

Quotes from Matthew Henry's Commentary on Genesis

Introduction

There is a great deal to be gained from reading a good commentary on the Word of God. Commentators have a way of bringing out truths and facts that are easily missed in our own study of the Bible. It's true that working your way through a commentary isn't exactly an easy thing to do, but it is quite rewarding.

One of the most famous commentaries in existence is one written by Matthew Henry. Over a period of time I have been slowly working my way through it – not just reading it, but studying it. I've put together a series of quotations that bring out things I found particularly interesting. You may never get a chance to read his commentary, but this might give you a taste for what he had to say – and might even show you a few things that you didn't realize.

So, without further ado, here is a series of quotations from Matthew Henry's Commentary on Genesis.

Introduction to Genesis (p1)

“The beginning of the New Testament is called Genesis too (Matt 1:1), Biblos geneseos, the book of the genesis, or generation, of Jesus Christ.”

Genesis 1:1-2

“It is the visible part of the creation that Moses here designs to account for; therefore he mentions not the creation of angels.”

“In the visible world it is easy to observe:

1. Great variety...
2. Great beauty...
3. Great exactness and accuracy...
4. Great power...
5. Great order...
6. Great mystery”

“The Hebrew word is Elohim... El signifies the strong God; and what less than almighty strength could bring all things out of nothing?”

“But by the almighty power of God it is not only possible that something should be made out of nothing (the God of nature is not subject to the laws of nature) but in the creation it is impossible it should be otherwise, for nothing is more injurious to the honor of the Eternal Mind than the supposition

of eternal matter. Thus the excellency of the power is of God and all the glory is to him.”

“Before the beginning of time there was none but that Infinite Being that inhabits eternity. Should we ask why God made the worlds no sooner, we should but darken counsel by words without knowledge; for how could there be sooner or later in eternity?”

“The Jewish Rabbis have a saying, that there were seven things which God created before the world, by which they only mean to express the excellency of these things: The law, repentance, paradise, hell, the throne of glory, the house of the sanctuary, and the name of the Messiah.”

“...atheism is folly, and atheists are the greatest fools in nature, for they see there is a world that could not make itself, and yet they will not own there is a God that made it.”

“that God is sovereign Lord of all by an incontestable right. If he is the Creator, no doubt he is the owner and possessor of heaven and earth.”

“If he made the world, he needs not our services, nor can he be benefited by them (Acts 17:24,25), and yet he justly requires them, and deserves our praise (Rev 4:11). If all is of him, all must be to him.”

“Dead matter would be for ever dead if he did not quicken it. And this makes it credible to us that God should raise the dead. The power which brought such a world as this out of confusion, emptiness, and darkness, at the beginning of time, can, at the end of time, bring our vile bodies out of the grave...”

Genesis 1:3-5

“in heaven there is perfect and perpetual light, and no darkness at all; in hell, utter darkness, and no gleam of light.”

Genesis 1:6-8

“...above the firmament God is said to have his throne (Ezek 1:26)...”

“The height of the heavens should remind us of God's supremacy and the infinite distance there is between us and him; the brightness of the heavens and their purity should remind us of his glory, and majesty, and perfect holiness; the vastness of the heavens, their encompassing of the earth, and the influence they have upon it, should remind us of his immensity and universal providence.”

Genesis 1:9-13

“We who, to this day, enjoy the benefit of the dry land... must own ourselves tenants to, and dependents upon, that God whose hands formed the dry land.”

Genesis 1:14-19

“The lights of heaven are made to serve us, and they do it faithfully, and shine in their season, without fail: but we are set as lights in this world to serve God; and do we in like manner answer the end of our creation? No, we do not, our light does not shine before God as his lights shine before us, Matt 5:14. We burn our Master's candles, but do not mind our Master's work.”

“...for the scriptures were written, not to gratify our curiosity and make us astronomers, but to lead us to God, and make us saints.”

“But the account here given of [the creation of the Sun, Moon, and stars] plainly shows that they are both God's creatures and man's servants; and therefore it is both a great affront to God and a great reproach to ourselves to make deities of them and give them divine honors.”

Genesis 1:26-28

“Man was made last of all the creatures, that it might not be suspected that he had been, any way, a helper to God in the creation of the world: that question must be for ever humbling and mortifying to him, 'Where wast thou... when I laid the foundations of the earth?' Job 38:4”

“God made but one male and one female, that all the nations of men might know themselves to be made of one blood, descendents from one common stock, and might thereby be induced to love one another.”

Genesis 1:31

“When we have finished a day's work, and are entering upon the rest of the night, we should commune with our own hearts about what we have been doing that day; so likewise when we have finished a week's work, and are entering upon the sabbath-rest, we should thus prepare to meet our God; and when we are finishing our life's work, and are entering upon our rest in the grave, that is a time to bring to remembrance, that we may die repenting, and so take leave of it.”

“He did not pronounce it good till he had seen it so, to teach us not to answer a matter before we hear it.”

Genesis 2:4-7

“All along, in the first chapter, he was called Elohim – a God of power; but now Jehovah Elohim – a God of power and perfection, a finishing God.”

“Jehovah is that great and incommunicable name of God which denotes his having his being of himself, and his giving being to all things; fitly therefore is he called by that name now that heaven and earth are finished.”

“So near an affinity is there between the earth and our earthly parents that our mother's womb, out of which we were born, is called the earth (Ps 139:15), and the earth, in which we must be buried, is called our mother's womb, Job 1:21.”

“When our Lord Jesus anointed the blind man's eyes with clay perhaps he intimated that it was he who at first formed man out of the clay; and when he breathed on his disciples, saying, Receive you the Holy Ghost, he intimated that it was he who at first breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life. He that made the soul is alone able to new-make it.”

Genesis 2:8-15

“Man was made out of paradise; for, after God had formed him, he put him in the garden: he was made of common clay, not of paradise-dust. He lived out of Eden before he lived in it.”

“Paradise itself was not a place of exemption from work.”

“We were none of us sent into the world to be idle. He that made us these souls and bodies has given us something to work with; and he that gave us this earth for our habitation has made us something to work on.”

Genesis 2:16-17

“Let us acknowledge God's right to rule us, and our own obligation to be ruled by him; and never allow any will of our own in contradiction to, or competition with, the holy will of God.”

Genesis 2:18-20

“It is God only who perfectly knows our wants, and is perfectly able to supply them all, Phil 4:19. In him alone our help is, and from him are all our helpers.”

Genesis 2:21;25

“That Adam slept while his wife was in making, that no room might be left to imagine that he had herein directed the Spirit of the Lord, or been his counselor, Isa. 40:13.”

“In this (as in many other things) Adam was a figure of him that was to come, for out of the side of Christ, the second Adam, his spouse the church was formed, when he slept the sleep, the deep sleep, of death upon the cross, in order to which his side was opened, and there came out blood and water, blood to purchase his church and water to purify it to himself. See Eph. 5:25, 26.”

Genesis 3:1-5

“That which the devil aimed at was to persuade Eve to eat forbidden fruit; and, to do this, he took the same method that he does still. He questioned whether it was a sin or no, v1. He denied that there was any danger in it, v4. He suggested much advantage by it, v5. And these are his common topics.”

“To support this part of the temptation, he abuses the name given to this tree: it was intended to teach the practical knowledge of good and evil, that is, of duty and disobedience; and it would prove the experimental knowledge of good and evil, that is, of happiness and misery. In these senses, the name of the tree was a warning to them not to eat of it; but he perverts the sense of it, and wrests it to their destruction, as if this tree would give them a speculative notional knowledge of the natures, kinds, and originals, of good and evil.”

Genesis 3:6-8

“Some think [Adam] fell the very day on which he was made; but I see not how to reconcile this with God's pronouncing all very good in the close of the day.”

“God having told [Adam] that his race should replenish the earth, surely he could not but know that he stood as a public person, and that his disobedience would be fatal to all his seed; and, if so, it was certainly both the greatest treachery and the greatest cruelty that ever was. The human nature being lodged entirely in our first parents, henceforward it could not but be transmitted from them under an attainder of guilt, a stain of dishonor, and an hereditary disease of sin and corruption. And can we say, then, that Adam's sin had but little harm in it?”

“What a deceiver Satan is. He told our first parents, when he tempted them, that their eyes should be opened; and so they were, but not as they understood it; they were opened to their shame and grief, not to their honor nor advantage. Therefore, when he speaks fair, believe him not. The most malicious mischievous liars often excuse themselves with this, that they only equivocate; but God will not so excuse them.”

“...they are more solicitous to save their credit before men than to obtain their pardon from God; they are backward to confess their sin, and very desirous to conceal it, as much as may be.”

“Yet thus we are all apt to cover our transgressions as Adam, Job 31:33.”

“...for he came to convince and humble them, not to amaze and terrify them. He came into the garden, not descending immediately from heaven in their view, as afterwards on mount Sinai (making either thick darkness his pavilion or he flaming fire his chariot), but he came into the garden, as one that was still willing to be familiar with them. He came walking, not running, not riding upon the wings of the wind, but walking deliberately, as one slow to anger, teaching us, when we are ever so much provoked, not to be hot nor hasty, but to speak and act considerately and not rashly. He came in the cool of the day, not in the night, when all fears are doubly fearful, nor in the heat of the day, for he came not in the heat of his anger. 'Fury is not in him', Isa. 27:4. Nor did he come suddenly upon the; but they heard his voice at some distance, giving them notice of his coming...”

“[Satan] promised them they should be safe, but now they cannot so much as think themselves so; he said they should not die, and yet now they are forced to fly for their lives; he promised them they should be advanced, but they see themselves abased - never did they seem so little as now; he promised them they should be knowing, but they see themselves at a loss, and know not so much as where to hide themselves; he promised them they should be as gods, great, and bold, and daring, but they are as criminals discovered, trembling, pale, and anxious to escape: they would not be as subjects, and so they are prisoners.”

Genesis 3:14-15

“God did not examine the serpent, nor ask him what he had done nor why he did it; but immediately sentenced him... Because he was to be for ever excluded from all hope of pardon; and why should any thing be said to convince and humble him who was to find no place for repentance? His wound was not searched, because it was not to be cured.”

“The devil's instruments must share the devil's punishments. Thus the bodies of the wicked, though only instruments of unrighteousness, shall partake of everlasting torments with the soul, the principle agent. Even the ox that killed a man must be stoned, Exod. 21:28, 29.”

“See here how God hates sin, and especially how much displeased he is with those who entice others into sin. It is a perpetual brand upon Jeroboam's name 'that he made Israel to sin.'”

“[The serpent's] crime was that he tempted Eve to eat that which she should not; his punishment was that he was necessitated to eat that which he would not: 'Dust thou shalt eat.'”

“It is the effect of this curse upon the serpent that, though that creature is subtle and very dangerous, yet it prevails not (as it would if God gave it commission) to the destruction of mankind.”

“Herein God magnifies his grace, in that, though the woman was first in the transgression, yet she shall be saved by childbearing (as some read it), that is, by the promised seed who shall descend from her, 1 Tim. 2:15.”

“He was likewise to be the seed of a woman only, of a virgin, that he might not be tainted with the corruption of our nature; he was sent forth, made of a woman (Gal. 4:4), that this promise might be fulfilled.”

Genesis 3:16-17

“Two things she is condemned to: a state of sorrow, and a state of subjection, proper punishments of a sin in which she had gratified her pleasure and her pride.”

“Note, Sin brought sorrow into the world; it was this that made the world a vale of tears, brought showers of trouble upon our heads, and opened springs of sorrows in our hearts, and so deluged the world: had we known no guilt, we should have known no grief.”

“It is God that multiplies our sorrows: 'I will do it.' God, as a righteous Judge, does it, which ought to silence us under all our sorrows: as many as they are, we have deserved them all, and more.”

“If man had not sinned, he would always have ruled with wisdom and love; and, if the woman had not sinned, she would always have obeyed with humility and meekness; and then the dominion would have been no grievance: but our own sin and folly make our yoke heavy.”

“Those wives who not only despise and disobey their husbands, but domineer over them, do not consider that they not only violate a divine law, but thwart a divine sentence.”

“She shall be subject, but it shall be to her own husband that loves her, not to a stranger, or an enemy: the sentence was not a curse, to bring her to ruin, but a chastisement, to bring her to repentance. It was well that enmity was not put between the man and the woman, as there was between the serpent and the woman.”

Genesis 3:17-19

“That labor is our duty, which we must faithfully perform; we are bound to work, not as creatures only, but as criminals; it is part of our sentence, which idleness daringly defies.”

“That uneasiness and weariness with labor are our just punishment, which we must patiently submit to, and not complain of, since they are less than our iniquity deserves.”

“Yet, in this part of the sentence, there is also a mixture of mercy. He shall sweat, but his toil shall make his rest the more welcome when he returns to his earth, as to his bed; he shall grieve, but he shall not starve; he shall have sorrow, but in that sorrow he shall eat bread, which shall strengthen his heart under his sorrows. He is not sentenced to eat dust as the serpent, only to eat the herb of the field.”

“How admirably the satisfaction our Lord Jesus made by his death and sufferings answered to the sentence here passed upon our first parents. (1.) Did traveling pains come in with sin? We read of the 'travail of Christ's soul' (Isa. 53:11); and the pains of death he was held by are called *odinai* (Acts 2:24), 'the pains of a woman in travail.' (2.) Did subjection come in with sin? Christ was made under the law, Gal. 4:4. (3.) Did the curse come in with sin? Christ was made a curse for us, died a cursed death, Gal. 3:13. (4.) Did thorns come in with sin? He was crowned with thorns for us. (5.) Did sweat come in with sin? He for us did sweat as it were great drops of blood. (6.) Did sorrow come in with sin? He was a man of sorrows, his soul was, in his agony, exceedingly sorrowful. (7.) Did death come in with sin? He became obedient unto death. Thus is the plaster as wide as the wound. Blessed by God for Jesus Christ!”

Genesis 3:20

“God having named the man, and called him 'Adam', which signifies 'red earth'. Adam, in further token of dominion, named the woman, and called her 'Eve', that is, 'life'.”

Genesis 3:21

“That clothes came in with sin. We should have had no occasion for them, either for defense or decency, if sin had not made us naked, to our shame. Little reason therefore we have to be proud of our clothes, which are but badges of our poverty and infamy.”

“Let the poor, that are meanly clad, learn hence not to complain: having food and a covering, let them be content; they are as well done to as Adam and Eve were. And let the rich, that are finely clad, learn hence not to make the putting on of apparel their adorning, 1 Pet 3:3.”

Genesis 3:22-24

“But man was only sent to till the ground out of which he was taken. He was sent to a place of toil, not to a place of torment. He was sent to the ground, not to the grave...”

“God revealed this to Adam, not to drive him to despair, but to oblige and quicken him to look for life and happiness in the promised seed, by whom the flaming sword is removed. God and his angels are reconciled to us, and a new and living way into the holiest is consecrated and laid open for us.”

Genesis 4:3-5

“A hypocrite may possibly hear as many sermons, say as many prayers, and give as much alms, as a good Christian, and yet, for want of sincerity, come short of acceptance with God. The Pharisee and the publican went to the temple to pray, Luke 18:10.”

“But Abel was curious in the choice of his offering: not the lame, nor the lean, nor the refuse, but the 'firstlings of the flock' - the best he had, 'and the fat thereof' - the best of the best.”

Genesis 4:8

“The first that dies is a saint, one that was accepted and beloved of God, to show that, though the promised seed was so far to destroy him that had the power of death as to save believers from its sting, yet still they should be exposed to its stroke. The first that went to the grave went to heaven. God would secure to himself the first-fruits, the first-born to the dead, that first opened the womb into another world.”

Genesis 4:9-12

“Murder is a crying sin, none more so. Blood calls for blood, the blood of the murdered for the blood of the murderer; it cries in the dying words of Zechariah (2 Chron 24:22), 'The Lord look upon it and require it';...”

“The patient sufferers cries for pardon ('Father, forgive them'), but their blood cries for vengeance. Though they hold their peace, their blood has a loud and constant cry, to which the ear of the righteous God is always open.”

“How well is it for us that the blood of Christ speaks better things than that of Abel! Heb 12:24. Abel's blood cried for vengeance, Christ's blood cries for pardon.”

“The curse for Adam's disobedience terminated on the ground: 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake;' but that for Cain's rebellion fell immediately upon himself; 'Thou art cursed;' for God had mercy in store for Adam, but none for Cain.”

“God could have taken vengeance by an immediate stroke from heaven, by the sword of an angel, or by a thunderbolt; but he chose to make the earth the avenger of blood, to continue him upon the earth, and not immediately cut him off, and yet to make even this his curse. The earth is always near us, we cannot fly from it; so that, if this is made the executioner of divine wrath, our punishment is unavoidable;...”

“This was the sentence passed upon Cain; and even in this there was mercy mixed, inasmuch as he was not immediately cut off, but had space given him to repent; for God is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish.”

Genesis 4:13-15

“Note, Impenitent unhumiliated hearts are therefore not reclaimed by God's rebukes because they think themselves wronged by them; and it is an evidence of great hardness to be more concerned about our sufferings than about our sins.”

“‘Whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him seven-fold,’ because thereby the sentence he was under (that he should be a fugitive and a vagabond) would be defeated. Condemned prisoners are under the special protection of the law; those that are appointed sacrifices to public justice must not be sacrificed to private revenge.”

“‘Slay them not, lest my people forget; scatter them by thy power,’ Ps 59:11.”

“Had Cain been slain immediately, he would have been forgotten (Eccl 8:10); but now he lives a more fearful and lasting monument of God's justice, hanged in chains, as it were.”

Genesis 4:16-18

“On the east of Eden, the cherubim were, with the flaming sword, ch. 3:24. There he chose his lot, as if to defy the terrors of the Lord. But his attempt to settle was in vain; for the land he dwelt in was to him ‘the land of Nod’ (that is, of ‘shaking’ or ‘trembling’), because of the continual restlessness and uneasiness of his own spirit. Note, Those that depart from God cannot find rest any where else.”

“Those that are cursed of God are apt to seek their settlement and satisfaction here below, Ps 17:14.”

Genesis 4:19-22

“That worldly things are the only things that carnal wicked people set their hearts upon and are most ingenious about. So it was with this impious race of cursed Cain. Here were a father of shepherds and a

father of musicians, but not a father of the faithful. Here was one to teach in brass and iron, but none to teach the good knowledge of the Lord.”

“Present things fill the heads of most people.”

“Common gifts are given to bad men, while God chooses to himself the foolish things of the world.”

Genesis 4:23-24

“It is a common thing for fierce and bloody men to 'glory in their shame' (Phil. 3:19)”

Genesis 4:25-26

“This son, by a prophetic spirit, they called 'Seth' (that is, set, settled, or placed), because, in his seed, mankind should continue to the end of time, and from him the Messiah should descend. While Cain, the head of the apostasy, is made to wander, Seth, from whom the true church was to come, is one fixed.”

“Now began the distinction between professors and profane, which has been kept up ever since, and will be while the world stands.”

Genesis 5:1-5

“...it is the list or catalog of the posterity of Adam, not of all, but only of the 'holy seed who were the substance thereof' (Isa 6:13), and 'of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came' (Rom 9:5), the names, ages, and deaths, of those that were the successors of the first Adam in the custody of that promise, and the ancestors of the second Adam.”

“It is usual for parents to bless their children; so God, the common Father, blessed his. But earthly parents can only beg a blessing; it is God's prerogative to command it.”

“[the name] Adam signifies earth, red earth.”

“Adam had himself named the rest of the creatures, but he must not choose his own name, lest he should assume some glorious pompous title. But God gave him a name which would be a continual memorandum to him...”

“He gave this name both to the man and to the woman. Being at first one by nature, and afterwards one by marriage, it was fit they should both have the same name, in token of their union. The woman is 'of

the earth earthy' as well as the man.”

“Note, Grace does not run in the blood, but corruption does. A sinner begets a sinner, but a saint does not beget a saint.”

Genesis 5:6-20

“To show the pleasure God takes in the names of his people. We found Cain's generation numbered in haste (ch 4:18), but this account of the holy seed is enlarged upon, and given in words at length, and not in figures; we are told how long those lived that lived in God's fear, and when those died that died in his favor; but as for others it is no matter. 'The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot.'”

“All the patriarchs here, except Noah, were born before Adam died; so that from him they might receive a full and satisfactory account of the creation, paradise, the fall, the promise, and those divine precepts which concerned religious worship and a religious life: and, if any mistake arose, they might have recourse to him while he lived, as to an oracle, for the rectifying of it...”

Genesis 5:21-24

“...what is godliness, but walking with God? The ungodly and profane are without God in the world, they walk contrary to him: but the godly walk with God, which presupposes reconciliation to God for two cannot 'walk together except they be agreed' (Amos 3:3)...”

“As [Enoch] did not live like the rest, so he did not die like the rest...”

“God often takes those soonest whom he loves best, and the time they lose on earth is gained in heaven, to their unspeakable advantage.”

“It appears by his prophecy that there were then many ungodly sinners, who spoke hard speeches, and probably did hard things too, against God's people (Jude 1:15), but God hid Enoch from them, not under Heaven, but in Heaven.”

Genesis 6:11-12

“When wickedness has become general and universal ruin is not far off; while there is a remnant of praying people in a nation, to empty the measure as it fills, judgments may be kept off a great while; but when all hands are at work to pull down the fences by sin and none stand in the gap to make up the breach, what can be expected but an inundation of wrath?”

Genesis 6:12-21

“God's favor to [Noah] was plainly intimated in what he said of him, v8-10, where his name is mentioned five times in five lines, when once might have served to make the sense clear, as if the Holy Ghost took a pleasure in perpetuating his memory...”

“Both the providence of God, and the grace of God, own and crown the endeavors of the obedient and diligent.”

“Every blow of his axes and hammers was a call to repentance... But, since by it he could not convince the world, by it he condemned the world, Heb. 11:7.”

Genesis 7:1-4

“Noah did not go into the ark till God bade him; though he knew it was designed for his place of refuge, yet he waited for a renewed command, and had it.”

“God does not bid him 'go' into the ark, but 'come' into it, implying that God would go with him, would lead him into it, accompany him in it, and in due time bring him safely out of it.”

“When Noah told them of the judgment at a distance, they were tempted to put off their repentance, because the vision was for a great while to come; but now he is ordered to tell them that it is at the door, that they have but one more week more to turn them in, but one sabbath more to improve, to see if that will now, at last, awaken them to consider the things that belong to their peace, which otherwise will soon be hidden from their eyes. But it is common for those that have been careless of their souls during the years of their health, when they have looked upon death at a distance, to be as careless during the days, the seven days, of their sickness, when they see it approaching, their hearts being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.”

Genesis 7:11-12

“We are told that [the flood] was in the 'second month, the seventeenth day of the month', which is reckoned to be about the beginning of November; so that Noah had had a harvest just before, from which to victual his ark.”

“When good men are removed judgments are not far off; for they are 'taken away from the evil to come', Isa 57:1. When they are called into the chambers, hidden in the grave, hidden in heaven, then God is 'coming out of his place to punish', Isa 26:20, 21.”

Genesis 17:13-16

“Hitherto the door of the ark stood open, and if any, even during the last seven days, had repented and believed, for aught I know they might have been welcomed into the ark; but now the door was shut, and they were cut off from all hopes of admittance: for God 'shutteth, and none can open'.”

“When Noah came into the ark, he quitted his own house and lands; so must we quit our own righteousness and our worldly possessions, whenever they come into competition with Christ.”

“God put Adam into paradise, but he did not shut him in, and so he threw himself out; but when he put Noah into the ark he shut him in, and so when he brings a soul to Christ he ensures its salvation; it is not in our own keeping, but in the Mediator's hand.”

Genesis 8:4-5

“God has times and places of rest for his people after their tossings; and many a time he provides for their seasonable and comfortable settlement without their own contrivance and quite beyond their own foresight.”

Genesis 8:6-12

“That though God had told Noah particularly when the flood would come, even to a day (ch. 7:4), yet he did not give him a particular account by revelation at what times, and by what steps, it should go away, 1. Because the knowledge of the former was necessary to his preparing the ark, and settling himself into it; but the knowledge of the latter would serve only to gratify his curiosity, and the concealing of it from him would be the needful exercise of his faith and patience.”

Genesis 8:20-22

“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.”

“Neither will I again smite any more every living thing;’ that is, it was determined that whatever ruin God might bring upon particular persons, or families, or countries, he would never again destroy the whole world till the day shall come when time shall be no more.”

“That outward judgments, though they may terrify and restrain men, yet cannot of themselves sanctify and renew them; the grace of God must work with those judgments. Man's nature was as sinful after the deluge as it had been before.”

Genesis 9:1-7

“Those creatures that are any way hurtful to us are restrained, so that, though now and then man may be hurt by some of them, they do not combine together to rise up in rebellion against man, else God could by these destroy the world as effectually as he did by a deluge; it is one of God's sore judgments, Ezek. 14:21. What is it that keeps wolves out of our towns, and lions out of our streets, and confines them to the wilderness, but this fear and dread?”

“Willful murder ought always to be punished with death. It is a sin 'which the Lord would not pardon' in a prince (2 Kings 24:3, 4), and which therefore a prince should not pardon in a subject.”

Genesis 9:18-23

“Noah was not only a good man, but had been a good father to [Ham]; and this was a most base disingenuous requital to him for his tenderness.”

Genesis 9:24-27

“...though the Canaanites were a formidable people, yet they were of old an accursed people, and doomed to ruin.”

“This certainly points at the victories obtained by Israel over the Canaanites... which happened not till about 800 years after this.”

“Many are marked for ruin that are not yet ripe for ruin. Therefore, 'Let not thy heart envy sinners.'”

“When we see men's good works we should glorify, not them, but 'our Father', Matthew 5:16.”

Genesis 10:15-20

“Those that are under the curse of God may yet perhaps thrive and prosper greatly in this world; for we cannot know love or hatred, the blessing or the curse, by what is before us, but by what is within us, Eccl 9:1.”

“Canaan here has a better land than either Shem or Japheth, and yet they have a better lot, for they inherit the blessing.”

Genesis 10:21-32

“Eber himself, we may suppose, was a man eminent for religion in a time of general apostasy, and a great example of piety to his family; and, the holy tongue being commonly called from him the 'Hebrew', it is probable that he retained it in his family, in the confusion of Babel, as a special token of God's favor to him; and from him the professors of religion were called 'the children of Eber'.”

“As Ham, though he had many sons, is disowned by being called 'the father of Canaan', on whose seed the 'curse' was entailed (ch. 9:22), so Shem, though he had many sons, is dignified with the title of 'the father of Eber', on whose seed the blessing was entailed.”

“He was 'the brother of Japheth the elder', by which it appears that, though Shem is commonly put first, he was not Noah's first-born, but Japheth was older. But why should this also be put as part of Shem's title and description, that he 'was the brother of Japheth', since it had been, in effect, said often before? And he was not as much brother to Ham? Probaby this was intended to signify the union of the Gentiles with the Jews in the church. The sacred historian had mentioned it as Shem's honor that he was the father of the Hebrews; but, lest Japheth's seed should therefore be looked upon as for ever shut out from the church, he here reminds us that he 'was the brother of Japheth', not in birth only, but in blessing; for 'Japheth was to dwell in the tents of Shem'.”

Genesis 11:1-4

“What a difference there is between men's building and God's; when men build their Babel, brick and slime are their best materials; but, when God builds his Jerusalem, he lays even the 'foundations of it with sapphires, and all its borders with pleasant stones', Isa 54:11, 12; Rev. 21:19.”

Genesis 11:5-9

“Punishments are chiefly reserved for the future state. God's judgments on sinners in this life, compared with those which are reserved, are little more than restraints.”

Genesis 11:10-26

“Eber, from whom the Hebrews were denominated, was the longest-lived of any that was born after the flood, which perhaps was the reward of his singular piety and strict adherence to the ways of God.”

Genesis 12:1-3

“That this call was given him in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran; therefore we rightly read it, 'The Lord, had said unto Abram', namely, in Ur of the Chaldees; and, in obedience to this call, as Stephen further relates the story (Acts 7:4), 'he came out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran, or Haran, about five years, and thence, when his father was dead', by a fresh command, pursuant to the former, God removed him into the land of Canaan.”

“If God loves us, and has mercy in store for us, he will not suffer us to take up our rest any where short of Canaan, but will graciously repeat his calls, till the good work begun be performed, and our souls repose in God only.”

“Those that will deal with God must deal upon trust; we must quit the things that are seen for things that are not seen, and submit to the sufferings of this present time in hopes of a glory that is yet to be revealed (Rom 8:18);”

Genesis 12:6-9

“Thus the accursed Canaanites seemed to be in better circumstances than blessed Abram. Note, The children of this world have commonly more of it than God's children.”

Genesis 12:10-13

“...what he would think, 1. Of God that brought him thither, whether he would not be ready to say with his murmuring seed that he was brought forth to be 'killed with hunger', Exod 16:3. Nothing short of a strong faith could keep up good things of God under such a providence.”

“...for we tempt God, and do not trust him, if, in the times of distress, we use not the means he has graciously provided for our preservation: We must not expect needless miracles.”

“But that which is especially observable here, to the praise of Abram, is that he did not offer to return, upon this occasion, to the country from which he came out, nor so much as towards it. The land of his nativity lay north-east from Canaan; and therefore, when he must, for a time, quit Canaan, he chooses to go to Egypt, which lay south-west, the contrary way, that he might not so much as seem to look

back.”

“A good man, while he is on this side of heaven, wherever he is, is but a sojourner.”

Genesis 12:14-20

“We often perplex and ensnare ourselves with fears which soon appear to have been altogether groundless. We often fear where no fear is. We fear the 'fury of the oppressor, as though he were ready to destroy', when really there is no danger, Isa 51:13.”

“Observe a resemblance between this deliverance of Abram out of Egypt and the deliverance of his seed thence: 430 years after Abram went into Egypt on occasion of a famine they went thither on occasion of a famine also; he was fetched out with great plagues on Pharaoh, so were they; as Abram was dismissed by Pharaoh, and enriched with the spoil of the Egyptians, so were they. For God's care of his people is the same 'yesterday, today, and for ever.’”

Genesis 13:5-9

“Poverty and travail, wants and wanderings, could not separate between Abram and Lot; but riches did.”

“No doubt the eyes of all the neighbors were upon them, especially because of the singularity of their religion, and the extraordinary sanctity they professed; and notice would soon be taken of this quarrel, and improvement made of it, to their reproach, by the Canaanites and Perizzites.”

“There was all the reason in the world that Abram should choose first; yet he recedes from his right.”

Genesis 13:10-13

“Upon this occasion, one would have expected, 1. That [Lot] should have expressed an unwillingness to part from Abram, and that, at least, he should have done it with reluctance. 2. That he should have been so civil as to have remitted the choice back again to Abram. But we find not any instance of deference or respect to his uncle in the whole management.”

“God often gives great plenty to great sinners. Filthy Sodomites dwell in a city, in a fruitful plain, while faithful Abram and his pious family dwell in tents upon the barren mountains.”

Genesis 13:14-18

“When Abram had willingly offered Lot one-half of his right, God came, and confirmed the whole to him.”

“...God comes to him, and assures him that what he had should remain to him and 'his heirs for ever', so that, though Lot perhaps had the better land, yet Abram had the better title. Lot had the paradise, such as it was, but Abram had the promise; and the event soon made it appear that, however it seemed now, Abram had really the better part.”

Genesis 14:13-16

“Never was any military expedition undertaken, prosecuted, and finished, more honorably than this of Abram's.”

“The worst of men, in the day of their trouble, will be glad to claim acquaintance with those that are wise and good, and so get an interest in them. The rich man in hell called Abram 'Father'; and the foolish virgins made court to the wise for a share of their oil.”

“Religion tends to make men, not cowardly, but truly valiant. The righteous is bold as a lion. The true Christian is the true hero.”

“Justly might Abram have upbraided Lot with his folly in quarreling with him and removing from him, and have told him that he was well enough served, he might have known when he was well off; but, in the charitable breast of pious Abram, it is all forgiven and forgotten, and he takes this opportunity to give a real proof of the sincerity of his reconciliation.”

“As we have opportunity we must do good to all men.”

“God does good to the just and unjust, and so must we, Matt 5:45.”

Genesis 14:21-24

“Soldiers purchase their pay dearer than any laborers, and are well worthy of it, because they expose their lives.”

“A lively faith enables a man to look upon the wealth of this world with a holy contempt, 1 John 5:4. What are all the ornaments and delights of sense to one that has God and heaven ever in his eye?”

“Probably Abram knew the king of Sodom to be a proud and scornful man, and one that would be apt to turn such a thing as this to his reproach afterwards, though most unreasonably. When we have to do

with such men, we have need to act with particular caution.”

“Those who are strict in restraining their own liberty yet ought not to impose those restraints upon the liberties of others, nor to judge of them accordingly. we must not make ourselves the standard to measure others by.”

Genesis 15:1

“Abram had generously refused the rewards which the king of Sodom offered him, and here God comes, and tells him he shall be no loser by it.”

Genesis 15:2-6

“God often withholds those temporal comforts from his own children which he gives plentifully to others that are strangers to him.”

“True believers sometimes find it hard to reconcile God's promises and his providences, when they seem to disagree.”

Genesis 15:12-16

“Early in the morning, before day, while the stars were yet to be seen, God had given him orders concerning the sacrifices (v5), and we may suppose it was, at least, his morning's work to prepare them and set them in order; when he had done this, he abode by them, praying and waiting till towards evening. Note, God often keeps his people long in expectation of the comforts he designs them, for the confirmation of their faith; but though the answers of prayer, and the performance of promises, come slowly, yet they come surely. 'At evening time it shall be light'.”

“They must first be in the horror and darkness of Egyptian slavery, and then enter with joy into the good land; and therefore he must have the foretaste of their sufferings, before he had the foresight of their happiness.”

“God sends the worst first; we must first suffer, and then reign.”

“Good men are sometimes greatly favored by being 'taken away from the evil to come', Isa 57:1.”

Genesis 15:17-21

“What God has promised is as sure as if it were already done; hence, it is said, 'He that believes hath everlasting life' (John 3:36), for he shall as surely go to heaven as if he were there already.”

Genesis 16:1-3

“The mercy of children is often given to the poor and denied to the rich, given to the wicked and denied to good people, though the rich have most to leave them and good people would take most care of their education. God does herein as it has pleased him.”

Genesis 16:7-9

“...for [Hagar] was in the way of Shur, which lay toward Egypt.”

“Though she was Abram's wife, and, as such, was obligated to return, yet he calls her 'Sarai's maid,' to humble her.”

“Though civility teaches us to call others by their highest titles, yet humility and wisdom teach us to call ourselves by the lowest.”

Genesis 17:4-6

“Princes dignify their favorites by conferring new titles upon them; thus was Abraham dignified by him that is indeed the fountain of honor.”

“All believers have a new name, Rev. 2:17.”

Genesis 17:7-14

“[Circumcision] was peculiar to the males, though the women were also included in the covenant, for the man is the head of the woman... Some think that the blood of males only was shed in circumcision because respect was had in it to Jesus Christ and his blood.”

Genesis 18:9-15

“It was the modest usage of that time that the women did not sit at meat with men, at least not with strangers, but confined themselves to their own apartments; therefore Sarah is here out of sight: but she must not be out of hearing.”

Genesis 18:16-22

“[God] never punishes upon report, or common fame, or the information of others, but upon his own certain and infallible knowledge.”

Genesis 18:23-33

“See how swift God is to show mercy; he even seeks a reason for it. See what great blessings good people are to any place, and how little those befriend themselves that hate and persecute them.”

“God did not go away till Abraham had said all he had to say; for he is never weary of hearing prayer, Isa 59:1, 2.”

Genesis 19:4-11

“When the disease of sin has become epidemical, it is fatal to any place, Isa 1:5-7.”

“It was the most unnatural and abominable wickedness that they were now set upon, a sin that still bears their name, and is called 'Sodomy'. They were carried headlong by those vile affections (Rom. 1:26, 27), which are worse than brutish, and the eternal reproach of the human nature, and which cannot be thought of without horror by those that have the least spark of virtue and any remains of natural light and conscience. Note, Those that allow themselves in unnatural uncleanness are marked for the vengeance of eternal fire. See Jude 7, 2.”

“Those that have become impudent in sin generally prove impenitent in sin; and it will be their ruin.”

“Abuses offered to God's messengers and to faithful reprovers soon fill the measure of a people's wickedness and bring destruction without remedy. See Prov 29:1 and 2 Chron 36:16. If reproofs remedy not, there is no remedy. See 2 Chron 25:16.”

“When God, in a way of righteous judgment, blinds men, their condition is already desperate, Rom. 11:8, 9.”

Genesis 19:15-23

“The salvation of the most righteous men must be attributed to God's mercy, not to their own merit. We are saved by grace.”

“It was Lot's weakness to think a city of his own choosing safer than the mountain of God's appointing.”

Genesis 19:24-25

“It was a punishment that answered to their sin. Burning lusts against nature were justly punished with this preternatural burning. Those that went after strange flesh were destroyed by strange fire, Jude 7.”

Genesis 19:26

“Since it is such a dangerous thing to look back, let us always press forward, Phil 3:13, 14.”

Genesis 19:30-38

“Methinks it was strange that [Lot] did not return to Abraham, and put himself under his protection, to whom he had once and again owed his safety: but the truth is there are some good men that are not wise enough to know what is best for themselves.”

“He that, awhile ago, could not find room enough for himself and his stock in the whole land, but must jostle with Abraham, and get as far from him as he could, is now confined to a hole in a hill, where he has scarcely room to turn himself, and there he is solitary and trembling.”

“The sight of God's most tremendous judgments upon sinners will not of itself, without the grace of God, restrain evil hearts from evil practices...”

“...yet the tribe of Judah, of which our Lord sprang, descended from such a birth, and Ruth, a Moabitess, has a name in his genealogy, Matt 1:3, 5.”

Genesis 20:3-7

“There is a great deal of sin devised and designed that is never executed. As bad as things are in the world, they are not so bad as the devil and wicked men would have them.”

“It is God that restrains men from doing the ill they would do. It is not from him that there is sin, but it is from him that there is not more sin, either by his influence upon men's minds, checking their inclination to sin, or by his providence, taking away the opportunity to sin.”

Genesis 21:1-8

“God is always punctual to his time; though his promised mercies come not at the time we set, they will certainly come at the time he sets, and that is the best time.”

Genesis 21:9-13

“God takes notice of what children say and do in their play, and will reckon with them if they say or do amiss, though their parents do not.”

“Mocking is a great sin, and very provoking to God.”

“There is a rooted remaining enmity in the seed of the serpent against the seed of the woman.”

“None are rejected and cast out from God but those who have first deserved it. Ishmael is continued in Abraham's family till he becomes a disturbance, grief, and scandal to it.”

“A good man desires no more in doubtful cases than to know his duty, and what God would have him do; and, when he is clear in this, he is, or should be, easy.”

“Nations are of God's making: he founds them, he forms them, he fixes them.”

Genesis 21:14-21

“We are apt to forget former promises, when present providences seem to contradict them; for we live by sense.”

Genesis 21:22-32

“Religion does not make men morose and unconvivial; I am sure it ought not. We must not, under color of shunning bad company, be sour to all company, and jealous of every body.”

“...‘Beer-sheba’, the ‘well of the oath’...”

“Bargains made must be remembered, that we may make them good, and may not break our word through oversight.”

Genesis 22:1-2

“...then it was made to appear that he loved God better than his father; now that he loved him better than his son.”

“Many former trials will not supersede nor secure us from further trials; we have not yet put off the harness, 1 Kings 20:11.”

“God tempted him, not to draw him to sin... but to discover his graces, how strong they were, that they might be ‘found to praise, and honor, and glory’, 1 Peter 1:7.”

“Strong faith is often exercised with strong trials and put upon hard services.”

Genesis 22:3-10

“It is our wisdom and duty, when we are going to worship God, to lay aside all those thoughts and cares which may divert us from the service, leave them at the bottom of the hill, that we may attend on the Lord without distraction.”

“He obligated Isaac to carry the wood (both to try his obedience in a smaller matter first, and that he might typify Christ, who carried his own cross, John 19:17)...”

“Now this obedience of Abraham in offering up Isaac is a lively representation, (1.) Of the love of God to us, in delivering up his only-begotten Son to suffer and die for us, as a sacrifice.”

Genesis 22:11-14

“And it is observable that the temple, the place of sacrifice, was afterwards built upon this mount Moriah (2 Chron. 3:1)...”

Genesis 22:15-19

“Those that are willing to part with any thing for God shall have it made up to them with unspeakable advantage. Abraham has but one son, and is willing to part with that one, in obedience to God. "Well," said God, "thou shalt be recompensed with thousands and millions." What a figure does the seed of Abraham make in history! ... Thus he received a thousand-fold in this life, Matt. 19:29.”

Genesis 22:20-24

“This is recorded here... to make way for the following story of the marriage of Isaac to Rebekah, a daughter of this family.”

Genesis 23:16-20

“Though all the land of Canaan was Abraham's by promise, yet, the time of his possessing not having come, what he had now occasion for he bought and paid for.”

“The saints' title to an eternal inheritance does not entitle them to the possessions of this world, nor justify them in doing wrong.”

“It is worth noting, (1.) That a burying-place was the first spot of ground Abraham possessed in Canaan.”

“[The burial of Sarah was] a token of his belief and expectation of the resurrection; for why should such care be taken of the body if it be thrown away for ever, and must not rise again? Abraham, in this, said plainly that he sought a better country, that is, a heavenly.”

Genesis 24:1-9

“Oaths are to be taken with great caution, and the matter sworn to should be rightly understood and limited, because it is a 'snare to devour that which is holy, and, after vows, to make the enquiry' which should have been made before.”

Genesis 24:10-28

“When he came to seek a wife for his master, he did not go to the playhouse or the park, and pray that he might meet one there, but to 'the well of water', expecting to find one there well employed.”

“What we win by prayer we must wear with praise; for mercies in answer to prayer lay us under particular obligations.”

Genesis 24:29-53

“We have here the making up of the marriage between Isaac and Rebekah. it is related very largely and particularly, even to the minute circumstances, which, we should think, might have been spared, while other things of great moment and mystery (as the story of Melchizedek) are related in few words. Thus God conceals that which is curious from the wise and prudent, reveals to babes that which is common and level to their capacity (Matt. 11:25), and rules and 'saves the world by the foolishness of preaching', 1 Cor. 1:21. Thus also we are directed to take notice of God's providence in the little common occurrences of human life, and in them also to exercise our prudence and other graces; for the scripture was not only intended for the use of philosophers and statesmen only, but to make us all wise and virtuous in the conduct of ourselves and families.”

“Though [the servant] did but 'speak in his heart' (v 45), which perhaps he mentions, lest it should be suspected that Rebekah had overheard his prayer and designedly humored it.”

“Whatever benefit we have by the ministration of angels, all the glory must be given to the Lord of the angels, Rev. 22:9.”

Genesis 25:11-18

“And some very good expositors have taken notice of the signification of those three names which are put together (v14), as containing good advice to us all, Mishma, Dumah, and Massa, that is, hear, keep silence, and bear; we have them together in the same order, Jam. 1:19, Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.”

“Here is also an account of [Ishmael's] death; he too 'was gathered to his people'; but it is not said that he was 'full of days', though he lived to so great an age: he was not so weary of the world, nor so willing to leave it, as his good father was.”

Genesis 25:19-28

“Isaac seems not to have been a man of action, nor much tried, but to have spent his days in quietness and silence.”

“[Isaac] was sixty years old when his sons were born (v26), so that, after he was married, he had no child for twenty years.”

“While this mercy was delayed, Isaac did not approach to a handmaid's bed, as Abraham had done, and Jacob afterwards;...”

“The comforts we are most desirous of are sometimes found to bring along with them more occasion of trouble and uneasiness than we thought of; vanity being written upon all things under the sun, God thus teaches us to read it.”

“The difference of men's capacities, and consequently of their condition in the world, arises very much from the difference of their natural constitution; some are plainly designed by nature for activity and honor, others as manifestly marked for obscurity. This instance of the divine sovereignty in the kingdom of providence may perhaps help to reconcile us to the doctrine of the divine sovereignty in the kingdom of grace.”

“...if it be lawful for parents to make a difference between their children upon any account, doubtless Rebekah was in the right, that loved him whom God loved.”

Genesis 25:29-34

“And now Jacob's pottage pleased his eye better than ever his game had done. Give me (says he) some of 'that red, that red,' as it is in the original; it suited his own color (v25), and, in reproach to him for this, he was ever afterwards called 'Edom, red'.”

“Thus Esau despised his birthright; he used no means at all to get the bargain revoked, made no appeal to his father about it, nor proposed to his brother to compound the matter; but the bargain which his necessity had made (supposing it were so) his profaneness confirmed 'expost facto - after the deed'; and by his subsequent neglect and contempt he did, as it were, acknowledge a fine, and by justifying himself in what he had done he put the bargain past recall. Note, People are ruined, not so much by doing what is amiss, as by doing it and not repenting of it, doing it and standing to it.”

Genesis 26:1-5

“God bade [Isaac] stay where he was, and 'not go down into Egypt: Sojourn in this land', v 2, 3. There was a famine in Jacob's days, and God bade him 'go down into Egypt' (ch 46:3, 4), a famine in Isaac's

days, and God bade him 'not to go down', a famine in Abraham's days, and God left him to his liberty, directing him neither way. This variety in the divine procedure (considering that Egypt was always a place of trial and exercise to God's people) some ground upon the different characters of these three patriarchs. Abraham was a man of very high attainments, and intimate communion with God; and to him all places and conditions were alike. Isaac was a very good man, but not cut out for hardship; therefore he is forbidden to go to Egypt. Jacob was inured to difficulties, strong and patient; and therefore he must go down into Egypt, that 'the trial of his faith might be to praise, and honor, and glory'. This God proportions his people's trials to their strength."

Genesis 26:6-11

"Abimelech (not the same that was in Abraham's days, ch. 20, for this was nearly 100 years after that, but this was the common name of the Philistine kings, as Caesar of the Roman emperors)..."

Genesis 26:12-25

"He reaped 'a hundred fold'; and there seems to be an emphasis laid upon the time; it was that 'same year' when there was a famine in the land; while others scarcely reaped at all, he reaped thus plentifully."

"Isaac does not insist upon the bargain he had made with them for the lands he held, nor upon his occupying and improving them, nor does he offer to contest with them by force, though he had become very great, but very peaceably departs thence further from the royal city, and perhaps to a part of the country less fruitful. Note, We should deny ourselves both in our rights and in our conveniences, rather than quarrel: a wise and a good man will rather retire into obscurity, like Isaac here into a valley, than sit high to be the butt of envy and ill-will."

"Though he had grown very rich, yet he was as solicitous as ever about the state of his flocks, and still looked well to his herds; when men grow great, they must take heed of thinking themselves too big and too high for their business."

"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. Enquire for the old way, the wells which our fathers digged, which the adversaries of truth have stopped up: 'Ask thy elders, and they shall teach thee'."

"Though we must use the light of former ages, it does not therefore follow that we must rest in it, and make no advances. We must still be building upon the foundation, 'running to and fro, that knowledge may be increased', Dan. 12:4."

Genesis 27:1-5

“The work of life must be done before we die, for it cannot be done afterwards (Eccl 9:10); and it is very desirable, when we come to die, to have nothing else to do but to die. Isaac lived above forty years after this; let none therefore think that they shall die the sooner for making their wills and getting ready for death.”

Genesis 27:30-40

“The day is coming when those that now make light of the blessings of the covenant, and sell their title to them for a thing of naught, will in vain be importunate for them. Those that will not so much as ask and seek now will knock shortly, and cry 'Lord, Lord.'”

Genesis 27:41-46

“The happiness of saints is the envy of sinners. Whom Heaven blesses, hell curses.”

Genesis 28:6-9

“[Esau] married a daughter of Ishmael, the son of the bond-woman, who was cast out, and was not to inherit with Isaac and his seed, thus joining with a family which God had rejected, and seeking to strengthen his own pretensions by the aid of another pretender.”

Genesis 29:15-30

“It appears by computation that Jacob was now seventy-seven years old when he bound himself apprentice for a wife, 'and for a wife he kept sheep', Hos. 12:12.”

“We have reason to think there was no such custom of his country as [Laban] pretends; only he banters Jacob with it, and laughs at his mistake. Note, Those that can do wickedly and then think to turn it off with a jest, though they may deceive themselves and others, will find at last that God is not mocked.”

Genesis 30:1-13

“Observe a difference between Rachel's asking for this mercy and Hannah's, 1 Sam. 1:10, etc. Rachel envied; Hannah wept. Rachel must have children, and she died of the second; Hannah prayed for one child, and she had four more. Rachel is importunate and peremptory; Hannah is submissive and devout. 'If thou wilt give me a child, I will give him to the Lord.' Let Hannah be imitated, and not Rachel; and let our desires be always under the direction and control of reason and religion.”

“Whatever we want, it is God that withholds it, a sovereign Lord, most wise, holy, and just, that may do what he will with his own, and is debtor to no man, that never did, nor ever can do, any wrong to any of his creatures. The keys of the clouds, of the heart, of the grave, and of the womb, are four keys which God had in his hand, and which (the rabbins say) he entrusts neither with angels nor seraphim.”

Genesis 31:1-16

“Men's over-valuing worldly wealth is that fundamental error which is the root of covetousness, envy, and all evil.”

Genesis 31:25-35

“It is common for bad men, when they are disappointed in their malicious projects, to pretend that they designed nothing but what was kind and fair. When they cannot do the mischief they intended, they are loth it should be thought that they ever did intend it.”

“Those that mean ill themselves are most apt to put the worst construction upon what others do innocently.”

“Foolish man! to call those his gods that could be stolen! Could he expect protection from those that could neither resist nor discover their invaders? ... We do not find that [Laban] searched Jacob's flocks for stolen cattle; but he searched his furniture for stolen gods.”

Genesis 31:43-55

“Though Laban had afflicted [his daughters] himself, yet he will bind Jacob that he shall not afflict them. Note, Those that are injurious themselves are commonly most jealous of others, and those that do not do their own duty are most peremptory in demanding duty from others.”

Genesis 32:1-2

“God's people, at death, are returning to Canaan, to their Father's house; and then the angels of God will meet them, to congratulate them on the happy finishing of their servitude, and to carry them to their rest.”

Genesis 33:1-4

“The way to recover peace where it has been broken is to do our duty, and pay our respects, upon all occasions, as if it had never been broken. It is the remembering and repeating of matters that separates friends and perpetuates the separation.”

Genesis 34:6-17

“Religion is never more injured, nor are God's sacraments more profaned, than when they are thus used for a cloak of maliciousness.”

“It was true that Shechem had done ill; but he was endeavouring to atone for it, and was as honest and honorable, 'ex post facto - after the deed', as the case would admit; it was not the case of the Levite's concubine that was abused to death; nor does he justify what he has done, but courts a reconciliation upon any terms. [3.] It was true that Shechem had done ill; but what was that to all the Shechemites? Does one man sin, and will they be wroth with all the town? Must the innocent fall with the guilty? This was barbarous indeed. [4.] But that which above all aggravated the cruelty was the most perfidious treachery that was in it. The Shechemites had submitted to their conditions, and had done that upon which they had promised to become one people with them (v 16); yet they act as sworn enemies to those to whom they had lately become sworn friends, making as light of their covenant as they did of the laws of humanity. And are these the sons of Israel? 'Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce.' [5.] This also added to the crime, that they made a holy ordinance of God subservient to their wicked design, so making that odious; as if it were not enough for them to shame themselves and their family, they bring a reproach upon that honorable badge of their religion; justly would it be called a bloody ordinance.”

Genesis 35:6-15

“The comfort which the saints have in holy ordinances is not so much from 'Bethel, the house of God', as from 'El-beth-el, the God of the house'. The ordinances are but empty things if we do not meet with God in them.”

“[Jacob] confirmed the name he had formerly given to the place (v15), 'Beth-el, the house of God'. Yet

this very place afterwards lost the honor of its name, and became 'Beth-aven, a house of iniquity'; for here it was that Jeroboam set up one of his calves.”

Genesis 35:16-20

“Rachel had passionately said, 'Give me children, or else I die'; and now that she had children (for this was her second), she died.”

“Great afflictions sometimes befall us immediately after great comforts. Lest Jacob should be lifted up with the visions of the Almighty with which he was honored, this was sent as a thorn in the flesh to humble him. Those that enjoy the favors peculiar to the children of God must yet expect the troubles that are common to the children of men.”

“Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave, so that it was known, long after, to be Rachel's sepulchre (1 Sam 10:2), and Providence so ordered it that this place afterwards fell in the lot of Benjamin.”

Genesis 35:21-29

“Reuben's crime was so provoking that, for it, he lost his birthright and blessing, ch 49:4.”

“The age and death of Isaac are here recorded, though it appears, by computation, that he died not till many years after Joseph was sold into Egypt, and much about the time that he was preferred there. Isaac, a mild quiet man, lived the longest of all the patriarchs, for he was 180 years old; Abraham was but 175.”

Genesis 36:9-19

“Esau's sons were dukes when Jacob's sons were but plain shepherds, ch 47:3... We may suppose those dukes had numerous families of children and servants that were their dukedoms. God promised to multiply Jacob, and to enrich him; yet Esau increases, and is enriched first. Note, It is no new thing for the men of this world to be full of children, and to have their bellies too 'filled with hidden treasures', Ps 17:14.”

Genesis 36:31-43

“God had lately promised 'Jacob that kings should come out of his loins' (ch 35:11), yet Esau's blood becomes royal long before any of Jacob's did. Note, In external prosperity and honor, the children of

the covenant are often cast behind, and those that are out of the covenant get the start. The triumphing of the wicked may be quick, but it is short; soon ripe, and as soon rotten: but the products of the promise, though they are slow, are sure and lasting; 'at the end it shall speak, and not lie.' We may suppose it was a great trial to the faith of God's Israel to hear of the pomp and power of the kings of Edom, while they were bondslaves in Egypt; but those that look for great things from God must be content to wait for them; God's time is the best time."

"While the Israelites dwelt in the house of bondage, and their Canaan was only the land of promise, the Edomites dwelt in their own habitations, and Seir was in their possession. Note, The children of this world have their all in hand, and nothing in hope (Luke 16:25); while the children of God have their all in hope, and next to nothing in hand. But, all things considered, it is better to have Canaan in promise than mount Seir in possession."

Genesis 37:5-11

"Joseph had a great deal of trouble before him, and therefore God gave him betimes this prospect of his advancement, to support and comfort him under the long and grievous troubles with which he was to be exercised."

"Joseph dreamed of his preferment, but he did not dream 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."

Genesis 38:1-11

"It is computed that [Judah] was now not much above fifteen or sixteen years of age..."

"Judah married too young, and very rashly; he also married his sons too young, when they had neither wit nor grace to govern themselves, and the consequences were very bad."

"Onan, though he consented to marry the widow... he refused to raise up seed unto his brother, as he was in duty bound. This was so much the worse because the Messiah was to descend from Judah, and, had he not been guilty of this wickedness, he might have had the honor of being one of his ancestors."

Genesis 38:24-30

"If he designed that she should be burnt to death, perhaps, under pretense of zeal against the sin, he was contriving how to get rid of his daughter-in-law, being loath to marry Shelah to her. Note, It is a common thing, but a very bad thing, to cover malice against men's persons with a show of zeal against

their vices.”

“Some observe that the four eldest sons of Jacob fell under very foul guilt, Reuben and Judah under the guilt of incest, Simeon and Levi under that of murder; yet they were patriarchs, and from Levi descended the priests, from Judah the kings and Messiah. Thus they became examples of repentance, and monuments of pardoning mercy.”

Genesis 39:13-18

“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. As this matter was represented, one would have thought chaste Joseph a very bad man and his wanton mistress a virtuous woman; it is well that there is a day of discovery coming, in which all shall appear in their true characters. This was not the first time that Joseph's coat was made use of as a false witness concerning him; his father had been deceived by it before, now his master.”

Genesis 40:1-4

“High places are slippery places; nothing more uncertain than the favor of princes. Those that make God's favor their happiness, and his service their business, will find him a better Master than Pharaoh was, and not so extreme to mark what they do amiss.”

“The 'captain of the guard' himself, who was Potiphar, charged Joseph with them (v4), which intimates that he began now to be reconciled to him, and perhaps to be convinced of his innocence, though he durst not release him for fear of disobliging his wife.”

Genesis 40:5-19

“The visions that are for the comfort of God's saints are for a great while to come, and relate to things that are very far off, while the foresights of others, like this recorded here, look but three days before them.”

Genesis 41:9-16

“If the chief butler had at first used his interest for Joseph's enlargement, and had obtained it, it is probable that upon his release he would have gone back 'to the land of the Hebrews' again, which he spoke of so feelingly (ch 40:15), and then he would neither have been so blessed himself, nor such a

blessing to his family, as afterwards he proved. But staying two years longer, and coming out now upon this occasion, at last, to interpret the king's dreams, way was made for his very great preferment.”

Genesis 41:33-45

“Because that which is everybody's work commonly proves nobody's work, he advises Pharaoh to appoint officers who should make it their business, and select some one person to preside in the affair, v33. Probably, if Joseph had not advised this, it would not have been done; Pharaoh's counselors could no more improve the dream than his magicians interpret it; therefore it is said of him (Ps 105:22) that he 'taught the senators wisdom'.”

Genesis 42:21-28

“Guilty consciences are apt to take good providences in a bad sense, and to put wrong constructions even upon those things that make for them. They flee when none pursues.”

Genesis 42:29-48

“Through our ignorance and mistake, and the weakness of our faith, we often apprehend that to be against us which is really for us. We are afflicted in body, estate, name, and relations; and we think all these things are against us, whereas these are really working for us the weight of glory.”

Genesis 43:26-34

“Many seek the ruler's favor, but Joseph directs him to seek the favor of the ruler of rulers.”

Genesis 45:1-15

“What wheels are there within wheels, and yet all directed by the eye in the wheels, and the spirit of the living creature! Let us therefore judge nothing before the time.”

“Joseph could never have been 'the shepherd and stone of Israel' if his brethren had not shot at him, and hated him; even those that had wickedly sold Joseph into Egypt yet themselves reaped the benefit of the good God brought out of it; as those that put Christ to death were many of them saved by his

death.”

Genesis 45:16-24

“Thus those for whom Christ intends to share in his heavenly glory ought not to regard the stuff of this world: the best of its enjoyments are but stuff, but lumber; we cannot make sure of it while we are here, much less can we carry it away with us; let us not therefore be solicitous about it, nor set our eyes or hearts upon it. There are better things reserved for us in that blessed land whither our Joseph has gone to prepare a place.”

“Those that are wealthy should be generous, and devise liberal things; what is an abundance good for, but to do good with it?”

Genesis 45:25-28

“Death is as the wagons which are sent to fetch us to Christ: the very sight of it approaching should revive us.”

Genesis 46:28-34

“Jacob wished to die immediately, and lived seventeen years longer, which, as our lives go now, is a considerable part of a man's age. Note, Death will not always come just when we call for it, whether in a passion of sorrow or in a passion of joy. Our times are in God's hand, and not in our own; we must die just when God pleases, and not either just when we are surfeited with the pleasures of life or just when we are overwhelmed with its griefs.”

“[Joseph] desired they might live separately, that they might be in the less danger of both being infected by the vices of the Egyptians and of being insulted by the malice of the Egyptians.”

“[Joseph] would have them to continue shepherds, and not to be ashamed to own that as their occupation before Pharaoh. He could have employed them under himself in the corn-trade, or perhaps, by his interest in the king, might have procured places for them at court or in the army, and some of them, at least, were deserving enough; but such preferments would have exposed them to the envy of the Egyptians, and would have tempted them to forget Canaan and the promise made unto their fathers; therefore he contrives to continue them in their old employment.”

“It is generally best for people to abide in the callings that they have been bred to, and used to, 1 Cor 7:24. Whatever employment or condition God, in his providence, has allotted for us, let us accommodate ourselves to it, and satisfy ourselves with it, and 'not mind high things'. It is better to be

the credit of a mean post than the shame of a high one.”

Genesis 47:1-12

“[Jacob] calls his life 'a pilgrimage', looking upon himself as a stranger in this world, and a traveler towards another world: this earth his inn, not his home. To this the apostle refers (Heb. 11:13), 'They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims.'”

Genesis 47:13-26

“See how early God put a difference between the Egyptians and the Israelites... Jacob and his family, though strangers, were plentifully fed on free cost, while the Egyptians were dying for want.”

Genesis 47:27-31

“[Jacob] lived seventeen years after he came into Egypt, far beyond his own expectations. Seventeen years he had nourished Joseph (for so old he was when he was sold from him, ch 37:2), and now, by way of requital, seventeen years Joseph nourished him.”

Genesis 48:1-7

“Thus the aged dying patriarch teaches these young persons [the sons of Joseph], now that they were of age (being about twenty-one years old), not to look upon Egypt as their home, nor to incorporate themselves with the Egyptians, but to take their lot with the people of God, as Moses afterwards in the like temptation, Heb 11:24-26.”

Genesis 48:8-22

“Manasseh should be great, but truly Ephraim should be greater. Ephraim was more numerous than Manasseh, and had the standard of that squadron (Num 1:32, 33, 34; 2:18, 20), and is named first, Ps 80:2. Joshua was of that tribe, so was Jeroboam. The tribe of Manasseh was divided, one half on one side of the Jordan, the other half on the other side, which made it the less powerful and considerable.”

“These lands he settled upon Joseph; mention is made of this grant, John 4:5. Pursuant to it, this parcel

of ground was given to the tribe of Ephraim as their right, and the lot was never cast upon it; and in it Joseph's bones were buried...”

Genesis 49:1-4

“The prophecy concerning Reuben. He begins with him (v3, 4), for he was the firstborn; but by committing uncleanness with his father's wife, to the great reproach of the family to which he ought to have been an ornament, he forfeited the prerogatives of the birthright; and his dying father here solemnly degrades him, though he does not disown nor disinherit him: he shall have all the privileges of a son, but not of a firstborn... "'Thou shalt not excel'; a being though shalt have as a tribe, but not an excellency." No judge, prophet, nor prince, is found of that tribe, nor any person of renown except Dathan and Abiram, who were noted for their impious rebellion against Moses. That tribe, as not aiming to excel, meanly chose a settlement on the other side of Jordan. Reuben himself seems to have lost all that influence upon his brethren to which his birthright entitled him; for 'when he spoke unto them they would not hear', ch 42:22.”

Genesis 49:5-7

“A token of displeasure which [Jacob] foretells their posterity should lie under for this: 'I will divide them'. The Levites were scattered throughout all the tribes, and Simeon's lot lay not together, and was so strait that many of the tribe were forced to disperse themselves in quest of settlements and subsistence. This curse was afterwards turned into a blessing to the Levites; but the Simeonites, for Zimri's sin (Num 25:14), had it bound on.”

Genesis 49:13-21

“Concerning Zebulun (v13), that his posterity should have their lot upon the seacoast, and should be merchants, and mariners, and traders at sea. This was fulfilled when... the land of Canaan was divided by lot, and the 'border of Zebulun went up towards the sea', Josh 19:11. Had they chosen their lot themselves, or Joshua appointed it, we might have supposed it done with design to make Jacob's words good; but, being done by lot, it appears that it was divinely disposed, and Jacob divinely inspired.”

“Concerning Gad, v19. He alludes to his name, which signifies a 'troop', foresees that character of that tribe, that it should be a warlike tribe, and so we find (1 Chron 12:8); the 'Gadites were men of war fit for the battle'. He foresees that the situation of that tribe on the other side Jordan would expose it to the incursions of its neighbors, the Moabites and Ammonites... he assures them that they should 'overcome at the last', which was fulfilled when, in Saul's time and David's, the Moabites and Ammonites were wholly subdued: see 1 Chron 5:18, etc.”

Genesis 50:1-6

“When we return to our own houses from burying the bodies of our relations, we say, 'We have left them behind;' but, if their souls have gone to our heavenly Father's house, we may say with more reason, 'They have left us behind.'”

Genesis 50:7-14

“Of the funerals of the kings of Judah, usually, no more is said than this, 'They were buried with their fathers in the city of David:' but the funeral of the patriarch Jacob is more largely and fully described, to show how much better God was to him than he expected (he had spoken more than once of dying for grief, and going to the grave bereaved of his children, but, behold, he dies in honor, and is followed to the grave by all his children)...”