

***JOHN
BUNYAN***



***THE RICHES
OF BUNYAN:
SELECTED
FROM HIS
WORKS***

John Bunyan

The Riches of Bunyan: Selected from His Works

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NOTICES OF BUNYAN

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PREFATORY NOTICE.

The subscriber has been requested by his friend the Rev. Jeremiah Chaplin, the worthy son of an honored father, [Footnote: The late Rev. Dr. Chaplin, the founder and first president of Waterville college, in the state of Maine.] and the editor of the present selections from Bunyan, to attach to them some prefatory remarks. Needless as he feels it himself to be, and presumptuous as, to some, the attempt even may seem, to say aught in behalf of a work that, faithfully drawn as it is from Bunyan's overflowing stores, can require no other recommendation; yet the subscriber could not refuse all compliance with the wishes of one who

has given diligent and hearty and appreciating study to the rich and varied remains of "the immortal Dreamer."

Many of the Christians of our time, though conversant with the PILGRIM'S PROGRESS, and HOLY WAR, are apparently little aware of the glowing genius, and fervent piety, and strong sense, and picturesque imagery, and racy, vigorous English, that mark the many other writings of the honored tinker of Elstow. These last, if less known than the story of the pilgrimage to the Celestial City, and of the siege and recovery of the good town of Mansoul, yet bear all of them the traces of the same vivid fancy, the same earnest heart, and the same robust and sanctified intellect. To save from comparative disuse and consequent unprofitableness—from being buried in an undeserved seclusion, if not oblivion, many sparkling truths, and pithy sayings, and pungent rebukes, likely to do great good if they could but have, in our busy day, a more general currency over the wide mart of the world;—and to bespeak a new circle of influence, and a broader sphere of notoriety and usefulness for these overlooked legacies of a good and great man of a former age, has been the editor's object in the prolonged sifting to which he has subjected all Bunyan's writings. Of that patient and conscientious study the present selection has been the result. It is not hoped, or even wished for them, that in the case of any readers able to give the requisite leisure, these excerpts should supersede the original writings. But these last, in mass, are beyond the means and the time which are at the command of many Christians, who would yet greatly prize the briefer examples of Bunyan's experience and Bunyan's teachings that are here presented. And even to others of more affluence and leisure, this manual may serve to commend the author's works in their entirety.

Mr. Chaplin himself would most anxiously disavow any claim to have exhausted the mines from which he brings these gatherings. His specimens resemble rather those laces

which the good Bunyan tagged in Bedford jail—not in themselves garments, but merely adjuncts and ornaments of larger fabrics. He who would see the entire wardrobe of the Dreamer's mind, and the shape and proportions of the goodly vestures of truth in which he sought to array himself and his readers, must, after handling these the LACES, turn to the ROBES, from whose edge these have been skilfully detached.

In the character and history of JOHN BUNYAN, the great Head of the church seems to have provided a lesson of special significance, and singular adaptedness, for the men and the strifes of our own time. Born of the people, and in so low a condition, that one of Bunyan's modern reviewers, by a strange mistake, construed Bunyan's self-disparaging admissions to mean that he was the offspring of gypsies—bred to one of the humblest of handicrafts, and having but the scantiest advantages as to fortune or culture, he yet rose, under the blessings of God's word and providence and Spirit, to widest usefulness, and to an eminence that shows no tokens of decline. Down to our own times, the branches of his expanding influence seem daily spreading and extending themselves; and the roots of his earthly renown seem daily shooting themselves deeper, and taking a firmer hold on the judgment of critics and the hearts of the churches. When the English houses of Parliament were recently rebuilt, among the imagery commemorative of the nation's literary glories, a place was voted for the bust of the Bedford pastor, once so maligned and persecuted. Once tolerated by dainty Christians for the sake of his piety, while they apologized for what they deemed his uncouthness; he is now, at last, even from men of the world, who do not value that piety, receiving the due acknowledgment of his rare genius and witching style. It is not many years since Gilpin, an English clergyman of cultivated taste—himself a ready and popular writer—issued an edition of the Pilgrim's

Progress, modified, if not rewritten in much of its phraseology, because he deemed the original too rude for usefulness. In our own day, one of the highest authorities as to the graces and powers of our language, the English statesman and scholar, T. B. Macaulay, has pronounced upon that style, which Gilpin by implication so disparaged, the most glowing eulogies. Schools and leisure and wealth are useful, but they are not indispensable either to felicity or to honor. Bunyan lacked them all; and yet in the absence of them achieved greatness—and what is far better, wide and enduring usefulness. No man, with God's exhaustless Scriptures in his hands, and with the rich book of nature and providence open in its pictured radiance before his eyes, needs to have either a dwindling or an impoverished soul. Of that latter volume, the works of God, as of that former, the word of God, Bunyan was evidently a delighted and unwearied student. His references to birds and insects, flowers and running brooks and evening clouds, and forests and mountains, all show a man whose nature was genially awake to the harmony and beauty of the material world that lay in order and splendor around him. It was, in Bunyan, no mere mimicry caught from books and companions—the echo of any fashion of his times. He writes of what he had seen with his own eyes; and seems to avoid aiming at aught beyond that. Hence to the ocean, which probably he never thus saw—and which had he beheld it in its placid vastness, or in its stormy wrath, he could not well have forgotten—his writings contain, as far as we remember, no allusions, in all the varied and exuberant imagery which they employ. His books, more than those of his more learned contemporaries, Richard Baxter, and John Owen, that "mighty armor-bearer of the truth," as Bunyan happily calls him, were written exclusively from the resources of his own personal observation. And, in consequence of this, they have the freshness and odors of the outer world pervading them—scents and sounds of the highways along which, in the

trappings of his trade, he had plodded, and of the hedges that had shaded him. To use the language of the patriarch's benediction, they have "THE SMELL OF A FIELD WHICH THE LORD HATH BLESSED." His books are, like Walton's Angler, of the open air, and the purling streams. You catch, back of the good man's Bible, as he reverently ponders and commends it, glimpses of rural landscapes, and of open skies—God's beautiful world, still lovely, even though sin has marred it. Like the Sermon on the Mount, Bunyan's page has the traits of field-preaching. And it was so, also, in his references to the inner world of his own heart. He wrote not from the dried specimens of earlier collectors—from the shrivelled and rustling leaves of some old herbarium—from the philosophy and metaphysical analysis of other men's emotions, so much as from the glowing records of his own consciousness and experience, the fruits of grace and plants of righteousness, blooming and fragrant in the watered garden of his own heart. And this dipping of the pencil into his own soul, and into the freshness of nature around him, is doubtless a part of the secret of his perpetual originality and unsating freshness. Now, when men say repiningly, and in a temper which impeaches alike society and providence, that a lowly lot, with its necessary privations and its consequent ignorance, is a barrier, perpetual and insuperable, against usefulness and happiness and honor, we turn to the name and memory of Bunyan as an embodied denial of the impeachment, and as carolling forth their cheerful rebuke of such unmanly and ungodly complaints. With God's grace in the heart, and with the gleaming gates of his heaven brightening the horizon beyond the grave, we may be reformers; but it cannot be in the destructive spirit displayed by some who, in the prophet's language, amid darkness on the earth, "fret themselves, and curse their King and their God, and look upward." Poverty cannot degrade, nor ignorance bedwarf, nor persecution crush, nor dungeon enthrall the free, glad spirit of a child of God, erect

in its regenerate strength, and rich in its eternal hopes and heritage. And this hopeful and elastic temperament colors and perfumes every treatise that Bunyan sent out even from the precincts of his prison. With a style sinewy as Cobbett's, and simple and clear as Swift's; with his sturdy, peasant nature showing itself in the roundness and directness of his utterance, how little has he of their coarseness. He was not, on the one hand, like Cobbett, an anarchist, or libeller; but yet, on the other hand, as little was he ever a lackey, cringing at the gates of Power, or a train-bearer in the retinue of Fashion. Still less was he, like Swift, the satirist of his times and of his kind, snarling at his rulers, and turning at last to gnaw, in venomous rage, his own heart. And yet he who portrayed the character of By-ends, and noted the gossipings of Mrs. Bats-eyes, lacked neither keenness of vision, nor niceness of hand, to have made him most formidable in satire and irony.

His present station in the literature of Britain affords an illustration, familiar and obvious to every eye, of God's sovereignty, and of the arrangements of Him "who seeth not as man seeth." Had Pepys, or any other contemporary courtier that hunted for place and pension, or fluttered in levity and sin, in the antechambers of the later Stuarts, been asked, who of all the writers of the times were likely to go down to posterity among the lights of their age, how ludicrously erroneous would have been his apportionments of fame. Pepys might, from the Puritan education of his boyhood, have named Owen, Bates, and Baxter; or from the Conformist associations of his later years, have selected South, or Patrick, or Tillotson, as the religious writers who had surpassed all rivalry, or named a Walton or Castell, as having taken bonds of fame for the perpetuity of their influence. Had he known of Clarendon's preparations to become the historian of the Commonwealth and Restoration, or of Burnet's habits of preserving memoirs of

the incidents and characters around him, he might have conjectured their probable honors in after-times. But in poetry he would have classed Dryden the royalist far above Milton the republican apologist of regicide; and might, aping the fashions of the palace, have preferred to either the author of Hudibras together with the lewd playwrights who were the delight of a shameless court—hailing the last as the most promising candidates for posthumous celebrity. How little could he have dreamed that among these Puritans and Non-conformists, whose unpopular cause he had himself deserted, and whom his royal masters Charles and James had betrayed, amerced, exiled, and incarcerated; in those conventicles so closely watched and so sternly visited, which these persecuted confessors yet by stealth maintained; aye, and in those dungeons, whither the informer so often from these conventicles dragged them, British freedom had its truest guardians, and British literature some of its noblest illustrations. How little thought he that God had there, in his old and glorious school of trial, his "hidden ones," like Bunyan, whose serene testimony was yet to shine forth victorious over wrong and neglect, and reproach and ridicule, eclipsing so many contemporary celebrities, and giving to the homes and the sanctuaries of every land inhabited by an English race, one of the names "men will not willingly let die." How little could gilded and callous favorites of the palace have dreamed that their Acts of Uniformity and Five-mile Acts, and the like legislation of ecclesiastical proscription, were but rearing for the best men of the age, in the prisons where they had been immured, a Patmos, serene though stern, where the sufferer withdrew from man to commune with the King of kings. There the prisoned student was receiving for the churches new lessons of surpassing beauty and potency; and the confessor, pillaged by informers and bullied by judges, and lamented in his own stricken household and desolate home, but only derided by his godless sovereign and heartless

courtiers, yet often found himself compensated for every loss, when, like an earlier witness for the gospel of the Cross, enwrapped "IN THE SPIRIT, ON THE LORD'S DAY." Such were the schools where Non-conformist piety received its temper, its edge, and its lustre. The story of Bunyan is, we say, one of the golden threads binding together into harmony and symmetry, what, seen apart, seem but fragmentary and incoherent influences—the track of a divine Providence controlling the fates and reputations of the race. It is a Providence disappointing men's judgments and purposes, exalting the lowly and depressing the illustrious, rebuking despondency on the one hand and on the other curbing presumption, setting up one and putting down another. This is done even now and even here, as one of the many intimations which even time and earth present, of that final and universal reparation which is reserved for the general resurrection and the last judgment. Then the unforgetting and universal Sovereign will avenge all the forgotten of his people, nor leave unpunished one among the tallest and mightiest of his enemies. As the foreshadowing of this, there is often in this life what Milton has called, "a resurrection of character." Seen in Bunyan and others on earth, it will be one day accomplished as to all the families of mankind. We pronounce TOO SOON upon the apparent inequalities of fame and recompense around us; while we fail to take in the future as well as the present, and attempt to solve the mysteries of time without including in the field of our survey the retributions of that eternity which forms the selvage and hem of all the webs of earth. And we pronounce not only too soon but VERY SUPERFICIALLY upon the inequalities of happiness in the lot of those who fear and those who scorn God; while we look mainly or merely to the outward circumstances of home and station and bodily well-being, but take no note of the inner and more enduring elements of felicity, supplied to the sufferer for Christ by the blended powers of conscience and of hope—the one of them

purified and pacified by the blood of the great sacrifice on Calvary; the other of them steadily and cheerfully soaring to the glories and rest of the mount Zion above. Faithful, in his cage, bearing the gibes and flouts of the rabble who thirsted for his blood, was one of the happiest men in all Vanity Fair, even ere the hour when his spirit mounted the fiery chariot that hurried him to his celestial home.

The style of Bunyan, it may be further said, is one of the countless and brilliant testimonials to the merit and power of our excellent received version of the Bible. Shut out, as Bunyan was, from direct contact with much other literature, he was most thoroughly conversant with the remains of prophets and apostles, embalmed in that venerable work. With those scriptures his mind was imbued, saturated, and tinged, through its whole texture and substance. Upon the phraseology and imagery and idioms of that book was formed his own vernacular style, so racy, glowing, and energetic—long indeed underrated and decried, but now beginning to receive its due honors, and winning the praise of critics whose judgment and taste few will have the hardihood to impeach. No immaculate perfection, indeed, is claimed for the English version of the Scriptures. No perfect version has the world ever seen, or is it ever like to see; but the writings of Bunyan must be admitted to stand among the many crowding trophies of the power of our common Bible to furnish the mind with "thoughts that breathe and words that burn"—with holiest conceptions and mightiest utterances.

And Bunyan himself, as a theologian on whose head no learned academy had laid its hand of patronage, or let fall its anointing dews, but who, whether confronting the fanatics of his time or the distinguished latitudinarian divines, showed himself so powerful a reasoner, so acute and clear and practical a thinker, and so mighty in his

knowledge of the Scriptures—Bunyan himself, in his position and merits as a theologian, furnishes a standing monument of the power of the divine Spirit to fashion, by prayer and the study of the Bible, by affliction and by temptation, and by bitter persecutions even, a preacher, pastor, and writer, such as no university need have disdained to own. To that Spirit Bunyan gave zealous, earnest, and continual worship. Receiving his light and power from that good Spirit, and anxiously directing to that great Agent all the hopes and the praises of the flock whom he led, and of the readers whom he taught, his writings remain to diffuse and perpetuate the lesson of his life. Into whatever tribe of the ancient East or of the remote West his Pilgrim has been introduced, the name and story of the writer bear, as their great lesson, the testimony that God's Scriptures are the richest of pastures to the human soul; and that God the Holy Ghost, as working with those Scriptures and by those Scriptures, is the one Teacher on whose sovereign aid all the churches, all the nations, and all the ages must depend. For the absence of those influences of the divine Spirit no earthly lore can compensate; while the exuberance of those influences may supply, as on Pentecost, the lack of all human helpers and patrons, and more than replace all universities and all libraries. We love to dwell on the illustrious Dreamer, as one of those characters for whom man had done so little and God did so much.

And to Christians who are neither authors nor preachers, this life of romantic privacy and illustrious obscurity has its lessons, alike to awe and to cheer, of solemn warning and of sustaining hope. No scene or station of all the earth that can eye paradise, or catch the gleams of the atoning cross, is truly ignoble or utterly forlorn. He who promised that, in the last days, the inscription which shone on the front of the high-priest's mitre, "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD," should be written also on the very bells of the horses, and that "every

pot" in Jerusalem, and its outlying streets should become holy as the consecrated furniture of his own temple and altar, can in like manner render the lowliest scenes of human art and toil and traffic the schools of truth and duty and peace, schools ministering alike to the truest happiness and to the most perfect holiness of our race. He who gave, as in Bunyan's case he did, to the maker or mender of culinary vessels the sacred skill to grave the all-holy Name, as one dignifying and consecrating them, on all the objects and scenes and accompaniments of his humble labors, can, in our times and in our various stations, make each allowable task of our earthly life to become also "HOLINESS TO THE LORD;" and as the Christian's body is made a TEMPLE of the Holy Grhost, so can he render the Christian himself, in all his social relations and enterprises, "A PRIEST AND A KING UNTO GOD." And the great principle of conciliation amid earth's jarring tribes and clashing interests, and of true and helpful communion among mankind, is not external but internal, not material but spiritual, not, terrene but celestial; and is found in the blending by this one divine Spirit, of all earth's inhabitants, in a common contrition before a common redemption, tending as these inhabitants are, under a common sin and doom, to the same inevitable graves; but all of them invited, in the one name of one Christ, to aspire to the same heaven of endless and perfect blessedness.

WILLIAM R. WILLIAMS.
NEW YORK, January, 1851.

THE RICHES OF BUNYAN.

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I. GOD.

GLORY OF GOD.

God is the chief good—good so as nothing is but himself. He is in himself most happy; yea, all good and all true happiness are only to be found in God, as that which is essential to his nature; nor is there any good or any happiness in or with any creature or thing but what is communicated to it by God. God is the only desirable good; nothing without him is worthy of our hearts. Right thoughts of God are able to ravish the heart; how much more happy is the man that has interest in God. God alone is able by himself to put the soul into a more blessed, comfortable, and happy condition than can the whole world; yea, and more than if all the created happiness of all the angels of heaven did dwell in one man's bosom. I cannot tell what to say. I am drowned. The life, the glory, the blessedness, the soul-satisfying goodness that is in God, are beyond all expression.

It was this glory of God, the sight and visions of this God of glory, that provoked Abraham to leave his country and kindred to come after God. The reason why men are so careless of and so indifferent about their coming to God, is because they have their eyes blinded—because they do not perceive his glory.

God is so blessed a one, that did he not hide himself and his glory, the whole world would be ravished with him; but he has, I will not say reasons of state, but reasons of glory, glorious reasons why he hideth himself from the world and appeareth but to particular ones.

What is heaven without God? But many there be who cannot abide God; no, they like not to go to heaven, because God is there. The nature of God lieth cross to the lusts of men. A holy God, a glorious holy God, an infinitely holy God; this spoils all. But to the soul that is awakened, and that is made to see things as they are, to him God is what he is in himself, the blessed, the highest, the only eternal good, and he without the enjoyment of whom all things would sound but empty in the ears of that soul.

Methinks, when I consider what glory there is at times upon the creatures, and that all their glory is the workmanship of God, "O Lord," say I, "what is God himself?" He may well be called the God of glory, as well as the glorious Lord; for as all glory is from him, so in him is an inconceivable well-spring of glory, of glory to be communicated to them that come by Christ to him. Wherefore, let the glory and love and bliss and eternal happiness that are in God, allure thee to come to him by Christ.

MAJESTY OF GOD.

What is God's majesty to a sinful man, but a consuming fire? And what is a sinful man in himself, or in his approach to God, but as stubble fully dry?

What mean the tremblings, the tears, those breakings and shakings of heart that attend the people of God, when in an eminent manner they receive the pronounciation of the forgiveness of sins at his mouth, but that the dread of the

majesty of God is in their sight mixed therewith? God must appear like himself, speak to the soul like himself; nor can the sinner, when under these glorious discoveries of its Lord and Saviour, keep out the beams of his majesty from the eyes of its understanding.

Alas, there is a company of poor, light, frothy professors in the world, that carry it under that which they call the presence of God, more like to antics than sober, sensible Christians; yea, more like to a fool of a play, than those who have the presence of God. They would not carry it so in the presence of a king, nor yet of the lord of their land, were they but receivers of mercy at his hand. They carry it even in their most eminent seasons, as if the sense and sight of God, and his blessed grace to their souls in Christ, had a tendency in it to make men wanton: but indeed it is the most humbling and heart-rending sight in the world; it is fearful.

OBJECTION. But would you not have us rejoice at the sight and sense of the forgiveness of our sins?

ANSWER. Yes; but yet I would have you, and indeed you shall when God shall tell you that your sins are pardoned indeed, "rejoice with trembling;" for then you have solid and godly joy: a joyful heart and wet eyes in this, will stand very well together; and it will be so, more or less. For if God shall come to you indeed, and visit you with the forgiveness of sins, that visit removeth the guilt, but increaseth the sense of thy filth; and the sense of this, that God hath forgiven a filthy sinner, will make thee both rejoice and tremble. O, the blessed confusion which will then cover thy face, while thou, even thou, so vile a wretch, shalt stand before God to receive at his hand thy pardon, and so the first-fruits of thy eternal salvation. "That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because

of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." Jer. 33:8, 9; Ezek. 16:63.

Since the NAME of God is that by which his nature is expressed, and since he naturally is so glorious and incomprehensible, his name must needs be the object of our fear; and we ought always to have a reverent awe of God upon our hearts at what time soever we think of or hear his name; but most of all when we ourselves do take his holy and fearful name into our mouths, especially in a religious manner; that is, in preaching, praying, or holy conference.

Make mention then of the name of the Lord at all times with great dread of his majesty on your hearts, and in great soberness and truth. To do otherwise is to profane the name of the Lord, and to take his name in vain.

Next to God's nature and name, his service, his instituted worship, is the most dreadful thing under heaven. His name is upon his ordinances, his eye is upon the worshippers, and his wrath and judgment upon those that worship not in his fear.

His presence is dreadful; and not only his presence in common, but his special, yea, his most comfortable and joyous presence. When God comes to bring a soul news of mercy and salvation, even that visit, that presence of God is fearful. When Jacob went from Beersheba to Haran, he met with God in the way by a dream, in the which he apprehended a ladder set upon the earth, whose top reached to heaven. Now in this dream, at the top of this ladder, he saw the Lord, and heard him speak unto him, not threateningly, not as having his fury come up into his face, but in the most sweet and gracious manner, saluting him with promise of goodness after promise of goodness, to the

number of eight or nine. Yet, I say, when he awoke, all the grace that discovered itself in this heavenly vision to him could not keep him from dread and fear of God's majesty: "And Jacob awoke out of his sleep and said, 'Surely the Lord was in this place, and I knew it not;' and he was afraid, and said, 'How dreadful is this place; this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'"

At another time, when Jacob had that memorable visit from God, in which he gave him power as a prince to prevail with him; yea, and gave him a name, that by his remembering it he might call God's favor the better to his mind; yet, even then and there such dread of the majesty of God was upon him, that he went away wondering that his life was preserved. Man crumbles to dust at the presence of God; yea, though he show himself to us in his robes of salvation. Gen. 28:10-17; 32:30.

JUSTICE OF GOD.

You may see a few of the sparks of the justice of God against sin and sinners, by his casting off angels for sin from heaven and hell, by his drowning the old world, by his burning of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes.

God is resolved to have the mastery. God is merciful, and is come forth into the world by his Son, tendering grace unto sinners by the gospel, and would willingly make a conquest over them for their good by his mercy. Now he being come out, sinners like briars and thorns do set themselves against him, and will have none of his mercy. Well, but what says God? Saith he, "Then I will march on. I will go through them, and burn them together. I am resolved to have the mastery one way or another; if they will not bend to me and accept of my mercy in the gospel, I will bend them and break them by my justice in hell-fire."

HOLINESS OF GOD.

The holiness of God makes the angels cover their faces, and crumbles

Christians, when they behold it, into dust and ashes.

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

The will of God is the rule of all righteousness, neither knoweth he any other way by which he governeth and ordereth any of his actions. Whatsoever God doeth, it is good because he doeth it; whether it be to give grace or to detain it, whether in choosing or refusing. The consideration of this made the holy men of old ascribe righteousness to their Maker, even when yet they could not see the reason of his actions; they would rather stand amazed and wonder at the heights and depths of his unsearchable judgments, than quarrel at the most strange and obscure of them.

SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN CONVERSION.

Mercy may receive him that we have doomed to hell, and justice may take hold on him whom we have judged to be bound up in the bundle of life. We, like Joseph, are for setting of Manasseh before Ephraim; but God, like Jacob, puts his hands across, and lays his right hand upon the worst man's head and his left hand upon the best, Gen. 48, to the amazement and wonderment even of the best of men.

PROVIDENCE OF GOD IN CONVERSION.

Doth no man come to Jesus Christ by the will, wisdom, and power of man, but by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father? Then here is room for Christians to stand and

wonder at the effectual working of God's providence, that he hath made use of as means to bring them to Jesus Christ.

What was the providence that God made use of as a means, either more remote or near, to bring thee to Jesus Christ? Was it the removing of thy habitation, the change of thy condition, the loss of relations, estate, or the like? Was it the casting of thine eye upon some good book, the hearing thy neighbors talk of heavenly things, the beholding of God's judgments as executed upon others, or thine own deliverance from them, or thy being strangely cast under the ministry of some godly man? O take notice of such providence or providences. They were sent and managed by mighty power to do thee good. God himself hath joined himself to this chariot, yea, and so blessed it that it failed not to accomplish the thing for which it was sent.

CONDESCENSION OF GOD.

Notwithstanding there is such a revelation of God in his word, in the book of creatures, and in the book of providences, yet the scripture says, "Lo, these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him;" so great is God above all that we have read, heard, or seen of him, either in the Bible, in heaven, or earth, or sea, or what else is to be understood. But now that a poor mortal, a lump of sinful flesh, or, as the scripture phrase is, poor dust and ashes, should be in the favor, in the heart, and wrapped up in the compassions of such a God! O amazing; O astonishing consideration! And yet, "this God is our God for ever and ever, and he will be our guide even unto death."

MERCY OF GOD.

As God has mercies to bestow, and as he has designed to bestow them, so those mercies are no fragments or the

leavings of others, but mercies that are full and complete to do for thee what thou wantest, wouldst have, or canst desire. As I may so say, God has his bags that were never yet untied, never yet broken up, but laid by him through a thousand generations for those that he commands to hope in his mercy.

I tell you, sirs, you must not trust your own apprehensions nor judgments of the mercy of God; you do not know how he can cause it to abound: that which seems to be short and shrunk up to you, he can draw out and cause to abound exceedingly. There is a breadth and length and depth and height therein, when God will please to open it, that for its infiniteness can swallow up not only all thy sins, but all thy thoughts and imaginations, and that also can drown thee at last. "Now unto him that is able," as to mercy, "to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

This therefore is a wonderful thing, and shall be wondered at to all eternity, that the river of mercy, that at first did seem to be but ankle deep, should so rise and rise that at last it became "waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." Ezck. 47:5.

GOD THE JUSTIFIER.

The first cause of justification before God dependeth upon the will of God, who will justify because he will; therefore the meritorious cause must also be of his own providing, else his will cannot herein be absolute; for if justification depend upon our personal performances, then not upon the will of God. He may not have mercy upon whom he will, but on whom man's righteousness will give him leave; but his will,