

## WORDS OF THE WISE.

JOHN FLAVEL, OB., A. D. 1691.

UPON THE SIGHT OF A BLACK-BIRD TAKING SANCTUARY IN A BUSH FROM A PURSUING HAWK.

When I saw how hardly the poor bird was put to it to save herself from her enemy, who hovered just over the bush in which she was fluttering and squeaking, I could not but hasten to relieve her,—pity and succour being a due debt to the distressed; which when I had done, the bird would not depart from the bush, though her enemy had gone. This act of kindness was abundantly repaid by this meditation, with which I returned to my walk: My soul, like this bird, was once distressed, pursued, yea, seized by Satan, who had certainly made a prey of it, had not Jesus Christ been a sanctuary to it in that hour of danger. How ready did I find Him to receive my poor soul into His protection! Then did He make good that sweet promise to my experience, “Those that come unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” It called to mind that pretty and pertinent story of the philosopher, who walking in the fields, a bird, pursued by a hawk, flew into his bosom; he took her out, and said, “Poor bird, I will neither wrong thee, nor expose thee to thine enemy, since thou comest unto me for refuge.” So tender, and more than so, is the Lord Jesus to distressed souls that come unto Him. Blessed Jesus! how should I love and praise Thee, glorify and admire Thee, for that great salvation Thou hast wrought for me! If this bird had fallen into the claws of her enemy, she had been torn to pieces indeed and devoured, but then a few minutes had despatched her, and ended all her pain and misery; but had my soul fallen into the hand of Satan, there had been no end of its misery.

Would not this scared bird be flushed out of the bush that secured her, though I had chased away her enemy? And wilt thou, my soul, ever be enticed or scared from Christ thy refuge? Oh, let this for ever engage thee to keep close to Christ, and make me say with Ezra, And now, O Lord, since thou hast given me such a deliverance as this, should I again break thy commandments?

UPON THE HALTERING OF BIRDS WITH A GIN OF HAIR.

Observing in a snowy season how the poor hungry birds were haltered and drawn in by a gin of hair, cunningly cast over their heads, whilst, poor creatures! they were busily feeding, and suspected no danger; and even whilst their companions were drawn away from them one after another, all the interruption it gave the rest was only for a minute or two, whilst they stood peeping into that hole through which their companions were drawn, and then fell to their meat again, as busily as before; I could not choose but say, “Even thus surprisingly doth death steal upon the children of men, whilst they are wholly intent upon the cares and pleasures of this life, not at all suspecting its so near approach.” Those birds saw not the hand that ensnared them, nor do they see the hand of death plucking them one after another into the grave.

*Omnibus obscuras injicit ille manus.—Ovid*  
 Death's steps are swift, and yet no noise it makes;  
 Its hand's unseen, but yet most surely takes.

And even the surviving birds for a little time seemed to stand affrighted, peeping after their companions, and then as busy as ever to their meat again; just so it fares with the careless inconsiderate world, who see others daily dropping into eternity round about them, and for the present are a little startled, and will look into the grave after their neighbours, and then fall as busily to their earthly employments and pleasures again as ever, till their own turn comes.

I know, my God, that I must die as well as others; but, oh! let me not die as