonly most overwhelmed with heaviness.

(521.)

xxix. 19.—The grace of meekness will contribute very much to the increase of our holy joy.

(522.)

xxx. 20, 21.—It was a common saying among the old Puritans, “Brown bread and the gospel is good fare.”

(523.)

xxxvi. 1.—We must not wonder if, when we are doing well, God sends afflictions to quicken us to do better.

(524.)

xxxviii. 1.—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.

(525.)

xl. 1.—Words of conviction, such as we had in the former part of this book, must be followed with words of comfort.

(526.)

xliv. 12.—God put a great honour upon man when, in respect of the faculties of his soul, He made him after the image of God ; but man doth a great dishonour to God, when he makes Him, in respect of bodily members, after the image of man.

(527.)

xlv. 1-3.—That which God here promised to do for Cyrus, He could have done for Zerubbabel, or some of the Jews themselves ; but the wealth and power of this world God has seldom seen fit to intrust His own people with much of, so many are the snares and temptations that attend it.

(528.)

xlvii. 1.—Let those that have power use it with temper and moderation, considering that the spoke that is uppermost will be under.

(529.)

l. 10.—Serious Christians are apt to be melancholy ones, and those who fear always to fear too much.

(530.)

liv. 6, 7.—Those that shall never be forsaken and left in despair, may yet for a time be perplexed and in distress.

(531.)

liv. 8.—The wrath is little, but the mercies great.

(532.)

lvi. 1, 2.—The best evidence of our having kept the Sabbath well will be a care to keep a good conscience all the week. By this it will appear we have been in the mount with God, if our faces shine in a holy conversation before men.

(533.)

lviii. 1, 2.—Man may go a great way towards heaven and yet come short, nay, may go to hell with a good reputation.

(534.)

lviii. 3.—It is common for unhumbled hearts to be proud of their professions of humiliation.

(535.)

lxii. 1.—The business of ministers is to speak from God to his people, and to God for his people.

(536.)

lxii. 6, 7.—It is a good sign that God is coming toward a people in ways of mercy, when He pours out a spirit of prayer upon them.

(537.)

lxiv. 7.—Those that would take hold of God in prayer so as to prevail with him, must stir up themselves to do it.

(538.)

lxv. 1.—Though in after communion God is found of them that seek Him, yet on the first conversion He is found of those that seek Him not.

J E R E M I A H.

(539.)

iv. 19.—A good man in such a bad world as this cannot but be a man of sorrows.

(540.)

vi. 2.—The more we indulge ourselves in the pleasures of this life, the more we disfit ourselves for the troubles of this life.

(541.)

vii. 4.—They that slight the words of truth which would profit them, take shelter in words of falsehood that cannot profit them.

(542.)

vii. 4-8.—If they heard any awakening sermon, they lulled themselves asleep again with this,—We cannot but do well, for we have the temple of the Lord among us. 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.

(543.)

vii. 16.—God's praying prophets have a great interest in heaven, how little soever they have on earth.

(544.)

ix. 18.—First or last sinners must be weepers.

(545.)

xvii. 11.—Let us be wise ; what we get to get it honestly, and what we have to use it charitably, that we may lay up in store a good foundation, and be wise for eternity.

(546.)

xxi. 2.—Those that slight the prayers of God's people and ministers when they are in prosperity, may perhaps be glad of an interest in them when in distress. "Give us of your oil."

(547.)

xxii. 10.—Dying saints may be justly envied, whilst living sinners are justly pitied.

(548.)

xxiii. 9.—The dishonour done to God's name, and the profanation of His holy word, is the greatest grief imaginable to a gracious soul.

(549.)

xxvii. 22.—Though the return of the church's prosperity do not come in our time, we must not therefore despair of it, for it will come in God's time.

(550.)

xxxii. 2.—When we are brought very low, and insuperable difficulties appear in the way of our deliverance, it is good to remember it has been so with the church formerly, and yet it has been raised up from its low estate, and has got to Canaan through all the hardships of a wilderness.

(551.)

xxxii. 2, 3.—It is hard to take comfort from former smiles under present frowns.

3.—God's love is from everlasting in the counsels of it, to everlasting in the continuance of it.

(552.)

xxxii. 36.—Deep security commonly ends in deep despair, whereas those that keep up a holy fear at all times, have a good hope to support themselves in the worst of times.

(553.)

xxxiii. 13.—It is the prudence of those who have

never so much of the world to keep an account of what they have.

(554.)

xxxvii. 12.—There are times when it is the wisdom of good men to retire into privacy.

(555.)

xxxvii. 13.—In such a malicious world as this, innocency—nay, excellency—is no fence against calumny.

(556.)

xxxvii. 20.—A lion in God's cause must be a lamb in his own.

(557.)

xxxviii. 24-27.—Though we must be so harmless as doves as never to tell a lie, yet we must be so wise as serpents as not needlessly to expose ourselves to danger by telling all that we know.

(558.)

xl. 3-5.—The frowns of the world would not disquiet us as they do, if we did not foolishly flatter ourselves with the hopes of its smiles.

(559.)

xlviii. 7.—We forfeit the comfort of that creature which we repose that confidence in, that should be reposed in God only.

(560.)

xlviii. 11.—God's Israel was afflicted from their youth (Ps. cxxix. 1, 2), but Moab was at ease from his youth.

There are many that persist in unrepented-of iniquity, and yet enjoy uninterrupted prosperity.

E Z E K I E L.

(561.)

i. 1.—The best men, and those that are dearest to God, often share not only in the common calamities of this life, but in the public and national judgments that are inflicted for sin.

(562.)

ii. 6.—Those that will do anything to purpose in the service of God, must not be afraid of the face of man, for the fear of man will bring a snare which will be very entangling to us in the work of God.

(563.)

ii. 7.—The untractableness of people under the word is no good reason why ministers should leave off preaching to them ; nor must we decline an opportunity for doing good, though we have much reason to think no good will be done.

(564.)

iii. 8, 9.—Perhaps Ezekiel was naturally bashful and timorous ; but if God did not find him fit, yet

by His grace He made him fit to encounter the greatest difficulties.

(565.)

iii. 14.—There may in some cases, be a great reluctancy of corruption, even there where there is a manifest predominancy of grace—"I went in bitterness."

(566.)

iii. 24.—Those that are called to preach must find time to study, and a great deal of time, too; must often shut themselves up in their houses, that they may give attendance to reading and meditation, and so their profiting may appear to all.

(567.)

iv. 10.—The prophet must eat but about ten ounces of bread a-day, and he must drink but half-a-pint of water. The body must be kept under, and brought into subjection. Nature is content with a little, and grace with less, but lust with nothing.

(568.)

iv. 14.—Sometimes tender consciences fear sin without a cause, and perplex themselves with scruples about lawful things (Matt. xv. 11).

(569.)

iv. 15.—God dispensed with him in this matter. Those who have power should not be rigorous in pressing their commands upon those that are dissatisfied concerning them ; yea, though their dissatisfactions be groundless, or arising from education and long usage.

(570.)

vii. 19.—By their eager pursuit of wealth they were drawn into sin, and by their plentiful enjoyment of it they were hardened in sin ; and thus it was the stumbling-block of their iniquity.

There are many whose wealth is their ruin. The gaining of the world is the losing of their souls ; it makes them proud, secure, covetous, oppressive, voluptuous ; and that which, if well used, might have been the servant of their piety, being abused, becomes the stumbling-block of their iniquity.

(571.)

viii. 13.—We shall find it so in examining our own hearts, and searching into them ; there is a world of iniquity in them,—a great abundance and variety of abominations ; and when we have found out much amiss, still we shall find more, for the heart is desperately wicked : who can know it perfectly ?

(572.)

ix. 4.—Those who keep themselves pure in times of common iniquity, God will keep them safe in times of common calamity. They that distinguish themselves shall be distinguished; that cry for other men's sins shall not need to cry for their own afflictions, for they shall be either delivered from them, or comforted under them.

(573.)

xiii. 17.—When sinners grow very impudent, it is time for reprovers to be very bold.

(574.)

xvii. 15–19.—Nebuchadnezzar was a worshipper of false gods, yet the true God will avenge his quarrel when one of His worshippers breaks his league with him.

(575.)

xviii. 30, 31.—We must do our endeavour, and then God will not be wanting to us to give us His grace. Austen well explains this precept. “*Deus non jubet impossibilia, sed jubendo monet et facere quod possis, et petere quod non possis*”—“God does not enjoin impossibilities, but by His commands admonishes us to do what is in our power, and to pray for what is not.”

(576.)

xix. 9.—Bloody tyrants seldom die in peace.
“How few of all the boastful men that reign
Descend in peace to Pluto’s dark domain.”

—*Juvenal.*

(577.)

xx. 31.—Those reap no benefit by their religion that are not entire and sincere in it ; nor can we have any comfortable communion with God in ordinances of worship, unless we be inward and upright with Him therein. We make nothing of our profession if it be but a profession.

(578.)

xxiv. 2.—It is good to keep an exact account of the date of remarkable occurrences, which may sometimes contribute to the manifesting of God’s glory so much the more in them.

(579.)

xxv. 3.—It is a very wicked thing to be glad at the calamities of any, especially of God’s people, and a sin that God will surely reckon for.

(580.)

xxviii. 3.—We found before that Daniel, though now but a young man, was celebrated for prevalency

in prayer (xiv. 14) : here we find that he was famous for his prudence in the management of the affairs of this world, a great scholar and statesman, and withal a great saint ; and yet not a prince, but a poor captive.

(581.)

xxix. 18-20.—This accounts for the prosperity of wicked men in this world : God is in it paying them for some service or other in which He has made use of them.

(582.)

xxx. 10.—It is very rare to find an humble spirit in the midst of great advancements.

(583.)

xxxii. 11.—Those that delight in war, and are upon all occasions entering into contention, may expect some time or other to be engaged with those that will prove too hard for them. Pharaoh had been forward to quarrel with his neighbour, and to come forth with his armies—rivers (ver. 2)—but God will now give him enough of it.

(584.)

xxxiv. 2-6.—There is a woe to those that are in public trust, but consult only their own private

interest, and are more inquisitive about what money is to be got, than what good is to be done. It is an old complaint; all seek their own, and too many more than their own.

(585.)

xxxv. 15.—Those have the spirit of Edomites, who desire the deaths of others, because they hope to get by them, or are pleased with others failing, because they expect to come into their business.

(586.)

xxxvi. 37.—What is the matter of God's promises must be the matter of our prayers.

(587.)

xl. 1.—The appropriating of lands for the support of religion and the ministry, is an act of piety that bids as fair for perpetuity and the benefit of posterity as any other.

(588.)

xl. 10.—It concerns God's Israel to be very honest and just in all their dealings, very punctual and exact in rendering to all their due, very cautious to do wrong to none, because otherwise they spoil the acceptableness of their profession with God and the reputation of it before men.

D A N I E L.

(589.)

i. 8.—It is very much the praise of all, and especially of young people, to be dead to the delights of sense, not to covet them, not to relish them, but to look upon them with an indifferency. Those that would excel in wisdom and piety, must learn betimes to “keep under the body.”

(590.)

ii. 1.—We know not the uneasiness of many that live in great pomp, and one would think in pleasure too. We look into their houses, and are tempted to envy them, but could we look into their hearts we should pity them rather. All the treasures and all the delights of the children of men, which this mighty monarch had the command of, could not procure him a little repose, when, by reason of the trouble of his mind, his “sleep brake from him.”

(591.)

iii. 18.—These were they who formerly resolved

not to defile themselves with the king's meat. A steadfast, self-denying, adherence to God and duty in lesser instances, will qualify and prepare us for the like in greater.

(592.)

vi. 3, 4.—We have all need to walk circumspectly, because we have many eyes upon us, and some that watch for our halting. Those especially have need to carry their cup even that have it full.

(593.)

xii. 13.—A believing hope of a blessed lot in the heavenly Canaan, will be an effectual support to us when we are going our way out of this world, and will furnish us with living comforts in dying moments.

H O S E A.

(594.)

ii. 11.—If men will not take away sin from their mirth, God will take away mirth from their sin.

(595.)

ii. 14.—When it was said, “She forgat me,” one would think it should have followed—“Therefore I will abandon her.” No, “Therefore I will allure her.”

(596.)

iv. 8.—“The sin,” *i.e.* the sin-offerings. They set their hearts upon the people’s iniquities—the more sins, the more sacrifices. It is a very wicked thing to be well pleased with the sins of others, because some way or other they may turn to our advantage.

(597.)

iv. 9.—What is unlawfully gained, cannot be comfortably used.

(598.)

v. 4.—It is true, we cannot, by our own power, without the special grace of God, turn to Him ; but we may, by the due improvement of our own faculties and the common aids of His Spirit, frame our doings to turn to Him. And those that will not do that,—that “prepare not their hearts to seek the Lord,”—owe it to themselves that they are not turned, they die because they will die ; and to those that will do this, farther grace shall not be wanting.

(599.)

v. 15.—When men begin to complain more of their sins than of their afflictions, then there begins to be some hopes of them.

(600.)

vi. 6.—Our Saviour quotes this to shew that moral duties are to be preferred before rituals, whenever they come in competition.

(601.)

vi. 11.—When God spared them that time, He set them a harvest, that is, He designed to reckon with them another time for all together. Preservations from present judgments, if a good use be not made of them, are but reservations for greater judgments.

(602.)

viii. 8.—Those that have professed religion, if they degenerate and grow profane, are of all men the most contemptible.

(603.)

xiv. 2.—*Verbaque prævisam rem non invita sequentur.*—Those who master a subject, are seldom at a loss for language.

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

We are to be particular in our resolutions against sin, as we ought to be in our confessions, because deceit lies in generals.

J O E L.

(604.)

i. 11.—Those who labour only for “the meat that perisheth,” will, sooner or later, be ashamed of their labour.

(605.)

i. 13.—The people, as long as they had the fruits of the earth brought in their season, brought the offerings to the altar. A people may be filling up the measure of their iniquity apace, and yet keep a course of external performances in religion.

(606.)

ii. 32.—It is the praying remnant that shall be the saved remnant.

Those only shall be delivered in the great day that are now effectually called from sin to God, from self to Christ, from things below to things above.

A M O S.

(607.)

- ii. 6.—The more patiently men bear the injuries that are done them, the greater is the sin of those that injure them, and the more occasion they have to expect that God will right them.

(608.)

- v. 22.—The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to God. Dissembled piety is a double iniquity.

(609.)

- vii. 10.—It is no new thing for the accusers of the brethren to misrepresent them as enemies to the king and kingdom, as traitors to their prince, and troublers of the land, when really they are the best friends to both ; and it is common for designing men to assert that as the sense of the country, which is far from being so.

J O N A H.

(610.)

i. 3.—We may be out of the way of duty, and yet may meet with a favourable gale. The ready way is not always the right way.

(611.)

i. 7.—Even the heathen looked upon the casting of lots to be a sacred thing, and not to be made a sport of.

(612.)

iv. 5.—He makes him a booth, and sits in that, though there he would lie exposed to wind and weather. It is common for those that have fretful uneasy spirits, industriously to create inconveniences to themselves, that, resolving to complain, they may still have something to complain of.

M I C A H.

(613.)

i. 7.—It is common that what is squeezed out by one lust is squandered away upon another.

(614.)

ii. 2.—If covetousness reigns in the heart, commonly all compassion is banished from it.

(615.)

iii. 9.—The prophet speaks respectfully to them, gives them their titles of heads and princes. Ministers must be faithful to great men, in reproving them for their sins ; but they must not be rude and uncivil to them.

(616.)

iii. 11.—Many are rocked asleep in a fatal security by their church privileges. It is very absurd for sinners to think that their impudence will be their impunity.

H A B A K K U K.

(617.)

i. 2.—It does not appear that the prophet himself had any great wrong done him. In losing times, it fared best with those who had nothing to lose ; but it grieved him to see other people wronged.

(618.)

ii. 1.—Those that expect to hear from God, must withdraw from the world, and get above it,—must raise their attention, fix their thought, study the scriptures, consult experiences and the experienced, and continue instant in prayer, and thus set themselves upon the tower.

When we go to read and hear the word of God, we must observe what word of conviction, caution, counsel, and comfort, God gives us.

(619.)

ii. 4.—“The just shall live by his faith”—that faith which he acts upon, the word of God. This

is quoted in the New Testament (Rom. i., Gal. iii., Heb. x.) for the proof of the great doctrine of justification by faith only, and of the influence which the grace of faith has upon the Christian life.

(620.)

ii. 9, 10—Those that do wrong to their neighbour, do a much greater wrong to their own souls.

(621.)

iii. 18.—This is the principal ground of our joy in God, that He is the God of our salvation ; and if He be so, we may rejoice in Him as such in our greatest distresses, since by them our salvation cannot be hindered but may be furthered.

Thus the prophet that began his prayer with fear and trembling, concludes it with joy and triumph ; for prayer is heart's-ease to a gracious soul. When Hannah had prayed, she went her way and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.

ZEPHANIAH.

(622.)

ii. 3.—In the difficult and trying times approaching, the meek will find exercise for all the meekness they have, and all little enough—*Si dixisti sufficit periisti*. Say but I am all that I ought to be, and you are undone.

(623.)

iii. 9.—Converting grace refines the language, not by making the phrases witty, but the substance wise.

An air of purity and piety in common conversation is a very happy omen to any people.

Purity is the way to unity.

(624.)

iii. 11.—Church privileges, when they are not duly improved, are often made the matter of man's pride, and the ground of their security. But that haughtiness is of all other the most offensive to God, which is supported and fed by the pretensions of holiness.

Z E C H A R I A H.

(625.)

i. 3.—Before he published the promises of mercy, he published calls to repentance ; for thus the way of the Lord must be prepared. Law must be first preached, and then gospel.

(626.)

vii. 2.—Sherezzer and Regemmelech—persons of some rank, for they came with their men. Men of estate, having more leisure than men of business, ought to employ their time in the service of the public, and by doing good they make themselves truly great.

(627.)

vii. 10.—They must not only not do wrong to any, but they must not so much as desire it or think of it.

(628.)

viii. 19.—Let the truths of God rule in our heads, and let the peace of God rule in our hearts.

(629.)

xii. 10.—When God intends great mercy for His people, the first thing he doth is to set them a praying.

(630.)

xiv. 3.—The instruments of God's wrath will themselves be made the objects of it.

It is observable the Roman empire never flourished after the destruction of Jerusalem as it had done before, but in many instances God fought against it.

(631.)

xiv. 7.—Deliverance comes when the tale of bricks is doubled, and when God's people had done looking for it, and so it comes with a pleasing surprise.

(632.)

xiv. 17.—Some understand this figuratively; the rain of heavenly doctrine shall be withheld, and of the heavenly grace that should accompany that doctrine. It is a righteous thing with God to withhold the blessings of grace from those that did not attend the means of grace, to deny the green pastures to those that attend not the shepherds' tents.

MALACHI.

(633.)

i. 10.—Though God has given order that His servants be well paid in this world, yet those are no acceptable servants to Him that are mercenary, and would never do the work but for the wages.

The consideration of our constant receivings from God, and the present rewards of obedience in obedience, very much aggravates our slothfulness and niggardliness in our returns of duty to God.

(634.)

ii. 6.—Those ministers, and those only, are likely to turn men from iniquity, that preach sound doctrine and live good lives.

INDEX.

Adversity . . . . .	. 66, 456
Affection . . . . .	. 74, 476
Age . . . . .	. 319
Age and Youth	235, 280
Anger	89, 117, 135, 193, 209, 477, 479
Anniversary days . . . . .	. 91
Ark and idols . . . . .	. 274
Atonement	114, 450
Authority, how lost . . . . .	. 270
Beginners tried . . . . .	. 19
Beginnings, small . . . . .	. 299
“ Brown Bread ” . . . . .	. 522
Calamities, be not glad at . . . . .	. 483, 579, 585
Children of the righteous . . . . .	. 156, 251
Church of Christ . . . . .	. 402, 549, 550
Church's deliverance . . . . .	. 160, 208, 550
Comfort	36, 139, 231, 368, 388, 525, 551, 628
.. God's time to . . . . .	. 45, 400, 506
Comforts have their alloys . . . . .	. 22, 43, 55, 76
Commend where we can . . . . .	. 273, 304
Communion with God	46, 57, 104, 113, 115, 503
.. our, not to be proclaimed . . . . .	. 237
.. to be sought . . . . .	. 416, 424, 538
Company . . . . .	. 37, 415, 485
Consideration . . . . .	. 287, 497
Conscience . . . . .	. 59, 532, 568
Contentment . . . . .	. 166, 495, 496
Contributions, collecting of . . . . .	. 363, 366

Controversy	377, 380, 395, 473
Conversation	4, 335, 603, 623
Courtesy	226, 278, 308, 324
Covenant keeping . . . . .	. . . 574
Coveteousness . . . . .	. . . 270, 614
Creation and Redemption . . . . .	. . . 113
Death	223, 374, 383, 443, 524, 576
.. early . . . . .	. . . 8
.. of believers	183, 184, 547, 593
Delicateness . . . . .	. . . 60
Deliverance	208, 550, 572, 631
.. of saints, when	181, 412, 442, 515
Dependence on God . . . . .	. . . 103, 422
Dreams . . . . .	. . . 64
Duty	207, 338, 341, 342, 461, 486, 600, 633
Dwelling place . . . . .	. . . 9, 388
Early hours . . . . .	. . . 230
Earth not our home . . . . .	. . . 51
Earthly portion	44, 243, 256, 368, 379, 384, 560, 604
Endowments . . . . .	. . . 587
Envy . . . . .	. . . 397, 579, 585
Evil-doers . . . . .	. . . 7, 305
Evil-speaking	98, 145, 216, 369, 429
Evil, think no . . . . .	. . . 310
Example . . . . .	. . . 333
Excellence, aim at . . . . .	. . . 254
Experience . . . . .	. . . 255, 435
Faith . . . . .	. . . 619
Falls of good men . . . . .	. . . 367
Fame . . . . .	. . . 15
Family instruction . . . . .	. . . 92, 180, 259
Fear and trust . . . . .	. . . 53, 78
Fear	321, 359, 391, 409, 457, 529, 552
Flesh and spirit . . . . .	. . . 565
Flattery . . . . .	. . . 196
Food, convenient . . . . .	. . . 30, 387, 484
Forbearance	75, 147, 215, 569
Fortitude	404, 556, 562, 564

Forty years	210
Friendship	276, 455
Gaiety	520, 540, 590, 594
Generosity	32, 70, 220, 357, 358, 449, 502
Gentiles and Jews	288, 510
Gentleness	336
Gifts	65, 105, 294
Giving, yet increasing	14, 167, 459, 467, 502
God's love	16, 445, 551, 595
Go forward	96
Good manners	29, 371
Good men are blessings	34, 49, 62
Good men reproached	298, 346, 609
Good name	50, 61, 246, 267, 421
Good words	336, 478
Gospel, progress of	348, 349
Grace and comfort	18, 183
Gracious soul	13, 239, 410, 419, 509, 548
Grumblers	135, 176, 612
Hardness of heart	87, 300, 316, 474, 511
Heaven	152, 162, 416, 439, 533, 593
Heaven, preparation for	306
Help, ask and give it	100
History	178, 214, 427
Honesty	39, 68, 545, 588, 597
Honour	245, 517
Honour all	47
Home	464
Housewifery	277
Humbled for sin	123, 325, 513
Humility	56, 71, 80, 81, 83, 107, 111, 144, 146, 206, 229, 276, 286, 322, 329, 528, 534
Hypocrisy	151, 480, 608, 624
Idleness	3, 240, 242
Idols	526
Ill-doers are tempters	5
Ill-doers are suspicious	211, 327
Increase, God giveth the	309

Industry	3, 99, 188, 205, 220, 302, 492
Injuries	607, 620, 627
Innocency	433, 518, 555
Instruments in God's hand	105
Job's friends, doctrine of	375
Judgments of God	385, 394, 401, 413, 417, 601, 630
Kindness to saints	285
Kindness, why shew	269, 389
Labour	48, 72, 220, 491
Law and gospel	625
Leaders and followers	279, 339
Levellers	130
Liberality	25, 106, 112, 154, 330, 344
Losses, outward	219
Lots	249, 611
Love of enemies	483
Love to Christ	504, 507
Lusts of the flesh	159, 263, 613
Luxury	393
Magistrate's power, <i>circa sacra</i>	126
Maid servant	311, 390
Manna, spiritual	190
Man's ability	575, 598
Man's works	493
Marriage	155
Means of grace	241, 314, 398, 426, 460
Means, use of	186, 632
Meats, unclean	164
Meekness	191, 233, 235, 423, 437, 468, 499, 521, 622
Ministry, call to	148
Ministry, duties of	125, 129, 149, 177, 200, 234, 243, 247, 352, 365, 420, 535, 563, 566, 615, 634
Ministry, sustentation of	124, 149, 365
Miracles of Moses and Jesus	85
Miracles, when wrought	190
Moderation	199, 200

Monasticism	492
Murder	323
Nature content with little	2
Neighbourly, be	172
Note-book	168, 578
Obedience	38, 289
Obedience and comfort	10, 275
Opposition	79, 253
Pastimes	376
Peacemakers	23
Perfection not on earth	11, 35, 136, 252
Persecution	126, 260, 264
Persecutors	28, 78, 85, 250, 266, 292
Perseverance	339, 506
Poor, how to help	227, 307
Prayer	100, 110, 121, 157, 171, 232, 293, 351, 405, 411, 454, 536, 537, 546, 580, 586, 621, 629
Prayer, how answered	138, 299
Prayer, power of	31, 88, 109, 543
Praise	488
Pride	128, 242, 312, 498
Privileges not improved	314, 460, 616
Profession, mere	244, 577, 602
Profusion	263
Promises	187
Promises, God's	350
Property	170, 174, 195, 553
Prosperity	581, 582
.. piety promotes	77
.. danger of	290
Providence	78, 161, 213, 396, 446
.. God's dealings in, right	221, 447
.. God's purposes may seem to ripen slowly	81, 82, 179, 260
.. it may be dark before dawn	84
.. may seem to favour strangers and not the true Israel	222, 370, 527
Prudence	17, 102, 463, 469, 580

Psalm cxix.	451
Punishment and sin	202, 212, 544, 594
Rashness	340
Readers	322
Reasonableness of Christianity	92, 247
Regeneration	90
Rejoice with trembling	403, 516
Religion, a cheap	283
Religious special services	360, 362
Repentance	182, 282, 361, 399, 406, 418, 431, 440, 474, 603
Repentance not genuine	261, 303
Reproof	120, 313, 320, 355, 465, 471
Reprovers	33, 142, 356, 573
Respect, wisdom commands	257
Respect, shew	615
Rest	328
Rest not on earth	132, 408
Retirement	40, 205, 295, 432, 508, 554, 618
Reward	633
Rich to be useful	626
Rich and poor	225, 228, 617
Riches	21, 24, 127, 262, 337, 341, 392, 428, 448, 466, 470, 472, 475, 500, 527, 570
Riches separate friends	22
Right way	179, 458, 610
Rituals, zeal for	238, 248, 259, 317, 339, 542, 605
Ruin, presage of	316
Rule, who fit to	185, 206, 270, 278, 286
Saints in palaces	347
Salvation	82, 122, 606, 621
Seeking God	514
Self-abasement	54, 123, 420
.. denial	567, 589, 591
.. examination	1, 118, 301, 425, 462, 571
.. praise	487
.. seeking	26, 119, 199, 272, 494, 584
.. vindication	52, 63, 378
Sick, visiting of	73, 371
Simplicity	331, 387

Sin and ruin	198, 202, 263, 271, 407
Sin in others	236, 265, 596
Sin remembered	163, 599, 603
Sincerity	108, 382, 386, 416
Sinful friendships	6
Singularity in God's service	201
Singularity foolish	218
Small beginnings	299
Souls, love for	34, 134, 141, 373
Spiritual desertion	408, 414
Strangers and Israelites	143, 164, 173, 446
Stratagems in war	192
Steadfastness	284, 326
Submission	372
Tears	69, 453
Tempers of good men	354
Thankfulness	441
Thanksgiving and thanksgiving	430, 444
Tithes	165
Tokens for good	204, 629
Treasurers	318
Trials	19, 67, 84, 86, 93, 94, 95, 97, 116, 194, 224, 381, 436, 438, 441, 452, 530, 531, 560, 561
.. one on another	281
.. sanctified	12, 519
.. when severest	268
.. while in the way of duty	94, 296, 523
Truth	252, 541
Truth, search for	41
Unbelief	137, 140
Usefulness	489, 505
Usury	173, 353
Vain thoughts	27
Virtue unlooked for	20
War	583
Warfare, Christian	203
Watchfulness	481, 501, 592

Weak, consider the	315
Welldoing	101, 232, 253, 258, 343, 512, 626
Wife	4, 217, 490
Wine	85, 131
Wise as serpents	345, 557
Word read	364, 618
Work willingly	334
World but a wilderness	133, 150, 256, 539
World, use of	166, 197, 559
World's smiles	153, 158, 291, 434, 558
Yielding	42
Young, hopes of	58
Youth	175, 189, 297, 482
Zeal	169, 332, 453





