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The Clergyman's instructor



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THE
CLERGYMAN'S INSTRUCTOR,

OR A COLLECTION OF

TRACTS

ON THE

MINISTERIAL DUTIES.

— ἡ γὰρ ἱερωσύνη τελείται μὲν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τάξιν δὲ
ἐπουρανίων ἔχει πραγμάτων.

CHRYSOSTOM. DE SACERDOTIO DIAL. III.

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ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

THE Tracts contained in the following volume have been collected and published, in conformity with the plan for some time adopted by *The Delegates of the Clarendon Press*, of assisting the Parochial Clergy, either by reprinting some of the more scarce or eminent treatises of our English divines, or by editing in a more convenient form such documents as, though necessary to be referred to by those in holy orders, were before accessible only in works of great magnitude and expense. And as what has hitherto been done with this view has received no inconsiderable approbation, not only from ecclesiastical persons, but from serious and learned men of all orders, it is hoped that the present republication of tracts calculated especially both to teach and to enforce the *practical duties of ministers*, will not be thought less useful than those which have preceded it, or a less serviceable endeavour to contribute to the advancement of true religion, and a due honouring of THE CHURCH as by law established in this realm.

OXFORD, *July 6*, 1807.

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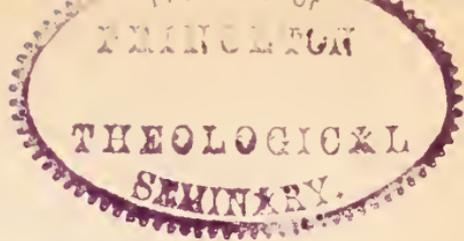
A
PRIEST TO THE TEMPLE;
OR THE
COUNTRY PARSON,
HIS CHARACTER,
AND
RULE OF HOLY LIFE.
BY
MR. GEORGE HERBERT.

THE AUTHOR TO THE READER.

BEING desirous, through the mercy of God, to please him, for whom I am, and live, and who giveth me my desires and performances; and considering with myself, that the way to please him is to feed my flock diligently and faithfully, since our Saviour hath made that the argument of a pastor's love; I have resolved to set down the form and character of a true pastor, that I may have a mark to aim at; which also I will set as high as I can, since he shoots higher that threatens the moon, than he that aims at a tree. Not that I think, if a man do not all which is here expressed, he presently sins, and displeases God; but that it is a good strife to go as far as we can in pleasing of him, who hath done so much for us. The Lord prosper the intention to myself, and others, who may not despise my poor labours, but add to those points, which I have observed, until the book grow to a complete pastoral.

1632.

GEORGE HERBERT.



A P R E F A C E

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER;

CONSISTING OF SIX PARAGRAPHS.

§. 1. **M**Y design in this preface to this impression is, first, to own that which I made to the first, that came forth anno Domini 1652; and to bless God for giving me that portion of ingenuity, to imitate Ezra the scribe, Nehemiah the governor, and Daniel the prophet, by giving God the glory of his justice, in bringing upon us those evils which we then suffered; and that degree of courage, in that day, when violence was at the height, to tell the instruments of cruelty the immediate causes of those evils; that God had also rods in store for them; and that from the ruins of that church they had pulled down, an heavy stone would fall upon themselves, and bruise them.

§. 2. Secondly, to do a piece of right, an office of justice to the good man that was possessor of the manuscript of this book, and transmitted it freely to the stationer who first printed it; merely upon design to benefit the clergy, and in them the church of England. He was Mr. Edmund Duncon, rector of Fryarn-Barnet in the county of Middlesex, brother to Dr. Eleazar Duncon, and Mr. John Duncon, two very learned and worthy

persons, and great sufferers, who both died before the miracle of our happy restoration; and were happy in that they lived not to see such ostentation of sin and ingratitude, as some since have made: as if they had been delivered from slavery under the tyrant, that they might with more liberty yield themselves servants to sin under the tyranny of Satan.

§. 3. Thirdly, to tell some of my thoughts for their good, unto my younger conforming brethren, (as for mine elder, dignitaries, and our fathers in God, I look upon them as judges, how I demean myself in this matter:) I say, to tell them, first, what an halcyonian calm, a blessed time of peace, this church of England had for many years, above all the churches in the world besides: (God grant that they may live to see the like:) at the very ἀκμῆ of which time, when the king, St. Charles of blessed memory, and the good archbishop of Canterbury, with others, were endeavouring to perfect the clergy in regularity of life, uniformity of officiating, and all variety of learning; then did schism, faction, and jealousy kindle that fire, which destroyed both church and state: and when they had done so, did cunningly cry out upon such, who laboured most to quench it, as if those very men had been the only or the chief incendiaries. It is meet that the younger clerks be reminded of this: because a considerable number of them, who be now admitted into holy orders, and inducted into livings, were not born before the troubles broke forth, which was about the year 1638. These men therefore shall do well to acquaint themselves with the most exact and impartial histories of the last past forty years, wherein there have been the strangest revolutions that ever happened in England in such a space of time. This is requisite to enable them to teach the people of this land (where all things are forgotten) what use they ought to make of God's mercies before, of his judgments in, the wars; and

after them also, of the great plague in the year 1665. Of the Dutch war in the same year, and in the year 1672, &c. and of his contending by fire with the nation, when London (the representative of the whole kingdom) was burnt in the year 1666. And secondly, to tell them, what he that has but half an eye may easily foresee, that the effect of publishing this book will be in no mediocrity. It will do either exceeding great good to the clergy, or exceeding much prejudice. Much good, if it work so upon the clergy, as effectually to persuade them to conform to that holy character delineated in the book: otherwise it will produce much prejudice; by framing so perfect an idea of a curate of souls in the minds of the laity, and by erecting such a great expectation and desire, that he, who takes care of theirs, be exactly such an one as this book has described; that if herein they be frustrated, all will be sorry, some will murmur and rage, others will perhaps forsake their parish church, if not the English: *Deus avertat.*

The portraiture of virtue in general displayed by eloquence is very amiable. But perfections proper to any of the three grand vocations, (especially that of the clergy, daily attendants on the Holy One,) the more accurately their characters be imprinted in the minds of others, the more despicable do they render the professors that want them. And the ordinary sort of people (which are the most) will wrest the defects of the man upon the profession; and, at the next remove, upon the best accomplished professors.

This consideration gives me the cue, to insert here a most passionate request, which I tender to the younger clergy, by the mercies of God, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, (of whose eternal priesthood they have a share,) and by the preciousness of their own and others' souls committed to their charge, that they will seriously consider, whether my last conjecture be not

more than probable: if they think it so, there will be less need to entreat them to forecast, or bethink themselves, what a stock of learning and prudence the occasions of these times (conference with sectaries, and disputation with papists) will require: what an habit of gravity in attire, and of retiredness in conversation, is necessary to make a clergyman exemplary to the loose and vain conversation of these days: what an adult degree of virtue and godliness it must be, that must withstand the incursion of profaneness in this age. And there will not be so much need to beseech them to buy fathers, councils, and other good classic books; to mortify the flesh with study, fasting, and prayer, and to do every thing becoming a curate of souls: using this book, as a looking-glass, to inform them what is decent.

§. 4. In this fourth paragraph I intend an address to our non-conforming brethren; both to those that are out of parochial cures, and to those that, having benefices, conform with duplicity of mind, and do as little as they can. I beg leave to tell them, (and desire them to believe that I do it in all sincere humility and charity,)

First, That all the clergy of mine acquaintance, and, I verily believe, all the old clergy of the nation, as well as my poor self, and many of the younger, do long to see ourselves and our younger brethren conform to that idea of a clerk, which the noble holy Herbert hath portrayed in this book.

Secondly, That what dissimilitude is found in the younger clergy is partly occasioned by that disturbance which the late wars made in the universities.

Thirdly, They therefore have the greatest reason imaginable to come in with speed, and join cordially in helping to repair those breaches in the church, (which they first made,) at which, swarms of sectaries have entered in amongst us, and too many others have eloped out into the church of Rome.

I do verily believe, that the best amongst them would think it a rich blessing to see both church and state in such condition as they were in before themselves moved towards a change. And if all the presbyterians would first seriously reflect upon the issues of their attempts; the death of the king, the best of princes; of the archbishop of Canterbury, of the lords Strafford and Montrose, four persons most worthy to live, (as Josephus says of those Jews whom the zealots slew in Jerusalem;) and all the blood spilt, and treasure spent in the wars:

Secondly, Upon the sudden total disappointment of their whole design:

Thirdly, Upon the manifested falseness of that calumny cast upon the good old bishops and clergy, as if they meant to bring in popery, (for the increase of which, the presbyterians have given great opportunity, though they did not intend it:)

Fourthly, Upon the sad corruption of manners, that broke in upon the demolition of government:

Fifthly, Upon the apostasy from the church, and violent inundation of sects: methinks they should not think it enough, to wipe their mouths, and wash their hands, and say, *We meant well, we intended the glory of God,* &c. but to bring forth fruits meet for penitents; that is, because they made havock of the church, to labour more abundantly to repair it; and to do this with speed, and in sincerity.

§. 5. This fifth paragraph contains a friendly prosopœia or apostrophe to T. B. the author of a book intituled, *The grounds and occasions of the contempt of the clergy*. If the author had subscribed his name, I might perhaps have said to him what I here write. Sir, I am sorry that that wit of yours is not under the conduct of more wisdom. You have reprov'd divers things worthy of reproof; but in a manner worthy to be reprov'd: i. e. *scoptice, sarcastice*, with wit satirical;

not with that gravity wherewith such faults ought to be reproved : like one puffed up, and not like a mourner.

You have rightly pitched upon two sluices that let into the church men not rightly qualified. 1. Promiscuous admission into the universities. 2. Indiscriminate or præproperous ordinations ; which latter is often but a consequent of the former. For after admission, and twelve terms, a degree and letters testimonial do too usually follow of course. And the bishop will in charity construe the subscription of ten or twelve presbyters in a college equivalent to the imposition of so many hands with him in ordination : except he do, as bishop Wren, lord bishop of Ely, used most carefully to do ; never accept a testimonial, unless it did certify, that the subscribers thought the party qualified for holy orders.

I will suppose that you neither intended to give that offence which your book has given to divers eminent, grave, and learned men in both universities ; nor to yield that nutriment to profaneness which your book hath done. For I hear (by those that are sorry for it) that as some things in your book were matter of chat in coffee-houses at C. before it was printed ; so now since it was printed, they be matter of pastime in taverns at L. where wit, and wine, and profaneness *sport themselves in their own deceivings* ; and make the faults of God's ministers (for which all that fear God do grieve) the matter of unhallowed mirth. Sir, how could you write that descant upon our blessed Saviour's words—*Weep not for me*—without mingling your tears with your ink ? Had you known the author, you would have pitied him ; he was a man of great wit, mixed with excess ; of a fancy extended to his hurt.

One of your exceptions, i. e. poverty, is so far from being a ground of contempt, that it is a cause of commiseration and honour, *ab extra, ab intra*, of comfort and joy. Aristotle says, *He is the best artificer that can make the*

best shoe of that leather that is given him. That minister that hath a poor living, and yet lives as well and does as much good as is possible to be done by any one that hath no better, shall have praise both of God and man. I have not observed any one thing (be-hither vice) that hath occasioned so much contempt of the clergy, as unwillingness to take, or keep, a poor living.

An holy man in a poor living is in a kingdom ; if there be a kingdom of heaven upon earth ; as I believe, I know, there is. It is a thesis that I dare undertake to make good against a Jesuit : *Status inopis parochi in ecclesia Anglicana est perfectior statu cujuslibet monachi in ecclesia Romana.*

There be two main occasions of contempt which you take no notice of. The one external, and that is, ENVY ; a mighty engine, which sometimes casts hatred and instruments of death, sometimes bolts of scorn, upon men. *Laici sunt infensi clericis*, is a proverb that holds in the many. It daily feeds, partly, upon the patrimony of the church, by God's wonderful providence restored to the clergy, and rescued from those that had devoured it ; (and I do here, in the name of my brethren, acknowledge, that, for THAT MERCY, and the mean profits of it, we are all accountable to God and man ;) partly, upon the sedentary lives of churchmen ; because they do not make tents as St. Paul did, nor hold the plough, thresh, or drive trades, as themselves do, they think them idle persons.

The other occasion omitted by you, (which also affords nourishment to envy,) is the affectation of gallantry, &c.

But your defect in assigning real grounds is recompensed with a great excess of instances in a long legend of clerks ; *οί πολλοί καπηλεύοντες και δολούντες τόν λόγον του Θεου* : some of which were dead nigh sixty years ago. I hope God has forgiven them ; and I beseech him to prevent the like in all that be alive. And I pray you

consider what reputation he is like to gain, that in a church having eight or nine thousand parishes, and perhaps as many clerks, or more, shall make it his business to ravel into sixty years backward, (twenty of which were a miserable anarchy,) and to collect the *imprudenter dicta* of young and weak preachers, to weed their books, and make a composure, loathsome to all good men, delightful only to such as *make a mock of sin*. Besides, you have imposed upon the reader, by charging the clergy of the church of England with those wild notions which were delivered by fanatics, qualified neither with orders nor arts. As for instance, (pag. 71. viz.) that the worm Jacob is a threshing worm, &c. It was delivered in Blackfriars church, London, in the year 1654, by a fanatic mechanic, who at that time was one of colonel Harrison's regiment, one of the late king's murderers. This is attested by a person of quality, who then was an ear-witness.

Sir, by this time I hope you are willing to consider, 1. Whether it had not been better to have thrown a cover of silence over all your instances. I will tell you a sad inconvenience that comes from the mere relation of the abuses of holy Scripture, made either by profane wit or weak folly. They do βασανίζειν every pious soul that hears or reads them. They infest the memory or fancy, and, (as the fowls that came down upon Abraham's sacrifice,) by presenting themselves, trouble a man's mind whilst he is reading the word of God, and should only attend to the pure meaning of the Spirit. Besides, one relation begets another, and so on till they engender, till profaneness become tradition. And therefore wise men make a conscience of making rehearsal of witty applications that wrong the text.

2. Whether the event have not overreached your intent. The pretence of your book was to shew the occasions; your book is become an occasion of the contempt of God's ministers.

3. What service you have done, and what thanks you may expect from God, the church, and state, if your book shall (by accident only) deter but one ingenuous youth, one hopeful gentleman, one noble man of good and great endowments, from entering into holy orders; the expedient appointed by God for saving souls.

But blessed be God, who hath secured the honour of the function from being disparaged by the misdemeanours of men that officiate in it; or by the malignity of such as observe their failings, with design to revile them.

Though the vulgar ordinarily do not, yet the nobility and gentry do, distinguish and abstract the errors of the man from the holy calling, and not think their dear relations degraded by receiving holy orders.

He that would see a fair catalogue of ancient nobles who were consecrated bishops, (well toward the primitive times of Christianity,) let him read the epistle dedicatory of the rev. Dr. Cave's book, intituled, *Primitive Christianity*. And for our late and present times, accept of that which here followeth.

I have read, that Henry the Eighth was by his father designed to the archbishopric of Canterbury, if his brother, prince Arthur, had lived to succeed in the crown.

Dr. Montague, who was bishop of Winchester, (when I was young,) was uncle to the lord chamberlain that last died, or at least nigh of kindred to his father, who, after he passed through many honourable offices, died president of the king's most honourable privy council.

The old earl of Westmorland did dedicate one of his sons to God's service in the sanctuary; and he became a good example of gravity and piety to those of that calling; and, for any thing I know, is so till this day.

So did the old lord Cameron, (father to Ferdinando lord Fairfax,) a son of his; who was first a regular and

sober fellow of Trinity college in Cambridge, and afterward rector of Bolton-Percy in Yorkshire, where he was sequestered (we may well conclude) for his good affection to God and the king, if his brother or nephew could not secure him.

There was a brother of the lord Gray's of Wark in Cambridge, in my time, who was very studious and virtuous, and after that entered into holy orders, and took a charge of souls upon him, and discharged it as became him.

The rev. Dr. Gray, rector of Burbidge, in the county of Leicester, was earl of Kent, about the year of God 1640.

There be divers persons of noble extraction, which have lately entered into holy orders, and are most worthily dignified and promoted in this church.

One is, the right rev. Dr. Henry Compton, now lord bishop of Oxon, brother to the right hon. earl of Northampton that now is, and son to that valiant earl, who was slain in the high places of the field, fighting for his God and for his king, in the year 1643.

The rev. Dr. Greenville, brother to the right hon. the earl of Bath, is another.

The right rev. Dr. Crew, clerk of the closet to his majesty, now the right rev. lord bishop of Durham, and son to the right hon. lord Crew, is another.

The rev. Mr. John North, late fellow of Jesus college, and public professor of the Greek tongue in the university of Cambridge, and prebendary of Westminster, son to the right hon. the lord North of Cartledge, is another.

The rev. Dr. Brereton, son to the late lord Brereton of Brereton-Green in Cheshire, is another.

My hopes that there be more (I pray God make them an hundred times more) noble worthy persons entered into holy orders, admonish me to beg pardon of all such

whose names I have (not pretermitted, but) omitted, only out of a mere negative ignorance, occasioned by my private condition.

These noble persons, so excellently qualified with virtues, learning, and piety, by bringing along with them into the church the eminency of their birth also, have cast a lustre upon the clergy, (as greater stars help to brighten up their less-shining neighbours,) and have advanced their Christian priesthood to the height it was at under the law of nature, when it was the hereditary honour and prerogative of the first-born of the chief family to be the priest of the most high God.

And surely these noble persons have shewed (and so will all the nobility that follow them shew) a twofold wisdom in their choice of this holy function. For first, the calling gives them better opportunities to get heaven : and secondly, it gives them title to the good things of the earth, (rectories, donatives, dignities,) their portions in the church's patrimony, which cannot miss them, being doubly so well qualified.

The advantage of doing God service, which height of birth gives to a nobleman or gentleman, over what a clerk of lower parentage hath, is very considerable. The truth taught by them is sooner believed ; a reproof bestowed by them is better received ; an example of virtue shewed by them makes deeper impression, than the same coming from one of meaner extraction would do. This observation I first made in those two great lights of our church, Dr. Fern, lord bishop of Chester, who was a knight's son ; and Dr. Hammond, who was of an ancient family. And the reader will observe more in this book, whose author was a person nobly descended.

The wisdom of this land confirms this truth. Our laws give that privilege to higher birth, which a man of meaner descent must stay, and study, and perform divers exercises for, by the space of fourteen years. To be a

knight's son, born in wedlock, is as good a qualification for some preferments, as to be a bachelor in divinity.

The example and wisdom of these noble persons will save me the labour of beseeching the other nobility and gentry of this kingdom; 1. To think the priesthood a function not unworthy of them, or their relations. 2. To look upon the patrimony of the church, as a good provision for their own dear children: as it is also for every mother's son of the commonalty that is duly qualified. And, 3. Therefore, that it is not only an impious thing, because sacrilege, but also an impolitic deed, because destructive of the means of a man's own and his children's well-being, to wish or desire, much more to consent to, or endeavour, the taking away of church-means devoted to God for the maintenance of such as attend his service.

This address to the nobles has not made me forget T. B. I mean to take my leave of him in as friendly a manner as I begun; and the rather, because he intimates a wish, that some augmentation of means might be made to the poor clergy. A thing that my soul desireth: and more; I intend to endeavour it, when and wherever it lies in my power. If I had ten thousand pounds, I would give nine thousand of it to that use. A thing which the cathedral church of Worcester hath carefully done: and I know not any cathedral that hath left it undone.

I know a prebendary of the cathedral church of York, that refused three hundred pounds fine for renewing a lease of an impropriation; and chose rather to settle half the clear profits of the tithes for an augmentation upon the vicar. And another, of another church, that hath settled a tithe that cost three hundred and fifty pounds; with divers other instances of this kind.

He may see I have complied with his wish. I entreat him to condescend to an earnest request of mine; that

he would endeavour, if not to augment the means of the poor clergy, yet to recompense the injury his book hath done them.

§. 6. But all this while, do I not forget myself much, and the reader more? I will conclude this preface with a short description of a complete clergyman.

He is a son, like Samuel, begged of God by his devout parents before he was begotten by them; and dedicated to serve God in his sanctuary before he was born; upon presupposal of shape and temper of body, of abilities and faculties of mind fit for that service: and these allowed for such by men of exquisite judgment: seasoned in his infancy, at home, with piety; at school, with arts; accomplished with sciences and degrees at the university; prepared for holy orders by prayer, and reading (*St. Chrysostom de Sacerdotio, St. Gregory's Pastoral*, and such other books as learned men shall direct): called by a bishop, or excited by a master of a college, or some grave divine, to receive holy orders. And when he is entered, he governs himself by the canons of the church, and best examples of the age. In sum; he imitates the author of *The Temple*, and of this book, *The Priest to the Temple*, the holy Mr. George Herbert. To whom God assimilate the clergy, and amongst them

The most unworthy,

BARNABAS OLEY.



A
PREFATORY VIEW
OF THE
LIFE AND VIRTUES OF THE AUTHOR,
AND
EXCELLENCIES OF THIS BOOK.

To the Christian, more designedly to the clergy-reader of the same time, and rank, and mind, and in like condition with the epistler. Grace, &c. and recovery, and profit by the ensuing tract.

My poor and dear brother,

DO not expect, I humbly beseech thee, the high and glorious titles of *companion in tribulation, and in the patience of Jesus*, &c. I could most willingly (if I thought that I could truly) give thee them; knowing, that what lustre I cast upon thee would by reflex light upon myself. But my mouth is stopped: let God be true, and the justice of God be justified.

1. The reading of those piercing scriptures, 1 Sam. ii. and iii. Jerem. xxiii. Ezek. iii. and xxxiii. Hos. iv. Mal. ii. 2. The view of this ensuing tract; which, methinks, is not a book of thirty-seven chapters, but a bill of seven times thirty-seven indictments against thee and me: a strange *speculum sacerdotale*; in its discovery something resembling the secret of the holy

Urim: as if this good Bezaleel had invented a living, pure looking-glass, in most exact proportions of beauty, that should both present itself as a body of unblemished perfections, and shew all the beholder's deformities at once; that should shew thee both Aaron in the holy of holies, before the mercy-seat, in all his pure ornaments; and Hophni or Phinehas, ravening for their fees of flesh, and wallowing in their lust at the door of the tabernacle. 3. The reflecting on common conversation in the day of our prosperity, and the paralleling the book of mine own conscience with the author's book, in both which I find myself (not to say thee) written highly defective in every duty the good man commends, and not a little peccant in every particular taxed by him. These three have convinced, and even enforced me to confess, that I am sure mine, and, I fear, thy sufferings are not the mere sufferings of pure and perfect martyrs, but of grievous transgressors. Not only under the rods of God's just judgment, but the scorpions of his heavy displeasure, fierce wrath, and sore indignation. Not only from the smoking of God's jealousy, or the sparks of his anger, but the flames of his furnace, (heat seven times more than ever,) yea, even from the furiousness of the wrath of God. Psalm lxxviii. 50.

God's sinking the gates, his destroying the walls, his slighting the strong holds of Zion; his polluting the kingdom, his swallowing the palaces, his cutting off the horn of Israel: God's hating our feasts, his abominating our sabbaths, his loathing our solemnities, Isai. i. God's forgetting his footstool, his abhorring his sanctuary, his casting off his altar, are to me signs that the glory of God is departed to the mountain, Ezek. xi. 23. that God hath in the indignation of his anger despised the king and the priest, Lam. ii. It must be acknowledged sure, that the hand of God hath gone out against us, more than against others of our rank at other times; at least, that God hath not restrained violence against us, so as he did that against those of our profession in the days of old: the portion of the Egyptian priests, that served the Ox, the Ape, and the Onion, escaped sale in time of the famine. Learned Junius, in his *Academia*, chap. iv. says, that the *Philistines spared the schools of the*

prophets in their wars with Israel : and that the *Phœnicians, Chaldæans, and Indians were tender over such places* : thus then did God restrain the spirits of princes ; yet that God, who in his own law, Lev. xxv. 32, gave the Levites a special privilege of redeeming lands (sold by themselves) at any time, when other tribes were limited to a set time, hath not stayed the madness of the people against us, but that our portions are sold unto others without redemption.

We must acknowledge that God's word hath taken hold of us, Zech. i. 5. that the Lord hath devised a device against us, hath watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us ; for under the whole heaven hath not been done, as hath been done upon Jerusalem. Dan. ix. 14.

Let us not flatter ourselves presumptuously. The punishment answers the sin, as the wax the seal, and as the mould owns the figure : and let us own both. It is very dangerous to bless ourselves too boldly ; God has cursed our blessings, Mal. ii. 2. And that he may bless to us our very curses, let us take with us words and say, *To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, and multiplied pardons ; to us shame and confusion, as at this day.* The most compendious way to get what belongs to God, is, to take to ourselves what belongs to us. If we would judge ourselves, and every man, knowing the plague of his own heart, lay God's dealing to heart ; and, accepting of our punishment, give glory to God, and humble ourselves under his mighty hand ; then shall God exalt us, and accept us, and take away our reproach.

If we shall confess our sins, that, like Simeon and Levi, we have been brethren in evil, have broken the covenant of Levi, have done violence to, and been partial in the law, have made ourselves vile, and therefore are justly, by God, made contemptible and base before the people, Mal. ii. If we shall confess, that we neither understood nor valued our high and holy calling as Christians, much less as ministers of Christ ; that we did not thrive kindly, when Providence had planted and watered us in those horns of oil, the two universities ; or that, when it had removed us into country cures, we did not fructify (as this book will shew) in any proportion to his encouragements, and there-

fore are justly cashiered out of his service, and stript of his rewards : God is faithful and just to forgive us : for, Job xxxiii. 27. *he looks upon men ; if any say, I have sinned, I have perverted that which was right, and it profited me not ; he will deliver his soul from the pit, his life shall see the light.*

And now, let none think, that this confession will give advantage to the adversaries ; they may take where none is given : they may say, “ Let the Lord be glorified : by their own confession, *we offend not*, though we devour them, *because they have sinned against the Lord, the habitation of justice.*” Jer. l. 7. But they will find at last, that to forsake the Levite is a sin ; that it is a bitter thing to help forward affliction, when God is but a little displeas'd : that Jerusalem will be a cup of trembling, and a burdensome stone to every one that cries but, Down with it. Woe to thee, O Assur, the rod of God's anger ; the staff in thine hand is God's indignation. Thou, Lord, hast ordained him for judgment, and established him for correction ; even for our correction, to purify us sons of Levi from our dross ; (howbeit, he meaneth not so ;) and by his hand, who punisheth us not only for that which is sin, to put on us martyr's robes ; by that contrivance both chastening and covering our sins ; as the Persians use their nobles, beating their clothes, and saving their persons.

There can be no credit lost by giving glory to God. Did Achan lose any thing by confessing that God had found him out, and his garment, and his wedge ? Hath not Adonibezek got a fame of ingenuity, for acknowledging God's art of justicing, in that most exact way of counter passion or retaliation, which is so frequent in these times, though it is not considered ? What lost Luther by confessing his personal defects as to God, though he yielded not a jot in his cause as to men ? What enemy ever upbraided that to him ? or this to the ingenuous learned Cajetan ? his humble and seasonable confession upon lasting record in his comments on the thirteenth verse of the fifth chapter of saint Matthew's Gospel : *Ye are the salt—if the salt have lost, &c. ?* The French army had taken Rome, when he was about that text, and offered great abuse to the clergy there : which he christianly resenting, inserts this passage ;

“ We prelates of the church of Rome do at this time find this truth verified on us in a special measure ! being by the just judgment of God become a spoil, and a prey, and captives ; not to infidels, but to Christians ; because we who were chosen to be the salt of the earth, *evanvimus*, were become light persons, and unsavoury, good for nothing but outward ceremonies, and *externa bona*, the revenues temporal. Hence it is that both we and this city be trodden under foot this sixth of May, 1527.” And that excellent Charles the Fifth is honourable for no one thing more, than for acknowledging the hand of God upon him, both at that pinch which made him pant out, *Jam me ab omnibus desertum video* ; and upon a lesser occasion than that, namely, when his domestics had left him all alone late at night, and he would needs hold the candle to Seldius, shewing him the way down the stairs, and up to God, he said, “ Thine eyes have seen me environed with great armies ; now thou seest me abandoned of mine ordinary servants. I acknowledge this change to come from him with whom is no shadow of change, from the mighty hand of God, and I will by no means withstand it.” And it is reported that the Scottish presbyters, sensible of God’s hand upon them, are at this time making their addresses to God, by confession of their sins respectively : God grant that both we and they may do it right. Though I shall still strive with them about the justice of the First Cause ; yet about the justness of our persons will I not strive with them, nor about any other matter, save only who shall confess themselves greater sinners to God. I have omitted David, Psalm li. and Ezra, and Nehemiah, and Daniel in their ninth chapters, and cited only these to confirm myself, and thee, brother, in this duty of giving glory to God in this manner, *Et confiteantur tibi omnes populi* : even so, true and righteous are thy judgments in all the world, O Lord God Almighty ; yea, merciful are they, and far below our deservings.

I hope no man will think, though I speak thus, that I give him leave to construe my words mathematically, as if there was not an atom or hair of a good man, or man of God, in our church. There were divers primitive, (and are at this day, blessed

be God; the Lord make them a thousand times more than they are,) holy, and heavenly souls, vessels chosen and fitted for the service of the sanctuary. I shall be bold to instance in three who died in peace; few considering (some did) that they were taken away from the evil to come, lest their eyes should see (what their spirits foresaw) what is come on us, on whom the days, not of visitation only, but of vengeance, even the ends of the world are come.

The first of these was Thomas Jackson, D. D. late president of Corpus Christi college in Oxford, and sometime vicar of St. Nicholas church in Newcastle upon Tyne; two places that must give account to God for the good they had, or might have had, by that man; as all scholars must for his neglected works.

The second was Mr. Nicholas Farrer, of Little Gidding in Huntingdonshire, sometimes fellow-commoner and fellow of Clare-hall in Cambridge.

The third was the author of this book, Mr. George Herbert, fellow of Trinity college, orator of the university of Cambridge, and rector of Bemerton in Wiltshire. All three holy in their lives, eminent in their gifts, signal protestants for their religion, painful in their several stations, precious in their deaths, and sweet in their memories.

First, I will give thee a brief of some confrontments common to them all, and then some of their, at least this author's, proper excellencies apart.

1. They all had that inseparable lot and sign of Christ and Christians, (Isa. viii. 18. Heb. ii. 13. Luke ii. 34.) to be signs of contradiction, (or spoken against,) men wondered at, and rated by the world. Doctor Jackson in two particulars suffered much. 1. He had like to have been sore shent by the parliament in the year 1628, for tenets in divinity, I cannot say, so far driven by him, as by some men now they are with great applause. His approach to unity was very near. "Grant me," saith he, "but these two things, that God has a true freedom in doing good, and man a true freedom in doing evil:" there needs be no other controversy betwixt the opposites in point of providence and predestination. See his *Epist. dedicat.* to his sixth book. 2. He had an adversary in England who writ a book against

him, with a title not so kindly as might have been devised. It was this; *A discovery of Dr. Jackson's Follies* which he bound as an ornament upon him, (as Job says,) that is, never answered but in the language of the lamb dumb before the shearer, silence and sufferance. And he had one in Scotland who also girded at him, without cause or answer.

And for Mr. Farrer, he was so exercised with contradictions, as no man, that lived so private as he desired to do, could possibly be more. I have heard him say, valuing (not resenting his own) sufferings in this kind, that "to fry a fagot was not "more martyrdom than continual obloquy." He was torn asunder as with mad horses, or crushed betwixt the upper and under millstone of contrary reports; that he was a papist, and that he was a puritan. What is, if this be not, to be sawn asunder as Esay, stoned as Jeremy, made a drum, or tympanized, as other saints of God were? And after his death, when, by injunction, which he laid upon his friends when he lay on his death-bed, a great company of comedies, tragedies, love hymns, heroical poems, &c. were burnt upon his grave, as utter enemies to Christian principles and practices, (that was his brand,) some poor people said, he was a conjurer.

And for our author, (the sweet singer of the temple,) though he was one of the most prudent and accomplished men of his time, I have heard sober men censure him as a man that did not manage his brave parts to his best advantage and preferment, but lost himself *in an humble way*; that was the phrase, I well remember it.

The second thing wherein all three agreed, was a singular sincerity in embracing, and transcendent dexterity in defending, the protestant religion established in the church of England. I speak it in the presence of God, I have not read so hearty, vigorous a champion against Rome, (amongst our writers of his rank,) so convincing and demonstrative as Dr. Jackson is. I bless God for the confirmation which he hath given me in the Christian religion against the atheist, Jew, and Socinian, and in the protestant against Rome: as also, by what I have seen in manuscript of Mr. Farrer's, and heard by relation of his travels over the western parts of Christendom; in which, his exquisite

carriage, his rare parts and abilities of understanding and languages, his morals more perfect than the best, did tempt the adversaries to tempt him, and mark him for a prize, if they could compass him. And opportunity they had to do this, in a sickness that seized on him at Padua, where mighty care was had by physicians and others to recover his bodily health, with design to infect his soul. But neither did their physic nor poison work any change in his religion, but rather inflamed him with an holy zeal, to revenge their charity, by transplanting their waste and misplaced zeal, (as they were all three admirable in separating from the vile, what was precious in every sect or person under heaven,) to adorn our protestant religion, by a right renouncing the world with all its profits and honours, in a true crucifying the flesh, with all its pleasures, by continued temperance, fasting, and watching unto prayers. In all which exercises, as he far outwent the choicest of their retired men, so did he far undervalue these deeds, rating them much below such prices as they set upon them. Upon this design he helped to put out Lessius, and to stir up us ministers to be painful in that excellent labour of the Lord, catechising, feeding the lambs of Christ: he translated a piece of Lud. Carbo; wherein Carbo confesseth, that the heretics (i. e. protestants) had got much advantage by catechising: but the authority at Cambridge suffered not that Egyptian jewel to be published.

And he that reads Mr. Herbert's poems attendingly, shall find not only the excellencies of scripture divinity, and choice passages of the fathers bound up in metre; but the doctrine of Rome also finely and strongly confuted; as in the poems, *To saints and angels*, p. 69. *The British church*, p. 102. *Church militant, &c.*

Thus stood they in aspect to Rome and her children on the left hand. As for our brethren that erred on the right hand, Dr. Jackson speaks for himself; and Mr. Farrer, though he ever honoured their persons, that were pious and learned, and always spoke of them with much Christian respect, yet would he bewail their mistakes, which, like mists, led them in some points back again to those errors of Rome which they had forsaken. To instance in one: He that says, preaching in the pulpit is

absolutely necessary to salvation, falls into two Romish errors : 1. That the scripture is too dark : 2. That it is insufficient to save a man. And perhaps a third, advancing the man of Rome more than they intend him, I am sure. But the chief aim of Mr. Farrer and this author was, to win those that disliked our liturgy, catechism, &c. by the constant, reverent, and holy use of them : which surely had we all imitated, having first imprinted the virtue of these prayers in our own hearts, and then studied with passionate and affectionate celebration, (for voice, gesture, &c.) as in God's presence, to imprint them in the minds of the people, (as this book teaches,) our prayers had been generally as well beloved as they were scorned. And for my part, I am apt to think, that our prayers stood so long, was a favour by God granted us at the prayers of these men, (who prayed for these prayers as well as in them;) and that they fell so soon, was a punishment of our negligence, (and other sins,) who had not taught even those that liked them well, to use them aright; but that the good old woman would absolve, though not so loud, yet as confidently as the minister himself.

Lastly, the blessed Three in One did make these three men agree in one point more. That one Spirit, which divides to every man gifts as he pleases, seems to me to have dropped upon these three elect vessels all of them some unction or tincture of the Spirit of prophecy. Shall I say, I hope, or fear Mr. Herbert's lines, p. 190, should be verified ?

Religion stands on tiptoe in our land,
Ready to pass to the American strand.
When height of malice and prodigious lusts,
Impudent sinnings, witchcrafts, and distrusts,
(The marks of future bane,) shall fill our cup
Unto the brim, and make our measure up :
When Seine shall swallow Tyber, and the Thames,
By letting in them both, pollutes her streams :
When Italy of us shall have her will,
And all her calendar of sins fulfil ;
Whereby one may foretell, what sins next year
Shall both in France and England domineer ;
Then shall religion to America flee :
They have their times of gospel, even as we.
My God, thou dost prepare for them a way ;
By carrying first their gold from them away ;

For gold and grace did never yet age,^h
 Religion always sides with poverty.
 We think we rob them, but we think amiss ;
 We are more poor, and they more rich by this.
 Thou wilt revenge their quarrel, making grace
 To pay our debts, and leave our ancient place
 To go to them ; while that which now their nation
 But lends to us, shall be our desolation.

I pray God he may prove a true prophet for poor America, not against poor England. Ride on, most mighty Jesu, because of the word of truth. Thy gospel is a light big enough for them and us : but leave us not. The people of thine holiness have possessed it but a little while ; Isaiah lxiii. 15, &c.

When some farmers near the place where Mr. Farrer lived, somewhat before these times, desired longer leases to be made them, he intimated, that seven years would be long enough ; troublous times were coming : they might thank God if they enjoyed them so long in peace.

But considering the accustomed modesty of Dr. Jackson in speaking of things not certain, I much admire that strange appendix to his sermons, (partly delivered before the king, about the signs of the times, printed in the year 1637,) touching the great tempest of wind which fell out upon the eve of the fifth of November, 1636. He was much astonished at it ; and what apprehension he had of it appears by these words of his :
 “ This mighty wind was more than a sign of the time, *tempus*
 “ *ipsum admonebat*, the very time itself was a sign, and inter-
 “ prets this messenger’s voice better than a linguist, as well as
 “ the prophets (were any now) could do. Both wind and time
 “ teach us that truth often mentioned in these meditations.
 “ Thus much the reader may understand, that though we of this
 “ kingdom were in firm league with all the nations of the earth,
 “ yet it is still in God’s power, we may fear in his purpose, to
 “ plague this kingdom by his own immediate hand, by this
 “ messenger, or by like tempests, more grievously than he hath
 “ done at any time, by the famine, sword, or pestilence, to bury
 “ many living souls, as well of superior as inferior rank, in the
 “ ruins of their stately houses or meaner cottages.” &c.

And what shall be thought of that which fell from his pen in

his epistle dedicatory of his *Attributes*, written November, 20, 1627, and printed 1628, in these words, or more? “If any
“ maintain, that all things were so decreed by God before the
“ creation, that nothing since could have fallen out otherwise
“ than it hath done; that nothing can be amended that is amiss:
“ I desire leave to oppugn his opinion, not only as an error, but
“ as an ignorance involving enmity to the sweet providence of
“ God; as a forerunner of ruin to flourishing states and king-
“ doms, where it grows common, or comes to full height.”

Was this a conjecture of prudence? or a censure of the physical influence, or of the meritorious effect of these tenets? or rather, a prediction of an event? Let the reader judge.

In these they did agree: the sequel will shew wherein they differed.

This author, Mr. G. Herbert, was extracted out of a generous, noble, and ancient family: his father was Richard Herbert of Blache-hall, in Montgomery, esq. descended from the great sir Richard Herbert in Edward the Fourth's time; and so his relation to the noble family of that name well known. His mother was daughter of sir Richard Newport of Arcoll, who doubtless was a pious daughter, she was so good and godly a mother. She had ten children, Job's number, and Job's distinction, seven sons; for whose education she went and dwelt in the university, to recompense the loss of their father by giving them two mothers. And this great care of hers, this good son of hers studied to improve and requite, as is seen in those many Latin and Greek verses, the obsequious *Parentalia*, he made and printed in her memory: which though they be good, very good, yet (to speak freely even of this man I so much honour) they be dull or dead in comparison of his *Temple Poems*. And no marvel; to write those, he made his ink with water of Helicon, but these inspirations propheticall were distilled from above: in those are weak motions of nature; in these, raptures of grace. In those he writ flesh and blood; a frail earthly woman, though a mother: but in these he praised his heavenly Father, the God of men and angels, and the Lord Jesus Christ his master; for so (to quicken himself in duties, and to cut off all depending on

man, whose breath is in his nostrils) he used ordinarily to call our Saviour.

I forget not where I left him: he did thrive so well there, that he was first chosen fellow of the college, and afterward orator of the university. The memorials of him left in the orator's book, shew how he discharged the place; and himself intimates, *Church*, p. 39, that whereas his birth and spirit prompted him to martial achievements, the way that takes the town, and not to sit simpering over a book; God did often melt his spirit, and entice him with academic honour, to be content to wear and wrap up himself in a gown so long, till he durst not put it off, nor retire to any other calling. However, probably he might, I have heard, (as other orators,) have had a secretary of state's place.

But the good man, like a genuine son of Levi, (I had like to have said Melchizedek,) balked all secular ways, saw neither father nor mother, child nor brother, birth nor friends, save in Christ Jesus; chose the Lord for his portion, and his service for employment. And he knew full well what he did when he received holy orders, as appears by every page in this book, and by the poems called *Priesthood*, and *Aaron*; and by his unparalleled vigilancy which he used over his parish, which made him (says that modest author of the epistle before his poems, N. F. who knew him well) "a peer to the primitive saints, and "more than a pattern to his own age."

Besides his parsonage, he had also a prebend in the church of Lincoln; which I think (because he lived far from, and so could not attend the duty of that place) he would fain have resigned to Mr. Farrer, and often earnestly sued to him to discharge him of it: but Mr. Farrer wholly refused, and diverted or directed his charity (as I take it) to the reedifying of the ruined church of Leighton, where the corpse of the prebend lay. So that the church of England owes to him (besides what good may come by this book, towards the repair of us churchmen in point of morals) the reparation of a church-material, and erection of that costly piece of Mosaic or Solomonic work, the temple; which flourishes and stands inviolate, when our other magnificences are desolate and despised.

These things I have said are high ; but yet there is one thing which I admire above all the rest : the right managing of the fraternal duty of reproof is one of the most difficult offices of Christian prudence. O Lord ! what is then the ministerial ? To do it as we should is likely to anger a whole world of wasps, to set fire on the earth. This, I have conjectured, was that which made many holy men leave the world, and live in wildernesses ; which, by the way, was not counted by the ancients an act of perfection, but of cowardice and poor-spiritedness ; of flight to shade and shelter, not of fight in dust and blood, and heat of the day. This author had not only got the courage to do this, but the art of doing this aright.

There came not a man in his way, be he of what rank he would, that spoke awry, (in order to God,) but he wiped his mouth with a modest, grave, and Christian reproof: this was heroic; adequate to that royal law, *Thou shalt in any case reprove thy brother, and not suffer sin upon him.* And that he did this, I have heard from true reporters, and thou mayest see he had learned it himself, else he never had taught it us, as he does in divers passages of this book.

His singular dexterity in sweetening this art, thou mayest see in the garb and phrase of his writing. Like a wise master-builder, he has fetched about a form of speech, transferred it in a figure, as if he was all the while learning from another man's mouth or pen, and not teaching any. And whereas we all of us deserved the sharpness of reproof, (*ἔλεγε ἀποτόμως,*) he saith, " he does this, and he does that ;" whereas, poor men, we did no such thing. This dart of his, thus dipped, pierces the soul.

There is another thing, (some will call it a paradox,) which I learned from him, and Mr. Farrer, in the managery of their most cordial and Christian friendship: That this may be maintained in vigour and height without the ceremonies of visits and compliments ; yea, without any trade of secular courtesies, merely in order to spiritual edification of one another in love. I know they loved each other most entirely, and their very souls cleaved together most intimately, and drove a large stock of Christian intelligence together long before their deaths : yet saw they not

each other in many years ; I think scarce ever, but as members of one university, in their whole lives.

There is one thing more may be learned from these two (I may say these three) also ; namely, that Christian charity will keep unity of souls, amidst great differences of gifts and opinions. There was variation considerable in their endowments : doctor Jackson had in his youth (as if he then had understood God's calling) laid his grounds carefully in arithmetic, grammar, philology, geometry, rhetoric, logic, philosophy, oriental languages, histories, &c. (yea, he had insight in heraldry and hieroglyphics,) he made all these serve either as rubbish under the foundation, or as drudges and day-labourers to theology. He was copious and definitive in controversies of all sorts. Master Farrer was master of the western tongues ; yet cared he not for criticisms and curiosities. He was also very modest in points of controversy, and would scarce venture to opine, even in the points whercin the world censured him possessed. Our author was of a middle temper betwixt, or a compound of both these ; yet having rather more of master Farrer in him : and to what he had of him, he added the art of divine poesy, and other polite learning, which so commended him to persons most eminent in their time, that doctor Donne inscribed to him a paper of Latin verses in print ; and the lord Bacon having translated some psalms into English metre, sent them, with a dedication prefixed, to his very good friend, master George Herbert, thinking that he had kept a true decorum in choosing one so fit for the argument, in respect of divinity and poesy, (the one as the matter, the other as the style,) that a better choice he could not make.

In sum, to distinguish them by better resemblances out of the Old and New Testament, and antiquity : methinks doctor Jackson has somewhat like the spirit of Jeremy, saint James, and Salvian ; master Herbert like David, and other psalm-men, saint John, and Prudentius ; master Farrer like Esay, saint Luke, and saint Chrysostom : yet in this diversity had they such an harmony of souls as was admirable. For instance ; in one who differed in some points from them all, yet in him they so

agreed all, as that master Farrer, out of a great liking of the man, translated him into English; master Herbert commented on him, and commended him to use; and doctor Jackson allowed him for the press: it was Valdesso's 110 Considerations.

It would swell this preface too much to set down the several excellencies of our author: his conscientious expense of time, which he even measured by the pulse, that native watch God has set in every of us; his eminent temperance and frugality, (the two best purveyors for his liberality and beneficence,) his private fastings, his mortification of the body, his extemporary exercises thereof, at the sight or visit of a chanel house, where every bone, before the day, rises up in judgment against fleshly lust and pride: at the stroke of a passing bell, when ancient charity used, said he, to run to church, and assist the dying Christian with prayers and tears, (for sure that was the ground of that custom;) and at all occasions he could lay hold of possibly, which he sought with the same diligence that others shun and shift them: besides his careful (not scrupulous) observation of appointed fasts, lents, and embers. The neglect and defect of this last, he said, had such influx on the children which the fathers of the church did beget at such times, as malignant stars are said to have over natural productions; children of such parents as be fasting and prayers, being like Isaac, and Jacob, and Samuel; most likely to become children of the promise, wrestlers with God, and fittest to wear a linen ephod. And with this fasting he impeded his prayers both private and public: his private must be left to God, who saw and heard them in secret; his public were the morning and evening sacrifice of the church liturgy, which he used with conscientious devotion, not of custom, but serious judgment; knowing, 1. That the sophism used to make people hate them, was a solid reason to make men of understanding love them; namely, because taken out of the mass book; taken out, but as gold from dross, the precious from the vile. The wise reformers knew Rome would cry, Schism, Schism, and therefore they kept all they could lawfully keep, being loath to give offence; as our blessed Saviour, being loath to offend the Jews at the great reformation, kept divers old elements, and made them new

sacraments and services; as their frequent washings he turned into one baptism; some service of the passover into the Lord's supper. 2. That the homeliness and coarseness, which also was objected, was a great commendation. The lambs, the poor of the flock, are forty for one grounded Christian: proportionable must be the care of the Church to provide milk; that is, plain and easy nourishment for them: and so had our church done, hoping that stronger Christians, as they abounded in gifts, so they had such store of the grace of charity, as for their weak brethren's sakes to be content therewith.

He thought also that a set liturgy was of great use in respect of those without, whether erring Christians, or unbelieving men: that when we had used our best arguments against their errors or unbelief, we might shew them a form wherein we did, and desired they would serve Almighty God with us: that we might be able to say, This is our church, here we would land you. Thus we believe, see the Creed. Thus we pray, baptize, catechise, celebrate the eucharist, marry, bury, entreat the sick, &c.

These, besides unity, and other necessary benefits, he thought grounds sufficient to bear him out in this practice: wherein he ended his life, calling for the church-prayers a while before his death, saying, "None to them, none to them;" at once both commending them, and his soul to God in them, immediately before his dissolution, as some martyrs did, Mr. Hullier by name, vicar of Babram, burnt to death in Cambridge; who having the Common Prayer Book in his hand, instead of a censer, and using the prayers as incense, offered up himself as a whole burnt sacrifice to God; with whom the very book itself suffered martyrdom, when fallen out of his consumed hands, it was by the executioners thrown into the fire, and burnt as an heretical book.

He was moreover so great a lover of church music, that he usually called it heaven upon earth, and attended it a few days before his death. But above all, his chief delight was in the holy scripture, one leaf whereof he professed he would not part with, though he might have the whole world in exchange. That was his wisdom, his comfort, his joy; out of that he took his motto; LESS THAN THE LEAST OF ALL GOD'S MERCIES. In

that he found the substance, Christ, and in Christ remission of sins, yea, in his blood he placed the goodness of his good works. "It is a good work," said he of building a church, "if it be sprinkled with the blood of Christ."

This high esteem of the word of life, as it wrought in himself a wondrous expression of high reverence, whenever he either read it himself, or heard others read it, so it made him equally wonder, that those which pretended such extraordinary love to Christ Jesus, as many did, could possibly give such leave and liberty to themselves as to hear that word that shall judge us at the last day, without any the least expression of that holy fear and trembling, which they ought to charge upon their souls in private, and in public to imprint upon others.

Thus have I with my foul hands soiled this and the other fair pieces, and worn out thy patience, courteous reader: yet have I not so much as with one dash of a pencil offered to describe that person of his, which afforded so unusual a contesseration of elegancies, and set of rarities to the beholder: nor said I any thing of his personal relation, as an husband to a loving and virtuous lady; as a kinsman, master, &c. yet will I not conceal his spiritual love and care of servants: teaching masters this duty, to allow their servants daily time wherein to pray privately, and to enjoin them to do it: holding this for true generally, that public prayer alone to such persons is no prayer at all.

I have given thee only these lineaments of his mind, and thou mayest fully serve thyself of this book, in what virtue of his thy soul longeth after. His practice it was, and his character it is, his as author, and his as object: yet, lo, the humility of this gracious man! He had small esteem of this book, and but very little of his poems. Though God had magnified him with extraordinary gifts, yet said he, "God has broken into my study, and taken off my chariot-wheels; I have nothing worthy of God." And yet this lowliness in his own eyes doth more advance their worth and his virtues.

I have done, when I have besought the reverend fathers, some cathedral, ecclesiastical, and academical men, (which ranks the modest author meddles not with,) to draw ideas for their several orders respectively. (Why should papists (as Timpius)

be more careful or painful in this kind than we?) If it do no other good, yet will it help on in the way of repentance, by discovery of former mistakes or neglects ; which is the greatest, if not the only good that can now probably be hoped for out of this tract : which being writ nigh twenty years since, will be less subject to misconstruction. The good Lord prosper it according to the pious intent of the author, and hearty wishes of the pre-facer ; who confesses himself unworthy to carry out the dung of God's sacrifices.

A

PRIEST TO THE TEMPLE;

OR THE

COUNTRY PARSON,

HIS CHARACTER, AND RULE OF HOLY LIFE.

CHAP. I.

Of a pastor.

A PASTOR is the deputy of Christ for the reducing of man to the obedience of God. This definition is evident, and contains the direct steps of pastoral duty and authority. For first, man fell from God by disobedience. Secondly, Christ is the glorious instrument of God for the revoking of man. Thirdly, Christ being not to continue on earth, but, after he had fulfilled the work of reconciliation, to be received up into heaven, he constituted deputies in his place, and these are priests. And therefore St. Paul in the beginning of his Epistles professeth this; and in the first to the Colossians plainly avoucheth, that he *fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church*: wherein is contained the complete definition of a minister. Out of this charter of the priesthood may be plainly gathered both the dignity thereof, and the duty; the dignity, in that a priest may do that which Christ did, and by his authority, and as his vicegerent. The duty, in that a priest is to do that which Christ did, and after his manner, both for doctrine and life.

CHAP. II.

Their diversities.

OF pastors, (intending mine own nation only, and also therein setting aside the right reverend prelates of the church, to whom this discourse ariseth not,) some live in the universities, some in noble houses, some in parishes residing on their cures. Of those that live in the universities, some live there in office, whose rule is that of the apostle, Rom. xii. 6. *Having gifts differing, according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching, &c. he that ruleth, let him do it with diligence, &c.* Some in a preparatory way, whose aim and labour must be not only to get knowledge, but to subdue and mortify all lusts and affections; and not to think, that when they have read the fathers, or schoolmen, a minister is made, and the thing done. The greatest and hardest preparation is within: for, *Unto the ungodly saith God, Why dost thou preach my laws, and takest my covenant in thy mouth?* Psalm l. 16. Those that live in noble houses are called chaplains, whose duty and obligation being the same to the houses they live in, as a parson's to his parish, in describing the one, (which is indeed the bent of my discourse,) the other will be manifest. Let not chaplains think themselves so free as many of them do, and, because they have different names, think their office different. Doubtless they are parsons of the families they live in, and are entertained to that end, either by an open or implicit covenant. Before they are in orders, they may be received for companions, or discourses; but after a man is once minister, he cannot agree to come into any house, where he shall not exercise what he is, unless he forsake his plough, and look back. Wherefore they are not to be over-submissive, and base, but to keep up with the lord and lady of the house, and to preserve a boldness with them and all, even so far as reproof to their very face, when occasion calls, but seasonably and discreetly. They who do not thus, while they remember their earthly lord, do much forget their heavenly: they wrong the priesthood, neglect their duty, and shall be so far from that which they seek with their over-submissiveness and cringing, that they shall ever be despised. They who for

the hope of promotion neglect any necessary admonition or reproof, sell, with Judas, their Lord and Master.

CHAP. III.

The parson's life.

THE country parson is exceeding exact in his life, being holy, just, prudent, temperate, bold, grave in all his ways. And because the two highest points of life, wherein a Christian is most seen, are patience, and mortification; patience in regard of afflictions, mortification in regard of lusts and affections, and the stupifying and deadening of all the clamorous powers of the soul; therefore he hath thoroughly studied these, that he may be an absolute master and commander of himself, for all the purposes which God hath ordained him. Yet in these points he labours most in those things which are most apt to scandalize his parish. And first, because country people live hardly, and therefore, as feeling their own sweat, and consequently knowing the price of money, are offended much with any, who by hard usage increase their travel, the country parson is very circumspect in avoiding all covetousness, neither being greedy to get, nor niggardly to keep, nor troubled to lose any worldly wealth; but in all his words and actions slighting and disesteeming it, even to a wondering that the world should so much value wealth, which in the day of wrath hath not one dram of comfort for us. Secondly, because luxury is a very visible sin, the parson is very careful to avoid all the kinds thereof, but especially that of drinking, because it is the most popular vice; into which if he come, he prostitutes himself both to shame and sin, and by having *fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*, he disableth himself of authority to reprove them: for sins make all equal, whom they find together: and then they are worst, who ought to be best. Neither is it for the servant of Christ to haunt inns, or taverns, or alehouses, to the dishonour of his person and office. The parson doth not so, but orders his life in such a fashion, that when death takes him, as the Jews and Judas did Christ, he may say as he did, *I sat daily with you teaching in the temple*. Thirdly, because country people (as indeed all honest men) do much esteem their word, it being the life of buying, and selling, and dealing in the world; therefore the parson is very strict in keeping his word, though

it be to his own hinderance, as knowing, that if he be not so, he will quickly be discovered and disregarded; neither will they believe him in the pulpit, whom they cannot trust in his conversation. As for oaths, and apparel, the disorders thereof are also very manifest. The parson's yea is yea, and nay nay; and his apparel plain, but reverend and clean, without spots, or dust, or smell; the purity of his mind breaking out, and dilating itself even to his body, clothes, and habitation.

CHAP. IV.

The parson's knowledge.

THE country parson is full of all knowledge. They say, it is an ill mason that refuseth any stone: and there is no knowledge, but, in a skilful hand, serves either positively as it is, or else to illustrate some other knowledge. He condescends even to the knowledge of tillage and pasturage, and makes great use of them in teaching, because people by what they understand are best led to what they understand not. But the chief and top of his knowledge consists in the book of books, the store-house and magazine of life and comfort, the holy scriptures. There he sucks and lives. In the scriptures he finds four things; precepts for life, doctrines for knowledge, examples for illustration, and promises for comfort: these he hath digested severally. But for the understanding of these; the means he useth are, first, a holy life, remembering what his Master saith, that *if any do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine*, John vii. and assuring himself, that wicked men, however learned, do not know the scriptures, because they feel them not, and because they are not understood but with the same Spirit that writ them. The second means is prayer, which if it be necessary even in temporal things, how much more in things of another world, where the well is deep, and we have nothing of ourselves to draw with? Wherefore he ever begins the reading of the scripture with some short inward ejaculation, as, *Lord, open mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of thy law*, &c. The third means is a diligent collation of scripture with scripture. For all truth being consonant to itself, and all being penned by one and the self-same Spirit, it cannot be, but that an industrious and judicious comparing of place with place, must be a singular help for the right understanding of the scriptures. To

this may be added the consideration of any text with the coherence thereof, touching what goes before, and what follows after, as also the scope of the Holy Ghost. When the apostles would have called down fire from heaven, they were reprov'd, as ignorant of what spirit they were. For the law required one thing, and the gospel another: yet as diverse, not as repugnant: therefore the spirit of both is to be considered and weigh'd. The fourth means are commenters and fathers, who have handled the places controverted, which the parson by no means refuseth. As he doth not so study others, as to neglect the grace of God in himself, and what the Holy Spirit teacheth him; so doth he assure himself, that God in all ages hath had his servants, to whom he hath revealed his truth, as well as to him; and that as one country doth not bear all things, that there may be a commerce; so neither hath God opened, or will open, all to one, that there may be a traffick in knowledge between the servants of God, for the planting both of love and humility. Wherefore he hath one comment at least upon every book of scripture, and ploughing with this, and his own meditations, he enters into the secrets of God treasur'd in the holy scripture.

CHAP. V.

The parson's necessary knowledges.

THE country parson hath read the fathers also, and the schoolmen, and the later writers, or a good proportion of all, out of all which he hath compiled a book, and body of divinity, which is the storehouse of his sermons, and which he preacheth all his life; but diversely clothed, illustrated, and enlarged. For though the world is full of such composures, yet every man's own is fittest, readiest, and most savoury to him. Besides, this being to be done in his younger and preparatory times, it is an honest joy ever after to look upon his well-spent hours. This body he made by way of expounding the Church Catechism, to which all divinity may easily be reduced. For it being indifferent in itself to choose any method, that is best to be chosen, of which there is likeliest to be most use. Now catechising being a work of singular and admirable benefit to the church of God, and a thing required under canonical obedience, the expounding of our Catechism must needs be the most use-

ful form. Yet hath the parson, besides this laborious work, a slighter form of catechising, fitter for country people: according as his audience is, so he useth one or other; or sometimes both, if his audience be intermixed. He greatly esteems also of cases of conscience, wherein he is much versed. And indeed, herein is the greatest ability of a parson, to lead his people exactly in the ways of truth, so that they neither decline to the right hand, nor to the left. Neither let any think this a slight thing. For every one hath not digested, when it is a sin to take something for money lent, or when not; when it is a fault to discover another's fault, or when not; when the affections of the soul in desiring and procuring increase of means or honour, be a sin of covetousness or ambition, and when not; when the appetites of the body in eating, drinking, sleep, and the pleasure that comes with sleep, be sins of gluttony, drunkenness, sloth, lust, and when not; and so in many circumstances of actions. Now if a shepherd know not which grass will bane, and which not, how is he fit to be a shepherd? Wherefore the parson hath throughly canvassed all the particulars of human actions, at least all those which he observeth are most incident to his parish.

CHAP. VI.

The parson praying.

THE country parson, when he is to read divine services, composeth himself to all possible reverence; lifting up his heart and hands, and eyes, and using all other gestures which may express a hearty and unfeigned devotion. This he doth, first, as being truly touched and amazed with the majesty of God, before whom he then presents himself; yet not as himself alone, but as presenting with himself the whole congregation, whose sins he then bears, and brings with his own to the heavenly altar to be bathed and washed in the sacred laver of Christ's blood. Secondly, as this is the true reason of his inward fear, so he is content to express this outwardly to the utmost of his power; that being first affected himself, he may affect also his people, knowing that no sermon moves them so much to a reverence, which they forget again, when they come to pray, as a devout behaviour in the very act of praying. Accordingly his voice is humble, his words treatable, and slow; yet not so slow neither, as to let the fervency of the supplicant hang and die

between speaking, but with a grave liveliness, between fear and zeal, pausing yet pressing, he performs his duty. Besides, his example, he having often instructed his people how to carry themselves in divine service, exacts of them all possible reverence, by no means enduring either talking, or sleeping, or gazing, or leaning, or half-kneeling, or any undutiful behaviour in them; but causing them, when they sit, or stand, or kneel, to do all in a straight and steady posture, as attending to what is done in the church; and every one, man and child, answering aloud both Amen, and all other answers, which are on the clerk's and people's part to answer: which answers also are to be done, not in a huddling or slubbering fashion, gaping or scratching the head, or spitting even in the midst of their answer, but gently and pausably, thinking what they say; so that while they answer, *As it was in the beginning*, &c. they meditate as they speak, that God hath ever had his people, that have glorified him as well as now, and that he shall have so for ever. And the like in other answers. This is that which the apostle calls *a reasonable service*, Rom. xii. when we speak not as parrots, without reason, or offer up such sacrifices as they did of old, which was of beasts devoid of reason; but when we use our reason, and apply our powers to the service of him that gives them. If there be any of the gentry or nobility of the parish, who sometimes make it a piece of state not to come at the beginning of service with their poor neighbours, but at mid-prayers, both to their own loss, and of theirs also who gaze upon them when they come in, and neglect the present service of God, he by no means suffers it, but after divers gentle admonitions, if they persevere, he causes them to be presented: or if the poor churchwardens be affrighted with their greatness, notwithstanding his instruction that they ought not to be so, but even to let the world sink, so they do their duty; he presents them himself, only protesting to them, that not any ill-will draws him to it, but the debt and obligation of his calling, being to obey God rather than men.

CHAP. VII.

The Parson preaching.

THE country parson preacheth constantly, the pulpit is his joy and his throne: if he at any time intermit, it is either

for want of health, or against some festival, that he may the better celebrate it, or for the variety of the hearers, that he may be heard at his return more attentively. When he intermits, he is ever very well supplied by some able man, who treads in his steps, and will not throw down what he hath built; whom also he entreats to press some point, that he himself hath often urged with no great success, that so in the mouth of two or three witnesses the truth may be more established. When he preacheth, he procures attention by all possible art, both by earnestness of speech, it being natural to men to think, that where is much earnestness, there is somewhat worth hearing; and by a diligent and busy cast of his eye on his auditors, with letting them know that he observes who marks, and who not; and with particularizing of his speech now to the younger sort, then to the elder, now to the poor, and now to the rich: This is for you, and this is for you; for particulars ever touch, and awake more than generals. Herein also he serves himself of the judgments of God, as of those of ancient times, so especially of the late ones; and those most, which are nearest to his parish; for people are very attentive at such discourses, and think it behoves them to be so, when God is so near them, and even over their heads. Sometimes he tells them stories, and sayings of others, according as his text invites him; for them also men heed, and remember better than exhortations; which though earnest, yet often die with the sermon, especially with country people, which are thick, and heavy, and hard to raise to a point of zeal and fervency, and need a mountain of fire to kindle them; but stories and sayings they will well remember. He often tells them, that sermons are dangerous things, that none goes out of church as he came in, but either better or worse; that none is careless before his Judge, and that the word of God shall judge us. By these and other means the parson procures attention; but the character of his sermon is holiness; he is not witty, or learned, or eloquent, but holy: a character, that Hermogenes never dreamed of, and therefore he could give no precepts thereof. But it is gained, first, by choosing texts of devotion, not controversy, moving and ravishing texts, whereof the scriptures are full. Secondly, by dipping and seasoning all our words and sentences in our hearts, before they come into our mouths, truly affecting and cordially expressing all that we say; so that the auditors may plainly

perceive that every word is heart-deep. Thirdly, by turning often, and making many apostrophes to God; as, O Lord, bless my people, and teach them this point; or, O my Master, on whose errand I come, let me hold my peace, and do thou speak thyself; for thou art love, and when thou teachest, all are scholars. Some such irradiations scatteringly in the sermon carry great holiness in them. The prophets are admirable in this. So Isaiah lxiv. *Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, &c.* And Jeremiah, chap. x. after he had complained of the desolation of Israel, turns to God suddenly, *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself, &c.* Fourthly, by frequent wishes of the people's good, and joying therein, though he himself were, with St. Paul, even sacrificed upon the service of their faith. For there is no greater sign of holiness, than the procuring and rejoicing in another's good. And herein St. Paul excelled in all his Epistles. How did he put the Romans in all his prayers! Rom. i. 9. and ceased not to give thanks for the Ephesians, Eph. i. 16. and for the Corinthians, chap. i. 4. and for the Philippians made request with joy, chap. i. 4. and is in contention for them whether to live or die; be with them or Christ, ver. 23; which, setting aside his care of his flock, were a madness to doubt of. What an admirable epistle is the second to the Corinthians! how full of affections! He joys, and he is sorry; he grieves, and he glories: never was there such care of a flock expressed, save in the great Shepherd of the fold, who first shed tears over Jerusalem, and afterwards blood. Therefore this care may be learned there, and then woven into sermons, which will make them appear exceeding reverend and holy. Lastly, by an often urging of the presence and majesty of God, by these or such like speeches: Oh let us take heed what we do: God sees us; he sees whether I speak as I ought, or you hear as you ought; he sees hearts, as we see faces: he is among us; for if we be here, he must be here, since we are here by him, and without him could not be here. Then turning the discourse to his majesty; And he is a great God, and terrible; as great in mercy, so great in judgment: there are but two devouring elements, fire and water; he hath both in him; *his voice is as the sound of many waters*, Revelations i. And he himself is *a consuming fire*, Heb. xii. Such discourses shew very holy. The parson's method in handling of a text consists of two parts; first, a plain and evident

declaration of the meaning of the text; and secondly, some choice observations drawn out of the whole text, as it lies entire, and unbroken in the scripture itself. This he thinks natural, and sweet, and grave. Whereas the other way of crumbling a text into small parts, as, the person speaking, or spoken to, the subject, and object, and the like, hath neither in it sweetness, nor gravity, nor variety, since the words apart are not scripture, but a dictionary, and may be considered alike in all the scripture. The parson exceeds not an hour in preaching, because all ages have thought that a competency, and he that profits not in that time will less afterwards; the same affection which made him not profit before, making him then weary, and so he grows from not relishing, to loathing.

CHAP. VIII.

The parson on Sundays.

THE country parson, as soon as he awakes on Sunday morning, presently falls to work, and seems to himself so as a market-man is, when the market-day comes, or a shop-keeper, when customers use to come in. His thoughts are full of making the best of the day, and contriving it to his best gains. To this end, besides his ordinary prayers, he makes a peculiar one for a blessing on the exercises of the day, that nothing befall him unworthy of that Majesty before which he is to present himself, but that all may be done with reverence to his glory, and with edification to his flock, humbly beseeching his Master, that how or whenever he punish him, it be not in his ministry. Then he turns to request for his people, that the Lord would be pleased to sanctify them all, that they may come with holy hearts and awful minds into the congregation, and that the good God would pardon all those who come with less prepared hearts than they ought. This done, he sets himself to the consideration of the duties of the day; and if there be any extraordinary addition to the customary exercises, either from the time of the year, or from the State, or from God by a child born, or dead, or any other accident, he contrives how and in what manner to induce it to the best advantage. Afterwards when the hour calls, with his family attending him, he goes to church, at his first entrance humbly adoring and worshipping the invisible majesty and presence of Almighty God, and bless-

ing the people either openly, or to himself. Then having read divine service twice fully, and preached in the morning, and catechised in the afternoon, he thinks he hath in some measure, according to poor and frail man, discharged the public duties of the congregation. The rest of the day he spends either in reconciling neighbours that are at variance, or in visiting the sick, or in exhortations to some of his flock by themselves, whom his sermons cannot or do not reach. And every one is more awaked, when we come and say, *Thou art the man*. This way he finds exceeding useful, and winning; and these exhortations he calls his privy purse, even as princes have theirs, besides their public disbursements. At night he thinks it a very fit time, both suitable to the joy of the day, and without hinderance to public duties, either to entertain some of his neighbours, or to be entertained of them, where he takes occasion to discourse of such things as are both profitable and pleasant, and to raise up their minds to apprehend God's good blessing to our Church and State; that order is kept in the one, and peace in the other, without disturbance or interruption of public divine offices. As he opened the day with prayer, so he closeth it, humbly beseeching the Almighty to pardon and accept our poor services, and to improve them, that we may grow therein, and that our feet may be like hinds' feet, ever climbing up higher and higher unto him.

CHAP. IX.

The parson's state of life.

THE country parson considering that virginity is an higher state than matrimony, and that the ministry requires the best and highest things, is rather unmarried than married. But yet, as the temper of his body may be, or as the temper of his parish may be, where he may have occasion to converse with women, and that amongst suspicious men, and other like circumstances considered, he is rather married than unmarried. Let him communicate the thing often by prayer unto God, and as his grace shall direct him, so let him proceed. If he be unmarried, and keep house, he hath not a woman in his house, but finds opportunities of having his meat dressed and other services done by men servants at home, and his lincn washed abroad. If he be unmarried, and sojourn, he never talks with

any woman alone, but in the audience of others, and that seldom, and then also in a serious manner, never jestingly or sportfully. He is very circumspect in all companies, both of his behaviour, speech, and very looks, knowing himself to be both suspected and envied. If he stand steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart, that he will keep himself a virgin, he spends his days in fasting and prayer, and blesseth God for the gift of continency, knowing that it can no way be preserved, but only by those means by which at first it was obtained. He therefore thinks it not enough for him to observe the fasting days of the church, and the daily prayers enjoined him by authority, which he observeth out of humble conformity and obedience; but adds to them, out of choice and devotion, some other days for fasting, and hours for prayers; and by these he keeps his body tame, serviceable, and healthful; and his soul fervent, active, young, and lusty as an eagle. He often readeth the lives of the primitive monks, hermits, and virgins, and wondereth not so much at their patient suffering, and cheerful dying under persecuting emperors, though that indeed be very admirable, as at their daily temperance, abstinence, watchings, and constant prayers, and mortifications in the times of peace and prosperity. To put on the profound humility and the exact temperance of our Lord Jesus, with other exemplary virtues of that sort, and to keep them on in the sunshine and noon of prosperity, he findeth to be as necessary, and as difficult at least, as to be clothed with perfect patience and Christian fortitude in the cold midnight storms of persecution and adversity. He keepeth his watch and ward, night and day, against the proper and peculiar temptations of his state of life, which are principally these two, spiritual pride and impurity of heart: against these ghostly enemies he girdeth up his loins, keeps the imagination from roving, puts on the whole armour of God, and by the virtue of the shield of faith he is not afraid of *the pestilence that walketh in darkness*, (carnal impurity,) nor of *the sickness that destroyeth at noon-day*, (ghostly pride and self-conceit.) Other temptations he hath, which, like mortal enemies, may sometimes disquiet him likewise; for the human soul being bounded, and kept in, in her sensitive faculty, will run out more or less in her intellectual. Original concupiscence is such an active thing, by reason of continual inward or outward temptations, that it is ever

attempting or doing one mischief or other. Ambition, or untimely desire of promotion to a higher state or place, under colour of accommodation, or necessary provision, is a common temptation to men of any eminency, especially being single men. Curiosity in prying into high speculative and unprofitable questions, is another great stumblingblock to the holiness of scholars. These and many other spiritual wickednesses in high places doth the parson fear, or experiment, or both; and that much more being single, than if he were married; for then commonly the stream of temptations is turned another way, into covetousness, love of pleasure, or ease, or the like. If the parson be unmarried, and means to continue so, he doth at least as much as hath been said. If he be married, the choice of his wife was made rather by his ear, than by his eye; his judgment, not his affection, found out a fit wife for him, whose humble and liberal disposition, he preferred before beauty, riches, or honour. He knew that, the good instrument of God to bring women to heaven, a wise and loving husband could out of humility produce any special grace of faith, patience, meekness, love, obedience, &c. and out of liberality make her fruitful in all good works. As he is just in all things, so is he to his wife also, counting nothing so much his own, as that he may be unjust unto it. Therefore he gives her respect both before her servants and others, and half at least of the government of the house, reserving so much of the affairs as serve for a diversion for him; yet never so giving over the reins, but that he sometimes looks how things go, demanding an account, but not by the way of an account. And this must be done the oftener, or the seldomer, according as he is satisfied of his wife's discretion.

CHAP. X.

The parson in his house.

THE parson is very exact in the governing of his house, making it a copy and model for his parish. He knows the temper and pulse of every person in his house, and accordingly either meets with their vices, or advanceth their virtues. His wife is either religious, or night and day he is winning her to it. Instead of the qualities of the world, he requires only three of her; first, a training up of her children and maids in the fear of God, with prayers and catechising, and all religious duties.

Secondly, a curing and healing of all wounds and sores with her own hands ; which skill either she brought with her, or he takes care she shall learn it of some religious neighbour. Thirdly, a providing for her family in such sort, as that neither they want a competent sustentation, nor her husband be brought in debt. His children he first makes Christians, and then commonwealth's-men ; the one he owes to his heavenly country, the other to his earthly, having no title to either, except he do good to both. Therefore having seasoned them with all piety, not only of words in praying and reading, but in actions, in visiting other sick children, and tending their wounds, and sending his charity by them to the poor, and sometimes giving them a little money to do it of themselves, that they get a delight in it, and enter favour with God, who weighs even children's actions, 1 Kings xiv. 12, 13. He afterwards turns his care to fit all their dispositions with some calling, not sparing the eldest, but giving him the prerogative of his father's profession, which happily for his other children he is not able to do. Yet in binding them apprentices, (in case he think fit to do so,) he takes care not to put them into vain trades, and unbefitting the reverence of their father's calling, such as are taverns for men, and lace-making for women ; because those trades, for the most part, serve but the vices and vanities of the world, which he is to deny, and not augment. However, he resolves with himself never to omit any present good deed of charity, in consideration of providing a stock for his children ; but assures himself, that money thus lent to God is placed surer for his children's advantage, than if it were given to the chamber of London. Good deeds, and good breeding, are his two great stocks for his children ; if God give any thing above those, and not spent in them, he blesseth God, and lays it out as he sees cause. His servants are all religious ; and were it not his duty to have them so, it were his profit, for none are so well served as by religious servants, both because they do best, and because what they do is blessed, and prospers. After religion, he teaches them, that three things make a complete servant, truth, diligence, and neatness or cleanliness. Those that can read are allowed times for it, and those that cannot are taught ; for all in his house are either teachers or learners, or both ; so that his family is a school of religion, and they all account, that to teach the ignorant is the greatest alms. Even the walls are not idle, but something is written or painted

there, which may excite the reader to a thought of piety ; especially the 101st Psalm, which is expressed in a fair table, as being the rule of a family. And when they go abroad, his wife among her neighbours is the beginner of good discourses, his children among children, his servants among other servants ; so that as in the house of those that are skilled in music all are musicians ; so in the house of a preacher all are preachers. He suffers not a lie or equivocation by any means in his house, but counts it the art and secret of governing, to preserve a directness and open plainness in all things ; so that all his house knows that there is no help for a fault done, but confession. He himself or his wife takes account of sermons, and how every one profits, comparing this year with the last : and, besides the common prayers of the family, he straitly requires of all to pray by themselves before they sleep at night, and stir out in the morning, and knows what prayers they say, and, till they have learned them makes them kneel by him ; esteeming that this private praying is a more voluntary act in them, than when they are called to others' prayers, and that which, when they leave the family, they carry with them. He keeps his servants between love and fear, according as he finds them ; but generally he distributes it thus ; to his children he shews more love than terror, to his servants more terror than love ; but an old good servant boards a child. The furniture of his house is very plain, but clean, whole, and sweet, as sweet as his garden can make ; for he hath no money for such things, charity being his only perfume, which deserves cost when he can spare it. His fare is plain and common, but wholesome ; what he hath is little, but very good ; it consisteth most of mutton, beef, and veal ; if he adds any thing for a great day, or a stranger, his garden or orchard supplies it, or his barn and backside : he goes no further for any entertainment, lest he go into the world, esteeming it absurd, that he should exceed, who teacheth others temperance. But those which his home produceth he refuseth not, as coming cheap and easy, and arising from the improvement of things, which otherwise would be lost. Wherein he admires and imitates the wonderful providence and thrift of the great Householder of the world : for there being two things, which as they are, are unuseful to man, the one for smallness, as crumbs and scattered corn, and the like ; the other for the foulness, as wash and dirt, and things thereinto fallen ; God hath provided crea-

tures for both ; for the first, poultry ; for the second, swine. These save man the labour, and doing that which either he could not do, or was not fit for him to do, by taking both sorts of food into them, do as it were dress and prepare both for man and themselves, by growing themselves fit for his table. The parson in his house observes fasting days ; and particularly as Sunday is his day of joy, so Friday his day of humiliation, which he celebrates not only with abstinence of diet, but also of company, recreation, and all outward contentments, and besides with confession of sins, and all acts of mortification. Now fasting days contain a treble obligation : first, of eating less that day than on other days : secondly, of eating no pleasing or over-nourishing things, as the Israclites did eat sour herbs : thirdly, of eating no flesh, which is but the determination of the second rule by authority to this particular. The two former obligations are much more essential to a true fast, than the third and last ; and fasting days were fully performed by keeping of the two former, had not authority interposed : so that to eat little, and that unpleasant, is the natural rule of fasting, although it be flesh. For since fasting in scripture language is an afflicting of our souls, if a piece of dry flesh at my table be more unpleasant to me than some fish there, certainly to eat the flesh, and not the fish, is to keep the fasting day naturally. And it is observable, that the prohibiting of flesh came from hot countries, where both flesh alone, and much more with wine, is apt to nourish more than in cold regions, and where flesh may be much better spared, and with more safety, than elsewhere, where both the people and the drink being cold and phlegmatic, the eating of flesh is an antidote to both. For it is certain, that a weak stomach being prepossessed with flesh, shall much better brook and bear a draught of beer, than if it had taken before either fish or roots, or such things ; which will discover itself by spitting, and rheum, or phlegm. To conclude, the parson, if he be in full health, keeps the three obligations, eating fish or roots, and that for quantity little, for quality unpleasant. If his body be weak and obstructed, as most students are, he cannot keep the last obligation, nor suffer others in his house that are so to keep it ; but only the two former, which also in diseases of exinanition (as consumptions) must be broken : for meat was made for man, not man for meat. To all this may be added, not for emboldening the unruly, but for the comfort of the weak, that not only

sickness breaks these obligations of fasting, but sickliness also. For it is as unnatural to do any thing that leads me to a sickness, to which I am inclined, as not to get out of that sickness, when I am in it, by any diet. One thing is evident, that an English body, and a student's body, are two great obstructed vessels, and there is nothing that is food, and not physic, which doth less obstruct than flesh moderately taken ; as being immoderately taken, it is exceeding obstructive. And obstructions are the cause of most diseases.

CHAP. XI.

The parson's courtesy.

THE country parson owing a debt of charity to the poor, and of courtesy to his other parishioners, he so distinguisheth, that he keeps his money for the poor, and his table for those that are above alms. Not but that the poor are welcome also to his table, whom he sometimes purposely takes home with him, setting them close by him, and carving for them, both for his own humility, and their comfort, who are much cheered with such friendliness. But since both is to be done, the better sort invited, and meaner relieved, he chooseth rather to give the poor money, which they can better employ to their own advantage, and suitably to their needs, than so much given in meat at dinner. Having then invited some of his parish, he taketh his times to do the like to the rest ; so that in the compass of the year, he hath them all with him, because country people are very observant of such things, and will not be persuaded, but being not invited, they are hated. Which persuasion the parson by all means avoids, knowing that where there are such conceits, there is no room for his doctrine to enter. Yet doth he oftenest invite those whom he sees take best courses, that so both they may be encouraged to persevere, and others spurred to do well, that they may enjoy the like courtesy. For though he desire, that all should live well, and virtuously, not for any reward of his, but for virtue's sake ; yet that will not be so: and therefore as God, although we should love him only for his own sake, yet out of his infinite pity hath set forth heaven for a reward to draw men to piety, and is content if, at least so, they will become good: so the country parson, who is a diligent observer and tracker of God's ways, sets up as many

encouragements to goodness as he can, both in honour, and profit, and fame ; that he may, if not the best way, yet any way, make his parish good.

CHAP. XII.

The parson's charity.

THE country parson is full of charity ; it is his predominant clement. For many and wonderful things are spoken of thee, thou great virtue. To charity is given the covering of sins, 1 Peter iv. 8. and the forgiveness of sins, Matthew vi. 14. Luke vii. 47. the fulfilling of the law, Romans xiii. 10. the life of faith, James ii. 26. the blessings of this life, Proverbs xxii. 9. Psalm xli. 2. and the reward of the next, Matthew xxv. 35. In brief, it is the body of religion, John xiii. 35. and the top of Christian virtues, 1 Cor. xiii. Wherefore all his works relish of charity. When he riseth in the morning, he bethinketh himself what good deeds he can do that day, and presently doth them ; counting that day lost, wherein he hath not exercised his charity. He first considers his own parish, and takes care that there be not a beggar or idle person in his parish, but that all be in a competent way of getting their living. This he effects either by bounty or persuasion, or by authority, making use of that excellent statute, which binds all parishes to maintain their own. If his parish be rich, he exacts this of them ; if poor, and he able, he easeth them therein. But he gives no set pension to any ; for this in time will lose the name and effect of charity with the poor people, though not with God : for then they will reckon upon it, as on a debt ; and if it be taken away, though justly, they will murmur, and repine as much as he that is dis-seized of his own inheritance. But the parson having a double aim, and making a hook of his charity, causeth them still to depend on him ; and so by continual and fresh bounties, unexpected to them, but resolved to himself, he wins them to praise God more, to live more religiously, and to take more pains in their vocation, as not knowing when they shall be relieved ; which otherwise they would reckon upon, and turn to idleness. Besides this general provision, he hath other times of opening his hand ; as at great festivals and communions ; not suffering any, that day that he receives, to want a good meal suiting to the joy of the occasion. But specially, at hard times, and

dearths, he even parts his living and life among them, giving some corn outright, and selling other at under rates ; and, when his own stock serves not, working those that are able to the same charity, still pressing it in the pulpit, and out of the pulpit, and never leaving them, till he obtain his desire. Yet in all his charity he distinguisheth, giving them most, who live best, and take most pains, and are most charged ; so is his charity in effect a sermon. After the consideration of his own parish, he enlargeth himself if he be able, to the neighbourhood ; for that also is some kind of obligation ; so doth he also to those at his door, whom God puts in his way, and makes his neighbours. But these he helps not without some testimony, except the evidence of the misery bring testimony with it. For though these testimonies also may be falsified, yet considering that the law allows these in case they be true, but allows by no means to give without testimony, as he obeys authority in the one, so that being once satisfied, he allows his charity some blindness in the other ; especially, since, of the two commands, we are more enjoined to be charitable than wise. But evident miseries have a natural privilege, and exemption from all law. Whenever he gives any thing, and sees them labour in thanking of him, he exacts of them to let him alone, and say rather, God be praised, God be glorified ; that so the thanks may go the right way, and thither only, where they are only due. So doth he also before giving make them say their prayers first, or the Creed, and Ten Commandments, and as he finds them perfect, rewards them the more. For other givings are lay and secular, but this is to give like a priest.

CHAP. XIII.

The parson's church.

THE country parson hath a special care of his church, that all things there be decent, and befitting his name by which it is called. Therefore, first he takes order, that all things be in good repair ; as walls plaistered, windows glazed, floor paved, seats whole, firm, and uniform ; especially that the pulpit and desk, and communion table and font, be as they ought, for those great duties that are performed in them. Secondly, that the church be swept and kept clean, without dust or cobwebs, and at great festivals strewed and stuck with boughs, and perfumed

with incense. Thirdly, that there be fit and proper texts of scripture every where painted, and that all the painting be grave and reverend, not with light colours or foolish antics. Fourthly, that all the books appointed by authority be there, and those not torn or fouled, but whole and clean, and well bound : and that there be a fitting and sightly communion cloth “ of fine linen, with an handsome and seemly carpet of good “ and costly stuff or cloth, and all kept sweet and clean, in a “ strong and decent chest, with a chalice and cover, and a stoop “ or flagon ; and a bason for alms and offerings ; besides which, “ he hath a poor man’s box conveniently seated to receive the “ charity of well-minded people, and to lay up treasure for the “ sick and needy.” And all this he doth, not as out of necessity, or as putting a holiness in the things, but as desiring to keep the middle way between superstition and slovenliness, and as following the apostle’s two great and admirable rules in things of this nature : the first whereof is, *Let all things be done decently, and in order* : the second, *Let all things be done to edification*, 1 Cor. xiv. For these two rules comprise and include the double object of our duty, God and our neighbour ; the first being for the honour of God, the second for the benefit of our neighbour. So that they excellently score out the way, and fully and exactly contain, even in external and indifferent things, what course is to be taken ; and put them to great shame, who deny the scripture to be perfect.

CHAP. XIV.

The parson in circuit.

THE country parson upon the afternoons in the week-days takes occasion sometimes to visit in person, now one quarter of his parish, now another. For there he shall find his flock most naturally as they are, wallowing in the midst of their affairs : whereas on Sunday it is easy for them to compose themselves to order, which they put on as their holyday clothes, and come to church in frame, but commonly the next day put off both. When he comes to any house, first he blesseth it, and then as he finds the persons of the house employed, so he forms his discourse. Those that he finds religiously employed, he both commends them much, and furthers them, when he is gone, in their employment ; as if he finds them reading, he furnisheth

them with good books; if curing poor people, he supplies them with receipts, and instructs them further in that skill, shewing them how acceptable such works are to God, and wishing them ever to do the cures with their own hands, and not to put them over to servants. Those that he finds busy in the works of their calling, he commendeth them also: for it is a good and just thing for every one to do their own business. But then he admonisheth them of two things; first that they dive not too deep into worldly affairs, plunging themselves over head and ears into carking and caring; but that they so labour, as neither to labour anxiously, nor distrustfully, nor profanely. Then they labour anxiously, when they overdo it, to the loss of their quiet and health: then distrustfully, when they doubt God's providence, thinking that their own labour is the cause of their thriving, as if it were in their own hands to thrive, or not to thrive. "Then they labour profanely, when they set themselves to work like brute beasts, never raising their thoughts to God, nor sanctifying their labour with daily prayer; when on the Lord's day they do unnecessary servile work, or in time of divine service on other holydays, except in the cases of extreme poverty, and in the seasons of seed-time and harvest." Secondly, he adviseth them so to labour for wealth and maintenance, as that they make not that the end of their labour, but that they may have wherewithal to serve God the better, and do good deeds. After these discourses, if they be poor and needy, whom he thus finds labouring, he gives them somewhat; and opens not only his mouth, but his purse to their relief, that so they go on more cheerfully in their vocation, and himself be ever the more welcome to them. Those that the parson finds idle, or ill employed, he chides not at first, for that were neither civil nor profitable; but always in the close before he departs from them: yet in this he distinguisheth; for if he be a plain countryman, he reproveth him plainly; for they are not sensible of fineness: if they be of higher quality, they commonly are quick, and sensible, and very tender of reproof; and therefore he lays his discourse so, that he comes to the point very leisurely, and oftentimes as Nathan did, in the person of another, making them to reprove themselves. However, one way or other, he ever reproveth them, that he may keep himself pure, and not be entangled in others' sins. Neither in this doth he forbear, though there be company by: for as when the

offence is particuar, and against me, I am to follow our Saviour's rule, and to take my brother aside, and reprove him; so when the offence is public, and against God, I am then to follow the apostle's rule, 1 Timothy v. 20, and to rebuke openly that which is done openly. Besides these occasional discourses, the parson questions what order is kept in the house, as about prayers morning and evening on their knees, reading of scripture, catheehising, singing of psalms at their work, and on holydays; who can read, who not: and sometimes he hears the children read himself, and blesseth them, encouraging also the servants to learn to read, and offering to have them taught on holydays by his servants. If the parson were ashamed of particularizing in these things, he were not fit to be a parson; but he holds the rule, that nothing is little in God's service: if it once have the honour of that name, it grows great instantly. Wherefore neither disdaineth he to enter into the poorest cottage, though he even ereep into it, and though it smell never so loathsomely. For both God is there also, and those for whom God died: and so much the rather doth he so, as his access to the poor is more comfortable than to the rich; and in regard of himself, it is more humiliation. These are the parson's general aims in his circuit; but with these he mingles other discourses for conversation sake, and to make his higher purposes slip the more easily.

CHAP. XV.

The parson comforting.

THE country parson, when any of his cure is sick, or afflicted with loss of friend or estate, or any ways distressed, fails not to afford his best comforts, and rather goes to them, than sends for the afflicted, though they can, and otherwise ought to come to him. To this end he hath thoroughly digested all the points of consolation, as having continual use of them; such as are from God's general providence extended even to lilies; from his particuar, to his ehureh; from his promises, from the examples of all saints that ever were; from Christ himself, perfecting our redemption no other way, than by sorrow; from the benefit of affliction, which softens and works the stubborn heart of man; from the certainty both of deliverance and reward, if we faint not; from the miserable comparison of the moment of

griefs here, with the weight of joys hereafter. “ Besides this, “ in his visiting the sick, or otherwise afflicted, he followeth the “ church’s counsel, namely, in persuading them to particular “ confession, labouring to make them understand the great good “ use of this ancient and pious ordinance, and how necessary it “ is in some cases : he also urgeth them to do some pious cha- “ ritable works, as a necessary evidence and fruit of their faith ; “ at that time especially, to the participation of the holy sacra- “ ment, shewing them how comfortable and sovereign a medicine “ it is to all sin-sick souls ; what strength, and joy, and peace it ad- “ ministers against all temptations, even in death itself. He “ plainly and generally intimateth all this to the disaffected, or “ sick person, that so the hunger and thirst after it may come “ rather from themselves, than from his persuasion.”

CHAP. XVI.

The parson a father.

THE country parson is not only a father to his flock, but also professeth himself throughly of the opinion, carrying it about with him as fully, as if he had begot his whole parish. And of this he makes great use. For by this means, when any sins, he hateth him not as an officer, but pities him as a father : and even in those wrongs which, either in tithing or otherwise, are done to his own person, he considers the offender as a child, and forgives, so he may have any sign of amendment ; so also, when, after many admonitions, any continues to be refractory, yet he gives him not over, but is long before he proceed to disinheriting, or perhaps never goes so far ; knowing, that some are called at the eleventh hour, and therefore he still expects and waits, lest he should determine God’s hour of coming ; which as he cannot touching the last day, so neither touching the intermediate days of conversion.

CHAP. XVII.

The parson in journey.

THE country parson, when a just occasion calleth him out of his parish, (which he diligently and strictly weigheth, his parish being all his joy and thought,) leaveth not his ministry behind him ; but is himself wherever he is. Therefore those

he meets on the way he blesseth audibly, and with those he overtakes, or that overtake him, he begins good discourses, such as may edify, interposing sometimes some short and honest refreshments, which may make his other discourses more welcome, and less tedious. And when he comes to his inn, he refuseth not to join, that he may enlarge the glory of God to the company he is in, by a due blessing of God for their safe arrival, and saying grace at meat, and at going to bed by giving the host notice, that he will have prayers in the hall, wishing him to inform his guests thereof, that if any be willing to partake, they may resort thither. The like he doth in the morning, using pleasantly the outlandish proverb, that “prayers and provender never hinder “journey.” When he comes to any other house, where his kindred or other relations give him any authority over the family, if he be to stay for a time, he considers diligently the state thereof to God-ward, and that in two points: first, what disorders there are either in apparel, or diet, or to open a buttery, or reading vain books, or swearing, or breeding up children to no calling, but in idleness, or the like. Secondly, what means of piety, whether daily prayers be used, grace, reading of scriptures and other good books, how Sundays, holydays, and fasting days are kept. And accordingly, as he finds any defect in these, he first considers with himself, what kind of remedy fits the temper of the house best, and then he faithfully and boldly applieth it; yet seasonably and discreetly, by taking aside the lord or lady, or master and mistress of the house, and shewing them clearly that they respect them most who wish them best, and that not a desire to meddle with others’ affairs, but the earnestness to do all the good he can, moves him to say thus and thus.

CHAP. XVIII.

The parson is sentinel.

THE country parson, wherever he is, keeps God’s watch; that is, there is nothing spoken or done in the company where he is, but comes under his test and censure; if it be well spoken or done, he takes occasion to commend and enlarge it; if ill, he presently lays hold of it, lest the poison steal into some young and unwary spirits, and possess them even before they themselves heed it. But this he doth discreetly, with mollifying and suppling words; This was not so well said, as it might have

been forborne ; We cannot allow this ; or else, if the thing will admit interpretation ; Your meaning is not thus, but thus ; or, So far indeed what you say is true, and well said ; but this will not stand. This is called keeping God's watch, when the baits which the enemy lays in company are discovered and avoided ; this is to be on God's side, and be true to his party. Besides, if he perceive in company any discourse tending to ill, either by the wickedness or quarrelsome-ness thereof, he either prevents it judiciously, or breaks it off seasonably by some diversion. Wherein a pleasantness of disposition is of great use, men being willing to sell the interest and engagement of their discourses for no price, sooner than that of mirth ; whither the nature of man, loving refreshment, gladly betakes itself, even to the loss of honour.

CHAP. XIX.

The parson in reference.

THE country parson is sincere and upright in all his relations. And first, he is just to his country ; as when he is set at an armour, or horse, he borrows them not to serve the turn, nor provides slight and unuseful, but such as are every way fitting to do his country true and laudable service, when occasion requires. To do otherwise is deceit ; and therefore not for him who is hearty and true in all his ways, as being the servant of him in whom there was no guile. Likewise in any other country-duty, he considers what is the end of any command, and then he suits things faithfully according to that end. Secondly, he carries himself very respectfully, as to all the fathers of the church, so especially to his diocesan, honouring him both in word and behaviour, and resorting unto him in any difficulty, either in his studies or in his parish. He observes visitations, and, being there, makes due use of them, as of clergy councils, for the benefit of the diocese. And therefore before he comes, having observed some defects in the ministry, he then either in sermon, if he preach, or at some other time of the day, propounds among his brethren what were fitting to be done. Thirdly, he keeps good correspondence with all the neighbouring pastors round about him, performing for them any ministerial office, which is not to the prejudice of his own parish. Likewise he welcomes to his house any minister, how

poor or mean soever, with as joyful a countenance, as if he were to entertain some great lord. Fourthly, he fulfils the duty and debt of neighbourhood to all the parishes which are near him. For the apostle's rule, Philipp. iv. being admirable and large, *that we should do whatsoever things are honest, or just, or pure, or lovely, or of good report, if there be any virtue or any praise;* and neighbourhood being ever reputed, even among the heathen, as an obligation to do good, rather than to those that are further, where things are otherwise equal, therefore he satisfies this duty also. Especially, if God have sent any calamity either by fire or famine to any neighbouring parish, then he expects no brief; but taking his parish together the next Sunday, or holyday, and exposing to them the uncertainty of human affairs, none knowing whose turn may be next, and then when he hath affrighted them with this, exposing the obligation of charity and neighbourhood, he first gives liberally himself, and then incites them to give; making together a sum either to be sent, or, which were more comfortable, all together choosing some fit day to carry it themselves, and cheer the afflicted. So, if any neighbouring village be overburdened with poor, and his own less charged, he finds some way of relieving it, and reducing the manna and bread of charity to some equality, representing to his people, that the blessing of God to them ought to make them the more charitable, and not the less, lest he cast their neighbour's poverty on them also.

CHAP. XX.

The parson in God's stead.

THE country parson is in God's stead to his parish, and dischargeth God what he can of his promises. Whereof there is nothing done either well or ill, whereof he is not the rewarder or punisher. If he chance to find any reading in another's Bible, he provides him one of his own. If he finds another giving a poor man a penny, he gives him a tester for it, if the giver be fit to receive it; or if he be of a condition above such gifts, he sends him a good book, or easeth him in his tithes, telling him when he hath forgotten it, This I do, because at such and such a time you were charitable. This is in some sort a discharging of God; as concerning this life, who hath promised, that godliness shall be gainful: but in the other God is his own

immediate paymaster, rewarding all good deeds to their full proportion. "The parson's punishing of sin and vice is rather
" by withdrawing his bounty and courtesy from the parties
" offending, or by private or public reproof, as the case requires,
" than by causing them to be presented, or otherwise complained
" of. And yet as the malice of the person, or heinousness of
" the crime, may be, he is careful to see condign punishment
" inflicted, and with truly godly zeal, without hatred to the
" person, hungereth and thirsteth after righteous punishment of
" unrighteousness. Thus both in rewarding virtue, and in pu-
" nishing vice, the parson endeavoureth to be in God's stead,
" knowing that country people are drawn or led by sense, more
" than by faith, by present rewards or punishments, more than
" by future."

CHAP. XXI.

The parson catechising.

THE country parson values catechising highly: for there being three points of his duty; the one, to infuse a competent knowledge of salvation into every one of his flock; the other, to multiply and build up this knowledge to a spiritual temple; the third, to inflame this knowledge, to press and drive it to practice, turning it to reformation of life, by pithy and lively exhortations; catechising is the first point, and but by catechising the other cannot be attained. Besides, whereas in sermons there is a kind of state, in catechising there is an humbleness very suitable to Christian regeneration, which exceedingly delights him as by way of exercise upon himself, and by way of preaching to himself, for the advancing of his own mortification. For in preaching to others, he forgets not himself, but is first a sermon to himself, and then to others, growing with the growth of his parish. He useth and preferreth the ordinary Church Catechism, partly for obedience to authority, partly for uniformity sake, that the same common truths may be every where professed, especially since many remove from parish to parish, who like Christian soldiers are to give the word, and to satisfy the congregation by their catholic answers. He exacts of all the doctrine of the Catechism; of the younger sort, the very words; of the elder, the substance. Those he catechiseth publicly, these privately, giving age honour, according

to the apostles's rule, 1 Tim. v. 1. He requires all to be present at catechising : first, for the authority of the work ; secondly, that parents and masters, as they hear the answers prove, may, when they come home, either commend or reprove, either reward or punish. Thirdly, that those of the elder sort, who are not well grounded, may then by an honourable way take occasion to be better instructed. Fourthly, that those who are well grown in the knowledge of religion may examine their grounds, renew their vows, and, by occasion of both, enlarge their meditations. When once all have learned the words of the Catechism, he thinks it the most useful way that a pastor can take, to go over the same, but in other word's : for many say the Catechism by rote, as parrots, without ever piercing into the sense of it. In this course the order of the Catechism would be kept, but the rest varied : as thus, in the Creed : How came this world to be as it is ? Was it made, or came it by chance ? Who made it ? Did you see God make it ? Then are there some things to be believed that are not seen ? Is this the nature of belief ? Is not Christianity full of such things as are not to be seen, but believed ? You said, God made the world ; Who is God ? and so forward, requiring answers to all these, and helping and cherishing the answerer by making the question very plain with comparisons, and making much even of one word of truth contained in the answer given by him. This order being used to one, would be a little varied to another. And this is an admirable way of teaching, wherein the catechised will at length find delight, and by which the catechiser, if he once get the skill of it, will draw out of ignorant and silly souls, even the dark and deep points of religion. Socrates did thus in philosophy, who held that the seeds of all truths lay in every body, and accordingly by questions well ordered he found philosophy in silly tradesmen. That position will not hold in Christianity, because it contains things above nature : but after that the Catechism is once learned, that which nature is towards philosophy, the Catechism is towards divinity. To this purpose, some dialogues in Plato were worth the reading, where the singular dexterity of Socrates in this kind may be observed and imitated. Yet the skill consists but in these three points : first, an aim and mark of the whole discourse, whither to drive the answerer, which the questionist must have in his mind before any question be propounded, upon which and to which the

questions are to be chained. Secondly, a most plain and easy framing the question, even containing, in virtue, the answer also, especially to the more ignorant. Thirdly, when the answerer sticks, an illustrating the thing by something else, which he knows, making what he knows to serve him in that which he knows not: as, when the parson once demanded after other questions about man's misery, Since man is so miserable, what is to be done? and the answerer could not tell; he asked him again, What he would do if he were in a ditch? This familiar illustration made the answer so plain, that he was even ashamed of his ignorance; for he could not but say, he would haste out of it as fast as he could. Then he proceeded to ask, whether he could get out of the ditch alone, or whether he needed a helper, and who was that helper. This is the skill, and doubtless the holy scripture intends thus much, when it condescends to the naming of a plough, a hatchet, a bushel, leaven, boys piping and dancing: shewing that things of ordinary use are not only to serve in the way of drudgery, but to be washed and cleansed, and serve for lights even of heavenly truths. This is the practice which the parson so much commends to all his fellow-labourers, the secret of whose good consists in this, that at sermons and prayers men may sleep or wander; but when one is asked a question, he must discover what he is. This practice exceeds even sermons in teaching: but there being two things in sermons, the one informing, the other inflaming; as sermons come short of questions in the one, so they far exceed them in the other. For questions cannot inflame or ravish; that must be done by a set, and laboured, and continued speech.

CHAP. XXII.

The parson in sacraments.

THE country parson being to administer the sacraments, is at a stand with himself, how or what behaviour to assume for so holy things. Especially at communion times he is in a great confusion, as being not only to receive God, but to break and administer him. Neither finds he any issue in this, but to throw himself down at the throne of grace, saying, Lord, thou knowest what thou didst, when thou appointedst it to be done thus; therefore do thou fulfil what thou didst appoint; for thou art

not only the feast, but the way to it. At baptism, being himself in white, he requires the presence of all, and baptizeth not willingly, but on Sundays or great days. He admits no vain or idle names, but such as are usual and accustomed. He says that prayer with great devotion, where God is thanked for calling us to the knowledge of his grace, baptism being a blessing, that the world hath not the like. He willingly and cheerfully crosseth the child, and thinketh the ceremony not only innocent, but reverend. He instructeth the godfathers and godmothers, that it is no complimentary or light thing to sustain that place, but a great honour, and no less burden, as being done both in the presence of God and his saints, and by way of undertaking for a Christian soul. He adviseth all to call to mind their baptism often ; for if wise men have thought it the best way of preserving a state, to reduce it to its principles by which it grew great ; certainly it is the safest course for Christians also to meditate on their baptism often, (being the first step into their great and glorious calling,) and upon what terms, and with what vows they were baptized. At the times of the holy communion, he first takes order with the churchwardens, that the elements be of the best, not cheap, or coarse, much less ill-tasted, or unwholesome. Secondly, he considers and looks into the ignorance or carelessness of his flock, and accordingly applies himself with catechising and lively exhortations, not on the Sunday of the communion only, (for then it is too late ;) but the Sunday or Sundays before the communion, or on the eves of all those days. If there be any, who, having not yet received, are to enter into this great work, he takes the more pains with them, that he may lay the foundation of future blessings. The time of every one's first receiving is not so much by years, as by understanding : particularly, the rule may be this : When any one can distinguish the sacramental from common bread, knowing the institution, and the difference, he ought to receive, of what age soever. Children and youth are usually deferred too long, under pretence of devotion to the sacrament ; but it is for want of instruction ; their understandings being ripe enough for ill things, and why not then for better ? But parents and masters should make haste in this, as to a great purchase for their children and servants ; which while they defer, both sides suffer ; the one, in wanting many excittings of grace ; the other, in being worse served and obeyed. The saying of the Catechism

is necessary, but not enough; because to answer in form may still admit ignorance: but the questions must be propounded loosely and widely, and then the answerer will discover what he is. Thirdly, for the manner of receiving, as the parson useth all reverence himself, so he administers to none but to the reverent. The feast indeed requires sitting, because it is a feast; but man's unpreparedness asks kneeling. He that comes to the sacrament hath the confidence of a guest; and he that kneels confesseth himself an unworthy one, and therefore differs from other feasters: but he that sits, or lies, puts up to an apostle: contentiousness in a feast of charity is more scandal than any posture. Fourthly, touching the frequency of the communion, the parson celebrates it, if not duly once a month, yet at least five or six times in the year; as, at Easter, Christmas, Whitsuntide, afore and after harvest, and the beginning of Lent. And this he doth, not only for the benefit of the work, but also for the discharge of the churchwardens; who being to present all that receive not thrice a year, if there be but three communions, neither can all the people so order their affairs as to receive just at those times, nor the churchwardens so well take notice who receive thrice, and who not.

CHAP. XXIII.

The parson's completeness.

THE country parson desires to be all to his parish, and not only a pastor, but a lawyer also, and a physician. Therefore he endures not that any of his flock should go to law; but in any controversy, that they should resort to him as their judge. To this end, he hath gotten to himself some insight in things ordinarily incident and controverted, by experience, and by reading some initiatory treatises in the law, with Dalton's Justice of Peace, and the Abridgements of the Statutes, as also by discourse with men of that profession, whom he hath ever some cases to ask, when he meets with them; holding that rule, that to put men to discourse of that wherein they are most eminent, is the most gainful way of conversation. Yet whenever any controversy is brought to him, he never decides it alone, but sends for three or four of the ablest of the parish to hear the cause with him, whom he makes to deliver their opinion first; out of which he gathers, in case he be ignorant himself, what to hold; and so the thing passeth with more authority, and less

envy. In judging, he follows that which is altogether right ; so that if the poorest man of the parish detain but a pin unjustly from the richest, he absolutely restores it as a judge ; but when he hath so done, then he assumes the parson, and exhorts to charity. Nevertheless, there may happen sometimes some cases, wherein he chooseth to permit his parishioners rather to make use of the law, than himself : as in cases of an obscure and dark nature, not easily determinable by lawyers themselves ; or in cases of high consequence, as establishing of inheritances ; or lastly, when the persons in difference are of a contentious disposition, and cannot be gained, but that they still fall from all compromises that have been made. But then he shews them how to go to law, even as brethren, and not as enemies, neither avoiding therefore one another's company, much less defaming one another. Now as the parson is in law, so is he in sickness also : if there be any of his flock sick, he is their physician, or at least his wife, of whom, instead of the qualities of the world, he asks no other, but to have the skill of healing a wound, or helping the sick. But if neither himself nor his wife have the skill, and his means serve, he keeps some young practitioner in his house for the benefit of his parish, whom yet he ever exhorts not to exceed his bounds, but in ticklish cases to call in help. If all fail, then he keeps good correspondence with some neighbour physician, and entertains him for the cure of his parish. Yet it is easy for any scholar to attain to such a measure of physic, as may be of much use to him both for himself and others. This is done by seeing one anatomy, reading one book of physic, having one herbal by him. And let Fernelius be the physic author, for he writes briefly, neatly, and judiciously ; especially let his method of physic be diligently perused, as being the practical part, and of most use. Now both the reading of him and the knowing of herbs may be done at such times, as they may be a help and a recreation to more divine studies, nature serving grace both in comfort of diversion, and the benefit of application, when need requires ; as also by way of illustration, even as our Saviour made plants and seeds to teach the people : for he was the true householder, who bringeth out of his treasure things new and old ; the old things of philosophy, and the new of grace ; and maketh the one serve the other. And I conceive our Saviour did this for three reasons : first, that by familiar things he might make his doctrine slip the more easily into the hearts even of the

meanest. Secondly, that labouring people (whom he chiefly considered) might have every where monuments of his doctrine, remembering in gardens his mustard-seed and lilies; in the field, his seed-corn and tares; and so not be drowned altogether in the works of their vocation, but sometimes lift up their minds to better things, even in the midst of their pains. Thirdly, that he might set a copy for parsons. In the knowledge of simples, wherein the manifold wisdom of God is wonderfully to be seen, one thing would be carefully observed; which is, to know what herbs may be used instead of drugs of the same nature, and to make the garden the shop: for homebred medicines are both more easy for the parson's purse, and more familiar for all men's bodies. So, where the apothecary useth either for loosing, rhubarb; or for binding, bolcarmena; the parson useth damask or white roses for the one, and plaintain, shepherd's purse, knot-grass, for the other, and that with better success. As for spices, he doth not only prefer homebred things before them, but condemns them for vanities, and so shuts them out of his family, esteeming that there is no spice comparable, for herbs, to rosemary, thyme, savory, mints; and for seeds, to fennel, and caraway seeds. Accordingly, for salves, his wife seeks not the city, but prefers her garden and fields before all outlandish gums. And surely hyssop, valerian, mercury, adder's tongue, yarrow, melilot, and St. John's wort, made into a salve; and elder, chamomile, mallows, comfrey, and smallage made into a poultice, have done great and rare cures. In curing of any, the parson and his family use to premise prayers, for this is to cure like a parson, and this raiseth the action from the shop to the church. But though the parson sets forward all charitable deeds, yet he looks not in this point of curing beyond his own parish, except the person be so poor, that he is not able to reward the physician: for as he is charitable, so he is just also. Now it is a justice and debt to the commonwealth he lives in, not to encroach on others' professions, but to live on his own. And justice is the ground of charity.

CHAP. XXIV.

The parson arguing.

THE country parson, if there be any of his parish that hold strange doctrines, useth all possible diligence to reduce them to the common faith. The first means he useth is prayer, be-

seeching the Father of lights to open their eyes, and to give him power so to fit his discourse to them, that it may effectually pierce their hearts, and convert them. The second means is a very loving and sweet usage of them, both in going to, and sending for them often, and in finding out courtesies to place on them ; as in their tithes, or otherwise. The third means is the observation what is the main foundation and pillar of their cause, whereon they rely ; as, if he be a papist, the church is the hinge he turns on ; if a schismatic, scandal. Wherefore the parson hath diligently examined these two with himself ; as, what the church is ; how it began ; how it proceeded ; whether it be a rule to itself ; whether it hath a rule ; whether, having a rule, it ought not to be guided by it ; whether any rule in the world be obscure ; and how then should the best be so, at least in fundamental things ; the obscurity in some points being the exercise of the church, the light in the foundations being the guide : the church needing both an evidence and an exercise. So for scandal : what scandal is, when given or taken ; whether, there being two precepts, one of obeying authority, the other of not giving scandal, that ought not to be preferred, especially since in disobeying there is scandal also ; whether things once indifferent, being made by the precept of authority more than indifferent, it be in our power to omit or refuse them. These and the like points he hath accurately digested, having ever besides two great helps and powerful persuaders on his side ; the one, a strict religious life ; the other, an humble and ingenuous search of truth, being unmoved in arguing, and void of all contentiousness : which are two great lights able to dazzle the eyes of the misled, while they consider that God cannot be wanting to them in doctrine, to whom he is so gracious in life.

CHAP. XXV.

The parson punishing.

WHENSOEVER the country parson proceeds so far as to call in authority, and to do such things of legal opposition, either in the presenting or punishing of any, as the vulgar ever construes for signs of ill-will ; he forbears not in any wise to use the delinquent as before, in his behaviour and carriage towards him, not avoiding his company, or doing any thing of averseness, save in the very act of punishment : neither doth he

esteem him for an enemy, but as a brother still, except some small and temporary estranging may corroborate the punishment to a better subduing and humbling of the delinquent ; which if it happily take effect, he then comes on the faster, and makes so much the more of him, as before he alienated himself ; doubling his regards, and shewing by all means, that the delinquent's return is to his advantage.

CHAP. XXVI.

The parson's eye.

THE country parson at spare times from action, standing on a hill, and considering his flock, discovers two sorts of vices, and two sorts of vicious persons. There are some vices whose natures are always clear and evident, as adultery, murder, hatred, lying, &c. There are other vices, whose natures, at least in the beginning, are dark and obscure ; as covetousness and gluttony. So likewise there are some persons who abstain not even from known sins ; there are others, who when they know a sin evidently, they commit it not. It is true indeed, they are long a knowing it, being partial to themselves, and witty to others who shall reprove them for it. A man may be both covetous and intemperate, and yet hear sermons against both, and himself condemn both in good earnest : and the reason hereof is, because the natures of these vices being not evidently discussed, or known commonly, the beginnings of them are not easily observable : and the beginnings of them are not observed, because of the sudden passing from that which was just now lawful, to that which is presently unlawful, even in one continued action. So a man dining eats at first lawfully ; but proceeding on, comes to do unlawfully, even before he is aware, not knowing the bounds of the action, nor when his eating begins to be unlawful. So a man storing up money for his necessary provisions, both in present for his family, and in future for his children, hardly perceives when his storing becomes unlawful ; yet is there a period for his storing, and a point or centre when his storing, which was even now good, passeth from good to bad. Wherefore the parson, being true to his business, hath exactly sifted the definitions of all virtues and vices ; especially canvassing those, whose natures are most stealing, and beginnings uncertain. Particularly concerning

these two vices, not because they are all that are of this dark and creeping disposition, but for example sake, and because they are most common, he thus thinks: First, for covetousness, he lays this ground: Whosoever, when a just occasion calls, either spends not at all, or not in some proportion to God's blessing upon him, is covetous. The reason of the ground is manifest, because wealth is given to that end to supply our occasions. Now, if I do not give every thing its end, I abuse the creature; I am false to my reason, which should guide me; I offend the supreme Judge, in perverting that order which he hath set both to things and to reason. The application of the ground would be infinite; but in brief, a poor man is an occasion, my country is an occasion, my friend is an occasion, my table is an occasion, my apparel is an occasion: if in all these, and those more which concern me, I either do nothing, or pinch, and scrape, and squeeze blood, undecently to the station wherein God hath placed me, I am covetous. More particularly, and to give one instance for all, if God hath given me servants, and I either provide too little for them, or that which is unwholesome, being sometimes baned meat, sometimes too salt, and so not competent nourishment, I am covetous. I bring this example, because men usually think, that servants for their money are as other things that they buy, even as a piece of wood, which they may cut, or hack, or throw into the fire, and so they pay them their wages, all is well. Nay, to descend yet more particularly, if a man hath wherewithal to buy a spade, and yet he chooseth rather to use his neighbour's, and wear out that, he is covetous. Nevertheless, few bring covetousness thus low, or consider it so narrowly, which yet ought to be done, since there is a justice in the least things, and for the least there shall be a judgment. Country people are full of these petty injustices, being cunning to make use of another, and spare themselves; and scholars ought to be diligent in the observation of these, and driving of their general school-rules ever to the smallest actions of life: which while they dwell in their books, they will never find; but being seated in the country, and doing their duty faithfully, they will soon discover: especially if they carry their eyes ever open, and fix them on their charge, and not on their preferment. Secondly, for gluttony, the parson lays this ground: He that either for quantity eats more than his health or employment will bear, or for quality is lickerous

after dainties, is a glutton ; as he that eats more than his estate will bear is a prodigal ; and he that eats offensively to the company, either in his order or length of eating, is scandalous and uncharitable. These three rules generally comprehend the faults of eating, and the truth of them needs no proof : so that men must eat neither to the disturbance of their health, nor of their affairs, (which being overburdened, or studying dainties too much, they cannot well despatch,) nor of their estate, nor of their brethren. One act in these things is bad, but it is the custom and habit that names a glutton. Many think they are at more liberty than they are, as if they were masters of their health, and so they will stand to the pain, all is well. But to eat to one's hurt, comprehends, besides the hurt, an act against reason, because it is unnatural to hurt oneself ; and this they are not masters of. Yet of hurtful things, I am more bound to abstain from those, which by mine own experience I have found hurtful, than from those which by a common tradition and vulgar knowledge are reputed to be so. That which is said of hurtful meats extends to hurtful drinks also. As for the quantity, touching our employments, none must eat so as to disable themselves from a fit discharging either of divine duties, or duties of their calling. So that if after dinner they are not fit (or unwieldy) either to pray, or work, they are gluttons. Not that all must presently work after dinner ; for they rather must not work, especially students, and those that are weakly ; but that they must rise so, as that it is not meat or drink that hinders them from working. To guide them in this, there are three rules : first, the custom and knowledge of their own body, and what it can well digest : the second, the feeling of themselves in time of eating ; which because it is deceitful, (for one thinks in eating, that he can eat more than afterwards he finds true :) the third is the observation with what appetite they sit down. This last rule joined with the first never fails. For knowing what one usually can well digest, and feeling when I go to meat in what disposition I am, either hungry or not, according as I feel myself, either I take my wonted proportion, or diminish of it. Yet physicians bid those that would live in health not keep an uniform diet, but to feed variously, now more, now less : and Gerson, a spiritual man, wisheth all to incline rather to too much, than to too little ; his reason is, because discases of exinanition are more dangerous than discases

of repletion. But the parson distinguisheth according to his double aim, either of abstinence a moral virtue, or mortification a divine. When he deals with any that is heavy and carnal, he gives him those freer rules ; but when he meets with a refined and heavenly disposition, he carries them higher, even sometimes to a forgetting of themselves, knowing that there is one, who, when they forget, remembers for them ; as when the people hungered and thirsted after our Saviour's doctrine, and tarried so long at it, that they would have fainted, had they returned empty, he suffered it not ; but rather made food miraculously, than suffered so good desires to miscarry.

CHAP. XXVII.

The parson in mirth.

THE country parson is generally sad, because he knows nothing but the cross of Christ, his mind being defixed on it with those nails wherewith his Master was : or if he have any leisure to look off from thence, he meets continually with two most sad spectacles, sin and misery ; God dishonoured every day, and man afflicted. Nevertheless, he sometimes refresheth himself, as knowing that nature will not bear everlasting droopings, and that pleasantness of disposition is a great key to do good ; not only because all men shun the company of perpetual severity, but also for that when they are in company, instructions seasoned with pleasantness both enter sooner, and root deeper. Wherefore he condescends to human frailties both in himself and others ; and intermingles some mirth in his discourses occasionally, according to the pulse of the hearer.

CHAP. XXVIII.

The parson in contempt.

THE country parson knows well, that both for the general ignominy which is cast upon the profession, and much more for those rules, which out of his choicest judgment he hath resolved to observe, and which are described in this book, he must be despised ; because this hath been the portion of God his Master, and of God's saints his brethren, and this is foretold, that it shall be so still, until things be no more. Nevertheless, according to the apostle's rule, he endeavours *that none shall despise him* ; especially in his own parish he suffers it not to

his utmost power ; for that, where contempt is, there is no room for instruction. This he procures, first, by his holy and unblameable life ; which carries a reverence with it, even above contempt. Secondly, by a courteous carriage and winning behaviour : he that will be respected must respect ; doing kindnesses, but receiving none, at least of those who are apt to despise ; for this argues a height and eminency of mind, which is not easily despised, except it degenerate to pride. Thirdly, by a bold and impartial reproof, even of the best in the parish, when occasion requires : for this may produce hatred in those that are reprov'd, but never contempt either in them or others. Lastly, if the contempt shall proceed so far as to do any thing punishable by law, as contempt is apt to do, if it be not thwarted, the parson, having a due respect both to the person and to the cause, referreth the whole matter to the examination and punishment of those which are in authority ; that so the sentence lighting upon one, the example may reach to all. But if the contempt be not punishable by law, or being so, the parson think it in his discretion either unfit or bootless to contend, then when any despises him, he takes it either in an humble way, saying nothing at all ; or else in a slighting way, shewing that reproaches touch him no more, than a stone thrown against heaven, where he is and lives ; or in a sad way, griev'd at his own and others' sins, which continually break God's laws, and dishonour him with those mouths which he continually fills and feeds ; or else in a doctrinal way, saying to the contemner, Alas, why do you thus ! You hurt yourself, not me ; he that throws a stone at another hits himself : and so, between gentle reasoning and pitying, he overcomes the evil : or lastly, in a triumphant way, being glad and joyful that he is made conformable to his Master ; and being in the world as he was, hath this undoubted pledge of his salvation. These are the five shields wherewith the godly receive the darts of the wicked ; leaving anger, and retorting, and revenge, to the children of the world, whom another's ill mastereth, and leadeth captive without any resistance, even in resistance to the same destruction. For while they resist the person that reviles, they resist not the evil which takes hold of them, and is far the worse enemy.

CHAP. XXIX.

The parson with his churchwardens.

THE country parson doth often, both publicly and privately, instruct his churchwardens, what a great charge lies upon them, and that indeed the whole order and discipline of the parish is put into their hands. If himself reform any thing, it is out of the overflowing of his conscience; whereas they are to do it by command, and by oath. Neither hath the place its dignity from the ecclesiastical laws only, since even by the common statute-law they are taken for a kind of corporation, as being persons enabled by that name to take movable goods or chattels, and to sue and to be sued at the law concerning such goods for the use and profit of their parish: and by the same law they are to levy penalties for negligence in resorting to church, or for disorderly carriage in time of divine service. Wherefore the parson suffers not the place to be vilified or debased, by being cast on the lower rank of people; but invites and urges the best unto it, shewing that they do not lose, or go less, but gain by it; it being the greatest honour of this world, to do God and his chosen service; or as David says, to be even a doorkeeper in the house of God. Now the Canons being the churchwardens' rule, the parson adviseth them to read, or hear them read often, as also the Visitation Articles, which are grounded upon the Canons, that so they may know their duty, and keep their oath the better; in which regard, considering the great consequence of their place, and more of their oath, he wisheth them by no means to spare any, though never so great; but, if after gentle and neighbourly admonitions they still persist in ill, to present them; yea though they be tenants, or otherwise engaged to the delinquent: for their obligation to God and their own soul is above any temporal tie. Do well and right, and let the world sink.

CHAP. XXX.

The parson's consideration of Providence.

THE country parson considering the great aptness country people have to think that all things come by a kind of natural course; and that if they sow and soil their grounds, they must have corn; if they keep and fodder well their cattle, they must

have milk and calves; labours to reduce them to see God's hand in all things, and to believe, that things are not set in such an inevitable order, but that God often changeth it according as he sees fit, either for reward or punishment. To this end he represents to his flock, that God hath and exerciseth a threefold power in every thing which concerns man. The first is a sustaining power; the second a governing power; the third a spiritual power. By his sustaining power he preserves and actuates every thing in his being; so that corn doth not grow by any other virtue, than by that which he continually supplies, as the corn needs it; without which supply the corn would instantly dry up, as a river would if the fountain were stopped. And it is observable, that if any thing could presume of an inevitable course and constancy in its operations, certainly it should be either the sun in heaven, or the fire on earth, by reason of their fierce, strong, and violent natures: yet when God pleased, the sun stood still, the fire burned not. By God's governing power he preserves and orders the referenes of things one to the other, so that though the corn do grow, and be preserved in that act by his sustaining power, yet if he suit not other things to the growth, as seasons, and weather, and other accidents by his governing power, the fairest harvest comes to nothing. And it is observable, that God delights to have men feel, and acknowledge, and reverence his power, and therefore he often overturns things, when they are thought past danger; that is his time of interposing: as when a merchant hath a ship come home after many a storm, which it hath escaped, he destroys it sometimes in the very haven; or if the goods be housed, a fire hath broken forth, and suddenly consumed them. Now this he doth, that men should perpetuate, and not break off their acts of dependence, how fair soever the opportunities present themselves. So that if a farmer should depend upon God all the year, and being ready to put hand to sickle, shall then secure himself, and think all coeksure; then God sends such weather as lays the corn and destroys it: or if he depend on God further, even till he imbarn his corn, and then think all sure; God sends a fire and consumes all that he hath: for that he ought not to break off, but to continue his dependence on God, not only before the corn is inned, but after also; and indeed, to depend and fear continually. The third power is spiritual, by which God turns all outward blessings to inward

advantages. So that if a farmer hath both a fair harvest, and that also well inned and imbarnd, and continuing safe there; yet if God give him not the grace to use and utter this well, all his advantages are to his loss. Better were his corn burnt, than not spiritually improved. And it is observable in this, how God's goodness strives with man's refractoriness: man would sit down at this world; God bids him sell it, and purchase a better: just as a father, who hath in his hand an apple, and a piece of gold under it; the child comes, and with pulling gets the apple out of his father's hand: his father bids him throw it away, and he will give him the gold for it, which the child utterly refusing, eats it, and is troubled with worms: so is the carnal and wilful man with the worm of the grave in this world, and the worm of conscience in the next.

CHAP. XXXI.

The parson in liberty.

THE country parson, observing the manifold wiles of Satan, (who plays his part sometimes in drawing God's servants from him, sometimes in perplexing them in the service of God,) stands fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. This liberty he compasseth by one distinction, and that is, of what is necessary, and what is additionary. As for example: It is necessary, that all Christians should pray twice a day every day of the week, and four times on Sunday, if they be well. This is so necessary and essential to a Christian, that he cannot without this maintain himself in a Christian state. Besides this, the godly have ever added some hours of prayer, as at nine, or at three, or at midnight, or as they think fit, and see cause, or rather as God's Spirit leads them. But these prayers are not necessary, but additionary. Now it so happens that the godly petitioner upon some emergent interruption in the day, or by oversleeping himself at night, omits his additionary prayer. Upon this his mind begins to be perplexed and troubled; and Satan, who knows the exigent, blows the fire, endeavouring to disorder the Christian, and put him out of his station, and to enlarge the perplexity, until it spread and taint his other duties of piety, which none can perform so well in trouble as in calmness. Here the parson interposeth with his distinction, and shews the perplexed Christian, that this prayer being additionary, not necessary; taken in, not commanded; the omission

thereof upon just occasion ought by no means to trouble him. God knows the occasion as well as he, and he is as a gracious father, who more accepts a common course of devotion, than dislikes an occasional interruption. And of this he is so to assure himself, as to admit no scruple, but to go on as cheerfully as if he had not been interrupted. By this it is evident, that the distinction is of singular use and comfort, especially to pious minds, which are ever tender and delicate. But here there are two cautions to be added. First, that this interruption proceed not out of slackness, or coldness, which will appear if the pious soul foresee and prevent such interruptions, what he may, before they come, and when, for all that, they do come, he be a little affected therewith, but not afflicted or troubled; if he resent it to a dislike, but not a grief. Secondly, that this interruption proceed not out of shame. As for example: a godlyman, not out of superstition, but of reverence to God's house, resolves, whenever he enters into a church, to kneel down and pray, either blessing God, that he will be pleased to dwell among men; or beseeching him, that, whenever he repairs to his house, he may behave himself so as befits so great a presence; and this briefly. But it happens, that near the place where he is to pray, he spies some scoffing ruffian, who is likely to deride him for his pains: if he now shall, either for fear or shame, break his custom, he shall do passing ill: so much the rather ought he to proceed, as that by this he may take into his prayer humiliation also. On the other side, if I am to visit the sick in haste, and my nearest way lie through the church, I will not doubt to go without staying to pray there; but only, as I pass, in my heart; because this kind of prayer is additional, not necessary, and the other duty overweighs it: so that if any scruple arise, I will throw it away, and be most confident that God is not displeased. This distinction may run through all Christian duties, and it is a great stay and settling to religious souls.

CHAP. XXXII.

The parson's surveys.

THE country parson hath not only taken a particular survey of the faults of his own parish, but a general also of the diseases of the time, that so, when his occasions carry him abroad, or

bring strangers to him, he may be the better armed to encounter them. The great and national sin of this land he esteems to be idleness; great in itself, and great in consequence: for when men have nothing to do, then they fall to drink, to steal, to whore, to scoff, to revile, to all sorts of gamings. Come, say they, we have nothing to do, let us go to the tavern, or to the stews, or what not. Wherefore the parson strongly opposeth this sin, wheresoever he goes. And because idleness is twofold, the one in having no calling, the other in walking carelessly in our calling, he first represents to every body the necessity of a vocation. The reason of this assertion is taken from the nature of man, wherein God hath placed two great instruments, reason in the soul, and a hand in the body, as engagements of working: so that even in Paradise man had a calling; and how much more out of Paradise, when the evils which he is now subject unto may be prevented or diverted by reasonable employment. Besides, every gift or ability is a talent to be accounted for, and to be improved to our Master's advantage. Yet it is also a debt to our country to have a calling, and it concerns the commonwealth, that none should be idle, but all busied. Lastly, riches are the blessing of God, and the great instrument of doing admirable good: therefore all are to procure them honestly and seasonably, when they are not better employed. Now this reason crosseth not our Saviour's precept of selling what we have, because when we have sold all, and given it to the poor, we must not be idle, but labour to get more, that we may give more, according to St. Paul's rule, Ephes. iv. 28. 1 Thess. iv. 11, 12. So that our Saviour's selling is so far from crossing St. Paul's working, that it rather stablisheth it, since they that have nothing are fittest to work. Now because the only opposer to this doctrine is the gallant, who is witty enough to abuse both others and himself, and who is ready to ask, if he shall mend shoes, or what he shall do? therefore the parson unmoved sheweth, that ingenious and fit employment is never wanting to those that seek it. But if it should be, the assertion stands thus: all are either to have a calling, or prepare for it: he that hath or can have yet no employment, if he truly and seriously prepare for it, he is safe and within bounds. Wherefore all are either presently to enter into a calling, if they be fit for it, and it for them; or else to examine with care and advice what they are fittest for,

and to prepare for that with all diligence. But it will not be amiss in this exceeding useful point to descend to particulars: for exactness lies in particulars. Men are either single or married: the married and housekeeper hath his hands full, if he do what he ought to do. For there are two branches of his affairs: first, the improvement of his family, by bringing them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord: and secondly, the improvement of his grounds, by drowing or draining, or stocking or fencing, or ordering his land to the best advantage both of himself and his neighbours. The Italian says, "None fouls his hands in his own business:" and it is an honest and just care, so it exceed not bounds, for every one to employ himself to the advancement of his affairs, that he may have wherewithal to do good. But his family is his best care, to labour Christian souls, and raise them to their height, even to heaven; to dress and prune them, and take as much joy in a straight growing child, or servant, as a gardener doth in a choice tree. Could men find out this delight, they would seldom be from home; whereas now, of any place they are least there. But if, after all this care well despatched, the housekeeper's family be so small, and his dexterity so great, that he have leisure to look out, the village or parish which either he lives in, or is near unto it, is his employment. He considers every one there, and either helps them in particular, or hath general propositions to the whole town or hamlet, of advancing the public stock, and managing commons or woods, according as the place suggests. But if he may be of the commission of peace, there is nothing to that: no commonwealth in the world hath a better institution than that of justices of the peace: for it is both a security to the king, who hath so many dispersed officers at his beck throughout the kingdom, accountable for the public good: and also an honourable employment of a gentle or nobleman in the country he lives in, enabling him with power to do good, and to restrain all those, who else might both trouble him and the whole state. Wherefore it behoves all, who are come to the gravity and ripeness of judgment for so excellent a place, not to refuse, but rather to procure it. And whereas there are usually three objections made against the place; the one, the abuse of it, by taking petty country bribes; the other, the casting of it on mean persons, especially in some shires; and lastly, the trouble of it: these are so far from deterring any good man from the place,

that they kindle them rather to redeem the dignity either from true faults, or unjust aspersions. Now, for single men, they are either heirs, or younger brothers: the heirs are to prepare in all the fore-mentioned points against the time of their practice. Therefore they are to mark their father's discretion in ordering his house and affairs; and also elsewhere, when they see any remarkable point of education or good husbandry, and to transplant it in time to his own home, with the same care as others, when they meet with good fruit, get a graft of the tree, enriching their orchard, and neglecting their house. Besides, they are to read books of law and justice; especially the Statutes at Large. As for better books of divinity, they are not in this consideration, because we are about a calling, and a preparation thereunto. But chiefly, and above all things, they are to frequent sessions and assizes; for it is both an honour which they owe to the reverend judges and magistrates, to attend them, at least in their shire; and it is a great advantage to know the practice of the land; for our law is practice. Sometimes he may go to court, as the eminent place both of good and ill. At other times he is to travel over the king's dominions, cutting out the kingdom into portions, which every year he surveys piecemeal. When there is a parliament, he is to endeavour by all means to be a knight or burgess there; for there is no school to a parliament: and when he is there, he must not only be a morning man, but at committees also; for there the particulars are exactly discussed, which are brought from thence to the house but in general. When none of these occasions call him abroad, every morning that he is at home he must either ride the great horse, or exercise some of his military postures. For all gentlemen, that are now weakened and disarmed with sedentary lives, are to know the use of their arms: and as the husbandman labours for them, so must they fight for and defend them, when occasion calls. This is the duty of each to other, which they ought to fulfil: and the parson is a lover of and exciter to justice in all things, even as John the Baptist squared out to every one, even to soldiers, what to do. As for younger brothers, those whom the parson finds loose, and not engaged into some profession by their parents, whose neglect in this point is intolerable, and a shameful wrong both to the commwealth, and their own house: to them, after he hath shewed the unlawfulness of spending the day in dressing, complimenting, visiting, and sport-

ing, he first commends the study of the civil law, as a brave and wise knowledge, the professors whereof were much employed by queen Elizabeth, because it is the key of commerce, and discovers the rules of foreign nations. Secondly, he commends the mathematics, as the only wonder-working knowledge, and therefore requiring the best spirits. After the several knowledge of these, he adviseth to insist and dwell chiefly on the two noble branches thereof, of fortification and navigation; the one being useful to all countries, and the other especially to islands. But if the young gallant think these courses dull and phlegmatic, where can he busy himself better than in those new plantations and discoveries, which are not only a noble, but also, as they may be handled, a religious employment? Or let him travel into Germany and France, and observing the artifices and manufactures there, transplant them hither, as divers have done lately, to our country's advantage.

CHAP. XXXIII.

The parson's library.

THE country parson's library is a holy life: for (besides the blessing that that brings upon it, there being a promise, that if the kingdom of God be first sought, all other things shall be added) even itself is a sermon. For the temptations with which a good man is beset, and the ways which he used to overcome them, being told to another, whether in private conference, or in the church, are a sermon. He that hath considered how to carry himself at table about his appetite, if he tell this to another, preacheth; and much more feelingly and judiciously, than he writes his rules of temperance out of books. So that the parson having studied and mastered all his lusts and affections within, and the whole army of temptations without, hath ever so many sermons ready penned, as he hath victories. And it fares in this as it doth in physic: he that hath been sick of a consumption, and knows what recovered him, is a physician, so far as he meets with the same disease and temper; and can much better and particularly do it, than he that is generally learned, and was never sick. And if the same person had been sick of all diseases, and were recovered of all by things that he knew, there were no such physician as he, both for skill and tenderness. Just so it is in divinity, and that not without manifest reason: for

though the temptations may be diverse in divers Christians, yet the victory is alike in all, being by the selfsame Spirit. Neither is this true only in the military state of a Christian life, but even in the peaceable also; when the servant of God, freed for a while from temptation, in a quiet sweetness seeks how to please his God. Thus the parson, considering that repentance is the great virtue of the gospel, and one of the first steps of pleasing God, having for his own use examined the nature of it, is able to explain it after to others. And particularly, having doubted sometimes, whether his repentance were true, or at least in that degree it ought to be, since he found himself sometimes to weep more for the loss of some temporal things, than for offending God, he came at length to this resolution, that repentance is an act of the mind, not of the body, even as the original signifies; and that the chief thing which God in scriptures requires, is the heart and the spirit, and to worship him in truth and spirit. Wherefore in case a Christian endeavour to weep, and cannot, since we are not masters of our bodies, this sufficeth. And consequently he found, that the essence of repentance (that it may be alike in all God's children, which as concerning weeping it cannot be, some being of a more melting temper than others) consisteth in a true detestation of the soul, abhorring and renouncing sin, and turning unto God in truth of heart and newness of life; which acts of repentance are and must be found in all God's servants: not that weeping is not useful, where it can be, that so the body may join in the grief, as it did in the sin; but that, so the other acts be, that is not necessary: so that he as truly repents, who performs the other acts of repentance, when he cannot more, as he that weeps a flood of tears. This instruction and comfort the parson getting for himself, when he tells it to others, becomes a sermon. The like he doth in other Christian virtues, as of faith, and love, and the cases of conscience belonging thereto, wherein (as St. Paul implies that he ought, Rom. ii.) he first preacheth to himself, and then to others.

CHAP. XXXIV.

The parson's dexterity in applying of remedies.

THE country parson knows that there is a double state of a Christian even in this life, the one military, the other peaceable. The military is, when we are assaulted with temptations either

from within or from without. The peaceable is, when the devil for a time leaves us, as he did our Saviour, and the angels minister to us their own food, even joy, and peace, and comfort in the Holy Ghost. These two states were in our Saviour, not only in the beginning of his preaching, but afterwards also; (as Matth. xxii. 35. he was tempted; and Luke x. 21. he rejoiced in spirit :) and they must be likewise in all that are his. Now the parson having a spiritual judgment, according as he discovers any of his flock to be in one or the other state, so he applies himself to them. Those that he finds in the peaceable state, he adviseth to be very vigilant, and not to let go the reins as soon as the horse goes easy. Particularly, he counselleth them to two things: first, to take heed, lest their quiet betray them, as it is apt to do, to a coldness and carelessness in their devotions, but to labour still to be as fervent in Christian duties, as they remember themselves were, when affliction did blow the coals. Secondly, not to take the full compass and liberty of their peace: not to eat all those dishes at table, which even their present health otherwise admits; nor to store their house with all those furnitures which even their present plenty of wealth otherwise admits; nor when they are among them that are merry, to extend themselves to all that mirth, which the present occasion of wit and company otherwise admits; but to put bounds and hoops to their joys: so will they last the longer, and, when they depart, return the sooner. If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; and if we would bound ourselves, we should not be bounded. But if they shall fear, that at such or such a time their peace and mirth have carried them further than this moderation, then to take Job's admirable course, who sacrificed lest his children should have transgressed in their mirth: so let them go, and find some poor afflicted soul, and there be bountiful and liberal; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Those that the parson finds in the military state, he fortifies and strengthens with his utmost skill. Now in those that are tempted, whatsoever is unruly falls upon two heads; either they think, that there is none that can or will look after things, but all goes by chance or wit: or else, though there be a great Governor of all things, yet to them he is lost, as if they said, God doth forsake and persecute them, and there is none to deliver them. If the parson suspect the first, and find sparks of such thoughts now and then to break forth, then, without opposing

directly, (for disputation is no cure for atheism,) he scatters in his discourse three sorts of arguments; the first taken from nature, the second from the law, the third from grace. For nature, he sees not how a house could be either built without a builder, or kept in repair without a housekeeper. He conceives not possibly, how the winds should blow so much as they can, and the sea rage so much as it can, and all things do what they can, and all, not only without dissolution of the whole, but also of any part, by taking away so much as the usual seasons of summer and winter, earing and harvest. Let the weather be what it will, still we have bread, though sometimes more, sometimes less; wherewith also a careful Joseph might meet. He conceives not possibly, how he that would believe a Divinity, if he had been at the creation of all things, should less believe it, seeing the preservation of all things; for preservation is a creation; and more, it is a continued creation, and a creation every moment. Secondly, for the law, there may be so evident though unused a proof of Divinity taken from thence, that the atheist or Epicurean can have nothing to contradict. The Jews yet live, and are known: they have their law and language bearing witness to them, and they to it: they are circumcised to this day, and expect the promises of the scripture: their country also is known, the places and rivers travelled unto, and frequented by others, but to them an unpenetrable rock, an unaccessible desert. Wherefore if the Jews live, all the great wonders of old live in them; and then who can deny the stretched-out arm of a mighty God? especially since it may be a just doubt, whether, considering the stubbornness of the nation, their living then in their country under so many miracles were a stranger thing, than their present exile and disability to live in their country. And it is observable, that this very thing was intended by God, that the Jews should be his proof and witnesses, as he calls them, *Isaiah* xliii. 12; and their very dispersion in all lands was intended not only for a punishment to them, but for an exciting of others by their sight to the acknowledging of God and his power, *Psalm* lix. 11; and therefore this kind of punishment was chosen rather than any other. Thirdly, for grace. Besides the continual succession, since the gospel, of holy men, who have borne witness to the truth, (there being no reason why any should distrust *St. Luke*, or *Tertullian*, or *Chrysostom*, more than *Tully*, *Virgil*, or *Livy*;) there are two prophecies in the gospel, which

evidently argue Christ's divinity by their success: the one concerning the woman that spent the ointment on our Saviour, for which he told, that it should never be forgotten, but with the gospel itself be preached to all ages, Matthew xxvi. 13. The other concerning the destruction of Jerusalem; of which our Saviour said, that that generation should not pass, till all were fulfilled, Luke xxi. 32; which Josephus's story confirmeth, and the continuance of which verdict is yet evident. To these might be added the preaching of the gospel in all nations, Matthew xxiv. 14, which we see even miraculously effected in these new discoveries, God turning men's covetousness and ambitions to the effecting of his word. Now a prophecy is a wonder sent to posterity, lest they complain of want of wonders. It is a letter sealed, and sent, which to the bearer is but paper, but to the receiver and opener is full of power. He that saw Christ open a blind man's eyes, saw not more divinity, than he that reads the women's ointment in the gospel, or sees Jerusalem destroyed. With some of these heads enlarged, and woven into his discourse, at several times and occasions, the parson settlenth wavering minds. But if he sees them nearer desperation than atheism; not so much doubting a God, as that he is theirs; then he dives into the boundless ocean of God's love, and the unspeakable riches of his lovingkindness. He hath one argument unanswerable. If God hate them, either he doth it as they are creatures, dust and ashes; or as they are sinful. As creatures, he must needs love them; for no perfect artist ever yet hated his own work. As sinful, he must much more love them; because, notwithstanding his infinite hate of sin, his love overcame that hate, and that with an exceeding great victory; which in the creation needed not, gave them love for love, even the Son of his love, out of his bosom of love. So that man, which way soever he turns, hath two pledges of God's love, (that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established,) the one in his being, the other in his sinful being: and this as the more faulty in him, so the more glorious in God. And all may certainly conclude, that God loves them, till either they despise that love, or despair of his mercy: not any sin else, but is within his love; but the despising of love must needs be without it. The thrusting away of his arm makes us only not embraced.

CHAP. XXXV.

The parson's condescending.

THE country parson is a lover of old customs, if they be good and harmless ; and the rather, because country people are much addicted to them, so that to favour them therein is to win their hearts, and to oppose them therein is to deject them. If there be any ill in the custom, which may be severed from the good, he pares the apple, and gives them the clean to feed on. Particularly, he loves procession, and maintains it, because there are contained therein four manifest advantages. First, a blessing of God for the fruits of the field : Secondly, justice in the preservation of bounds : Thirdly, charity in loving, walking, and neighbourly accompanying one another, with reconciling of differences at that time, if there be any : Fourthly, mercy in relieving the poor by a liberal distribution and largess, which at that time is or ought to be used. Wherefore he exacts of all to be present at the perambulation ; and those that withdraw, and sever themselves from it, he mislikes and reproves as uncharitable and unneighbourly ; and if they will not reform, presents them. Nay, he is so far from condemning such assemblies, that he rather procures them to be often, as knowing that absence breeds strangeness, but presence love. Now love is his business and aim ; wherefore he likes well, that his parish at good times invite one another to their houses, and he urgeth them to it : and sometimes, where he knows there hath been, or is, a little difference, he takes one of the parties, and goes with him to the other, and all dine or sup together. There is much preaching in this friendliness. Another old custom there is of saying, when light is brought in, " God send us the light of heaven ;" and the parson likes this very well ; neither is he afraid of praising or praying to God at all times, but is rather glad of catching opportunities to do them. Light is a great blessing, and as great as food, for which we give thanks : and those that think this superstitious, neither know superstition, nor themselves. As for those that are ashamed to use this form, as being old and obsolete, and not the fashion, he reforms and teaches them, that at baptism they professed not to be ashamed of Christ's cross, or for any shame to leave that which is good. He that is ashamed in small things, will extend his pusillanimity to greater. Rather should a Christian soldier take such oc-

casions to harden himself, and to further his exercises of mortification.

CHAP. XXXVI.

The parson blessing.

THE country parson wonders, that blessing the people is in so little use with his brethren: whereas he thinks it not only a grave and reverend thing, but a beneficial also. Those who use it not, do so either out of niceness, because they like the salutations, and compliments, and forms of worldly language better: which conformity and fashionableness is so exceeding unbecoming a minister, that it deserves reproof, not refutation: or else, because they think it empty and superfluous. But that which the apostles used so diligently in their writings, nay, which our Saviour himself used, Mark x. 16, cannot be vain and superfluous. But this was not proper to Christ, or the apostles only, no more than to be a spiritual father was appropriated to them. And if temporal fathers bless their children, how much more may and ought spiritual fathers? Besides, the priests of the Old Testament were commanded to bless the people, and the form thereof is prescribed, Numb. vi. Now as the apostle argues in another case, if the ministration of condemnation did bless, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit exceed in blessing? The fruit of this blessing good Hannah found, and received with great joy, 1 Sam. i. 18, though it came from a man disallowed by God: for it was not the person, but priesthood, that blessed; so that even ill priests may bless. Neither have the ministers power of blessing only, but also of cursing. So in the Old Testament Elisha cursed the children, 2 Kings ii. 24; which though our Saviour reprov'd as unfitting for his particular, who was to shew all humility before his passion, yet he allows it in his apostles. And therefore St. Peter used that fearful imprecation to Simon Magus, Acts viii. *Thy money perish with thee*: and the event confirmed it. So did St. Paul, 2 Tim, iv. 14. and 1 Tim. i. 20. Speaking of Alexander the coppersmith, who had withstood his preaching, *The Lord*, saith he, *reward him according to his works*. And again, of Hymeneus and Alexander, he saith, *he had delivered them to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme*. The forms both of blessing and cursing are expounded in the Common Prayer Book, the one in *The grace of*

our *Lord Jesus Christ, &c.* and, *The peace of God, &c.* The other in general in the Commination.

Now blessing differs from prayer in assurance, because it is not performed by way of request, but of confidence and power, effectually applying God's favour to the blessed, by the interesting of that dignity wherewith God hath invested the priest, and engaging of God's own power and institution for a blessing. The neglect of this duty in ministers themselves hath made the people also neglect it; so that they are so far from craving this benefit from their ghostly father, that they oftentimes go out of church, before he hath blessed them. In the time of popery, the priest's *benedicite*, and his holy water, were over-highly valued; and now we are fallen to the clean contrary, even from superstition to coldness and atheism. But the parson first values the gift in himself, and then teacheth his parish to value it. And it is observable, that if a minister talk with a great man in the ordinary course of complimenting language, he shall be esteemed as an ordinary complimenter; but if he often interpose a blessing, when the other gives him just opportunity, by speaking any good, this unusual form begets a reverence, and makes him esteemed according to his profession. The same is to be observed in writing letters also. To conclude, if all men are to bless upon occasion, as appears Rom. xii. 14, how much more those who are spiritual fathers?

CHAP. XXXVII.

Concerning detraction.

THE country parson, perceiving that most, when they are at leisure, make others' faults their entertainment and discourse, and that even some good men think, so they speak truth, they may disclose another's fault, finds it somewhat difficult how to proceed in this point. For if he absolutely shut up men's mouths, and forbid all disclosing of faults, many an evil may not only be, but also spread in his parish, without any remedy, (which cannot be applied without notice,) to the dishonour of God, and the infection of his flock, and the discomfort, discredit, and hinderance of the pastor. On the other side, if it be unlawful to open faults, no benefit or advantage can make it lawful: for *we must not do evil, that good may come of it.* Now the parson taking this point to task, which is so exceeding useful,

and hath taken so deep root, that it seems the very life and substance of conversation, hath proceeded thus far in the discussing of it. Faults are either notorious or private. Again, notorious faults are either such as are made known by common fame, (and of these, those that know them, may talk, so they do it not with sport, but commiseration;) or else such as have passed judgment, and been corrected either by whipping, or imprisoning, or the like. Of these also men may talk, and more, they may discover them to those that know them not; because infamy is a part of the sentence against malefactors, which the law intends, as is evident by those, which are branded for rogues, that they may be known; or put into the stocks, that they may be looked upon. But some may say, though the law allow this, the gospel doth not, which hath so much advanced charity, and ranked backbiters among the generation of the wicked, Rom. i. 30. But this is easily answered: as the executioner is not uncharitable that takes away the life of the condemned, except, besides his office, he add a tincture of private malice in the joy and haste of acting his part; so neither is he that defames him, whom the law would have defamed, except he also do it out of rancour. For in infamy all are executioners, and the law gives a malefactor to all to be defamed. And as malefactors may lose and forfeit their goods or life, so may they their good name, and the possession thereof, which before their offence and judgment they had in all men's breasts: for all are honest, till the contrary be proved. Besides, it concerns the commonwealth, that rogues should be known, and charity to the public hath the precedence of private charity. So that it is so far from being a fault to discover such offenders, that it is a duty rather, which may do much good, and save much harm. Nevertheless, if the punished delinquent shall be much troubled for his sins, and turn quite another man, doubtless then also men's affections and words must turn, and forbear to speak of that, which even God himself hath forgotten

RULES AND ADVICES
TO
THE CLERGY
OF THE
DIOCESE OF DOWN AND CONNOR,
BY
JEREMY TAYLOR,
BISHOP OF THAT DIOCESE.

RULES AND ADVICES

TO

THE CLERGY.

I. *Personal duty.*

1. **R**EMEMBER that it is your great duty, and tied on you by many obligations, that you be exemplar in your lives, and be patterns and presidents to your flocks ; lest it be said unto you, *Why takest thou my law into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest to be reformed thereby ?* He that lives an idle life may preach with truth and reason, or as did the Pharisees : but not as Christ, or as one having authority.

II. Every minister in taking accounts of his life must judge of his duty by more strict and severer measures, than he does of his people ; and he that ties heavy burdens upon others, ought himself to carry the heaviest end : and many things may be lawful in them, which he must not suffer in himself.

III. Let every minister endeavour to be learned in all spiritual wisdom, and skilful in the things of God ; for he will ill teach others the way of godliness, perfectly, that is himself a babe and uninstructed. An ignorant minister is an head without an eye ; and an evil minister is salt that hath no savour.

IV. Every minister, above all things, must be careful that he be not a servant to passion, whether of anger or desire. For he that is not a master of his passions will always be useless, and quickly will become contemptible and cheap in the eyes of his parish.

V. Let no minister be litigious in any thing ; not greedy or covetous ; not insisting upon little things, or quarreling for, or

exacting of every minute portion of his dues ; but bountiful and easy ; remitting of his right, when to do so may be useful to his people, or when the contrary may do mischief, and cause reproach. *Be not over righteous*, (saith Solomon,) that is, not severe in demanding, or forcing every thing, though it be indeed his due.

VI. Let not the name of the church be made a pretence for personal covetousness ; by saying, you are willing to remit many things, but you must not wrong the church : for though it be true, that you are not to do prejudice to succession, yet many things may be forgiven upon just occasions, from which the church shall receive no incommmodity ; but be sure that there are but few things which thou art bound to do in thy personal capacity, but the same also, and more, thou art obliged to perform, as thou art a public person.

VII. Never exact the offerings, or customary wages, and such as are allowed by law, in the ministration of the sacraments, nor condition for them, nor secure them beforehand ; but first do your office, and minister the sacraments purely, readily, and for Christ's sake ; and when that is done, receive what is your due.

VIII. Avoid all pride, as you would flee from the most frightful apparition, or the most cruel enemy ; and remember that you can never truly teach humility, or tell what it is, unless you practise it yourselves.

IX. Take no measures of humility, but such as are material and tangible ; such which consist not in humble words, and lowly gestures ; but what is first truly radicated in your souls, in low opinion of yourselves, and in real preferring others before yourselves ; and in such significations, which can neither deceive yourselves nor others.

X. Let every curate of souls strive to understand himself best ; and then to understand others. Let him spare himself least ; but severely judge, censure, and condemn himself. If he be learned, let him shew it by wise teaching, and humble manners. If he be not learned, let him be sure to get so much knowledge as to know that, and so much humility, as not to grow insolent, and puffed up by his emptiness. For many will pardon a good man that is less learned ; but if he be proud, no man will forgive him.

XI. Let every minister be careful to live a life as abstracted

from the affairs of the world, as his necessity will permit him ; but at no hand to be immerged and principally employed in the affairs of the world : what cannot be avoided, and what is of good report, and what he is obliged to by any personal or collateral duty, that he may do, but no more : ever remembering the saying of our blessed Lord ; *In the world ye shall have trouble ; but in me ye shall have peace ;* and consider this also, which is a great truth ; that every degree of love to the world is so much taken from the love of God.

XII. Be no otherwise solicitous of your fame and reputation, but by doing your duty well and wisely ; in other things refer yourself to God ; but if you meet with evil tongues, be careful that you bear reproaches sweetly and temperately.

XIII. Remember that no minister can govern his people well, and prosperously, unless himself hath learned humbly and cheerfully to obey his superior. For every minister should be like the good centurion in the gospel ; himself is under authority, and he hath people under him.

XIV. Be sure in all your words and actions to preserve Christian simplicity and ingenuity ; to do to others, as you would be done unto yourself ; and never to speak what you do not think. Trust to truth, rather than to your memory ; for this may fail you, that will never.

XV. Pray much and very fervently, for all your parishioners, and all men that belong to you, and all that belong to God ; but especially for the conversion of souls ; and be very zealous for nothing, but for God's glory, and the salvation of the world, and particularly of your charges : ever remembering that you are by God appointed, as the ministers of prayer and the ministers of good things, to pray for all the world, and to heal all the world, as far as you are able.

XVI. Every minister must learn and practise patience, that by bearing all adversity meekly, and humbly, and cheerfully, and by doing all his duty with unwearied industry, and with great courage, constancy, and Christian magnanimity, he may the better assist his people in the bearing of their crosses, and overcoming of their difficulties.

XVII. He that is holy, let him be holy still, and still more holy, and never think he hath done his work, till all be finished by perseverance, and the measures of perfection in a holy life, and a holy death ; but at no hand must he magnify himself by

vain separations from others, or despising them that are not so holy.

II. *Of prudence required in ministers.*

XVIII. Remember that discretion is the mistress of all graces ; and humility is the greatest of all miracles : and without this, all graces perish to a man's self ; and without that, all graces are useless unto others.

XIX. Let no minister be governed by the opinion of his people, and destroy his duty, by unreasonable compliance with their humours, lest, as the bishop of Granata told the governors of Leria and Patti, like silly animals they take burdens upon their backs at the pleasure of the multitude, which they neither can retain with prudence, nor shake off with safety.

XX. Let not the reverence of any man cause you to sin against God ; but in the matter of souls, being well advised, be bold and confident ; but abate nothing of the honour of God, or the just measures of your duty, to satisfy the importunity of any man whatsoever, and God will bear you out.

XXI. When you teach your people any part of their duty, as in paying their debts, their tithes and offerings, in giving due reverence and religious regards, diminish nothing of admonition in these particulars, and the like, though they object, That you speak for yourselves, and in your own cases. For counsel is not the worse, but the better, if it be profitable both to him that gives, and to him that takes it. Only do it in simplicity, and principally intend the good of their souls.

XXII. In taking accounts of the good lives of yourselves or others, take your measures by the express words of scripture ; and next to them estimate them by their proportion and compliance with the public measures, with the laws of the nation, ecclesiastical and civil, and by the rules of fame, of public honesty and good report ; and last of all by their observation of the ordinances and exterior parts of religion.

XXIII. Be not satisfied when you have done a good work, unless you have also done it well ; and when you have, then be careful that vainglory, partiality, self-conceit, or any other folly or indiscretion, snatch it not out of your hand, and cheat you of the reward.

XXIV. Be careful so to order yourself, that you fall not into temptation and folly in the presence of any of your charges ; and

especially that you fall not into chidings and intemperate talkings, and sudden and violent expressions: never be a party in clamours and scoldings, lest your calling be useless, and your person contemptible: ever remembering that if you cheaply and lightly be engaged in such low usages with any person, that person is likely to be lost from all possibility of receiving much good from your ministry.

III. *The rules and measures of government to be used by ministers in their respective cures.*

XXV. Use no violence to any man, to bring him to your opinion; but by the word of your proper ministry, by demonstrations of the Spirit, by rational discourses, by excellent examples, constrain them to come in; and for other things they are to be permitted to their own liberty, to the measures of the laws, and the conduct of their governors.

XXVI. Suffer no quarrel in your parish, and speedily suppress it when it is begun; and though all wise men will abstain from interposing in other men's affairs, and especially in matters of interest, which men love too well; yet it is your duty here to interpose, by persuading them to friendships, reconcilements, moderate prosecutions of their pretences; and by all means you prudently can, to bring them to peace and brotherly kindness.

XXVII. Suffer no houses of debauchery, of drunkenness or lust in your parishes; but implore the assistances of authority for the suppressing of all such meeting-places and nurseries of impiety; and as for places of public entertainment, take care that they observe the rules of Christian piety, and the allowed measures of the laws.

XXVIII. If there be any papists or sectaries in your parishes, neglect not frequently to confer with them in the spirit of meekness, and by the importunity of wise discourses seeking to gain them. But stir up no violences against them; but leave them (if they be incurable) to the wise and merciful disposition of the laws.

XXIX. Receive not the people to doubtful disputations: and let no names of sects or differing religions be kept up amongst you, to the disturbance of the public peace and private charity: and teach not the people to estimate their piety by their distance from any opinion, but by their faith in Christ, their obedience

to God and the laws, and their love to all Christian people, even though they be deceived.

XXX. Think no man considerable upon the point or pretence of a tender conscience, unless he live a good life, and in all things endeavour to approve himself void of offence both towards God and man: but if he be an humble person, modest and inquiring, apt to learn and desirous of information; if he seeks for it in all ways reasonable and pious, and is obedient to laws, then take care of him, use him tenderly, persuade him meekly, reprove him gently, and deal mercifully with him, till God shall reveal also that to him, in which his unavoidable trouble and his temptation lies.

XXXI. Mark them that cause divisions among you, and avoid them; for such persons are by the scripture called *scandals*^a in the abstract; they are offenders and offences too. But if any man have an opinion, let him have it to himself, till he can be cured of his disease by time, and counsel, and gentle usages. But if he separates from the church, or gathers a congregation, he is proud, and is fallen from the communion of saints, and the unity of the catholic church.

XXXII. He that observes any of his people to be zealous, let him be careful to conduct that zeal into such channels where there is least danger of inconveniency; let him employ it in something that is good; let it be pressed to fight against sin. For zeal is like a cancer in the breast; feed it with good flesh, or it will devour the heart.

XXXIII. Strive to get the love of the congregation; but let it not degenerate into popularity. Cause them to love you and revere you; to love with religion, not for your compliance; for the good you do them, not for that you please them. Get their love by doing your duty, but not by omitting, or spoiling any part of it: ever remembering the severe words of our blessed Saviour, *Wo be to you when all men speak well of you.*

XXXIV. Suffer not the common people to prattle about religion and questions; but to speak little, to be swift to hear, and slow to speak; that they learn to do good works for necessary uses, that they work with their hands, that they may have wherewithal to give to them that need; that they study to be quiet, and learn to do their own business.

^a Σκάνδαλα παρὰ τὴν διδαχὴν. Vide Rom. xvi. 17. οἱ διχοστατοῦντες.

XXXV. Let every minister take care that he call on his charge, that they order themselves so, that they leave no void spaces of their time, but that every part of it be filled with useful or innocent employment. For where there is a space without business, that space is the proper time for danger and temptation; and no man is more miserable than he that knows not how to spend his time.

XXXVI. Fear no man's person in the doing of your duty wisely, and according to the laws: remembering always, that a servant of God can no more be hurt by all the powers of wickedness, than by the noise of a fly's wing, or the chirping of a sparrow. Brethren, do well for yourselves; do well for yourselves as long as you have time; you know not how soon death will come.

XXXVII. Entertain no persons into your assemblies from other parishes, unless upon great occasion, or in the destitution of a minister, or by contingency and seldom visits, or with leave; lest the labour of thy brother be discouraged, and thyself be thought to preach Christ out of envy, and not of good-will.

XXXVIII. Never appeal to the judgment of the people in matters of controversy; teach them obedience, not arrogance; teach them to be humble, not crafty. For without the aid of false guides you will find some of them of themselves apt enough to be troublesome; and a question put into their heads and a power of judging into their hands, is a putting it to their choice whether you shall be troubled by them this week or the next; for much longer you cannot escape.

XXXIX. Let no minister of a parish introduce any ceremony, rites, or gestures, though with some seeming piety and devotion, but what are commanded by the church, and established by law; and let these also be wisely and usefully explicated to the people, that they may understand the reasons of obedience; but let there be no more introduced, lest the people be burdened unnecessarily, and tempted or divided.

IV. *Rules and advices concerning preaching.*

XL. Let every minister be diligent in preaching the word of God, according to the ability that God gives him: ever remembering that to minister God's word unto the people is the one half of his great office and employment.

XLI. Let every minister be careful that what he delivers be

indeed the word of God ; that his sermon may be answerable to his text ; for this is God's word, the other ought to be according to it ; that although in itself it be but the word of man, yet by the purpose, truth, and signification of it, it may in a secondary sense be the word of God.

XLII. Do not spend your sermons in general and indefinite things, as in exhortations to the people to get Christ, to be united to Christ, and things of the like unlimited signification ; but tell them in every duty, what are the measures, what circumstances, what instruments, and what is the particular minute meaning of every general advice. For generals not explicated do but fill the people's heads with empty notions, and their mouths with perpetual unintelligible talk ; but their hearts remain empty, and themselves are not edified.

XLIII. Let not the humours and inclinations of the people be the measures of your doctrines, but let your doctrines be the measure of their persuasions. Let them know from you what they ought to do ; but if you learn from them what you ought to teach, you will give but a very ill account at the day of judgment of the souls committed to you. He that receives from the people what he shall teach them, is like a nurse that asks of her child what physic she shall give him.

XLIV. Every minister in reproofs of sin and sinners ought to concern himself in the faults of them that are present, but not of the absent ; nor in reproof of the times ; for this can serve no end but of faction and sedition, public murmur and private discontent ; besides this, it does nothing but amuse the people in the faults of others, teaching them to revile their betters, and neglect the dangers of their own souls.

XLV. As it looks like flattery and design to preach nothing before magistrates but the duty of their people and their own eminency ; so it is the beginning of mutiny to preach to the people the duty of their superiors and supreme ; it can neither come from a good principle, nor tend to a good end. Every minister ought to preach to his parish, and urge their duty : St. John the Baptist told the soldiers what the soldiers should do, but troubled not their heads with what was the duty of the Scribes and Pharisees.

XLVI. In the reproof of sins be as particular as you please, and spare no man's sin, but meddle with no man's person ; neither name any man, nor signify him, neither reproach him,

or make him to be suspected ; he that doth otherwise makes his sermon to be a libel, and the ministry of repentance an instrument of revenge ; and so doing he shall exasperate the man, but never amend the sinner.

XLVII. Let the business of your sermons be to preach holy life, obedience, peace, love among neighbours, hearty love, to live as the old Christians did, and the new should ; to do hurt to no man, to do good to every man : for in these things the honour of God consists, and the kingdom of the Lord Jesus.

XLVIII. Press those graces most that do most good, and make the least noise ; such as giving privately and forgiving publicly ; and prescribe the grace of charity by all the measures of it which are given by the apostle, 1 Cor. xiii. For this grace is not finished by good words, nor yet by good works, but it is a great building, and many materials go to the structure of it. It is worth your study, for it is the fulfilling of the Commandments.

XLIX. Because it is impossible that charity should live, unless the lust of the tongue be mortified, let every minister in his charge be frequent and severe against slanderers, detractors, and backbiters ; for the crime of backbiting is the poison of charity, and yet so common, that it is passed into a proverb, *After a good dinner let us sit down and backbite our neighbours.*

L. Let every minister be careful to observe, and vehement in reproving those faults of his parishioners, of which the laws cannot or do not take cognizance ; such as are many, degrees of intemperate drinkings, gluttony, riotous living, expenses above their ability, pride, bragging, lying in ordinary conversation, covetousness, peevishness, and hasty anger, and such like. For the word of God searches deeper than the laws of men ; and many things will be hard to be proved by the measures of courts, which are easy enough to be observed by the watchful and diligent eye and ear of the guide of souls.

LI. In your sermons to the people, often speak of the four last things, of death and judgment, heaven and hell ; of the life and death of Jesus Christ ; of God's mercy to repenting sinners, and his severity against the impenitent ; of the formidable examples of God's anger poured forth upon rebels, sacrilegious, oppressors of widows and orphans, and all persons guilty of crying sins : these are useful, safe, and profitable : but never run into extravagances and curiosities, nor trouble yourselves or them

with mysterious secrets ; for there is more laid before you than you can understand ; and the whole duty of man is, *To fear God and keep his commandments*. Speak but very little of the secret and high things of God, but as much as you can of the lowness and humility of Christ.

LII. Be not hasty in pronouncing damnation against any man or party in a matter of disputation. It is enough that you reprove an error ; but what shall be the sentence against it at the day of judgment, thou knowest not, and therefore pray for the erring person, and reprove him, but leave the sentence to his Judge.

LIII. Let your sermons teach the duty of all states of men to whom you speak ; and particularly take care of servants and hirelings, merchants and tradesmen, that they be not unskilful, nor unadmonished in their respective duties ; and in all things speak usefully and affectionately ; for by this means you will provide for all men's needs, both for them that sin by reason of their little understanding, and them that sin because they have evil, dull, or depraved affections.

LIV. In your sermons and discourses of religion, use primitive, known, and accustomed words, and affect not new fantastical or schismatical terms ; let the Sunday festival be called the Lord's day ; and pretend no fears from the common use of words amongst Christians. For they that make a business of the words of common use, and reform religion by introducing a new word, intend to make a change, but no amendment ; they spend themselves in trifles, like the barren turf that sends forth no medicinal herbs, but store of mushrooms ; and they give a demonstration that they are either impertinent people, or else of a querulous nature ; and that they are ready to disturb the church if they could find occasion.

LV. Let every minister in his charge, as much as he can, endeavour to destroy all popular errors and evil principles taken up by his people, or others with whom they converse ; especially those that directly oppose the indispensable necessity of a holy life ; let him endeavour to understand in what true and useful sense Christ's active obedience is imputed to us ; let him make his people fear the deferring of their repentance, and putting it off to their death-bed ; let him explicate the nature of faith, so that it be an active and quickening principle of charity ; let him, as much as he may, take from them all confidences that

slacken their obedience and diligence; let him teach them to impute all their sins to their own follies and evil choice, and so build them up in a most holy faith to a holy life: ever remembering that in all ages it hath been the greatest artifice of Satan to hinder the increase of Christ's kingdom, by destroying those things in which it does consist, viz. peace and righteousness, holiness and mortification.

LVI. Every minister ought to be careful that he never expound scriptures in public contrary to the known sense of the catholic church, and particularly of the churches of England and Ireland, nor introduce any doctrine against any of the four first general councils; for these, as they are measures of truth, so also of necessity; that is, as they are safe, so they are sufficient; and beside what is taught by these no matter of belief is necessary to salvation.

LVII. Let no preacher bring before the people in his sermons or discourses, the argument of great and dangerous heresies, though with a purpose to confute them; for they will much easier retain the objection than understand the answer.

LVIII. Let not the preacher make an article of faith to be a matter of dispute; but teach it with plainness and simplicity, and confirm it with easy arguments and plain words of scripture, but without objection; let them be taught to believe, but not to argue, lest if the arguments meet with a scrupulous person, it rather shake the foundation by curious inquiry, than establish it by arguments too hard.

LIX. Let the preacher be careful that in his sermons he use no light, immodest, or ridiculous expressions, but what is wise, grave, useful, and for edification; that when the preacher brings truth and gravity, the people may attend with fear and reverence.

LX. Let no preacher envy any man that hath a greater audience, or more fame in preaching than himself; let him not detract from him or lessen his reputation directly or indirectly; for he that cannot be even with his brother but by pulling him down, is but a dwarf still; and no man is the better for making his brother worse. In all things desire that Christ's kingdom may be advanced; and rejoice that he is served, whoever be the minister; that if you cannot have the fame of a great preacher, yet you may have the reward of being a good man; but it is hard to miss both.

LXI. Let every preacher in his parish take care to explicate

to the people the mysteries of the great festivals, as of Christmas, Easter, Ascension-day, Whit-Sunday, Trinity-Sunday, the Annunciation of the blessed Virgin Mary; because these feasts containing in them the great fundamentals of our faith, will with most advantage convey the mysteries to the people, and fix them in their memories, by the solemnity and circumstances of the day.

LXII. In all your sermons and discourses speak nothing of God but what is honourable and glorious; and impute not to him such things, the consequences of which a wise and good man will not own: never suppose him to be author of sin, or the procurer of our damnation. For *God cannot be tempted, neither tempteth he any man. God is true, and every man a liar.*

LXIII. Let no preacher compare one ordinance with another; as prayer with preaching, to the disparagement of either; but use both in their proper seasons, and according to appointed order.

LXIV. Let no man preach for the praise of men; but if you meet it, instantly watch and stand upon your guard, and pray against your own vanity; and by an express act of acknowledgment and adoration return the praise to God. Remember that Herod was for the omission of this smitten by an angel; and do thou tremble, fearing lest the judgment of God be otherwise than the sentence of the people.

V. Rules and advices concerning Catechism.

LXV. Every minister is bound upon every Lord's day before evening prayer, to instruct all young people in the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the doctrine of the sacraments, as they are set down and explicated in the Church Catechism.

LXVI. Let a bell be tolled when the catechising is to begin, that all who desire it may be present; but let all the more ignorant and uninstructed part of the people, whether they be old or young, be required to be present; that no person in your parishes be ignorant in the foundations of religion: ever remembering, that if in these things they be unskilful, whatever is taught besides is like a house built upon the sand.

LXVII. Let every minister teach his people the use, practice, methods, and benefits of meditation, or mental prayer. Let them draw out for them helps and rules for their assistance in it, and furnish them with materials, concerning the life and death of the

ever blessed Jesus, the greatness of God, our own meanness, the dreadful sound of the last trumpet, the infinite event of the two last sentences at doomsday : let them be taught to consider what they have been, what they are, and what they shall be ; and above all things what are the issues of eternity ; glories never to cease, pains never to be ended.

LXVIII. Let every minister exhort his people to a frequent confession of their sins, and a declaration of the state of their souls ; to a conversation with their minister in spiritual things, to an inquiry concerning all the parts of their duty ; for by preaching, and catechising, and private intercourse, all the needs of souls can best be served ; but by preaching alone they cannot.

LXIX. Let the people be exhorted to keep fasting-days, and the feasts of the church ; according to their respective capacities ; so it be done without burden to them, and without becoming a snare ; that is, that upon the account of religion and holy desires to please God, they spend some time in religion, besides the Lord's day ; but be very careful that the Lord's day be kept religiously, according to the severest measures of the church, and the commands of authority : ever remembering, that as they give but little testimony of repentance and mortification, who never fast ; so they give but small evidence of their joy in God and religion, who are unwilling solemnly to partake of the public and religious joys of the Christian church.

LXX. Let every minister be diligent in exhorting all parents and masters to send their children and servants to the bishop at the visitation, or other solemn times of his coming to them, that they may be confirmed : and let him also take care that all young persons may by understanding the principles of religion, their vow of baptism, the excellency of the Christian religion, the necessity and advantages of it, and of living according to it, be fitted and disposed, and accordingly by them presented to the bishop, that he may pray over them, and invoke the Holy Spirit, and minister the holy rite of confirmation.

VI. *Rules and advices concerning the visitation of the sick.*

LXXI. Every minister ought to be careful in visiting all the sick and afflicted persons of his parish : even remembering, that as the priest's lips are to preserve knowledge, so it his duty to minister a word of comfort in the time of need.

LXXII. A minister must not stay till he be sent for ; but of his own accord and care go to them, to examine them, to exhort them to perfect their repentance, to strengthen their faith, to encourage their patience, to persuade them to resignation, to the renewing of their holy vows, to the love of God, to be reconciled to their neighbours, to make restitution and amends, to confess their sins, to settle their estate, to provide for their charges, to do acts of piety and charity, and above all things, that they take care they do not sin towards the end of their lives. For if repentance on our death-bed seem so very late for the sins of our life ; what time shall be left to repent us of the sins we commit on our death-bed ?

LXXIII. When you comfort the afflicted, endeavour to bring them to the true love of God ; for he that serves God for God's sake, it is almost impossible he should be oppressed with sorrow.

LXXIV. In answering the cases of conscience of the sick or afflicted people, consider not who asks, but what he asks ; and consult in your answers more with the estate of his soul, than the conveniency of his estate ; for no flattery is so fatal as that of the physician or divine.

LXXV. If the sick person inquires concerning the final estate of his soul, he is to be reprov'd rather than answer'd ; only he is to be called upon to finish his duty, to do all the good he can in that season, to pray for pardon and acceptance : but you have nothing to do to meddle with passing final sentences ; neither cast him down in despair, nor raise him up to vain and unreasonable confidences. But take care that he be not carelessly dismissed.

LXXVI. In order to these and many other good purposes, every minister ought frequently to converse with his parishioners ; to go to their houses, but always publicly, with witness, and with prudence, lest what is charitably intended be scandalously reported ; and in all your conversation be sure to give good example, and upon all occasions to give good counsel.

VII. *Of ministering the sacraments, public prayers, and other duties of ministers.*

LXXVII. Every minister is oblig'd publicly or privately to

read the common prayers every day in the week, at morning and evening ; and in great towns and populous places conveniently inhabited, it must be read in churches, that the daily sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving may never cease.

LXXVIII. The minister is to instruct the people, that the baptism of their children ought not to be ordinarily deferred longer than till the next Sunday after the birth of the child ; lest importune and unnecessary delay occasion that the child die before it is dedicated to the service of God and the religion of the Lord Jesus, before it be born again, admitted to the promise of the gospel, and reckoned in the account of the second Adam.

LXXIX. Let every minister exhort and press the people to a devout and periodical communion, at the least three times in the year, at the great festivals ; but the devouter sort, and they who have leisure, are to be invited to a frequent communion ; and let it be given and received with great reverence.

LXXX. Every minister ought to be well skilled and studied in saying his office, in the rubrics, the canons, the articles, and the homilies of the church, that he may do his duty readily, discreetly, gravely, and by the public measures of the laws. To which also it is very useful that it be added, that every minister study the ancient canons of the church, especially the penitentials of the eastern and western churches : let him read good books, such as are approved by public authority ; such which are useful, wise, and holy ; not the scribblings of unlearned parties, but of men learned, pious, obedient, and disinterested ; and amongst these, such especially which describe duty and good life, which minister to faith and charity, to piety and devotion ; cases of conscience, and solid expositions of scripture. Concerning which learned and wise persons are to be consulted.

LXXXI. Let not a curate of souls trouble himself with any studies but such which concern his own or his people's duty ; such as may enable him to speak well, and to do well ; but to meddle not with controversies, but such by which he may be enabled to convince the gainsayers in things that concern public peace and a good life.

LXXXII. Be careful in all the public administrations of your parish, that the poor be provided for. Think it no shame to beg for Christ's poor members ; stir up the people to liberal alms by your words and your example. Let a collection be made every

Lord's day, and upon all solemn meetings, and at every communion; and let the collection be wisely and piously administered: ever remembering, that at the day of judgment nothing shall publicly be proclaimed, but the reward of alms and mercy.

LXXXIII. Let every minister be sure to lay up a treasure of comforts and advices, to bring forth for every man's need in the day of his trouble; let him study and heap together instruments and advices for the promoting of every virtue, and remedies and arguments against every vice; let him teach his people to make acts of virtue not only by external exercise, but also in the way of prayer and internal meditation.

In these and all things else that concern the minister's duty, if there be difficulty, you are to repair to your bishop for further advice, assistance, and information.

J. G. Robinson 1850

A
DISCOURSE
OF THE
PASTORAL CARE.

WRITTEN BY THE
RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,
GILBERT,
LORD BISHOP OF SARUM.

OF THE

PASTORAL CARE.

CHAP. I.

Of the dignity of sacred employments, and the names and designations given to them in scripture.

HOW low soever the esteem of the clergy may be sunk in a profane and corrupt age, and how much soever the errors and disorders of clergymen may have contributed to bring this not only upon themselves, but upon others who deserve better, but are unhappy in being mixed with so much ill company; yet certainly if we either consider the nature of things in themselves, or the value that is set on that profession, in the scriptures, it will appear that it ought to be considered at another rate than it is. As much as the soul is better than the body, and as much as the purifying and perfecting the soul is preferable to all those mechanical employments which relate to the body, and as much as eternity is more valuable than this short and transitory life; so much does this employment excel all others.

A clergyman, by his character and design of life, ought to be a man separated from the cares and concerns of this world, and dedicated to the study and meditation of divine matters: whose conversation ought to be a pattern for others; a constant preaching to his people: who ought to offer up the prayers of the people in their name, and as their mouth to God: who ought to be praying and interceding for them in secret, as well as officiating among them in public: who ought to be distributing

among them the bread of life, the word of God ; and to be dispensing among them the sacred rites, which are the badges, the union, and the supports of Christians. He ought to admonish, to reprove, and to comfort them, not only by his general doctrine in his sermons, but from house to house ; that so he may do these things more home and effectually, than can be done from the pulpit. He is to watch over their souls, to keep them from error, and to alarm them out of their sins, by giving them warning of the judgments of God ; to visit the sick, and to prepare them for the judgment and life to come.

This is the function of a clergyman ; who, that he may perform all these duties with more advantage, and better effect, ought to behave himself so well, that his own conversation may not only be without offence, but be so exemplary, that his people may have reason to conclude, that he himself does firmly believe all those things which he proposes to them ; that he thinks himself bound to follow all those rules that he sets them ; and that they may see such a serious spirit of devotion in him, that from thence they may be induced to believe, that his chief design among them is to do them good, and to save their souls ; which may prepare them so to esteem and love him, that they may not be prejudiced against any thing that he does and says in public, by any thing that they observe in himself in secret. He must also be employing himself so well in his private studies, that from thence he may be furnished with such a variety of lively thoughts, divine meditations, and proper and noble expressions, as may enable him to discharge every part of his duty in such a manner, as may raise not so much his own reputation, as the credit of his function, and of the great *message of reconciliation* that is committed to his charge : above all studies, he ought to apply himself to understand the holy scriptures aright ; to have his memory well furnished that way, that so upon all occasions he may be able to enforce what he says out of them, and so be *an able minister of the New Testament*.

This is in short the character of a true clergyman, which is to be more fully opened and enlarged on in the following parts of this book. All this looks so great and so noble, that it does not appear necessary to raise it, or to insist on it more fully. Indeed it speaks its own dignity so sensibly, that none will dispute it, but such as are open enemies to all religion in general, or to the

Christian religion in particular ; and yet even few of these are so entirely corrupted, as not to wish that external order and policy were kept up among men, for restraining the injustice and violence of unruly appetites and passions ; which few, even of the tribe of the libertines, seem to desire to be let loose ; since the peace and safety of mankind require that the world be kept in method, and under some yoke.

It will be more suitable to my design, to shew how well this character agrees with that which is laid down in the scriptures concerning these offices. I shall begin first with the names, and then go on to the descriptions, and lastly proceed to the rules that we find in them.

The name of deacon, that is now appropriated to the lowest office in the church, was, in the time that the New Testament was writ, used more promiscuously : for the apostles, the evangelists, and those whom the apostles sent to visit the churches, are all called by this name. Generally in all those places where the word minister is in our translation, it is deacon in the Greek, which signifies properly a servant, or one who labours for another. Such persons are dedicated to the immediate service of God ; and are appropriated to the offices and duties of the church ; so this term both expresses the dignity and the labour of the employment.

The next order carries now the name of presbyter, or elder ; which though at first it was applied not only to bishops, but to the apostles themselves ; yet in the succeeding ages, it came to be appropriated to the second rank of the officers in the church. It either signifies a seniority of age, or of Christianity, in opposition to a neophyte or novice, one newly converted to the faith ; but by common practice, as senate or senator, being at first given to counsellors by reason of their age, came afterwards to be a title appropriate to them ; so the title presbyter, (altered in pronunciation to be in English, priest,) or elder, being a character of respect, denotes the dignity of those to whom it belongs : but since St. Paul divides this title either into two different ranks, or into two different performances of the duties of the same rank, those *that rule well*, and *those that labour in word and doctrine*^a ; this is a title that speaks both the dignity, and likewise the duty belonging to this function.

^a 1 Tim. v. 17.

The title which is now by the custom of many ages given to the highest function in the church, of bishop, or inspector, and overseer, as it imports a dignity in him, as the chief of those who labour; so it does likewise express his obligation to care and diligence, both in observing and overseeing the whole flock; and more specially in inspecting the deportment and labours of his fellow-workmen, who are subordinate to him in the constitution of the church, yet ought to be esteemed by him, in imitation of the apostles, his brethren, his fellow-labourers, and fellow-servants. Next to the names of the sacred functions, I shall consider the other designations and figures, made use of to express them.

The most common is that of pastor or shepherd. It is to be remembered, that in the first simplicity of mankind, for many ages, men looked after their own cattle, or employed their children in it; and when they trusted that care to any other, it was no small sign of their confidence, according to what Jacob said to Laban. The care of a good shepherd was a figure then so well understood, that the prophet expresses God's care of his people by this, *of his feeding them as a shepherd, carrying his lambs in his bosom, and gently leading them that were with young*^b. Christ also calls himself *the good Shepherd, that knew his sheep, and did not as a hireling, fly away when the wolf came, but laid down his life for his sheep*^c. This then being so often made use of in both Testaments, is an expression of the great trust committed to the clergy, which likewise supposes a great, a constant, and a tender care in looking to, in feeding or instructing, in watching over, and guarding the flock against errors and sins, and their being ready to offer themselves to the first fury of persecution.

The title of stewards, or dispensers, which is the most honourable in a household, is also given to them. These assign to every one his due share, both of labour and of provision; these watch over them, and have the care and order of the other servants assigned to them. So in this great family, of which Christ is the head^d, the stewards are not only in a post of great dignity, but also of much labour: they ought to be observing the rest of this household, that they may be faithful in the distribution, and so encourage, admonish, reprove, or censure, as there is occasion for it.

^b Isa. xl. 11.^c John x. 11, 12.^d 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

They are also called ambassadors, and this upon the noblest and most desirable message; for their business is to treat of peace between God and man; to them is given the word or doctrine of reconciliation; they are sent by Christ, and do speak in God's name; as if *God did beseech men by them; so do they in Christ's stead*, who is the Mediator, *press men to be reconciled to God*^e; words of a very high sound, of great trust and dignity, but which import likewise great obligations. An ambassador is very solicitous to maintain the dignity of his character, and his master's honour; and chiefly to carry on that which is the main business that he is sent upon, which he is always contriving how to promote: so if the honour of this title affects us as it ought to do, with a just value for it, we ought at the same time to consider the obligations that accompany it, of living suitable to it, answering in some sort the dignity and majesty of the King of kings, that has committed it to us: and of labouring with all possible diligence, to effectuate the great design on which we are sent; the reconciling sinners to God: the work having in itself a proportion to the dignity of him that employs us in it.

Another, and yet a more glorious title, is that of angels^f, who as they are of a pure and sublime nature, and are called a *flaming fire*, so they do always behold the face of our heavenly Father, and ever do his will, and are also *ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that are appointed to be the heirs of salvation*. This title is given to bishops and pastors; and as if that were not enough, they are in one place called not only the *messengers* or *angels of the churches*, but also *the glory of Christ*^g. The natural importance of this is, that men, to whom this title is applied, ought to imitate those heavenly powers, in the elevation of their souls, to contemplate the works and glory of God, and in their constant doing his will, more particularly in ministering to the souls of those, for whom the great Angel of the covenant made himself a sacrifice.

I do not among these titles reckon those of rulers or governors^h, that are also given to bishops, because they seem to be but another name for bishops, whose inspection was a rule and government, and so carried, in its signification, both authority and labour. To these designations, that carry in them characters of honour, but of honour joined to labour; and for the sake of

^e 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. ^f Rev. ii. iii. ^g 2 Cor. viii. 23. ^h Heb. xiii. 7, 17.

which the honour was due, according to that, *esteem them very highly for their work's sake*; I shall add some other designations, that in their significations carry only labour without honour, being borrowed from labours that are hard, but no way honourable.

They are often called watchmenⁱ, who used to stand on high towers, and were to give the alarm, as they saw occasion for it: these men were obliged to a constant attendance, to watch in the night, as well as in the day: so all this being applied to the clergy, imports that they ought to be upon their watch-tower, observing what dangers their people are exposed to, either by their sins, which provoke the judgments of God; or by the designs of their enemies: they ought not, by a false respect, to suffer them to sleep and perish in their sins; but must denounce the judgments of God to them, and rather incur their displeasure by their freedom, than suffer them to perish in their security.

St. Paul does also call churchmen by the name of builders, and gives to the apostles the title of master-builders^k. This imports both hard and painful labour, and likewise great care and exactness in it, for want of which the building will be not only exposed to the injuries of weather, but will quickly tumble down; and it gives us to understand, that those who carry this title ought to study well the great rule, by which they must carry on the interest of religion, that so they may *build up their people in their most holy faith*, so as to be *a building fitly framed together*.

They are also called labourers in God's husbandry, labourers in his vineyard, and harvest, who are to sow, plant, and water, and to cultivate the soil of the church^l. This imports a continual return of daily and hard labour, which requires both pain and diligence. They are also called soldiers^m, men that did war and fight against the powers of darkness. The fatigue, the dangers and difficulties of that state of life, are so well understood, that no application is necessary to make them more sensible.

And thus by a particular enumeration of either the more special names of these offices, such as deacon, priest and bishop, ruler and governor, or of the designations given to them of

ⁱ Ezek. iii. 17. ^k 1 Cor. iii. 10. ^l 1 Cor. iii. 6, 9. Matth. ix. 37, 38. xx. 1.
^m Philipp. ii. 25.

shepherds or pastors, stewards, ambassadors, and angels, it appears that there is a great dignity belonging to them, but a dignity which must carry labour with it, as that for which the honour is due: the other titles of watchmen, builders, labourers, and soldiers, import also that they are to decline no part of their duty, for the labour that is in it, the dangers that may follow, or the seeming meanness that may be in it, since we have for this so great a rule and pattern set us by our Saviour, who has given us this character of himself, and in that a rule to all that pretend to come after him, *The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister*ⁿ. This was said upon the proud contentions that had been among his disciples, who should be the greatest: two of them presuming upon their near relation to him, and pretending to the first dignity in his kingdom; upon that he gave them to understand, that the dignities of his kingdom were not to be of the same nature with those that were in the world. It was not rule or empire to which they were to pretend; *The disciple was not to be above his lord*: and he that humbled himself to be the last and lowest in his service, was by so doing really the first.

He himself descended to the *washing his disciples' feet*^o; which he proposeth to their imitation; and that came in latter ages to be taken up by princes, and acted by them in pageantry: but the plain account of that action is, that it was a prophetic emblem; of which sort we find several instances, both in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel: the prophet doing somewhat that had a mystical signification in it, relating to the subject of his prophecy: so that our Saviour's washing the feet of his disciples imported the humility, and the descending to the meanest offices of charity, which he recommended to his followers, particularly to those whom he appointed to preach his gospel to the world.

CHAP. II.

Of the rules set down in scripture for those that minister in holy things, and of the corruptions that are set forth in them.

I INTEND to write with all possible simplicity, without the affectation of a strictness of method: and therefore I will give one full view of this whole matter, without any other order

ⁿ Matth. xx. 28.

^o John xiii. 5.

than as it lies in the scriptures : and will lay both the rules and the reproofs that are in them together, as things that give light to one another. In the law of Moses^p we find many very particular rules given for the washing and consecration of the priests and Levites, chiefly of the holy priest. The whole tribe of Levi was sanctified and separated from the common labours, either of war or tillage : and though they were but one in twelve, yet a tenth of all was appointed for them : they were also to have a large share of another tenth ; that so they might be not only delivered from all cares, by that large provision that was made for them, but might be able to relieve the necessities of the widows and fatherless, the poor and the strangers that sojourned among them ; and by their bounty and charity be possessed both of the love and esteem of the people. They were *holy to the Lord* ; they were said to be sanctified or dedicated to God ; and the head of their order carried on his mitre this inscription, *Holiness to the Lord*. The many washings that they were often to use, chiefly in doing their functions, carried this signification in them, that they were appropriated to God, and that they were under very strict obligations to a high degree of purity ; they might not so much as mourn for their dead relations^q, to shew how far they ought to rise above all the concerns of flesh and blood, and even the most excusable passions of human nature. But above all things, these rules taught them with what exactness, decency, and purity they ought to perform those offices that belonged to their function^r ; and therefore when Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, transgressed the law that God had given, *fire came out from the Lord, and devoured them*^s ; and the reason given for it carries in it a perpetual rule ; *I will be sanctified in all them that draw near to me, and before all the people I will be glorified*^t : which import, that such as minister in holy things ought to behave themselves so, that God's name may be glorified by their means ; otherwise, that God will glorify himself by his severe judgments on them. A signal instance of which we do also find in Eli's two sons^u, whose impieties and defilements, as they made the people to *abhor the offering of the Lord*, so they also drew down, not only heavy judgments on themselves, but on the whole house of Eli ; and indeed on the whole nation.

^p Levit. viii.^q Levit. xxi. 1.^r Levit. xxii. 3, 4.^s Levit. x. 1, 2.^t Levit. ix. 3.^u 1 Sam. ii. and iii.

But besides the attendance which the priests and Levites were bound to give at the temple, and on the public service there, they were likewise obliged to study the law, to give the people warning out of it, to instruct them in it, and to conduct them, and watch over them: and for this reason they had cities assigned them in all the corners of the land; that so they might both more easily observe the manners of the people, and that the people might more easily have recourse to them. Now when that nation became corrupted both by idolatry and immorality, God raised up prophets to be extraordinary monitors to them; to declare to them their sins, and to denounce those judgments which were coming upon them, because of them: we find the silence, the ignorance, and the corruption of their pastors, their shepherds, and their watchmen, is a main article of their charge; so Isaiah tells them, that their *watchmen were blind, ignorant, dumb dogs, that could not bark; sleeping, lying down, and loving to slumber*: yet these careless watchmen were covetous and insatiable, *They were greedy dogs, which could never have enough; shepherds they were, that could not understand*^x; but how remiss soever they might be in God's work, they were careful enough of their own: *They all looked to their own way, every one to his own gain from his quarter*. They were, no doubt, exact in levying their tithes and first-fruits, how little soever they might do for them, bating their bare attendance at the temple, to officiate there; so guilty they were of that reigning abuse, of thinking they had done their duty, if they either by themselves, or by proxy, had performed their functions, without minding what was incumbent on them, as watchmen, or shepherds. In opposition to such careless and corrupt guides, God promises to his people *to set watchmen over them that should never hold their peace day nor night*.

As the captivity drew nearer, we may easily conclude, that the corruptions both of priest and people increased, which ripened them for the judgments of God, that were kept back by the reformations which Hezekiah and Josiah had made; but at last all was so depraved, that though God sent two prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, to prepare them for that terrible calamity, yet this was only to save some few among them: for the sins of the nation were grown to that height, that though Moses and Samuel, Noah, Job, and Daniel^y, had been then alive to

^x Isaiah lvi. 10, 11.

^y Jer. xv. 1. Ezek. xiv. 14.

intercede for them, yet God declared that he would not *hear them*; nor *spare the nation for their sakes*: so that even such mighty intercessors could only save their own souls. In this deplorable state we shall find that their priests and pastors had their large share. *The priests said not, Where is the Lord? They that handled the law knew me not; the pastors also transgressed against me^a*; and their corruption went so far, that they had not only false prophets to support them, but the people, who, how bad soever they may be themselves, do generally hate evil priests, grew to be pleased with it. *The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: From the prophet even to the priest, every one dealt falsely^a*. And upon that, a *woe is denounced against the pastors that destroyed and scattered the sheep of God's pasture^b*. They by their office ought to have fed the people; but, instead of that, *they had scattered the flock, and driven them away, and had not visited them: both prophet and priest were profane; their wickedness was found even in the house of God^c*. In opposition to all which, God promises by the prophet, that he would set *shepherds over them, that should feed them; so that the people should have no more reason to be afraid of their pastors^d*, or of being misled by them; and he promised upon their return from the captivity, *to give them pastors according to his own heart, who should feed them with knowledge and understanding^e*.

In Ezekiel we find the solemn and severe charge given to watchmen twice repeated; that they *ought to warn the wicked from his wickedness; otherwise though he should indeed die in his sin, God would require his blood at the watchman's hand; but if he gave warning, he had by so doing delivered his own soul^f*. In that prophecy we have the guilt of the priests set forth very heinously. *Her priests have violated my law, and profaned my holy things; they have put no difference between the holy and profane, the clean and the unclean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths*; the effect of which was, that *God was profaned among them^g*. This is more fully prosecuted in the 34th chapter, which is all addressed to the shepherds of Israel; *Woe be to the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flock? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the*

^a Jer. ii. 8. ^a Jer. v. 31. and vi. 13. ^b Jer. xxiii. 1. ^c Jer. xxiii. 2, 11.

^d Jer. xxiii. 4. ^e Jer. iii 15. ^f Ezek. iii. 17, 18, 19. and xxxiii. 7, 8, 9.

^g Ezek. xxii. 26.

wool, ye kill them that are fed : but ye feed not the flock^h. Then follows an enumeration of the several sorts of troubles that the people were in, under the figure of a flock, to shew how they had neglected their duty in all the parts and instances of it ; and had trusted to their authority, which they had abused to tyranny and violence. *The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost ; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them*ⁱ : upon which follows a terrible expostulation, and denunciation of judgments against them : *I am against the shepherds, saith the Lord ; I will require my flock at their hands, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock ; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more*^k. And in the 44th chapter of that prophecy one rule is given, which was set up in the primitive church as an unalterable maxim. That such priests as had been guilty of idolatry should not do the office of a priest any more, nor come near to any of the holy things, or enter within the sanctuary, but were still to bear their shame ; they might minister in some inferior services, such as keeping the gates, or slaying the sacrifice ; but they were still to bear their iniquity.

I have passed over all that occurs in these prophets, which relates to the false prophets, because I will bring nothing into this discourse that relates to sins of another order and nature. In Daniel we have a noble expression of the value of such as *turn men to righteousness, that they shall shine as the stars for ever and ever*^l. In Hosea we find among the sins and calamities of that time, this reckoned as a main cause of that horrid corruption, under which they had fallen, there *being no truth, no mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land ; which was defiled by swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge* : to which is added, *Because thou hast rejected knowledge, (or the instructing the people,) I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me ; seeing thou hast forgot the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children*^m. That corrupt race of priests attended still upon the temple, and offered up the sin-offering, and feasted upon their portion ; which is wrong rendered, *They eat up the sin of my people* ; for sin stands

^h Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3.ⁱ Ezek. xxxiv. 4.^k Ezek. xxxiv. 10.^l Dan. xii. 3.^m Hosea iv. 1, 2, 6.

there, as in the law of Moses, for sin-offering : because of the advantage this brought them, they were glad at the abounding of sin ; which is expressed *by their setting their heart*, or lifting up their soul, *to their iniquity* : the conclusion of which is, that *they should be given up for a very heavy curse, of, Like priests like people*. In Joel we find the duty of the priests and ministers of the Lord set forth in times of great and approaching calamities thus ; They ought to be intercessors for the people, and *to weep between the porch and the altar, and say, Spare thy people, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen* (strangers and idolaters) *should rule over them ; wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their Godⁿ ?* There is in Micah a very black character of a depraved priesthood ; *Their priests teach for hire, and their prophets divine for money^o*.

These were the forerunners of the destruction of that nation : but though it might be expected, that the captivity should have purged them from their dross, as it did indeed free them from all inclinations to idolatry ; yet other corruptions had a deeper root. We find in Zechariah a curse against the idol shepherd, who resembled the true shepherd, as an idol does the original : but he was without sense and life. *Woe be to the idol shepherd that leaveth the flock* ; the curse is figuratively expressed, *The sword shall be upon his arm, and his right eye* ; (the things that he valued most ;) *his arm shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be utterly darkened^p*. But this is more copiously set out by Malachi, in an address made to the priests ; *And now, O ye priests, this commandment is for you ; If you will not hear, and if you will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings ; yea, I have cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.*—Then the first covenant with the tribe of Levi is set forth ; *My covenant was with him of life and peace ; the law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips ; he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many from their iniquity ; for the priest's lips should preserve knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth ; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts*. All this sets forth the state of a pure and holy priesthood : but then follow terrible words : *But ye are departed out of the way, we have caused many to stumble at the law : ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts. Therefore have I also*

ⁿ Joel ii. 17.^o Micah iii. 11.^p Zech. xi. 17.

*made you contemptible and base before all the people ; according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law*⁹. Their ill example made many loathe both their law and their religion : they had corrupted their institution, and studied, by a gross partiality, to bring the people to be exact in those parts of the law, in which their wealth or their authority was concerned ; while they neglected the more essential and indispensable duties.

Thus far have I gone over the most important places, that have occurred to me in the Old Testament, relating to this matter ; upon all which I will only add one remark, that though some exception might be made to those expressions, that import the dignity and sanctification of those who were then consecrated to the holy functions, as parts of that instituted religion which had its period by the coming of Christ ; yet such passages as relate to moral duties, and to the obligations that arise out of natural religion, have certainly a more binding force, and ought to be understood and explained in a more elevated and sublime sense, under the new dispensation, which is internal and spiritual ; compared to which, the Old is called the letter and the flesh ; therefore the obligations of the priests, under the Christian religion, to a holy strictness of life and conversation, to a diligent attendance on their flock, and for instructing and watching over them, must all be as much higher, and more binding, as this new covenant excels the old one.

CHAP. III.

Passages out of the New Testament relating to the same matter.

THIS general consideration receives a vast improvement from the great example that the Author of our religion, *the great Bishop and Shepherd of our souls*, has set us ; who went about ever doing good, to whom *it was as his meat and drink, to do the will of his Father that sent him. He was the good Shepherd that knew his sheep, and laid down his life for them.* And since he set such a value on the souls of that flock which he hath redeemed, and purchased with his own blood ; certainly those to whom he has committed that work of reconciliation which stood himself so dear, ought to consider themselves under very strict

⁹Mal. ii. 1, &c.

obligations, by that charge of which they must give a severe account at the great day, in which the blood of all those who have perished through their neglect and default, shall be required at their hands. Yet because I will not aggravate this argument unreasonably, I will make no use of those passages which relate immediately to the apostles: for their function being extraordinary, as were also the assistances that were given them for the discharge of it, I will urge nothing that belongs properly to their mission and duty.

In the character that the gospel gives of the priests and Pharisees of that time, we may see a just and true idea of the corruptions into which a bad clergy is apt to fall. They studied to engross the knowledge of the law to themselves, and to keep the people in ignorance, and in a blind dependence upon them: they were zealous in lesser matters, but neglected the great things of the law: they put on an outward appearance of strictness, but under that there was much rottenness: they studied to make proselytes to their religion, but they had so depraved it, that they became thereby worse men than before: they made great shows of devotion, of praying, and fasting much, and giving alms; but all this was to be seen of men, and by it they devoured the estates of poor and simple people: they were very strict in observing the traditions and customs of their fathers, and of every thing that contributed to their own authority or advantage; but by so doing they made void the law of God: in a word, they had no true worth in themselves, and hated such as had it: they were proud and spiteful, false and cruel, and made use of the credit they were in with the people, by their complying with them in their vices, and flattering them with false hopes, to set them on to destroy all those who discovered their corruptions, and whose real and shining worth made their counterfeit show of it the more conspicuous and odious. In this short view of those enormous disorders, which then reigned amongst them, we have a full picture of the corrupt state of bad priests in all ages and religions, with this only difference, that the priests in our Saviour's time were more careful and exact in the external and visible parts of their conversation, than they have been in other times: in which they have thrown off the very decencies of a grave and sober deportment.

But now to go on with the characters and rules that we find in the New Testament. Our Saviour as he compared the work

of the gospel in many parables to a field and harvest, so he calls those whom his Father was to send, the labourers in that harvest; and he left a direction to all his followers, to *pray to his Father that he would send labourers into his harvest*^r. Out of which both the vocation and divine mission of the clergy, and the prayers of the church to God for it, that are among us fixed to the ember weeks, have been gathered by many pious writers. In the warnings that our Saviour gives to prepare for his second coming, we find the characters of good and bad clergymen stated, in opposition to one another, under the figure of stewards: the good are both wise and faithful, they wait for his coming, and in the mean while are *dividing to every one of their fellow-servants his portion to eat in due season*^s, that is, their proportion both of the doctrine and mysteries of the gospel, according to their several capacities and necessities. But the bad stewards are those who put the evil day far from them, and say in their heart, *The Lord delayeth his coming*; upon which they eat, drink, and are drunken: they indulge their sensual appetites even to a scandalous excess; and as for their fellow-servants, instead of feeding, of instructing, or watching over them, they beat them, they exercise a violent and tyrannical authority over them. Their state in the next world is represented as different as their behaviour in this was; the one shall be exalted from being a steward to be a *ruler over the household*, to be a *king and a priest for ever unto God*; whereas the other *shall be cut asunder, and shall have his portion with unbelievers*.

The 10th of St. John is the place which both fathers and more modern writers have chiefly made use of to shew the difference between good and bad pastors. The good shepherds enter by the door, and Christ is this door, by whom they must enter; that is, from whom they must have their vocation and mission: but the thief and robber, who comes to kill, steal, and destroy, climbeth up some other way: whatever he may do in the ritual way for form's sake, he has in his heart no regard to Jesus Christ, to the honour of his person, the edification of his church, or the salvation of souls; he intends only to raise and enrich himself; and so he compasses that, he cares not how many souls perish by his means, or through his neglect. *The good shepherd knows his sheep so well, that he can call them by*

^r Matth. ix. 38.^s Luke xii. 42.

name, and lead them out, and they hear his voice ; but the hireling careth not for the sheep, he is a stranger to them, they know not his voice, and will not follow him. This is urged by all, who have pressed the obligation of residence, and of the personal labours of the clergy, as a plain divine and indispensable precept : and even in the council of Trent, though, by the practices of the court of Rome, it was diverted from declaring residence to be of divine right, the decree that was made to enforce it urges this place to shew the obligation to it. The good shepherd feeds the flock, and looks for pasture for them, and is ready to give his life for the sheep ; but the bad shepherd is represented as a *hireling that careth not for the flock, that sees the wolf coming, and upon that leaveth the sheep and flieth*. This is, it is true, a figure, and therefore I know it is thought an ill way of reasoning to build too much upon figurative discourses : yet on the other hand, our Saviour having delivered so great a part of his doctrine in parables, we ought at least to consider the main scope of a parable ; and may well build upon that, though every particular circumstance in it cannot bear an argument.

I shall add but one passage more from the Gospels, which is much made use of by all that have writ of this matter. When our Saviour confirmed St. Peter in his apostleship, from which he had fallen by his denying of him, as in the charge which he thrice repeated of *feeding his lambs and his sheep*, he pursues still the figure of a shepherd ; so the question that he asked preparatory to it was, *Simon, lovest thou me more than these*^t? From which they justly gather, that the love of God, a zeal for his honour, and a preferring of that to all other things whatsoever, is a necessary and indispensable qualification for that holy employment ; which distinguishes the true shepherd from the hireling ; and by which only he can be both animated and fortified to go through with the labours and difficulties, as well as the dangers and sufferings, which may accompany it.

When St. Paul was leaving his last charge with the bishops that met him at Ephesus, he still makes use of the same metaphor of a shepherd, in those often cited words, *Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops or overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath*

^t John xxi. 15.

purehased with his own blood^u. The words are solemn, and the consideration enforcing them is a mighty one; they import the obligations of the clergy, both to an exactness in their own deportment, and to earnest and constant labours, in imitation of the apostle, who, during the three years of his stay among them, had been *serving God with all humility of mind, with many tears and temptations; and had not ceased to warn every one, both night and day, with tears; and had taught them publiely, and from house to house*^x. Upon which he leaves them, calling them all to witness that *he was pure from the blood of all men*^y. There has been great disputing concerning the persons to whom these words were addressed: but if all parties had studied more to follow the example here proposed, and the charge that is here given, which are plain and easy to be understood, than to be contending about things that are more doubtful, the good lives and the faithful labours of apostolical bishops would have contributed more both to the edifying and healing of the church, than all their arguments or reasonings will ever be able to do.

St. Paul reckoning up to the Romans the several obligations of Christians, of all ranks, to assiduity and diligence in their callings and labours, among others he numbers these; *Ministers, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teaches, on teaching; he that ruleth, with diligence*^z. In his Epistle to the Corinthians, as he states the dignity of the clergy in this, that they ought to be accounted of *as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God*; he adds, *that it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful*^a. In that Epistle he sets down that perpetual law, which is the foundation of all the provision that has been made for the clergy, *That the Lord hath ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel*^b. But if upon that the laity have looked on themselves as bound to appoint so plentiful a supply, that the clergy might have whereon to live at their ease and in abundance; then certainly this was intended, that they, being freed from the troubles and cares of this world, might attend continually *on the ministry of the word of God and on prayer*^c. Those who do that work negligently, provoke the laity to repent of their bounty, and to defraud them of it. For certainly there are no such enemies to the patrimony and rights of the church, as those who eat the fat, but do not preach the

^u Acts xx. 28.^x Acts xx. 19, 20.^y Acts xx. 26.^z Rom. xii. 7, 8.^a 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.^b 1 Cor. ix. 14.^c Acts vi. 4.

gospel, nor feed the flock. Happy, on the other hand, are they, to whom that character, which the apostle assumes to himself, and to Timothy, does belong ; *Therefore seeing we have received this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not : but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully ; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God*^d. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, we have the ends of the institution of all the ranks of clergymen set forth in these words ; *He gave some, apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers : for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ : till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*^e. In these words we see something that is so vast and noble, so far above those slight and poor performances, in which the far greater part do too easily satisfy themselves ; that in charity to them we ought to suppose that they have not reflected sufficiently on the importance of them. Otherwise they would have in some sort proportioned their labours to those great designs for which they are ordained ; and would remember the charge given to the Colossians to say to Archippus, who, it seems, was remiss in the discharge of his duty, *Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it*^f.

The Epistles to Timothy and Titus are the foundation of all the canons of the church. In these we have the characters of bishops and deacons, as well as the duties belonging to those functions, so particularly set forth, that from thence alone every one who will weigh them well may find sufficient instruction, how he ought to behave himself in the house of God. In these we see what patterns those of the clergy ought to be *in word, (or doctrine,) in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity ; they ought to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine ;* that is, both to the instructing and exhorting of their people. *They ought not to neglect the gift that was given to them by the laying on of hands ; they ought to meditate on these things, to give themselves wholly to them, that so their profiting may appear unto all ; and to take heed to themselves and their doctrine, and to continue in them ; for in so doing they shall both save themselves and*

^d 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2.^e Ephes. iv. 11, 12, 13.^f Col. iv. 17.

those that hear them^g. Those that govern the church are more particularly charged *before God, the Lord Jesus, and the holy angels, that they observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality, by domestic regards, the considerations of friendship, intercession, or importunity; and above all, that they lay hands suddenly on no man; to which are added words of great terror, neither be thou partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure*^h. Which ought to make great impression on all those with whom the power of ordination is lodged, since they do plainly import, that such as do ordain any rashly without due inquiry, and a strict examination, entitle themselves to all the scandal they give, and become partners of their guilt; which, if well considered, must needs make all such as are not past feeling, use great care and caution in this sacred trust. Bishops are the depositaries of the faith, which they are to keep pure, and to hand down faithfully, according to these words; *And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who may be able to teach others also*. Upon this he prepares the bishops for difficulties, *to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*. And according to that figure, since those that go to war do not carry unnecessary burdens with them, which may encumber or retard their march, he adds, *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him for a soldier*ⁱ. Upon this it is that all those canons, which have been made in so many ages of the church against churchmen's meddling with secular affairs, have been founded; than which we find nothing more frequently provided against, both in the apostolical canons, in those of Antioch, in those made by the general council of Chalcedon, and in divers of the councils of Carthage: but this abuse had too deep a root in the nature of man to be easily cured. St. Paul does also in this place carry on the metaphor, to express the earnestness and indefatigableness of clergymen's zeal; that as officers in an army were satisfied with nothing under victory, which brought them the honours of a triumph, so we ought to fight, not only so as to earn our pay, but for mastery, to spoil and overcome the powers of darkness; yet even this must be done lawfully^k, not by deceiving the people with pious frauds, hoping that our good

^g 1 Tim. iv. 12—16.

^h 1 Tim. v. 21, 22.

ⁱ 2 Tim. ii. 2, 3, 4.

^k 2 Tim. ii. 5.

intentions will atone for our taking bad methods. War has its laws as well as peace, and those who manage this spiritual warfare ought to keep themselves within the instructions and commands that are given them. Then the apostle, changing the figure from the soldier to the workman and steward, says, *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, (not to seek the vain applause of men, but to prefer to all other things the witness of a good conscience, and that in simplicity and godly sincerity he may walk and labour as in the sight of God,) a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*¹: this is, according to the figure of a steward, giving every one his due portion; and a little after comes a noble admonition, relating to the meekness of the clergy towards those that divide from them: *The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them repentance, to the acknowledging the truth*^m. This is the passage that was chiefly urged by our reformers against the persecuting that the Roman clergy did every where set on against them: the extent of it ought to be well considered, that so it may not be said, that we are only against persecution when it lies on ourselves; for if it is a good defence to some, it is as good to others; unless we own that we do not govern ourselves by that rule of *doing to others that which we would have others do to us*. In the next chapter we find the right education of this bishop, and that which furnishes a clergyman, to perform all the duties incumbent on him; *From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus*ⁿ: that is, the Old Testament well studied, by one that believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and that was led into it by that faith, did discover to man the great economy of God in the progress of the light, which he made to shine upon the world by degrees, unto the perfect day of the appearing of the Sun of righteousness; and to this he adds a noble character of the inspired writings: *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works*^o. The apostle goes on, and gives Timothy the most solemn charge that can be set out in words; which if understood

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 15.^m 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.ⁿ 2 Tim. iii. 15.^o 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

as belonging to all bishops, as the whole church of God has ever done, must be read by them with trembling. *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing, and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine^p; (that is, with great gentleness in the manner, and clearness and strength in the matter of their instructions;) and a little after, Watch thou in all things, endure affliction, do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of (or fulfil) thy ministry^q: and as a consideration to enforce this the more, he tells what a noble and agreeable prospect he had in the view of his approaching dissolution: *the time of his departing drew nigh, he was ready to be offered up^r*; as a sacrifice for that faith which he had so zealously and so successfully preached: and here we have his two great preparatives for martyrdom; the one was looking on his past life and labours; *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith^s*. The other was looking forward to the reward, *that crown of righteousness which was laid up for him, which the Lord, the righteous judge, would give him at that day; and not only to him, but also to all those that loved his appearing^t*, and certainly more especially to those who not only loved it themselves, but who laboured so as to dispose others also to love it. To all these considerations, though nothing needed to have been added, to one upon whom they made so strong an impression, as they did upon Timothy, yet one comes after all, which ought to teach us to work out *our salvation with fear and trembling*, since St. Paul tells Timothy, that Demas, one of the companions of his labours, *had forsaken him*, and that which prevailed over him was *the love of this present world^u*.*

These are the rules and charges given by St. Paul to Timothy and in him to all the bishops and pastors that were to come after him in the church. Some of these are again repeated in his Epistle to Titus, where we have the characters set out, by which he was to prepare and examine those elders or bishops, who were to rule the house of God: that those being well chosen, they might be able *by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers^x*; and, that he might do his duty with the more advantage, he charges him to *shew himself in all things a pattern*

^p 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. ^q 2 Tim. iv. 5. ^r 2 Tim. iv. 6. ^s 2 Tim. iv. 7.
^t 2 Tim. iv. 8. ^u 2 Tim. iv. 10. ^x Tit. i. 9.

of good works ; in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, and using such sound speech as could not be condemned: that so those who were of the contrary party (the Judaizers who were studying to corrupt the Christian religion by making a medley of it and Judaism) might have no evil thing to say of him^y: and after a glorious but short abstract of the design of their holy religion, he concludes that part of the Epistle in these words, *These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority*: to which he adds a charge, that may seem more proper to be addressed to others, than to himself; *Let no man despise thee^z*: the same is likewise in his Epistle to Timothy, with this addition; *Let no man despise thy youth^a*: but these words do import that it is in a bishop's own power to procure due esteem to himself; at least to prevent contempt; since a holy and exemplary deportment, and faithful and constant labours, never fail to do that. In the conclusion of the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find both the characters of those who had laboured among them, and had ruled them, but who were then dead; and also of such as were yet alive. *Remember them who had the rule over you; who have spoken to you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation^b*. They had both lived and died, as well as laboured, in such a manner, that the remembering of what had appeared in them, was an effectual means of persuading the Hebrews to be steady in the Christian religion: for certainly, though while a man lives let him be ever so eminent, there is still room for ill nature and jealousy to misrepresent things, and to suspect that something lies hid under the fairest appearances, which may shew itself in due time; all that goes off, when one has finished his course, so that all appears to be of a piece, and that he has died as he had lived. Then the argument from his conversation appears in its full strength, without any diminution. But the charge given with relation to those who then had the rule over them is no less remarkable; *Obey them that have the rule over you: and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you^c*. Here obedience and submission is enjoined, upon the account of their rulers watching over them, and for them: and therefore those who do not watch like men that know that they must give account of that trust, have no reason

^y Tit. ii. 7, 8.^z Tit. ii. 15.^a 1 Tim. iv. 12.^b Heb. xiii. 7.^c Heb. xiii. 17.

to expect these from their people. Of a piece with this is St. Paul's charge to the Thessalonians ; *We beseech you to know* (or to acknowledge) *them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake.* Here both the submission and esteem, as well as the acknowledgment that is due to the clergy, is said to be for their work's sake : and therefore such as do not the work, and that do not labour and admonish their people, have no just claim to them. There is another expression in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, that is much urged by those who have writ on this head ; *That if any will not work, he should not eat* ; which, if it is a rule binding all men, seems to lie much heavier on the clergy.

I shall conclude all that I intend to bring out of the scripture upon this argument, with St. Peter's charge to the elders of the churches to which he writ ; which is indeed so full, that though in the course of the New Testament it had not lain last, it deserved by the rules of method to be kept last, for the closing and enforcing all that has gone before, and for giving it its full weight. St. Peter descends, 1 Epist. chap. v. ver. 1. &c. to a level with them, calling himself no better than a *fellow-elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ* ; and also a *partaker of the glory which was to be revealed.* *Feed the flock of God*, says he, *which is among you*, (these words will bear another rendering, *as much as lieth in you*,) *taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint*, (as forced to it by rules, canons, or laws,) *but willingly* ; *not for filthy lucre*, (for though God has ordained that such as *preach the gospel should live of the gospel* ; yet those who propose that to themselves as the chief motive in entering into holy orders are hereby severely condemned,) *but of a ready mind*, *neither as being lords over God's heritage*, (or, *not using a despotic authority over their several lots or divisions*,) *but being examples to the flock*, not tyrannizing it over their people ; but acquiring their authority chiefly by their own exemplary conversation. The conclusion of the charge is suitable to the solemnity of it, in these words : *And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall likewise receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

With this I make an end of citations from scripture : I think it is as plain as words can make any thing, that such as are dedicated to the service of God and of his church, ought to labour constantly and faithfully, and that in their own persons.

For it is not possible to express a personal obligation in terms that are both more strict and more solemn than these are which have been cited ; and all the returns of obedience and submission, of esteem and support, being declared to be due to them on the account of their watching over and feeding the flock of God, those who pretend to these, without considering themselves as under the other obligations, are guilty of the worst sort of sacrilege, in devouring the things that are sacred, without doing those duties for which these are due ; and what right soever the law of the land may give them to them, yet certainly, according to the divine law, those who do not wait *at the altar*, ought not to be partakers with the altar : those who do not minister about holy things, ought not to live of the things of the temple : nor ought those who do not preach the gospel, to live of the gospel^d. If I had a mind to make a great show of reading, or to triumph in my argument with the pomp of quotations, it were very easy to bring a cloud of witnesses, to confirm the application that I have made of these passages of scripture : indeed all those who have either writ commentaries on the scriptures, ancient and modern, or have left homilies on these subjects, have pressed this matter so much, that every one that has made any progress in ecclesiastical learning, must know that one might soon stuff a great many pages with abundance of quotations out of the authors, both of the best and of the worst ages of the church : not only the fathers, but even the schoolmen ; and, which is more, the canonists have carried this matter very high, and have even delivered it as a maxim, that all dispensations that are procured upon undue pretences, the chief of which they reckon the giving a man an easy and large subsistence, are null and void of themselves : and conclude, that how strong soever they may be in law, yet they are nothing in conscience ; and that they do not free a man from his obligations to residence and labour : and they do generally conclude, that he who upon a dispensation, which has been obtained upon carnal accounts, such as birth, rank, or great abilities, (and qualifications are not yet so good as these,) does not reside, is bound in conscience to restore the fruits of a benefice which he has thus enjoyed with a bad conscience, without performing the duty belonging to it in his own person. But though it were very easy to bring out a great deal to this purpose, I will go no further at present upon this head :

^d 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.

the words of God seem to be so express and positive, that such as do not yield to so indisputable an authority, will be little moved by all that can be brought out of authors of a lower form, against whom it will be easy to muster up many exceptions, if they will not be determined by so many of the oracles of the living God.

CHAP. IV.

Of the sense of the primitive church in this matter.

I WILL not enter here into any historical account of the discipline of the church, during the first and best ages of Christianity. It is the glory of the church, that in her disputes on both hands, as well with those of the church of Rome, as with those that separate from her, she has both the doctrine and the constitution of the primitive church on her side. But this plea would be more entire and less disputable, if our constitution were not only in its main and most essential parts formed upon that glorious model; but were also in its rules and administrations made more exactly conformable to those best and purest times. I can never forget an advice that was given me above thirty years ago; by one of the worthiest clergymen now alive: while I was studying the controversy relating to the government of the church from the primitive times, he desired me to join with the more speculative discoveries, that I should make, the sense that they had of the obligations of the clergy, both with relation to their lives, and to their labours: and said, that the argument in favour of the church, how clearly soever made out, would never have its full effect upon the world, till abuses were so far corrected, that we could shew a primitive spirit in our administration, as well as a primitive pattern for our constitution. This made, even then, deep impressions on me, and I thank God the sense of it has never left me in the whole course of my studies.

I will not at present enter upon so long and so invidious a work as the descending into all the particulars into which this matter might be branched out; either from the writings of the fathers, the decrees of councils, the Roman law and capitulars, or even from the dreg of all, the canon law itself; which, though a collection made in one of the worst ages, yet carries many rules in it, that would seem excessively severe, even to us, after

our reformation of doctrine and worship. This has been already done with so much exactness, that it will not be necessary to set about it after the harvest, which was gathered by the learned bishop of Spalatro in the last book of his great work : which the pride and inconstancy of the author brought under a disesteem, that it no way deserves ; for whatever he might be, that work was certainly one of the best productions of that age. But this design has been prosecuted of late with much more exactness and learning, and with great honesty and fidelity, where the interest of his church did not force him to use a little art, by F. Thomasin, who has compared the modern and the ancient discipline, and has shewed very copiously, by what steps the change was made, and how abuses crept into the church. It is a work of great use to such as desire to understand that matter truly. I will refer the curious to these, and many other lesser treatises, writ by the Jansenists in France, in which abuses are very honestly complained of, and proper remedies are proposed ; which in many places being entertained by bishops, that had a right sense of the primitive rules, have given the rise to a great reformation of the French clergy.

Instead then of any historical deduction of these matters, I shall content myself with giving the sense of two of the fathers of the Greek church, and one of the Latin, upon this whole business, of the obligations of the clergy. The first is Gregory of Nazianzum, whose father ordained him a presbyter, notwithstanding all his humble intercessions to the contrary, according to the custom of the best men of that age, who, instead of pressing into orders, or aspiring to them, fled from them, excused themselves, and, judging themselves unworthy of so holy a character and so high a trust, were not without difficulty prevailed on to submit to that, which in degenerate ages men run to as to a subsistence, or the means of procuring it, and seem to have no other sense of that sacred institution, than mechanics have of obtaining their freedom in that trade or company in which they have passed their apprenticeship. It were indeed happy for the church, if those who offer themselves to orders had but such a sense of them as tradesmen have of their freedom : who do not pretend to it till they have finished the time prescribed ; and are in some sort qualified to set up in it : whereas, alas ! men who neither know the scriptures, nor the body of divinity, who have made no progress in their studies,

and can give no tolerable account of that holy doctrine, in which they desire to be teachers, do yet, with equal degrees of confidence and importunity, pretend to this character, and find the way to it too easy, and the access to it too free. But this holy father had a very different sense of this matter. He had indeed submitted to his father's authority, he being his bishop, as well as his father. But immediately after he was ordained, he gives this account of himself in his Apologetical Oration ; “ That he “ judging he had not that sublimity of virtue, nor that familiar “ acquaintance with divine matters, which became pastors and “ teachers ; he therefore intending to purify his own soul to “ higher degrees of virtue, to an exaltation above sensible “ objects, above his body, and above the world, that so he might “ bring his mind to a recollected and divine state, and fit his “ soul, that as a polished mirror it might carry on it the “ impressions of divine ideas unmix'd with the allay of earthly “ objects, and might be still casting a brightness upon all his “ thoughts, did, in order to the raising himself to that, retire to “ the wilderness. He had observed that many pressed to handle “ the holy mysteries, with unwashed hands, and defiled souls ; “ and before they were meet to be initiated to the divine voca- “ tion, were crowding about the altar ; not to set patterns to “ others, but designing only a subsistence to themselves : “ reckoning that the holy dignity was not a trust for which an “ account was to be given, but a state of authority and exemption. “ They had neither piety nor parts to recommend them, but “ were the reproaches of the Christian religion, and were the “ pests of the church : which infected it faster than any plague “ could do the air ; since men did easily run to imitate bad “ examples, but were drawn off very hardly by the perfectest “ patterns to the practice of virtue. Upon which he formed a “ high idea of the eminent worth and virtues which became “ those who governed the church, and of the great progress that “ they ought to be daily making ; not contented with low mea- “ surcs of it, as if they were to weigh it critically in nice “ balances, and not to rise up to the highest degrees possible in “ it. Yet even this was not all ; for to govern mankind, which “ was so various and so uncertain a sort of creature, seemed to “ him the highest pitch of knowledge and wisdom, as far above “ that skill and labour that is necessary to the curing of bodily “ diseases, as the soul is superior to the body ; and yet since so

“ much study and observation was necessary to make a man a
“ skilful physician, he concluded that much more was necessary
“ for the spiritual medicine : the design of which was to give
“ wings to the soul, to raise it above the world, and to consecrate
“ it to God.” Here he runs out into a noble rapture upon the
excellence and sublimity of the Christian religion, and upon the
art of governing souls ; of the different methods to be taken,
according to the diversity of men’s capacities and tempers ; and
of dividing the word of God aright among them. The difficulties
of which he prosecutes in a great variety of sublime expressions
and figures ; but concludes lamenting that “ there was so little
“ order then observed, that men had scarce passed their child-
“ hood, when, before they understood the scriptures, not to say
“ before they had washed off the spots and defilements of their
“ souls, if they had learned but two or three pious words, which
“ they had got by heart, or had read some of the Psalms of
“ David, and put on an outward garb that carried an appearance
“ of piety in it, these men were presently pushed on by the
“ vanity of their minds, to aspire to the government of the
“ church.” To such persons he addresses himself very rhetori-
cally, and asks them, “ what they thought of the commonest
“ employments, such as the playing on instruments, or of
“ dancing, in comparison with divine wisdom. For acquiring
“ the one, they knew great pains and much practice was neces-
“ sary : could they then imagine that the other should be so
“ easily attained ?” But he adds, “ that one may as well sow
“ upon rocks, and talk to the deaf, as hope to work upon per-
“ sons, who have not yet got to that degree of wisdom, of being
“ sensible of their own ignorance. This evil he had often with
“ many tears lamented ; but the pride of such men was so great,
“ that nothing under the authority of a St. Peter or a St. Paul
“ could work upon them.” Upon this mention of St. Paul, he
breaks out into a rapture upon his labours and sufferings, and
the care of all the churches that lay on him ; his becoming all
things to all men ; his gentleness where that was necessary, and
his authority upon other occasions ; his zeal, his patience, his
constancy, and his prudence, in fulfilling all the parts of his
ministry. Then he cites several of the passages of the prophets,
particularly those of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, Zechariah and
Malachi, which relate to the corruptions of the priests and shep-
herds of Israel ; and shews how applicable they were to the

clergy at that time, and that all the woes denounced against the Scribes and Pharisees belonged to them, with heavy aggravations. “ These thoughts possessed him day and night ; they “ did eat out his very strength and substance ; they did so afflict “ and deject him, and gave him so terrible a prospect of the “ judgments of God, which they were drawing down upon “ the church, that he, instead of daring to undertake any part of “ the government of it, was only thinking how he should cleanse “ his own soul, and fly from the wrath which was to come ; and “ could not think that he was yet, while so young, meet to “ handle the holy things.” Where he runs out into a new rapture in magnifying the dignity of holy functions, and upon that says, “ That though he had been dedicated to God from his “ mother’s womb, and had renounced the world and all that was “ charming in it, even eloquence itself, and had delighted long “ in the study of the scriptures, and had subdued many of his “ appetites and passions ; yet after all this, in which perhaps he “ had become a fool in glorying, he had so high a notion of the “ care and government of souls, that he thought it above his “ strength ; especially in such bad times, in which all things were “ out of order ; factions were formed, and charity was lost ; so “ that the very name of a priest was a reproach, as if God had “ poured out contempt upon them ; and thereby impious men “ daily blasphemed his name.” And indeed, all the show of religion that remained, was in their mutual heats and animosities, concerning some matters of religion ; “ they condemned and “ censured one another ; they cherished and made use of the “ worst men, so they were true to their party ; they concealed “ their crimes, nay, they flattered and defended some that “ should not have been suffered to enter into the sanctuary ; “ they gave the holy things to dogs, while they inquired very “ narrowly into the failings of those that differed from them, not “ that they might lament them, but that they might reproach “ them for them. The same faults which they excused in some, “ were declaimed against in others : so that the very name of a “ good or a bad man was not now considered, as the character “ of their lives, but of their being of or against a side. And “ these abuses were so universal, that they were like people like “ priest. If those heats had arisen upon the great heads of religion, he should have commended the zeal of those who had “ contended for the truth, and should have studied to have

“ followed it. But their disputes were about small matters, and
 “ things of no consequence ; and yet even these were fought for,
 “ under the glorious title of the faith, though the root of all was
 “ men’s private animosities. These things had exposed the
 “ Christian religion to the hatred of the heathen, and had given
 “ even the Christians themselves very hard thoughts of the
 “ clergy : this was grown to that height, that they were then
 “ acted and represented upon the stage, and made the subject
 “ of the people’s scorn : so that by their means the name of God
 “ was blasphemed. This was that which gave him much sadder
 “ apprehensions, than all that could be feared from that wild
 “ beast, that was then beginning to vex and persecute the church,
 “ (by which probably Julian is meant ;) the comfortable prospect
 “ of dying for the name of Christ made that a persecution was
 “ not so dreadful a thing, in his account, as the sins, the
 “ divisions, and distractions of Christians.” This then was the
 reason that had made him fly to the wilderness ; for the state of
 the church had made him despond, and lose all his courage : he
 had also gone thither, that he might quite break himself to all
 his appetites and passions, and to all the pleasures and concerns
 of this life, that did darken the shinings of the divine image
 upon his soul, and the emanations of the heavenly light. When
 he considered the judgments of God upon bad priests, and
 many other strict rules in the old dispensation, and the great
 obligations that lay upon those who were the priests of the
 living God, and that ought, before they presumed to offer up
 other sacrifices, to begin with the oblation of themselves to
 God ; he was, upon all these reasons, moved to prepare himself
 by so long a retreat.

I have given this long abstract of his Apologetical Oration,
 not only to set before my reader the sense that he had of the
 sacred functions, but likewise to shew what were the corruptions
 of that age, and with how much freedom this holy father laid
 them open. If there is any occasion for applying any part of
 this to the present age, or to any persons in it, I chose rather to
 offer it in the words of this great man, than in any of my own.
 I wish few were concerned in them ; and that such as are would
 make a due application of them to themselves, and save others
 the trouble of doing it more severely.

I go next to another father of the Greek church, St. Chrysos-
 tom, whose books of the priesthood have been ever reckoned

among the best pieces of antiquity. The occasion of writing them was this: he had lived many years in great friendship with Basil; at last, they having both dedicated themselves to sacred studies, the clergy of Antioch had resolved to lay hold on them, and to use that holy violence which was in those times often done to the best men, and to force them to enter into orders. Which when Basil told Chrysostom, he concealed his own intentions, but pressed Basil to submit to it; who, from that, believing that his friend was of the same mind, did not go out of the way, and so he was laid hold on; but Chrysostom had hid himself. Basil, seeing he could not be found, did all that was possible to excuse himself: but that not being accepted of, he was ordained. Next time that he met his friend, he expostulated severely with him for having forsaken him upon that occasion: this gave the occasion to those books, which are pursued in the way of a dialogue.

The first book contains only the preparatory discourses, according to the method of such writings. In the second he runs out to shew from our Saviour's words to St. Peter, *Simon, lovest thou me?* " what tender and fervent love both to Christ and to " his church a priest ought to feel in himself, before he enters " upon the feeding those sheep, which Christ has purchased " with his own blood. To lose the souls of the flock first, and " then one's own soul, through remissness, was no light matter. " To have both the powers of darkness and the works of " the flesh to fight against, required no ordinary measure " both of strength and courage. He pursues the allegories " of a shepherd and a physician, to shew, by the parallel of " these laid together, the labours and difficulties of the priest- " hood, especially when this authority was to be maintained only " by the strength of persuasion; and yet sometimes severe " methods must be taken, like incisions to prevent gangrenes, or " to cut off a part already corrupted. In the managing this, " great art and prudence was necessary; a bishop ought to have " a great and generous, a patient and undaunted mind: there- " fore, Chrysostom says that he found, though he truly loved " his Saviour, yet he was so afraid to offend him, that he durst " not undertake a charge, that he did not yet judge himself " qualified for. It was not enough that a man was tolerably " well esteemed by others; he ought to examine himself: for " that of a bishop's being *well reported of*, is but one of many

“ characters, declared necessary by St. Paul. He complains
“ much that those who raised men to orders, had more regard to
“ rank and wealth, and to much time spent in a vain search into
“ profane learning, (though Christ chose fishermen and tent-
“ makers,) than to true worth, and an earnest zeal for the real
“ good of the church. In the third book, he runs out with a
“ great compass on the praises of the priestly function; he
“ looked upon it as a dignity raised far above all the honours of
“ this world, and approaching to the angelical glory. A priest
“ ought to aspire to a purity above that of other mortals, answer-
“ ing that of angels. When a priest performs the holy func-
“ tions, is sanctifying the holy eucharist, and is offering a
“ crucified Christ to the people, his thoughts should carry him
“ heavenwards, and as it were translate him into those upper
“ regions. If the Mosaical priest was to be holy, that offered
“ up sacrifices of a lower order, how much holier ought the
“ priests of this religion to be, to whom Christ has given the
“ power both of retaining and forgiving of sins! But if St. Paul,
“ after all his visions and labours, after all his raptures and
“ sufferings, yet was inwardly burnt up with the concerns of the
“ church, and laboured with much fear and trembling, how
“ much greater apprehensions ought other persons to have of
“ such a trust! If it were enough to be called to this function,
“ and to go through with the duties incumbent on it in some
“ tolerable manner, the danger were not great: but when the
“ duty, as well as dignity, together with the danger belonging
“ to it, are all laid together, a man is forced to have other
“ thoughts of the matter. No man that knows he is not capable
“ of conducting a ship, will undertake it, let him be pressed to
“ it never so much. Ambitious men, that loved to set them-
“ selves forward, were of all others the most exposed to tempta-
“ tions: they were apt to be inflamed by the smallest provoca-
“ tions, to be glad at the faults of others, and troubled if they
“ saw any do well; they courted applause, and aspired to
“ honour; they fawned on great persons, and trod on those
“ that were below them; they made base submissions, undecent
“ addresses, and often brought presents to those in authority;
“ they durst not in any sort reprove them for their faults,
“ though they reproached the poor out of measure for their
“ failings. These were not the natural consequences of the
“ dignity of the priesthood; but unworthy and defiled persons,

“ who, without true merit, had been advanced to it, had brought
“ it under reproach. There had been no due care used in the
“ choice of bishops, and by the means of bad choices the church
“ was almost ruined, through the gross ignorance and unwor-
“ thiness of many in that post. Certainly a worthy priest has
“ no ambitious aspirings; those who fly to this dignity from
“ that base principle, will give a full vent to it when they have
“ attained it. If submissions, flatteries, and money itself are
“ necessary, all will be employed; therefore it was an indispens-
“ able preparation, to it that one should be duly sensible of
“ the greatness of the trust, and of his own unfitness for it, that
“ so he might neither vehemently desire it, nor be uneasy if he
“ should happen to be turned out of it. A man may *desire the*
“ *office of a bishop*, when he considers it is a work of toil and
“ labour; but nothing is more pestiferous than to desire it
“ because of the power and authority that accompanies it. Such
“ persons can never have the courage that ought to shew itself
“ in the discharge of their duty, in the reproving of sin, and
“ venturing on the indignation of great men. He confesses he
“ had not yet been able to free his mind from that disease, and,
“ till he had subdued it, he judged himself bound to fly from all
“ the steps to preferment: for the nearer he should come to it,
“ he reckoned the appetite to it would rage the higher within
“ him; whereas the way to break it quite, was to keep himself
“ at the greatest distance from it. Nor had he that vivacity, or
“ lively activity of temper, which became this function; nor
“ that softness and gentleness of mind, that was necessary to
“ prepare him to bear injuries, to endure contempt, or to treat
“ people with the mildness that Christ has enjoined his followers,
“ which he thought more necessary to a bishop than all fastings,
“ or bodily mortifications whatsoever. And he runs out into a
“ long digression upon the great mischiefs that a fretful and
“ spiteful temper did to him that was under the power of it, and
“ to the church, when a bishop was soured with it. It will
“ often break out, it will be much observed, and will give great
“ scandal: for as a little smoke will darken and hide the
“ clearest object; so if all the rest of a bishop’s life were
“ brighter than the beams of the sun, a little blemish, a passion
“ or indiscretion, will darken all, and make all the rest be
“ forgotten. Allowances are not made to them as to other men;
“ the world expects great things from them, as if they had not

“ flesh and blood in them, not a human, but an angelical nature ;
“ therefore a bishop ought, by a constant watchfulness, and a
“ perpetual strictness, to be armed with armour of proof on all
“ sides, that no wound may hurt him. Stories will be easily
“ believed to his disadvantage, and his clergy about him will be
“ ready to find them out, and to spread them abroad. He lays
“ this down for a certain maxim, That every man knows himself
“ best ; and therefore, whatsoever others might think of him, he
“ who knew well that he had not in himself those qualifications
“ that were necessary for this function, ought not to suffer him-
“ self to be determined by that. After this he lays open the
“ great disorders, factions, partialities, and calumnies, with
“ which the popular elections were at that time managed, and
“ the general corruption that had overrun the whole church ; so
“ that the strictness and authority, the gentleness and prudence,
“ the courage and patience, that were necessary to a bishop,
“ were very hard to be found altogether. He instances, to
“ make out the difficulty of discharging the duty of a bishop, in
“ that single point, of managing the widows ; who were so med-
“ dling, so immoral, so factious, and so clamorous, that this
“ alone was enough to employ a bishop’s prudence, and exercise
“ his patience. From that, and another article relating to it
“ concerning the virgins, he goes to consider the trouble, the
“ difficulties, and censures, that bishops were subject to, by the
“ hearing of causes that were referred to them ; many, pretend-
“ ing they were wronged by their judgments, made shipwreck
“ of the faith in revenge ; and they pressed so hard upon the
“ bishop’s time, that it was not possible for him to content them,
“ and discharge the other parts of his duty. Then he reckons
“ up the many visits that were expected from bishops, the
“ several civilities they were obliged to ; which it was hard to
“ manage so as not to be either too much or too little in them :
“ matter of censure would be found in both extremes. Then
“ he reflects on the great temper that ought to be observed in
“ the final sentence of excommunication ; between a gentleness
“ to vice on the one hand, and the driving men to despair and
“ apostasy on the other. And he concludes that book with re-
“ flections on the vast burden that follows the care of souls. In
“ his fourth book he runs through a variety of arts and profes-
“ sions, and shews how much skill and labour was necessary for
“ every one of them : from whence he concludes strongly, that

“ much more was necessary for that which was the most important of all others ; so that no consideration whatsoever should make a man undertake it, if he did not find himself in some sort qualified for it : more particularly he ought to be ready to give an account of his faith, and to stop the mouths of all gain-sayers, Jews, Gentiles, and heretics ; in which the ignorance of many bishops, carrying things from one extreme to another, had given great occasion to errors. A bishop must understand the style and phrase of the scriptures well. From this he runs out into a very noble panegyric upon St. Paul, in whom a pattern was set to all bishops. His fifth book sets out the labour of preaching, the tentations to vanity in it, the censures that were apt to be made if there was either too much or too little art or eloquence in sermons. To this he adds the great exactness that a bishop should use in preserving his reputation, yet without vanity, observing a due temper between despising the censures of the multitude, and the servile courting of applauses. In his sermons he ought above all things to study to edify, but not to flatter his hearers, or to use vain arts to raise esteem or admiration from them : since a bishop, whose mind was not purged from this disease, must go through many tossings, and be much disquieted : and upon that he runs out so fully upon the tentations to desire applause for eloquence, and a readiness in speaking, that it plainly appears that he felt that to be his own weak side. The sixth book is chiefly employed to shew how much a harder thing it was to govern the church, than to live in a desert under the severest mortifications.”

I will go no further in this abstract ; I hope I have drawn out enough to give a curiosity to such as have not yet read those excellent books, to do it over and over again : for to any that has a true relish, they can never be too often read : every reading will afford a fresh pleasure, and new matter of instruction and meditation. But I go, in the last place, to offer St. Jerome's sense in this matter. I shall not bring together what lies scattered through his works upon this argument, nor shall I quote what he writ in his youth upon it ; when the natural flame of his temper, joined with the heat of youth, might make him carry his thoughts further than what human nature could bear : but I shall only give an abstract of that which he writ to Nepotion on this head, in his old age, as he says himself, a good

part of that epistle being a reflection upon the different sense that old age gives of these things, from that which he felt during the ardour of youth.

He begins with the title clerk, which signifying a lot or portion, "imports either that the clergy are God's portion, or that God is theirs, and that therefore they ought to possess God, and be possessed of him. He that has this portion must be satisfied with it, and pretend to nothing but having food and raiment, be therewith content, and as men carried their crosses naked, so to be ready to carry his. He must not seek the advantages of this world in Christ's warfare. Some clerks grew richer under Christ, who made himself poor, than ever they could have been if they had continued in the service of the god of this world; so that the church groaned under the wealth of those who were beggars before they forsook the world. Let the strangers and the poor be fed at your tables, says he, and in these you entertain Christ himself. When you see a trafficking clerk, who from being poor grows rich, and from being mean becomes great, fly from him as from a plague. The conversation of such men corrupted good minds; they sought after wealth, and loved company, the public places of conversation, fairs, and market-places; whereas a true clerk loves silence and retirement. Then he gives him a strong caution against conversing with women, and in particular against all those mean compliances which some of those clerks used towards rich women, by which they got not only presents during their lives, but legacies by their wills. That abuse had grown to such an intolerable excess, that a law was made, excluding priests from having any benefit by testaments. They were the only persons that were put under that incapacity. Heathen priests were not included in the law, yet he does not complain of the law, but of those who had given just occasion for making it. The laws of Christ had been contemned, so it was necessary to restrain them by human laws. It was the glory of a bishop to provide for the poor, but it was the reproach of a priest to study the enriching of himself. He reckons up many instances of the base and abject flattery of some clerks, to gain upon rich and dying persons, and to get their estates. Next he exhorts him to the constant and diligent study of the scriptures; but to be sure to do nothing that should contradict his discourses, or give occasion to his hearers to an-

“ swer him thus, Why do not you do as you say ? Then he speaks
“ of the union that ought to be between the bishop and his clergy :
“ the affection on the one side, and the obedience on the other.
“ In preaching he must not study to draw applauses, but groans,
“ from his hearers. Their tears was the best sort of commen-
“ dation of a sermon, in which great care was to be taken to avoid
“ the methods of the stage, or of common declamations. Great
“ use was to be made of the scriptures. The mysteries of our
“ faith and the sacraments of our religion ought to be well ex-
“ plained : grimaces and solemn looks are often made use of to
“ give weight and authority to that which has none in itself. He
“ charges him to use a plain simplicity in his habit, neither
“ shewing too much nicety on the one hand, that savours of
“ luxury, nor such a neglect on the other, as might savour of
“ affectation. He recommends particularly the care of the poor
“ to him. Then he speaks of clergymen’s mutually preferring
“ one another ; considering that there are different members in
“ one body, and that every one has his own function and pecu-
“ liar talent : and that therefore no man ought to overvalue his
“ own, or undervalue his neighbour’s. A plain clerk ought not
“ to value himself upon his simplicity and ignorance, nor ought
“ a learned and eloquent man to measure his holiness by his
“ rhetoric ; for indeed, of the two, a holy simplicity is much
“ more valuable than unsanctified eloquence. He speaks against
“ the affectation of magnificence and riches in the worship of God,
“ as things more becoming the pomp of the Jewish religion,
“ than the humility of the spiritual doctrine of Christ. He falls
“ next upon the high and sumptuous way of living of some
“ priests, which they pretended was necessary to procure them
“ the respect that was due to them, and to give them interest
“ and credit : but the world, at least the better part of it, would
“ always value a priest more for his holiness than for his wealth.
“ He charges him strictly to avoid all the excesses of wine, and,
“ in opposition to that, to fast much, but without superstition, or
“ a nicety in the choice of such things as he was to live on in
“ the time of fasting. Some shewed a trifling superstition in
“ those matters, as well as vanity and affectation that was indeed
“ scandalous. Plain and simple fasting was despised, as not
“ singular nor pompous enough for their pride. For it seems by
“ what follows, that the clergy was then corrupted with the
“ same disorders, with which our Saviour had reproached the

“ Pharisees, while they did not study inward purity, so much as
 “ outward appearances ; nor the pleasing of God, so much as the
 “ praise of men. But here he stops short, for it seems he went
 “ too near the describing some eminent man in that age. From
 “ that he turns to the government of a priest’s tongue : he
 “ ought neither to detract from any one himself, nor to encour-
 “ rage such as did : the very hearkening to slander was very
 “ unbecoming. They ought to visit their people, but not to
 “ report in one place what they observed in another ; in that
 “ they ought to be both discreet and secret. Hippocrates ad-
 “ jured those that came to study from him, to be secret, grave,
 “ and prudent in their whole behaviour ; but how much more
 “ did this become those, to whom the care of souls was trusted !
 “ he advises him to visit his people rather in their afflictions,
 “ than in their prosperity ; not to go too often to their feasts,
 “ which must needs lessen him that does it too much. He, in
 “ the last place, speaks very severely of those who applied the
 “ wealth of the church to their own private uses. It was theft
 “ to defraud a friend, but it was sacrilege to rob the church. It
 “ was a crime that exceeded the cruelty of highwaymen, to re-
 “ ceive that which belonged indeed to the poor, and to withdraw
 “ any part of it to one’s private occasions. He concludes with
 “ this excuse, That he had named no person ; he had not writ to
 “ reproach others, but to give them warning. And therefore,
 “ since he had treated of the vices of the clergy in general terms,
 “ if any was offended with him for it, he thereby plainly
 “ confessed that he himself was guilty.”

CHAP. V.

*An account of some canons in divers ages of the church, relating
 to the duties and labours of the clergy.*

I WILL go no further in gathering quotations, to shew the sense that the fathers had in these matters ; these are both so full and so express, that I can find none more plain and more forcible. I shall to these add some of the canons that have been made both in the best and in the worst ages of the church, obliging bishops and other clerks to residence, and to be contented with one cure. In that at Sardica that met in the year 347, consisting of above three hundred and fifty bishops, two canons were made (the 11th and 12th) against “bishops who.

“ without any urgent necessity or pressing business, should be
“ absent from their church above three weeks, and thereby
“ grieve the flock that was committed to their care :” and even
this provision was made, because bishops had estates lying out
of their dioceses ; therefore they were allowed to go and look
after them, for three weeks ; “ in which time they were to per-
“ form the divine function in the churches to which those
“ estates belonged.”

Many provisions were also made against such as went to
court, unless they were called by the emperors, or went by a
deputation from the church upon a public account. There is not
any one thing more frequently provided against, than that any
of the clergy should leave their church, and go to any other
church, or live any where else without the bishop’s leave and
consent : nor is there any thing clearer from all the canons of
the first ages, than that they considered the clergy of every
church as a body of men dedicated to its service ; that lived
upon the oblations of the faithful, and that was to labour in the
several parts of the ecclesiastical ministry, as they should be
ordered by the bishop.

In the fourth general council at Chalcedon, pluralities do first
appear : for they are mentioned and condemned in the 10th
canon, which runs thus : “ No clerk shall at the same time
“ belong to two churches ; to wit, to that in which he was first
“ ordained, and that to which, as being the greater, he has gone,
“ out of a desire of vainglory ; for such as do so ought to be sent
“ back to that church in which they were at first ordained, and
“ to serve there only : but if any has been translated from one
“ church to another, he shall receive nothing out of his former
“ church, nor out of any chapel or almshouse belonging to it :
“ and such as shall transgress this definition of this general
“ council, are condemned by it to be degraded.” I go next to a
worse scene of the church, to see what provisions were made in
this matter about the eighth century, both in the east and in the
west : the worse that those ages and councils were, it makes the
argument the stronger ; since even bad men in bad times could
not justify or suffer such an abuse.

In the year 787, the second council of Nice was held, that
settled the worship of images. The 15th canon of it runs thus :
“ No clerk shall from henceforth be reckoned in two churches,”
(for every church had a catalogue of its clergy, by which the

dividends were made,) “ for this is the character of trafficking
 “ and covetousness, and wholly estranged from the ecclesiastical
 “ custom. We have heard from our Saviour’s own words, that
 “ *no man can serve two masters ; for he will either hate the one,*
 “ *and love the other ; or cleave to the one, and despise the other :*
 “ *Let every one therefore,* according to the apostle’s words, *con-*
 “ *tinue in the vocation in which he is called,* and serve in one
 “ church : for those things which filthy lucre has brought into
 “ church-matters are contrary to God. There is a variety of
 “ employments, for acquiring the necessary supplies of this life :
 “ let every one that pleases make use of these, for furnishing
 “ himself: for the apostle says, *These hands ministered to my*
 “ *necessities, and to those that were with me.* This shall be the
 “ rule in this town, which is guarded by God ; but in remote
 “ villages an indulgence may be granted, by reason of the want
 “ of men.” It is upon this that the canonists do found the first
 of the two reasons, for which only they allow that a dispensation
 for holding two benefices may be lawful : one is, the want of fit
 and sufficient men for the service of the church. The founda-
 tion of the other will be found in the canon, which I shall next
 set down.

It is the 49th canon of the sixth council at Paris, under Lewis
 the Good, in the year 829. This council came after a great
 many that had been held by Charles the Great and his son, for
 purging out abuses, and for restoring the primitive discipline.
 These councils sat at Frankfort, Mentz, Aken, Rheims, Chalons,
 Tours, Arles ; and this of Paris was the last that was held upon
 that design. In these all the primitive canons relating to the
 lives, and labours, and the government of the clergy were renewed.
 Among others is that of Chalcedon formerly mentioned ; but it
 seems there was no occasion given to make a special one against
 pluralities, before this held at Paris, which consisted of four
 provinces of France ; Rheims, Sens, Tours, and Rouen. The
 canon runs thus : “ As it becomes every city to have its proper
 “ bishop ; so it is also becoming and necessary that every church
 “ dedicated to God should have its proper priest. Yet covet-
 “ ousness, which is idolatry, (of which we are much ashamed,)
 “ has so got hold of some priests, and caught them captives in
 “ its fetters, that they, blinded with it, know neither whither
 “ they go, nor what they ought to be or do ; so that they being
 “ kindled with the fire of covetousness, and forgetful of the

“ priestly dignity, neglecting the care of those churches to which
“ they were promoted, do, by some present given or promised,
“ procure other churches not only from clerks, but from laymen,
“ in which they do against law undertake to perform the minis-
“ try of Christ. It is not known whether their bishops are
“ consulted in this matter or not ; if they are, without doubt
“ their bishops become partakers of their sin : but if they pre-
“ sume to do it without consulting them, yet it is to be imputed
“ to the bishop’s negligence. There is scarce a priest to be
“ found who warreth worthily and diligently in that church in
“ which he is dedicated to the divine service : but how much
“ less will he be able to do that worthily in two, three, or more
“ churches ! This practice brings a reproach on the Christian
“ religion, and a confusion on the priestly order. The covet-
“ ousness of the clergy is censured by their people ; the worship
“ of God is not performed in places consecrated to him ; and, as
“ was observed in the former chapters, the souls of the people
“ are thereby much endangered. Wherefore we do all unani-
“ mously appoint, that no bishop suffer this to be done in his
“ parish” (or diocese, these words being used promiscuously)
“ any more ; and we decree, that every church that has a con-
“ gregation belonging to it, and has means by which it may
“ subsist, shall have its proper priest ; for if it has a congregation,
“ but has not means by which it may subsist, that matter is left
“ to the bishop, to consider whether it can or ought to be
“ supported or not. But it is specially recommended to their
“ care, to see that, under this pretence, no priest may out of
“ covetousness hold two or three churches, in which he cannot
“ serve, nor perform the worship of God.” The last provisions
in this canon are the grounds upon which the canonists found
the second just cause of dispensing with pluralities, which is
when a church is so poor, that the profits which arise out of it
cannot afford a competent maintenance to a clerk ; but then the
question arises, what is a competent maintenance ? This they
do all bring very low, to that which can just maintain him : and
they have so clogged it, that no pretence should be given by so
general a word to covetousness, voluptuousness, or ambition.
And indeed while we have so many poor churches among us,
instead of restraining such pluralities, it were rather to be wished
that it were made easier than by law it is at present, either to
unite them together, or to make one man capable of serving two

churches, when both benefices make but a tolerable subsistence, rather than to be forced to have a greater number of clerks than can be decently maintained; since it is certain, that it is more for the interest of religion, and for the good of souls, to have one worthy man serving two churches, and dividing himself between them, than to have clerks for many benefices, whose scandalous provisions make too many scandalous incumbents, which is one of the greatest diseases and miseries of this church.

But a due care in this matter has no relation to the accumulation of livings at great distances (every one of which can well support an incumbent) upon the same person, merely for the making of a family, for the supporting of luxury or vanity, or for other base and covetous designs. But I go next to two of the worst councils that ever carried the name of general ones, the third and the fourth of the Lateran, that we may see what was the sense of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in this matter, notwithstanding the corruption of those ages. The thirteenth canon of the third Lateran council runs thus: “ Forasmuch as some, whose covetousness has no bounds, endeavour to procure to themselves divers ecclesiastical dignities, and several parish churches, against the provisions of the holy canons; by which means, though they are scarce able to perform the office of one, they do claim the provisions due to many: we do severely require, that this may not be done for the future; and therefore, when any church or ecclesiastical ministry is to be given, let such a one be sought out for it, as shall reside upon the place, and shall be able to discharge the care in his own person: if otherwise, he who receives any such benefice contrary to the canons, shall lose it, and he who gave it shall likewise lose his right of patronage.” This canon not being found effectual to cure so great an abuse, the twenty-ninth canon of the fourth council in the Lateran was penned in these words: “ It was with great care forbidden in the council of the Lateran, that any one should have divers ecclesiastical dignities, and more parish churches than one, which is contrary to the holy canons. Otherwise he that took them should lose them, and he that gave them should lose the right of giving them. But by reason of some men’s presumption and covetousness, that decree has had little or no effect hitherto. We therefore, desiring to make a more evident and express provision against these abuses, do appoint, That whosoever

“ shall receive any benefice to which a care of souls is annexed, shall thereupon, by law, be deprived of any other such benefice that he formerly had ; and if he endeavours still to hold it, he shall lose the other likewise ; and he, to whom the right of the patronage of his first benefice did belong, is empowered to bestow it upon his accepting another : and if he delays the bestowing it above three months, not only shall his right devolve to another, according to the decree of the council in the Lateran, but he shall be obliged to restore to the church to which the benefice belongs, all that which he himself received during the vacancy. This we do likewise decree as to parsonages, and do further appoint, That no man shall presume to hold more dignities or parsonages than one in the same church, even though they have no cure of souls annexed to them. Provided always, that dispensations may be granted by the apostolical see, to persons of high birth, or eminently learned (*sublimes et literatas personas*) or dignified in universities, (for so the word *literati* was understood,) who upon occasion may be honoured with greater benefices.” It was by this last proviso, that this, as well as all other canons made against these abuses, became quite ineffectual ; for this had no other effect, but the obliging people to go to Rome for dispensations ; so that this canon, instead of reforming the abuse, did really establish it ; for the qualifications here mentioned were so far stretched, that any person that had obtained a degree in any university came within the character of lettered, or learned ; and all those that were in any dependance upon great men, came likewise within the other qualification of high rank and birth.

This was the practice among us during the reign of Henry VIII. ; and he, when he was beginning to threaten the see of Rome in the matter of his divorce, got that act to be passed, which has been the occasion of so much scandal and disorder in this church. It seems to one that considers it well, that the clauses which qualify pluralities were grafted upon another bill against spiritual persons taking estates to farm, with which that act begins ; and that in the carrying that on, such a temper shewed itself, that the other was added to it. It contained indeed a limitation of the papal authority ; but so many provisions are made, that the nobility, clergy, and the more eminent of the gentry, knights in particular, were so taken care of, that it could meet with no great opposition in the parliament ; but

from the state of that time, and from several clauses in the act itself, it appears it was only intended to be a provisional act, though it is conceived in the style of a perpetual law. By it then, and by it only, (for I have not been able to find that any such act ever passed in any kingdom or state in Christendom, many having been made plainly to the contrary in France, declaring the obligation to residence to be of divine right,) were the abuses, that had risen out of the canon of one of the worst councils that ever was, authorized and settled among us, as far as a law of the land can settle them. But, after all, it is to be considered, that a law does indeed change the legal and political nature of things, it gives a title to a freehold and property; but no human law can change the moral or divine laws, and cancel their authority. If a false religion is settled by law, it becomes indeed the legal religion, but is not a whit the truer for that: and therefore if the laws of the gospel oblige clerks to personal labour, as was formerly made out, an act of parliament may indeed qualify a man in law to enjoy the benefice, whether he labours in it or not; but it can never dissolve his obligation to residence and personal labour.

But to bring this chapter to an end, I shall only add three decrees that were made by the council of Trent in this matter, that so it may appear what provisions they made against abuses, which are still supported by laws among us. A part of the first chapter of reformation, that passed in the sixth session, runs thus: "This synod admonishes all that are set over any cathedral churches, by what title soever, that they, taking heed to themselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has set them, to govern the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood, do watch and labour, and fulfil their ministry, as the apostle has commanded: and they must know that they cannot do this, if, as hirelings, they forsake the flock committed to them, and do not watch over those sheep, whose blood will be required at their hands in the last day: since it is certain that no excuse will be received, if the wolf devours the sheep when the shepherd does not look after them. Yet since, to our great grief, it is found, that some at this time neglect the salvation of their souls, and, preferring earthly things to heavenly, are still about courts; and forsaking the fold, and the care of the sheep trusted to them, do give themselves wholly to earthly and temporal cares: there-

“ fore all the ancient canons, which by the iniquity of times, and the corruptions of men, were fallen into desuetude, were renewed against non-residents.” To which several compulsory clauses are added, which are indeed slight ones, because the execution of them was entirely put into the pope’s power, and the punishment did only lie, if the bishop was absent six months in a year.

This decree did not satisfy those who moved for a reformation; so a fuller one was made in the 23d session, 1st chap. in these words: “ Whereas, by the law of God, all those to whom the care of souls is committed are commanded to know their sheep, to offer sacrifice for them, to feed them by the preaching of the word of God, the administration of the sacraments, and by the example of a good life, to have a tender care of the poor, and all other miserable persons, and to lay themselves out upon all the other functions of the pastoral care: which cannot be performed by those who do not watch over, nor are present with their flock; therefore this synod does admonish and exhort them, that they, remembering the divine precepts, and being made an example to their flock, may feed and govern them in righteousness and truth. Upon this they declare, that all bishops, even cardinals themselves, are obliged to personal residence in their church and diocese, and there to discharge their duty, unless upon some special occasions.” By which indeed a door is opened to as many corruptions, as the court of Rome thinks fit to dispense with. Yet without this none may be absent above two, or at most three months in the whole year; and even that must be upon a just reason, and without any prejudice to the flock: “ And they leave this upon the consciences of such as withdraw for so long a time, who they hope will be religious and tender in this matter, since all hearts are known to God, and it is no small sin to do his work negligently.” They declare the breaking this decree to be a mortal sin, and that such as are guilty of it cannot with a good conscience enjoy the mean profits during such their absence, but are bound to lay them out on the fabric, or give them to the poor: and all these provisions and punishments they do also make against the inferior clergy, that enjoyed any benefice to which the care of souls was annexed; and the execution of that is put in the bishop’s hands, who is required not to dispense

with their residence, unless upon a very weighty occasion, above two months; and in this they give the bishop so full an authority, that no appeal or prohibition was to lie against his sentence upon non-residents, even in the court of Rome. By these decrees, though the papal party hindered a formal declaration of the obligation to residence by divine right, that so room might be still left for the dispensing power; yet they went very near it; they applied passages of scripture to it, and laid the charge of mortal sin upon it.

In the last place, I shall set down the decree that was made in the 24th session, chap. 17, against pluralities, in these words: “Whereas the ecclesiastical order is perverted, when one clerk has the offices of many committed to him, it was therefore well provided by the holy canons, that no man should be put into two churches. But many, led by their depraved covetousness, deceiving themselves, but not God, are not ashamed to elude those good constitutions by several artifices, and obtain more benefices than one at the same time: therefore the synod, being desirous to restore a proper discipline for the government of churches, does, by this decree, by which all persons, of what rank soever, even cardinals themselves, shall be bound, appoint, that, for the future, one man shall be capable of receiving only one ecclesiastical benefice. But if that is not sufficient for the decent maintenance of him that has it, then it shall be lawful to give him another simple benefice, provided that both benefices do not require personal residence. This rule must be applied not only to cathedrals, but to all other benefices, whether secular, regular, or such as are held by commendam, or of what sort or order soever they may be. And as for such as do at present possess either more parish churches than one, or one cathedral and another parish church, they shall be forced, notwithstanding any dispensations or unions that may have been granted them for term of life, to resign within the space of six months all they do now hold, except one cathedral, or one parochial church; otherwise all their benefices, whether parochial or others, shall be by law esteemed void, and as such they shall be disposed of to others. Nor may those who formerly enjoyed them receive the mean profits after the term of six months with a good conscience.

“ But the synod wishes that some due provision might be made, such as the pope shall think fit, for the necessities of those who are hereby obliged to resign.”

These were the decrees that were made by that pretended general council: and wheresoever that council is received, they are so seldom dispensed with, that the scandal of non-residence, or plurality, does no more cry in that church. In France, though that council is not received, yet such regard is had to primitive rules, that it is not heard of among them. Such examples are to us reproaches indeed, and that of the worst sort, when the argument, from the neglect of the pastoral care, which gave so great an advantage at first to the reformers, and turned the hearts of the world so much from their careless pastors to those who shewed more zeal and concern for them, is now against us, and lies the other way. If the nature of man is so made, that it is not possible but that *offences must come*; yet *woe be to him by whom they come*.

CHAP. VI.

Of the declared sense and rules of the church of England in this matter.

WHATSOEVER may be the practice of any among us, and whatsoever may be the force of some laws that were made in bad times, and perhaps upon bad ends, yet we are sure the sense of our church is very different: she intended to raise the obligation of the pastoral care higher than it was before; and has laid out this matter more fully and more strictly than any church ever did in any age, as far at least as my inquiries can carry me. The truest indication of the sense of a church is to be taken from her language in her public Offices: this is that which she speaks the most frequently, and the most publicly; even the articles of doctrine are not so much read, and so often heard, as her liturgies are. And as this way of reasoning has been of late made use of with great advantage against the church of Rome, to make her accountable for all her public Offices in their plain and literal meaning; so will I make use of it on this occasion: it is the stronger in our case, whose Offices being in a tongue understood by the people, the argument from them does more evidently conclude here.

In general then this is to be observed, that no church before ours, at the reformation, took a formal spousion at the altar from such as were ordained deacons and priests: that was indeed

always demanded of bishops, but neither in the Roman nor Greek Pontifical do we find any such solemn vows and promises demanded or made by priests or deacons, nor does any print of this appear in the Constitutions, the pretended Arcopagite, or the ancient canons of the church. Bishops were asked many questions, as appears by the first canon of the fourth council of Carthage. They were required to profess their faith, and to promise to obey the canons, which is still observed in the Greek church. The questions are more express in the Roman Pontifical; and the first of these demands a promise, That they will instruct their people in the Christian doctrine, according to the holy scriptures: which was the foundation upon which our bishops justified the reformation; since the first and chief of all their vows binding them to this, it was to take place of all others; and if any other parts of those sponsions contradicted this, such as their obedience and adherence to the see of Rome, they said that these were to be limited by this.

All the account I can give of this general practice of the church, in demanding promises only of bishops, and not of the other orders, is this; that they considered the government of the priests and deacons as a thing that was so entirely in the bishop, as it was indeed by the first constitution, that it was not thought necessary to bind them to their duty by any public vows or promises, (though it is very probable that the bishops might take private engagements of them before they ordained them,) it being in the bishop's power to restrain and censure them in a very absolute and summary way. But the case was quite different in bishops, who were all equal by their rank and order; none having any authority over them by any divine law or the rules of the gospel; the power of primates and metropolitans having arisen out of ecclesiastical and civil laws, and not being equally great in all countries and provinces; and therefore it was more necessary to proceed with greater caution, and to demand a further security from them.

But the new face of the constitution of the church, by which priests were not under so absolute a subjection to their bishops as they had been at first, which was occasioned partly by the tyranny of some bishops, to which bounds were set by laws and canons, partly by their having a special property and benefice of their own, and so not being maintained by a dividend out of the common stock of the church as at first, had so altered the state

of things, that indeed no part of the episcopacy was left entirely in the bishop's hands, but the power of ordination. This is still free and unrestrained; no writs nor prohibitions from civil courts, and no appeals, have elogged or fettered this, as they have done all the other parts of their authority. Therefore our reformers, observing all this, took great care in reforming the office of ordination; and they made both the charge that is given, and the promises that are to be taken, to be very express and solemn, that so both the ordainers and the ordained might be rightly instructed in their duty, and struck with the awe and dread that they ought to be under in so holy and so important a performancc. And though all mankind does easily enough agree in this, that promises ought to be religiously observed which men make to one another, how apt soever they may be to break them; yet, to make the sense of these promises go deeper, they are ordered to be made at the altar, and in the nature of a stipulation or covenant; the church conferring orders, or indeed rather Christ, by the ministry of the offices that he has constituted, conferring them upon those promises that are first made. The forms of ordination in the Greek church, which we have reason to believe are less changed, and more conform to the primitive patterns, than those used by the Latins, do plainly import that the church only declared the divine vocation. "The grace of God, that perfects the feeble and heals the weak, promotes this man to be a deacon, a priest, or a bishop:" where nothing is expressed as conferred, but only as declared; so our church, by making our Saviour's words the form of ordination, must be construed to intend by that, that it is Christ only that sends, and that the bishops are only his ministers to pronounce his mission: otherwise it is not so easy to justify the use of this form, "Receive the Holy Ghost;" which as it was not used in the primitive church, nor by the Roman, till within these five hundred years, so in that church it is not the form of ordination, but a benediction given by the bishop singly, after the orders are given by the bishop and the other priests joining with him: for this is done by him alone as the final consummation of the action. But our using this as the form of ordination shews, that we consider ourselves only as the instruments that speak in Christ's name and words; insinuating thereby that he only ordains. Pursuant to this in the ordaining of priests, the questions are put in the name of God and of his church; which

makes the answers to them to be of the nature of vows and oaths ; so that if men do make conscience of any thing, and if it is possible to strike terror into them, the forms of our ordinations are the most effectually contrived for that end that could have been framed.

The first question that is put in the office of deacons is, “ Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office, to serve God for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people ? ” To which he is to answer, “ I trust so. ” This is put only in this Office, and not repeated afterwards, it being justly supposed that where one has had this motion, all the other orders may be in time conferred pursuant to it : but this is the first step by which a man dedicates himself to the service of God, and therefore it ought not to be made by any that has not this divine vocation. Certainly, the answer that is made to this ought to be well considered ; for if any says, “ I trust so, ” that yet knows nothing of any such motion, and can give no account of it, he lies to the Holy Ghost, and makes his first approach to the altar with a lie in his mouth, and that not to men, but to God : and how can one expect to be received by God, or be sent and sealed by him, that dares do a thing of so crying a nature, as to pretend that he trusts he has this motion, who knows that he has it not, who has made no reflections on it, and, when asked what he means by it, can say nothing concerning it, and yet he dares venture to come and say it before God and his church ? If a man pretends a commission from a prince, or indeed from any person, and acts in his name upon it, the law will fall on him, and punish him : and shall the great God of heaven and earth be thus vouched, and his motion be pretended to, by those whom he has neither called or sent ? And shall not he reckon with those who dare to run without his mission, pretending that they trust they have it, when perhaps they understand not the importance of it ; nay, and perhaps some laugh at it, as an enthusiastical question, who yet will go through with the office ? They come to Christ for the loaves ; they hope to live by the altar and the gospel, how little soever they serve at the one, or preach the other ; therefore they will say any thing that is necessary for qualifying them to this, whether true or false. It cannot be denied but that this question carries a sound in it that seems a little too high, and that may rather raise scruples, as importing somewhat that is not

ordinary, and that seems to savour of enthusiasm ; and therefore it was put here, without doubt, to give great caution to such as come to the service of the church. Many may be able to answer it truly according to the sense of the church, who may yet have great doubting in themselves concerning it ; but every man that has it not, must needs know that he has it not.

The true meaning of it must be resolved thus : The motives that ought to determine a man to dedicate himself to the ministering in the church, are a zeal for promoting the glory of God, for raising the honour of the Christian religion, for the making it to be better understood, and more submitted to. He that loves it, and feels the excellency of it in himself, that has a due sense of God's goodness in it to mankind, and that is entirely possessed with that, will feel a zeal within himself, for communicating that to others ; that so *the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent*, may be more universally glorified, and served by his creatures. And when to this he has added a concern for the souls of men, a tenderness for them, a zeal to rescue them from endless misery, and a desire to put them in the way to everlasting happiness ; and, from these motives, feels in himself a desire to dedicate his life and labours to those ends ; and, in order to them, studies to understand the scriptures, and more particularly the New Testament, that from thence he may form a true notion of this holy religion, and so be an able minister of it : this man, and only this man, so moved and so qualified, can, in truth, and with a good conscience, answer, That he trusts he is inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost : and every one that ventures on the saying it without this, is a sacrilegious profaner of the name of God, and of his holy Spirit : he breaks in upon his church, not to feed it, but to rob it ; and it is certain that he who begins with a lie, may be sent by the father of lies ; but he cannot be thought to enter in by the door, who prevaricates in the first word that he says in order to his admittance.

But if the office of deacons offers no other particular matter of reflection, the office of ordaining priests has a great deal ; indeed the whole of it is calculated to the best notions of the best times. In the charge that is given, the figures of watchmen, shepherds, and stewards, are pursued, and the places of scripture relating to these are applied to them : “ They are required to have
“ always printed in their remembrance, how great a treasure
“ was committed to their charge : the church and congregation

“ whom they must serve is his spouse and body. Then the
“ greatness of the fault of their negligence, and the horrible
“ punishment that will follow upon it, is set before them, in case
“ the church, or any member of it, take any hurt or hindrance
“ by reason of it. They are charged never to cease their labour,
“ care, and diligence, till they have done all that lieth in them,
“ according to their bounden duty, towards all such as are or
“ shall be committed to their care, to bring them to a ripeness
“ and perfection of age in Christ. They are again urged to
“ consider with what care and study they ought to apply them-
“ selves to this; to pray earnestly for God’s holy Spirit, and to
“ be studious in reading and learning of the scriptures; and to
“ forsake and set aside, as much as they may, all worldly cares
“ and studies. It is hoped that they have clearly determined,
“ by God’s grace, to give themselves wholly to this vocation;
“ and as much as lieth in them to apply themselves wholly to
“ this one thing, and to draw all their cares and studies this way,
“ and to this end; and that by their daily reading and weighing
“ the scriptures, they will study to wax riper and stronger in
“ their ministry.” These are some of the words of the preparatory charge given by the bishop when he enters upon this office, before he puts the questions that follow to those who are to be ordained. What greater force or energy could be put in words, than is in these? Or where could any be found that are more weighty and more express, to shew the entire dedication of the whole man, of his time and labours, and the separating himself from all other cares to follow this one thing with all possible application and zeal? There is nothing in any office, ancient or modern, that I ever saw, which is of this force, so serious and so solemn; and it plainly implies not only the sense of the church upon this whole matter, but likewise their design who framed it, to oblige priests, notwithstanding any relaxation that the laws of the land had still favoured, by the firmest and sacredest bonds possible, to attend upon their flocks, and to do their duties to them. For a bare residence, without labouring, is but a mock residence; since the obligation to it is in order to a further end, that they may watch over and feed their flock, and not enjoy their benefices only as farms or as livings, according to the gross but common abuse of our language, by which the names of cures, parishes, or benefices, which are the ecclesiastical names, are now swallowed up into that of living,

which carries a carnal idea in the very sound of the word, and I doubt a more carnal effect on the minds of both clergy and laity.

Whatever we may be, our church is free of this reproach; since this charge carries their duty as high and as home as any thing that can be laid in words. And it is further to be considered, that this is not of the nature of a private exhortation, in which a man of lively thoughts and a warm fancy may be apt to carry a point too high; it is the constant and uniform voice of the church. Nor is it of the nature of a charge, which is only the sense of him that gives it, and to which the person to whom it is given is only passive: he hears it, but cannot be bound by another man's thoughts or words, further than as the nature of things binds him. But orders are of the nature of a covenant between Christ and the clerks, in which so many privileges and powers are granted on the one part, and so many duties and offices are promised on the other; and this charge being the preface to it, it is stipulatory. It declares the whole covenant of both sides; and so those who receive orders upon it are as much bound by every part of it, and it becomes as much their own act, as if they had pronounced or promised it all in the most formal words that could be; and indeed the answers and promises that are afterwards made are only the application of this to the particular persons, for giving them a plainer and livelier sense of their obligation, which yet, in itself, was as entire and strong, whether they had made any promise by words of their own or not.

But to put the matter out of doubt, let us look a little further into the Office, to the promises that they make with relation to their flock, even to such as are or shall be committed to their charge. They promise, "That, by the help of the Lord, they will give their faithful diligence always so to minister the doctrine and sacraments, and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this realm hath received the same, according to the commandment of God: so that they may teach the people committed to their care and charge with all diligence to keep and observe the same." This does plainly bind to personal labour; the mention that is made of "what this realm has received" being limited by what follows, "according to the commandment of God," shews, that by this is meant the reformation of the doctrine and worship that was then received and established by law; by which these general words, "the

“ doctrine, and sacraments, and discipline of Christ,” to which all parties pretend, are determined to our constitution ; so that though there were some disorders among us, not yet provided against by the laws of the land, this does not secure a reserve for them. This is so slight a remark, that I should be ashamed to have made it, if it had not been urged to myself, slight as it is, to justify, in point of conscience, the claiming all such privileges or qualifications as are still allowed by law. But I go on to the other promises : the clerk says, “ He will, by the help
 “ of God, be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and
 “ drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to
 “ God’s word, and to use both public and private admonitions
 “ and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole within his
 “ cure, as need shall require, and as occasion shall be given.” This is as plainly personal and constant as words can make any thing ; and in this is expressed the so much neglected, but so necessary duty, which incumbents owe their flock, in a private way, visiting, instructing, and admonishing them, which is one of the most useful and important parts of their duty, how generally soever it may be disused or forgotten ; these being the chief instances and acts of watching over and feeding the flock, that is committed to their care. In the next place they promise, “ That they will be diligent in prayers, and in reading of the
 “ holy scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge
 “ of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh.” This still carries on that great notion of the pastoral care, which runs through this whole office ; that it is to be a man’s entire business, and is to possess both his thoughts and his time. They do further promise, “ That they will maintain, and set
 “ forward, as much as lieth in them, quietness, peace, and love
 “ among all Christian people, and especially among them that
 “ are or shall be committed to their charge.”

These are the vows and promises that priests make before they can be ordained. And to complete the stipulation, the bishop concludes it with a prayer to God, “ who has given them the
 “ will to do all these things, to give them also strength and
 “ power to perform the same ; that he may accomplish his work
 “ that he hath begun in them, until the time that he shall come,
 “ at the latter day, to judge the quick and the dead.” Upon the whole matter, either this is all a piece of gross and impudent pageantry, dressed up in grave and lofty expressions, to strike

upon the weaker part of mankind, and to furnish the rest with matter to their profane and impious scorn ; or it must be confessed that priests come under the most formal and express engagements, to constant and diligent labour, that can possibly be contrived or set forth in words. It is upon this that they are ordained ; so their ordination being the consummation of this compact, it must be acknowledged, that, according to the nature of all mutual compacts, a total failure on the one side does also dissolve all the obligation that lay on the other : and therefore those who do not perform their part, that do not reside and labour, they do also, in the sight of God, forfeit all the authority and privileges, that do follow their orders, as much as a Christian at large, that does not perform his baptismal vow, forfeits the rights and benefits of his baptism, in the sight of God ; though both in the one and in the other it is necessary that, for the preventing of disorder and confusion, a sentence declaratory of excommunication in the one, as of degradation in the other, pass before the visible acts and rights, pursuant to those rites, can be denied.

To all this I will add one thing more, which is, that since our book of Ordination is a part of our liturgy, and likewise a part of the law of the land ; and since constant attendance and diligent labour is made necessary by it ; and since this law is subsequent to the act of the 21st of Henry VIII. that qualifies so many for pluralities and nonresidence, and is in plain terms contrary to it ; this as subsequent does repeal all that it contradicts. It is upon all this a matter that to me seems plain, that by this law the other is repealed, in so far as it is inconsistent with it. This argument is by this consideration made the stronger, that the act of king Henry does not enact that such things shall be, but only reserves privileges for such as may be capable of an exemption from the common and general rules. Now, by the principles of law, all privileges or exemptions of that sort are odious things ; and the constructions of law lying hard and heavy against odious cases, it appears to me, according to the general grounds of law, very probable, (I speak within bounds when I say only probable,) that the act of uniformity, which makes the Offices of Ordination a part of the law of England, is a repeal of that part of the act of king Henry which qualifies for pluralities. To conclude, whatsoever may be the strength of this plea in bar to that act, if our faith, given to God and his church in the most

express and plainest words possible, does bind, if promises given at the altar do oblige, and if a stipulation, in the consideration of which orders are given, is sacred, and of an indispensable obligation, then, I am sure, this is.

To make the whole matter yet the stronger, this Office is to be completed with a communion: so that, upon this occasion, that is not only a piece of religious devotion accompanying it, but it is the taking the sacrament upon the stipulation that has been made between the priest and the church: so that those who have framed this Office have certainly intended, by all the ways that they could think on, and by the weightiest words they could choose, to make the sense of the priestly function, and of the duties belonging to it, give deep and strong impressions to such as are ordained. I have compared with it all the exhortations that are in all the Offices I could find, ancient and modern, whether of the Greek or the Latin church; and this must be said of ours, without any sort of partiality to our own forms, that no sort of comparison can be made between ours and all the others; and that as much as ours is more simple than those as to its rites and ceremonies, which swell up other Offices, so much is it more grave and weighty in the exhortations, collects, and sponsions that are made in it. In the Roman Pontifical no promises are demanded of priests, but only that of obedience; bishops in a corrupted state of the church taking care only of their own authority, while they neglected more important obligations.

In the office of consecrating bishops; as all the sponsions made by them, when they were ordained priests, are to be considered as still binding, since the inferior office does still subsist in the superior; so there are new ones superadded, proportioned to the exaltation of dignity and authority that accompanies that office. In the Roman Pontifical there are indeed questions put to a bishop before he is consecrated; but of all these the first only is that which has any relation to his flock, which is in these words: "Wilt thou teach the people over whom thou art to be set, both by thy example and doctrine, those things that thou learnest out of the holy scripture?" All the rest are general, and relate only to his conversation; but not at all to his labours in his diocese: whereas, on the contrary, the engagements in our Office do regard not only a bishop's own conversation, but chiefly his duty to his people; he declares, that "he is deter-

“ mined to instruct the people committed to his charge out of
“ the holy scriptures :” that “ he will study them, so as to be
“ able by them to teach and exhort with wholesome doctrine ;
“ and withstand and convince the gainsayers :” that “ he will
“ be ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away
“ all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God’s word ;
“ and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage
“ others to the same :” that “ he will maintain and set forward,
“ as much as lies in him, quietness, love, and peace among all
“ men ; and correct and punish such as be unquiet, disobedient,
“ and criminous, within his dioecese ; according to such authority
“ as he has.” In particular, “ he promises to be faithful in
“ ordaining, sending, or laying hands upon others : he promises
“ also to shew himself to be gentle and merciful, for Christ’s
“ sake, to poor and needy people, and to all strangers destitute
“ of help.” These are the covenants and promises under which
bishops are put, which are again reinforced upon them in the
charge that is given immediately after their consecration, when
the Bible is put in their hands ; “ Give heed to reading, exhor-
“ tation, and doctrine : think upon the things contained in this
“ book ; be diligent in them, that the increase coming thereby
“ may be manifest unto all men. Take heed unto thyself, and
“ to doctrine, and be diligent in doing them ; for by doing this
“ thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. Be thou
“ to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf ; feed them,
“ devour them not. Hold up the weak, heal the sick, bind up
“ the broken, bring again the outcasts, seek the lost ; be so
“ merciful, that you be not too remiss ; so minister discipline
“ that you forget not mercy : that, when the chief Shepherd
“ shall appear, you may receive the never fading crown of glory,
“ through Jesus Christ our Lord.” In these words the great
lines of our duty are drawn in very expressive and comprhen-
sive terms. We have the several branches of our function, both
as to preaching and governing, very solemnly laid upon us : and
both in this Office, as well as in all the other Offices that I have
seen, it appears, that the constant sense of all churches in all ages
has been, that preaching was the bishop’s great duty, and that
he ought to lay himself out in it most particularly.

I shall only add one advice to all this, before I leave this
article of the sense of our church in this matter ; both to those
who intend to take orders, and to those who have already taken

them. As for such as do intend to dedicate themselves to the service of the church, they ought to read over these Offices frequently; and to ask themselves solemnly, as in the presence of God, whether they can with a good conscience make those answers which the book prescribes or not? and not to venture on offering themselves to orders, till they know that they dare and may safely do it. Every person who looks that way ought at least on every Ordination-Sunday, after he has once formed the resolution of dedicating himself to this work, to go over the office seriously with himself, and to consider in what disposition or preparation of mind he is, suitable to what he finds laid down in it. But I should add to this, that for a year before he comes to be ordained, he should every first Sunday of the month read over the Office very deliberately; and frame resolutions, conform to the several parts of it, and, if he can, receive the sacrament upon it, with a special set of private devotions relating to his intentions. As the time of his ordination draws near, he ought to return the oftener to those exercises. It will be no hard task for him to read these over every Sunday, during the last quarter before his ordination; and to do that yet more solemnly, every day of the week in which he is to be ordained; and to join a greater earnestness of fasting and prayer with it on the fast-days of his ember-week.

Here is no hard imposition. The performance is as easy in itself, as it will be successful in its effects. If I did not consider rather what the age can bear, than what were to be wished for, I would add a great many severe rules calculated to the notions of the primitive times. But if this advice were put in practice, it is to be hoped, that it would set back many who come to be ordained, without considering duly, either what it is that they ask, or what it is that is to be asked of them: which some do with so supine a negligence, that we plainly see that they have not so much as read the Office, or at least that they have done it in so slight a manner, that they have formed no clear notions upon any part of it, and least of all upon those parts to which they themselves are to make answers. And as such a method as I have proposed would probably strike some with a due awe of divine matters, so as to keep them at a distance till they were in some sort prepared for them; so it would oblige such as come to it, to bring along with them a serious temper of mind, and such a preparation of soul, as might make that their orders

should be a blessing to them, as well as they themselves should be a blessing to the church. It must be the greatest joy of a bishop's life, who truly minds his duty in this weighty trust of sending out labourers into God's vineyard, to ordain such persons, of whom he has just grounds to hope that they shall do their duty faithfully in reaping that harvest. He reckons these as his children indeed, who are to be his strength and support, his fellow-labourers and helpers, his crown and his glory. But on the other hand, how heavy a part of his office must it be, to ordain those against whom perhaps there lies no just objection, so that, according to the constitution and rules of the church, he cannot deny them; and yet he sees nothing in them that gives him courage or cheerfulness. They do not seem to have that love to God, that zeal for Christ, that tenderness for souls, that meekness and humility, that mortification and deadness to the world, that becomes the character and profession which they undertake; so that his heart fails him, and his hands tremble when he goes to ordain them.

My next advice shall be to those who are already in orders, that they will, at least four times a year, on the Ordination-Sundays, read over the offices of the decrees of the church in which they are; and will particularly consider the charge that was given, and the answers that were made by them; and then ask themselves, as before God, who will judge them at the great day upon their religious performance of them, whether they have been true to them or not: that so they may humble themselves for their errors and omissions, and may renew their vows for the future, and so to be going on, from quarter to quarter, through the whole course of their ministry, observing still what ground they gain, and what progress they make. To such as have a right sense of their duty, this will be no hard performance. It will give a vast joy to those who can go through it with some measure of assurance, and find that, though in the midst of many temptations and of much weakness, they are sincerely and seriously going on in their work to the best of their skill, and to the utmost of their power; so that their consciences say within them, and that without the partialities of self-love and flattery, *Well done, good and faithful servant*: the hearing of this said within, upon true grounds, being the certainest evidence possible, that it shall be publicly said at the last great day. This exercise will also offer checks to a man that

looks for them, and intends both to understand his errors, and to cleanse himself from them. It will, upon the whole matter, make clergymen go on with their profession, as the business and labour of their lives.

Having known the very good effect that this method has had on some, I dare the more confidently recommend it to all others.

Before I conclude this chapter, I will shew what rules our reformers had prepared with relation to non-residence and pluralities ; which though they never passed into laws, and so have no binding force with them, yet in these we see what was the sense of those that prepared our Offices, and that were the chief instruments in that blessed work of our reformation. The 12th chapter of the title, “ Concerning those that were to be admitted “ to ecclesiastical benefices,” runs thus ; “ Whereas, when “ many benefices are conferred on one person, every one of these “ must be served with less order and exactness, and many learned men, who are not provided, are by that means shut out ; “ therefore such as examine the persons who are proposed for “ benefices, are to ask every one of them, whether he has at “ that time another benefice or not ; and if he confesses that he “ has, then they shall not consent to his obtaining that to which “ he is presented, or the first benefice shall be made void, as in “ case of death, so that the patron may present any other person “ to it.” Chap. 13th is against dispensations, in these words : “ No man shall hereafter be capable of any privilege, by virtue “ of which he may hold more parishes than one : but such as “ have already obtained any such dispensations for pluralities, “ shall not be deprived of the effects of them by virtue of this “ law.” The 14th chapter relates to residence, in these words : “ If any man, by reason of age or sickness, is disabled from dis- “ charging his duty, or if he has any just cause of absence for “ some time, that shall be approved of by the bishop, he must “ take care to place a worthy person to serve during his absence. “ But the bishops ought to take a special care, that upon no re- “ gard whatsoever any person may, upon feigned or pretended “ reasons, be suffered to be longer absent from his parish, than “ a real necessity shall require.”

These are some of the rules which were then prepared ; and happy had it been for our church, if that whole work of the reformation of the ecclesiastical law had been then settled among

us. Then we might justly have said, that our reformation was complete, and not have lamented, as our church still does in the Office of Communion, "That the godly discipline which " was in the primitive church is not yet restored," how much and how long soever it has been wished for. It is more than probable that we should neither have had any schisms, nor civil wars, if that great design had not been abortive. If but the 9th and 20th titles of that work, which treat of the public offices and officers in the church, had become a part of our law, and been duly executed, we should indeed have had matter of glorying in the world.

In the canons of the year 1571, though there was not then strength enough in the church to cure so inveterate a disease as non-residence; yet she expressed her detestation of it in these words: "The absence of a pastor from the Lord's flock, and that " supine negligence and abandoning of the ministry, which we " observe in many, is a thing vile in itself, odious to the people, " and pernicious to the church of God; therefore we exhort all " the pastors of churches in our Lord Jesus, that they will, as " soon as possible, come to their churches, and diligently preach " the gospel; and, according to the value of their livings, that " they will keep house, and hospitably relieve the poor." It is true, all this is much lessened by the last words of that article, "That every year they must reside, at least, threescore days " upon their benefices." By the canons made at that time, pluralities were also limited to twenty miles distance. But this was enlarged to thirty miles by the canons in the year 1597; yet by these the pluralist was required to spend "a good part of the " year" in both his benefices. And upon this has the matter rested ever since; but there is no express definition made how far that general word of "a good part of the year" is to be understood.

I will not to this add a long invidious history of all the attempts that have been made for the reforming these abuses, nor the methods that have been made use of to defeat them. They have been but too successful, so that we still groan under our abuses, and do not know when the time shall come in which we shall be freed from them. The defenders of those abuses, who get too much by them to be willing to part with them, have made great use of this, that it was the puritan party that, during queen Elizabeth and king James the First's reign, promoted

these bills to render the church odious : whereas it seems more probable that those who set them forward, what invidious characters soever their enemies might put them under, were really the friends of the church ; and that they intended to preserve it, by freeing it from so crying and so visible an abuse ; which gives an offence and scandal, that is not found out by much learning or great observation, but arises so evidently out of the nature of things, that a small measure of common sense helps every one to see it, and to be deeply prejudiced against it. But since our church has fallen under the evils and mischiefs of schism, none of those who divide from us have made any more attempts this way ; but seem rather to be not ill pleased that such scandals should be still among us, as hoping that this is so great a load upon our church, that it both weakens our strength and lessens our authority. It is certainly the interest of an enemy, to suffer the body to which he opposes himself to lie under as many prejudices, and to be liable to as much censure, as is possible ; whereas every good and wise friend studies to preserve that body to which he unites himself, by freeing it from every thing that may render it less acceptable and less useful.

Here I will leave this argument, having, I think, said enough to convince all that have a true zeal to our church, and that think themselves bound in conscience to obey its rules, and that seem to have a particular jealousy of the civil power's breaking in too far upon the ecclesiastical authority, that there can be nothing more plain and express, than that our church intends to bring all her priests under the strictest obligations possible to constant and personal labour, and that in this she pursues the designs and canons, not only of the primitive an best times, but even of the worst ages ; since none were ever so corrupt, as not to condemn those abuses by canon, even when they maintained them in practice. She does not only bind them to this, by the charge she appoints to be given, but also by the vows and promises that she demands of such as are ordained. When all this is laid together, and when there stands nothing on the other side to balance it, but a law made in a very bad time, that took away some abuses, but left pretences to cover others ; can any man, that weighs these things together, in the sight of God, and that believes he must answer to him for this at the great day, think, that the one, how strong soever it may be in his favour at an earthly tribunal, will be of any force in that last and dreadful

judgment? This I leave upon all men's consciences; hoping that *they will so judge themselves, that they shall not be judged of the Lord.*

CHAP. VII.

Of the due preparation of such as may and ought to be put in orders.

THE greatest good that one can hope to do in this world is upon young persons, who have not yet taken their ply, and are not spoiled with prejudices and wrong notions. Those who have taken an ill one at first will neither be at the pains to look over their notions, nor turn to new methods; nor will they, by any change of practice, seem to confess that they were once in the wrong: so that if matters that are amiss can be mended or set right, it must be by giving those that have not yet set out, and that are not yet engaged, truer views and juster ideas of things. I will therefore here lay down the model upon which a clerk is to be formed, and will begin with such things as ought to be previous and preparatory to his being initiated into orders.

These are of two sorts; the one is of such preparations as are necessary to give his heart and soul a right temper, and a true sense of things: the other is of such studies as are necessary to enable him to go through with the several parts of his duty. Both are necessary, but the first is the more indispensable of the two; for a man of a good soul may, with a moderate proportion of knowledge, do great service in the church, especially if he is suited with an employment that is not above his talent: whereas unsanctified knowledge puffs up, is insolent and unquiet, it gives great scandal, and occasions much distraction in the church. In treating of these qualifications, I will watch over my thoughts, not to let them rise to a pitch that is above what the common frailties of human nature, or the age we live in, can bear: and after all, if in any thing I may seem to exceed these measures, it is to be considered that it is natural in proposing the ideas of things to carry them to what is wished for, which is but too often beyond what can be expected; considering both the corruption of mankind, and of these degenerated times.

First of all then, he that intends to dedicate himself to the church ought, from the time that he takes up any such resolution, to enter upon a greater decency of behaviour, that his mind

may not be vitiated by ill habits, which may both give such bad characters of him, as may stick long on him afterwards, and make such ill impressions on himself, as may not be easily worn out or defaced. He ought, above all things, to possess himself with a high sense of the Christian religion, of its truth and excellence, of the value of souls, of the dignity of the pastoral care, of the honour of God, of the sacredness of holy functions, and of the great trust that is committed to those who are set apart from the world, and dedicated to God and to his church. He who looks this way must break himself to the appetites of pleasure or wealth, of ambition or authority; he must consider that the religion, in which he intends to officiate, calls all men to great purity and virtue, to a probity and innocence of manners, to a meekness and gentleness, to a humility and self-denial, to a contempt of the world, and a heavenly-mindedness, to a patient resignation to the will of God, and a readiness to bear the cross, in the hopes of that everlasting reward which is reserved for Christians in another state; all which was eminently recommended, by the unblemished pattern that the Author of this religion has set to all that pretend to be his followers. These being the obligations which a preacher of the gospel is to lay daily upon all his hearers, he ought certainly to accustom himself often to consider seriously of them; and to think how shameless and impudent a thing it will be in him, to perform offices suitable to all these, and that do suppose them; to be instructing the people, and exhorting them to the practice of them; unless he is in some sort all this himself which he teaches others to be.

Indeed, to be tied to such an employment, while one has not an inward conformity to it, and complacency in it, is both the most unbecoming, the most unpleasant, and the most uncomfortable state of life imaginable. Such a person will be exposed to all men's censures and reproaches, who, when they see things amiss in his conduct, do not only reproach him, but the whole church and body to which he belongs, and, which is more, the religion which he seems to recommend by his discourses; though his life and actions, which will always pass for the most real declaration of his inward sentiments, are a visible and continual opposition to it. On all these things he whose thoughts carry him toward the church, ought to reflect frequently: nothing is so odious as a man that disagrees with his character;

a soldier that is a coward, a courtier that is brutal, an ambassador that is abject, are not such unseemly things, as a bad or vicious, a drunken or dissolute clergyman. But though his scandals should not rise up to so high a pitch, even a proud and passionate, a worldly-minded and covetous priest gives the lie to his discourses so palpably, that he cannot expect they should have much weight. Nor is such a man's state of life less unpleasant to himself, than it is unbecoming. He is obliged to be often performing offices, and pronouncing discourses, in which, if he is not a good man, he not only has no pleasure, but must have a formed aversion to them. They must be the heaviest burden of his life; he must often feel secret challenges within; and though he as often silences these, yet such unwelcome reflections are uncomfortable things. He is forced to manage himself with a perpetual constraint, and to observe a decorum in his deportment, lest he fall under a more public censure. Now to be bound to act a part, and live with restraint one's whole life, must be a very melancholy thing. He cannot go so quite out of sight of religion and convictions, as other bad men do, who live in a perpetual hurry, and a total forgetfulness of divine matters. They have no checks, because they are as seldom in the way to find them as is possible. But a clerk cannot keep himself out of their way; he must remember them, and speak of them, at least upon some occasions, whether he will or no: he has no other way to secure himself against them, but by trying what he can do to make himself absolutely disbelieve them. Negative atheism, that is, a total neglect of all religion, is but too easily arrived at; yet this shall not serve his turn, he must build his atheism upon some bottom, that he may find quiet in it. If he is an ignorant man, he is not furnished with those sleights of wit, and shows of learning, that must support it: but if he is really learned, he will soon be beaten out of them; for a learned atheism is so hard a thing to be conceived, that unless a man's powers are first strangely vitiated, it is not easy to see how any one can bring himself to it. There is nothing that can settle the quiet of an ill priest's mind and life, but a stupid formality, and a *callus* that he contracts by his insensible way of handling divine matters, by which he becomes hardened against them. But if this settles him by stupifying his powers, it does put him also so far out of the reach of conviction, in all the ordinary methods of grace, that it is scarce possible he can ever be

awakened, and by consequence that he can be saved ; and if he perishes, he must fall into the lowest degree of misery, even to the portion of hypocrites : for his whole life has been a course of hypocrisy in the strictest sense of the word ; which is the acting of a part, and the counterfeiting another person. His sins have in them all possible aggravations : they are against knowledge and against vows, and contrary to his character ; they carry in them a deliberate contempt of all the truths and obligations of religion ; and if he perishes, he does not perish alone, but carries a shoal down with him ; either of those who have perished in ignorance through his neglect, or of those who have been hardened in their sins through his ill example. And since all this must be put to his account, it may be justly inferred from hence, that no man can have a heavier share in the miseries of another state, than profane and wicked clerks. On all these things he ought to employ his thoughts frequently, who intends to dedicate himself to God, that so he may firmly resolve not to go on with it, till he feels such seeds and beginnings of good things in himself, that he has reason to hope, that, through the grace and assistance of God, he will be an example to others.

He ought more particularly to examine himself, whether he has that soft and gentle, that meek and humble, and that charitable and compassionate temper, which the gospel does so much press upon all Christians ; that shined so eminently through the whole life of the blessed Author of it ; and which he has so singularly recommended to all his followers ; and that has in it so many charms and attractives, which do not only commend those who have these amiable virtues, but, which is much more to be regarded, they give them vast advantages in recommending the doctrine of our Saviour to their people. They are the true ground of that Christian wisdom and discretion, and of that grave and calm deportment, by which the clergy ought to carry on and maintain their authority : a haughty and huffing humour, an impatient and insolent temper, a loftiness of deportment, and a peevishness of spirit, rendering the lives of the clergy, for the most part, bitter to themselves, and their labours, how valuable soever otherwise they may be, unacceptable and useless to their people. A clergyman must be prepared to bear injuries, to endure much unjust censure and calumny, to see himself often neglected, and others preferred to him, in the esteem of the people. He that takes all this ill, that resents

it, and complains of it, does thereby give himself much disquiet ; and to be sure he will, through his peevishness, rather increase than lessen that contempt, under which he is so uneasy ; which is both better borne and sooner overcome by a meek and a lowly temper. A man of this disposition affects no singularities, unless the faultiness of those about him makes his doing his duty to be a singularity : he does not study to lessen the value that is due to others, on design to increase his own : his low thoughts of himself make that he is neither aspiring, nor envying such as are advanced : he is prepared to stay till God in his providence thinks fit to raise him : he studies only to deserve preferment, and leaves to others the wringing posts of advantage out of the hands of those that give them. Such a preparation of mind in a clergyman disposes him to be happy in whatsoever station he may be put, and renders the church happy in him : for men so moulded, even though their talents should be but mean, are shining lights, that may perhaps be at first despised, as men of a low size, that have not greatness of soul enough to aspire ; but when they have been seen and known so long, that all appears to be sincere, and that the principle from whence this flows is rightly considered, then every thing that they say or do must have its due weight : the plainest and simplest things that they say have a beauty in them, and will be hearkened to as oracles.

But a man that intends to prepare himself right for the ministry of the church, must indeed, above all things, endeavour to break himself to the love of the world, either of the wealth, the pomp, or the pleasures of it. He must learn to be content with plain and simple diet, and often even abridge that by true fasting. I do not call fasting a trifling distinction of meats, but a lessening of the quantity, as well as the quality, and a contracting the time spent at meals, that so he may have a greater freedom both in his time, and in his thoughts ; that he may be more alone, and pray and meditate more, and that what he saves out of his meals, he may give to the poor. This is, in short, the true measure and right use of fasting. In cold climates, an abstinence till night may create disorders, and raise such a disturbance both in the appetite and in the digestion, that this managed upon the practices of other countries, especially in young persons, may really distract, instead of furthering, those

who do it indiscreetly. In short, fasting, unless joined with prayer and almsgiving, is of no value in the sight of God. It is a vast advantage to a man to be broken to the niceties of his palate, to be content with plain food, and even to dislike delicacies and studied dishes. This will make him easy in narrower circumstances, since a plain bill of fare is soon discharged. A lover of his appetites, and a slave to his taste, makes but a mean figure among men, and a very scurvy one among clergymen.

This deadness to the world must raise one above the affectations of pomp and state, of attendance and high living: which to a philosophical mind will be heavy, when the circumstances he is in seem to impose and force it on him. And therefore he who has a right sense finds it is almost all he can do, to bear those things which the tyranny of custom or false opinions put upon him; so far is he from longing for them. A man that is truly dead to the world would choose much rather to live in a lowly and narrow figure, than to be obliged to enter into the methods of the greatness of this world; into which if the constitutions and forms of a church and kingdom put him, yet he feels himself in an unnatural and uncouth posture: it is contrary to his own genius and relish of things, and therefore he does not court nor desire such a situation, but, even while he is in it, he shews such a neglect of the state of it, and so much indifference and humility in it, that it appears how little power those things have over his mind, and how little they are able to subdue and corrupt it. This mortified man must likewise become dead to all the designs and projects of making a family, or of raising the fortunes of those that are nearly related to him: he must be bountiful and charitable; and though it is not only lawful to him, but a necessary duty incumbent on him, to make due provision for his family, if he has any; yet this must be so moderated, that no vain nor sordid designs, no indirect nor unbecoming arts may mix in it; no excessive wealth nor great projects must appear; he must be contented with such a proportion as may set his children in the way of a virtuous and liberal education; such as may secure them from scandal and necessity, and put them in a capacity to serve God and their generation in some honest employment. But he who brings along with him a voluptuous, an ambitious, or a covetous mind, that is carnal and earthly minded, comes as a hireling to feed himself, and not the

flock ; he comes to steal and to destroy. Upon all, this great reflection is to be made concerning the motives that determine one to offer himself to this employment.

In the first beginnings of Christianity, no man could reasonably think of taking orders, unless he had in him the spirit of martyrdom. He was to look for nothing in this service but labour and persecution : he was indeed to live of the altar, and that was all the portion that he was to expect in this world. In those days an extraordinary measure of zeal and devotion was necessary to engage men to so hard and difficult a province, that, how great soever its reward might be in another world, had nothing to look for in this but a narrow provision, and the first and largest share of the cross : they were the best known, the most exposed, and the soonest fallen upon in the persecution. But their services and their sufferings did so much recommend that function in the succeeding ages, that the faithful thought they could never do enough to express their value for it. The church came to be richly endowed ; and though superstition had raised this out of measure, yet the extreme went as far to the other hand at the reformation, when the church was almost stripped of all its patrimony, and a great many churches were left so poor, that there was not, in most places, a sufficient, nay, not so much as a necessary maintenance reserved for those that were to minister in holy things. But it is to be acknowledged that there are such remnants preserved, that many benefices of the church still may, and perhaps do but too much work upon men's corrupt principles, their ambition and their covetousness : and it is shrewdly to be apprehended, that of those who present themselves at the altar, a great part comes, as those who followed Christ, for the loaves ; because of the good prospect they have of making their fortunes by the church.

If this point should be carried too far, it might perhaps seem to be a pitch above human nature ; and certainly very far above the degeneracy of the age we live in : I shall therefore lay this matter with as large an allowance as I think it can bear. It is certain, that since God has made us to be a compound of soul and body, it is not only lawful, but suitable to the order of nature, for us, in the choice we make of the state of life that we intend to pursue, to consider our bodies in the next place after our souls : yet we ought certainly to begin with our souls, with

the powers and faculties that are in them, and consider well of what temper they are, and what our measure and capacity is ; that so we may choose such a course of life for which we seem to be fitted, and in which we may probably do the most good to ourselves and others : from hence we ought to take our aims and measures chiefly. But in the next place, we not only may, but ought to consider our bodies, how they shall be maintained in a way suitable to that state of life, into which we are engaged. Therefore though no man can, with a good conscience, begin upon a worldly account, and resolve to dedicate himself to the church, merely out of carnal regards ; such as an advowson in his family, a friend that will promote him, or any other such like prospect, till he has first consulted his temper and disposition, his talents and his capacities ; yet though it is not lawful to make the regards of this world his first consideration, and it cannot be denied to be a perfecter state, if a man should offer himself to the church, having whereon to support himself, without any assistance or reward out of its patrimony ; and to be nearer to St. Paul's practice, whose hands ministered to his necessities, and who reckoned, that in this he had whereof to glory, that he was not burdensome to the churches : yet it is, without doubt, lawful for a man to design, that he may subsist in and out of the service of the church : but then these designs must be limited to a subsistence, to such a moderate proportion as may maintain one in that state of life ; and must not be let fly by a restless ambition, and an insatiable covetousness, as a ravenous bird of prey does at all game. There must not be a perpetual inquiry into the value of benefices, and a constant importuning of such as give them : if laws have been made in some states restraining all *ambitus* and aspirings to civil employments, certainly it were much more reasonable to put a stop to the scandalous importunities that are every where complained of ; and no where more visible and more offensive than at court. This gives a prejudice to men, that are otherwise inclined enough to search for one, that can never be removed, but by putting an effectual bar in the way of that scrambling for benefices and preferments ; which will ever make the lay part of mankind conclude, that, let us pretend what we will, covetousness and ambition are our true motives, and our chief vocation. It is true, the strange practices of many patrons, and the constitution of most courts, give a colour to excuse so great an in-

decency. Men are generally successful in those practices ; and as long as human nature is so strong, as all men feel it to be, it will be hard to divert them from a method which is so common, that to act otherwise would look like an affectation of singularity : and many apprehend, that they must languish in misery and necessity, if they are wanting to themselves in so general a practice. And indeed if patrons, but chiefly if princes would effectually cure this disease, which gives them so much trouble as well as offence, they must resolve to distribute those benefices that are in their gift, with so visible a regard to true goodness and real merit, and with so firm and so constant an opposition to application and importunity, that it may appear, that the only way to advancement is to live well, to study hard, to stay at home, and labour diligently ; and that applications by the persons themselves, or any set on by them, shall always put those back who make them : this would more effectually cure so great an evil, than all that can be said against it. One successful suitor who carries his point will promote this disorder more than twenty repulses of others ; for, unless the rule is severely carried on, every one will run into it, and hope to prosper as well as he who they see has got his end in it. If those who have the disposition of benefices, to which the cure of souls is annexed, did consider this as a trust lodged with them, for which they must answer to God ; and that they shall be in a great measure accountable for the souls that may be lost through the bad choice that they make, knowing it to be bad ; if, I say, they had this more in their thoughts, than so many scores of pounds as the living amounts to ; and thought themselves really bound, as without doubt they are, to seek out good and worthy men, well qualified and duly prepared, according to the nature of that benefice which they are to give ; then we might hope to see men make it their chief study, to qualify themselves aright ; to order their lives, and frame their minds as they ought to do, and to carry on their studies with all application and diligence. But as long as the short methods of application, friendship, or interest, are more effectual than the long and hard way of labour and study, human nature will always carry men to go the surest, the easiest, and the quickest way to work.

After all, I wish it were well considered by all clerks, what it is to run without being either called or sent ; and so to thrust one's self into the vineyard, without staying till God, by his

providence, puts a piece of his work in his hands : this will give a man a vast ease in his thoughts, and a great satisfaction in all his labours, if he knows that no practices of his own, but merely the directions of Providence, have put him in a post. He may well trust the effects of a thing to God, when the causes of it do plainly flow from him. And though this will appear to a great many a hard saying, so that few will be able to bear it ; yet I must add this to the encouragement and comfort of such as can resolve to deliver themselves up to the conduct and directions of Providence, that I never yet knew any one of those few (too few I confess they have been) who were possessed with this maxim, and that have followed it exactly, that have not found the fruit of it even in this world. A watchful care hath hovered over them : instruments have been raised up, and accidents have happened to them so prosperously, as if there had been a secret design of Heaven, by blessing them so signally, to encourage others to follow their measures, to depend on God, to deliver themselves up to his care, and to wait till he opens a way for their being employed, and settled in such a portion of his husbandry, as he shall think fit to assign to them.

These are preparations of mind, with which a clerk is to be formed and seasoned : and in order to this he must read the scriptures much, he must get a great deal of those passages in them that relate to these things by heart, and repeat them often to himself ; in particular, many of the most tender and melting Psalms, and many of the most comprehensive passages in the Epistles ; that by the frequent reflecting on these he may fill his memory with noble notions, and right ideas of things. The Book of Proverbs, but chiefly Ecclesiastes, if he can get to understand it, will beget in him a right view of the world, a just value of things, and a contempt of many objects that shine with a false lustre, but have no true worth in them. Some of the books taught at schools, if read afterwards, when one is more capable to observe the sense of them, may be of great use to promote this temper. Tully's Offices will give the mind a noble set ; all his philosophical discourses, but chiefly his Consolation ; which though some critics will not allow to be his, because they fancy the style has not all the force and beauty in it that was peculiar to him, yet is certainly the best piece of them all : these, I say, give a good savour to those who read them much. The satirical poets, Horace, Juvenal, and Persius, may contribute

wonderfully to give a man a detestation of vice, and a contempt of the common methods of mankind ; which they have set out in such true colours, that they must give a very generous sense to those who delight in reading them often. Persius's second satire may well pass for one of the best lectures in divinity. Hierocles upon Pythagoras's Verses, Plutareh's Lives, and, above all the books of heathenism, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, contain such instructions, that one cannot read them too often, nor repass them too frequently in his thoughts. But when I speak of reading these books, I do not mean only to run through them, as one does through a book of history, or of notions ; they must be read and weighed with great care, till one is become a master of all the thoughts that are in them : they are to be often turned in one's mind, till he is thereby wrought up to some degrees of that temper which they propose. And as for Christian books, in order to the framing of one's mind aright, I shall only recommend *The Whole Duty of Man*, *Dr. Sherlock of Death and Judgment*, and *Dr. Seott's books* ; in particular, that great distinction that runs through them, of the means and of the ends of religion. To all which I shall add one small book more, which is to me ever new and fresh, gives always good thoughts and a noble temper, *Thomas a Kempis of the Imitation of Christ*. By the frequent reading of these books, by the relish that one has in them, by the delight they give, and the effects they produce, a man will plainly perceive, whether his soul is made for divine matters or not ; what suitableness there is between him and them ; and whether he is yet touched with such a sense of religion, as to be capable of dedicating himself to it.

I am far from thinking that no man is fit to be a priest, that has not the temper which I have been describing, quite up to that height in which I have set it forth : but this I will positively say, that he who has not the seeds of it planted in him, who has not these principles, and resolutions formed to pursue them, and to improve and perfect himself in them, is in no wise worthy of that holy character. If these things are begun in him, if they are yet but as a grain of mustard seed ; yet if there is a life in them, and a vital sense of the tendeneies and effects they must have, such a person, so moulded, with those notions and impressions, and such only are qualified, so as to be able to say with

truth and assurance, that they trust they are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to undertake that office.

So far have I despatched the first and chief part of the preparation necessary before orders. The other branch of it relates to their learning, and to the knowledge that is necessary. I confess I look upon this as so much inferior to the other, and have been convinced by so much experience, that a great measure of piety, with a very small proportion of learning, will carry one a great way, that I may perhaps be thought to come as far short in this, as I might seem to exceed in the other. I will not here enter into a discourse of theological learning, of the measure that is necessary to make a complete divine, and of the methods to attain it: I intend only to lay down here, that which I look on as the lowest degree, and as that which seems indispensably necessary to one that is to be a priest. He must then understand the New Testament well. This is the text of our religion, that which we preach and explain to others; therefore a man ought to read this so often over, that he may have an idea of the whole book in his head, and of all the parts of it. He cannot have this so sure, unless he understands the Greek so well, as to be able to find out the meaning of every period in it, at least of the words and phrases of it: any book of annotations or paraphrase upon it is a great help to a beginner; Grotius, Hammond, and Lightfoot are the best. But the having a great deal of the practical and easy parts of it, such as relate to men's lives and their duties, such as strike and awaken, direct, comfort, or terrify, are much more necessary than the more abstruse parts. In short, the being able to state right the grounds of our hope, and the terms of salvation, and the having a clear and ready view of the new covenant in Christ Jesus, is of such absolute necessity, that it is a profaning of orders, and a defiling of the sanctuary, to bring any into it, that do not rightly understand this matter in its whole extent. Bishop Pearson on the Creed is a book of great learning and profound exactness. Dr. Barrow has opened it with more simplicity; and Dr. Towerson more practically: one or other of these must be well read and considered. But when I say read, I mean read and read over again, so oft that one is master of one of these books; he must write notes out of them, and make abridgments of them, and turn them so oft in his thoughts, that he must thoroughly understand and

well remember them. He must read also the Psalms over so carefully, that he may at least have a general notion of those divine hymns ; to which bishop Patrick's Paraphrase will help to carry him.

A system of divinity must be read with exactness : they are almost all alike. When I was young, Wendelin and Maresius were the two shortest and fullest. Here is a vast error in the first forming of our clergy, that a contempt has been cast on that sort of books ; and indeed to rise no higher than to a perpetual reading over different systems, is but a mean pitch of learning ; and the swallowing down whole systems by the lump has helped to possess people's minds too early with prejudices, and to shut them up in too implicit a following of others. But the throwing off all these books makes that many who have read a great deal, yet have no entire body of divinity in their head ; they have no scheme or method, and so are ignorant of some very plain things, which could never have happened to them, if they had carefully read and digested a system into their memories. But because this is indeed a very low form ; therefore to lead a man further, to have a freer view of divinity, to examine things equally and clearly, and to use his own reason, by balancing the various views, that two great divisions of protestants have, not only in the points which they controvert, but in a great many others, in which though they agree in the same conclusions, yet they arrive at them by very different premises ; I would advise him that studies divinity, to read two larger bodies, writ by some eminent men of both sides ; and, because the latest are commonly the best, Turretin for the whole Calvinist hypothesis, and Limborch for the Arminian, will make a man fully the master of all the notions of both sides. Or if one would see how far middle ways may be taken, the Theses of Saumur, or Le Blanc's Theses, will complete him in that. These books well read, digested into abstracts, and frequently reviewed or talked over by two companions in study, will give a man an entire view of the whole body of divinity.

But, by reason of that pest of atheism, that spreads so much among us, the foundations of religion must be well laid : bishop Wilkins's book of Natural Religion will lead one in the first steps through the principles that he has laid together in a plain and natural method. Grotius's book of the Truth of the Christian Religion, with his notes upon it, ought to be read and

almost got by heart. The whole controversy both of atheism and deism, the arguments both for the Old and New Testament, are fully opened, with a great variety both of learning and reasoning, in bishop Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacræ*.

There remains only to direct a student how to form right notions of practical matters; and particularly of preaching. Dr. Hammond's *Practical Catechism* is a book of great use; but not to be begun with, as too many do: it does require a good deal of previous study, before the force of his reasonings is apprehended; but when one is ready for it, it is a rare book, and states the grounds of morality, and of our duty, upon true principles. To form one to understand the right method of preaching, the extent of it, and the proper ways of application, bishop Sander-son, Mr. Faringdon, and Dr. Barrow, are the best and the fullest models. There is a vast variety of other sermons, which may be read with an equal measure of advantage and pleasure. And if from the time that one resolves to direct his studies towards the church, he would every Lord's day read two sermons of any good preacher, and turn them a little over in his thoughts, this would insensibly, in two or three years time, carry him very far, and give him a large view of the different ways of preaching, and furnish him with materials for handling a great many texts of scripture when he comes to it.

And thus I have carried my student through those studies, that seem to me so necessary for qualifying him to be an able minister of the New Testament, that I cannot see how any article of this can be well abated. It may seem strange, that in this whole direction I have said nothing concerning the study of the fathers or church-history. But I said at first, that a great distinction was to be made between what was necessary to prepare a man to be a priest, and what was necessary to make him a complete and learned divine.

The knowledge of these things is necessary to the latter, though they do not seem so necessary for the former: there are many things to be left to the prosecution of a divine's study, that therefore are not mentioned here, not with any design to disparage that sort of learning; for I am now only upon that measure of knowledge, under which I heartily wish that no man were put in priest's orders; and therefore I have passed over many other things, such as the more accurate understanding of the controversies between us and the church of Rome, and the

unhappy disputes between us and the dissenters of all sorts ; though both the one and the other have of late been opened with that perspicuity, that fulness of argument, and that clearness as well as softness of style, that a collection of these may give a man the fullest instruction, that is to be found in any books I know. Others, and perhaps the far greater number, will think that I have clogged this matter too much. But I desire these may consider how much we do justly reckon, that our profession is preferable either to law or medicine. Now, if this is true, it is not unreasonable, that since those who pretend to these must be at so much pains, before they enter upon a practice which relates only to men's fortunes, or their persons, we, whose labours relate to their souls and their eternal state, should be at least at some considerable pains before we enter upon them. Let any young divine go to the chambers of a student in the Inns of Court, and see how many books he must read, and how great a volume of a common-place-book he must make : he will there see through how hard a task one must go in a course of many years, and how ready he must be in all the parts of it, before he is called to the bar, or can manage business. How exact must a physician be in anatomy, in simples, in pharmacy, in the theory of diseases, and in the observations and counsels of doctors, before he can either with honour, or a safe conscience, undertake practice ! He must be ready with all this, and in that infinite number of hard words, that belong to every part of it, to give his directions and write his bills by the patient's bed-side ; who cannot stay till he goes to his study and turns over his books. If then so long a course of study, and so much exactness and readiness in it, is necessary to these professions ; nay, if every mechanical art, even the meanest, requires a course of many years, before one can be a master in it, shall the noblest and the most important of all others, that which comes from heaven, and leads thither again ; shall that which God has honoured so highly, and to which laws and governments have added such privileges and encouragements, that is employed in the sublimest exercises, which require a proportioned worth in those who handle them, to maintain their value and dignity in the esteem of the world ; shall all this, I say, be esteemed so low a thing in our eyes, that a much less degree of time and study is necessary to arrive at it, than at the most sordid of all trades whatsoever ? And yet, after all, a man of a tolerable capacity,

with a good degree of application, may go through all this well, and exactly, in two years time. I am very sure, by many an experiment I have made, that this may be done in a much less compass; but because all men do not go alike quick, have not the same force, nor the same application, therefore I reckon two years for it; which I do thus divide: one year before deacon's orders, and another between them and priest's orders. And can this be thought a hard imposition? Or do not those, who think thus, give great occasion to the contempt of the clergy, if they give the world cause to observe, that how much soever we may magnify our profession, yet by our practice we shew that we do judge it the meanest of all others, which is to be arrived at upon less previous study and preparation to it, than any other whatsoever? Since I have been hitherto so minute, I will yet divide this matter a little lower into those parts of it, without which deacon's orders ought not to be given, and those to be reserved to the second year of study. To have read the New Testament well, so as to carry a great deal of it in one's memory, to have a clear notion of the several books of it, to understand well the nature and the conditions of the covenant of grace, and to have read one system well, so as to be master of it, to understand the whole catechetical matter, to have read Wilkins and Grotius; this, I say, is that part of this task, which I propose before one is made deacon. The rest, though much the larger, will go the easier, if those foundations are once well laid in them. And upon the article of studying the scriptures, I will add one advice more.

There are two methods in reading them; the one ought to be merely critical, to find out the meaning and coherence of the several parts of them, in which one runs easily through the greater part, and is only obliged to stop at some harder passages, which may be marked down, and learned men are to be consulted upon them: those that are really hard to be explained are both few, and they relate to matters that are not so essential to Christianity; and therefore after one has in general seen what is said upon these, he may put off the fuller consideration of that to more leisure, and better opportunities. But the other way of reading the scriptures is to be done merely with a view to practice, to raise devotion, to increase piety, and to give good thoughts and severe rules. In this a man is to employ himself much. This is a book always at hand, and the getting a great

deal of it always by heart is the best part of a clergyman's study; it is the foundation, and lays in the materials for all the rest. This alone may furnish a man with a noble stock of lively thoughts and sublime expressions; and therefore it must be always reckoned as that, without which all other things amount to nothing; and the chief and main subject of the study, the meditation, and the discourses of a clergyman.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the functions and labours of clergymen.

I HAVE in the former chapter laid down the model and method, by which a clerk is to be formed and prepared: I come now to consider his course of life, his public functions, and his secret labours. In this, as well as in the former, I will study to consider what mankind can bear, rather than what may be offered in a fair idea, that is far above what we can hope ever to bring the world to. As for a priest's life and conversation, so much was said in the former chapter; in which, as a preparation to orders, it was proposed what he ought to be; that I may now be the shorter on this article.

The clergy have one great advantage, beyond all the rest of the world, in this respect, besides all others, that whereas the particular callings of other men prove to them great distractions, and lay many temptations in their way, to divert them from minding their high and holy calling of being Christians; it is quite otherwise with the clergy; the more they follow their private callings, they do the more certainly advance their general one: the better priests they are, they become also the better Christians: every part of their calling, when well performed, raises good thoughts, brings good ideas into their mind, and tends both to increase their knowledge, and quicken their sense of divine matters. A priest therefore is more accountable to God and the world for his deportment, and will be more severely accounted with, than any other person whatsoever. He is more watched over and observed than all others; very good men will be, even to a censure, jealous of him; very bad men will wait for his halting, and insult upon it; and all sorts of persons will be willing to defend themselves against the authority of his doctrine and admonitions by this, "He says, but does not:" and though our Saviour charged his disciples and followers, *to hear*

those who sat in Moses' chair, and to observe and do whatsoever they bid them observe, but not to do after their works, for they said and did not^e; the world will reverse this quite, and consider rather how a clerk lives, than what he says. They see the one, and from it conclude what he himself thinks of the other; and so will believe themselves not a little justified, if they can say that they did no worse than as they saw their minister do before them.

Therefore a priest must not only abstain from gross scandals, but keep at the furthest distance from them: he must not only not be drunk, but he must not sit a tippling, nor go to taverns or alehouses, except some urgent occasion requires it, and stay no longer in them, than as that occasion demands it. He must not only abstain from acts of lewdness, but from all indecent behaviour, and unbecoming raillery. Gaming and plays, and every thing of that sort, which is an approach to the vanities and disorders of the world, must be avoided by him. And, unless the straitness of his condition or his necessities force it, he ought to shun all other cares; such as, not only the farming of grounds, but even the teaching of schools, since these must of necessity take him off both from his labour and study. Such diversions as his health, or the temper of his mind, may render proper for him, ought to be manly, decent, and grave; and such as may neither possess his mind or time too much, nor give a bad character of him to his people. He must also avoid too much familiarity with bad people, and the squandering away his time in too much vain and idle discourse. His cheerfulness ought to be frank, but neither excessive nor licentious: his friends and his garden ought to be his chief diversions, as his study and his parish ought to be his chief employments. He must still carry on his study, making himself an absolute master of the few books he has, till his circumstances grow larger, that he can purchase more. He can have no pretence, if he were ever so narrow in the world, to say, that he cannot get not only the Collects, but the Psalms, and the New Testament by heart, or at least a great part of them. If there be any books belonging to his church, such as Jewel's Works, and the Book of Martyrs, which lie tearing in many places, these he may read over and over again, till he is able to furnish himself better, I mean with a greater variety: but let him furnish himself ever so

^e Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.

well, the reading and understanding the scriptures, chiefly the Psalms and the New Testament, ought to be still his chief study, till he becomes so conversant in them, that he can both say many parts of them, and explain them without book.

It is the only visible reason of the Jews adhering so firmly to their religion, that during the ten or twelve years of their education, their youth are so much practised to the scriptures, to weigh every word in them, and get them all by heart, that it is an admiration to see how ready both men and women among them are at it: their rabbies have it to that perfection, that they have the concordance of their whole Bible in their memories; which gives them vast advantages, when they are to argue with any that are not so ready as they are in the scriptures. Our task is much shorter and easier, and it is a reproach, especially to us protestants, who found our religion merely on the scriptures, that we know the New Testament so little, which cannot be excused.

With the study of the scriptures, or rather as a part of it, comes in the study of the fathers, as far as one can go; in these, their apologies and epistles are chiefly to be read, for these give us the best view of those times. Basil's and Chrysostom's sermons are by much the best. To these studies, history comes in as a noble and pleasant addition; that gives a man great views of the providence of God, of the nature of man, and of the conduct of the world. This is above no man's capacity; and though some histories are better than others, yet any histories, such as one can get, are to be read, rather than none at all. If one can compass it, he ought to begin with the history of the church, and there at the head Josephus, and go on with Eusebius, Socrates, and the other historians, that are commonly bound together; and then go to other later collectors of ancient history. The history of our own church and country is to come next; then the ancient Greek and Roman history; and after that, as much history, geography, and books of travels, as can be had, will give an easy and a useful entertainment, and will furnish one with great variety of good thoughts, and of pleasant as well as edifying discourse. As for all other studies, every one must follow his inclinations, his capacities, and that which he can procure to himself. The books that we learn at schools are generally laid aside, with this prejudice, that they were the labours as well as the sorrows of our childhood and education;

but they are among the best of books ; the Greek and Roman authors have a spirit in them, a force both of thought and expression, that later ages have not been able to imitate ; Buchanan only excepted, in whom, more particularly in his Psalms, there is a beauty and life, an exactness as well as a liberty, that cannot be imitated, and scarce enough commended. The study and practice of physic, especially that which is safe and simple, puts the clergy in a capacity of doing great acts of charity, and of rendering both their persons and labours very acceptable to their people ; it will procure their being soon sent for by them in sickness, and it will give them great advantages in speaking to them of their spiritual concerns, when they are so careful of their persons : but in this nothing that is sordid must mix.

These ought to be the chief studies of the clergy. But to give all these their full effect, a priest that is much in his study ought to employ a great part of his time in secret and fervent prayer, for the direction and blessing of God in his labours, for the constant assistance of his holy Spirit, and for a lively sense of divine matters, that so he may feel the impressions of them grow deep and strong upon his thoughts. This, and this only, will make him go on with his work without wearying, and be always rejoicing in it : this will make his expressions of these things to be happy and noble, when he can bring them out of the good treasure of his heart, that is ever full, and always warm with them.

From his study, I go next to his public functions. He must bring his mind to an inward and feeling sense of those things that are prayed for in our Offices : that will make him pronounce them with an equal measure of gravity and affection, and with a due slowness and emphasis. I do not love the theatrical way of the church of Rome, in which it is a great study, and a long practice, to learn in every one of their Offices, how they ought to compose their looks, gesture, and voice : yet a light wandering of the eyes, and a hasty running through the prayers, are things highly unbecoming ; they do very much lessen the majesty of our worship, and give our enemies advantage to call it dead and formal, when they see plainly, that he who officiates is dead and formal in it. A deep sense of the things prayed for, a true recollection and attention of spirit, and a holy earnestness of soul, will give a composure to the looks, and a weight to the pronounciation, that will be tempered between affectation on the

one hand, and levity on the other. As for preaching, I refer that to a chapter apart.

A minister ought to instruct his people frequently of the nature of baptism, that they may not go about it merely as a ceremony, as it is too visible the greater part do; but that they may consider it is the dedicating their children to God, the offering them to Christ, and the holding them thereafter as his; directing their chief care about them, to the breeding them up in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*. There must be care taken to give them all a right notion of the use of godfathers and godmothers, which is a good institution, to procure a double security for the education of children; it being to be supposed, that the common ties of nature and religion bind the parents so strongly, that if they are not mindful of these, a special vow would not put a new force in them: and therefore a collateral security is also demanded, both to supply their defects, if they are faulty, and to take care of the religious education of the infant, in case the parents should happen to die before that is done. And therefore no godfather or godmother are to be invited to that office, but such with whom one would trust the care of the education of his child; nor ought any to do this office for another, but he that is willing to charge himself with the education of the child for whom he answers. But when ambition or vanity, favour or presents, are the considerations upon which those sureties in baptism are chosen, great advantage is hereby given to those who reject infant-baptism, and the ends of the church in this institution are quite defeated; which are both the making the security that is given for the children so much the stronger, and the establishing an endearment and a tenderness between families; this being in its own nature no small tie, how little soever it may be apprehended or understood.

Great care must be taken in the instruction of the youth: the bare saying the Catechism by rote is a small matter; it is necessary to make them understand the weight of every word in it: and, for this end, every priest, that minds his duty, will find that no part of it is so useful to his people, as once every year to go through the whole Church-Catechism, word by word, and make his people understand the importance of every tittle in it. This will be no hard labour to himself; for after he has once gathered together the places of scripture that relate to every

article, and formed some clear illustrations, and easy similes to make it understood, his catechetical discourses, during all the rest of his life, will be only the going over that same matter again and again. By this means his people will come to have all this by heart; they will know what to say upon it at home to their children; and they will understand all his sermons the better, when they have once had a clear notion of all those terms that must run through them; for those not being understood renders them all unintelligible. A discourse of this sort would be generally of much greater edification than an afternoon's sermon: it should not be too long; too much must not be said at a time, nor more than one point opened; a quarter of an hour is time sufficient; for it will grow tedious and be too little remembered, if it is half an hour long. This would draw an assembly to evening prayers, which we see are but too much neglected, when there is no sort of discourse or sermon accompanying them. And the practising this, during the six months of the year, in which the days are long, would be a very effectual means both to instruct the people, and to bring them to a more religious observation of the Lord's day; which is one of the powerfulest instruments for the carrying on and advancing of religion in the world.

With catechising, a minister is to join the preparing those whom he instructs to be confirmed, which is not to be done merely upon their being able to say over so many words by rote. It is their renewing their baptismal vow in their own persons, which the church designs by that Office; and the bearing in their own minds a sense of their being bound immediately by that, which their sureties then undertook for them. Now to do this in such a manner, as that it may make impression, and have a due effect upon them, they must stay till they themselves understand what they do, and till they have some sense and affection to it; and therefore till one is of an age and disposition fit to receive the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, and desires to be confirmed, as a solemn preparation and qualification to it, he is not yet ready for it: for in the common management of that holy rite, it is but too visible, that of those multitudes that crowd to it, the far greater part come merely as if they were to receive the bishop's blessing, without any sense of the vow made by them, and of their renewing their baptismal engagements in it.

As for the greatest and solemnest of all the institutions of Christ, the commemorating his death, and the partaking of it in the Lord's supper ; this must be well explained to the people, to preserve them from the extremes of superstition and irreverence ; to raise in them a great sense of the goodness of God, that appeared in the death of Christ ; of his love to us, of the sacrifice he once offered, and of the intercession which he still continues to make for us : a share in all which is there federally offered to us, upon our coming under engagements, to answer our part of the covenant, and to live according to the rules it sets us. On these things he ought to enlarge himself, not only in his sermons, but in his catechetical exercises, and in private discourses ; that so he may give his people right notions of that solemn part of worship, that he may bring them to delight in it ; and may neither fright them from it, by raising their apprehensions of it to a strictness that may terrify too much, nor encourage them in the too common practice of the dead and formal receiving, at the great festivals, as a piece of decency recommended by custom.

About the time of the sacrament, every minister that knows any one of his parish guilty of eminent sins, ought to go and admonish him to change his course of life, or not to profane the table of the Lord ; and if private admonitions have no effect, then if his sins are public and scandalous, he ought to deny him the sacrament ; and upon that he ought to take the method which is still left in the church to make sinners ashamed, to separate them from holy things, till they have edified the church as much by their repentance, and the outward profession of it, as they had formerly scandalized it by their disorders. This we must confess, that though we have great reason to lament our want of the godly discipline that was in the primitive church, yet we have still authority for a great deal more than we put in practice. Scandalous persons ought, and might be more frequently presented than they are, and both private and public admonitions might be more used than they are. There is a flatness in all these things among us. Some are willing to do nothing, because they cannot do all that they ought to do ; whereas the right way for procuring an enlargement of our authority, is to use that we have well ; not as an engine to gratify our own or other people's passions, not to vex people, nor to look after fees, more than the correction of manners, or

the edification of the people. If we began much with private applications, and brought none into our courts, till it was visible that all other ways had been unsuccessful, and that no regard was had either to persons or parties, to men's opinions or interests, we might again bring our courts into the esteem which they ought to have, but which they have almost entirely lost. We can never hope to bring the world to bear the yoke of Christ, and the order that he has appointed to be kept up in his church, of noting those that walk disorderly, of separating ourselves from them, of having no fellowship, no, not so much as to eat with them; as long as we give them cause to apprehend, that we intend by this to bring them under our yoke, to subdue them to us, and to rule them with a rod of iron; for the truth is, mankind is so strangely compounded, that it is very hard to restrain ecclesiastical tyranny on the one hand, without running to a lawless licentiousness on the other: so strangely does the world love extremes, and avoid a temper.

Now I have gone through the public functions of a priest; and in speaking of the last of these, I have broke in upon the third head of his duty, his private labours in his parish. He understands little the nature and the obligations of the priestly office, who thinks he has discharged it by performing the public appointments; in which if he is defective, the laws of the church, how feeble soever they may be as to other things, will have their course. But as the private duties of the pastoral care are things upon which the cognizance of the law cannot fall, so they are the most important and necessary of all others: and the more praiseworthy, the freer they are, and the less forced by the compulsion of law. As to the public functions, every man has his rule; and in these all are almost alike; every man, especially if his lungs are good, can read prayers, even in the largest congregation; and if he has a right taste, and can but choose good sermons, out of the many that are in print, he may likewise serve them well that way too. But the difference between one man and another shews itself more sensibly in his private labours, in his prudent deportment, in his modest and discreet way of procuring respect to himself, in his treating his parish, either in reconciling such differences as may happen to be among them, or in admonishing men of rank, who set an ill example to others, which ought always to be done in that way, which will probably have the best effect upon them; therefore it must be done

secretly, and with expressions of tenderness and respect for their persons: fit times are to be chosen for this; it may be often the best way to do it by a letter; for there may be ways fallen upon of reproving the worst men in so soft a manner, that if they are not reclaimed, yet they shall not be irritated or made worse by it, which is but too often the effect of an indiscreet reproof. By this a minister may save the sinner's soul; he is at least sure to save his own, by having discharged his duty towards his people.

One of the chief parts of the pastoral care is, the visiting the sick; not to be done barely when one is sent for: he is to go as soon as he hears that any of his flock are ill; he is not to satisfy himself with going over the Office, or giving them the sacrament when desired: he ought to inform himself of their course of life, and of the temper of their mind, that so he may apply himself to them accordingly. If they are insensible, he ought to awaken them with the terrors of God, the judgment and the wrath to come. He must endeavour to make them sensible of their sins; particularly of that which runs through most men's lives, their forgetting and neglecting God and his service, and their setting their hearts so inordinately upon the world. He must set them on to examine their dealings, and make them seriously to consider, that they can expect no mercy from God, unless they restore whatsoever they may have got unjustly from any other, by any manner of way, even though their title were confirmed by law. He is to lay any other sins to their charge, that he has reason to suspect them guilty of; and must press them to all such acts of repentance as they are then capable of. If they have been men of a bad course of life, he must give them no encouragement to hope much from this death-bed repentance; yet he is to set them to implore the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, and to do all they can to obtain his favour. But unless the sickness has been of a long continuance, and that the person's repentance, his patience, his piety, has been very extraordinary during the course of it, he must be sure to give him no positive ground of hope; but leave him to the mercies of God. For there cannot be any greater treachery to souls, that is more fatal and more pernicious, than the giving quick and easy hopes, upon so short, so forced, and so imperfect a repentance. It not only makes those persons perish securely themselves, but it leads all about them to destruction, when they

see one, of whose bad life and late repentance they have been the witnesses, put so soon in hopes, nay by some unfaithful guides made sure of salvation: this must make them go on very secure in their sins, when they see how small a measure of repentance sets all right at last. All the order and justice of a nation would be presently dissolved, should the howlings of criminals, and their promises of amendment, work on juries, judges, or princes: so the hopes that are given to death-bed penitents must be a most effectual means to root out the sense of religion of the minds of all that see it. And therefore though no dying man is to be driven to despair, and left to die obstinate in his sins; yet if we love the souls of our people, if we set a due value on the blood of Christ, and if we are touched with any sense of the honour or interests of religion, we must not say any thing that may encourage others, who are but too apt of themselves to put all off to the last hour. We can give them no hopes from the nature of the gospel-covenant; yet after all, the best thing a dying man can do is to repent; if he recovers, that may be the seed and beginning of a new life and a new nature in him. Nor do we know the measure of the riches of God's grace and mercy; how far he may think fit to exert it beyond the conditions and promises of the new covenant, at least to the lessening of such a person's misery in another state. We are sure he is not within the new covenant; and since he has not repented, according to the tenor of it, we dare not, unless we betray our commission, give any hopes beyond it. But one of the chief cares of a minister about the sick ought to be to exact of them solemn vows and promises of a renovation of life, in case God shall raise them up again; and these ought to be demanded, not only in general words, but if they have been guilty of any scandalous disorders, or any other ill practices, there ought to be special promises made with relation to those. And upon the recovery of such persons, their ministers ought to put them in mind of their engagements, and use all the due freedom of admonitions and reproof, upon their breaking loose from them. In such a case they ought to leave a terrible denunciation of the judgments of God upon them; and so, at least, they acquit themselves.

There is another sort of sick persons, who abound more in towns than in the country; those are the troubled in mind: of these there are two sorts; some have committed enormous sins,

which kindle a storm in their consciences ; and that ought to be cherished, till they have completed a repentance proportioned to the nature and degree of their sin. If wrong has been done to another, reparation and restitution must be made to the utmost of the party's power. If blood has been shed, a long course of fasting and prayer ; a total abstinence from wine, if drunkenness gave the rise to it ; a making up the loss to the family, on which it has fallen, must be enjoined. But alas ! the greater part of those that think they are troubled in mind are melancholy hypochondriacal people, who, what through some false opinions in religion, what through a foulness of blood, occasioned by their unactive course of life, in which their minds work too much, because their bodies are too little employed, fall under dark and cloudy apprehensions ; of which they can give no clear nor good account. This, in the greatest part, is to be removed by strong and chalybeate medicines ; yet such persons are to be much pitied, and a little humoured in their distemper. They must be diverted from thinking too much, being too much alone, or dwelling too long on thoughts that are too hard for them to master.

The opinion that has had the chief influence in raising these distempers, has been that of praying by the Spirit ; when a flame of thought, a melting in the brain, and the abounding in tender expressions, have been thought the effects of the Spirit, moving all those symptoms of a warm temper. Now in all people, especially in persons of a melancholy disposition, that are much alone, there will be a great diversity, with relation to this, at different times : sometimes these heats will rise and flow copiously, and at other times there will be a damp upon the brain, and a dead dryness in the spirits. This, to men that are prepossessed with the opinion now set forth, will appear as if God did sometimes shine out, and at other times hide his face ; and since this last will be the most frequent in men of that temper, as they will be apt to be lifted up, when they think they have a fulness of the Spirit in them, so they will be as much cast down when that is withdrawn ; they will conclude from it, that God is angry with them, and so reckon that they must be in a very dangerous condition : upon this, a vast variety of troublesome scruples will arise, out of every thing that they either do or have done. If then a minister has occasion to treat any in this condition, he must make them apprehend that the heat or

coldness of their brain is the effect of temper, and flows from the different state of the animal spirits, which have their diseases, their hot and their cold fits, as well as the blood has; and therefore no measure can be taken from these either to judge for or against themselves. They are to consider what are their principles and resolutions, and what is the settled course of their life; upon these they are to form sure judgments, and not upon any thing that is so fluctuating and inconstant as fits or humours.

Another part of a priest's duty is, with relation to them that are without, I mean, that are not of our body, which are of the side of the church of Rome, or among the dissenters. Other churches and bodies are noted for their zeal in making proselytes, for their restless endeavours, as well as their unlawful methods in it; they reckoning, perhaps, that all will be sanctified by the increasing their party; which is the true name of making converts, except they become at the same time good men, as well as votaries to a side or cause. We are certainly very remiss in this of both hands; little pains is taken to gain either upon papist or nonconformist; the law has been so much trusted to, that that method only was thought sure; it was much valued, and others at the same time as much neglected; and whereas at first, without force or violence, in forty years time, popery, from being the prevailing religion, was reduced to a handful, we have now in above twice that number of years made very little progress. The favour shewed them from our court made us seem, as it were, unwilling to disturb them in their religion; so that we grew at last to be kind to them, to look on them as harmless and inoffensive neighbours, and even to cherish and comfort them: we were very near the being convinced of our mistake, by a terrible and dearbought experience. Now they are again under hatches; certainly it becomes us, both in charity to them, and in regard to our own safety, to study to gain them by the force of reason and persuasion; by shewing all kindness to them, and thereby disposing them to hearken to the reasons that we may lay before them. We ought not to give over this as desperate, upon a few unsuccessful attempts; but must follow them in the meekness of Christ, that so we may at last prove happy instruments, in delivering them from the blindness and captivity they are kept under, and the idolatry and superstition they live in: we ought to visit them often in a spirit of love and charity, and to offer them conferences; and

upon such endeavours we have reason to expect a blessing, at least this, of having done our duty, and so delivering our own souls.

Nor are we to think, that the toleration, under which the law has settled the dissenters, does either absolve them from the obligations that they lay under before, by the laws of God and the gospel, to maintain the unity of the church, and not to rent it by unjust or causeless schisms; or us from using our endeavours to bring them to it, by the methods of persuasion and kindness: nay, perhaps, their being now in circumstances, that they can no more be forced in these things, may put some of them in a greater towardness to hear reason; a free nation naturally hating constraint: and certainly the less we seem to grudge or envy them their liberty, we will be thereby the nearer gaining on the generouser and better part of them, and the rest would soon lose heart, and look out of countenance, if these should hearken to us. It was the opinion many had of their strictness, and of the looseness that was among us, that gained them their credit, and made such numbers fall off from us. They have in a great measure lost the good character that once they had: if to that we should likewise lose our bad one; if we were stricter in our lives, more serious and constant in our labours, and studied more effectually to reform those of our communion, than to rail at theirs; if we took occasion to let them see that we love them, that we wish them no harm, but good; then we might hope, by the blessing of God, to lay the obligations to love and peace, to unity and concord before them, with such advantages, that some of them might open their eyes, and see at last upon how slight grounds they have now so long kept up such a wrangling, and made such a rent in the church, that both the power of religion in general, and the strength of the protestant religion, have suffered extremely by them.

Thus far I have carried a clerk through his parish, and all the several branches of his duty to his people. But that all this may be well gone about, and indeed as the foundation upon which all the other parts of the pastoral care may be well managed, he ought frequently to visit his whole parish from house to house; that so he may know them, and be known of them. This, I know, will seem a vast labour, especially in towns, where parishes are large; but that is no excuse for those in the

country, where they are generally small ; and if they are larger, the going this round will be the longer a doing ; yet an hour a day, twice or thrice a week, is no hard duty ; and this, in the compass of a year, will go a great way, even in a large parish. In these visits much time is not to be spent ; a short word for stirring them up to mind their souls, to make conscience of their ways, and to pray earnestly to God, may begin it, and almost end it ; after one has asked in what union and peace the neighbourhood lives, and inquired into their necessities, if they seem very poor, that so those to whom that care belongs may be put in mind, to see how they may be relieved. In this course of visiting, a minister will soon find out, if there are any truly good persons in his parish, after whom he must look with a more particular regard : since these are the excellent ones, in whom all his delight ought to be. For let their rank be ever so mean, if they are sincerely religious, and not hypocritical pretenders to it, who are vainly puffed up with some degrees of knowledge, and other outward appearances, he ought to consider them as the most valuable in the sight of God ; and indeed, as the chief part of his care ; for *a living dog is better than a dead lion*. I know this way of parochial visitation is so worn out, that, perhaps, neither priest nor people will be very desirous to see it taken up. It will put the one to labour and trouble, and bring the other under a closer inspection, which bad men will no ways desire, nor perhaps endure. But if this were put on the clergy by their bishops, and if they explained in a sermon, before they began it, the reasons and ends of doing it ; that would remove the prejudices which might arise against it. I confess this is an increase of labour, but that will seem no hard matter to such as have a right sense of their ordination vows, of the value of souls, and of the dignity of their function. If men had the spirit of their calling in them, and a due measure of flame and heat in carrying it on, labour in it would be rather a pleasure than a trouble. In all other professions, those who follow them labour in them all the year long, and are hard at their business every day in the week. All men that are well suited in a profession, that is agreeable to their genius and inclination, are really the easier and the better pleased, the more they are employed in it. Indeed there is no trade nor course of life, except ours, that does not take up the whole man : and shall ours only, that is the noblest of all others, and that has a certain subsistence fixed

upon it, and does not live by contingencies, and upon hopes, as all others do, make the labouring in our business an objection against any part of our duty? Certainly nothing can so much dispose the nation to think on the relieving the necessities of the many small livings, as the seeing the clergy setting about their business to purpose: this would, by the blessing of God, be a most effectual means of stopping the progress of atheism, and of the contempt that the clergy lies under; it would go a great way towards the healing our schism, and would be the chief step, that could possibly be made, towards the procuring to us such laws as are yet wanting to the completing our reformation, and the mending the condition of so many of our poor brethren, who are languishing in want, and under great straits.

There remains only somewhat to be added concerning the behaviour of the clergy towards one another. Those of a higher form in learning, dignity, and wealth, ought not to despise poor vicars and curates; but on the contrary, the poorer they are, they ought to pity and encourage them the more, since they are all of the same order, only the one are more happily placed than the others; they ought therefore to cherish those that are in worse circumstances, and encourage them to come often to them; they ought to lend them books, and to give them other assistances in order to their progress in learning. It is a bad thing to see a bishop behave himself superciliously towards any of his clergy; but it is intolerable in those of the same degree. The clergy ought to contrive ways to meet often together, to enter into a brotherly correspondence, and into the concerns one of another, both in order to their progress in knowledge, and for consulting together in all their affairs. This would be a means to cement them into one body; hereby they might understand what were amiss in the conduct of any in their division, and try to correct it either by private advices and endeavours, or by laying it before the bishop, by whose private labours, if his clergy would be assisting to him, and give him free and full informations of things, many disorders might be cured, without rising to a public scandal, or forcing him to extreme censures. It is a false pity in any of the clergy, who see their brethren running into ill courses, to look on and say nothing: it is a cruelty to the church, and may prove a cruelty to the person of whom they are so unseasonably tender: for things may be more easily corrected at first, before they have grown to be public, or

are hardened by habit and custom. Upon these accounts it is of great advantage, and may be matter of great edification to the clergy, to enter into a strict union together, to meet often, and to be helpful to one another: but if this should be made practicable, they must be extremely strict in those meetings to observe so exact a sobriety, that there might be no colour given to censure them, as if these were merry meetings, in which they allowed themselves great liberties. It were good, if they could be brought to meet to fast and pray: but if that is a strain too high for the present age, at least they must keep so far within bounds, that there may be no room for calumny. For a disorder upon any such occasion would give a wound of an extraordinary nature to the reputation of the whole clergy, when every one would bear a share of the blame, which perhaps belonged but to a few. Four or five such meetings in a summer would neither be a great charge, nor give much trouble: but the advantages that might arise out of them would be very sensible.

I have but one other advice to add, but it is of a thing of great consequence, though generally managed in so loose and so indifferent a manner, that I have some reason in charity to believe, that the clergy make very little reflection on what they do in it: and that is, in the testimonials that they sign in favour of those that come to be ordained. Many have confessed to myself, that they had signed these upon general reports, and importunity; though the testimonial bears personal knowledge. These are instead of the suffrages of the clergy, which in the primitive church were given before any were ordained. A bishop must depend upon them; for he has no other way to be certainly informed: and therefore as it is a lie, passed with the solemnity of hand and seal, to affirm any thing that is beyond one's own knowledge, so it is a lie made to God and the church; since the design of it is to procure orders. So that if a bishop, trusting to that, and being satisfied of the knowledge of one that brings it, ordains an unfit and unworthy man, they that signed it are deeply and chiefly involved in the guilt of his laying hands suddenly upon him: therefore every priest ought to charge his conscience in a deep particular manner, that so he may never testify for any one, unless he knows his life to be so regular, and believes his temper to be so good, that he does really judge him a person fit to be put in holy orders. These are all the rules that do occur to me at present.

In performing these several branches of the duty of a pastor, the trouble will not be great, if he is truly a good man, and delights in the service of God, and in doing acts of charity. The pleasure will be unspeakable; first, that of the conscience in this testimony that it gives, and the quiet and joy which arises from the sense of one's having done his duty: and then it can scarce be supposed but by all this some will be wrought on; some sinners will be reclaimed; bad men will grow good, and good men will grow better. And if a generous man feels, to a great degree, the pleasure of having delivered one from misery, and of making him easy and happy; how sovereign a joy must it be to a man that believes there is another life, to see that he has been an instrument to rescue some from endless misery, and to further others in the way to everlasting happiness! and the more instances he sees of this, the more do his joys grow upon him. This makes life happy, and death joyful to such a priest; for he is not terrified with those words, *Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward*: he knows his reward shall be full, pressed down, and running over. He is but too happy in those spiritual children, whom he has begot in Christ; he looks after those as the chief part of his care, and as the principal of his flock, and is so far from aspiring, that it is not without some uneasiness that he leaves them, if he is commanded to arise to some higher post in the church.

The troubles of this life, the censures of bad men, and even the prospect of a persecution, are no dreadful things to him that has this seal of his ministry; and this comfort within him, that he has not *laboured in vain*, nor *run and fought as one that beats the air*; he sees the travail of his soul, and is satisfied when he finds that *God's work prospers in his hand*. This comforts him in his sad reflections on his own past sins, that he has been an instrument of advancing God's honour, of saving souls, and of propagating his gospel; since to have saved one soul is worth a man's coming into the world, and richly worth the labours of his whole life. Here is a subject that might be easily prosecuted by many warm and lively figures: but I now go on to the last article relating to this matter.

CHAP. IX.

Concerning preaching.

THE world naturally runs to extremes in every thing. If one sect or body of men magnify preaching too much, another carries that to another extreme of decrying it as much. It is certainly a noble and a profitable exercisc, if rightly gone about, of great use both to priest and people, by obliging the one to much study and labour, and by setting before the other full and copious discoveries of divine matters, opening them clearly, and pressing them weightily upon them. It has also now gained so much esteem in the world, that a clergyman cannot maintain his credit, nor bring his people to a constant attendance on the worship of God, unless he is happy in these performances.

I will not run out into the history of preaching, to shew how late it was before it was brought into the church, and by what steps it grew up to the pitch it is now at : how long it was before the Roman church used it, and in how many different shapes it has appeared. Some of the first patterns we have are the best : for as Tully began the Roman eloquence, and likewise ended it, no man being able to hold up to the pitch to which he raised it ; so St. Basil and St. Chrysostom brought preaching from the dry pursuing of allegories that had vitiated Origen, and from the excessive affectation of figures and rhetoric that appears in Nazianzen, to a due simplicity ; a native force and beauty ; having joined to the plainness of a clear but noble style, the strength of reason, and the softness of persuasion. Some were disgusted at this plainness, and they brought in a great deal of art into the composition of sermons ; mystical applications of scripture grew to be better liked than clear texts ; an accumulation of figures, a cadence in the periods, a playing upon the sounds of words, a loftiness of epithets, and often an obscurity of expression, were according to the different tastes of the several ages run into. Preaching has passed through many different forms among us since the reformation. But without flattering the present age, or any persons now alive, too much, it must be confessed that it is brought of late to a much greater perfection than it was ever before at among us. It is certainly brought nearer the pattern that St. Chrysostom has set, or perhaps carried beyond it. Our

language is much refined, and we have returned to the plain notions of simple and genuine rhetoric.

We have so vast a number of excellent performances in print, that if a man has but a right understanding of religion, and a true relish of good sense, he may easily furnish himself this way. The impertinent way of dividing texts is laid aside, the needless setting out of the originals, and the vulgar version, is worn out. The trifling shows of learning in many quotations of passages, that very few could understand, do no more flat the auditory. Pert wit and luscious eloquence have lost their relish. So that sermons are reduced to the plain opening the meaning of the text, in a few short illustrations of its coherence with what goes before and after, and of the parts of which it is composed ; to that is joined the clear stating of such propositions as arise out of it, in their nature, truth, and reasonableness, by which the hearers may form clear notions of the several parts of religion, such as are best suited to their capacities and apprehensions : to all which applications are added, tending to the reproving, directing, encouraging, or comforting the hearers, according to the several occasions that are offered.

This is indeed all that can truly be intended in preaching, to make some portions of scripture to be rightly understood ; to make those truths contained in them to be more fully apprehended ; and then to lay the matter home to the consciences of the hearers, so directing all to some good and practical end. In the choice of the text, care is to be taken not to choose texts that seem to have humour in them ; or that must be long wrought upon, before they are understood. The plainer a text is in itself, the sooner it is cleared, and the fuller it is of matter of instruction ; and therefore such ought to be chosen to common auditories. Many will remember the text, that remember nothing else ; therefore such a choice should be made, as may at least put a weighty and speaking sentence of the scriptures upon the memories of the people. A sermon should be made for a text, and not a text found out for a sermon ; for to give our discourses weight, it should appear that we are led to them by our texts : such sermons will probably have much more efficacy than a general discourse, before which a text seems only to be read as a decent introduction, but to which no regard is had in the progress of it. Great care should be also had, both in opening the text, and of that which arises from it, to illus-

trate them by concurrent passages of scripture. A little of this ought to be in every sermon, and but a little ; for the people are not to be overcharged with too much of it at a time ; and this ought to be done with judgment, and not made a bare concordance-exercise, of citing scriptures, that have the same words, though not to the same purpose, and in the same sense. A text being opened, then the point upon which the sermon is to run is to be opened ; and it will be the better heard and understood, if there is but one point in a sermon ; so that one head, and only one, is well stated, and fully set out. In this, great regard is to be had to the nature of the auditory, that so the point explained may be in some measure proportioned to them. Too close a thread of reason, too great an abstraction of thought, too sublime and too metaphysical a strain, are suitable to very few auditories, if to any at all.

Things must be put in a clear light, and brought out in as short periods, and in as plain words as may be. The reasons of them must be made as sensible to the people as is possible ; as in virtues and vices, their tendencies and effects, their being suitable or unsuitable to our powers, to both souls and bodies, to the interests of this life as well as the next ; and the good or evil that they do to human societies, families, and neighbourhoods, ought to be fully and frequently opened. In setting these forth, such a measure is to be kept, that the hearers may perceive that things are not strained, in the way of a declamation, into forced characters ; but that they are set out, as truly they are, without making them seem better by imaginary perfections, or worse by an undue aggravation. For the carrying those matters beyond the plain observation of mankind, makes that the whole is looked on as a piece of rhetoric ; the preacher seeming to intend rather to shew his skill, in raising his subject too high, or running it down too low, than to lay before them the native consequences of things ; and that which upon reflection they may be all able to perceive is really true. Virtue is so good in itself, that it needs no false paint to make it look better ; and vice is so bad, that it can never look so ugly, as when shewed in its own natural colours. So that an undue sublime in such descriptions does hurt, and can do no good.

When the explanatory part of the sermon is over, the application comes next : and here great judgment must be used, to make it fall the heaviest, and lie the longest, upon such parti-

culars as may be within the compass of the auditory. Directions concerning a high devotion, to a stupid ignorant company; or of generosity and bounty, to very poor people; against pride and ambition, to such as are dull and low-minded; are ill suited, and so must have little effect upon them: therefore care must be taken that the application be useful and proper; that it make the hearers apprehend some of their sins and defects, and see how to perform their duty; that it awaken them to it, and direct them in it: and therefore the most common sins, such as men's neglecting their duty to God, in the several branches of it; their setting their hearts inordinately upon the world; their lying in discourse, but chiefly in bargainings; their evil-speaking, and their hatred and malice, ought to be very often brought in. Some one or other of these ought to be in every application that is made, by which they may see, that the whole design of religion lies against them. Such particular sins, swearing, drunkenness, or lewdness, as abound in any place, must likewise be frequently brought in here. The application must be clear and short, very weighty, and free of every thing that looks like the affectations of wit and eloquence; here the preacher must be all heart and soul, designing the good of his people. The whole sermon is directed to this: therefore, as it is fit that the chief point which a sermon drives at should come often over and over, that so the hearers may never lose sight of it, but keep it still in view; so in the application, the text must be shewed to speak it; all the parts of the explanation must come in to enforce it: the application must be opened in the several views that it may have, but those must be chiefly insisted on that are most suitable both to the capacities and the circumstances of the people. And in conclusion, all ought to be summed up in a weighty period or two; and some other signal passage of the scriptures relating to it may be sought for, that so the matter may be left upon the auditory in the solemnest manner possible.

Thus I have led a preacher through the composition of his sermon; I will next lay before him some particulars relating to it. The shorter sermons are, they are generally both better heard, and better remembered. The custom of an hour's length forces many preachers to trifle away much of the time, and to spin out their matter, so as to hold out. So great a length does also flat the hearers, and tempt them to sleep; especially when,

as is usual, the first part of the sermon is languid and heavy. In half an hour a man may lay open his matter in its full extent, and cut off those superfluities which come in only to lengthen the discourse: and he may hope to keep up the attention of his people all the while. As to the style, sermons ought to be very plain; the figures must be easy, not mean, but noble, and brought in upon design to make the matter better understood. The words in a sermon must be simple and in common use; not savouring of the schools, nor above the understanding of the people. All long periods, such as carry two or three different thoughts in them, must be avoided; for few hearers can follow or apprehend these: niceties of style are lost before a common auditory. But if an easy simplicity of style should run through the whole composition, it should take place most of all in the explanatory part; for the thing being there offered to be understood, it should be stripped of all garnishing: definitions should not be offered in the terms, or method, that logic directs. In short, a preacher is to fancy himself as in the room of the most unlearned man in his whole parish; and therefore he must put such parts of his discourse as he would have all understand in so plain a form of words, that it may not be beyond the meanest of them. This he will certainly study to do, if his desire is to edify them, rather than to make them admire himself as a learned and high-spoken man.

But in the applicatory part, if he has a true taste of eloquence, and is a master at it, he is to employ it all in giving sometimes such tender touches, as may soften, and deeper gashes, such as may awaken his hearers. A vain eloquence here is very ill placed; for if that can be borne any where, it is in illustrating the matter; but all must be grave, where one would persuade: the most natural, but the most sensible expressions come in best here. Such an eloquence as makes the hearers look grave, and as it were out of countenance, is the properest. That which makes them look lively, and as it were smile upon one another, may be pretty; but it only tickles the imagination, and pleases the ear: whereas that which goes to the heart, and wounds it, makes the hearer rather look down, and turn his thoughts inward upon himself. For it is certain that a sermon, the conclusion whereof makes the auditory look pleased, and sets them all a talking one with another, was either not right spoken, or not right heard; it has been fine, and has probably delighted

the congregation, rather than edified it. But that sermon that makes every one go away silent and grave, and hastening to be alone, to meditate or pray over the matter of it in secret, has had its true effect.

He that has a taste and genius for eloquence must improve it by reading Quintilian, and Tully's books of Oratory, and by observing the spirit and method of Tully's Orations: or if he can enter into Demosthenes, there he will see a much better pattern, there being a simplicity, a shortness, and a swiftness and rapidity in him, that could not be heard without putting his auditors into a great commotion. All our modern books upon those subjects are so far short of those great originals, that they can bear no comparison: yet F. Rapin's little book of Eloquence is by much the best, only he is too short. Tully has so fully opened all the topics of invention, that a man who has read him will, if he has any invention of his own, and if he knows thoroughly his matter, rather have too much than too little in his view, upon every subject that he treats. This is a noble study, and of great use to such as have judgment to manage it; for artificial eloquence, without a flame within, is like artificial poetry; all its productions are forced and unnatural, and in a great measure ridiculous. Art helps and guides nature; but if one was not born with this flame, art will only spoil him, make him luscious and redundant. To such persons, and indeed to all that are not masters of the body of divinity, and of the scriptures, I should much rather recommend the using other men's sermons, than the making any of their own. But in the choice of these, great judgment must be used: one must not take an author that is too much above himself; for by that, compared with his ordinary conversation, it will but too evidently appear, that he cannot be the author of his own sermons; and that will make both him and them lose too much of their weight. He ought also to put those printed sermons out of that strength and closeness of style, which looks very well in print, but is too stiff, especially for a common auditory. He may reverse the method a little, and shorten the explanations, that so he may retain all that is practical; and that a man may form himself to preaching, he ought to take some of the best models, and try what he can do upon a text handled by them, without reading them, and then compare his work with theirs; this will more sensibly, and without putting him to the blush, model him to imitate, or, if he

can, to excel the best patterns. And by this method, if he will restrain himself for some time, and follow it close, he may come to be able to go without such crutches, and to work without patterns: till then, I should advise all to make use of other men's sermons, rather than to make any of their own.

The nation has got into so good a taste of sermons, from the vast number of those excellent ones that are in print, that a mean composition will be very ill heard; and therefore it is an unseasonable piece of vanity for any to offer their own crudities, till they have well digested and ripened them. I wish the majesty of the pulpit were more looked to; and that no sermons were offered from thence, but such as should make the hearers both the better and the wiser; the more knowing, and the more serious.

In the delivering of sermons, a great composure of gesture and behaviour is necessary, to give them weight and authority: extremes are bad here, as in every thing else; some affect a light and flippant behaviour; and others think that wry faces and a tone in the voice will set off the matter. Grave and composed looks, and a natural, but distinct pronounciation, will always have the best effects. The great rule, which the masters of rhetoric press much, can never be enough remembered; that to make a man speak well, and pronounce with a right emphasis, he ought thoroughly to understand all that he says, be fully persuaded of it, and bring himself to have those affections, which he desires to infuse into others. He that is inwardly persuaded of the truth of what he says, and that has a concern about it in his mind, will pronounce with a natural vehemence, that is far more lively than all the strains that art can lead him to. An orator, if we hearken to them, must be an honest man, and speak always on the side of truth, and study to feel all that he says; and then he will speak it so as to make others feel it likewise. And therefore such as read their sermons ought to practise reading much in private, and read aloud, that so their own ear and sense may guide them, to know where to raise or quicken, soften or sweeten their voice, and when to give an articulation of authority, or of conviction; where to pause, and where to languish. We plainly see by the stage, what a force there is in pronounciation: the best compositions are murdered, if ill spoken; and the worst are acceptable, when well said. In tragedies rightly pronounced and acted, though we know that all

is fable and fiction, the tender parts do so melt the company, that tears cannot be stopped, even by those who laugh at themselves for it. This shews the power of apt words and a just pronunciation: but because this depends, in a great measure, upon the present temper of him that speaks, and the lively disposition in which he is, therefore he ought by much previous seriousness, and by earnest prayer to God, to endeavour to raise his mind to as warm a sense of the things he is to speak of, as possible he can, that so his sermons may make deep impressions on his hearers.

This leads me to consider the difference that is between the reading and speaking of sermons. Reading is peculiar to this nation, and is endured in no other. It has indeed made that our sermons are more exact, and so it has produced to us many volumes of the best that are extant; but after all, though some few read so happily, pronounce so truly, and enter so entirely into those affections which they recommend, that in them we see both the correctness of reading, and the seriousness of speaking sermons, yet every one is not so happy: some by hanging their heads perpetually over their notes, by blundering as they read, and by a cursory running over them, do so lessen the matter of their sermons, that as they are generally read with very little life or affection, so they are heard with as little regard or esteem. Those who read ought certainly to be at a little more pains, than for the most part they are, to read true, to pronounce with an emphasis, and to raise their heads, and to direct their eyes to their hearers: and if they practised more alone the just way of reading, they might deliver their sermons with much more advantage. Man is a low sort of creature; he does not, nay, nor the greater part cannot, consider things in themselves, without those little seasonings, that must recommend them to their affections. That a discourse be heard with any life, it must be spoken with some; and the looks and motions of the eye do carry in them such additions to what is said, that where these do not at all concur, it has not all the force upon them that otherwise it might have: besides that the people, who are too apt to censure the clergy, are easily carried into an obvious reflection on reading, that it is an effect of laziness.

In pronouncing sermons, there are two ways; the one is when a whole discourse is got by heart, and delivered word for word, as it was writ down. This is so vast a labour, that it is

scarce possible that a man can be able to hold up long to it: yet there is an advantage even in this to beginners; it fills their memories with good thoughts, and regular meditations: and when they have got some of the most important of their sermons by heart in so exact a manner, they are thereby furnished with topics for discourse. And therefore there are at least two different subjects, on which I wish all preachers would be at the pains to form sermons well in their memories: the one is the grounds of the covenant of grace, of both sides, God's offers to us in Christ, and the conditions that he has required of us, in order to our reconciliation with him. This is so important a point, in the whole course of our ministry, that no man ought to be to seek in the opening or explaining it: and therefore, that he may be ripe in it, he ought to have it all rightly laid in his memory, not only as to the notions of it, but to have such a lively description and illustration of it all, as to be able to speak of it sensibly, fully, and easily upon all occasions. Another subject, in which every minister ought also to be well furnished, is concerning death and judgment; that so when he visits the sick, and, as is common, that the neighbours come in, he may be able to make a grave exhortation, in weighty and fit words, upon those heads. Less than this, I think, no priest ought to have in his memory. But indeed, the more sermons a young beginner gets by heart, he has still thereby the more discourse ready upon those heads; for though the whole contexture of the sermon will stick no longer than he has occasion for it, yet a great deal will stay with him: the idea of the whole, with the most important parts of it, will remain much longer.

But now I come to propose another method of preaching, by which a priest may be prepared, after a right view of his matter, a true understanding his text, and a digesting of his thoughts upon it into their natural and proper order, to deliver these both more easily to himself, and with a better effect both upon himself and his hearers. To come at this, he must be for some years at a great deal of pains to prepare himself to it; yet when that is over, the labour of all the rest of his life, as to those performances, will become very easy and very pleasant to him. The preparations to this must be these: first, he must read the scriptures very exactly; he must have great portions of them by heart; and he must also, in reading them, make a short concordance of them in his memory; that is, he must lay together

such passages as belong to the same matter; to consider how far they agree or help to illustrate one another, and how the same thing is differently expressed in them; and what various ideas or ways of recommending a thing rise out of this concordance. Upon this a man must exercise himself much, draw notes of it, and digest it well in his thoughts. Then he must be ready with the whole body of divinity in his head; he must know what parts come in as objections to be answered, where difficulties lie, how one part coheres with another, and gives it light. He must have this very current in his memory, that he may have things lie before him in one full view; and upon this, he is also to work, by making tables, or using such other helps as may lay matters clearly before him. He is, more particularly, to lay before him a system of morality, of all virtues and vices, and of all the duties that arise out of the several relations of mankind; that he may have this matter very full in his eye, and know what are the scriptures that belong to all the parts of it: he is also to make a collection of all such thoughts, as he finds either in the books of the ancient philosophers, (where Seneca will be of great use to him,) or of Christian authors: he is to separate such thoughts as are forced, and that do become rather a strained declamation made only to please, than a solid discourse designed to persuade. All these he must gather, or at least such a number of them, as may help him to form a distinct notion of that matter, so as to be able both to open it clearly, and to press it with affection and vehemence.

These are the materials that must be laid together; the practice in using them comes next: he then that would prepare himself to be a preacher in this method, must accustom himself to talk freely to himself, to let his thoughts flow from him, especially when he feels an edge and heat upon his mind; for then happy expressions will come in his mouth, things will ventilate and open themselves to him, as he talks them thus in a soliloquy to himself. He must also be writing many essays upon all sorts of subjects; for by writing he will bring himself to a correctness both in thinking and in speaking: and thus by a hard practice for two or three years, a man may render himself such a master in this matter, that he can never be surprised, nor will new thoughts ever dry up upon him. He must talk over to himself the whole body of divinity, and accustom himself to explain, and prove, to clear objections, and to apply every

part of it to some practical use. He must go through human life, in all the ranks and degrees of it, and talk over all the duties of these; consider the advantages or disadvantages in every one of them, their relation to one another, the morality of actions, the common virtues and vices of mankind; more particularly the duties of Christians, their obligations to meekness and humility, to forgive injuries, to relieve the poor, to bear the cross, to be patient and contented in every state of life, to pray much and fervently, to rejoice ever in God, and to be always praising him, and most particularly to be applying seriously to God through Jesus Christ, for mercy and pardon, and for his grace and Spirit; to be worshipping him devoutly in public, and to be delighting frequently to commemorate the death of Christ, and to partake of the benefits of it. All these, I say, he must talk over and over again to himself; he must study to give his thoughts all the heat and flight about them that he can: and if, in these his meditations, happy thoughts, and noble and tender expressions, do at any time offer themselves, he must not lose them, but write them down; and in his pronouncing over such discourses to himself, he must observe what words sound harsh, and agree ill together; for there is a music in speaking, as well as in singing; which a man, though not otherwise critical in sounds, will soon discover. By a very few years practice of two or three of such soliloquies a day, chiefly in the morning when the head is clearest, and the spirits are liveliest, a man will contract a great easiness both in thinking and speaking.

But the rule I have reserved last is the most necessary of all, and without it all the rest will never do the business: it is this; that a man must have in himself a deep sense of the truth and power of religion; he must have a life and flame in his thoughts, with relation to those subjects: he must have felt in himself those things, which he intends to explain and recommend to others. He must observe narrowly the motions of his own mind, the good and bad effects that the several sorts of objects he has before him, and affections he feels within him, have upon him; that so he may have a lively heat in himself, when he speaks of them; and that he may speak in so sensible a manner, that it may be almost felt that he speaks from his heart. There is an authority in the simplest things that can be said, when they carry visible characters of genuineness in them. Now if a

man can carry on this method, and by much meditation and prayer draw down divine influences, which are always to be expected, when a man puts himself in the way of them, and prepares himself for them; he will often feel, that while he is musing a fire is kindled within him, and then he will speak with authority and without constraint; his thoughts will be true, and his expressions free and easy: sometimes this fire will carry him, as it were, out of himself; and yet without any thing that is frantic or enthusiastical. Discourses brought forth with a lively spirit and heat, where a composed gesture, and the proper motions of the eye and countenance, and the due modulations of the voice concur, will have all the effect that can be expected from any thing that is below immediate inspiration: and as this will be of use to the hearers, so it will be of vast use to the preacher himself, to oblige him to keep his heart always in good tune and temper; not to suffer irregular or forbidden appetites, passions, or projects to possess his mind: these will both divert him from going on in the course of meditation, in which a man must continue many years, till all his thoughts are put in order, polished, and fixed; they will make him likewise speak much against the grain, with an aversion that will be very sensible to himself, if not to his hearers: if he has guilt upon him, if his conscience is reproaching him, and if any ill practices are putting a damp upon that good sense of things, that makes his thoughts sparkle upon other occasions, and gives him an air and authority, a tone of assurance, and a freedom of expression.

Such a method as I have been opening has had great success with all those that I have known to have tried it. And though every one has not that swiftness of imagination, nor that clearness of expression, that others may have, so that in this men may differ as much as they do in their written compositions; yet every man by this method may rise far above that which he could ever have attained to any other way: it will make even exact compositions easier to him, and him much readier and freer at them. But great care must be used by him, before he suffers himself to speak with the liberty here aimed at in public; he must try himself at smaller excursions from his fixed thoughts, especially in the applicatory part, where flame and life are more necessary, and where a mistaken word or an unfinished period are less observed and sooner forgiven, than in

the explanatory part, where men ought to speak more severely. And as one succeeds in some short excursions, he may give himself a further scope, and so, by a long practice, he will at last arrive at so great an easiness both in thinking and speaking, that a very little meditation will serve to lay open a text to him, with all the matter that belongs to it, together with the order in which it ought to be both explained and applied. And when a man has attained to a tolerable degree in this, he is then the master of his business; he is master also of much time, and of many noble thoughts, and schemes that will arise out of them.

This I shall prosecute no further; for if this opening of it does not excite the reader to follow it a little, no enlargements I can offer upon it will work upon him. But to return to preaching, and so conclude this chapter. He that intends truly to preach the gospel, and not himself; he that is more concerned to do good to others, than to raise his own fame, or to procure a following to himself, and that makes this the measure of all his meditations and sermons, that he may put things in the best light, and recommend them with the most advantage to his people; that reads the scriptures much, and meditates often upon them; that prays earnestly to God for direction in his labours, and for a blessing upon them; that directs his chief endeavours to the most important, and most indispensable, as well as the most undeniable duties of religion; and chiefly to the inward reformation of his hearers' hearts, which will certainly draw all other lesser matters after it; and that does not spend his time nor his zeal upon lesser or disputable points; this man so made, and so moulded, cannot miscarry in his work: he will certainly succeed to some degree; *the word spoken by him shall not return again*: he shall have his crown and his reward from his labours: and to say all that can be said, in one word, with St. Paul, *he shall both save himself, and them that hear him.*

THE CONCLUSION.

I HAVE now gone over all that seemed to me most important upon this head, of the pastoral care, with as much shortness and clearness as I could; so now I am to conclude. The discourse may justly seem imperfect, since I say nothing concerning the duties incumbent on bishops. But I will upon this occasion say very little on that head. The post I am in

gives me a right to teach priests and deacons their duty ; therefore I thought, that without any great presumption I might venture on it : but I have been too few years in the higher order, to take upon me to teach them, from whom I shall ever be ready to learn. This is certain, that since, as was formerly said, the inferior orders subsist in the superior, bishops must still be under all the obligations of priests : they are then, take the matter at lowest, bound to live, to labour, and to preach as well as they. But why are they raised to a higher rank of dignity and order, an increase of authority, and an extent of cure ? and why have Christian princes and states given them great revenues, and an accession of secular honours ? All this must certainly import their obligation to labour more eminently, and to lay themselves out more entirely in the work of the gospel ; in which, if the greatest encouragements and assistances, the highest dignities and privileges belong to them ; then, according to our Saviour's example and decision, *who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister*, and who declared, that *he who is first shall be last, and he who is the greatest must be the servant of all* ; then, I say, the higher that any are raised in this ministry, they ought to lay themselves out the more entirely in it, and labour the more abundantly. And as our obligations to Christ and his church tie us to a greater zeal and diligence, and to a more constant application of our care and thoughts ; so the secular supports of our honours and revenues were given us, to enable us to go through with that extent of care and jurisdiction that lies upon us. We are not only watchmen to watch over the flock, but likewise over the watchmen themselves. We keep the door of the sanctuary, and will have much to answer for, if through our remissness or feeble easiness, if by trusting the examination of those we ordain to others, and yielding to intercession and importunity, we bring any into the service of the church, who are not duly qualified for it. In this we must harden ourselves, and become inexorable, if we will not partake in other men's sins, and in the mischiefs that these may bring upon the church. It is a false pity, and a cruel compassion, if we suffer any considerations to prevail upon us in this matter, but those which the gospel directs. The longer that we know them before we ordain them, the more that we sift them, and the greater variety of trials through which we may make them pass, we do thereby both secure the quiet of our own

consciences the more, as well as the dignity of holy things, and the true interest of religion and the church : for these two interests must never be separated ; they are but one and the same in themselves ; and *what God has joined together, we must never set asunder.*

We must be setting constantly before our clergy their obligations to the several parts of their duty ; we must lay these upon them, when we institute or collate them to churches, in the solemnest manner, and with the weightiest words we can find. We must then lay the importance of the care of souls before them, and adjure them, as they will answer to God in the great day, in which we must appear to witness against them, that they will seriously consider and observe their ordination-vows, and that they will apply themselves wholly to that one thing. We must keep an eye upon them continually, and be applying reproofs, exhortations, and encouragements, as occasion offers : we must enter into all their concerns, and espouse every interest of that part of the church that is assigned to their care : we must see them as oft as we can, and encourage them to come frequently to us ; and must live in all things with them, as a father with his children. And that every thing we say to stir them up to their duty may have its due weight, we must take care so to order ourselves, that they may evidently see that we are careful to do our own. We must enter into all the parts of the worship of God with them ; not thinking ourselves too good for any piece of service that may be done ; visiting the sick, admitting poor and indigent persons, or such as are troubled in mind, to come to us ; preaching oft, catechising and confirming frequently ; and living in all things like men that study to *fulfil their ministry, and to do the work of evangelists.*

There has been an opinion of late, much favoured by some great men in our church, that the bishop is the sole pastor of his whole diocese ; that the care of all the souls is singly in him, and that all the incumbents in churches are only his curates in the different parts of his parish, which was the ancient designation of his diocese. I know there are a great many passages brought from antiquity to favour this ; I will not enter into the question, no not so far as to give my own opinion of it. This is certain, that such as are persuaded of it ought thereby to consider themselves as under very great and strict obligations to constant labour and diligence ; otherwise it will be thought that they

only favour this opinion, because it increases their authority, without considering that necessary consequence that follows upon it.

But I will go no further on this subject at this time, having said so much only, that I may not seem to fall under that heavy censure of our Saviour's with relation to the scribes and Pharisees, *that they did bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, upon others; and laid them upon men's shoulders, when they themselves would not move them with one of their fingers.* I must leave the whole matter with my readers. I have now laid together with great simplicity what has been the chief subject of my thoughts for above thirty years. I was formed to them by a bishop that had the greatest elevation of soul, the largest compass of knowledge, the most mortified and most heavenly disposition, that I ever yet saw in mortal; that had the greatest parts as well as virtues, with the perfectest humility, that I ever saw in man; and had a sublime strain in preaching, with so grave a gesture, and such a majesty both of thought, of language, and of pronunciation, that I never once saw a wandering eye where he preached; and have seen whole assemblies often melt in tears before him; and of whom I can say, with great truth, that in a free and frequent conversation with him for above two and twenty years, I never knew him say an idle word, that had not a direct tendency to edification: and I never once saw him in any other temper, but that which I wished to be in, in the last minutes of my life. For that pattern which I saw in him, and for that conversation which I had with him, I know how much I have to answer to God: and though my reflecting on that which I knew in him gives me just cause of being deeply humbled in myself, and before God; yet I feel no more sensible pleasure in any thing, than in going over in my thoughts all that I saw and observed in him.

I have also another reason, that has determined me at this time to prepare this discourse, and to offer it to the public; from the present posture of our affairs. We are now brought very near the greatest crisis that ever church or nation had: and as on the one hand, if God should so far punish us for our sins, for our contempt of his gospel, and neglect of our duties, as to deliver us over to the rage of our enemies, we have nothing to look for but a persecution more dreadful than any is in history: so if God hears our prayers, and gives us a happy issue out of all

those dangers, with which the malice of our enemies threatens us; we have in view the greatest prospect of a blessed and lasting settlement, that even our wishes can propose to us. Now nothing can so certainly avert the one, or prepare us to glorify God in it, if he in his justice and wisdom should call us to a fiery trial of our faith and patience; as the serious minding of our functions, of our duties and obligations, the confessing of our sins, and the correcting of our errors. We shall be very unfit to suffer for our religion, much less to die for it, and very little able to endure the hardships of persecution, if our consciences are reproaching us all the while, that we have procured these things to ourselves; and that by the ill use of our prosperity, and other advantages, we have kindled a fire to consume us. But as we have good reason from the present state of affairs, as well as from the many eminent deliverances, and happy providences, which have of late, in so signal a manner, watched over and protected us, to hope that God, according to the riches of his mercy, and for the glory of his great name, will hear the prayers that many good souls offer up, rather than the cry of those abominations that are still among us: so nothing can so certainly hasten on the fixing of our tranquillity, and the completing our happiness, as our lying often between the porch and the altar, and interceding with God for our people; and our giving ourselves wholly to the ministry of the word of God, and to prayer. These being then the surest means, both to procure and to establish to us all those great and glorious things that we pray and hope for; this seemed to me a very proper time to publish a discourse of this nature.

But that which made it an act of obedience, as well as zeal, was the authority of my most reverend metropolitan; who, I have reason to believe, employs his time and thoughts chiefly to consider what may yet be wanting to give our church a greater beauty and perfection; and what are the most proper means both of purifying and uniting us. To which I thought nothing could so well prepare the way, as the offering to the public a plain and full discourse of the Pastoral Care, and of every thing relating to it. His grace approved of this, and desired me to set about it: upon these motives I writ it, with all the simplicity and freedom that I thought the subject required, and sent it to him: by whose particular approbation I publish it, as I writ it at his direction.

There is indeed one of my motives that I have not yet men-

tioned, and on which I cannot enlarge so fully as I well might. But while we have such an invaluable and unexampled blessing in the persons of those princes whom God hath set over us; if all the considerations which arise out of the deliverances that God has given us by their means, of the protection we enjoy under them, and of the great hopes we have of them; if, I say, all this does not oblige us to set about the reforming of every thing that may be amiss or defective among us, to study much, and to labour hard; to lead strict and exemplary lives, and so to stop the mouths and overcome the prejudices of all that divide from us; this will make us look like a nation cast off and *forsaken of God*, which is *nigh unto cursing*, and *whose end is burning*. We have reason to conclude, that our present blessings are the last essays of God's goodness to us; and that, if we bring forth no fruit under these, the next sentence shall be, *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?* These things lie heavy on my thoughts continually, and have all concurred to draw this treatise from me; which I have writ with all the sincerity of heart, and purity of intention, that I should have had, if I had known that I had been to die at the conclusion of it, and to answer for it to God.

To him I humbly offer it up, together with my most earnest prayers, that the design here so imperfectly offered at may become truly effectual, and have its full progress and accomplishment; which whensoever I shall see, I shall then with joy say, *Nunc dimittis, &c.*

CHAP. X.

Of presentations to benefices, and simony.

I DO not intend to treat of this matter, as it is a part of our law; but leaving that to the gentlemen of another robe, I shall content myself with offering an historical account of the progress of it, with the sense that the ancient church had of it, together with such reflections as will arise out of that.

At first the whole body of the clergy, in every city, parish, or diocese, was as a family under the conduct and authority of the bishop; who assigned to every one of his presbyters their peculiar district, and gave him a proper maintenance out of the stock of the oblations of the faithful. None were ordained but by the approbation, or rather the nomination of the people, the bishop

being to examine into the worth and qualifications of the persons so nominated. In the first ages, which were times of persecution, it is not to be supposed that ambition or corruption could have any great influence, while a man in holy orders was as it were put in the front, and exposed to the first fury of the persecutors. So that what Tertullian says^f on this head will be easily believed, “that those who presided over them were first “tried; having obtained that honour, not by paying a price for “it, but by the testimony that was given of them; for the things “of God were not purchased by money;” he alluding probably to the methods used by the heathens to arrive at their pontifical dignities.

But as soon as wealth and dignity was, by the bounty of Christian emperors, made an appendix to the sacred function, then we find great complaints made of disorders in elections, and of partiality in ordinations, on which we see severe reflections made by the best men both in the eastern and western churches. They not only condemned the purchasing elections and holy orders with money, but all the train of solicitations and intercessions, with all flattery and obsequious courtship in order to those things.

They indeed laid the name of simony chiefly on the purchasing of orders by money, which was attempted by Simon of Samaria, commonly called Simon Magus; but they brought other precedents to shew how far they carried this matter. Balaam’s hire of divination, Gehazi’s going after Naaman for a present, and Jeroboam’s making priests of those *who filled his hands*^g, are precedents much insisted on by them, to carry the matter beyond the case of a bargain beforehand; every thing in the way of practice to arrive at holy orders was all equally condemned. When things were reduced into methodical divisions, they reckoned a threefold simony; that of the hand when money was given, that of the mouth by flatteries, and that of service, when men by domestic attendance and other employments did, by a temporal drudgery, obtain the spiritual dignity.

Chrysostom^h expresses this thus: “If you do not give money, “but instead of money, if you flatter; if you set others at work, “and use other artifices, you are as guilty.” Of all these he adds, that “as St. Peter said to Simon, *Thy money perish with thee*, so may thy ambition perish with thee.” St. Jeromⁱ

^f Apology.

^g 2 Chron. xiii. 9.

^h Hom. in Acta Ap.

ⁱ In Esai.

says, “ We see many reckon orders as a benefice, and do not seek
 “ for persons who may be as pillars erected in the house of God,
 “ and may be most useful in the service of the church ; but they
 “ do prefer those for whom they have a particular affection, or
 “ whose obsequiousness has gained their favour, or for whom
 “ some of the great men have interceded ; not to mention the
 “ worst of all, those who, by the presents they make them,
 “ purchase that dignity.”

A corruption began to creep into the church in the fifth century, of ordaining vagrant clerks, without any peculiar title ; of whom we find St. Jerom oft complaining. This was condemned by the council of Chalcedon in a most solemn manner^k. “ The orders of all who were ordained presbyters, deacons, or
 “ in the inferior degrees, without a special title either in the
 “ city, in some village, some chapel or monastery, are declared
 “ null and void : and, to the reproach of those who so ordained
 “ them, they are declared incapable of performing any function.” But how sacred soever the authority of this council was, it did not cure this great evil, from which many more have sprung.

A practice rose, not long after this, which opened a new scene. Men began to build churches on their own grounds, at their own charges, and to endow these ; and they were naturally the masters, and, in the true signification of the Roman word, the patrons of them. All the churches in the first matricula were to be served by persons named to them by the bishop, and were to be maintained by him out of the revenue of the church ; but these were put upon another foot, and belonged to the proprietors of the ground, to the builders, and the endowers^l. They were also to offer to the bishop a clerk to serve in them. It seems they began to think, that the bishop was bound to ordain all such as were named by them : but Justinian^m settled this matter by a law ; for he provided that the “ patriarch should
 “ not be obliged to ordain such as were nominated by the patron,
 “ unless he judged them fit for it :” the reason given is, that
 “ the holy things of God might not be profanedⁿ.” It seems he had this in his eye, when by another law he condemned those who received any thing for such a nomination ; for so I understand the *patrocinium ordinationis*.

The elections to most sees lay in many hands ; and to keep

^k Can. 6.

^l Fundus, ædificatio, et dos.

^m Novel. 57. c. 2.

ⁿ Nov. 6. c. 1.

out not only corruption, but partiality, from having a share in them, he by a special law required, “ that all persons, seculars
 “ as well as ecclesiastics, who had a vote in elections, should
 “ join an oath to their suffrage, that they were neither moved to
 “ it by any gift, promise, friendship, or favour, or by any other
 “ affection, but that they gave their vote upon their knowledge
 “ of the merits of the person^o.” It will easily be imagined that
 no rule of this kind could be much regarded in corrupt ages.

Gregory the Great is very copious in lamenting these disorders, and puts always the threefold division of simony together, *manus, oris, et ministerii*^p. Hincmar cites the prophet’s words, *He that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes*^q; in the Vulgar it is, *from every bribe*; applying it to three sorts of simony. And in that letter to Lewis the Third, king of France, he protests, “ he knew no kinsman nor friend; and he only
 “ considered the life, learning, and other good qualities necessary to the sacred ministry.” Those ages were very corrupt; so that the great advantages that the popes had, in the disputes concerning the investitures into benefices, were taken from this, that servile obsequiousness and flatteries were the methods used in procuring them. Of which it were easy to bring a great and copious proof, but that it is needless.

I shall only name two provisions made against all these sinistrous practices: one was among us in a council at Exeter^r, in which this charge is given; “ Let all men look into their
 “ own consciences, and examine themselves with what design
 “ they aspire to orders; if it is, that they may serve God more
 “ virtuously and more acceptably; or if it is for the temporals,
 “ and that they may extort benefices from those who ordain
 “ them; for we look on such as simoniacs.” In the council of Basil^s, in which they attempted the restoring the freedom of elections, as a mean to raise the reputation of the sacred function, they appointed that an oath should be taken by all electors, “ That they should not give their voice for any who had, as they
 “ were credibly informed, endeavoured to procure it to themselves, either by promising or giving any temporal thing for
 “ it, or by any prayer or petition, either by themselves, or by
 “ the interposition of any other; or by any other way whatsoever, directly or indirectly.” This would go as far, as those

^o Nov. 137. c. 2.^p Tom. 2. 195.^q Isa. xxxiii. 15.^r Synod. Exon. 1287. cap. 8.^s Sess. 12.

who took it considered themselves bound by an oath, to secure elections from corruption or practice.

I will go no further to prove, that both fathers and councils, in their provisions against simony, considered the practice of application, importunity, solicitations, and flatteries, as of the same nature with simony: and therefore, though our law considers only simony, as it is a bargain in which money or the equivalent is given or promised, yet the sense of the church went much further on this head, even in the most corrupt ages. The canon law does very often mention simony in its threefold distinction, *manus, linguæ, et obsequii*; it being still reckoned a duty both in the giver and receiver, that the gift should be free and voluntary.

In the church of Rome a right of patronage is, according to their superstition, a matter of great value; for in every mass the patron is to be remembered by a special collect, so that it saves them a great charge in a daily mass said for them. To us this effect ceases; but still it is a noble piece of property, since a patron has the nomination of him that has a care of souls committed to him. But as it is in itself highly valuable, so a great account is to be given for it, to him who made and purchased those souls, and in whose sight they are of inestimable value, and who will reckon severely with such patrons as do not manage it with a due care.

It is all one what the consideration is on which it is bestowed, if regard is not in the first place had to the worth of the person so nominated; and if he is not judged fit and proper to undertake the cure of souls: for with relation to the account that is to be given to the great Bishop of souls, it is all one whether money, friendship, kindred, or any carnal regard, was the chief motive to the nomination.

I know it may be said, no man but one in holy orders is capable of being possessed of a benefice, and in order to that he is to be examined by the bishop, though already ordained, before he can be possessed of it: but the sin is not the less, because others come in to be partakers of it. Still a patron must answer to God for his share, if he has nominated a person without due care, and without considering whether he thinks him a proper person for undertaking so great a trust.

I will not carry this matter so far as to say, that a patron is bound to choose the fittest and most deserving persons he can

find out: that may put him under great scruples; and there being a great diversity in the nature of parishes, and in the several abilities necessary for the proper duties of the pastoral care, it may be too great a load to lay on a man's conscience an obligation to distinguish who may be the fittest person. But this is very evident, that a patron is bound to name no person to so important a care as the charge of souls, of whom he has not at least a probable reason to believe that he has the due qualifications, and will discharge the trust committed to him. Some motives may be baser than others; but even the consideration of a child to be provided for, by a cure of souls, when the main requisites are wanting, is in the sight of God no better than simony. For in the nature of things it is all one, if one sells a benefice, that by the sale he may provide for a child, and if he bestows it on a child, only out of natural affection, without considering his son's fitness to manage so great a trust. Perpetual advowsons, which are kept in families as a provision for a child, who must be put in orders, whatever his aversion to it or unfitness for it may be, bring a prostitution on holy things. And parents, who present their undeserving children, have this aggravation of their guilt, that they are not so apt to be deceived in this case, as they may be when they present a stranger. Concerning these they may be imposed on by the testimony of those whom they do not suspect; but they must be supposed to be better informed as to their own children.

It is also certain, that orders are not given by all bishops with that anxiety of caution that the importance of the matter requires. And if a person is in orders, perhaps qualified for a lower station, yet he may want many qualifications necessary for a greater cure: and the grounds on which a presentation can be denied are so narrow, that a bishop may be under great difficulties, who yet knows he cannot stand the suit, to which he lies open, when he refuses to comply with the patron's nomination.

The sum of all this is, that patrons ought to look on themselves as bound to have a sacred regard to this trust that is vested in them, and to consider very carefully what the nature of the benefice that they give is, and what are the qualifications of the person they present to it; otherwise the souls that may be lost by a bad nomination, whatsoever may have been their motive to it, will be required at their hands.

At first the right of patronage was an appendant of the estate

in which it was vested ; and was not to be alienated but with it, and then there was still less danger of an ill nomination. For it may be supposed that he who was most concerned in a parish would be to a good degree concerned to have it well served. But a new practice has risen among us, and, for aught I have been able to learn, it is only among us, and is in no other nation or church whatsoever : how long it has been among us, I am not versed enough in our law-books to be able to tell : and that is the separating the advowson from the estate to which it was annexed ; and the selling it, or a turn in it, as an estate by itself. This is so far allowed by our law, that no part of such a traffick comes within the statute against simony, unless when the benefice is open. I shall say nothing more on this head, save only that whosoever purchases a turn, or a perpetual advowson, with a design to make the benefice go to a child, or remain in a family, without considering the worth or qualifications of the person to be presented to it, put themselves and their posterity under great temptations. For here is an estate to be conveyed to a person, if he can get but through those slight examinations upon which orders are given, and has negative virtues, that is, he is free from scandalous sin, though he has no good qualities, nor any fixed intentions of living suitably to his profession, of following the studies proper to it, and of dedicating himself to the work of the ministry : on the contrary, he perhaps discovers a great deal of pride, passion, covetousness, and an ungoverned love of pleasure ; and is so far from any serious application of mind to the sacred functions, that he has rooted in him an aversion to them.

The ill effects of this are but too visible, and we have great reason to apprehend that persons who come into the service of the church with this disposition of mind will despise the care of souls, as a thing to be turned over to one of a mechanic genius, who can never rise above some low performances ; they will be incessantly aspiring higher and higher, and by fawning attendances, and the meanest compliances with such as can contribute to their advancement, they will think no services too much out of their road, that can help to raise them : they will meddle in all intrigues, and will cry up and cry down things in the basest methods, as they hope to find their account in them. I wish, with all my heart, that these things were not too notorious, and that they did not lay stumblingblocks in men's way, which may

give advantages to the tribe of profane libertines to harden them in their prejudices against not only the sacred functions, but all revealed religion in general. I shall end this head, leaving it on the consciences of all patrons, and obtesting them by all that is sacred, to reflect seriously on this great trust that the law has put in their hands; and to consider what account they are to give of it in the great day.

But if patrons ought to consider themselves under strict obligations in this matter, how much more ought they to lay the sense of the duties of their function to heart, who have by solemn vows dedicated themselves to the work of the ministry? What notion have they of running without being sent, who tread in those steps? Do not they say, according to what was threatened as a curse on the posterity of Eli, *Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priest's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread*^t? Do they not feel these words as a character of what they say within themselves, when they come up to the altar? Can they not trust God, and go on, fitting themselves in the best manner they can for holy functions, waiting for such an interposition of Providence as shall open a clear way to them to some station in the church; not doubting, but that if God by a motion of his Spirit called them to holy orders, he will raise up instruments to bring that about, and put it in the heart of some one or other to give or to procure to them a post, without their own engaging in that sordid merchandise, or descending to any, though less scandalous methods, which bring with them such a prostitution of mind, that they who run into them cannot hope to raise to themselves the esteem due to the sacred function; which is the foundation of all the good they can do by their labours. If things turn cross to them, in a post to which such endeavours may have brought them, what comfort can they have within them? or what confidence can they have in God? when their own consciences will reproach them with this, that it is no wonder, if what was so ill acquired should prosper no better. When they come to die, the horror of an oath falsely taken, which they palliated by an equivocating sense, will be a terrible companion to them in their last minutes; when they can no more carry off the matter by evasions or bold denials, but are to appear before that God, to whose eyes all things are naked and opened. Then all the scandal they have given, all the souls

^t 1 Sam. ii. 36.

that they have lost or neglected, all the reproaches that they have brought on their function and on the church, for which perhaps they have pretended no ordinary measure of zeal; all these, I say, will come upon them as an armed man, and surround them with the sense of guilt, and the terrors of that *consuming fire*, that is ready to devour them. Men who have by unlawful methods, and a prevaricating oath, come into a benefice, cannot truly repent of it, but by departing from it. For the unlawful oath will still lie heavy on them, till that is done. This is the indispensable restitution in this case; and unless this is done, they live on and die in the sin unrepented of. *God is not mocked*, though men are. I will leave this here, for I can carry it no higher.

As for those who have not prevaricated in the oath, but yet have been guilty of practice and methods to arrive at benefices, I do not lay this of relinquishing their benefices on them: but certainly, if they ever come to right notions of the matter, they will find just ground to be deeply humbled before God for all their practices that way. If they do truly mourn for them, and abstain from the like for the future, and if they apply themselves with so much the more zeal to the labours of their function, and redeem the meanness of their former practices by a stricter course of life, by their studies and their diligence, they may by that compensate for the too common arts by which they arrived at their posts.

I know these things are so commonly practised, that as few are out of countenance who tread in such beaten paths, so I am afraid they are too little conversant in just notions to feel the evil of them. It is no wonder if their labours are not blessed, who enter on them by such low and indirect methods: whereas men who are led by an overruling Providence into stations, without any motions or procurement of their own, as they have an unclouded call from God, so they have the foundation of a true firmness in their own minds. They can appeal to God, and so have a just claim to his protection and blessing: every thing is easy to them, because they are always easy within. If their labours are blessed with success, they rejoice in God, and are by that animated to continue in them, and to increase their diligence. If that is denied them, so that they are often forced to cry out, *My leanness, my leanness*^u, I have laboured

^u Isaiah xxiv. 16.

in vain ; they are humbled under it ; they examine themselves more carefully, if they can find any thing in their own conduct that may occasion it, which they will study to correct, and still they persist in their labour ; knowing that if they continue doing their duty, whatever other effects that may have, those faithful shepherds, when the *chief Shepherd shall appear, shall receive from him a crown of glory that fadeth not away*^x.

To all this I will only add somewhat relating to bonds of resignation. A bond to resign at the pleasure of the patron carries with it a base servitude, and simony in its full extent : and yet because no money is given, some who give those bonds do very ignorantly apprehend that they may, with a good conscience, swear the oath of simony. There is but one way to cure the mischief of this great evil, which can have no effect, if bishops will resolve to accept of no resignation made upon such bonds ; since by the common law a clerk is so tied to his bishop and to his cure, that he cannot part with it without the bishop's leave. By this all these bonds may be made ineffectual.

Other bonds are certainly more innocent, by which a clerk only binds himself to that which is otherwise his duty. And since the forms of our courts are dilatory and expensive, and there is not yet a full provision made against many abuses which a good patron would secure a parish from, I see no just exception to this practice, where the abuse is specially certified ; so that nothing is reserved in the patron's breast, by general words, of which he, or his heirs, who perhaps may not inherit his virtues as they do his fortunes, may make an ill use. It is certain our constitution labours yet under some defects, which were provided against by that noble design brought so near perfection, in that work entitled, *Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum*, which it is to be hoped will be at some time or other taken up again, and perfected.

The affinity of the former matter leads me to give an account of somewhat relating to myself. When I was first put in the post which I still hold, I found there were many market towns in the diocese very poorly provided. So since there are about fifty dignities and prebends belonging to the cathedral, I considered how by the disposing of these I might mend the condition of the incumbents in the market towns, and secure such a help

^x 1 Pet. v. 4.

to their successors. And by the advice of some very eminent divines and canonists, this method was resolved on, that, when I gave a prebend to any such incumbent, he should give a bond, that, if he left that benefice, he should at the same time resign his prebend, that it might go to his successor. This went on for some years with a universal approbation.

But when a humour began to prevail of finding fault, this was cried out upon as a grievance bordering upon simony. I upon that drew up a vindication of my practice, from great authority, out of civilians and canonists. But upon second thoughts I resolved to follow that saying of Solomon's, *Leave off contention, before it be meddled with or engaged in*^v. So to lay the clamour that some seemed resolved to raise, I resolved to drop my design, and so delivered back all the bonds that I had taken.

I will offer nothing either in the way of vindication or resentment, being satisfied to give a true relation of the matter, leaving it to the reader's judgment to approve or censure, as he sees cause. And thus I conclude this chapter, which I thought was wanting to complete my design in writing this treatise.

A

DISCOURSE

MADE BY

THE LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER

TO THE

CLERGY OF HIS DIOCESE,

AT

HIS VISITATION IN THE YEAR MDCXCV.

A
DISCOURSE

MADE BY

THE LORD BISHOP OF ROCHESTER

TO THE

CLERGY OF HIS DIOCESE.

I CAN scarce think it worth my while, or yours, my good brethren, that I should now spend much time in any long general exhortation to your diligent and conscientious performing the duties incumbent on you, as you are “the ministers of God, “duly called according to the will of our Lord Christ, and the “order of this excellent church of England.”

Did I find there were here any absolute need to use many words towards the exciting your care in the several administrations of your holy calling; yet, I am persuaded, I myself might well spare my own labour, and your patience, on this subject; since all that kind of wholesome advice has been already so very sufficiently and so much better given you, in arguments deduced out of the holy scriptures, and most fitly applied to this purpose, by the venerable compilers of our public liturgy, in the forms appointed for the ordering of deacons and priests.

There, you know, this work has been so wisely and so fully, long ago, done to a bishop's hands; there all the parts of your weighty office are so judiciously laid before you; the high dignity and great importance of it, towards the salvation of mankind, is so substantially urged; the blessed fruits and everlasting rewards of well-attending it, and the extreme dangers of neglect-

ing it, are so justly amplified; the necessity of adorning your doctrine by an innocent, virtuous, and pious life of your own, towards the rendering it efficacious on the lives of others, is so pathetically enforced; that, I am confident, the very best charge a bishop could give to his clergy, were to recommend seriously to all their memories, as I now do most affectionately to yours, those very same questions and answers, those very same promises and vows, as you ought to esteem them, wherewith every one of you did most solemnly charge his conscience, at the time of your admission into holy orders.

I profess I cannot, nor, I believe, can the wit of man, invent any more proper method of instruction to men in your circumstances, from a man in mine, than to exhort you all to a continual recollection of, and meditation upon, those many and great obligations you then seemed voluntarily and cheerfully to lay on yourselves.

Whence there could not but ensue, by God's blessing, a firm resolution in your minds to endeavour the performance of them, and a holy perseverance in those endeavours, and in conclusion, the happy effects of all on yourselves, and the flocks committed to you: that by thus *meditating on these things, and giving yourselves wholly to them, your profiting may appear to all; and that by taking heed to yourselves, and your doctrines, and continuing in them, you may both save yourselves, and those that hear you.*

Wherefore seeing that, which else had been a bishop's proper business in such meetings as this, I hope, is, or may be so easily shortened for me by you yourselves, by your having recourse to a rule so well known, and so obvious to you, in a book, which ought scarce ever to be out of your hands; I shall the rather, at this time, purposely omit the prescribing you many admonitions, touching the matter and substance of the duties of your sacred function. Instead of them, I shall only offer you some few familiar considerations, which may serve as so many friendly and brotherly advices, concerning, chiefly, the manner and way of performing some of the principal offices of your ministry.

And, I trust in God, that if these advices shall be as carefully examined, and, if you find them useful, as industriously observed by you, as they are honestly intended by me, they may, in some sort, enable you to do laudably, and with commendation, the same things, which, I hope, you already do, without just exception.

Only, in this place, let me premise once for all, that whatever instructions I shall now give you, I intend them not only as directions to you, but especially to myself. As indeed, in all matters, that come under deliberation, he ought to be esteemed no good counsellor, who is very ready and eager in giving, but averse from receiving the same counsel, as far as it may be also proper for himself.

The first advice I presume to set before your view shall relate to the manner of doing your part, in all the ordinary offices of the public liturgy.

As to that, it is my earnest request, that you would take very much care, and use extraordinary intention of mind, to perfect yourselves in a true, just, sensible, accurate, becoming way of reading, and administering them as you have occasion.

A suggestion, which some perhaps, at first hearing, may think to be but of a slight and ordinary concernment: yet, if I am not much deceived, it will be found of exceeding moment and consequence in its practice: and of singular usefulness towards the raising of devotion in any congregation piously inclined: when your weekly or rather daily labours of this kind shall be thus performed; I mean, not with a mere formal or artificial, but with such a grave, unaffected delivery of the words, as (if the defect be not in ourselves) will indeed naturally flow from a right and serious considering of their sense.

I pray therefore, take my mind aright in this particular. I do not only mean, that you should be very punctual in reading the Common Prayer Book, as the law requires; that is, not only to do it constantly, and entirely in each part, without any maiming, adding to, or altering of it, that so *supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, may be made, by you, for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

If you do not so, you are liable to a legal punishment and censure. But my aim now is, not merely to prevent that, or to provide only against your breaking the law. What I intend is something higher, and more excellent; something that you cannot be punished for, though you do it not; but if you shall do it in any reasonable perfection, it will redound to the unspeakable benefit of your congregations.

The purpose then of this my plain motion to you is, in short, to beseech you all to employ much serious pains in practising

the public and private reading of all your offices, as the use of any of them shall occur, distinctly, gravely, affectionately, fervently ; so as every where to give them all that vigour, life, and spirit, whereof they are capable : which certainly is as great as in any human writings whatsoever ; if we be not wanting to them in the repetition.

The truth is, whatever some may imagine to the contrary, such a complete and consummate faculty of reading the Common Prayer, *Quam nequeo monstrare, et sentio tantum*, is of so great difficulty, as well as use, that I am fully convinced, it very well deserves to have some place among our constant studies ; at least in the first initiation into our ministry, if not throughout the whole course of it.

I could heartily wish, it were altogether needless for me to lay so much stress on this advice as I do. Yet, I hope, I may do it without offence ; since it is not with design of censuring any particular men's failings or deficiencies, but only for the public good ; that we may all strive to attain not only to a mediocrity, but to an excellency in this kind : which, in my small judgment, can never be done, unless we shall make this duty a business by itself, and assign it a special place among our other ecclesiastical studies.

It cannot be denied, but the church itself has provided for this with all imaginable circumspection ; having solemnly enjoined every clergyman, besides the times of his public ministry, to read some very considerable parts of his Office, once a day, at least, to himself, except he shall be excused by indispensable business.

By which wise injunction, though, no doubt, the church intended primarily to produce and increase, in the minds of all its ministers, a frame of spirit perpetually serious and devout ; yet, if that be also accompanied with a proportionable regard to the manner, as well as to the matter of our public prayers, this other advantage of well reading, what is so often to be read, will follow of course, and by necessary consequence.

It seems indeed to me, that the very way of performing all the outward acts of religion has so wonderful an influence towards obtaining the inward effects of it on our hearts and consciences, that I cannot but think we can never be too laborious in preparing and exercising our thoughts, and even our very voices, in private, for a public service of so great importance.

It is true, we generally value and esteem preaching as our great privilege and honour. And so far we are in the right. But we are not so, if we look on the reading of prayers only as our task and burden ; and, as such, shall be willing to get rid of it altogether, or to get through it in any undecent manner, with such heaviness or precipitation, as, in any affairs of worldly interest, we would never be content with: a preposterous custom, which, if due care be not taken, may be very prejudicial and mischievous to our church, by quenching the spirit of devotion in our own people, and giving occasion to our adversaries to throw scorn and contempt on our otherwise incomparable liturgy.

Consider, I pray you, how can we expect that others should revere or esteem it according to its true worth, if we ourselves will not keep it so much in countenance, as to afford it a fair reading ? if we will not do it so much common justice as to contribute, as much as lies in our power, that it may have an impartial hearing, equal at least to any other divine ordinance ? if we shall refuse to lay as much weight on those devotions, which our whole church has enjoined us to pour out before the throne of grace, for the people, as we do on those discourses, which we make, on our own heads, to the people ?

Wherefore, I say again, this very commendable skill of devout and decent reading the holy Offices of the church is so far from being a perfunctory or superficial work, a mean or vulgar accomplishment, or a subordinate lower administration, only fit for a curate ; that it deserves to be placed among your ministerial endowments of greater superiority and preeminence ; as being one of the most powerful instruments of the holy Spirit of God, to raise and command men's hearts and affections : of the holy true Spirit of God, I say ; which, though in our inward ejaculations, or private supplications towards Heaven, it often *helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered* ; yet, in the public worship, is most frequently pleased to operate by such words and sounds, as are expressed with the best utterance.

So that now, with a just assurance, I may assert this to be a very proper qualification of a parochial minister ; that he has attained to an habitual faculty of setting forth the public prayers to all their due advantage, by pronouncing them leisurably, fitly, warmly, decently ; with such an authority in the speaker,

as is, in some degree, suitable to the authority of what is spoken.

Thus much I may safely say, that the reader of the prayers, if he does his part, in the manner I have mentioned, by such a vigorous, effectual, fervent delivery of the words and conceptions, put into his mouth by the church itself, may give a new enlivening breath, a new soul, as it were, to every prayer, every petition in it: he may quicken and animate those confessions, intercessions, and thanksgivings, which, when read coldly and indifferently, with irreligious carelessness, or ignorant flatness, will seem to some to be but a dead letter: he may make every Hymn, every Psalm, every Lesson, Epistle, and Gospel, to become well nigh a new sermon; at least he may give to the old standing text of the Bible a very good clear exposition, even by his very way of reading it to the congregation.

This, upon experience, you will find to be apparently true. For if, as is usually observed by men of learning in printed books, the very accurate and critical pointing of the copy is one of the best kinds of good new commentaries on any old author; how much more, in all the offices of devotion, would that, which consists not only in good pointing, and observing all due stops, but in so much more besides, I mean a good, distinct, forcible, yet easy, and unforced reading of every prayer, and portion of the holy scriptures; how much more would all this really serve for a good new paraphrase and illustration of every sentence in them!

It is indeed almost incredible, how quite another thing the daily morning and evening prayers will appear; what new figures and beauties, and hidden treasures of sacred eloquence, they will continually discover when thus pronounced; how much apter they will be to kindle in us and our auditors all manner of heavenly affections, of spiritual grief and contrition, of love and gratitude, of faith, hope, and charity, and joy in the Holy Ghost; when the harmony of the tongue shall be tuned, as it were, to the harmony of the matter; when the zeal of the reader shall keep company with his voice; and his voice shall be adapted to, and varied together with, every sense and expression; when by long use, and imitation of the best masters, or the best we can come at, we shall know familiarly how to give every word and sentence its due poise; where to lay a greater or smaller weight on every clause, according to its natu-

ral or spiritual force ; where to be quicker or more vehement, where slower and more sedate ; how to observe equally all pauses and distances ; how to avoid monotonies on the one hand, and immoderate elevations and depressions on the other ; yet, where to use the same tones, where to rise or fall in the right place : when, I say, the reader shall be thoroughly expert and versed in practising these, and many more such natural decencies of pronouncing ; though they may seem but light and petty things, taken singly, and apart, yet all together, in their full united power, they will be found to have an admirable concurrence towards the creating, augmenting, well-tempering, and well-governing of devotion.

Had I time, it were easy to exemplify this, in every Office of our church. Give me leave only to mention one instance within the compass of my own knowledge, which perhaps may not be unworthy your special remarking : though I doubt not but many of you have met with several examples of the like nature.

It was immediately after the happy restoration of king Charles the Second, when, together with the rights of the crown, and the English liberties, the church and the liturgy were also newly restored ; that a noted ringleader of schism in the former times was to be buried in one of the principal churches of London. The minister of the parish, being a wise and regular conformist, and he was afterwards an eminent bishop in our church, well knew how averse the friends and relations of the deceased had always been to the Common Prayer ; which, by hearing it so often called a low rudiment, a beggarly element, and carnal ordinance, they were brought to contemn to that degree, that they shunned all occasions of being acquainted with it.

Wherefore, in order to the interment of their friend, in some sort, to their satisfaction, yet so as not to betray his own trust, he used this honest method to undeceive them. Before the day appointed for the funeral, he was at the pains to learn the whole Office of Burial by heart. And then, the time being come, there being a great concourse of men of the same fanatical principles, when the company heard all delivered by him without book, with a free readiness, and profound gravity, and unaffected composure of voice, looks, and gestures, and a very powerful emphasis in every part, (as indeed his talent was excellent that way,) they were strangely surprised and affected ;

professing they had never heard a more suitable exhortation, or a more edifying exercise, even from the very best and most precious men of their own persuasion.

But they were afterwards much more surprised and confounded, when the same person, who had officiated, assured the principal men among them, that not one period of all he had spoken was his own; and convinced them by ocular demonstration how all was taken word for word out of the very Office ordained for that purpose, in the poor contemptible Book of Common Prayer.

Whence he most reasonably inferred, how much their ill-grounded prejudice and mistaken zeal had deluded them, that they should admire the same discourse, when they thought it an unprepared, unpremeditated rapture: which they would have abominated, had they known it to be only a set form prescribed by authority.

And from the same observation, we also may as justly infer, that all the coldness and dulness, which too many such abused and wanton spirits have complained they find in set forms, is not really in the forms themselves; in ours it is far otherwise. If there be any colour for the complaint, that can only proceed from a cold, flat, supine, insipid manner of repeating them.

Upon the whole matter it is most certain, that in the public worship of God nothing can be more grave or moving, more lofty or divine, either in the confessing, petitioning, or praising part, than where the thoughts and expressions are strictly weighed, and prudently reduced into standing unalterable forms: provided also, those very forms be not pronounced in a formal way; but that they be assisted, inflamed, inspired, as I may say, with such a present ardour and sprightly zeal in reading them, as will always make them seem to be extempore: extempore, I mean, in the new, ready, vehement manner of their pronunciation; but set forms still, in the solid ripeness of the sense, and the due choice and deliberate ordering of their phrases and figures; which are the peculiar advantages of set forms: and therefore, so spoken, they will in all reason produce a far more real, unfeigned, and durable devotion, than all the other mere extempore, raw, and indigested effusions ought to pretend to.

I should crave your pardon, that I have dwelt so long on this first head of advice. But it appeared to me so very material, that I could not hastily pass it over: especially since what I have

now said on this subject may concern in common all your public ministrations, and is equally applicable, not only to the well performing the daily Morning and Evening Prayers throughout the year, both of ordinary days and Sundays, and extraordinary fasts and festivals; but also to the Offices of Baptism, Matrimony, and the holy Communion; and indeed to every other part of our established liturgy; in all which, as the reader officiates better or worse, so most usually is their benefit and efficacy more or less on the minds of the hearers.

Nay, I will now make bold to go further, to apply the usefulness of this counsel, not only to the praying part, but also to another part of your office I am next to consider, which is that of preaching.

I am verily persuaded, that the sermons preached every Sunday in this one kingdom, by the church of England clergy in this age, are more excellent compositions of that kind, than have been delivered, in the same space of time, throughout the whole Christian world besides.

Only let me take the freedom to suggest, that perhaps it would add much, though not to the solid and substantial part of such discourses, yet to their just popularity, and more general acceptance, and to the greater edification of our hearers, if we would universally addict ourselves a little more to this study of pronunciation: by which advantages alone of the freedom and life of their elocution, we know the preachers of some other nations do seem to reign and triumph in the pulpit, whilst their sermons, as far as we can judge by those we have of them in print, are not comparable to the English.

An observation, which, methinks, may rouse our preachers to outdo them in this kind of perfection also: I mean, in a natural, comely, modest, yet undaunted force of pronunciation: not such as is full of over-action and mimical gesticulations; which, though some parties may admire for a time, and to serve a turn, yet the serious temper of our nation will never long approve or admit of. But I intend such a steady, composed, severe, decent, lively, and apposite managing your voices and gestures in the pulpit, as is best accommodated to the gravity and solidity of the English genius, and is also agreeable, as much as may be, to the simplicity, power, and height of the message you bring from heaven.

The next great duty then of your priestly office, which

comes in our way, being that of preaching, I shall begin with one short admonition, which, I confess, I am almost ashamed to give ; and yet it may be very expedient that it should be given ; not, I declare, as a correction to any of you here present for any thing past, but only in regard to the future, and for the sake of those who as yet are less experienced preachers, and young timorous beginners.

The caution, in plain terms, is this ; that every person, who undertakes this great employment, should make it a matter of religion and conscience, to preach nothing but what is the product of his own study, and of his own composing.

I would not be mistaken, as if I should hereby condemn the reading of the Homilies ; which were composed by the wisdom and piety of former times, and have been ever since allowed, nay recommended, by our church, in some places, and upon some necessities to be used. I am so far from doing so, that I rather wish from my heart we were furnished with a larger stock of such learned, plain, and orthodox discourses.

There can be no manner of hurt, nay there is very great reason, that, upon some urgent occasions, a preacher should have liberty to take something out of that public treasury, which was laid up for that end, and has the stamp of authority upon it to make it current. My purpose is only to dissuade you from all unjust rapine of this kind, from all underhand dealing with the private stores of particular persons.

As to that, I dare avouch, it is far better and more advisable, even for the rawest practiser, to exhibit but very mean things of his own at first, than to flourish it in the best of other men's sense and oratory. For he who does never so ordinarily at first, provided it be from himself, may and will do better and better in time, by God's assistance, through fervent prayer, and indefatigable attention to reading, and hearing, and practising to preach. Whereas this sordid borrowing, this shameful, I had almost said sacrilegious, purloining from other men's labours, is an utter irreconcilable enemy to all manner of growth and improvement in divine learning or eloquence.

I will not now insist on the meanness of spirit, and perpetual fear, that must attend the consciousness of this guilt, lest it should be some time or other discovered ; or on the shame and contempt that often happens to such pilferers upon the discovery. But besides all this, in truth, when once men have indulged

themselves in this easy, but despicable and shuffling commerce, they seldom or never give it over; nay, at last, they can very hardly give it over if they would.

Thence would succeed such a visible decay of parts, such a neglect of all serious studies, such a desuetude and unaptness for regular thinking, such emptiness of invention and memory, such a diffidence of their own style, understanding, and judgment; that they, who at first made bold with others' sermons, perhaps merely out of idleness, will at length be forced to do it out of necessity. It will unavoidably happen to this kind of thieves, as most commonly it does to all others; they steal so long in their youth and strength of age, because they will not work, that in their old age they are compelled to steal on, because they cannot work.

But enough or too much of this. I know to whom I speak; to those, who, for aught I could ever observe, or hear, do not only preach, but themselves compose what they preach. Yet I thought it became me to give this intimation, seeing, in my own small experience, I have been forced to deny orders to some persons, because I found them peccant in this very crime. I was at first exceedingly amazed to hear them produce most excellent sermons, whilst I found their gifts of nature, and abilities of learning, and knowledge, were far from being passable. But my wonder was soon over, when I manifestly discovered, that nothing but their ignorance was their own, their sermons belonging of right to their betters.

Now then, my brethren, that we may come into the way again, after this unwelcome digression; in making our sermons, great regard ought to be had to the words and to the matter; great to both, though not equally great to both.

Your words and style should be simple, expressive, weighty, authoritative; and therefore, though not without some true art, yet not very artificial; and rather void of all ornament, than over-adorned; but as much scriptural as may be without affectation; and as easy, familiar, and intelligible as possible. And perspicuity is always possible. Nay it is almost impossible, that one's words should not be perspicuous, when his thoughts are clear, and untroubled, and the thing to be spoken of is thoroughly understood. When the matter is well invented, digested, and ordered in the mind, it very rarely happens, but the fittest and

most expressive words will occur to the fancy and tongue of the speaker. *Verba non invita sequuntur.*

Next, since your matter must of course be either doctrinal or practical ; where it shall be merely doctrinal, there it may suffice for your common auditories, and, in good truth, for all other from the lowest to the very highest, that it be plain, sound, substantial, ancient, catholic ; seldom or never curiously drawn out into the fine threads of dispute and speculation, or, as the apostle terms them, *oppositions of science falsely so called.*

It were indeed much to be wished, that the agitating of all manner of controversies could be utterly excluded from the great work of saving souls, which is your special work. Yet, because in times so degenerate from the primitive purity, and in this militant state of the Christian church, it cannot be expected, that you should teach aptly, or oppose schism and heresy solidly, without touching sometimes, and entering upon some walks of controversies ; certainly the best way, in these inevitable cases, is never to meddle with such obscure subtilties, out of spiritual pride or ostentation, but merely out of necessity ; and then only with the most necessary parts of them ; and then also that you be ever sure to keep close to *the form of sound words* used in the church, and to contain yourselves within the known bounds of scripture determinations, in every controverted point, to deliver the faith to your people, as *it was once delivered to the saints.*

As little a lover then as I am of controversial divinity in the pulpit, yet I cannot be faithful to you, or to our mother the church of England, if I do not recommend two sorts of it to be seriously studied by you : but I must still say, rather to be studied than preached ; though preached too upon reasonable occasions.

The first kind is that of the controversies between us and the church of Rome. For we are not yet so exempt from fear on that quarter, that we should securely lay aside, and suffer to rust on the walls, those very arms, which, to the immortal praise of the parochial clergy, were so successfully managed by them, during the last great crisis of danger from the popish interest.

I the rather mention these, because they are still almost in every man's hands ; and perhaps a judicious sum and full epitome collected out of them all would be as useful a body of controversies on those questions, as any is yet extant.

Wherefore, that you may preserve your own, and the souls under your care, from infection, and be able to convince gain-sayers, I exhort you all, according to your several stations and opportunities, to be still conversant and prepared in those very same arguments against the papists: yet, let me say also, not only now in those. For there is another sort of controversies, or rather blasphemous doctrines, revived in this age, and which seem indeed to be the most cherished and darling tenets of the loose and antichristian part of the age; I mean those execrable opinions against the incarnation and eternal godhead of our Saviour, the satisfaction of his meritorious sufferings, and death, and the very being of the ever-blessed Trinity: which being all of them the peculiar and distinguishing foundations of Christianity, whatever they, who so directly oppose them, may at first pretend, yet they cannot but really tend to the destruction of the primitive faith in Christ, and the introduction of another religion, new, and therefore abominable.

Wherefore, to maintain no less than the main fundamental points of our *pure and undefiled religion*, you are now most zealously to apply your thoughts to the serious study of those divine mysteries. Yet, if you please to take my judgment, after you shall be never so well furnished with weapons defensive or offensive, of this nature, you should very rarely brandish, or so much as shew them in your ordinary pulpits; never but when you cannot avoid it without betraying or deserting the orthodox truth. And whenever you shall produce any of them in such auditories, even then, it were best done in a calm, positive, and didactical, rather than in a sharp, wrangling, or contentious way. But always take along with you what I said before, to wade no further in them, in your popular sermons, than as the scripture light primitively expounded shall plainly lead you.

This may suffice, at present, touching the doctrinal and speculative part of your preaching. As to the other, which is the practical, in that I need not forewarn you to proceed with such reserve or restraint. In the greatest abundance of that, if managed with any tolerable prudence, there can hardly be any manner of excess. Most assuredly the less controversial, and the more practical, your pulpit discourses are, the better they must be, and the more profitable.

Now, my dear brethren, the subject of this part of your sermons being, as you cannot but know, so comprehensive and

vast, as to take in the whole compass of all our spiritual and moral duties ; I say of moral also ; for, let none be deceived, moral preaching is of marvellous use, wherever it is subservient to the inspired doctrine of Christianity, and does not strive to juggle that, which is its principal, quite out of the pulpit : but, I say, the matter of your practical preaching being in itself so large, as to extend to all the precepts and promises both of the law and the gospel ; to all the temptations and corruptions of the world, the flesh, and the devil ; whereof the one ought to be the eternal argument of your exhortations, the other of your reproofs and admonitions : here it is especially that I would beseech you all with a brotherly tenderness, and oblige you with a fatherly authority, to lay out the whole stress and bent of your souls, to draw all your studies, all your learning, human or divine, all your eloquence, all your affections, all your zeal this way ; this being the great work you have chosen for the business of your whole lives, and for which we all were so peculiarly dedicated to the service of God, and his church : and let me add, this being the great purpose, for which *all scripture* seems to have been *given by inspiration of God* ; that it may be *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction*. There is the chief end of all the doctrine you are to teach. But what follows ? *For instruction in righteousness ; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to every good work*. There is the great design of all the practice you are to enforce.

I have despatched what I thought proper now to say on this head of preaching, unless you will suffer me to name one very obvious caution ; which yet I cannot think to be ever the less necessary, for being so very obvious.

The caution is, that in all your sermons, where you have occasion to praise any virtue, or dispraise any vice ; in all your commendations of what is good, or discommendations of what is bad ; you would always separate the good person from the good thing, and always distinguish the sinner from the sin : that is, that you would never put any one virtue, never any one vice, you are to deal with in the pulpit, into the habit or countenance of any one member of your congregations, so that they may be known thereby : in a word, that you would utterly shun and abhor all personal flatteries of the good, and all personal reflections on the wicked.

As to the first of these extremes, that of flattery, I need only

mention it here. That is seldom thought worthy of such plain country congregations as yours generally are : it were well, if it were as much excluded out of all other religious assemblies of better quality.

It is indeed great pity, that such glossing and deceitful language should at last, in any measure, take sanctuary in the church ; when it had been so long, in all ages, by common consent of wise and good men, judged fit to be banished out of all other well-constituted societies. Has it not been always found by experience, that a flattering tongue is so far from increasing the virtues of the good and the great, that it rather serves to deprave the real worth they might have before ? so that, as the Psalmist says, the men, *who flatter with their tongue, have not only no faithfulness in their mouth, but their very throat is an open sepulchre.* But, above all, it is most unbecoming the pulpit ; where men would seem to speak as from God, and with authority, which nothing can more debase or prostitute than flattery.

As to the other excess, that of secret reflections, and malicious insinuations against, or open defamations of persons, I would absolutely dissuade you from the very shadow and suspicion of it. I would entreat you all, in *the bowels of our Lord Christ,* that you would never, on any occasion or accident, not even on the greatest provocation, do that affront to the honour and modesty of the pulpit, as to make it a place for any rudeness or scurrility whatsoever. Surely nothing can be more disgraceful to the reputation of your profession, or more destructive to edification, or more unbecoming the gravity and charity of a church of England divine, than to make an ordinance so sacred, and the word of God handled in it, become instrumental to your own private passions, animosities, or revenges.

I am now arrived at the next great duty of your holy office, which is that of catechising ; not so much to recommend to you the duty itself ; though I might do that most earnestly and vehemently, and with some kind of episcopal expostulation and reprehension, if any where it should be totally neglected. But that I would not here so much as suppose.

I cannot doubt but we are all of one mind touching the inexpressible advantages of this ordinance in general ; we especially who have lived in these times. We cannot but be abundantly convinced of it by a woful and dearbought experience : since it

is evident, that the far greater part of the monstrous looseness of opinions, and profane enormity of manners, which overwhelmed the whole face of the last age, and has too much descended on this, did remarkably proceed from the notorious defect, or universal omission of orthodox catechising, during the calamities and confusions of the great rebellion.

Wherefore, touching the imminent necessity of restoring, or, I may well hope rather, among you, of continuing this first part of Christian discipline, I make sure account we are all agreed.

The only thing to be debated is the manner how this holy exercise may be so put in use, that the blessed ends, which, I am assured, we all aim at alike, may be attained.

Without all controversy then, the first practice of your regular catechising, in all your churches, ought to be in the very same order, and on the same materials, which the Church Catechism has traced out, and the law has enjoined.

I would therefore desire you all to begin, or rather encourage you to go on, plainly and literally, in that way, with a strict confinement of your catechumens, as they may be called, to that very compendious introduction; to have your youth thoroughly versed and instructed perfectly in all the questions and answers there prescribed. This ought by no means to be left undone in the smallest or poorest of your country cures; where the highest capacities are not at first above, and the lowest can scarce be below, this kind of plain information.

But in greater towns, where the youth are somewhat better educated, and so should be more capable of improvement, there, supposing still you never omit the other more simple way, you may, by degrees, with a sober and discreet pace, proceed further; I will not say by enlarging the foundations, but by raising the building higher on the same compass of ground.

And this I have known done with very remarkable fruit and benefit to the learners, in a familiar method, whereof I will only trace out to you the imperfect draught, which by time and custom you may easily advance and complete. The method is this; that to every article, and every clause of it, in the Church Catechism, after they have learnt them by heart, you should annex, at first, some such texts of scripture, as may suffice to prove the matter contained in them, and do it in the fewest words, and clearest to the purpose. These texts you should induce your

young disciples to repeat often, and perfectly without book, together with each article, and should begin to let them understand, by a very brief exposition, how evidently each scripture proves each article.

Then, by degrees, after they shall be made intimately acquainted with that first set of texts, you may more securely add other quotations out of the Bible, somewhat larger, but still tending to the same purpose; and when you have explained them, in the like manner, but more copiously, you may cause those also to be learnt as exactly, and repeated as readily as the former. And the same course you may begin, and go through with again, still adding more texts, and more distinctly dividing the parts and members of the several articles, as often as you shall find it practicable or convenient.

Thus, whilst you do not overburden tender minds, but softly instil these instructions into them, drop after drop, the children you have undertaken in this way, so very little out of the common road, and many also of riper years, who shall be present and attentive, will, beyond their own, and even your first expectation, come to have treasured up, almost unawares, in their minds, a little body, as it were, of orthodox divinity: which cannot but be all orthodox, all primitive, as being without mixture purely collected out of the holy scriptures.

With the scriptures, by this means, their memories will unperceivably be filled; yet not so as only to fit them to cant with unseasonably in common discourse, but so as to instruct or confirm their judgments, and teach them to apply properly what they shall there read, to every part of a sober Christian's belief, or practical duty.

In this great article of catechising, I would offer one honest direction more. It is, that you should not so much aim in it at the length of the exercise, or at the perpetual changing of your thoughts and expressions, as at the sound bottom on which you build your discourse, and the solid, unmovable ground of each doctrine, whereon you fix your explanations; though your performance each time be the shorter, so it be not unreasonably short, and though your words and phrases may happen frequently to be the same, and repeated more than once.

In truth, I would, if I durst, offer some such advice also as to your preaching. But I know the common vogue is against my

real opinion in this matter. And therefore I must handle this point the more tenderly.

It is indeed a very great burden, that the humour of the people, and our own too, in some measure, has laid on our profession; such as, I think, no other calling, or way of life, were ever willing to lay on themselves; no, nor any other nation, that I know of, has exacted in so high a degree from their clergy; that you should twice or once a week, at least, always present your auditories with new sermons; and those also to be composed with the care and accuracy, almost of elaborate, and complete treatises.

Whereas I am sure, in the business of catechising, and most probably the same will be found true in preaching also, that a sound, substantial, well-collected, and well-woven provision of plain, instructive, godly, and devout discourses, altered and increased according to the teacher's growing abilities, and used over and over, though in the same desks or pulpits, would be more edifying, and sink deeper into the minds and consciences of the hearers, than all the greatest affluence and redundance of new words and phrases, multiplied or interchanged, which the most fanciful, copious catechist or preacher can devise.

I have known some very learned and pious men, and excellent preachers, and zealous lovers of our church and country, whose welfare and prosperity they wisely judged to be inseparably joined; I say I have known these persons affectionately declare their wishes that some such order as this I shall subjoin were observed by the greatest part, if not by all our parochial ministers.

That, on the very entering into their ministry, or at any time afterwards, if they have not done it before, they would set themselves to draw out the general lineaments and larger members of a whole year's, or perhaps a two years' course of catechisms and sermons: following therein the annual method of our church's devotions, or any other scheme they shall approve and form to themselves; provided it comprises all the main points of Christian doctrine and practice.

That on this stock they should set up; and, in the first and second year, begin to fill up the void spaces, and lay the first colours, towards the finishing, as well as their sufficiency will then allow; still collecting and conveying all the streams of

their useful reading and learning into those common receptacles and channels; and so successively preaching them on, as the year turns round.

That ever after, in the whole progress of their ministry, they should still be adding to, or cutting off from, or polishing those first imperfect *ideas*; altering the method and shape of the whole, if needful; enforcing or increasing the arguments, illustrations, and amplifications, if wanting; inserting new doctrines before unobserved, making new practical inferences before untouched, as their judgments, or light, or experience shall improve; but especially, still drawing more and more, over all, a new beautiful skin, and the lovely features of scripture language: and then, without scruple or disguise, should preach them again and again, so corrected, augmented, and in some part renewed.

And I have heard these very wise persons, some of them most excellent fathers of our church, often conclude, that, by this, or some such method, any preacher, though of no extraordinary bright endowments at first, yet of an honest mind, clear sense, unwearied industry, and judicious learning, would, in process of time, in all likelihood, have by him in store a complete domestic course of sound, well-compacted, affecting sermons; that, by God's blessing, might, with the just advantages of delivery, be of far greater use to his conscientious hearers, than all that pompous novelty and counterfeit variety, which some others may boast of.

I say counterfeit variety. For so indeed it is often, upon trial, found to be. And now I have faithfully told you the opinion of those great men, I will presume, under so safe a shelter, to disclose my own thoughts in this business; yet still with all deference and candour towards any, who may differ from me in this particular.

We have lived in an age when the two gifts, as they are wont to be called, of extempore praying, and extempore preaching, have been more pretended to and magnified than, I believe, they ever were before, or, I hope, ever will be again, in this church and nation. Yct, for all I could ever learn or observe, the most sudden readiness, and most profuse exuberancy, in either of these ways, has been only extempore in show and appearance, and very frequently but a cunningly-dissembled change of the

very same matter and words often repeated, though not in the same order.

As to that of extempore praying, which therefore too many mistake for praying by the Spirit, it is manifest, that the most exercised and most redundant faculty in that kind is, in reality, only praying by the fancy, or the memory, not by the Spirit. They do but vary and remove the scripture style and language, or their own, into as many places, and shapes, and figures, as they can. And though they have acquired never so plentiful a stock of them, yet still the same phrases and expressions do so often come about again, that the disguise may quickly be seen through by any attentive and intelligent hearer. So that, in plain terms, they who think themselves most skilful in this art do really, all the while, only pray in set forms disorderly set, and never ranged into a certain method. For which cause, though they may not seem to be set forms to their deluded auditors, yet they are so in themselves; and the very persons who use them most variously and most artificially cannot but know them to be so.

This, my brethren, seems to be all the great mystery of the so much boasted power of extempore praying. And why may not the like be affirmed, in great measure, of extempore preaching, which has so near an affinity with the other? Is not this also, at the bottom, only a more crafty management of the same phrases and observations, the same doctrines and applications, which they had before provided, and composed, and reserved in their memories?

Do but hear the most voluble masters in this way, once or twice, or perhaps oftener, as far as their changes shall reach; and at first, no doubt, you will be inclined to wonder at the strange agility of their imaginations, and compass of their inventions, and nimbleness of their utterance. But if you shall attend them calmly and constantly, the vizer will be quickly pulled off, though they manage it never so dexterously: you will at last find, they only walk forward, and backward, and round about: one, it may be, in a larger labyrinth than another; but in a labyrinth still; through the same turnings and windings again and again, and, for the most part, guided by the same clue.

The explanations, perhaps, of their texts, the connections and

transitions of the parts, and some sudden glosses, and descants, and flights of fancy may seem new to you. But the material points of doctrine, and the common places, to which, upon any loss or necessity, they have recourse, these they frequently repeat, and apply to several subjects, with very little alterations in the substance, oftentimes not in the words. These are the constant paths, which they scruple not to walk over and over again, till, if you follow them very close, you may perceive, amidst all their extempore pretensions, they often tread in the same grounds till they have trodden them bare enough.

But, God be thanked, the church of England neither requires, nor stands in need of any such raptural (if I may so call it) or enthusiastical spirit of preaching. Here the more advised and modest, the more deliberate and prepared the preacher is, the better he is furnished, by God's grace, to deliver effectually our church's solid sense, its fixed precepts, its unalterable doctrines. Our church pretends not to enter into men's judgments merely by the affections; much less by the passions to overthrow their judgments. The door, which that strives first to open, is of the understanding and conscience: it is content, if by them a passage shall be made into the affections.

I have detained you the longer on this argument, because I am perfectly convinced, that although one or two preachers in an age, or perhaps some few more, men of extraordinary parts, assurance of mind, and volubility of tongue, may, by long use, make a remarkable blaze, for a time, in this sudden, unstudied way; yet, if it should ever become the general custom of the whole English clergy, it would produce little more than ignorance and confidence in many of our preachers, and tempt many of the laity, who presume themselves to be equally gifted, to think they had an equal right to the ministry.

But what need I say any more of this matter? It is confessed on all hands, that if an extempore kind of preaching had been universally put in use among us, from the beginning of our reformation, the whole church of Christ had been much impoverished thereby, had been deprived of the best treasury of sermons, that ever it was enriched with since the apostles and their successors, and the primitive fathers' times.

There is still behind one solemn duty more belonging to all of us, wherein I would willingly suggest one serious word of counsel: and it concerns the office of visiting the sick. I would

not doubt, but herein you generally do your parts diligently, piously, and prudently. But there are some things in this, as well as in the others before mentioned, touching the manner of doing it, whereof the observation may be of a peculiar and signal benefit to yourselves, as well as to your spiritual patients.

If you please to consult the rubrics relating to this office, you will find you are more left to your own liberty in this, than, I think, in any of the rest. For this duty of friendship and charity being supposed to be more in private, the rule itself in the liturgy seems to give way to, nay to direct some occasional admonitions and exhortations, to which I do not remember it does equally empower you in any of the rest, out of the pulpit.

Wherefore, to prepare your thoughts, and to replenish your minds throughly for this work not only of ministerial duty, but of compassion and brotherly love, you shall not only do well to furnish your memories with a plentiful store of pious, moving, affectionate expressions out of the Book of Psalms, and other practical and devotional parts of the holy scriptures, first; and, next to them, out of our own liturgy; and all these to be casually used, as shall be most proper: but principally I would persuade you to have some good sound body of casuistical divinity, of your own studying I mean, to be always at hand, that is, in your hearts, as well as heads.

You can scarce imagine, unless you have tried it, as, I hope, some of you have, of what unspeakable use this divine science of cases of conscience will be to you upon any sudden, unforeseen emergency in such ghostly visits.

Indeed the being a sound and well-experienced casuist is also a most excellent qualification towards all the other ends of your ministerial office; there being no kind of skill or proficiency in all your theological studies, that more becomes a divine of the church of England; whose highest spiritual art is to speak directly from his own conscience to the consciences of those under his pastoral care: and this at all times; but most especially when they are on their sick beds: when men's consciences are usually most awakened, most manageable, most truly tender, and capable of the best impressions.

So that I say it again, and can never say it too often, one of the most necessary provisions and instruments of your sacred armoury, which you are always to carry about with you, in your own souls, (for there it is best lodged; thence it will be drawn

forth, on all occasions, with the quickest expedition,) is such a firm sense, and general scheme of the primitive, uncorrupt, practical, casuistical divinity: such as, on the one side, is purged from the spiritual crafts and equivocations of the Jesuits, and, on the other, is freed from the narrowness and sourness of enthusiasm.

I told you even now, it highly concerned you all to be well stocked with plenty of good matter for present use, in the visitation of the sick; and that for your own sakes as much as theirs. And, in truth, so it is. A clergyman can no way better have his own affections and passions regulated, tempered, softened, mortified, sanctified, than by frequently performing this office in a right godly manner.

By thus often seeing death before our eyes, in all its ghastly shapes, we cannot, if it be not the fault of our own insensibility, but be the better accustomed, and made skilful to teach the whole and the healthful how to prepare to meet that king of terrors. By these spiritual anatomies of the dying, (if I may be allowed to use so bold a metaphor,) we cannot but be made more expert in discerning the inward frames and constitutions of the living, and to apply the properest remedies to the diseases of their souls.

And, to instance now only in one duty of such a faithful spiritual physician, that of relieving and refreshing the conscience thoroughly searched and purged, and of comforting and restoring the true penitent, what, I beseech you, can be a more godlike work among men, than for us to be humbly serviceable in that, which God owns to be his work, to be skilled in *not breaking the bruised reed, and not quenching the smoking flax?* to be instrumental in performing our Lord's own office, under the parable of the good Samaritan, *in binding up the wounded spirit, and pouring wine and oil into it?*

What can more adorn your evangelical ministry, than a soft, melting, compassionate, fellow-feeling, merciful habit, and disposition of mind, and, as the scripture styles it, *the ornament of a meek spirit?* Or, where can such a blessed temper be more seasonably practised, or sooner learned and increased, than in the chambers of sick and dying persons?

Now, my dear brethren, having all along insisted, that, for the furnishing and enriching your minds with spiritual knowledge, towards the due performing these and all other offices of

your holy profession, you should make the holy scriptures the principal subject, and indeed the only final centre of all your studies ; that your doctrine should never swerve from that unerring rule ; your very words, language, and style, should everywhere taste of and overflow with those living and inexhaustible streams of truth and godliness ; it may be expected, that, for the sake only of the younger divines among you, I should add a word or two touching the manner and method of your studying these sacred writings. It is indeed a business too large to be drawn within the narrow compass of the conclusion of such a discourse. But since a true, at least a competent understanding of this blessed book ought to be the beginning and end of all our spiritual studies ; and because I may speak to some, whose circumstances in this world are not so plentiful, as to enable them to purchase large libraries ; yet their industry is by no means to be discouraged, nor their zeal, in pursuing this holy skill, abated ; I will open to you my own simple apprehensions in this matter, with submission still to better judgments.

My opinion is, that although, without question, all manner of secular or ecclesiastical learning can never be more usefully employed than in this search, and is all little enough for it, and too little to complete it ; yet, when all is done, the scripture itself is the best expositor, the best commentator on itself.

It is apparent, that the whole New Testament is so to the whole Old Testament ; that being the real light of the other's figurative darkness and mysteries ; the very consummation of the other's prophecies, *and shadows of good things to come*. But I will also aver, that every part, every book, every sentence almost, both of the Old and the New Testament, well compared, and judiciously set one over against the other, in their right view and reflection, cannot but prove, by God's blessing, an inestimable explanation of each other : if a due and accurate care, I say, be taken to interpret their difficult texts, by others of their own that are easier ; and to collate their words, phrases, and sense, that may seem dark or doubtful in some places, with the same or the like in other places, where they are clearer and more intelligible.

I cannot forbear, as I go along, to declare my meaning a little fuller in this matter, by one special instance. For, consider, I pray, how is it possible for any, the most learned or sagacious student in divinity, to conceive the true and genuine sense of

the eloquent and divine Epistle to the Hebrews, except he has been also thoroughly conversant in the writings of Moses? Or where can there be found a clearer, a more spiritual, and more illustrious commentary on the whole ritual part of the Pentateuch, than the Epistle to the Hebrews?

The like also may be proved of all other portions of the holy book of God. And indeed to manifest what mutual brightness and splendour the scripture gives to and takes from itself, by comparing its several parts, I need only urge the frequent practice of our Saviour himself, and the inspired penmen of the gospel, in thus expounding the old law by the new, and the new by the old.

So that now I may with greater freedom propound my humble conceptions in this matter; that where multitudes of fathers, councils, schoolmen, histories are wanting, (which are all very beneficial helps, where they can be had, but, where they cannot be come at,) if a clergyman shall resort immediately to the fountain itself, first, and always imploring the assistance of that divine Spirit, by which the scriptures were written, and then, with a sincere love of the truth, and resolution to live according to it, without which God will neither hear our prayers, nor bless our endeavours; and also with an humble heart, a devout mind, and unquenchable fervour of spirit, and a right unbiassed judgment; joined with a sufficient skill in the original languages, and in those other introductory studies; which no man in holy orders, if it be not the bishop's fault as well as his own, can possibly be altogether to seek in: and if withal he shall be assisted with some of the ancient, and some few of the modern sound and orthodox commentaries; he will, in all human probability, by an incessant, daily, and nightly meditating upon, and revolving in his mind, the divine text itself, become, in time, though not perhaps, as Apollos is said to have been, eloquent and mighty in the scriptures, yet *a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

The more to encourage your studies in this method, if you shall be necessitated to it, give me leave to present you with one example of a great divine and bishop, in the time of king Charles the First, who was one of the most eminent confessors then, and survived those calamities, to die in peace and tranquillity, several years after the return of king Charles the Second.

In the common persecution, which then happened to the

whole episcopal order, this reverend person was exposed to a more than ordinary degree of popular malice and rage ; so that, without ever being once brought to his trial, he was closely imprisoned in the Tower for almost twenty years, and was not only despoiled of his annual revenue and personal estate in the first fury of the civil wars ; but was also plundered of most of the collections of his former labours, and a very considerable library.

Wherefore, being thus laid up in prison, without any prospect of liberty, having also a numerous family to maintain, so that he was not able, in any sort, to repair the loss of his books and papers, he betook himself to this course of study : well knowing that he could have no faithfuller companion for his solitude, nor surer consolation in his afflictions, than the holy scriptures, he applied himself to them immediately, with little other help but what he had within himself, and the best prints of the originals in the learned tongues, and their translations in the learned and modern, in both which he was a great master.

Thus however he firmly and vigorously proceeded so far in the single study of the scriptures, that long before his enlargement he had composed a great mass of annotations on divers parts of the Bible. What is become of them, I know not. If they are either embezzled, or suppressed, no doubt it is to the great damage of the church ; since the native thoughts of a great man are generally, at least, as good as the most artificial.

Perhaps you will say, he might be able to do all this by the strength of his memory, and the variety of learning he had laid up in it beforehand : and I make no doubt but those were an exceeding great assistance to him.

But what was very remarkable, and for which I am bold to produce him as an instance worthy your imitation in this particular, I know he was often heard to profess solemnly, that in all his former studies, and various reading, and observations, he had never met with a more useful guide, or a surer interpreter, to direct his paths in the dark places of the lively oracles, to give information to his understanding in the obscure passages, or satisfaction to his conscience in the experimental truths of them, than when he was thus driven by necessity to the assiduous contemplation of the scripture alone, and to weigh it by itself, as it were, in the balance of the sanctuary.

Had I not been already so tedious, there is one particular

behind, on which I ought most justly to have expatiated, which now I can only name; and it is that touching the manner of your conversation; that it be such, as may render you *vessels*, not only *sanctified*, but *meet for your Master's use*, and, as St. Paul also adds, *vessels of honour*.

I would therefore recommend to men of your character, not only the innocency and sincerity, but (as much as human frailties will allow) the comeliness and the amiableness of every word and action of your lives: that you especially would not only strive to *follow whatsoever things are true, or honest, or just, but moreover whatsoever things are pure and lovely, and of good report*; that you would *think on these things, not only if there be any virtue, but if there be any praise of virtue*.

From you, my brethren, it may well be expected, that your behaviour should not only be unblamable, but, if I may be permitted so to say, something more than strictly unblamable, and that not only to those within, but also towards them who as yet are without; that you should not only keep your minds clean, your hands unpolluted, your tongues well governed, your whole course of life spotless and upright, and your consciences undefiled, but also *your consciences void of offence*, and that *towards men*, as well as *towards God*: that you may be not only exemplary in your families, in your parishes, in the neighbouring country, in the whole church of God, to the gentry, to the laity, to your brethren of the clergy, to the commonalty of our communion, for your justice, modesty, sobriety, prudence, quietness, and obedience to superiors; but that you would exercise and extend all these virtues, and also your humility, long-suffering, good-will, good wishes, condescension, and affability, even beyond the church itself, to the very enemies of it: that towards all men you would sweeten the gravity of your behaviour, and soften the strictness of your conversation, with the gentleness and suavity of your manners: that you would take special care, as never to be obstinately in the wrong, so, when you are sure you are in the right, even then never to be too rigidly, austere, or morosely, in the right: that by all reasonable respects, mild and winning converse, and not only by a ready return, but by a cheerful prevention of all Christian good offices; and even by making your very oppositions and contentions with those that differ from you, if you shall happen to be forced to any, as humane and friendly, and easy to be entreated, as possi-

ble ; by all this you may do your part to *put to silence the ignorance of foolish and unreasonable men*. Who knows but you may convert and gain some of them ? who knows, but by your thus *following* not only *righteousness and faith*, but *peace and charity* ; by your being not only *apt to teach*, but *gentle to all men, and patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves* ; who knows if by these means *God peradventure will give* the fiercest adversaries of our church *repentance to the acknowledging of the truth* ? Most certainly by these means, or by no other, in all human probability.

I cannot now enlarge as I would on this most necessary and seasonable argument. But unquestionably by thus keeping yourselves free from haughty censoriousness, and untractable peevishness, and sullen darkness of life and manners ; and by excelling in the contrary virtues, you will, in the best way, teach and convince all that dissent from you, how unworthy such a pharisaical garb and disposition is of the true Christian liberty, or severity.

In short, by such a grave, sedate, decent, charitable course, and colour of your whole lives, you will do yourselves, and especially the church of England, most right. For our church itself, wherever she is set in a true light, cannot but be found to be most of this sweet, meek, and truly pacific temper of any church in the Christian world.

I conclude therefore, whoever among her sons and members, much more among her teachers and fathers, as you and we are, shall not do their utmost to attain to this gentle, obliging, charming manner of conversation, which our church prescribes towards all men, adversaries as well as friends, I must repeat what our blessed Saviour said to his disciples on the like occasion, *They know not what spirit they are of*.

There is one or two short requests more I am to make you, which chiefly respect me, as your unworthy bishop ; and then I shall give ease to your patience.

One is to entreat, that you would be exceeding watchful, and indeed religiously scrupulous, for whom you give certificates and testimonials. For what some of you, perhaps out of good nature, or good neighbourhood, or an easiness, and not being able to resist importunity, may at first think to be only a matter of form, is not so to me. I have scarce any other way possible of being rightly informed, from without, of the good lives or sufficient

endowments of the persons, but only by yours, and the like testimonies. The law of the land appoints that method to me, and almost confines me to it. Whereas if you make this to be only a business of private favour or partiality, not of public judgment and conscience, I may chance to be led into very mischievous and sometimes irreparable mistakes; only by that, which you may esteem but as a piece of bashfulness and good breeding: I may be induced to lay hands on the ignorant and unworthy, merely by the authority of your names, the subscribing of which you might think to be only an office of common humanity and modesty.

My next and last request to you at this time shall concern your curates. This it may suffice only to intimate to you. I know, I need not spend many words on it in this assembly; because there is but a very small inconsiderable number of pluralists in my diocese. I am persuaded they will be found upon inquiry the fewest of any in England.

I cannot but say, I could be very well content there were more; especially if all, so qualified, would be rigorously true to the church in their choice of substitutes, where they cannot always reside themselves.

For as, I will frankly own, I never yet heard an invincible objection against the prudent allowance and moderate use of pluralities; but only some plausible popular ones against the abuse of them; which we are as much offended with as any others can be: so, I verily believe, were this legal indulgence to the clergy so carefully observed every where, as, among divers other good ends of it, to furnish us with a race of painful, learned, godly curates; who, by this way of probation, may make, and shew themselves worthy to be promoted to a higher charge; there pluralities would be so far from being a scandal, or prejudice, that they would conduce to the strength and defence, as well as they do to the ease and ornament of the church of England.

The great obligation then I am to lay upon you (you, I mean, whom it does at present concern) is this, that you would be very unmovably faithful to me, to yourselves, and to the whole church of God, in the persons, whom, on just occasions, you shall offer to me to be your curates.

I do not only intend, that you should never own or patronize

any, as your curates, who really are not so, that, under that colour, by false titles, they may slip into holy orders. But I speak of such instances where you really have need of, and the law allows you to have, curates. In such cases, it is my earnest entreaty, that you would not only keep all the legal times of your own residence and hospitality; and not only afford your curates a liberal maintenance in your absence; liberal, I mean, not only for their own livelihood, but for their continuing some kind of hospitality too, to the poor at least: but that you, you especially, who are of greater age and experience, would watch over your curates as your fellow-labourers, your friends, your probationers; for whose improvement in divine learning, godly conversation, and abilities of teaching, you or I must be answerable to the great Shepherd of our souls.

But it is high time to dismiss you. I beseech Almighty God to assist and prosper all your labours, to his glory, and your own comfort in the great day of account. Towards the obtaining which blessed ends, you can never think of any better, or indeed of any other means, than by living up, in your private conversation, to the religion you profess, and teach others; and in your public office, by defending and supporting the church established by law in this kingdom.

A religion, and a church, that well deserves all this at your hands; being in its faith most primitive, in its orders most apostolical; in its discipline most moderate; in its charity most diffusive; in its devotions most spiritual as to the substance, most decent as to the circumstances. In few words, in its interests it is inviolably united with the laws and rights, with the well-being, I had almost said with the being, of the English nation and government: in its principles, it is irreconcilable with the interests of popery, and the only impregnable defence against its return into this land: which, it is much to be lamented, that the dissenters will not see, and are therefore dissenters, since it is evident, the papists themselves have always seen it but too well.

What then remains? but that as Christians, as Englishmen, as churchmen, we should all make it our principal, our only great concern, and pray to God the father of mercies, that all others of our character throughout the nation would make it theirs; to represent to the world the true excellencies of such a

religion, and such a church, by our doctrine and example, with industry and vigilance, with steadfastness and courage, *in meekness of wisdom, and with zeal according to knowledge.*

And if we shall all, in this manner, devote ourselves to this work, we may then be assured, that the same promise which our Lord Christ, in some of his last words on earth, made to his whole church, will be eminently made good to this, the purest part of it in these latter ages of Christianity, that *he himself will be alway with it, even to the end of the world.* Amen.

A
C O M P A N I O N
· FOR THE
CANDIDATES OF HOLY ORDERS;
OR THE
GREAT IMPORTANCE AND PRINCIPAL DUTIES
OF THE
P R I E S T L Y O F F I C E.
BY THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD
GEORGE BULL, D. D.
LATE LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S.

A

VISITATION SERMON

CONCERNING THE

GREAT DIFFICULTY AND DANGER

OF THE

PRIESTLY OFFICE.

JAMES iii. 1.

My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

THE text may at first sight appear to some to stand at a very wide distance from the present occasion. But I hope, by that time I have spent a little pains in explaining it, I shall set the text and occasion at a perfect agreement.

The words therefore are by interpreters diversely expounded. Among the rest, two interpretations there are, which stand as the fairest candidates for our reception.

1. Some understand the masters here in my text to be proud, malicious censors and judges of other men's actions, and so expound the text as a prohibition of rash and uncharitable judgment, and make it parallel to that of our Saviour, *Judge not, that ye be not judged*^a. Be not rash and hasty in censuring or judging the actions of others, or speaking evil of them, considering that by so doing you will but procure a greater judgment of God upon yourselves. The chief, if not the only argument for this interpretation, is the context of the apostle's discourse, which

^a Matth. vii. 1.

in the following verses is wholly spent against the vices of the tongue. But,

2. Others there are, who interpret the masters in the text to be pastors or teachers in the church of God; and accordingly understand the words as a serious caution against the rash undertaking of the pastoral office or function, as an office attended with great difficulty and danger, a task very hard to be discharged, and wherein whoever miscarries makes himself thereby liable to a severer judgment of Almighty God.

This latter interpretation (with submission I speak it) seems to me, almost beyond doubt, the genuine sense of the apostle. The reasons are evident in the text itself. For, 1. unless we thus expound the words, it will be hard to give a rational account of this word, πολλοὶ *many*, why it should be inserted. For if we understand those masters the apostle speaks of to be rash judges and censurers of others, it is most certain then, one such would be too many, and the multiplicity of them would not be the only culpable thing. But on the other side, if we receive the latter interpretation, the account of the word πολλοὶ is easily rendered, according to the paraphrase of Erasmus, thus; “Let not pastors or teachers be too vulgar and cheap among you; let not every man rush into so sacred an office and function^b.” And Drusius’s gloss on this very word is remarkable: *Summa summorum; quo pauciores sunt magistri, eo melius agitur cum populo. Nam ut medicorum olim Cariam, ita doctorum et magistrorum nunc multitudo perdit rempublicam. Utinam vanus sim.* I need not English the words to those whom they concern.

2. If we embrace any other interpretation, we must of necessity depart from the manifest propriety of the Greek word, which our translators render *masters*. The word is διδάσκαλοι, which whoso understands the first elements of the Greek tongue knows to be derived from διδάσκω, *to teach*, and so literally to signify teachers. *Be not many teachers.*

And so accordingly the Syriac renders it by a word, which, the learned Drusius tells us, is parallel to the Hebrew מורים, which undoubtedly signifies doctors or teachers.

These reasons are sufficient to justify our interpretation, though I might add the authority of the ancients, who generally follow this sense, as also the concurrent judgment of our most

^b Ne passim ambiatis esse magistri.

learned modern annotators, Erasmus, Vatablus, Castellio, Estius, Drusius, Grotius, with many others.

As for the connection of the words, thus explained, with the following discourse of the apostle, I suppose this very easy account may be given of it. The moderation and government of the tongue, (on which St. James, in the sequel of the chapter, wholly insists,) though it be a general duty, (for there is no man's tongue so lawless as to be exempted from the dominion to right reason and religion,) yet it is a duty wherein the pastor or teacher hath a peculiar concern. The minister's tongue is a chief tool and instrument of his profession, that which *ex officio* he must often make use of: he lies under a necessity of speaking much and often, and the Wise Man tells us, *in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin*^c. And certainly there is scarce any consideration more powerful, to deter a man from undertaking the office of a teacher, than this; how extremely difficult and almost impossible it is, for a man that speaks much and often, so to govern his tongue, as to speak nothing that either is itself unfit, or in an unfit time, or after an undue manner; and yet, how highly every teacher is concerned so to do.

So that it is a very easy knot to fasten my text to the next verse, thus: Let not every man ambitiously affect the office of a teacher in the church of God, considering that it is an office of great difficulty and danger; *for in many things we offend all; if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, &c.* As if he had said, As there are many ways, whereby the best of us do offend, so there is no way whereby we so easily fall into sin, as by that slippery member the tongue; and there is no man more exposed to this danger of transgressing with the tongue, than the teacher, who makes so much and so frequent use of it. So that the teacher is *τέλειος ἀνὴρ*, a rare and perfectly accomplished man indeed, that hath acquired the perfect government of his tongue. He that can do that, who fails not in that piece of his duty, may easily also bridle his whole body, i. e. rightly manage himself in all the other parts of his pastoral office. But this, as it is very necessary, so it is extremely difficult, and therefore *be not many teachers*^d.

To this it will not be amiss to add, what Grotius wisely observes, that the admonition of the apostle concerning the vices

^c Prov. x. 19.

^d Μὴ πολλοὶ διδάσκαλοι γίνεσθε.

of the tongue, subjoined to the caution in my text, “is chiefly directed against brawling and contentious disputers^e ;” such teachers as abuse their liberty of speaking unto loose discourses, and take occasion from thence to vent their own spleen and passions: men of intemperate spirits and virulent tongues, troublers rather than teachers of the people, whose tongues are indeed cloven tongues of fire, but not such as the apostles were endowed with from above, as serving to burn, rather than to enlighten, to kindle the flames of faction, strife, and contention, rather than those of piety and charity in the church of God.

And, indeed, the direful and tragical effects, which the apostle in this chapter ascribes to the evil tongue, as that it is *a fire, a world of iniquity, defiling the whole body, setting on fire the course of nature, full of deadly poison*^f, &c. are such as are not so easily producible by the tongue of a private man, as of a teacher: “Whose discourse (saith Erasmus) spreads its poison by so much the more generally and effectually, as the authority of the speaker is greater, and his advantage also of speaking to many^g.”

Having removed this seeming rub in the context, I return again to the text itself; wherein you may please to observe, 1. A serious dissuasive from the rash undertaking of the pastoral office; *My brethren, be not many masters, or teachers.* 2. A solid argument or reason to enforce it, drawn from the difficulty and the danger thereof; *knowing that we shall receive, &c. μείζον κρίμα, a greater or severer judgment*; i. e. God will require more of us that are teachers, than of others; we shall not escape or be acquitted in the divine judgment at so easy a rate as they. There is a place in the excellent Book of Wisdom^h, that is exactly parallel to my text, and gives great light to it, *A sharp judgment shall be to them that are in high places*ⁱ. Where the οἱ ὑπερέχοντες, those that are *in high places* in the state, answer to the διδάσκαλοι in my text; the *teachers* in the church: the κρίσις ἀπότομος, *the sharp, or, the precise and severe judgment*, to the μείζον κρίμα, *the greater judgment* in the text.

I shall not at all insist on the first branch of the division, the

^e Maxime directa est in rixosos disputatores.

^f Φλογίζουσα τὸν τρόχον τῆς γενέσεως.

^g Cujus sermo hoc latius ac periculosius spargit suum venenum, quod auctoritate dicentis commendetur.

^h Wisd. vi. 5.

ⁱ Κρίσις ἀπότομος ἐν τοῖς ὑπερέχουσι γίνεται.

dissuasive ; as remembering that I am to preach not an ordination, but a visitation sermon ; and to discourse not to candidates of holy orders, but to such as are already engaged in that sacred profession. I come therefore to the reason or argument in the text, (as of very much concernment to all that are in the priestly office,) drawn from the great difficulty and danger thereof. To represent both which, as fully as my short allowance of time, and much shorter scantling of abilities will permit, shall be my present business.

And first, as to the difficulty of the teacher's office, it is a very great difficulty fully to explain it. So many are the branches of his duty, that it were a tedious labour to reckon them up : Lord, what a task is it then to discharge them ! I shall content myself therefore *rudi Minerva*, briefly and only in general to describe the chiefest requisites that are necessary to constitute a complete teacher in the church of God ; and even by that little which I shall say, I doubt not but it will appear how very formidable, how tremendous an undertaking that function deserves to be accounted. The teacher's office then requires a very large knowledge, a great prudence, an exemplary holiness. And surely much is required of him, of whom these things are required.

1. Then, the first requisite to the office of a teacher is a very large knowledge. The very name of his office implies this ; he is *διδάσκαλος*, a teacher ; and he that is such must be, as the apostle requires^k, *apt* or *fit to teach*^l. And this he cannot be, unless he be well learned^m and instructed himself, and furnished with a plentiful measure of divine knowledge. God himself, by the prophet Malachi, requires that the *priest's lips* יִשְׁמְרוּ דַעַת *should keep* or *preserve knowledge*ⁿ. Methinks the expression is more emphatical than is ordinarily conceived. It seems to imply that the priest should be a kind of repository or treasury of knowledge, richly furnished with knowledge himself, and able also abundantly to furnish and supply the wants of those that shall at any time have recourse to him for instruction. And therefore it presently follows : *And they* (that is, the people) *shall seek the law at his mouth*. Yea, the words import that the priest should be a treasury of knowledge not to be exhausted.

He must have knowledge not only to spend, but to keep ; not

^k 1 Tim. iii. 2.

^m Διδάκτος, doctus.

^l Διδακτικός, aptus sive idoneus ad docendum.

ⁿ Mal. ii. 7.

like those that live from hand to mouth, or whose stock of knowledge is quickly spent in a few sermons, but he must have something still reserved and laid up in store. Methinks our Saviour doth excellently expound this text, though it be by a parable, *Every scribe that is instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old*^o. Where the γραμματεὺς, or scribe, is the same among the Jews, with the νομοδιδάσκαλος, the teacher or expounder of the law. And it is the usual custom of our Saviour, as Grotius observes, “by names in use among the Jews, to express such offices, as were to be in the Christian church^p.” The γραμματεὺς then, or scribe, is the same with the διδάσκαλος, or teacher, afterwards in the church of Christ. This scribe is said by our Saviour to be *instructed unto* or for *the kingdom of heaven*^q, i. e. well prepared, provided, furnished for the preaching of the gospel. And, to shew that he is so, he is compared to the householder, who for the maintaining of his family, and the entertainment of his guests all the year long, is supposed to have an ἀποθήκη, or repository for provisions, (called here his θησαυρὸς, his treasure,) and there to have laid in provisions καινὰ καὶ παλαιὰ, both new and old, i. e. a great store and abundance, provisions of all sorts and kinds. As the spouse in the Canticles tells her beloved, *At our gates are all manner of fruits, both new and old, which I have laid up for thee*^r. This kind of hospitality (however by the iniquity of an ungrateful sacrilegious age he may be disabled from exercising the other) is the indispensable duty of the pastor or teacher. He must keep a table well furnished with these heavenly provisions for all comers.

The knowledge of a teacher, we shall easily grant, extends itself into a very large compass, if we consider what that science is that he is to teach; theology, “the art of arts, and the science of sciences^s,” as Nazianzen speaks; the queen and mistress of all other disciplines, to which they do all but *aneillare*, perform the office of handmaids, and yet in so doing they are of use and service to her.

^o Matth. xiii. 52.

^p Nominibus apud Judæos receptis significare munia, quæ futura erant in ecclesia Christiana.

^q Μαθητευθεὶς εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν.

^r Cant. vii. 13.

^s Τέχνη τεχνῶν, καὶ ἐπιστήμη ἐπιστημῶν.

And upon that account, the divine, if he will be complete, must be *πανεπιστήμων*, must have compassed the *ἐγκυκλοπαιδεία*, in the modern and more noble signification of the word; i. e. the whole circle of arts and sciences. And he that hath so done, *illi des nominis hujus honorem*, let him pass for a perfect divine, he only is adequate to so ample a title. But, God be thanked, this is only the heroic perfection, not the necessary qualification of a teacher. A man may very well content himself to sit in a much lower form, and yet sit safely; he may move in a far inferior orb, and yet give much light, and communicate a benign and useful influence to the church of God. Let us view therefore the necessary parts of theology itself, wherein the teacher cannot be ignorant or uninstructed, but to the very great detriment of his disciples, and his own greater shame and hazard. How ample a field have we still before us! here is theology positive, polemical, moral, casuistical, and all most necessary for the teacher.

As for positive divinity, or the knowledge of those necessary speculative truths that are revealed in scripture, a man can no more be a divine, that is unacquainted with this, than he can be a grammarian, that understands not the very first elements of grammar. And yet of so abstruse, so sublime a nature are even these truths, that for a man rightly to apprehend them, and clearly to explain them, especially to the capacity of his duller hearers, is no very easy matter.

Polemical or controversial divinity is *theologia armata*, or that part of divinity which instructs and furnisheth a man with necessary weapons to defend the truth against its enemies. Now the good shepherd's office is not only to feed his sheep, but to secure them from the wolves; or else his care in feeding them serves only to make them the fatter and richer prey. And therefore St. Paul^t requires, that the teacher should be able, ^u *both by sound doctrine to exhort his hearers,* ^x *as also to convince or refute gainsayers or opposers.* *Ἡὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν τοῦ τυχόντος*, (as Grotius well glosseth on the text,) every man cannot do this, and yet every teacher must. The times wherein we live do much heighten the necessity of this study; for we may enforce this duty on all teachers, by the same melancholy argument that St. Paul doth in the forementioned text. The teacher,

^t Titus i. 9.

^u Καὶ παρακαλεῖν ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ τῆ ὑγιανοῦση.

^x Καὶ τοὺς ἀντιλέγοντας ἐλέγχειν.

saith he, must be able to *convince gainsayers* : why so ? He gives the reason, *There are many unruly and vain teachers and deceivers, &c. whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not.* These unruly and vain teachers, these deceivers, were never certainly in a greater number than now they are. These men's mouths must be stopped, there is a necessity for it ; for otherwise they will subvert whole houses, yea and pervert whole parishes. Not that we have any hopes in this age to stop the mouths of our opposers, so as to make them cease speaking ; (for bawl they will to eternity ; they are, as the apostle somewhere speaks, *unreasonable men*^z, that understand not, admit not of any topics ; no argumentation, though never so convincing, will make them give back ;) but so at least, as that they shall be able to speak little to the purpose, so as to satisfy sober, humble, docible persons, who have not passionately espoused an error, or, to speak in the apostle's phrase, *that are not given up to strong delusions, to believe lies, that they may be damned.* In a word, our fate in these days is much like that of the rebuilders of Jerusalem after the captivity, that were necessitated *every one with one of his hands to work in the building, with the other to hold a weapon*^a. With one hand we must build up our people in the doctrine of piety, with the other we must resist heretical opposers, who otherwise will demolish as fast as we build.

And to quicken us to this part of our study, methinks no consideration can be more forcible than this ; to observe, where ministers are defective therein, with what triumph and ostentation deceivers carry souls captive, to the disgrace not only of the persons, but also of the function of the teachers, yea and of truth itself, which is wounded thus through their sides, and bleeds through their weakness and folly.

But let us leave this thorny field of controversial, and step a little into the other more fruitful, of moral or practical divinity. Of this one speaks most truly : "The knowledge of controversies is made necessary by heretics, the study of piety by God himself^b." Theology is doubtless a practical science, nothing in it but what aims at this end. And therefore he that neglects this practical part of it understands not the very design of his

^y Titus i. 10, 11.

^z ἄνθρωποι ἄποιοι.

^a Nehem. iv. 17.

^b Controversiarum scientiam necessariam fecerunt hæretici, studium pietatis Deus ipse mandavit.

own profession. Without this a man deserves no more to be accounted a divine, than he a physician that understands little or nothing of therapeutics. It is true, there are some (otherwise not unlearned men) that despise this part of theology, as a vulgar, trivial, easy, obvious thing. But sure they very much disparage their own judgment, who let the world understand that they are of this mind: and the event commonly shews how much they are mistaken. For bring these doctors out of their academic cells, set them to preach in a country congregation, and they soon become the objects of laughter, or rather of pity to the wiser: to observe how they greedily snatch at every occasion of engaging in a controversy, and that perhaps such a one as was never before heard of by their hearers, but a controversy they had read in some of their books, though long ago dead and buried; thus manfully encountering ghosts and shadows: how learnedly they will discuss the barren subtleties of Aquinas or Scotus, which the poor souls no more understand, than if they had read them a lecture out of Cornelius Agrippa's occult philosophy: how, when they come to practicals, they are *velut in alium mundum translati*, as if they were entered into a new unknown world; so frigid, barren, and lifeless are their discourses on those subjects. And may the same shame, or a serious repentance, attend all the contemners of this useful theology!

Lastly, there is casuistical divinity, which I distinguish from moral or practical, as a more noble species thereof, and which therefore deserves a distinct consideration. For though all casuistical divinity be practical, yet all practical divinity is not casuistical; for the design of casuistical divinity is to resolve only the dubious and difficult cases that refer to practice. How difficult this study is, every man that is not a very stranger therein will readily acknowledge. And the necessity thereof is evident: for what more necessary for a teacher, than to be able to resolve his people what their duty is in difficult cases? Teachers, no doubt, are purposely placed by God in these cross-ways, as mercurial statues, not dead, but living speaking ones, directing the perplexed traveller towards the heavenly Jerusalem, and saying, (as it is in the prophet,) *This is the way, walk therein*. And the Lord by the prophet Malachi tells us, that the priest should be such a one as that the *people may seek the law at his mouth*: the law, i. e. the sense of the law, or what

that duty is, which the law obligeth them to in doubtful cases. A very oracle to be consulted by them on all occasions. It is true, the greatest oracle may be sometimes silenced by a greater difficulty: but an oracle altogether dumb is certainly a very lamentable contradiction.

I have all this while spoken nothing of the holy scriptures, that deep and unsearchable mine, from whence the divine is to fetch all his treasure. From hence he is to borrow the principles of all theology, positive, polemical, moral, casuistical; and therefore it is evident, that unless he be well studied in these, he must needs be defective in all the rest. He must needs be a weak divine, that is not *mighty in the scriptures*^c, as it is said of Apollos^d. And, Lord, how many things are necessary to give a man a right understanding of these sacred writings! I confess, we are fallen into a very confident age, wherein to interpret scripture is counted the most obvious and easy thing; and every mechanic, that scarce understands common sense, will venture on the expounding of these mysterious books. We have so childishly departed from the error of the Romish church, in asserting an inexplicable obscurity of the scriptures, even in things necessary, that for fear of this Charybdis we are swallowed up in as dangerous a Scylla, to make the scriptures even despicable and contemptible. For, as Nazianzen truly saith, “that which is thus easily understood is generally with as much “ease slighted and contemned^e.” But we know who they are, who “run from one bad extreme to another^f.” For it is certain, that rightly to understand the holy scriptures is a very difficult thing, especially for us, who live at so great a distance from those times wherein they were written, and those persons and churches to whom they were directed. It is no slender measure of the knowledge of antiquity, history, philology, that is requisite^g to qualify a man for such an undertaking. They know nothing of the holy scriptures, that know not this. And therefore those unlearned and ignorant men, that venture on the exposition of scripture, being perfect strangers to these parts of learning, must of necessity wrest them to their own and their hearers’ destruction.

I cannot omit to take notice here of that common axiom, “A

^c Δυνατός ἐν γραφαῖς. ^d Acts xviii. 24.

^e Τὸ ῥαδίως ληπτὸν ἅπαν ἐγκαταφρόνητον.

^f Dum vitant vitia in contraria currunt.

“good textuary is a good divine^ε ;” and to observe, that it is most true, if rightly understood. If by a textuary we mean him who hath not only a concordance of scriptures in his memory, but also a commentary on them in his understanding; who thinks it not enough to be ready in alleging the bare words of scripture, with the mention of chapter and verse where it is written, unless he know the sense and meaning of what he recites. The former every illiterate sectary is able to do, who can quote scriptures by dozens and scores, the tithe whereof he understands not, and are little to his purpose. The latter is the proper commendation of the divine. Without this grain of salt, the aphorism, but now mentioned, most justly falls under the severe censure of our learned Prideaux: “A good textuary is “a good divine, say many, who understand not, mind not, either “the text, or divinity, or goodness^h.” We have seen the necessary parts of theology rudely delineated, and yet even by this imperfect draught we may take an estimate, how large that man’s knowledge ought to be, that is obliged to understand all these things.

I confess that here also (and I have as much reason to rejoice in it as most of my brethren) a latitude is to be allowed; and it were a cruelty worse than that of Procrustes, to stretch all men to the same giant-like proportion of knowledge that some attain to. But yet doubtless it is a wise and prudent severity, as Nazianzen speaks, “to measure every teacher, and stretch him out “to St. Paul’s rules and canonsⁱ.” And they, as we have already heard, require that he should be *διδασκτικὸς*, apt and fit to teach, i. e. in some competent measure able to instruct his hearers in all these useful parts of theology.

2. I have discoursed so largely of the first requisite of the teacher’s office, that if I gave over here, I had said enough to convince any sober person of the difficulty thereof. But yet this is not all. A very great prudence also is required in the teacher, or else his knowledge will be useless and unserviceable. Wisdom is the soul that animates and enlivens knowledge, without which a large knowledge is but like a huge carcass, a lifeless unactive thing. And if any man thinks that science and prudence are

^ε Bonus textualis, bonus theologus.

^h Bonus textualis, bonus theologus, clamant quamplurimi, qui nec de textu, nec de theologia, nec de bonitate sunt solliciti.

Παρεκτείνειν τοῖς Παύλου κήρυξιν.

things inseparable, sad experience refutes him. Every learned man is not a wise man; and there are some who have read very many books, but very few men; who have dwelt so much in their studies, that they understand little abroad in the world, no not in their own little world, I mean their charges and parishes. There are some that have a large measure of the spirit of knowledge, but want the spirit of government, which yet is most necessary for him who is to be a guide of souls. Every teacher is concerned to be wise, both for himself, and those committed to his charge. For himself, to take heed of men, that he be neither betrayed by false brethren, nor become a prey to the malice of professed enemies; to decline both the envy and contempt of his neighbours; to keep himself within the bounds of his calling; *to mind his own business*^k, &c. To this kind of wisdom belongs the advice of our Saviour, when sending forth his apostles, as innocent lambs amongst the wolves of that age, he cautions them to *be wise as serpents, and innocent as doves*¹; i. e. to use all honest and sinless arts to secure themselves. But this is not the prudence which I principally intend; for if a minister be defective in this, he is no man's foe but his own; he hurts only himself, and that but in temporal concerns.

I add therefore, that he is to be wise for those committed to his charge, lest by any indiscretion of his he obstructs that which ought to be his great design and business, the eternal salvation of their souls. And here how many things are there, which a teacher is concerned to understand! He must be wise so to frame his discourses, especially in public, that he speak nothing that may either offend the weak, or give advantage to the malicious; that his sermons may not only be good in themselves, but adapted and fitted to the necessity of his hearers; that he make choice of the most suitable and powerful arguments to enforce on them those Christian duties, whereto he exhorts them. He must be wise in the government of his carriage and actions, distinguishing especially between lawfulness and expediency, and shunning not only that which is directly sinful, but whatsoever is scandalous and offensive. He must be wise in his common converse with his people, that he be neither of too easy, or too morose and difficult an access; but especially he is to be careful of this in his freer conversation; that he indulge not himself any liberty more than ordinary, among those who will make an ill

^k Τὰ ἴδια πράσσειν.¹ Matth. x. 16.

use of that whercin there was no ill intended. He is to be wise in the choice of his friends, not to inscribe any man into that catalogue, that may reflect any disparagement on his person or function : for *qui non contemnitur a se, contemnitur a socio*. He must be wise, especially in the government of his own family : for as the apostle excellently reasons, *if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God^m ?* He must be wise to inquire into the state of his flock, and to discern their particular tempers and constitutions ; and even to search into their hearts and secret inclinations. He must be wise to administer private counsels and reproofs, duly observing the circumstances of time, of place, of person, of disposition ; for, as the wisest of men tells us, *a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silverⁿ*. These and many other things the teacher is deeply concerned to be well versed in ; and what a task is this !

If it be objected, “ that prudence is a thing without our power, “ an arbitrary gift of God, which he bestows on whom he pleaseth, as he doth beauty, or wealth, or a good natural wit, and “ therefore cannot reasonably be imposed on a man as his duty : ” I answer, if this prudence were wholly out of our election, yet this certainly was left to our free choice, whether we would undertake that office whereto so great prudence is requisite. We have obliged ourselves to it, by engaging in that function, that cannot be discharged without it. But indeed this excellent gift of God is in a great degree put within our power, in conjunction with the divine assistance. We may and must endeavour for it, diligently study it, carefully observe things and persons, faithfully record experiments, consult wiser friends. But above all things we must take St. James’s advice, *If any man want wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him^o*. Especially, if he desire it constantly, earnestly, and above all things in the world ; if with Solomon he despise greatness and wealth, and all other secular advantages ; and, before them all, desire this one thing of God, *that he would give him wisdom and knowledge to go in and out before the people committed to his charge and guidance^p*.

3. I come now to the last, though not the least, of those requisites that are necessary to the office of a teacher, viz. an exemplary holiness. For of this I may say, as the apostle doth,

^m 1 Tim. iii. 5. ⁿ Prov. xxv. 11. ^o James i. 5. ^p 2 Chron. i. 10.

speaking of the three theological graces, *And now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity*^a. So here there remaineth knowledge, prudence, holiness, all three necessary requisites to make up a complete teacher; but the greatest of these is holiness. And what he further says of the same grace of charity, in the beginning of the same chapter, may with a little change be applied also to our present purpose. If a man had *πάσαν γνώσιν*, *all sorts of knowledge*, so as to be able to understand all mysteries; if he were prudent, beyond the prodigious measure of Solomon's wisdom; if those endowments were crowned in him with an eloquence more than human, so that he were able to discourse like an angel: yet without this holiness he were as nothing, or at best but as *the sounding brass or tinkling cymbal*. The priest that is not *clothed with righteousness*, though otherwise richly adorned with all the ornaments of human and divine literature, and those gilded over with the rays of a seraphic prudence and sagacity, is yet but a naked, beggarly, despicable creature, of no authority, no interest, no use or service in the church of God. The unholy teacher, let him preach never so well, discourseth to little purpose; there will be no life in his doctrine, because his life is so destitute of the spirit of holiness, he will sooner damn his own soul, than save any man's else. His discourses, though armed with the most powerful oratory, will serve to move no other affection in his hearers, than that of indignation against his hypocrisy and impudence, to hear him excellently declaim against a vice, of which himself is notoriously guilty; and they will say,

Loripedem rectus derideat, Æthiopem albus.

In a word, as a wise man well observes, "every notorious vice "is infinitely against the spirit of government, and depresses a "man to an evenness with common persons."

— *Facinus quos inquinat æquat.*

And when a man's authority is thus lost, he becomes a thing wholly useless in the church of God. Useless, did I say? it were well if that were all: he is the most pernicious creature that moves on God's earth; he serves to the worst purposes, to make men atheists, infidels, or heretics. Learned and knowing men, of ill lives, have been always the greatest stumblingblock

^a 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

in the church of God : their fall is not single, but attended with the ruin of many others ; who, imitating the barbarous civility of those nations that use to solemnize the funerals of their great men, by sacrificing a great part of their families, when the teachers damn themselves, are ready to die and perish with them for company. And the fallacy that ruins them is this ; because some wise men live wickedly, they presently conclude that wickedness is the greatest wisdom : as if it were impossible for the will to choose contrary to the dictates of the understanding, or for a man that knows his duty, not to do it. We of this age have reason to take special notice of this. For as Cicero, inquiring into the causes of those bold and unheard-of attempts, that Catiline and his confederates made upon the commonwealth of Rome, presently gives this account : *nos, (dico aperte,) nos consules desumus* : so when we are astonished at the prodigious blasphemies, heresies, and schisms of our times, and wonder at the cause of them, we may quickly resolve ourselves after the same manner : *nos, (dico aperte,) nos pastores desumus*. For certainly all the arguments that heretics and sectaries have made use of, to seduce our people from obedience unto the most excellent doctrine, liturgy, and discipline of our church, would have been accounted ridiculous sophisms, and no way served their wicked purposes, if they had not been furnished with a more powerful topic *ab exemplo*, from the vicious lives of some clergymen. And as to this :

—*Pudet hæc opprobria nobis
Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.*

I might here be very large in representing the necessity of holiness in a minister ; but I shall only observe, that the wicked teacher sins with the highest aggravation of his guilt, and the least hope of his repentance ; he is the greatest and most desperate sinner.

The greatest sinner ; for either he is a person of more than ordinary knowledge, or he is not : if not, he sinned greatly in undertaking that office, to which so great a knowledge is requisite : if he be, his knowledge doubtless increaseth his guilt : *For he that knows his master's will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes*. Besides, he must needs sin with a very strange assurance, by living in that wickedness which he daily

reproves and preaches against, and so becoming *αὐτοκατάκριτος*, a *condemned man*, from his own mouth.

But that which I chiefly urge is this: the wicked teacher is, of all men living, in the most hopeless and desperate condition. It is usually observed of seamen, that dwell in the great deep, that if they are not very pious, for the most part they are desperately wicked, because they daily behold the wonders of the Lord, and besides live in a continual and a very near danger, bordering upon the very confines of death, and being,

Quatuor aut septem digitis a morte remoti,

but a few fingers' breadth divided from their fluid graves. And if these considerations do not persuade them to *fear the Lord exceedingly*, as it is said of the mariners in Jonah, i. 16, it argues that they are exceedingly hardened. The observation is truer of the minister; if he be not a good man, he must needs be extremely bad; for he daily converseth in the great deep of the holy scriptures, and there sees and reads such things, that if they do not effectually persuade him to piety, it is certain he is a man of an obdurate heart.

What remedy is likely to work this man's cure and repentance? Will the dreadful menaces and threats of God's word affright him? No; these are daily thundered out of his own mouth, and yet to him they are but *bruta fulmina*. Will the gracious promises of God allure him? No; he daily charms his hearers with these, but remains himself as the deaf adder. Will those excellent books of learned and pious men, that he reads in his study, work any good on him? No; he that slights God's word will little regard the words of men. Will the public prayers make him serious? No; he daily reads them, and his daily practice is contrary to his daily prayers. Will a medicine compounded of the flesh and blood of the Son of God (I mean the holy eucharist) do the miserable man any good? No; he hath frequently received those dear pledges of his Saviour's love, and yet is still as bad as ever, and so hath *trodden under foot the blood of the everlasting covenant*, wherewith he should have been sanctified. The Lord look upon this man; for there is no hope of him, without a miracle of divine mercy. Nay indeed, all these excellent means, by being made familiar to him, have lost their efficacy upon him. Our Saviour, methinks, doth excellently represent the hopeless condition of a vicious minister,

by a parable, where speaking to the apostles, (considered, I suppose, as ministers of the word,) he tells them, *Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewithal shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men*⁹. Salt, if it be good, is of excellent use to season many things; but if it become itself un-savoury, it is not only the most useless thing, *good for nothing, but to be cast out, &c.* but irrecoverably lost; there is nothing will fetch putrid salt again; *for if the salt hath lost his savour, wherewithal shall it be salted?* Thus necessary is holiness in a minister, both for himself and others.

I have now done with the difficulty, and consequently with the danger, of the pastoral office, represented from the three grand requisites thereunto; a very large knowledge, a great prudence, an exemplary holiness. I shall add but one consideration more, of itself abundantly sufficient to evince the whole; viz. That every teacher is accountable for the souls committed to his charge. This is the plain doctrine of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews; *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account*^r, &c. A dreadful consideration this! And St. Chrysostom tells us, that when he read that text, “it did κατασείειν τὴν ψυχὴν, cause a kind of earthquake within him, and produce a holy fear and trembling in his soul.” And in his commentary on the text he thus exclaims: “Lord, how difficult, how hazardous an undertaking is this! What shall a man say to those wretched men, that rashly thrust themselves into such an abyss of judgments? All the souls that are committed to thy conduct, men, women, and children, thou art to give an account of^s.” He presently subjoins, “It is a wonder if any ruler in the church be saved^t.” A passionate hyperbole, expressing his deep sense of the extreme danger of the pastoral office.

It is true, indeed, the excellent bishop speaks there of those of his own most sacred order, whose place and dignity in the

⁹ Matt. v. 13.

^r Heb. xiii. 17.

^s Βαβαὶ πόσος ὁ κίνδυνος! τί ἂν τις εἴποι πρὸς τοὺς ἀθλίου τοὺς ἐπιβρίπτοντας ἐαυτοὺς τοσαύτη τιμωριῶν ἀβύσσω; πάντων ὧν ἄρχεις, γυναικῶν, καὶ ἀνδρῶν, καὶ παιδῶν, σὺ λόγον δίδως.

^t Θαυμάζω εἰ τινὰ ἐστι τῶν ἀρχόντων σωθῆναι.

church of God, as it is eminently higher, their charge greater, their inspection more extensive; so will their account be accordingly. But yet the same is true, in its proportion, of every clergyman, of what order soever he be. So St. Austin expressly; "If you mark it, most dear brethren, you shall find that "all the Lord's priests, not only bishops, but also presbyters "and ministers of churches, stand in a very hazardous condition". "And he gives a shrewd reason for what he says, a little after; "If at the day of judgment it will be a hard task for every man "to give an account of his own soul, what will become of "priests, of whom God will require an account of the souls of so "many others committed to their charge^x?" He concludes, "*magnum opus, sed gravis sarcina*; the care of souls is indeed "a great work, a noble undertaking, but yet a very grievous "burden." He must be a man of very firm shoulders, that is not crushed under it.

I have oftentimes, not without wonder and indignation, observed the strange confidence of empirics in physic, that dare venture on the practice of that noble art, which they do not at all understand; considering how for a little paltry gain they shrewdly hazard, or rather certainly destroy, the health and lives of men; and have judged them worthy of as capital and ignominious a punishment, as those that kill men on the highways. But I have soon exchanged this meditation into another of more concernment to myself; and my indignation hath quickly returned into my own bosom, when I consider how much bolder and more hazardous an attempt it is for a man to venture on the priestly office, to minister to the eternal health and salvation of souls: how much skill is requisite to qualify a man for such an undertaking; how great care in the discharge of it; what a sad thing it would be, if through my unskilfulness, or negligence, any one soul should miscarry under my hands, or die and perish eternally!

We minister to souls. Souls! methinks in that one word there is a sermon. Immortal souls! precious souls! one where-

^u Si diligenter attenditis, fratres charissimi, omnes sacerdotes Domini, non solum episcopos, sed etiam presbyteros et ministros ecclesiarum, in grandi periculo esse cognoscetis.

^x Si enim pro se unusquisque vix poterit in die iudicii rationem reddere, quid de sacerdotibus futurum est, a quibus sunt omnium animæ requirendæ?

of is more worth than all the world besides, the price of the blood of the Son of God. I close up this with the excellent words appointed by the church to be read at the ordination of every priest: "Have always therefore in your remembrance, " how great a treasure is committed to your charge. For they " are the sheep of Christ, which he bought with his death, and " for whom he shed his blood. The church and congregation, " whom ye serve, is his spouse and body. And if it shall hap- " pen, the same church, or any members thereof, to take any " hurt or hinderance, by reason of your negligence, you know " the greatness of the fault, and also the horrible punishment " that will ensue."

And now methinks I may use the apostle's words in another case; *Ye see your calling, brethren* *γ*. You see how extremely difficult and hazardous an office it is we have undertaken; *who is sufficient for these things* *²*? whose loins do not tremble at this fearful burden on his shoulders? who would not be almost tempted to repent himself of his undertaking, and to wish himself any the meanest mechanic, rather than a minister? But, alas! this were vain, yea sinful. We are engaged in this sacred office, and there is no retreating; we must now run the hazard, how great soever it be; in we are, and on we must. What shall we then say? what shall we do? Surely this is our best, yea our only course. Let us first prostrate ourselves at the feet of the Almighty God, humbly confessing and heartily bewailing our great and manifold miscarriages in this weighty undertaking; let us weep tears of blood (if it were possible) for the blood of souls, which we have reason to fear may stick upon our garments. The blood of souls, I say: for when I consider how many less discerned ways there be, whereby a man may involve himself in that guilt, as not only by an openly vicious example, but even by a less severe, prudent, and wary conversation; not only by actions directly criminal, but by lawful actions, when offensive; (for by these, the apostle assures us, *a man may destroy the soul of his weak brother, for whom Christ died* *³*;) not only by a gross negligence and supine carelessness, but by every lesser remission of those degrees of zeal and diligence, which are requisite

γ 1 Cor. i. 26. Βλέπετε τὴν κλησιν ἑμῶν, ἀδελφοί.

² Καὶ πρὸς ταῦτα τίς ἰκανός;

³ Romans xiv. 15.

in so important an affair: in a word, by not doing all that a man can, and lies within his power, to save the souls committed to his charge:—I say, when I consider this, for mine own part I cannot, I dare not justify myself, or plead Not Guilty before the great Judge of heaven and earth; but do, upon the bended knees of my soul, bewail my sin, and implore his pardoning grace and mercy, crying mightily unto him; *Deliver me from this blood-guiltiness, O my God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*

Having laid ourselves at God's feet, let us not lie idly there, but arise, and for the future do the work of God with all faithfulness and industry; yea, let us make amends for our past negligence, by doubling our future diligence. And for our encouragement here, let us remember, that though many things are required of a minister, yet the chief and most indispensable requisites are these two; a passionate desire to save souls, and an unwearied diligence in the pursuit of that noble design. The minister that wants these two qualifications will hardly pass the test, or gain the approbation of God, the great Judge and Trier; but where these are found, they will cover a multitude of other failings and defects. Let us therefore, reverend brethren, (and may I here conjure both you and myself, by the endeared love we bear to our own souls, and the precious souls committed to our charge, yea by the blood of the Son of God, the price of both,) let us, I beseech you, from henceforth return to our several charges, zealously and industriously plying the great work and business that is before us. Let us think no pains too great, to escape that *μείζον κρίμα*, that *greater judgment*, that otherwise attends us. Let us study hard, and read much, and pray often, and *preach in season and out of season*, and catechise the youth, and take wise opportunities of instructing those, who being of riper years may yet be as unripe in knowledge; and visit the sick, and according to our abilities relieve the poor, shewing to all our flock the example of a watchful, holy, humble conversation. And may a great blessing of God crown our labours! Let us go on, and the Lord prosper us!

I have done *ad clerum*, and have but a word more *ad populum*, to the people.

My brethren, you may possibly think yourselves altogether unconcerned in this whole discourse. But if you do, you are

mistaken ; all this nearly concerns even you. I shall only point to you wherein.

1. If the pastoral office be so tremendous an undertaking, judge then, I pray you, of the sacrilegious boldness and impiety of those Uzzahs among the laity, that dare touch this ark, the priest's charge and care. If we, my brethren, that have been trained up in the schools of the prophets, that have been educated with no small care and cost to this employment, that have spent a double apprenticeship of years in our studies, and most of us a great deal more—if we, I say, after all this, find reason to tremble at our insufficiency for such an undertaking ; how horrible is the confidence, or rather impudence, of those mechanics, that have leaped from the shopboard or plough into the pulpit, and thus *per saltum*, by a prodigious leap, commenced teachers ? what shall we say to these mountebanks in the church, these empirics in theology ? I only say this. I can never sufficiently admire either their boldness in venturing to be teachers, or the childish folly and simplicity of those that give themselves up to be their disciples. It is a miracle that any such person shall dare to preach, or if he do, that any man in his right wits should vouchsafe to hear him.

2. This discourse concerning the difficulty and hazard of the priestly office shews sufficiently all the people's danger. It is the danger your own souls are in, my brethren, if not carefully looked to, that is the great hazard of our office. O therefore, if you do consider it, what need have you to look to yourselves !

3. Lastly, if our work and office be attended with this difficulty, sure it is your duty to pity us, to pray for us, to encourage us, by all possible ways and means, to the vigorous performance of it ; at least not to add to our load, or discourage us, either by your wayward factiousness, or stubborn profaneness, or sacrilegious injustice : if you do, sad will be your account.

Remember therefore the advice of the apostle^b ; *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves ; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account ; that they may do this* (i. e. attend on this work of watching over your souls) *with joy, and not with grief*^c. Grotius's paraphrase is here most genuine ; “ Sweeten and allay the irksome labour of
“ your teachers, by performing to them all offices of respect and

^b Hebrews xiii. 17.

^c Ἴνα μετὰ χαρᾶς τοῦτο ποιῶσι, καὶ μὴ στενάζοντες.

“ love, that they may with alacrity, and not with grief, discharge
“ that function, which is of itself a sufficient burden, without any
“ addition of sorrow from you ^d.”

*Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed all
honour and glory, adoration and worship, both now and for
ever. Amen.*

^d Mulcete eum laborem omnibus obsequiis et officiis, ut cum alacritate
potius quam dolore fungantur munere satis gravi, etiamsi a vobis nihil
triste accedat.

THE
PRINCIPAL PARTS AND BRANCHES
OF THE
PASTORAL OFFICE,
WITH
RULES AND DIRECTIONS

FOR THE DUE PERFORMANCE OF EACH OF THEM ;

IN A CHARGE TO THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF
ST. DAVID'S.

Reverend brethren of the clergy,

I SHALL not waste my time and little strength, by detaining you with a long and useless preface. In short, my business at this time shall be to set before you the several parts and branches of that holy office and function which you have undertaken, together with some rules and directions which are necessary to be observed for the due performance of each of them.

The principal parts and branches of the pastoral office are these five :

First, Reading divine service, or the prayers of the church.

Secondly, Preaching.

Thirdly, Catechising.

Fourthly, Administering the holy sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper.

Fifthly and lastly, Visiting of the sick.

First, Reading divine service, or the prayers of the church. This some may think to be a slight and easy matter, that needs

not any advice or directions ; but they are very much mistaken. For to the reading of the prayers aright, there is need of great care and caution. The prayers of the church must be read audibly, distinctly, and reverently.

1. Audibly, so that, if possible, all that are present may hear them, and join in them. There are some that mutter the prayers, as if they were to pray only to themselves, whereby they exclude most of the congregation from the benefit of them.

2. The prayers of the church ought to be read distinctly and leisurely ; not to be galloped over, as the manner of some is, who read the prayers so fast, that they outrun the attention and devotion of the people, not giving them time to join with them, or to make their responses in their due places. This rule is to be observed in reading the prayers throughout, but especially in reading the Decalogue or Ten Commandments in the second service. There are some that read the Commandments so thick one upon another, that the people have not time to add that excellent prayer to each of them, *Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.*

To this head, of distinct reading the prayers, I shall only add this one observation. Whereas upon Sundays and holydays the church hath appointed a first and second service to be read one after another, it is convenient that there be a decent interval betwixt them. For judge, I pray you, how absurd it may seem, to conclude the first service with St. Chrysostom's prayer, and *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and immediately, without any intermission, to enter upon the second service.

I verily believe, the first intention of the church was, that these two services should be read at two several times in the morning ; but now custom and the rubric direct us to use them both at the same time. Yet in cathedral or mother churches, here is still a decent distinction between the two services : for before the priest goes to the altar to read the second service, there is a short but excellent anthem sung ; in imitation whereof, in the churches of London, and in other greater churches of the country, instead of that anthem there is part of a psalm sung.

3. And lastly, the prayers of the church are to be read with great reverence and devotion, so as to excite and kindle devotion in the congregation. Thus the prayers of the church are to be read, if we would keep up the reputation of them, and render

them useful to the people. But alas! there are too many ministers, who, by disorderly and indecent and irreverent reading of the liturgy, disgrace it, and expose it to contempt. To whom the church may complain, as one of old in the poet did of the ill rehearsal of his oration :

*Quem recitas meus est, O Fidentine, libellus ;
Sed male dum recitas, incipit esse tuus.*

The book of prayers which ye read is indeed mine : but at the sad rate you read it, I am ashamed of it ; it is none of mine, but yours.

I am verily persuaded, that this is one cause, that there are so many sectaries and separatists among us. They find so little reverence and devotion in the use of our common prayers, that they cannot away with them, but run from the church to the conventicle, where they hope to find more devotion.

II. Another part of the pastoral office is preaching, i. e. (as we commonly use the word,) taking a text or portion of scripture, explaining it, raising some useful point of doctrine from it, and applying it to the edification of the hearers. For otherwise the bare reading of the scriptures is sometimes called preaching ; as Acts xv. 21. *For Moses* (that is, the writings of Moses) *of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.* But here I take the word preaching in the forementioned sense, as now it is used. This is a noble part of the pastor's duty, but difficult ; it is not a work that every one should undertake, or can perform : for it requires the knowledge and understanding of the holy scriptures, and, in order thereunto, some skill in the learned languages, and other parts of human learning ; it requires a good judgment and discretion, I add elocution too. The time will not give me leave (if I were able) to set before you all the rules or precepts of the art of preaching, and to give you an entire system of it. There are many learned men, who have written full treatises of this subject ; I mention only our excellent bishop Wilkins, who hath published a treatise, entitled, *Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher*, which I recommend to the reading of younger divines, and first beginners in the art of preaching : to whom also I give this further advice, that they should not at first trust to their own compositions, but furnish themselves with store of the best sermons that have been published by the learned divines of our

church. These they should read often, and study to imitate them, and in time they will attain to a habit of good preaching themselves. Among the printed sermons, those of the late archbishop Tillotson are well known and approved by all.

But what shall be done in those poor parishes, where there are as poor ministers, altogether incapable of performing this duty of preaching in any tolerable manner? I answer, that in such places, ministers, instead of sermons of their own, should use the Homilies of the church, which ought to be in every parish. And they would do well also, now and then to read a chapter or section out of the *Whole Duty of Man*, which, I presume, is translated into the Welsh tongue. I add, that it would be a piece of charity, if the clergy of the neighbourhood to such places, who are better qualified, would sometimes visit those dark corners, and lend some of their light to them, by bestowing now and then a sermon on the poor people, suited to their capacities and necessities. They have my leave, yea and authority so to do; and they may be sure the good God will not fail to reward them.

III. The third work of the pastor's office is catechising, without which preaching will not be sufficient. For if people be not well instructed in the necessary principles of religion when they are young, they will hardly attain to any sound knowledge when they are old. For according to the Greek apophthegm,

Νεκρὸν λατρεύειν, καὶ γέροντα νοηθεῖν, ταυτὸν ἐστὶ,

To instruct an ignorant old man, and to raise a dead man, are things almost equally difficult. I shall not insist upon this subject; for the usefulness and necessity of catechising is acknowledged by all, though the work itself is by many of the clergy sadly neglected. Where such neglect is, it is the duty of the churchwardens to present. I shall make it my business to see this fault amended.

IV. Another, and a main part of the priest's office, is the administration of the holy sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper.

First, for baptism; the church strictly requires, that it be performed publicly, in the house of God, not in private houses, except in case of real necessity; as when a child is weak, and cannot without endangering itself be brought to church. But notwithstanding this strict order of our church, in most places in

this country, baptism is altogether administered in private houses, and scarce any (if any) baptized in the church. If this may be allowed, away with the fonts in your churches, what do they signify? To what purpose are they there? If all the authority I am invested with can do it, I will see this lamentable abuse of the sacrament of baptism reformed.

But further observe, that as our church strictly requires that baptism be administered in public, so it advises that it be performed (if conveniently it may be) on the Lord's day, in a full congregation of Christian people. Hear the words of the rubric.

“ The people are to be admonished that it is most convenient that baptism should not be administered but upon Sundays and other holydays, when the most number of people come together; as well for that the congregation there present may testify the receiving of them that be newly baptized into the number of Christ's church, as also because in the baptism of infants every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God in baptism.”

I take leave to add, that it is most for the interest of the infant to be so baptized, that it may have the benefit of the united prayers of a full Christian congregation, which is much to be valued. Methinks there should be no need of urging this to parents, that have any real love or affection to their children. This would incline them to desire that themselves, which the church desires of them. Remember, I beseech you, that your children are to be but once baptized: and what is but once done ought to be well done, in the best and most perfect manner.

To come to the other sacrament, the eucharist, or holy supper: this is the most sacred and mysterious rite, the apex, the top, and perfection of Christian worship, as the ancients term it; and therefore it ought to be performed with the greatest reverence and solemnity in every punctilio of it, according to the direction of our church in her rubric to the Communion Office. But this you are especially to take care of, that you administer not the holy sacrament to persons known to be vicious and scandalous. Hear the rubric of the church to this purpose, viz.

“ So many as intend to be partakers of the holy communion shall signify their names to the curate at least some time the day before.—And if any of those be an open and notorious

“ evil liver, or have done any wrong to his neighbours, by word
 “ or deed, so that the congregation be thereby offended; the
 “ curate having knowledge thereof, shall call him, and advertise
 “ him, that in anywise he presume not to come to the Lord’s
 “ table, until he hath openly declared himself to have truly re-
 “ pented and amended his former naughty life, that the congre-
 “ gation may thereby be satisfied, which before were offended;
 “ and that he hath recompensed the parties to whom he hath
 “ done wrong, or at least to declare himself to be in full purpose
 “ so to do, as soon as he conveniently may.”

I am not ignorant that there are some who plead for a free admission to the Lord’s table, of all that are members of the visible church, and not yet excommunicated; and exclaim against the exclusion of men from the holy communion, as a device, and usurpation of the presbyterians and other sectaries. But these men are grossly mistaken, for you see it is the express order of our church. I add, that the same order was observed in the primitive and apostolical churches. For Justin Martyr, who flourished within forty years after the apostolic age, (i. e. after the death of St. John the apostle,) in his second Apology tells us, that in his time none were admitted to the holy eucharist but those who lived according to the law of Christ. It is a received distinction among divines, that there is a twofold excommunication, *excommunicatio major et minor*, “ the greater
 “ and the lesser excommunication.” The greater excommunication is an exclusion of a man from the communion of the church, and the public ordinances universally. The lesser excommunication is indeed in order to prevent the greater, and to bring men under the discipline and correction of the church, for the amendment of their lives, that so at length they may be fit to be admitted to the holy communion.

So our church informs us in her rubric to the Communion Office, where the minister repelling any from the communion, is required “ to give an account thereof to the ordinary within
 “ fourteen days after at the furthest; and the ordinary shall pro-
 “ ceed against the offending person, according to the canon.” So much for the administration of the holy sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s supper.

V. I come to the fifth and last part of the pastoral office, viz. visiting the sick. For this we have an express command in the

holy scriptures, *Is any sick among you, let him call for the elders of the church*^b, i. e. the presbyters of the church; as supposing they may not otherwise have notice of his sickness. Sick men too commonly neglect this duty, oftentimes out of fear, proceeding from an evil conscience. They look upon the minister's coming to their sick bed as a kind of a messenger of death, for which they are not so well prepared. But if the sick man does not send for his minister, the minister (having other notice of his sickness) ought to go to him without being sent for.

How to perform this duty towards sick men aright, our church fully directs him, in her excellent Office of the Visitation of the Sick, which is so full and perfect, that there needs nothing to be added to it.

But observe further, that it is the pastor's duty to visit his parishioners, not only when they are sick, but also when they are well and in good health; not only with common neighbourly visits, but visiting them to the purposes of salvation. He should sometimes go home to their houses, and minister to their souls in private, mildly reproving them for what faults he observes in them, admonishing them of such duties as he knows them to be ignorant of; as not coming constantly to church, not frequenting the communion, and the like. He is there seriously to call upon them, to mind them of the great concern of their immortal souls, in time to prepare for sickness and death, and the tremendous judgment that follows. Such particular private applications of the minister to his parishioners are highly useful, and will render the public ordinances more beneficial to them.

To you, my brethren of the clergy, I shall conclude all I have to say, in a short but serious and affectionate exhortation.

1. In the first place, and above all things, follow after holiness, *without which no man shall see the Lord*. Holiness is a qualification, indispensably required in every Christian, and that *sub periculo animæ, as he hopes to be saved*, and to see the face of God in heaven. And can it be imagined, that a minister of God should be saved without it? Nay, he is obliged to holiness in a double capacity, both as a Christian and as a minister. As a minister, his calling obliges him to be almost perpetually conversant about holy things; which he profanes if he be not himself a holy person. He profanes God's holy worship, his holy

^b James v. 14.

word, and his holy sacraments ; and God will most certainly and severely punish such profaners of his sacred things.

Nay, a minister of God is obliged to an exemplary holiness. Epiphanius tells us, that the duty of the laity is τὸ σύμμετρον καὶ τὸ συγγνωστόν, *a more moderate measure of piety*, suited to their capacity, and tempered with a greater indulgence and mercy. But from the clergy is expected ἡ περὶ πάντων ἀκριβολογία, *a more exact and accurate course of life in all things*. And St. Paul speaks to the same purpose, when he charges Titus to shew himself *in all things an example or pattern of good works*^c. For every pattern must be excellent and extraordinary, and such as is worthy of imitation. This the people will expect from us, that we should go before them, and lead them on to virtue and piety by our example. And however they fail in other civilities, they will be sure generally to observe this piece of good manners, they will readily give us the precedence in the way to heaven, and be content to follow us at a very humble distance. So that our conversation must be somewhat extraordinary, if we expect by our example to bring them up to the ordinary and necessary measures of piety ; and we shall hardly be able to do well, unless we ourselves do somewhat excellently.

2. Be diligent, very diligent in the business of your calling ; for it is a laborious calling, that will not admit of ease and idleness. I speak especially to the younger clergy ; ply your studies, give yourselves to reading, chiefly the holy scriptures, and the writings of learned men that have explained them to you.

The exhortations of St. Paul to Timothy are full to this purpose ; *Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all*^d. Consider, I beseech you, what kind of person he was, whom St. Paul thus exhorts : he was one, who from a child knew the holy scriptures ; one that had the gift of prophecy, and was endued with extraordinary and even miraculous gifts. This man St. Paul earnestly calls upon to be diligent in reading and study ; what need then have we, even the best of us, of this diligence, who are so very far short of his accomplishments ! In a word, an idle person in any calling whatsoever is very contemptible ; but an idle and

^c Titus ii. 7.

^d 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15.

lazy parochial priest is of all mortals the most contemptible and inexcusable. What! so much business, and that of so great importance as the salvation of men's souls, and yet idle? For the Lord's sake shake off sloth, rouse up and bestir yourselves in the business of your calling, remembering that the souls of your people and your own souls are at stake.

3. And lastly, be much and often in prayer to God, especially in private prayer. Content not yourselves with reading prayers at church, but take care also, that there be daily prayers in your families, at least morning and evening; and some time every day retire to your studies, and there, upon your bended knees, earnestly beseech Almighty God to have mercy on you, to direct and assist you in your studies, and to give you good success in your labours. Pray for the souls of the people committed to your charge; pray for your own souls, that *while you preach to others, you yourselves may not be castaways.*

If you do these things; if you adorn your holy profession with a holy conversation; if you be diligent in the business of your calling; if you pray daily to God for his help and assistance; he will not fail to be with you, and to carry you through all difficulties with honour and success; and in the end your reward will be great and glorious, and an abundant compensation of all your labours. So St. Peter tells you in that excellent text, with which I shall conclude; *Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away^e.*

^e 1 Peter v. 2, 3, 4.

DIRECTIONS

GIVEN

TO THE CLERGY
OF THE DIOCESE OF LONDON,
IN THE YEAR MDCCXXIV.

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

EDMUND

LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

To which is added,

His CHARGE to the Clergy, in his last Visitation, begun in the Year
1741, and finished in the Year 1742.

DIRECTIONS

GIVEN TO

THE CLERGY

OF THE DIOCESE OF LONDON,

IN THE YEAR MDCCXXIV.

Reverend brethren,

WHEN it pleased his majesty to translate me to the see of London, upon the death of a pious predecessor now with God, I was very sensible of the great weight and difficulty of the charge, as requiring almost perpetual attendances of one kind or another, and entangled with a greater variety of emergencies, and more exposed to the observation and censure of the world, than the administration of any other diocese. But as I was called to this charge without any application or endeavour on my own part, I considered it as a providential appointment, and firmly trusted that the same God, whose providence had called me to it, would graciously direct and support me in the discharge of it, to his glory, and the good of his church.

And next to the divine goodness, upon which I humbly rely for such a measure of wisdom and understanding, and such strength of body and resolution of mind, as a station of so much labour and difficulty requires, I must depend upon the kind and unanimous assistance of you, my reverend brethren ; and I doubt not but you will be ready on all occasions to join with me in

preserving and establishing order and discipline within this diocese ; which, as it is adorned with the capital city of the kingdom, from whence, as from a fountain, good and evil are derived to all parts of the kingdom ; and as it may well be presumed to abound with persons of greater learning, knowledge, and experience, than any other diocese ; ought upon both these accounts to be a pattern of order and discipline to the whole nation. And more particularly ought it to be the pattern of a regular behaviour in the clergy, and of an exact performance of the public offices of the church ; upon which two, it may most truly be said, that national piety and religion do mainly depend ; nothing being more clear in experience, than that the spirit of piety and religion decays or increases in particular parishes, according as the incumbent sets a good or bad example, and the public offices in the church are reverently or negligently performed.

For the promoting these good ends, I choose, at my first coming to you, to put into your hands some rules and observations, which more particularly relate to those two important points. For though I doubt not but as many of the clergy of this diocese as have been a long time incumbents in it, and have reaped the full advantage of books and conversation, which is its peculiar blessing, are abundantly instructed in the several branches of the pastoral office ; yet it must be remembered, that there are many others, whose age, observation, and experience are much less ; and to them therefore I would be understood more especially to apply myself, in suggesting such rules as are of most constant use, and seem to me to be most needful, for discharging the ministerial function, with honour to the church, and edification to the people : resolving also to put them into the hands of those who will have yet greater need of them, I mean, all such as I shall hereafter appoint to parochial cures, whether by institution or license. And if the rules which I have laid down shall be thought plain and obvious, it is a sufficient answer, that they are useful : since it may be truly said of all rules for the conduct of human life in any branch whatsoever, that the more plain the rule is, the more important the duty.

And because I shall begin with the decent and regular performance of the public offices of the church ; that which I must mention in the first place, as a general preparation for the rest, is,

1. The decency of the place in which those offices are to be performed, in point of repairs, cleanliness, and all accommodations of books, vessels, vestments, and other things, which the rubrics and canons of the church suppose and require. For nothing is more certain, than that the solemn appearance of the place is the means of begetting a reverence in the minds of the persons, and a suitable honour for the public worship of God; and, on the other hand, all mean and unseemly appearances in the house of God, and all neglects of the decent and necessary preparations for his public worship, beget an indolence and inactivity in the minds of the congregation, and a contempt, or at least a disregard, of the worship itself. So that the observation is ordinarily true, that the want of decency and cleanliness in the house of God is a sign of the want of true piety and devotion in the hearts of the people. God be thanked, there has of late years been an unusual zeal in this nation for the repairing and beautifying paróchial churches, and furnishing them with all proper accommodations for the decent and orderly performance of divine service: but where that spirit has not yet prevailed, and the churches appear to need it, I must beseech you to do all that is in your power to raise it among the people; and particularly, I must beseech every rector to set his parishioners a good example upon this head, as well as others, by keeping his chancel not only in good repair, but in a decent condition.

The decency and solemnity of the place being thus provided for; that which comes first under consideration among the duties to be performed in it is,

II. The reading of divine service to the congregation. An office that is usually reckoned a matter of course, which all clergymen are equally capable of performing, and which they can hardly perform amiss; and yet it is most certain, that the edification of the people, and the honour of the liturgy itself, depend a great deal upon the manner of performing it; that is, upon the reading it audibly, distinctly, and solemnly. It is an absurdity, and an iniquity, which we justly charge upon the church of Rome, that her public service is in a tongue unknown to the people; but though our service is in a known tongue, it must be owned that as the reading it without being heard makes it to all intents and purposes an unknown tongue, so confused and indistinct reading, with every degree thereof, is a gradual approach to it. The dissenters object against our public liturgy,

that it is cold, and lifeless, and unaffecting: but though the objection has no force in itself, (what they call cold and lifeless being no more than grave and serious, as all public liturgies ought to be,) yet we may give it very great force by running over the service in a cold and unaffecting manner. Our people themselves are too apt, in their own minds, to vilify and depreciate this part of our public service, as that which is ready composed to the minister's hand, and requires no further talent than the bare reading; but we find by experience to what degrees this objection vanishes, and how devoutly and reverently the service is attended to, where it has the just advantage of being read in a distinct, solemn, and affectionate manner. In a word, it is in vain to hope, that the people will be zealous, if they see the minister indifferent, or that any service will be duly attended to, which is not recommended to them as a matter of great concern and importance, by being performed in a serious and affecting way; and whenever we perform it carelessly and precipitately, we must forgive them if they believe that we account it a task and a burden to us, which we are willing to get rid of with as little trouble, and in as short a time, as we can: a consideration, that will oblige me to resist, to the utmost of my power, and where there is not the most evident necessity, all attempts in ministers to charge themselves with the performing of divine service on any Lord's day more than twice; as it is a practice, which for the most part must render the service less affecting and edifying as to the people, and almost unavoidably draws the reproaches I have mentioned, both upon the liturgy and the minister.

I am aware, that the duty which I am now pressing is not equally in every one's power; all men having not an equal strength and felicity of voice. And, considering how much depends upon these qualifications, in order to an useful and honourable discharge of the ministerial office, it is much to be wished, that greater regard were had to them, in making choice of persons for the sacred function; and particularly, that, in the education of those who are designed for the ministry, the right forming of the voice were made one special care from the very beginning, in our schools, as well as universities: a care, which however omitted by others, it is to be hoped will not be forgotten by such clergymen who have sons that are intended for the ministry; because they know by experience, and cannot but

sensibly feel, the great importance and advantage of it. In the mean time, with regard to those who are already admitted to holy orders, I must beg leave to observe, that as on one hand there are few whose perfections and abilities in this way are so complete by nature, as to supersede all endeavours after further improvement; so, on the other hand, there are not many, whose natural talents are so very defective and unhappy as to be incapable of being bettered by care and observation. At least, it is very certain, that none are so irregularly framed, as not to be capable of officiating in a devout and serious manner, such as shall shew that the person who officiates is himself thoroughly affected; and this, where it appears, makes such a strong and constant impression upon the minds of the congregation, as goes a great way to atone for other failings, which they see to be natural and unavoidable. But a supine, careless, and indevout way of performing divine service is utterly inexcusable both with God and man.

When ministers have given it the utmost advantages they can, they will find it to be all little enough to keep up the attention and devotion of the people; whose minds are overwhelmed with worldly cares, and too little accustomed to spiritual exercises of any kind. However, ministers who officiate in that devout and affectionate way do a great deal towards the raising in them a spirit of devotion; and more they cannot do, unless the people will be persuaded to the practice of family devotion; which would hinder the mind from being drowned in worldly thoughts, and habituate it to the moving and approaching towards heaven; and which therefore I must entreat you to promote in your several parishes to the utmost of your power, with this view, among others, that greater degrees of attention and devotion may be seen in our public assemblies. For the same end, I will take this occasion to mention one thing more; and that is, the practice of saying grace before and after meals; which, however small it may seem, yet being a devout acknowledgment of the providence of God over us, and of our dependence upon him, it would be another good means of keeping up a spirit of piety and devotion in families, if it were brought into constant practice.

III. Besides that part in our public devotions which properly belongs to the minister, there is another, which, though it belongs to the whole body of the congregation, will hardly be

performed in a decent and edifying manner, without some previous care and assistance on his part; I mean the singing of psalms. This is a divine and heavenly exercise, which the scripture recommends to us as one special means of edification; and being then in its greatest perfection, when it is performed by Christians in a joint harmony of heart and voice, it has been ever accounted a standing part of public devotion, not only in the Jewish, but in the Christian church. And in the church of England particularly, whose Sunday-service is made up of three offices, which were originally distinct, and in their natures are so, there is the greater need of the intervention of psalmody, that the transitions from one service to another may not be too sudden and abrupt. This exercise therefore, being a part of our public devotions, and very useful when it is duly and regularly performed, must not be forgotten, while we are considering of proper rules for decency and edification in the church; especially, since it is so plain in experience, that where no care is taken in this matter, the performance will be very indecent, and indeed shocking.

To prevent that, and to provide for due solemnity in this part of our public service as well as the rest, I have often wished, that every minister would take the trouble of directing the choice of proper psalms; or rather, that they would once for all fix and establish a course of psalms, to be given out and sung in their order. By which means, the congregation might be furnished with those which are most proper, and also with a due variety; and, by degrees, the most useful parts of the Book of Psalms would be implanted in the minds of the people, and become familiar to them.

With a view to those goods ends, and by way of assistance to the younger clergy, I have subjoined to these directions a course of singing-psalms; which may be gone through every six months, and is so ordered, as to consist of a proper mixture, 1. of praises and thanksgivings, 2. of prayer to God and trust in him, and, 3. of precepts and motives to a godly life. But when I put this into your hands, I would not be understood to direct, but only to recommend the use of it; leaving you at full liberty to choose any other parts of the Book of Psalms which you may judge proper; provided you leave not the choice to the parish clerk, which I earnestly desire you will not.

And, to the end the psalms so chosen may be sung in a more

decent manner, it is further to be wished, that the people of every parish, and especially the youth, were trained up and accustomed to an orderly way of singing some of the psalm tunes which are most plain and easy, and of most common use ; since that is the proper season of forming the voice as well as the mind, and the regularity into which it is then cast with great ease will remain with them during life, and not only enable them to contribute their part to the decency of this performance, but, even for the sake of that talent, will incline them to be constant in attending the public service of the church.

But when I recommend the bringing your people, whether old or young, to a decent and orderly way of singing psalms, I do by no means recommend to you or them the inviting or encouraging those idle instructors, who of late years have gone about the several countries to teach tunes uncommon and out of the way ; (which very often are as ridiculous as they are new ; and the consequence of which is, that the greatest part of the congregation, being unaccustomed to them, are silenced, and do not join in this exercise at all ;) but my meaning is, that you should endeavour to bring your whole congregation, men and women, old and young, or at least as many as you can, to sing five or six of the plainest and best known tunes, in a decent, regular, and uniform manner, so as to be able to bear their part in them at the public service of the church.

Which last advantage, of bringing the whole congregation to join in this exercise, will be best obtained, especially in country parishes, by directing the clerk to read the psalm, line by line, as they go on ; by which means, they who cannot read will yet be able to bear a part in singing ; and even they who can neither read nor sing will receive from the matter of the psalm both instruction in their duty, and improvement in their devotion.

Under this head, I must take notice of the choice of parish clerks, who are assistants to the minister in performing divine service, and are still in his nomination, by canon in all places, and by custom also in most. And upon this account, their qualifications, “ of honest conversation, and sufficiency for reading, “ writing, and singing, ” are specially provided for in the ninety-first canon of our church ; which was made on purpose to guard against the indecencies that parish clerks, who are not duly qualified, always bring into the public worship. In conformity to

which canon, it is to be hoped, that, as there shall be occasion, ministers (setting aside all private regards and applications) will choose such persons to be their clerks, as are known to be of sober conversation, and of ability to perform the part that belongs to them (especially in the point of psalmody) decently and laudably.

If what I have said under this head concerning psalmody, and the qualifications of parish clerks, shall be thought a descending to points too little, and unworthy of regard, let it be remembered, that nothing can be called little, which conduces in any degree to so great an end, as is the decent and orderly performance of the public worship of God.

But to return to the duties which belong to the minister alone.

IV. What has been said under the second head, concerning the advantages of reading in a distinct and affectionate manner, equally holds in the duty of preaching; the effects and impressions whereof, with the several degrees of them, do not more depend upon any one thing, than the manner of delivering. When Demosthenes was asked, What was the first qualification of a good orator? his answer was, Pronunciation; and being further asked, what was the second? and, after that, what was the third? he still went on to answer, Pronunciation; *ut eam videri posset, non præcipuam, sed solam, judicasse*, as Quintilian adds, who relates the passage. Thus it always has been, and always will be, in mixed and popular assemblies. And the proper inference from thence is not to fall into complaints that empty sounds should in so many instances obtain greater praise and a more favourable acceptance, than good sense expressed in proper language; but let the inference be, an endeavour to recommend good sense by the advantage of good elocution. For it is in vain to contend against experience; and in experience nothing is more plain and certain, than the great importance of a distinct and graceful elocution, both to the honour of the preacher, and the edification of the hearers; and therefore an endeavour after it is a justice that is owing as well to your own compositions, as to the souls which are committed to your care.

But although, the church having composed a public service to our hands, all that is required on our part is the reading it in a distinct, serious, and affectionate manner; yet the work of

preaching, being now left by the church entirely to incumbents, requires an additional care as to matter, method, and other circumstances. In speaking to which heads I would not have it understood, as if my design were to enter into the general rules of preaching: this has been often done already by much abler hands: and my only aim is, to give a check to some particular irregularities in this way, which young men are apt to fall into, and which, in my opinion, tend to defeat the main ends of public preaching, especially in mixed and popular congregations.

To prevent this, it must be always remembered, in the first place, that we are Christian preachers, and not barely preachers of morality. For though it is true, that one end of Christ's coming was to correct the false glosses and interpretations of the moral law, and, in consequence thereof, one end of his instituting a ministry must be, to prevent the return of those abuses, by keeping up in the minds of men a true notion of natural religion, and a just sense of their obligations to the performance of moral duties; yet it is also true, that the main end of his coming was to establish a new covenant with mankind, founded upon new terms and new promises; to shew us a new way of obtaining forgiveness of sins, and reconciliation to God, and eternal happiness; and to prescribe rules of greater purity and holiness, by way of preparation for greater degrees of happiness and glory. These (that is, the several branches of what we may call the mediatorial scheme, with the several duties annexed to and resulting from each branch) are, without doubt, the main ingredients of the gospel state; those, by which Christianity stands distinguished from all other religions, and Christians are raised to far higher hopes, and far greater degrees of purity and perfection. In which views it would seem strange, if a Christian preacher were to dwell only upon such duties as are common to Jews, Heathens, and Christians; and were not more especially obliged to dwell on and inculcate those principles and doctrines which are the distinguishing excellencies of the Christian religion, and by the knowledge and practice of which, more especially, every Christian is entitled to the blessings and privileges of the gospel covenant.

But yet so it is, that these subjects are too much forgotten among young preachers; who, being better acquainted with morality than divinity, fall naturally into the choice of moral

rather than divine subjects, and will of course do so, till the two subjects are equally considered and understood. And this partiality (if I may so call it) to one above the other seems to have had its rise from the ill times, when, the pulpits being much taken up with some favourite points of divinity, discourses upon moral heads were less common; and after those times were over, their successors, upon the Restoration, desirous to correct that error, and to be upon the whole as little like their predecessors as might be, seem to have fallen into the contrary extreme; so that probably in many places the heads of divinity began to be as rarely treated of, as the heads of morality had been before.

The thing therefore, which I would recommend to young preachers, is, to avoid both the extremes, by ordering the choice of their subjects in such a manner, that each of those heads may have its proper share, and their hearers be duly instructed upon both. Only, with these cautions in relation to moral subjects; that, upon all such occasions, justice be done at the same time to Christianity, by taking special notice of the improvements which it has made in each branch of the moral scheme, and warning their hearers not to rest in the righteousness of a moral heathen, but to aspire to Christian perfection; and, in the next place, that all moral discourses be enriched by examples and illustrations from scripture; which, besides its being more familiar to the people than any other writings, has in it such a noble plainness and simplicity, as far surpasses all the beauties and elegancies that are so much admired in heathen authors. To which give me leave to add a third observation, with regard to the doctrines and duties peculiarly belonging to the Christian scheme, or the new covenant; that the true way to secure to these their proper share, is the setting apart some certain seasons of the year for catechetical discourses, whether in the way of expounding, or preaching; which being carried on regularly, though at different times, according to the order and method of the Church Catechism, will lead the minister, as by a thread, to the great and fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith; and not only to explain them to the people, but to lay out the particular duties which more immediately flow from each head, together with the encouragements to the performance of them; that so principle and practice may go hand in hand, as they do throughout the whole Christian scheme, and as they certainly ought to do throughout the preaching of every Christian minis-

ter. This was the foundation of that standing rule among our ancestors, to proceed upon every head, expressly, by way of doctrine and use; and however the terms may be discontinued, the things never must, if we resolve to preach to the true edification of our hearers. And, with the same view, it seems necessary to add one rule more, which is, that in our sermons the doctrinal part be comprised in as narrow a compass as the nature of the subject will fairly bear, that so sufficient room may be left for a distinct and particular enforcement of the practical duties resulting from it, and not barely for a brief and superficial mention of them, which is too often the case, and must unavoidably be so, where too large a scope is given to the doctrinal part.

This is an error, into which young men are naturally led by the practice in the universities; where sermons being required rather as an exercise of the preacher, than for the instruction and edification of the hearers, greater allowances may be made for theory and speculation: but this is a mischievous indulgence in other congregations, over which ministers are professedly appointed as public teachers, to instruct and edify their people, and not to make proof of their own abilities.

The same is to be said of the choice of uncommon subjects, and the treating of those that are common in an uncommon and refined way; which gains great applause in our universities, as a testimony of good parts, or great reading: but in popular congregations it answers not any one of those wise ends, for which public preaching was instituted.

In like manner, close argument, and a long chain of reasonings and consequences from the mere nature of things, are very useful and laudable before a learned audience, who have capacities to comprehend and follow them; but in other audiences, the reasonings may easily be so close, as to be unintelligible; and therefore, in condescension to meaner understandings, they must be loosened and disentangled by proper divisions, and rendered plain and obvious by such examples and allusions as are most familiar to the people.

If the submitting to these things shall be thought a diminution to preachers who are capable of the more close and refined way, it must be remembered, that the being able to make things plain to the meanest capacities is no ordinary talent; that in all cases he must be allowed to speak best, who speaks things that arise

most naturally from the subject in hand ; and that, particularly in the work of preaching, the faculty of discoursing pertinently upon all subjects, in a distinct method and proper language, with as close reasoning as the audience can bear, and no closer, is a very great perfection, not to be attained but by a clear understanding and a solid judgment, improved by long exercise, and an intimate acquaintance with the best and most judicious authors.

Against these and all other errors, into which young preachers are apt to fall, I know no better general remedies than these two : the first, that when they have pitched upon their subject, and considered what the heads are which it naturally suggests, they weigh each head separately, and fill every one of them with hints of proper matter, before they begin to compose. By this means, the discourse will be more solid, and the several parts of it duly connected ; and when they have before their eyes, and in one view, all the heads to be treated of, they will take care that the whole be uniform, and that no greater share be allowed to any one head, than is consistent with their doing justice to the rest. The second is, that, before they go on to compose, they make references, under each head, to such proofs and examples of scripture, as tend to confirm or explain the several doctrines to be treated of ; by which means, the text and phrases of scriptures (the best embellishments of all religious discourses) will spread themselves into every branch, and be sure to be taken in where the application of them is most easy and pertinent ; as they will also suggest many proper and useful thoughts in the whole course of the composition ; there being no doubt but the Spirit of God is best able to acquaint us with the motives and arguments which are most effectual for the propagating religion, and the reforming of mankind.

The holy scriptures are our great rule both of faith and practice ; but the precepts and examples contained in them are not ranged into one view under the several heads of duty, but are mixed and dispersed throughout the sacred books. And though those books are in the hands of the people, and will not fail to give great light and good impressions, when they are seriously and frequently read by them ; yet it must be owned, that the weight and conviction which they carry in them are much increased, when the several places of the same import and ten-

dency are laid together and compared, and are applied to the mind in their united strength. A work, which cannot in reason be expected from the generality of the people, unless they had more leisure, and greater abilities; and a work, therefore, that certainly belongs to the ministers of God's word, who have both leisure and abilities, and who cannot lay a better foundation of sound and useful preaching, than in this way of digesting the precepts and examples of scripture, and making them mutual explications and enforcements of one another.

Every minister declares at the time of his ordination, that he is determined to instruct the people committed to his charge out of the holy scriptures, and that he will be diligent in reading and studying them. And I am fully persuaded, that this method of comparing scripture with scripture, which is so very beneficial to the people in plain and practical points, will also be found upon trial to be the best method that a minister can take, in order to form a just notion of the spirit of religion in general, and of the meaning of such particular passages as are less plain, and need explication. Whether the difficulty arise from the phrase and language of scripture, or from some peculiar offices and usages of those ancient times, or from any seeming incoherence in the reasoning and argument: in all these cases, and I will add, in all other difficulties, of what kind soever, the frequent reading of holy writ till the style and spirit of it becomes familiar to us, and the comparing particular passages with others of like nature and tendency, will appear to be our best help and most sure guide. And whoever has patience and resolution enough to proceed and persevere in this way, though he may go on slowly, will go on surely, and find himself in the end a far greater proficient than those, who, neglecting this method, shall wholly betake themselves to assistances of other kinds. Not that any assistance is to be neglected, which may furnish us with knowledge of so high and valuable a nature; but my meaning is, that, in general, scripture is the best interpreter of scripture, and that the comparing scripture with scripture is the surest way to the true understanding of it; and therefore, that recourse ought not ordinarily to be had to the other ways (however seemingly more short and easy) till this has been fully tried, and the mind still calls for further light and assistance. It was the saying of a great man, that the time which he thought he spent best was between his Bible and his

Concordance : and however expositors may be useful, and even necessary, upon some particular points, yet it is very certain, that no person who is possessed of those two, and has not at least a competent knowledge of the holy scriptures, can fairly charge his want of knowledge upon the want of books : on the contrary, it can be a want of nothing but industry and application in the business of his profession.

But whatsoever means or helps of other kinds we may have recourse to for the right understanding of the holy scriptures, there are two which will be always necessary, and which are equally in every one's power, viz. a sincere desire to know the will of God, in order to practise it when known ; and earnest prayer to him for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, in all our inquiries concerning the revelations which he has made to mankind.

V. But, notwithstanding the greatest care and most serious endeavours in ministers to render their discourses useful and edifying, we must not expect that preaching will have its full effect, unless there be some preparation also on the part of the hearers. For as no discourses in any art or science can be tolerably understood, where the general terms and principles belonging to them are not learnt in the first place ; so those particularly of religion must in great measure be lost, unless the people be prepared to receive and apprehend them, by a general knowledge of the language and principles of Christianity. This shews us the great necessity there is to be careful and diligent in the work of catechising, or instructing youth in the general principles of religion ; because upon that it mainly depends, whether our preaching shall be successful or not ; in other words, whether people shall be capable or incapable, during life, to hear and read religious discourses with profit and delight. And as none who is a faithful labourer in God's vineyard can be indifferent, whether the seed which he sows shall grow up or die ; so, in proportion to every one's desire to see that seed grow up to perfection, will his care and diligence be to prepare the soil for the kindly reception of it : a preparation, which must be begun in repeating the Catechism by heart ; but, if it end there, will not avail much to the purpose of profitable hearing. And therefore it is of great use, and indeed necessity, that children be likewise obliged to commit to memory such plain texts of holy scripture, as confirm and illustrate the several branches of

the Church Catechism, and that, as they grow up, they be exhorted to peruse and consider some of those larger catechisms, which give a more particular insight into the Christian faith, and which therefore may be properly said to finish the preparation that we are now speaking of.

VI. The directions which I have been hitherto offering relate to the performance of public duties and offices in the church. But you are not to reckon your ministerial cares at an end as soon as these are over ; there being other pastoral duties of a more private nature, to which you are equally obliged, though not in law as incumbents, yet in conscience as the ministers of Christ.

For instance, dissuasives from vice in general, or even from this or that particular vice, when delivered from the pulpit, may possibly not be heard by the persons who are most guilty ; or if they be heard, men are apt to be partial to themselves, and not to reckon, that what is delivered equally to all concerns them more than their neighbours ; or those general dissuasives may be capable of additional strength from particular circumstances in the condition of particular persons ; the mention of which in public would be more apt to harden than reform. In these and the like cases, ministers will oftentimes see very great need of private admonition and reproof ; and if those prove ineffectual, there is one step further, which they either ought to make themselves, or procure to be made by the officers of the church, and that is, the presenting of obstinate offenders to the spiritual power, to bring them to public shame, and to deter others from falling into the like practices ; and so to deliver the Christian name from the scandal of open and barefaced wickedness, and our church from the reproach of suffering it to go on with impunity, and in defiance of her laws. Two vices I will name in particular, which are more common and more daring than the rest, drunkenness and swearing : but notwithstanding they are so very common, and that the canon concerning presentments makes express mention of those two by name, yet I believe they are seldom found among the crimes presented : for what reason I cannot conceive, unless it be that the laws of the state have appointed temporal penalties for them. But as there is nothing in those laws that has taken away the authority of the church, so is there no cause why the exercise of that authority in these particulars should be discontinued ; at least,

till we see the temporal laws executed with greater zeal and better effect.

In the next place, there may be those under your care, who are troubled in mind, or afflicted with scruples; and as Christ, in the words of the prophet, *was sent to bind up the broken-hearted*, which our Saviour also has specially applied to himself; there can be no doubt, but you are obliged to attend the same work; and to consider yourselves, in this respect among others, as his ministers upon earth: endeavouring to discharge this branch of your office wisely and prudently, and to be able to resolve doubts and difficulties which relate to conscience, by a competent knowledge in casuistical divinity.

This is oftentimes the case of sick persons; whom a lowness of spirits naturally subjects to doubts and distrusts, either wholly groundless, or far more dark and dismal than they need be; and who in that condition are great objects of your compassion. Or it may happen in other instances, that the fears are too well founded, upon the sense and consciousness of a wicked life; and in that case they have still the more need of your counsel and assistance, to direct them in the great affair of their souls, and the most probable methods which then remain, of making their peace with God. Or, though there be no doubts or fears of any sort, yet the bare weakness of body and mind calls for your assistance in prayer to God; which, besides the other effects, is usually a great comfort and refreshment to them. Upon these accounts, our church has made it one part of the business of every minister to visit the sick; and there remains yet one more duty in case of their recovery, namely, to be often pressing them to a serious reflection upon the danger they have been in, and a remembrance of their solemn vows and promises while they had death before their eyes.

And while I am mentioning the pastoral duties of a more private nature, I must not omit that of making peace, and composing differences among neighbours; a work, which certainly belongs to the preachers of peace and the ministers of the God of peace, and for which they are generally much better qualified than other men, by their equal influence over both parties, and the equal relation they bear to both. Accordingly our church, in her Ordination-Service, requires of every person who is to be ordained a solemn declaration and promise, “that he will maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in him, quietness,

“ peace, and love among all Christian people, and especially among them that are or shall be committed to his charge.”

These and the like duties of a pastoral kind (which I call private, by way of distinction from the public duties in the church) do immediately result from the nature of your office and ministry, but are not so strictly bound upon you by the laws of church and state, as the public duties are: a circumstance, which adds much to the honour, as well as merit, of discharging them diligently; since the more this appears to be the effect of your own choice and inclination, the more it endears you to the people, and is the strongest testimony both to them and yourselves, that you are acted, in the whole course of your ministry, by a true principle of conscience, and a tender concern for the souls of men.

VII. But besides public instructions from the pulpit, and admonitions and reproofs in a private way, there is another sort of teaching, which is no less effectual, and that is, by our lives. This is a daily and hourly lesson to the people; and that, without which all other lessons are fruitless and ineffectual. And for this reason, even the heathen writers made it a necessary qualification of a good orator, that he should be a good man; one, whose reputation for probity and sincerity might be a pledge of his dealing honestly with them, and might, by consequence, give every persuasion and argument its full force. Much more is this a necessary qualification in a Christian orator, the great design of whose preaching is to persuade men to be good, upon the considerations of duty to God, and of future rewards and punishments; and it would be an extraordinary demand on our part, if we should expect to be thought sincere and in earnest in persuading others to be good upon those motives, on any less terms than the being very good ourselves; not only in those negative degrees which pass in common account for goodness, (the not being drunkards, nor swearers, nor profane, nor unclean, and the like,) but that goodness, I mean, which consists in a steady and uniform exercise of the graces and virtues of the Christian life; that which makes us fit to instruct and reprove, and to be patterns and examples to the flock of Christ.

With those views of instruction, reproof, and example, and the unblamable character which these offices require, every clergyman solemnly promises at his ordination, “ That he will be diligent to frame and fashion not only his own life, but also

“ the lives of his family, according to the doctrine of Christ, and “ make both himself and them, as much as in him lieth, whole- “ some examples and patterns to the flock of Christ.” And the rules of the church have descended to the minutest circumstances in their outward demeanour, and even appearance; to the end every thing about them may be grave and serious, and remote from the gayeties of the world: more particularly their habit; which hath been ever considered as a certain mark of distinction from the laity, not only in the time of their officiating, but also in their travels; and which, being such as is suitable to their office and character, is justly accounted a token of inward seriousness and composedness of mind, and (as the canon of our church expresses it) “ is one good means to gain them honour “ and estimation from the people.”

For the same ends, the laws of the church in all ages have restrained clergymen from many freedoms and diversions, which in others are accounted allowable and innocent: being either such exercises as are too eager and violent, and therefore unagreeable to that sedateness and gravity which becomes our function; or such games and sports as frequently provoke to oaths and curses, which we can neither decently hear, nor, at that time, seasonably reprove; or such concourses and meetings, as are usually accompanied with jollity and intemperance, with folly and levity, and a boundless liberty of discourse; which are very unfit for the eyes and ears of devout and serious Christians, and among which temptations it is by no means proper to trust so nice and tender a thing as the reputation of a clergyman. The canons of our own and other churches abound with cautions and prohibitions of this nature: and the wisdom of them is fully justified in experience; by which (if we will but make our own observations) it will be found very clear, that the different degrees of respect and authority which ministers enjoy, depend upon no one thing so much, as their mixing or not mixing with the laity, in those diversions and freedoms of life. It is true, the submitting to such mixtures may gain them the reputation of good-nature; but that reputation may be easily got and maintained without it, and is certainly bought too dear, at the expense of their proper character, as ministers of the gospel. Or, it may endear them to free and irregular livers, who delight in nothing more, than to see clergymen willing to become sharers in their irregularities. But whether that, in the end,

proves the foundation of inward respect, or inward contempt, is too plain to be made a question.

VIII. This is a snare into which the younger clergy are most apt to be drawn, and I know but one way that will effectually prevent their falling into it; which is, the entering into a course of studies suitable to their profession, particularly of the holy scriptures; with a resolution to go through and finish that course, in the best manner that they are able, and their circumstances will admit; out of a laudable desire, not only to be qualified in all respects for the discharge of their duty, but also to improve and enrich their own minds, and not to remain strangers to any parts of knowledge, which it is proper for divines to be acquainted with. This will always secure to them an agreeable entertainment at home; and whenever they desire diversion abroad, (which it is far from my intention to discourage,) it will incline them to seek it chiefly among their own brethren, and among the most serious and knowing part of the laity; and there the pleasure will be doubled by the mutual improvement of one another, without danger of giving scandal, and without temptation to irregularities of any kind.

And there is the greater need, in our days, to press upon the clergy a diligent application to the studies of their profession, with regard as well to the dissenters, whose teachers, generally speaking, are more learned than in former days, as to the papists, who are more diligent than ever in corrupting and seducing the members of our communion. Against the assaults of both these, the parochial clergy cannot furnish themselves with any better armour, than those excellent treatises which were written by the London divines, in the reigns of king Charles and king James the Second. But, besides the attacks from those two quarters, there is in our days a further need of study and application in the clergy, with regard to the younger gentry; too many of whom, out of a love of novelty, and under pretence of thinking with freedom, are become zealous advocates for such doctrines and principles, as subvert the Christian faith, and destroy the divine mission and authority of a Christian ministry and a Christian church. The broaching of these schemes carries in it a show of new discoveries, and of a penetration which disdains to go on in the common road, and in both these respects is calculated to feed the vanity of young men; who are therefore eager on all occasions to discover and main-

tain their sentiments, and think it no small matter of triumph, when they meet with clergymen unacquainted with the cause, and not able to manage the dispute against them. This is an open attack upon our common Christianity, which it is the more immediate work of the ministers of the gospel to maintain; and as many as shall take care to furnish themselves with proper and sufficient armour for that end, and shall employ it zealously, as they see occasion, against these enemies of religion, will be accounted faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ. Especially, if to their study and reasoning, by which they are able to bear up against the attacks of freethinkers, they add the powerful argument of an exemplary and truly pastoral life; which is a sort of argument that is easily understood by the people, and carries in it an irresistible force. No doubts will ever grow in the minds of the people, whether that pastor is a messenger and ambassador of Christ, whom they see diligent in informing them, both by doctrine and example, concerning the will of Christ; nor can they ever be persuaded that they are not his shepherds and his stewards, who watch over their flocks with such care as becomes those that believe themselves accountable to their Lord and Master.

And that you may never be unmindful of the relation which you bear to Christ, and of the duties incumbent upon you in consequence of that relation, I must earnestly recommend to you a frequent and serious perusal of the forms of ordination, especially that of priests; where, together with that relation, you will see the solemn engagements which you entered into at the time of your ordination, and find the chief offices of the ministerial function distinctly laid out; and all this in such an excellent and lively manner, as cannot fail of making great impression upon a serious mind.

The two qualifications last mentioned, namely, a good life, and a serious application to the study of divine matters, are the principal ingredients in the character of a clergyman; those, without which he cannot only do no service in the church of Christ, but must bring dishonour to his profession, and great mischief to the souls of men. On those accounts, it becomes the duty of every clergyman not only to be possessed of those qualifications himself, but also to use his utmost endeavour, that none but such as are possessed of them be admitted to holy orders, or the cure of souls; and much more to take care that he be not

accessary to such admissions, by joining in undue testimonials for those ends. It is a duty which every man owes to truth, not to give his testimony to things which he either knows to be false, or does not know to be true: it is a duty which every clergyman owes to his bishop, not to deceive and impose upon him: it is, further, a duty which he owes to the church whereof he is a member, not to be the means of sending into it ignorant and unworthy ministers: and, last of all, it is a duty which he owes to his own soul, not to involve it in the guilt of all that mischief which such ministers do to the souls of others, and of all that scandal and reproach which they bring upon their profession and order. By these and the like considerations, every clergyman must arm himself against the importunities which are usual on such occasions, and against all the arguments of compassion, and friendship, and neighbourhood. And whoever considers this matter aright will not only refuse to join in undue testimonials, but must think himself obliged, when he sees others joining in them, to convey beforehand such private intimations, as may lead the bishop to further inquiries, and hinder him from proceeding, till he shall have given himself proper satisfaction in some other way.

IX. From the distinction mentioned under the sixth head, between public duties, to which ministers are strictly obliged by the laws of the church, and the duties of a more private nature, which, though not so strictly bound upon them by the laws, are very important branches of the ministerial office; from that distinction, I say, there arises another duty, namely, residence; as this is necessary to the due discharge of all those pastoral offices which are of a more private nature. And I choose here to resume that distinction, as a proper ground of the duty of residence, because it has been urged to me by some, as a sufficient reason why I might indulge non-residence, that they should be near enough to perform the duties of the Lord's day in person, and if any necessary business should fall out on the week-days, as buryings, christenings, or the like, some neighbouring clergyman would be ready to attend. A way of reasoning, which rests upon this supposition, that there are no ministerial duties, but such as are made expressly necessary by the laws: and it will appear to be very wrong reasoning, when it is considered, how many excellent ends there are, which either cannot be attained at all, or at best in a very imperfect manner, without personal

residence. Such are, a daily oversight and inspection, and, by that means, a constant check and restraint upon evil practices of all kinds, and upon the growth of corrupt customs and habits among the people : such are also, a more intimate knowledge of their spiritual estate, and occasional exhortations and reproofs, and, that which exhorts and reproves most effectually of all, the daily sight and influence of a good example : to which we must add, the being always at hand, to observe and compose differences, before they grow too strong ; and to assist the rich with counsel, the sick with comfort, and (according to your abilities) the poor and distressed with seasonable relief ; and to perform among them all neighbourly and charitable offices of the like kinds, which are not only excellent in themselves, but are the means of endearing ministers to their people, and of opening a passage into their hearts for spiritual instructions of all sorts.

I am aware, that there is one case which makes constant residence impracticable, and God knows it is a case too common in most dioceses, namely, the insufficiency of a maintenance ; which renders it necessary for the bishop to commit the care of more than one parish to one and the same hand ; and, in such cases, we can only exhort and entreat ministers to have those good ends seriously in their thoughts, and to endeavour after them as far as such unavoidable absence will permit. But the cases which I now mean are those of convenience only, not of necessity ; and my desire is, to obviate all applications for indulgence on such occasions, by convincing the clergy, that personal residence is of too great importance in the ministerial office, to be sacrificed to private convenience.

I am also aware, that there are cases, in which the laws of church and state suppose and permit ministers to be absent from their cures ; particularly the case of pluralities, and of residence in cathedral churches : but, in regard to these, it is my duty to take care, that such absences be not more long, and more frequent, than the laws intend and direct. By the express tenor of the dispensation, every pluralist is bound to preach thirteen sermons every year at the place where he does not ordinarily reside, and to keep hospitality there for two months ; and by the forty-fourth canon of our church, every bishop is enjoined to take care, that all such residentiaries of his cathedral church, as have also parochial cures, be obliged to return to them as soon as ever their statutable residence is performed. Nor is it a suf-

ficient plea for the habitual absence either of pluralists or residentiary-canons, that they have curates under them of good abilities and with sufficient salaries, who officiate in their stead. For though it is to be hoped, on one hand, that all curates will remember, that in the eye of the law and in the sight of God they stand chargeable with the cure of souls; and, on the other hand, that all such incumbents who enjoy those additional advantages will freely and of their own accord allow such salaries to their curates, as are sufficient and reasonable; yet is there a great difference, in the point of ability to do good, between incumbents and curates. The curates, ordinarily speaking, must be supposed to have less knowledge and less experience in their profession, and not to have near so much influence and authority, as incumbents personally residing: and, not to insist upon the natural relation there is between a pastor and his people, a shepherd and his flock, which certainly ought to rest upon the mind of every pastor, it will be hard to persuade the people, that the care of their souls is the thing at his heart, if they receive not a reasonable share of pastoral offices, by way of return for the revenues of the church.

From hence it appears, that where the law indulges non-residence, it does not intend a total discharge from the care which was originally committed to incumbents, but only a discharge so far as it necessarily follows from the ground and reason of such indulgence; and when that ceases, the obligation to a personal care and attendance returns of course. And even in the times of necessary absence many things may be done by an incumbent, to shew that he is far from reckoning himself discharged from all manner of care: the needy may be relieved, poor children may be sent to school, useful books may be distributed, inquiries may be made from time to time concerning the state of persons and things, and proper directions may be given to the curate for his behaviour and studies, that he may be trained up to be an useful preacher and a prudent pastor, and thoroughly qualified for a parochial cure of his own, when ever it shall please Providence to call him to it. A circumstance, which makes some amends to the church for the mischiefs of non-residence, and has doubtless a good effect, where learned and experienced incumbents make it their care to direct young persons in the study of divinity, and to frame their minds to a pastoral life.

But, with whatever misfortunes, mischiefs, and inconveniences,

non-residence may be attended in itself, and by unavoidable necessity, it is certain that these ought not to be increased beyond what the laws allow, and natural necessity requires; but, on the contrary, to be made up and balanced by an exact observance of the rules which the church has laid down for the supply of the cures. Every incumbent has the cure of souls committed to him by the bishop; and he needs no other commission, while he continues to attend that cure in person. But if either the law discharge him from constant residence, or the bishop dispense with it, on account of health, or for other reasonable cause; in those cases he has no power, in virtue of his first commission, to transfer the cure to what hand he pleases, but, upon such failure of personal attendance, the bishop is the proper judge of the fitness of the person who shall be appointed to the cure. And if he were not the judge, the consequence must be, (what I have too often found by experience,) that numbers of cures will remain in the hands of persons, concerning whose abilities, morals, opinions, and even orders, the bishop has not the least satisfaction. An abuse, so unwarrantable in itself, and so pernicious in the consequences, that I shall think myself much wanting to my duty, if I do not put in execution the laws of the church upon this head; especially since his grace the lord ^a archbishop of this province, in his directions to his suffragan bishops, hath expressly recommended to us, “ That we
“ make diligent inquiry concerning curates in our several
“ dioceses, and proceed to ecclesiastical censures against those
“ who shall presume to serve curcs, without being first duly
“ licensed thereunto; as also against all such incumbents who
“ shall receive and employ them, without first obtaining such
“ license.” Or, at least, without satisfying the bishop concerning the characters of the persons they employ, till such license may conveniently be obtained.

And when I am speaking of curates who enter upon parochial cures without the license or knowledge of the ordinary, I cannot omit to take notice of the very mischievous and irregular practice of obtaining titles to cures, for the single end of obtaining holy orders in virtue of such titles, without any intention to serve the cures. This is a shameful imposition upon bishops, and defeats the wise end of the thirty-third canon of our church, which was to prevent the needless multiplying of clergymen,

^a Archbishop Wake.

beyond what the present occasions of the church require ; and this, when it happens, exposes the church to contempt, and the persons to reproach, and lays them under temptations to submit to mean and sometimes indirect methods of application for preferment, and gives great advantage to mercenary patrons. To prevent those evils as much as may be, I shall insist upon a solemn declaration to be made by every incumbent who gives a title for orders, that such title is true and real ; according to a ^b form which is printed for that purpose at the end of these Directions, and which I expect to be the standing form of all titles that are sent to me.

X. Hitherto I have applied myself to you, as you stand intrusted by God and his church with the administration of divine offices, and the care of souls. I must now say somewhat concerning another kind of trust, which is not indeed so high and important in its nature, but yet is such, as cannot with a good conscience be neglected ; I mean, the patrimony of the church ; without which, we could not, humanly speaking, have established cures, nor by consequence those many advantages of constant personal residence, which I have enumerated under the last head. Religion therefore is nearly concerned, that due care be taken to preserve and continue things, which are such manifest supports to it. And I need not say on whom that care rests, since all our laws consider the church as in a state of minority and pupillage, and every incumbent as the guardian, for the time being, of the rights of his own church ; who therefore stands obliged to transmit them entire to his successors, and is guilty of a breach of trust, if through his neglect the church shall suffer loss or diminution in profits or conveniences of any kind ; if the houses shall run to decay, or the glebe be injured in tillage, fences, or trees ; or the tithes be diminished, by undue compositions, and by customs and moduses growing and gaining strength in his time.

Where no house is, the law does not think it reasonable to inflict the penalties of non-residence ; and therefore it takes great care, where houses are, to keep them in due repair ; not only in a habitable, but, as an ancient constitution of our church expresses it, in a decent state ; such as is suitable to the character of a clergyman, and to the condition of a person who has had a

^b This form has been omitted, as being no longer in general use. See the Clergyman's Assistant, 2d edit. p. 315.

liberal education, and such as may make personal residence easy and agreeable. This is what the laws of the church require of every elergyman, under severe penalties : but my present business is not to explain the obligation of law, but to enforce the obligation of conscience ; having far more delight to see justice done to the church freely, than by constraint ; and knowing how much more agreeable it is to the sacred character and function, to be led into what is right by a sense of duty and conscience, than to be driven into it by the threatenings and penalties of the law. And a matter of conscience this certainly is, not only in itself, as it is the betraying a trust which the church commits to incumbents ; but in the consequences also, as it brings a great charge and difficulty upon the successors, and, which is no small aggravation of the injustice, a charge that might have been prevented at very little expense, by an early care in the predecessors ; the failings in fabrics being like those in our bodies, cured and amended at small expense, if taken in time, but by delays becoming very chargeable, and oftentimes incurable.

The thing then to be guarded against in this matter is delay ; which must occasion a heavy burden somewhere : if upon the incumbent himself, it is great folly ; if upon his successor, it is great injustice. Nor is it enough to satisfy the conscience under such delays, that their executors will be accountable to the next successor ; since they know, that the utmost which the law itself allows in that case, though generally much more than would have prevented the mischief, bears no kind of proportion to the real damage which the successor sustains by such delay.

When I spake, under the last head, of the many mischiefs of non-residence, I industriously reserved one of them for this place, viz. the decay and ruin of parsonage-houses. It may be supposed, ordinarily speaking, that elergymen will provide for decency in the places where they dwell, not only from a sense of duty to God and the church, but for their own convenience and credit, and to secure themselves from the contempt of their neighbours. But we see too little of this, where incumbents do not personally reside ; the houses, in that case, usually falling into the hands of farmers, who are no further concerned either in conscience or credit, than to keep them in a mere habitable condition. And where pluralists, who enjoy a double portion, can prevail with themselves to leave the houses of the church to

the mercy of such inhabitants, they must have forgotten, not only the obligations which rest upon them in common with other incumbents, but also how unseemly it appears in them, to be less forward in doing right to the church, the more she enables them to do it; to be less kind to her, the more bountiful she is to them.

The mischief and injustice which attend those neglects in the repairing of parsonage-houses do equally attend the neglect of chancels, the care whereof is assigned, by the laws of the church, to rectors; who, by bestowing upon them a decency suitable to that most sacred office of our religion to which they are appropriated, do not only invite the parishioners to preserve the church in a clean and decent state, but also leave the neighbouring impropiators without any colourable excuse, if they do not right to the chancels under their care; which undoubtedly they will be less forward to do, as long as they can be kept in countenance by the neglect of spiritual rectors.

The like reasoning from the obligation of conscience will equally hold with regard to the possessions of the church; both as they are a trust in the hands of the present incumbents, and as the neglect or abuse of them is a great damage and injury to the successors. In the case of temporal possessions, if one is tenant of an estate for life only, and destroys the woods, or lets the houses and fences run to ruin, or uses the grounds otherwise than in a fair and husbandlike way; the law accounts all this a plain injustice to the next heir, and accordingly, at his motion, will give satisfaction for the damage done, and put a stop to such abuses for the time to come. In the case of ecclesiastical possessions, the next incumbent is not known, and patrons oftentimes live at a distance, or may not think fit to give themselves the trouble of interposing; but inasmuch as the being a tenure for life only is the foundation of the injustice, the crime is the very same here as in the case of temporal possessions; and the less hold the law takes of it, the greater need there is to urge and enforce the obligations of conscience, and to beseech incumbents to have a watchful eye over their agents and tenants, that the glebes be not abused by them, either in those or any other respects.

In like manner, and upon the same obligations of conscience, great care ought to be taken in the ordering and management of tithes; that no unreasonable compositions be made, nor permit-

ted at any hand to grow into moduses; which have already swallowed up so large a share of the patrimony of the church beyond the possibility of a retrieve, and which therefore ought to be immediately broken, where they are not yet arrived to a legal establishment. Nor must the clergy, when there is need to call in the assistance of the law, be discouraged by the fear of being thought litigious; since, besides the special obligations upon them not to see the church injured, they have certainly the same privilege with other men, to maintain their own just rights. So far are the clergy from deserving such a censure, that it is to be feared they are rather more easy and indulgent than is fairly consistent with their duty to the church; and if inquiry were to be made into all the suits that have been commenced for tithes, it would be found, that the instances in which they have miscarried bear no kind of proportion in point of number to those in which they have prevailed. But if any clergyman shall have entered unhappily into settled engagements for his own time, the church may however expect this justice from him, that he take care to inform his successors, either by an entry in the register-book of the parish, or by some other method equally proper and sure, that such continuance of the selfsame payments through a succession of years was owing not to any legal composition or modus, but to special agreements between him and the parishioners.

I doubt not, but those prejudicial compositions, which are slid by degrees into settled moduses, have been owing in many instances to the supineness and negligence of incumbents; but I am also afraid, that in some instances they may have been owing to a far worse cause, and that is, bonds of resignation, exacted by patrons, and given unawares by clergymen; which are not only inconsistent with the oath against simoniacal contracts, and contrary to the laws of the church in all ages, and upon both these accounts an unhappy entanglement to the minds and consciences of clergymen; but are also the means of enslaving them during life to the will and pleasure of patrons, and particularly of tempting them to submit to all the most unreasonable agreements and compositions for tithes which can be proposed.

These things are but small in comparison of the duties which more immediately belong to the pastoral office; but the mischiefs occasioned by the neglect of them are not small; nor ought any thing to be so accounted, which is a necessary means

to preserve the rights of the church, and to enable the parochial clergy to go through their pastoral labours with comfort and success. In the pursuit of which excellent ends, you shall always be sure of the best assistances that are in my power; and you cannot fail of a special blessing from Heaven upon your undertakings, while you continue to express your zeal for the honour of God and the salvation of souls, by a faithful and conscientious discharge of all the parts of the ministerial function.

And now, my brethren, having laid before you what I thought proper concerning the public service of our church, and the provisions for a public ministry to attend that service, and having suggested such rules in relation to both, as seem to me to render them most effectual for the great ends of religion; I must beg leave to mention one thing more, and that is, the obligation that lies upon us all, not only to make the due administration of these a blessing to our own time, but also to do all that lies in our power to ensure the enjoyment of them to our latest posterity. In pursuance of this, ^c I must entreat you to be very diligent in inculcating upon your people this most plain and important truth, that there is no means, under God, of continuing these invaluable blessings to us or our posterity, but a zealous and resolute maintenance of the succession to the crown in the protestant line; there being no thought more visionary, nor any reasoning more absurd, than the supposing that a protestant service and a protestant ministry can prosper or subsist under a popish prince. Put them in mind, (as many, I mean, as did not see it, or seem to have forgot it,) that the experiment has been already tried, and not only failed, but that the swift progress which was then made towards the destruction of our religious rights left the nation a most convincing proof of what they are to expect from a popish prince; all princes of that religion being equally bound in conscience to endeavour the extirpation of a protestant church. And let me further entreat you to urge upon particular persons, as you see occasion, the regard they owe to their religion and country; and also, how abominable it must appear to all honest and sober minds, to find the general tenor of their actions and discourse a direct contra-

^c This was added upon occasion of the plot, which had been laid and carried on a little before that time, for abrogating the protestant succession, and setting a popish pretender on the throne.

diction to their oaths. Above all, let me beseech you to make it your care, that every thing in your own conduct and conversation be exactly agreeable to the oaths you have taken; and particularly, fail not to let your parishioners hear the king and the royal family constantly prayed for before sermon by name; which I must peremptorily insist upon, as well in compliance with the canon of our church to that purpose, as to remove a reproach which the omission of it must occasion, as if such clergymen had not taken the oaths sincerely, and therefore are willing to avoid, as much as they can, all public notice of the king and the royal family, and all expressions of regard and respect to them: an opinion, which being joined to the remembrance of their having taken the most strict and solemn oaths of fidelity and abjuration, must lessen the reverence of an oath in the minds of the people, and weaken the credit and authority of the clergy, and be a great hinderance to the success of their ministry in general.

Finally, I must entreat you to go one step further in your expressions of zeal for the king and the protestant succession; and that is, to endeavour to remove out of the minds of your people all those unjust jealousies and prejudices against his majesty and his administration, which you see sown among them by the professed enemies of his government, with a design to overthrow it. And this I may and ought to press with the greater freedom and earnestness, both because the diligence of the enemy in sowing jealousies and spreading misrepresentations is incredible; and also because I can declare with the greatest sincerity, that I am firmly persuaded, that our good and gracious king has nothing more in his desire and intention, than to preserve the constitution, as it stands established both in church and state.

THE
C H A R G E

OF

EDMUND, LORD BISHOP OF LONDON,

TO THE

CLERGY OF HIS DIOCESE, &c.

Reverend brethren,

I. **W**HEN I held my primary visitation of this diocese, I put into the hands of the clergy a book of Directions, relating to the due discharge of the ministerial office, and the several branches of it. And having made it a rule ever since to put the same into the hands of every person who has been instituted or licensed by me, as containing the several heads of duty, which I judged necessary to be attended to by every one who takes upon him the cure of souls; having, I say, done this, there has been no need to speak to you upon those heads, in the several visitations which I have held since. And therefore I have usually chosen for my subject on these occasions such incidents relating to the church, or clergy, or religion, as have fallen out between the several visitations; in order to give you a clear insight into the facts, and to make such applications, for our conduct and practice, as they naturally led to. And this is the method which I shall continue at present; but I must first entreat your patience, while I further press and enforce one

particular branch of the formentioned Directions. What I mean is, the distinction that is there made between duties legal, the neglect of which is punishable by the laws of church and state, and duties pastoral, which are not expressly enforced by laws and penalties, as the others are, but yet are bound upon us by a more sacred tie, and that is, the obligation of duty and conscience, founded upon a serious sense of the nature and ends of the ministerial function, and of the importance, or rather necessity, of those pastoral labours, towards a successful discharge of it. Such are, private admonition and reproof; the taking the advantage of sickness or other calamity, (which are apt to open the mind to instruction,) to infuse into your people serious and good thoughts, and such as may make the most lasting impression; to endeavour to convince and reform those who are found negligent in the great duty of resorting to the public service of the church, or not careful enough to be present at the beginning of it; and, to bring all, in general, to a just sense of the obligation they are under, to give a diligent attention of the mind in all the offices of religion, whether public or private. To which I must add, as a branch of the pastoral office which is never to be forgotten, private exhortation to parents and masters, where it is found needful, to fit and prepare the youth under their care to be publicly catechised, together with those of their neighbours; and further, to accustom their children, from the beginning, to a regular attendance upon the public worship of the church, with a decent and orderly behaviour therein; and, to check the first tendency they observe in them to any irregularities in life: duties, which are of great importance to religion, and to which parents and masters are strictly obliged, in pursuance of the powers that God has given them over their children and servants. But yet, in many cases, it will require some care and pains on the part of the minister, to make parents duly sensible either of the importance of those duties, or the special obligation they are under to perform them. And would to God they could be further convinced, how many and great blessings, spiritual and temporal, the practice of family devotion would procure to them and their household; and how just and reasonable a thing it is, to express their thankfulness to God for the supports of life, and to beg a blessing upon them, as oft as they feed upon the fruits of his bounty.

II. These private applications, though no part of the legal and

ordinary offices of the church, are of great moment towards the preserving among our people a serious sense of religion; or rather, are absolutely necessary to the giving the legal offices their due effect. Men, for instance, are not over-forward in applying to themselves the public admonitions which are heard from the pulpit, nor apt to be duly affected in hearing them, unless they be privately put in mind, as there is occasion, of the more particular concern they have in them. Next, if men can be brought to serious thoughts and resolutions, in the time of sickness or other calamity, by private applications, it may reasonably be hoped, that from thenceforth the exhortations of a more public nature, while they find themselves in health and at ease, will take the faster hold of them. Again, if men will not attend the public worship of God, or, attending it, will behave themselves there in a thoughtless and negligent manner, it is, to them, as if there were no public worship at all. And lastly, if children be not early instructed in the general principles of their religion, but remain strangers to the sense and meaning of the terms under which they are couched, the public discourses they afterwards hear will neither be understood nor relished by them; at least, will lose much of the instruction they would have conveyed, and the impression they would have made, if the hearers had been duly prepared, first, by a general knowledge of the principles of their religion, and next by an habitual reverence for the public devotions and instructions of the church; as ordinances of God's own appointment, and as a special means of obtaining his grace and favour, to all those who religiously attend them.

By this it appears, of how great importance, or rather necessity, these pastoral duties are, as well for the giving the legal duties their operation and effect, as for the keeping up a true spirit of religion among our people. And, surely, there never was a time, when religion did more earnestly call for those pastoral endeavours to support it; or rather, to preserve it in being. Nothing is more evident, than that a great looseness both in principle and practice, is gradually descending to the middling rank, under the influence and authority of higher examples, and through a too great disposition in corrupt nature to approve and follow them. And nothing can hinder this infection from descending lower and lower, till it becomes general, and we upon the point of being overwhelmed by it, but

a diligent endeavour on the part of the parochial clergy to check and resist it ; particularly in the methods already mentioned, and such others of the like kind, as tend to establish the people committed to their care, both in the principles and the practice of the Christian religion.

III. I need not tell you, what gross representations have been made both here and in the Plantations, as if the generality of the clergy of the church of England were shamefully remiss and negligent in the pastoral office. This slander upon our church and clergy has been publicly spread and avowed in a very unworthy and licentious manner, and has received a reprehension, though more gentle than it deserved, in a late pastoral letter against the enthusiasm of these days. But however, the reproaches of those men may be so far of use to us, as to be made a fresh incitement to care and diligence in the offices belonging to our function ; that, after the example of St. Paul in a like case, we may *cut off all occasion of slander from them who desire occasion*. And since it is not to be expected, that, amongst such a number of clergymen, there should be, in all, the same degree of zeal and activity in the discharge of their duty ; those of them who have been hitherto less zealous and less active than their neighbours, must increase their diligence, upon this, among other motives, that they may cut off all occasion of slander from those who seem not to be ill-pleased with any handle for it. And we must all of us remember, that we cannot do greater justice and honour to our established church, than by making it appear, in fact and experience, that its rules and orders, pursued and invigorated as they always ought to be, are an effectual means of promoting piety and goodness among the members of it ; an honour for which it must at all times be mainly indebted to the care and vigilance of parochial ministers.

It is now an hundred years since the like clamours were raised and propagated throughout the nation against the established clergy ; as a body lazy and unactive in the work of religion, and whose defects in the discharge of their duty did greatly need to be supplied by itinerant preachers. And these preachers, under a notion of greater zeal and sanctity, and by pretences to more than ordinary measures of the Spirit, drew after them confused multitudes of the lower rank, and did all that was in their power to lay waste the bounds of parochial communion, and to bring the established service into disgrace. And we cannot have a

more pregnant testimony, how mischievous such practices are to religion, and how productive not only of confusion, but of blasphemy, profaneness, and the most wicked and destructive doctrines and practices, than these and the like effects which they then had, as they are set before us at large in the histories of those times. A sufficient warning to all who have a serious concern for religion, and a just regard to public peace and order in church and state, to use their best endeavours to oppose and suppress that spirit of enthusiasm, which is now gone out, and which cannot be opposed and suppressed more effectually than by preserving the bounds of parochial communion, and opposing all breaches upon them; and then by every minister's satisfying his people, in the course of a regular life and a diligent discharge of all duties and offices, pastoral as well as legal, that they need no other instruction, nor any other means and helps for the saving of their souls, than those which the church has provided for them; on supposition, that the people, on their parts, will seriously embrace those means and helps, and religiously conform to the established worship and discipline, and submit to the advice and instructions of those to whom the providence of God has committed the care of their souls.

IV. And for the keeping up this good disposition among your people, let them be made sensible of the excellencies of the public offices of our church; as a service that comprises all and every branch of Christian devotion—confession of sins, and declaration of pardon to penitent sinners—a suitable and edifying mixture of psalms and hymns and the scriptures of the Old and New Testament—acknowledgments of our own weakness, and addresses to God for spiritual aid and strength—confessions of faith, and remembrances of duty to God and our neighbour, as set forth in the Ten Commandments, with the prayer after every branch, to incline the heart to the performance of it—supplications for averting all evil, and prayers for obtaining all good, to soul, body, and estate—intercessions for blessings to others, and thanksgivings for mercies to ourselves—special prayers for the divine blessing upon kings and counsellors, civil magistrates, and spiritual pastors; as those, through whose pious and wise administration, national blessings and benefits, spiritual and temporal, are in the ordinary course of providence conveyed to mankind—together with particular prayers and thanksgivings adapted to particular seasons and occasions—to which are added,

proper offices for a devout and solemn administration of every Christian ordinance and institution—and the whole conceived, as public liturgies always have been, and always ought to be, in a language that is grave, serious, and expressive; without any of those irregular flights and redundances, from which extempore prayer is seldom free; and least of all, that sort of it, which presumptuously fathers itself upon an immediate dictate of the Spirit of God.

I have only to add upon this head, that next to the internal excellencies of the liturgy itself, and that knowledge or rather feeling of those excellencies, which a reverent regard and attention will breed in the heart of every sincere worshipper; next to these, I say, nothing contributes more to the possessing the minds of the people with a due sense of those excellencies, than the minister's giving the offices, throughout, the just advantage of being performed in a solemn, serious, and affectionate manner.

And as to a personal respect to yourselves, and a due regard to your instructions; the apostle has plainly pointed out the way to secure these, when he grounds the obedience and esteem of the people upon the watchfulness and diligence of the pastor. His lesson to the people is, *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; and why? because they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account.* And again, *Esteem those who are over you in the Lord, very highly in love; and why? for their work's sake.*—Where there is a due watchfulness and working on one side, there will very rarely be wanting a due love and esteem on the other.

V. I have taken notice before, that one branch of these pastoral duties, that every minister is bound to discharge, is admonition and reproof; which cannot be performed from the pulpit, without the danger of hardening, instead of reforming. And this being, in truth, the most difficult part of the ministerial office, and yet highly necessary to be done, and also done in such a manner as may make the greatest impression, and give it the most lasting effects; I cannot omit to mention one expedient, which may make that work less difficult to ministers, and more effectual upon their people. What I mean is, the having in their possession some small tracts against particular vices and the more notorious defects in duty, to be occasionally put into the hands of those who are found to be going on in any habitual

sin, either of commission or omission, and so to need a more close and forcible application; whether it be by way of restraint from vice, or incitement to duty, as the case requires. As this is the gentlest method of proceeding, there is the least hazard of giving offence; and as the tracts themselves are both short and plain, they are most likely to be read and considered; and they make a much deeper impression upon the mind, than either general admonitions from the pulpit, or particular admonitions by word of mouth. A great variety of tracts, calculated for that use, is constantly provided by the *Society for promoting Christian Knowledge*^a; the members whereof are entitled to as many as they apply for, at one half of the prime cost; which reduces the price to a trifle. And, that no part of my diocese might want the convenience of being furnished with them as they see occasion, the incumbents of the several market-towns have readily agreed to take the trouble of becoming members of the society, and so have put themselves in a condition to furnish their neighbours, whether clergy or laity, with as many as they shall need.

This may seem, at first sight, to be a matter of small moment, but in the effects it will be found by experience not to be small. And great need there is in this degenerate age to have recourse to all expedients, whether great or small, for putting a stop to the growth of vice and wickedness, and for raising and keeping alive a spirit of religion among us; the first, to avert the judgments of God from falling upon a sinful nation; and the second, to make us a proper object of his mercy and forbearance. Vice is grown bold and headstrong, and has well nigh broken loose from the last restraint, that of shame. And though the powers put into the hand of the civil magistrate for restraining and suppressing it, are very great, the fruit and effect of those powers is found by experience to be very small. Nor is it to be expected, that the spiritual powers should be able effectually to encounter it in the way of discipline and censure, while they are fettered to such a degree, and liable to be interrupted in almost every step they take.

And as to the clergy; the utmost they can do in the way of punishment is, in the most prudent and respectful manner, to put the magistrate in mind, that the authority with which he is intrusted is not only for the preserving of peace, but likewise for

^a At their office No. 67 Lincoln's Inn Fields.

the punishment of vice ; one as a duty he owes to his prince, and the other as a duty he owes to his God. Both these are the duty of civil magistrates ; and it is greatly to be wished, that a due regard may always be had to both in the appointment of them ; and much to be wondered, that any magistrate, who is otherwise a serious person, and frequents the public service of the church, and appears to have a sense of duty in all other respects, should need to be put in mind of this branch of it, when the scripture so expressly charges it upon him, and when he is so frequently reminded of it in our own liturgy ; which makes it the prayer of him and of the whole congregation, “ that all “ who are in authority may truly and indifferently minister justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the “ maintenance of true religion and virtue.”

Upon the whole ; till we see a greater probability, that national wickedness and vice will be restrained and kept under in the way of authority, coercion, and censure, the great refuge of religion must be in the parochial clergy ; and to their pastoral labours, under the divine blessing, the nation will be chiefly indebted, if vice do not grow triumphant, and God do not visit us with some remarkable judgment ; or, which is the heaviest judgment of all, give us over, and remove his candlestick from among us.

This is a melancholy subject ; and the thought of national judgments, an uncomfortable scene ; but yet no way unfit to be opened and represented before those, who, by their vigilance and activity in their several stations, have it so much in their power to prevent them.

And though you may not find such a measure of success as might be expected from your pastoral labours, be not discouraged, but labour on. Some of the good seed you now sow, though seemingly dead for the present, may hereafter, by the blessing of God, take root, and spring up ; or if it do not, you, however, are sure of your reward from God.

The earnest wish of religious and good men always has been, and always will be, to see the world grow better ; and it is more peculiarly the duty of the ministers of the gospel to use their best endeavours to make it better. But it must be remembered at the same time, that it is a great work to keep it from growing worse. And therefore, though that part of the vineyard which the providence of God hath committed to your care should not

increase in fruitfulness so sensibly as you could wish, do not despond, nor be discouraged, as if you were an unprofitable labourer ; but consider, for your comfort, how soon it would be overrun with thorns and briers, (the fruits of the seed sown by the wicked one,) if you did not watch their growth, and use the best methods you can to keep them under, or root them up, and to sow the seeds of religion and piety in their stead.

VI. Next to the care of promoting the practice of religion in our particular stations, there is a general obligation upon us all, to use our best endeavours to preserve and maintain the legal establishment of it in this church and nation, as the most sure foundation, not only of preserving peace and order in church and state, but also of preserving and promoting religion, and the practice of it, within the several districts which that establishment has fixed ; provided there be no failure, either on the part of the minister, or on the part of the people. And where either of these is the case, the constitution cannot justly be charged, if it fail of attaining the ends of its establishment.

There are three sorts of people among us, who, though of different principles and views, do yet agree in their enmity to the established church : they who disavow all revelation ; they who are against all establishments, as such ; and they who dislike our present establishment. These, all together, are a formidable body of men ; ready to join, upon any fair prospect, in an attempt upon the constitution of our church ; and therefore ought to be diligently watched and guarded against by all the true lovers of it.

As to the first sort of enemies, they who disavow all revelation ; it is not to be wondered, that they contend with so much earnestness for no establishment, because they know how greatly a regularity, order, and uniformity in the public exercise of religion, tends to preserve the honour of it, and to defeat their schemes for promoting infidelity. Of the truth of which we need no other evidence, than the particular zeal which has been shewn by the chief patrons of infidelity, against all religious establishments, under colour of their being destructive of the general liberties of mankind ; whereas, in truth, they are destructive of nothing, but of that general licentiousness in principle and practice, to which the schemes and pursuits of these people have so visible a tendency. And they know very well what they do, when they are contending for such a confused and

irregular state of things, as not only naturally tends to expose religion to reproach and contempt, but has been found by experience so to do.

And therefore it has sometimes been a matter of wonder with me, that the second sort of enemies, those, I mean, who profess a serious regard to religion, but are yet against any national establishment, should not see that they are doing the work of the common enemy ; especially when a nation of gathered and independent congregations, without any fixed parochial districts, is, at first sight, so very big with confusion ; and when they cannot but know, what a monstrous degree of profaneness, enthusiasm, and immorality it produced, when the experiment was made in the days of their forefathers.

As for the third sort ; those who are satisfied concerning the expedience, if not necessity, of a national establishment, but are dissatisfied with the present ; it is time enough to enter into reasonings with them, when they have agreed among themselves, what the establishment is, which they would introduce in the place of the present. They have, indeed, in many of their writings, raised exceptions against our liturgy, and some other parts of our constitution ; (and what human constitution was ever perfect ?) but what they have hitherto done in that way has been mainly to justify their separation from the national church, and goes little further than to the pulling down the present fabric. But, surely, it is most unreasonable in them to expect that any one who is well satisfied with the present should be willing to part with it, till he has a full and entire view of what is to succeed in its place ; i. e. till he is enabled to form a judgment for himself ; first, which of the two is most agreeable to the word of God, and the practice of the first and purest ages ; and next, which of them is best calculated to answer the ends of peace, order, and unity in the church, and makes the best provision for the instruction and edification of every particular member of it.

VII. Next to a sincere zeal and endeavour to keep up a serious sense of religion among your people, and a reverent regard to our established worship in subservience to that great end, there is another point which also demands your care, namely, the established provision which our constitution has made, to support the clergy with comfort under their pastoral labours ; and which, in that respect, is directly subservient to the great

end of religion. What I mean is, the patrimony of the church, and the conveying it to the successive incumbents, unhurt and undiminished. A caution, which I know you will not think unseasonable to be repeated^b, when you remember the two attacks that have been made in parliament; the first, commonly called the Tithe Bill; and the second, of a later date, and distinguished by the name of the Quaker's Bill; both of them indeed defeated in the first attempt, but, I doubt, not so as to discourage a second.

You may remember, that the design of the Tithe Bill was to establish exemptions from tithe for ever, if in a certain number of years no tithe at all had been paid. This, if the bill had succeeded, would, as to exemptions, have made an entire change in the present law of tithes. As the law now stands, the incumbent is entitled at all times to sue for tithe of common right, and the proof of the exemption rests upon the occupant and landholder. But, if such a bill shall ever succeed, the proof will be put upon the incumbent; and he will fail in his suit, unless he can shew, that tithe has been paid within the time limited by the act. And this, a new incumbent may not be able to do; partly, because no tithe may have really been paid within the time, through private agreements or personal indulgences, by one or more of his predecessors, or through a natural inactivity, or an unhappy inability to sue for it; and partly, through the difficulties of making proof of payment of tithe, where it really has been paid within the time; whether through a negligence in keeping accounts by former incumbents, or through the concealment of those accounts by their executors; or through the fear of the poor to displeas the rich, and an unwillingness in one neighbour to be witness against another. The manifold and visible inconveniences which such a bill must bring upon the church, if it should pass into a law, make it the duty as well as interest of the whole body of the clergy, not only to do all that is in their power to obstruct it, but in the mean time to be guarding carefully against the consequences of it, if (which God forbid) it should ever succeed; by getting the best information they can of the ground and foundation upon which the claim of exemption rests, and whether it be such as the law will support; and if it be not, to enter into proper measures for overthrowing it,

^b See Directions, p. 328.

while it is in their power, and before it receives a final establishment from such a law as we are now speaking of; which has been already attempted with great zeal, and may probably be attempted again. And as to moduses also, to take care to vary their agreements and compositions for tithe; and having, from time to time, made due entries of such variations, to give special direction that the evidences thereof be faithfully transmitted to their successors.

And to induce incumbents the more effectually to provide against all encroachments upon the patrimony of the church, whether by exemptions or moduses, they must always remember, that as they are the proprietors for their own time, and that by as good a title as any other estate is enjoyed, whatever the enemies of the clergy may pretend to the contrary; so they are likewise guardians and trustees for God and his church; and, as such, are bound in conscience to use all reasonable care, that the rights of their respective churches be by them transmitted entire to succeeding incumbents.

I need not say much of the other attack that has been made upon the patrimony of the church, I mean, the Quaker's Bill; both because it is of a later date, and because the mischievous consequences of the bill, while it was depending in parliament, were published to the world, and cannot be so soon forgotten by the clergy, whose more immediate concern it is. It is enough to say in general, that if it had passed into a law, the whole body of the clergy would, in innumerable cases, have been deprived at once of the benefit of the established courts of the realm, ecclesiastical and temporal; that all apprehension from those courts and the exact and regular proceedings therein, which at present do in many cases discourage the Quakers from being so vexatious to the clergy as their principles lead them to be, would then be removed; that, if these restraints were removed, incumbents would be exposed to all the arts, concealments, and vexations, that they have reason to expect from a people, who think the clergy have no right to tithe, and who are so far from owning an obligation to pay, that they think themselves bound in conscience to do all that is in their power to avoid it. These are difficulties which the passing such a bill into a law would bring, more or less, upon the whole body of the clergy; but would fall most heavily upon the poor vicars, whose all would frequently come within the compass of such an act; and, as it

consists of small tithes which are not so easily ascertained, does greatly need the assistance of the established courts for that end. And, God knows, with all the assistance that the laws can give, the clergy find it difficult enough to bear up against the many advantages, which the Quakers, as a kind of body corporate, and that of no small influence and zeal, are known to be in possession of. And how greatly would the difficulty be increased, if the present advantages of the laws should be taken from them!

VIII. To conclude; As the laws of the land are on the side of the church, it is not only her interest, but her duty, on all proper occasions, to take the benefit of them, and to endeavour to defeat all attempts that may be made to deprive her of that benefit. But, at the same time, it must be remembered, that against all manner of attempts, whether upon the constitution, or upon the rights of the church, our best defence and greatest security will always be, the love and esteem of our people; and the only true way to be sure of this is, an exemplary life, a circumspect behaviour, a diligent discharge of the duties of our station, and a visible concern for the good of souls. These, I say, will, in all events, be the best security to our church that human helps can afford, and the most likely means of engaging God to support and defend it: especially, if, together with our own endeavours, we fail not to make our earnest prayer to him, to preserve it both in outward peace and inward purity: for its outward peace, to pray in the words of one of the collects of our church, "that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by his governance, that his church may joyfully serve him in all godly quietness:" and for inward purity, in the words of another collect, "that he will keep his household the church in continual godliness; and, that it may be devoutly given to serve him in good works, to the glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

INSTRUCTIONS

TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE DIOCESE OF TUAM,

BY JOSIAH HORT,

LATE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF TUAM,

AT HIS

PRIMARY VISITATION

Held there on WEDNESDAY, July 8, MDCCXLII.

INSTRUCTIONS

TO THE

CLERGY

OF THE DIOCESE OF TUAM, &c.

My reverend brethren,

THE providence of God having called me to the government of this diocese, I have judged it not improper for me to communicate my thoughts to you with regard to the execution of your ministerial office, in order to the edification and salvation of the souls respectively committed to your charge.

To this end I shall reduce what I have to say to you under two general heads :

The first relates to your conduct in the actual performance of divine offices in the house of God.

The second relates to your behaviour at large towards your parishioners.

In speaking to the former, I shall confine myself to these four branches of your office, namely, preaching, praying, catechising, and expounding the holy scriptures.

I shall begin with preaching, which is one of those means appointed by our Saviour, for the enlightening the minds, awakening the consciences, and reforming the manners of your hearers. In order to answer these great ends, some degree of skill and address, as well as of pains and study, will be requisite: and I shall, for the sake chiefly of such of you as have not been long in holy orders, communicate my sentiments with regard to the subject, the composition, the style, and the pronounciation of a sermon.

The subject of a sermon ought to be some point of doctrine that is necessary for a Christian to know ; or some duty that is necessary for him to practise, in order to his salvation. I speak this in opposition to subtile questions and curious speculations, that are above the common level of the auditory, and which have often no other effect, than to disquiet the minds and consciences of those who do not rightly understand them ; and if they please curious and itching ears, yet will edify no man in faith and a good life.

Upon this occasion I would recommend it to young preachers especially, to compose a set of sermons upon the chief articles of the Christian religion, according to their natural order and dependence. By this means they will improve their own knowledge at the same time that they are teaching their hearers : but this should be done in the plainest and easiest manner, laying aside metaphysical niceties and the jargon of the schools, and especially avoiding to explain mysteries ; for this is generally giving words and terms without meaning ; and no man has ever succeeded in the attempt.

When a useful subject is chosen, the next care of the preacher is to find out some proper and pertinent text, that will naturally lead him to pursue his subject, and that will yield him those doctrines and practical deductions which he had in his view, without force and torture. For want of this, the whole operation will be laborious, obscure, and perplexed to the composer ; and the discourse will be void of that perspicuity, which is necessary to engage the attention of the hearers. And I am sure there is no want of such texts upon all subjects in the Bible.

It has given me disgust to observe in some preachers a certain affectation of choosing such texts as appear remote and foreign to their subject, that by this means they may have opportunity of shewing their wit and ingenuity in fetching that out of a text, which nobody imagined could be in it. They would do something miraculous, like bringing water out of a dry rock in the wilderness, in order to surprise their auditory : but this will ever give distaste to good judges, and there is no occasion for putting one text upon the rack, to make it speak that which would naturally and easily arise out of another, that might as well have been chosen in the room of it.

When a useful subject and a pertinent text are chosen, the next work is composition, or the ranging of such thoughts as

naturally arise upon the subject, into a convenient order and method: this will be the plan of his discourse; and the composer will reap no small advantages from this practice.

First, As it will help him to enter all his loose and detached thoughts in their proper places, for want of which some of them may escape him when he comes to the finishing part.

Secondly, It will lead him to break his sermon into heads, which is absolutely necessary for giving strength and clearness to the whole, and for engaging the attention of the audience; which will be soon blunted and tired with hearing an harangue where all the parts are run into one general mass, and nothing distinctly and specially offered to the understanding.

Thirdly, The memory of the hearers will be greatly relieved; for a sermon thus broken into particular heads will be better imprinted, and more easily recollected, by reason of the dependence and connection of the parts, where one draws another after it like the links of a chain.

And lastly, It will give the preacher an opportunity of interspersing apt texts of holy scripture for the support or illustration of every particular head.

There may indeed be a faulty extreme on this hand; for I have heard a sermon that has been so overloaded with texts of scripture, that the thread of the reasoning was in a manner lost, and the whole looked like a piece of rich patchwork, without any ground appearing at the bottom. But the other extreme, of a penury of sacred texts, prevails too much in our modern and refined compositions; which, for that reason, may rather be called orations than sermons.

A due medium therefore ought to be observed in this case; but of the two, the latter extreme is most blameable; for a sermon will appear lean and unsatisfying to a religious palate, when it is not sufficiently larded with scripture, but the whole is made to rest on the reasonings of the preacher, unsupported by the authority of God's word.

By this means likewise he will become an expert textuary, which is the first excellency of a Christian divine; and the people will occasionally be made acquainted with the holy scriptures.

Now this is what I call a sermon, in contradistinction to an oration, which by one uniform flow of eloquence, without proper breaks and divisions, glides like a smooth stream over the soul,

leaving no traces behind it. The word thus delicately sown may, like a concert of music, delight the ear while it lasts, but dies with the sound, and the hearer will carry little home, besides a remembrance that he was sweetly entertained.

The effect of this will, where there are any kind of talents for it, be a good style ; by which I would be understood to mean that simplicity and propriety of language, which clearly conveys the sense of the speaker into the mind of the hearer. When therefore, by the method before prescribed, the preacher is become master of his subject, and has ranged all his materials fitly, fit words and expressions will readily offer themselves to answer to his clear ideas ; for nothing perplexes the style but a confused and perplexed manner of thinking.

He therefore who would convince and persuade his hearers should above all things aim at that perspicuity and simplicity, which are the greatest ornaments of language : whereas, on the contrary, a tawdry style, garnished with flowers of rhetoric and flights of fancy, which are incident to young preachers, makes only a bright confusion, that glares upon the mind without enlightening it.

As to the doctrinal part of a sermon, the style cannot be too plain and chaste, though it need not descend to be base and vulgar, (for there is a wide difference between these two,) because it is addressed to the understanding ; but as the practical part is designed to move the affections and passions, the style may rise, and grow warm with some heightenings of imagination, the better to answer that purpose.

I have only two short remarks to add on this head. The first relates to the introduction, the second to the conclusion of a sermon.

As to the former, if an introduction be necessary, it should always be short, pertinent, and leading as soon as may be to the main subject of the discourse. If the text needs any light from what goes before and follows it, this should be collected, and brought to bear upon the text with the utmost brevity and clearness ; for people are naturally impatient to know what the minister would be at, and to have him take his main business in hand. When I hear a preacher set out with a general preamble, that has no immediate relation to his text, and can never carry him to it but by a mighty circumference, I easily conclude with myself what I am to expect in the sequel of the discourse.

With regard to the conclusion of a sermon, it should be always practical, and persuasive to a good life; it should consist of exhortations and motives proper to enforce such duties and virtues as may pertinently arise from the doctrines and positions before laid down. For the great end of preaching is to make men better: mere knowledge put into the head, if it does not penetrate to the heart, and from thence diffuse itself into the life and conversation, becomes not only useless, but hurtful, as it will turn to a man's greater condemnation.

I shall dismiss this general head with some remarks upon the subject of pronunciation or elocution. And here I must observe to you, that no one manner of pronunciation will befit every sermon, nor every part of the same sermon, but that it must be diversified according to the nature of every period; it is impossible therefore to give precise rules where so great a variety of circumstances will arise, which require a different modification of voice and action; but every preacher must, in a good degree, be left to the direction of his own judgment, and the best examples.

All that I shall therefore attempt under this head, is to propose some general rules that will extend to all cases, and that may be of use for correcting some common faults and mistakes.

The first is, to pronounce every word and syllable distinctly, and to beware of sinking at the close of the period. This is undoubtedly the first and chiefest excellence of pronunciation, because the very end of speaking is so far lost, as it is not distinctly heard.

I would not be here understood to recommend that heavy and phlegmatic delivery that retails out words by their syllables; for this is more properly to be called spelling than speaking, and is apt to tire men's patience, and lull them to sleep: but I mean that articulate expression, with rests and pauses properly interposed, which shall break and distinguish the parts of a period according to the sense; and herein consists the propriety and beauty of elocution, which both speaker and hearer will sensibly enjoy.

This rule is calculated for the cure of two faults that are not unfrequent; one is a thick and confused delivery, which runs syllables and words into one mass, so that the ear cannot well separate them, and the hearer is forced to make up the sense by conjecture. The other is a rapidity of speech which runs off too

fast to impress any distinct idea on the mind, by which means both the pleasure and profit of a sermon are in great measure lost. A little time and practice will certainly cure this fault, where there is no natural defect in the organs.

The second rule I would mention is, to be careful not to exceed the compass of the voice. There is a certain *ne plus ultra* to the organs of speech in every man, and his own feeling alone can teach him where it lies: if he goes beyond this, his pronunciation will be harsh, unmusical, and disagreeable both to himself and to his hearers, who cannot receive with pleasure what they perceive he delivers with pain and violence; besides, that it is impossible for him duly to temper and govern his voice under these unnatural strainings and efforts.

It is a great mistake to imagine that a voice must needs be well heard, merely because it is loud. This is indeed a noble foundation for art and skill to work upon; but without the aid of these, it is often swallowed up and lost in itself.

A moderate strength of voice, with a due articulation of words, and distinction of pauses, will go further, even in a large congregation, than the thunder of an unskilful tongue; and this is that *suaviloquentia*, that mellowness and sweetness of speaking, so much praised in some of the Roman orators, in opposition to the rusticity of noisy declaimers.

Let me here add, by way of caution, the danger of forcing and straining the internal organs. I wish I were not an unhappy example of this kind, and that I did not to this day feel the sad effects of making too violent efforts in the pulpit, many years ago: from my own experience therefore let me advise young preachers, who have not the most robust lungs, to have recourse to art and management, rather than to force, for supplying that defect.

The third rule I would recommend to you is, to observe one even and uniform manner of pronunciation. I would not be here understood to mean, that a preacher is to confine himself to one simple note or sound, or to one degree of time and motion, from the beginning to the end of his discourse; for this is that *monotonia*, or *una quædam spiritus ac soni intentio*, which the great teacher of Roman oratory explodes. It would be most absurd to do this, unless every thought and every occasion were perfectly alike. The spirit and beauty, and, I may say, the very essence of pronunciation, lies in proper emphases and accents,

and in varying the notes and times pursuant to the diversity of sentiments and occasions.

But I am levelling this rule against that subsultory way of delivery, that rises like a storm in one part of the period, and presently sinks into a dead calm, that will scarce reach the ear. I allow that elevations and softenings of the voice, judiciously managed, are both ornamental and useful; but those sudden starts and explosions are most ungraceful, and unbecoming the gravity of the pulpit, and are of no use, that I can think of, unless it be to startle a hearer that happens to be asleep: and the other extreme of sinking below the ear is still more ridiculous; for words which cannot be heard may as well not be spoken.

The fourth and last general rule I would suggest is, to distinguish carefully between the doctrinal and practical part of the discourse, in the manner of your pronunciation. The intention of the doctrinal part being to enlighten the understanding, and to lead it to the knowledge of truth, by cool reasoning and argumentation; all that is proper and necessary here, is that simplicity of accent and emphasis, which may serve to point out where the force of the argument lies; and no man, who is master of his subject, can greatly err in this part.

But the practical part of a sermon requires a very different conduct; for the mind having been before sufficiently enlightened, and the nature and obligation of virtue clearly proved, the intention is now to persuade the will to embrace it; to which end the passions are to be excited to come in to assist the reason. And here it is that the pathetic allurements of voice will be useful and proper: for experience shews us the power of the outward senses in this case, and particularly that action and motion skilfully presented to the eye, and musical sounds received by the ear, produce wonderful effects on our passions and affections. It is therefore necessary, when your design is to raise fear or hope, joy or sorrow, love or hatred, to vary the action and pronunciation from cool and sedate, to that which is more warm and moving; in order to touch the spring of that passion which you would make use of to answer your end.

To descend to particulars in this case is impossible, because the variety is infinite. The simple accents required in reasoning are few and easy, and good sense alone will direct these; but the various modulations of the voice, which render tone and

cadence harmonious, are talents of quite another kind : for these being in reality nothing but different notes in the scale of music, require a musical ear to form and direct them ; and where this natural gift is wanting, the preacher will fall into discords, and only expose himself by his attempt.

For this reason, the safest way is, generally, of the two extremes, to avoid that of running into too much tone and cadence ; his defect on this side will, at the worst, only not please, but an error on the other side will disturb and displease ; and it may moreover carry the appearance of affectation and self-opinion, which will expose him to contempt and censure.

I come next to the second branch of your office in the church, and that is reading the public prayers ; and I do assure you, there is no little skill required to do this as it ought to be done. I call it indeed reading the prayers, in compliance with the common phrase ; but speaking properly, prayers ought to be prayed, and not read.

There is a certain propriety of accent, cadence, and gesture, that befits the solemnity and seriousness of devotion ; and where this is duly observed, the minister will find it a great help, both to warm his own heart, and to draw out the attention and affections of the congregation. I do allow that prayer is a spiritual duty, and is properly the action of the soul : but experience shews us to be so made and compounded, as that our souls receive great impressions and changes from our outward senses. And therefore the minister should choose those accents and gestures that are most apt and proper to excite his own devotion, as well as that of the people : he should pray to their eyes, and pray to their ears, as the readiest way to affect their hearts.

But he must at the same time carefully avoid theatrical accents and gestures ; all affectation is offensive to good judges ; but that of the theatre is of all others the most unbecoming the house of God, and will disgust serious persons. And yet if accents and diversification of voice be wholly rejected, the prayers will seem cold and lifeless, the attention will languish, and the devotion lose its spirit and fervour.

There is likewise a due medium to be observed in the time and movement of prayers : if they are read too fast, they cannot impress the soul with due sentiments and affections as the minister proceeds ; on the other hand, slow and heavy reading will make the work dull and tiresome ; and the impatient hearer will

be apt to let loose his thoughts to wander upon foreign subjects or perhaps compose himself to rest.

So that it requires some degree of judgment to steer between these extremes ; and the reading of the public prayers is an art which all clergymen should set themselves to acquire by study and practice, and by copying after the best examples.

And yet I fear that it is too much neglected by those who are newly ordained ; and that, when they come first into the desk, they strike at random, and without any regard to propriety, into a certain manner of reading, which every body observes to be wrong but themselves : time and use will soon render this familiar ; and as they never discover the fault, it becomes a habit, and they never think of correcting it afterwards.

It is indeed difficult to change a bad manner ; but difficult things may be done, and often must be done. And to make this point more easy, I will give you one short rule, which may be of use both to such clergymen as are yet to form their manner, and to those who have habituated themselves to an improper one ; and it is this : let a minister, when he opens his book, possess his soul with this thought ; that he is going to address himself to the great Majesty of heaven and earth, who knows all his thoughts, and beholds all his actions ; and that he is in the immediate presence of this adorable Being, who is very jealous of his honour ; I say, let him possess his soul duly with this consideration, and he will naturally fall into all the proprieties of prayer.

The third branch of your office is that of public catechising.

The compilers of our liturgy acted very prudently in making the Church Catechism short and summary, for fear of overburdening the memory, and rendering it distasteful and irksome. For this reason they did not support the doctrines and duties, there laid down, with proofs out of the holy scripture, taking it for granted, that this part would be supplied by the pastors of the church : this has accordingly been done by many of our bishops and learned divines, in their printed expositions of the Church Catechism ; descending to many particular questions and answers, which naturally branch out from the general heads of that summary.

Among these I must mention and recommend one in particular, composed by that most excellent prelate (now with God)

who was my immediate predecessor in this diocese and province, in whose steps I beseech God to give me grace to tread.

With regard to children, the chief use of catechisms is to treasure up the materials of knowledge in their memories, though they may perhaps enter very little into the sense of them : but as their understandings ripen with time, and their appetite for knowledge increases, it will be no small advantage that they have the words and sentences ready stored up for use ; for they will easily put sense to them hereafter, and then it is that a more copious exposition becomes seasonable and necessary : however, no pains should be spared for enlightening them at present according to their capacities.

And I am afraid that too many of your parishioners who are of mature age, and even some who are advanced in years, have need to be taught what are the first principles of the oracles of God. Shame will hinder such from coming to be catechised like children, but that shame will be covered by your putting in practice the method I am recommending ; for light and knowledge will be obliquely conveyed into their minds, and you will, by instructing children in their presence, instruct them at the same time, without exposing their ignorance.

In such parishes as afford a sufficient auditory at the evening service, this work may be then most conveniently performed, till the short days come in ; but where the parishioners lie remote from the church, the morning will be the fittest time. It will indeed prolong the service for half an hour ; but they who come to worship God but once in seven days may look upon this as an easy composition ; and if the minister should not grudge his pains, it will be hard if they should grudge their time, when they have no worldly business upon their hands.

If you should at the same time take occasion to explain and enforce the doctrines of protestantism, and of the established church, it might be of great use to fortify your people, and prevent apostasies, and perhaps to bring over such as may have the curiosity to be your hearers. And to speak the truth, there is no other way of effecting this properly upon reasonable creatures and Christians, than the way of reasoning and conviction. Coercive laws may restrain and disable those who avow principles that are destructive to the church and state, and coercion in those cases is wise and necessary ; but they can never convince any body : they may tie up men's hands and tongues, but never

reach their hearts; this is only to be done by enlightening the mind, and working properly upon the conscience.

I must therefore, my reverend brethren, most earnestly press you to be assiduous in the discharge of this part of your office; declaring at the same time, that I shall distinguish with my regards such ministers and curates, as shall distinguish themselves by their diligence upon this and the following head;

Which is, fourthly, the reviving of that almost antiquated exercise of expounding the holy scriptures to your congregations.

I am afraid the bulk of your people are very little acquainted with this divine book; some for want of inclination to read it, and others for want of proper helps for understanding it; and yet this is the book that *is able to make them wise unto salvation*^a. This book is the great rule of their faith and practice, and according to this book they must be judged at the last day.

Who then should teach them to understand it but their pastors, who are called by that honourable name, because they are to *feed their people with knowledge and understanding*^b? *For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts*^c.

By this means you will by degrees lead those into the knowledge of the holy scriptures, who will not be at the pains, or may want leisure, to read them at home; or if they do read, yet, for want of commentators, are sometimes at a loss for the true sense.

Let me add, that this exercise will be of no small advantage even to yourselves, as it will lay you under a necessity of studying the word of God, which you are by profession, and promise at your ordination, bound to do: for a clergyman can no more be unskilful in the holy scriptures, without great shame and reproach, than a lawyer in the law.

The Epistles and Gospels, and Lessons for the day, will furnish you with choice of subjects for this work, which will become easy and familiar to the minister, after he has once made himself master of the sense and connection. And the same notes will generally serve, as the same portions return in an annual rotation.

But let me not be misunderstood: I am not recommending

^a 2 Tim. iii. 15.

^b Jer. iii. 15.

^c Mal. ii. 7.

this as an additional task, over and above the sermon, but to be substituted sometimes in the place of it ; and which, in my judgment, will be more profitable ; especially if care be taken to make such practical inferences and applications in the course of the exposition, as may naturally arise out of the text. This will indeed make it a sermon in another shape ; with this difference only, that the variety of subjects and incidents will enliven the attention, and give a more agreeable, as well as instructive entertainment to the audience ; who, I dare say, will come with a better appetite to this exercise, when judiciously performed, and fill your churches better.

It will remain in the minister's discretion to interpose a sermon when he pleases ; but he will do well to note down those Sundays, in order to expound in the following year those portions of holy scripture, which by this means were omitted.

And if the people were admonished to bring their Bibles with them, according to the good old practice of our ancestors, and to accompany the minister as he reads and expounds, they would understand and retain it better, and be enabled to spend an hour most profitably in recollecting and repeating to their families what they had heard at church.

If this custom, practised in the times of puritanism, was laid aside in a licentious age, when all seriousness in religion grew out of fashion, let us not be ashamed to revive it ; for it is no shame to learn that which is good from any body. After all, if a sermon in form should, in compliance with custom, be found indispensable, it may however be shortened to allow for the time that had been spent in the exposition.

I come now to the second general head I proposed to speak to, viz. your duty at large, and out of the house of God.

The first I should mention is the visitation of the sick. And let me assure you, that this is a very critical office at certain conjunctures, and that great discretion is required for the right discharge of it ; for there may be danger in administering either too much fear or too much hope.

To awaken a sick man to reflect upon his past life, and to call his sins to remembrance, in order to a particular repentance, will be of great use to him ; but care must be taken, not to throw him into despair of God's mercy and forgiveness ; for this will prevent his repentance, and shut the door of mercy against him.

On the other hand, to set only the mercy of God before him, and deal out hope too liberally, will be the way to make him secure at a time when his soul is in the utmost danger, and when repentance is all that he has for it. And by-standers will be too apt to lay hold of such sweet doctrine to their own undoing.

I am afraid it is too frequent for wicked livers, when they apprehend the approaches of death, to send for the minister, in order to receive the communion and absolution as a kind of passport, which they hope will do their business at once, and carry them by a short way to heaven ; and indeed this is a very short way, if it would do. But alas ! we do not find in the holy scriptures that the way is quite so easy ; on the contrary, we find that repentance and a good life are the only sure foundation of hope and comfort at the hour of death. For this reason a minister ought not to be too ready with his absolutions ; nor has he any warrant for it, unless the proofs of repentance be strong, and the sick person humbly and earnestly desire it ; in which case only, the rubric directs absolution to be given.

And even then, it will be very proper for the minister to observe, that he has no power to forgive sins absolutely ; but that all that he can do is to declare, for the comfort of the sick, that God forgives him, in case his repentance be sincere, and his heart thoroughly changed.

I confess, that when things are come to the last extremity, repentance is all that is in the power of a dying man, after a bad life : but God only knows, whether it be the mere effect of terror, or whether the heart be so changed as, in case of recovery, would have operated to a virtuous life. Charity, which hopeth all things, will make the best of it ; but it is a very poor refuge ; and as it would be cruel to refuse a dying man that little comfort which his case may possibly admit, so it would encourage presumption in the living to give too much.

But the case is quite otherwise with regard to a virtuous and godly man in his last moments ; here none of these cautions are necessary, but the minister may safely pour the oil of joy and hope with profusion into his soul.

But the visitation of the sick is only an occasional branch of a pastor's duty, and there is another of much greater importance and extent, and that is,

Secondly, His visiting all his parishioners at their houses in a stated and a regular course. By this means only can he learn the true state of their souls, and all their spiritual wants. In the church he is to speak, and they to hear only; but his familiar conversation will give them an opportunity of speaking in their turns, and of opening to him their doubts and scruples of conscience; their fears, their temptations, and their ignorance; and he will take fit occasions to admonish and reprove them privately, without exposing them to shame, according to our Saviour's advice. The tenderness and regard to the character and credit of an offender must naturally tend to soften and reclaim him; but if after repeated admonitions he should prove obstinate and incorrigible, then, and not till then, is he to be put to open shame. Presentments, excommunications, judicial censures, and penances, are always to be the last resort, when private admonitions and exhortations have been repeated without effect.

If there be domestic quarrels and dissensions, the discreet advice of the minister may heal them, and restore unity and peace, and mutual affection between husband and wife, parents and children, brethren and sisters. If reciprocal passions, or ill offices, have set neighbours and friends at variance, and given rise to vexatious prosecutions and lawsuits, which are often occasioned by a mere misunderstanding of one another, (or by malicious whispers and insinuations,) he will set things in a better light, and mollify them to a better temper; and bring them to decide their differences by the cheap and Christian way of arbitration, to the saving of families from utter ruin. And indeed I have observed, that when once a minister has, by his discreet, peaceable, and upright behaviour, established himself in the good opinion and confidence of his parishioners, he becomes from that time a general arbiter and judge among them, and all their little strifes are readily submitted to his decision.

By the same means also he will learn if the worship of God be kept up in families, as it ought; he will discover what good books are used among them, and what bad ones, which may tend to corrupt their principles and manners. He will find if seducers have been privately at work in his parish, to practise on the ignorant and unstable, and lead them astray; and this will give him an opportunity to set them right, and fortify them. And I

fear there was never more occasion for the vigilance of ministers in this case, than in these days, when the flock of Christ is beset with wolves of various denominations.

To name no more, he will learn from his own eyesight the distresses and wants of the poor families in his parish, which will move him both to extend his own charity, and to solicit that of others, for their relief.

These and a thousand other good ends are to be obtained only by the diligence of a pastor in visiting his parishioners at their houses ; so that if he should content himself with officiating in the church only, and having barely a face-knowledge of them, he will leave a great part of his duty undone.

It is incredible how far this practice would go towards reforming the people, and especially those of the lower rank ; for though he is doing no more than his bare duty, yet they would mistake it for a great honour and condescension on his part, to visit them familiarly in their homely cottages ; and by thus gaining their hearts, he would find them soft to his good impressions, and patient under his reproofs.

I hope, therefore, my reverend brethren, that you will be particularly assiduous in this branch of your duty ; and that, for the more easy and effectual performance of it, you will divide your respective parishes into convenient districts, to be visited by you in a stated course.

Need I observe to you, in the third and last place, that the example of a virtuous and holy life in a minister will have more effect upon his people, than a thousand discourses from the pulpit, be they never so excellent.

The bulk of mankind are much easier led by the eye than the ear ; and though he should preach like an angel, yet they will despise his doctrine, if they do not read it in his life : but when he shews himself *in all things a pattern of good works*, and presents in his own life a fair copy of all those graces and virtues which he recommends from the pulpit, his people will believe him to be in good earnest, and that his sincere aim is to save their souls as well as his own. His humility, meekness, and forgiveness, his charity and moderation, his temperance and sobriety, his grave, prudent, and peaceable behaviour, his encouragement of religion and devotion in his own family, will procure reverence and authority to his person, attention to his preaching, and a zeal to imitate his virtues : they will think such

a labourer worthy of his hire ; and he must be of a very perverse temper indeed, who will not cheerfully render him his dues.

I must here make one observation, which most naturally arises out of this head ; and that is the indispensable duty of residing on your respective cures ; for it is of the nature of examples to be present and before the eye ; so that a minister who does not live among his flock can never be an example to them.

I might here mention, as a lower consideration, the convenience of residence to yourselves ; not only for the better improvement of your glebes, and the providing of more comfortable habitations for yourselves and successors, and being in the midst of your business ; but also for avoiding all pretences of withholding from you your legal dues.

When a minister is not resident, either in person or by his curate, the parishioners are ready to plead, (and indeed with too much colour,) that they do not receive the valuable consideration of their tithes.

In strictness of law there is no foundation for this plea, because tithes are not the property of the tenant or the landlord, but free donations to the church by the piety of ancient times ; which by unlucky accidents are fallen into the hands of mere laymen, who can do no spiritual service for the same : and in fact all estates subject to tithes were transmitted, or purchased, subject to this incumbrance ; for which the purchaser must have paid a greater price, and the farmer a higher rent, if they had been tithe-free. Every man therefore must consider himself not as a possessor in property, but as a trustee of the tenth part of the produce ; which he holds in trust for the use of the parish minister ; and which he cannot without injustice withhold and apply to his own use, since he has no title to it.

And the case is become the same where there are lay-impropriators ; and yet these receive their tithes with less grumbling and opposition, though they can neither pray nor preach as a consideration for the same.

The nonresidence therefore of the minister, or even his neglects of duty, are a mere pretence set up against paying tithes and I am afraid that if he would graciously remit his dues, too many of these clamourers would readily dispense with his residence.

But give me leave to observe, on the other hand, that if in law the minister be entitled to his tithes, the parishioners are in

good conscience, and by the rules of the gospel, and the will of the donor, entitled equally to his spiritual cares and labours in the execution of his office for the good of their souls. If he *reaps their carnal things*, it is in consideration that he shall *sow unto them spiritual things*; and as he is *partaker of the altar*, he is required *to wait at the altar*^d; and therefore if he proves remiss in the discharge of his duty, if he is not at hand to watch over his flock, to feed and to guard them, he must not wonder if they are untoward and difficult in the payment of their dues; for though the law be with him, yet they will justly set up the equity of the gospel against him.

I cannot dismiss this general head without putting you in mind of one duty more, which, though it be not properly canonical and within my province, yet is truly of religious consideration.

I am speaking of that provision for your families, by a prudent management of your incomes, which every man is bound by the laws of God and of nature to make. St. Paul's admonition in this case is at least as binding as any canon of our church: *If any one provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel*^e.

And I am sorry to observe, that the memories of many clergymen lie under just reproach for their neglect of this duty, which the laws of God and nature oblige every man to do. If a clergyman happens to have a temporal estate, something will remain for the support of his family who survive him; but where his benefice is his only fund, he must want natural affection and justice, or to suppose the best, he must be void of all thought, who spends it as fast as it comes in, without laying up some part of it for their support. Whether it be owing to indolence, or bad management, or to idle projects, or whether his income be expended in entertainments and high living, falsely called hospitality, though it may more properly be called pride and ostentation; yet it makes no difference with respect to them, when there is nothing left for their subsistence.

He would disdain to be told, that the only refuge of his widow must be in some charity-house; and that his daughters, after being delicately bred, must be quartered as humble companions

^d 1 Cor. ix. 11, 13.

^e 1 Timothy v. 8.

upon some good lady ; where, if they are treated better than servants in point of ceremony and respect, yet their condition is so far worse, as they serve without wages ; or if this should not be their good fortune, they must be exposed to snares and temptations, and at last perhaps fall a prey to some rich invader of their virtue, for the sake of a maintenance : I say, he would disdain to be told this, and yet he is taking the ready way to bring things to this issue. For he well knows that he is only a tenant for life, and that as he spends all while he lives, all his funds must die with him.

How much better would it be for such a one to retrench all superfluities in good time, and enter upon a new economy ! What if he should not treat with wine, and rival men of permanent fortunes in his entertainments ; what if his wife and daughters were not to shine in silks, but be modestly clothed in decent stuffs, and the savings laid up for their fortunes ; would any wise man think the worse either of him or them ? No ; his prudence and their humility would be universally applauded, and would be set up as an example to other families in the like circumstances.

I should therefore think it a most laudable resolution in every clergyman, who is not possessed of a temporal estate, to lay up one half, or one third, or at the least one quarter of his income, according as the thing will bear, for the future occasions of his family ; and to look upon such savings as not at all his own, but sacred to their use.

It remains only that I exhort you to that which is not so properly to be called a distinct and separate head of duty, as a mode or quality that ought to run through all the rest : I am speaking of zeal, or that fervent desire of doing good to the souls of your parishioners, which will animate and enliven every part of your duty. This is opposed to that indolence and lukewarmness of spirit, which always proceeds with indifference and slothfulness in business ; which does what is barely required, and no more, and therefore generally underdoes in every thing. To such tempers every thing goes up hill and against the grain ; and is performed as if it were a task, which is done only because it must be done.

But a principle of zeal will turn our duty into delight, and make us active and diligent ; it will overcome all difficulties, and spare no pains in promoting the honour of God, and the salva-

tion of those souls that are committed to our charge. Our Saviour gives John the character of a *burning and a shining light*^f, shining by the light of his doctrine, and burning by the warmth and activity of his zeal: and the same should be the character of every minister of the gospel.

In order therefore to excite you to the effectual discharge of your spiritual offices with this laudable temper of mind, I shall, as I proposed, lay before you some motives and considerations, which, if duly attended to, cannot fail of success.

The first shall be taken from the nature of that trust, which with your own consent has been committed to you. The souls of your parishioners are your immediate charge, and you are to guide them in the way to eternal salvation. Hence it is, that the office of a minister is represented in the holy scriptures under metaphors and characters importing a very high trust.

You are called shepherds, who are to feed the flock of Christ, by enlightening their minds with the knowledge of divine truths; to establish their faith, and influence them to the practice of virtue. *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?* says our Saviour; *Feed my sheep*^g; which he repeats three times. The trust is comprised in three words, but so big with important matter as might fill a volume. However, you may observe the principle and spring from whence it is inferred and enforced; *Lovest thou me?* strongly implying, that wherever there is a true love for our blessed Saviour, it will naturally operate by a zeal for promoting the salvation of those souls for whom he shed his most precious blood.

As shepherds, who are likewise instructed to guard your flocks from spiritual enemies and dangers, especially as they are surrounded with those who will be assiduous to pervert and corrupt both their faith and manners. For this reason a good pastor will always have an eye upon his flock, to confirm those that are wavering, and to reclaim and recover such as have been led astray, being seduced by *cunning men, who lay in wait to deceive*; for those wolves have ever haunted about Christ's fold.

And it is in the same view and for the same purposes that you are called watchmen; for you are to watch over the faith and morals of your people, and guard them against infidelity, idolatry, false doctrines, corrupt religions, evil customs, and immoral

^f John v. 35.

^g John xxi. 16.

practices. *Son of man*, says God to the prophet, *I have made thee a watchman over the house of Israel*; and the end follows, namely, to *warn the wicked from his evil way*. St. Paul takes up the allusion, *Obey them that have the rule over you, for they watch for your souls*^h.

And here I cannot but repeat the hint of the necessity of residence, which is so clearly and strongly implied in those metaphors; for an absent and rambling shepherd must needs neglect the safety of his flock, and a watchman or sentinel will be punished if he leaves his post.

And lastly, to name no more, you are *stewards of the mysteries of God*ⁱ, and dispensers of the means of salvation in his church. The church is Christ's household or family; and it is your office to administer their spiritual food to them, *even the sincere milk of the word*, that so they may *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of God their Saviour*.

Now these metaphors of a shepherd, a watchman, and a steward, express in a most significant and lively manner the nature of that trust which is committed to every one who has taken upon him the holy character; and shew that he is responsible for the souls of his parishioners.

And as every trust must one time or other be accounted for, this leads me to the other motive, proper to excite you to a zealous and diligent discharge of your office; namely, that you will most certainly be called to a strict account for the same. This is strongly urged by St. Paul, in the place before mentioned, as an argument both to ministers and people to discharge their duties reciprocally; *Obey them that rule over you, for they watch for your souls, as those who must give account*.

And what account will a lukewarm, slothful, and negligent minister give at that day, if his unhappy parishioners should turn evidences against him, and, in excuse for their own faults, plead, that they miscarried through his neglect? will he plead his obedience to the canons and rubrics, and that he performed every service which the letter of the law required? Let me assure you, my reverend brethren, that this plea will not be admitted before the great Judge, and that the Father and Lover of souls requires much more at your hands.

Canons and rubrics are useful instruments for keeping up

^h Hebrews xiii. 17.

ⁱ 1 Cor. iv. 1.

external discipline, order, and decency in an established church; and it is small merit in a clergyman to obey these, because he will be exposed to ecclesiastical censures for his neglect. But if he contents himself with this legal observance, and goes no further, he will be *found wanting* when he comes to be *weighed in the balance*. His heart and soul must be set upon his work; he must give up the best of his time and pains to it, labouring *in season and out of season*^k, performing many things as a volunteer, which laws do not and cannot prescribe; or he will never stand the inquisition of the great day, but be ranked in the number of *unprofitable servants*. This day of reckoning must come; it is what you preach to others, and it is what you should seriously consider yourselves, *lest, after preaching to them, you yourselves should be castaways*^l.

But as dreadful as this day will prove to slothful and merely canonical pastors, it will be no less joyful and happy to those who have been zealous and diligent in saving the souls committed to their charge. With what pleasure will every such minister appear at the head of his happy flock before the great Shepherd, and in his own words say, *Those thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost!* The light of his doctrine, and the living light of his example, did not shine in vain, even with respect to himself, before his people; *for they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever*^m.

If any further motive were necessary, though one would think it should not, you may turn to the Office of Ordination, and refresh your memories with the solemn promises you made at your admission to the order of priests; and I would earnestly advise every clergyman to read over that Office once at least in every year, because stale promises are too apt to be forgotten.

Having thus, my reverend brethren, delivered my thoughts to you, though very imperfectly, upon some of the chief branches of your sacred function, I hope you will receive them favourably, and that they will not be quite unprofitable; and especially to such of you as have not long been admitted to the cure of souls.

I shall, by God's assistance, endeavour to cooperate with you for promoting the great ends of your ministry; I shall rejoice to live in harmony and a good understanding with you; I shall be happy in your esteem and affection, and in giving you the best

^k 2 Tim. iv. 2.^l 1 Cor. ix. 27.^m Daniel xii. 3.

proofs of mine. If any of you should need admonition, you will remember that it is my duty to give it, and yours to take it in good part : and I hope always to give it in the spirit of meekness, and with a due regard to the dignity of your character. I shall be apt to take good impressions of you, and slow to believe things unworthy of you ; and would hope that this disposition of charity and benevolence will be mutual. I shall cheerfully assist you, as far as I am capable, with my advice, and with my prayers in your behalf ; and I hope I shall not want the benefit of your advice as there shall be occasion ; and especially of your prayers, that God will enable me by his grace to discharge faithfully the great trust committed to me, for the promotion of his glory and the edification of this diocese : that so, when the great Shepherd shall require an account of the flocks committed to our charge, you and I may be able to give it up with cheerfulness, and *enter into the joy of our Lord.*

I shall conclude with those awful words of God to the prophet Ezekiel in his 33d chapter. *O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel : therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die ; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it ; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul.*

PAROCHIALIA:

OR,

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CLERGY,

IN THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR

PAROCHIAL DUTY

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND

THOMAS WILSON, D. D.

LORD BISHOP OF SODOR AND MAN.

THE
P R E F A C E.

THE venerable author of the following Instructions to the Clergy presented a copy of them, in manuscript, to every clergyman in his diocese; and as they are admirably adapted to the end for which they were designed, we may reasonably presume that this instance of his lordship's affectionate concern for his clergy and people was attended with the happiest effects.

The Instructions comprehend several of the most important branches of the pastoral office; and as they are the fruit of long experience in the work of the ministry, and that too the experience of Bishop Wilson, they carry their own recommendation with them, and will, we doubt not, be favourably received by the reverend body, for whose use they are intended, and to whom they are most respectfully offered.

TO
THE CLERGY
OF THE
DIOCESE OF SODOR AND MAN.

Bishop's-Court, March 3, 1708.

My dear brethren,

I PERSUADE myself, that you will take the following advice well from me, because, besides the authority God has given me, I have always encouraged you to give me your assistance to enable me to discharge my duty.

Every return of Lent (a time when people were wont either to call themselves, or to be called, to an account) should put *us*, above all men, upon examining and judging ourselves, because we are to answer for the faith and manners of others, as well as for our own; and therefore this is a very proper season to take an account both of our flocks and of ourselves, which would make our great account less hazardous and dreadful.

Let me therefore entreat you, at this time, to do what I always have obliged myself to; namely, carefully to look over your ordination vows. It is very commendable to do this every Ember-week, but it would be unpardonable negligence not once a year to consider what we have bound ourselves to, and taken the sacrament upon it.

In the first place, therefore, *if we were indeed moved by the Holy Ghost, and truly called to the ministry of the church*, as we declared we were, this will appear in our conduct ever since.

Let us then consider, whether our great aim has been to promote the glory of God with which we were intrusted, and the eternal interest of the souls committed to our charge, according to the vows that are upon us? If not, for God's sake let us put on resolutions of better obedience for the time to come.

The holy scriptures are the rule by which we and our people are to be judged at the last day; it is for this we solemnly promise, *to be diligent in reading, and to instruct our people out of the same holy scriptures.* They do indeed sufficiently contain all doctrine necessary to eternal salvation, (as we profess to believe,) but then they must be carefully studied, often consulted, and the Holy Spirit often applied to for the true understanding of them; or else in vain is all our labour, and we are false to our vows.

Upon which heads it will behove us to consider, how much we have neglected this necessary study;—how often we have contented ourselves with reading just so much as we were obliged to by the public offices of the church!—How apt such as read not the holy scriptures are to run to other books for matter for their sermons; by which means they have been too often led to speak of errors and vices which did no way concern their hearers, or of things above their capacities:—and it has often happened, that they themselves have scarce been convinced of (and of course have not been heartily in love with) the truths which they have recommended to others; which is the true reason why their sermons may have done so little good.

But when a man is sensibly affected with the value of souls, with the danger they are in, with the manner of their redemption, and the price paid for them; and is well acquainted with the New Testament, in which all this is plainly set forth;—as he will never want matter for the best sermons, so he will never want arguments sufficient to convince his hearers, his own heart being touched with the importance of the subject. Under this head, we must not forget to charge ourselves with the neglect of catechising; for, as it is one of the most necessary duties of the ministry, so it is bound upon us by laws, canons, rubrics, and constitutions, enough to awaken the most careless among us to a more diligent discharge of this duty.

But though we should be never so diligent in these duties, if our conversation be not edifying, we shall only bring these

ordinances into contempt ; and therefore, when a priest is ordained, he promises, *by God's help, to frame and fashion himself and family, so as to make both, as much as in him lieth, wholesome examples and patterns of the flock of Christ.*

Under which head it will be fit to consider what offence we may have given, by an unwary conversation, by criminal liberties, &c. that we may beg God's pardon, and make some amends by a more strict behaviour for the future ; that we may be examples to the flock, teaching them sobriety, by our strict temperance ; charity, by our readiness to forgive ; devotion, by our ardent zeal in the offering up their prayers to God.

They that think all their work is done, when the service of the Lord's day is over, do not remember, that they have promised to use both public and private monitions, as well to the sick as to the whole, within their cures, as need shall require, and as occasion shall be given. Upon this head, let us look back, and see how often we have forborne to reprove open offenders, either out of fear, or from a sinful modesty, or for worldly respects :—considerations which should never come in competition with the honour of God, with which a clergyman stands charged.

Let us consider, how few we have admonished privately ; how few we have reclaimed ; and how many, who are yet under the power of a sinful life, which we might have reclaimed by such admonitions !

Let us consider how many have been in affliction of mind, body, or estate, without any benefit to their souls, for want of being made sensible of the hand, and voice, and design of God in such visitation ! How many have recovered from the bed of sickness, without becoming better men, only for want of being put in mind of the fears they were under, and the thoughts they had, and the promises they made, when they were in danger !—Lastly, how many have lived and died in sin, without making their peace with God, or satisfaction and restitution to man, for want of being forewarned of the account they were to give ! A negligence which we cannot reflect upon without trembling.

It will here likewise be proper to consider how many offenders have escaped the censures of the church through our neglect, by which they might have been humbled for their sins, and others restrained from falling into the like miscarriages.—Other

churches lament the want of that discipline, which we (blessed be God) can exercise. How great then is the sin of those, who, by laziness or partiality, would bring it into disuse !

Because a great deal depends upon the manner of our performing divine offices, we ought to reflect upon it, how often we read the prayers of the church with coldness and indevotion, and administer the sacraments with an indifference unworthy of the holy mysteries ; by which it comes to pass that some despise, and some abhor the service of God ! Let us detest such indevotion, and resolve upon a becoming seriousness when we offer up the supplications of the people to God, that they, seeing our zeal, may be persuaded, that it is not for trifles we pray, nor out of custom only that we go to church.

The great secret of attaining such an affecting way is to be constant and serious in our private devotions, which will beget in us a spirit of piety, able to influence our voice and actions.

Having thus taken an account of our own engagements, and heartily begged God's pardon for our omissions, and prescribed rules to ourselves, of acting suitably to our high calling for the future, we shall be better disposed to take an account of our flock : always remembering, that our love to Christ is to be expressed by *feeding his sheep*.

I have observed with satisfaction that most people, who by their age are qualified, do come to the Lord's supper at Easter. Now, it is much to be feared that such as generally turn their backs upon that holy ordinance at other times, do come at this time more out of custom, or to comply with the laws, than out of a sense of duty.

This is no way to be prevented, but by giving them a true notion of this holy sacrament, such as shall neither encourage the profane to eat and drink their own damnation, nor discourage well-meaning people from receiving the greatest comfort and support of the Christian life.

To this end it will be highly conducive (and I earnestly recommend it to you) to make this the subject of a good part of your sermons during Lent. But let them be plain and practical discourses, such as may set forth the nature, end, and benefits of the Lord's supper. That it is to keep up the remembrance of the sacrifice and death of Christ, whereby alone we obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his passion. That

it is a mark of our being members of Christ's church, a token of our being in covenant with God. That a sinner has nothing but this to plead for pardon, when the devil or his conscience accuse him before God. That we ought to receive as often as conveniently we can, that, as Peter Damien expresses himself, "the old serpent, seeing the blood of the Lamb upon our lips, may tremble to approach us." That Jesus Christ presents before God in heaven his death and merits, for all such as duly remember them on earth.

Let them know, that a Christian life is the best preparation ;—that God respects sincerity of heart above all things ; which consists in doing what God has commanded us, to the best of our knowledge and power.

Let them know the danger of unworthy receiving, without full purposes of amendment of life. And that they may know wherein they have offended, and that they may have *no cloke for their sin*, it would be very convenient, some Sunday before Easter, to read to them some heads of self-examination, (leaving out such sins and duties in which none of them are concerned,) such as you will find at the latter end of the *Whole Duty of Man*, and in many other books of devotion.

But to make your sermons more effectual, (and I desire it and require it of you,) that you take an account of the state and condition of your particular flocks, during the approaching season, and visit and deal in private with those upon whom your sermons have probably had no influence.

Let them know that the church obliges you to deny them the blessed sacrament, which is the means of salvation, until you can be satisfied of their reformation.

Let such as live in malice, envy, or in any other grievous crime, and yet come to the holy table as if they were in a state of salvation ; let them be told, that they provoke God to plague them with his judgments.

Admonish such as are litigious, and vex their neighbours without cause, that this is contrary to the spirit and rules of Christianity ;—that this holy sacrament either finds or makes all communicants of one heart and mind, or mightily increases their guilt that are not made so.

Tell such as are wont, before that solemn season of receiving, to forbear drinking and their other vices,—that fast and pray

for a few days ;—tell them plainly, that none of these exercises are acceptable to God, which are not attended with amendment of life.

Rebuke severely such as despise and profane the Lord's-day ; make them sensible, that a curse must be upon that family, out of which none goes to church to obtain a blessing upon those that stay at home.

Tell such as have submitted to church censures, and are not become better men, how abominable that hypocrisy is, that made them utter the most solemn promises, which they never meant to keep.

By this method you will answer the ends of that rubric before the Communion, which requires all persons that design to receive, to signify their names to the curate at least some time the day before,—an order, which, if observed, would give us rare opportunities of admonishing offenders who yet do not think themselves in danger.

Lastly, in making this visitation you will see what children are uncatechised, what families have no face of religion in them, &c.

But for God's sake remember, that if all this is not done in the spirit of meekness, with prudence and sweetness, you will never attain the end proposed by such a visitation of your parish.

Do but consider with what goodness our blessed Master treated with sinners, and you will bear much in order to reduce them. At the same time fear not the face of any man, while you are engaged in the cause of God, and in the way of your duty. He will either defend you, or reward your sufferings ; and can, when he pleases, terrify gainsayers.

It is true, all this is not to be done without trouble ; but then consider what grief, and weariness, and contempt our Master underwent, in turning sinners from the power of Satan unto God : and as he *saw the travail of his soul*, so shall we reap very great benefit by it even in this world.

We shall have great satisfaction in seeing our churches thronged with communicants, who come out of a sense of duty more than out of a blind obedience. We shall gain a wonderful authority amongst our people. Such as have any spark of grace will love and respect you for your friendly admonition : such as have none, will however reverence you, and stand in awe of you.

And they that pay you tithes, will by this be convinced, that it is not for doing nothing that you receive them, since your calling obliges you to continual labour and thoughts of heart.

That you may do all this with a spirit of piety worthy of the priesthood, you have two excellent books in your hands, *The Pastoral Care*, and *The Country Parson*, which I hope I need not enjoin you to read over at this time.

I considered, that the best men have sometimes need of being stirred up, that they may not lose a spirit of piety, which is but too apt to languish. This is all the apology I shall make for this address to you at this time.

Now that both you and I may give a comfortable account of our office and charge, as it is the design of this letter, so it shall be my hearty prayer to God.

I am your affectionate brother,

THOMAS SODOR AND MAN.

PAROCHIALIA.

OF CONFIRMATION.

Of answering the ends of this apostolical institution.

THERE is no question to be made of it, but that most of that ignorance, impiety, profaneness, want of charity, of union, and order, which we complain of, is owing to the neglect or abuse of this one ordinance; which being appointed by the apostles, and practised even when baptism was administered to people of full age^a, it is no wonder that God punishes the contempt of it, by withholding his holy Spirit, and those graces which are necessary, and would certainly accompany the religious use of it.

If this were well considered, and pastors would resolve to discharge their duty in this particular faithfully, we should soon see another face of religion: Christians would be obliged to study their religion, and to think it something more than a work of the lips, and of the memory, or the mere custom of the place where they live. And being made sensible of their danger, (being liable to *sin*, to *death*, and to *damnation*;) this would make them *serious*, and *thoughtful*, and *inquisitive*, after the manner of their redemption, and the means of salvation;—and their consciences being awakened and informed, sin would become more uneasy to them, and virtue more acceptable. In short, by this means, people would know their duty, the sacraments would be kept from being profaned, and pastors would be respected and obeyed, as being very truly the fathers of their flock.

^a Acts viii. 17.

And certainly no greater injury can be done to religion, than to suffer young people to come to confirmation, before they know the reason of this service, and have been well instructed in the principles and duties of Christianity. This being the very time of seasoning their minds with sound knowledge, of fortifying their wills with sober resolutions, and of engaging them to piety, before sin has got the possession of their affections ; this being also the time of qualifying them to receive benefit by all our future labours, and of arming them against apostasy, heresy, schism, and all other vices, to which we are subject in this state of trial.

In short, I do not know how a clergyman could possibly spend one month better, than by leading young people, as it were, by the hand, into the design of Christianity, by some such easy method as this following : if which, deliberately proposed to every single person in the hearing of all the rest, (who should be obliged to be every day present,) and familiarly explained, not the most ignorant (supposing he had learned, as he ought, the Church Catechism) but would be *able to give a reason of the hope that is in him* ; and his faith being thus built upon a solid and sure foundation, would, by the grace of God now imparted to him in a greater measure, withstand all future trials and temptations.

The method of dealing with young Christians, in order to fit them for confirmation.

I DO not ask you, whether you believe in God: you cannot open your eyes, but you must, by the world that you see, acknowledge the God that made it, and does still preserve it ;—that he is infinite in power, in wisdom, and in goodness ;—that in Him we live, and move, and have our being ;—that he is therefore worthy of all the love and service that we can possibly pay him.

How then do you think it comes to pass, that so many who *profess to know God*, do yet *in their works deny him*^b ? Why, this shews plainly, that man is fallen from that good estate in which God created him. He knows that he ought to live righteously, as in the sight of an holy and just God ;—that he should be afraid of doing any thing to offend so powerful a Being ;—that he should love, and strive to please him, upon whose goodness he depends ;—and that he should obey all his laws. And yet

^b Titus i. 16.

he cannot prevail with himself to do what he is persuaded he ought to do.

This may convince you, that man's nature has been sadly corrupted some way or other ; we having, in every one of us, the seeds of all manner of wickedness, which, if not kept under, will certainly grow up and be our ruin.

Now, the holy scriptures tell you how this came to pass ; namely, that our first parents being created perfect, (that is, able to know and obey any law that God should give them,) God gave them the law of nature and right reason to live by, and required of them a perfect obedience, with this assurance, that they should never die, if they did not transgress one particular command—of not eating the forbidden fruit, which command was given them both to try their obedience, and to keep their appetites in subjection.

Now, they did transgress this command, and thereby became subject to sin, to death—the reward of sin, and to the wrath of God : for God withdrew the supernatural powers and graces which he had given them, so that now, though they knew what was fit to be done, yet had they no longer power to perform it ; which would certainly have driven them to despair, but that God was pleased immediately to comfort them with this promise, that a time was coming, when he would send one to redeem them and their posterity from this miserable bondage ; and that he would then receive them again into favour, upon reasonable conditions.

In the mean time, Adam begat a race of children *after his own likeness*^e ; that is, with such a corrupt nature as his own was now become ; and his posterity grew every day more and more wicked, till at last God destroyed the whole world (except eight persons) by a flood.

But this did not destroy the seeds of sin which was in them, for by these eight persons the world was peopled with a race of men, who in a short time did quite forget and forsake God ; and for the most part became the subjects of the devil, and were led captives by him at his will.

At last, God remembered his promise, and, resolving to mend that disorder which sin had caused in the world, he sent his Son to take our nature upon him, and to give mankind assurance, that God would be reconciled to them upon very

^e Genesis v. 3.

merciful conditions ; namely, if they would renounce the devil, who first tempted man to sin, and accept of such laws and rules as were necessary to change their nature, which was now become prone to evil continually.

Now, to assure them that Jesus Christ came with this message from God, he did such miracles as none but God could do ; and to convince us how much he loved us, and what a sad thing sin is, (which nothing but his death could atone for,) he gave his life a ransom for us ; the punishment due to *us* being laid on *him*.

And God, to let us know that he was well pleased with what his Son had *done*, and *taught*, and *suffered*, raised him to life after he had been crucified, and received him up into heaven, and gave him all power in heaven and in earth, and sent down the Holy Ghost, with mighty power, to set up his kingdom, which is his church, among men ;—to destroy the kingdom of Satan, who hitherto had ruled without control ;—and to free mankind from the tyranny and slavery of sin.

In order to this, the Holy Ghost appointed certain persons, (who are called Christ's ministers,) and gave them power to receive into his church all such as would promise to obey his laws.

Your parents therefore took care (as the Jews did by their children) to consecrate you to God and Christ as soon as you were born. And this they did by baptism, (as Jesus Christ had commanded,) by which holy ceremony you were dedicated to *God*, who *made* you ; to *Jesus Christ*, who *redeemed* you ; and to the *Holy Ghost*, who *sanctifieth* all God's chosen servants.

Thus you were translated (or taken) out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom, protection, and government of Jesus Christ^d : and being thus received into Christ's church, you became a child of God, and an heir of the kingdom of heaven.

But then you are to consider, that before you were admitted to this favour, your sureties promised for you, that when you should come to age, you should in your own person, and with your own free consent, renounce the devil and all his works, the world and all its wicked customs, and the flesh with all its sinful lusts :—that you should believe in God, that is, receive the gospel as a rule of faith ; and obediently keep God's commandments.

^d Col. i. 13.

You are now therefore called upon to do this, before God, who knows all the secrets of your hearts ;—before God's minister, who will charge you very solemnly to be sincere ;—and before the congregation, who will be witnesses against you, if you shall break your vows.

I must tell you further, that to root or keep out evil habits, and to get habits of virtue, and to live as becomes a Christian, is not so easily done as promised.

You will be obliged to take pains, to watch and pray, and deny yourself, and even lay down your life, rather than deny your profession, or dissemble it.

But then you will not think this too much, when you consider, that it is for your life, and that it is to escape eternal death.

For Jesus Christ has made known to us, that this life is a state of trial, and only a passage to another life, where God will take an account how all men have behaved themselves here, and appoint them a portion suitable to what they have done in the body, whether good or bad : *When they that have done good, shall go into life everlasting ; and they that have done evil, into everlasting misery.*

Now, that you may not despair of going through the work of your salvation, and getting the victory over all your enemies, Jesus Christ hath sent down his holy Spirit to be communicated, *by the laying on of hands*^e, to all such as are disposed to receive him ; by which almighty Spirit, all your enemies shall be subdued, all your lusts mortified, your corruptions rooted out, and your soul purified ; so that when you die you will be fit to be carried to the quiet and happy regions of paradise, where the souls of the faithful enjoy perpetual rest and happiness.

Every Christian, who is preparing himself for confirmation, ought to have this or some such short account of the method of divine grace read to him distinctly (and explained where there is need) once every day for one month, at least, before that holy ordinance ; that he may remember it as long as he lives, and be able to *give a reason of the hope that is in him.*

But, forasmuch as he is to renew his vows before God, who will be provoked with the hypocrisy and impiety of those who

^e Acts viii. 17.

promise what they do not understand, or what they do not think of performing, a good pastor will not fail to ask every person, in the presence of the rest, (that by hearing them often they may be better able to remember them,) some such questions as these following.

Of renouncing the Devil, &c.

ARE you convinced that you ought to love God, as he is the author of all good, and *upon whom you depend for life, and breath, and all things?*

Why then consider, that you cannot possibly love God, unless you renounce the love of every thing that may displease him.

Do you know that all sin is displeasing to God, as being the transgression of his law^f?

Do you therefore renounce all sin, and every thing that would draw you from God?

Do you renounce the *devil*, the great enemy of God and man; all his *works*, such as pride, malice, revenge, and lying; and wicked men, which are his agents?

Do you know that this is not the world you were made for; that it is only a passage to another?

Do you then renounce the *world*; that is, all evil customs, all that is wicked or vain, all covetous desires, and inordinate love of riches, or pleasures, or honours,—which are the world's idols, and draw the heart from the love of God?

Will you renounce and abhor all *youthful lusts*, all sins of *impurity and uncleanness*, and all sins which lead to these; such as, *gluttony and drunkenness, filthy words and songs, intemperance, and an idle life?*

Do you know that it is a very hard thing to break off evil habits?

Will you then call yourself often to an account, that you may repent and amend, before sin and hell get dominion over you?

Will you be careful to avoid all temptations, and occasions of sin, and especially of such sins as you are most apt to fall into?

Will you keep a strict watch over your heart, remembering that adulteries, murders, thefts, and all manner of wickedness, proceed from thence?

^f 1 John iii. 4.

Since heaven and happiness eternal are blessings too great to be attained without labour and pains, will you resolve in earnest to *enter in at the strait gate*, cost what trouble it will ?

Will you be temperate in all things, deny yourself, and use such abstinence, as the flesh being subdued to the spirit, you may in all things obey all godly motions ?

Are you convinced, that the power to do good is from God ?

Will you then pray to God daily, that his holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule your heart ?

And will you take care to remember this great rule of the gospel,—that he that makes use of God's grace, he shall have still more grace ; and he that neglects it, shall loose what he hath ?

Of faith in God, in Jesus Christ, &c.

YOU know it is your duty to *believee in* and to *love* God.

That you may do so truly, you must often think of God as the author and fountain of all good ; you must pray to him, give him thanks, and always speak of him with great reverence.

Will you resolve to do so ?

And if you set God always before you, and remember that he hates all iniquity, that he sees all you *do*, or *speak*, or *think*, this will fill your heart with godly fear.

Are you persuaded that nothing does happen in the world without God's knowledge and permission ?

Will you then trust in the Lord with all your heart, and rest assured that neither men nor devils can hurt you without his leave ?

Will you consider afflictions as coming from the hands of a good God, and therefore to be borne with *patience*, *submission*, and a firm faith *that all things work together for good to those that fear God* ?

The holy scripture, as well as sad experience, assures us, that our nature is corrupt, and prone to evil continually. Are you truly sensible of this ?

If you are, then you know for certain that you are liable to the wrath of God, and that there is a necessity of a Redeemer to make your peace with God, and to shew you how to please him.

Know then, that it was for this reason that the Son of God took our nature upon him, that he might suffer what we had

deserved to suffer, and that God *laid on him the iniquities of us all*, and that he hath obtained everlasting redemption for all them that obey him.

Are you then persuaded, that such as do not lay hold of this mercy must suffer the wrath of God in their own persons?

Are you then resolved to fly to God's mercy, for Christ's sake, to obey his laws, and follow his example?

Will you always endeavour to do what you believe Christ would do, if he were in your place and circumstances?

Will you set before your eyes his *sufferings*, his *humility*, his *patience*, his *charity*, and his *submission* to the will of God, in order to *direct*, to *support*, and *comfort* you in all your troubles?

And remember that Jesus Christ is now in heaven, in his human nature, evermore interceding for all that go to God by him.

Do you firmly believe all that God hath made known to us by his Son?

Do you believe that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, by whose righteous sentence, *they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting misery?*

Will you then live like one that believes all this; being careful of all your thoughts, words, and actions, which must then be judged?

Do you know that in baptism we are dedicated to the Holy Ghost, because it is he who must sanctify our nature, and fit us by his graces for heaven?

Will you then pray earnestly to God, and especially at this time, to give you this blessing, since he himself hath promised to *give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

Will you order your life according to that word which he inspired, and take care not to grieve him by continuing in any known sin?

And since you are taught and governed by a bishop and pastors commissioned by the Holy Ghost^g, will you therefore live in obedience to them, to whom Jesus Christ made this promise^h: *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world?*

Will you treat all Christian people with love and charity,

^g Acts xx. 28.

^h Matth. xxviii. 20.

as being members of that body, of which Jesus Christ is the head ?

Will you hope for forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake only, and believe that the goodness of God ought to lead you to repentance ?

Do you believe that there will be a resurrection both of the just and unjust ?

Do you faithfully believe, that after this life there will be a state of endless happiness or endless misery ?

Remember then that *a saving faith purifieth the heart* ; and that a good faith must be known by its fruits, as one tree is known from another.

Of obedience to God's commands, &c.

ARE you persuaded, that the design of all true religion is to make men holy, that they may be happy ?

Do you think that man is able to find out a way to please God, and to govern himself by his own reason ?

So far from it, that when God left men to themselves, (as he did the heathens,) they chose the most foolish and abominable ways of serving their gods, and fell into wickednesses scarce fit to be namedⁱ.

Will you then make the law of God the rule of your life ?

Will you be careful not to love or fear any thing more than God ? for that would be your idol.

Will you worship God with reverence ; that is, upon your knees, when you ask his pardon or blessing ; standing up when you praise him, and by hearing his word with attention ?

Will you honour God's name, so as not to use it but with seriousness ?

Will you abhor all manner of oaths, except when you are called before a magistrate ; and will you then speak the truth, as you hope the Lord will hold you guiltless ?

Will you remember to keep holy the Lord's day, as that which sanctifies the whole week ?

Will you honour your parents, and be subject to the higher powers, obeying all their lawful commands ?

Will you reverence your pastors, and take in good part all their godly admonitions ?

ⁱ Rom. i.

Will you be careful not to hurt, or wish any man's death, not be glad at misfortunes, or grieve men without cause?

Will you be *gentle and easy to be entreated*, that God for Christ's sake may be so towards you?

Will you remember that whoredom and sins of impurity will certainly keep men out of heaven?

Do you believe that restitution is a necessary duty, (where it can be made,) without which there is no forgiveness?

If you believe this, you will never wrong any body by force, fraud, or by colour of law; you will pay all your just debts, and never take advantage of any man's necessity.

Will you remember that the God of truth hateth lying,—that the devil is the father of lies,—and that liars, slanderers, and backbiters, are to *have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone*^k?

Will you endeavour to be content with your own condition, neither envying that of others, nor bettering your own by unjust ways?

Will you in all your actions have an eye to God; and say to yourself, I do *this*, or forbear *that*, because God hath commanded me?

Will you remember this good rule, never to undertake any thing which you dare not pray God to prosper?

Are you convinced, that all power to do good is from God; and that without his grace you cannot keep his commandments?

Will you then pray to God daily, that his holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule your heart?

May the gracious God enable you to do what you have now resolved upon.

You are now going to profess yourself a member of the church of Christ.

Will you then endeavour to become a worthy member of that society?

Will you make the gospel of Christ your rule to walk by, and obey them that are over you in the Lord?

Will you promise, by the grace of God, to continue in the unity of this church, of which you are now going to be made a complete member?

If you should be so unhappy as hereafter to fall into any

scandalous sin, will you patiently submit to be reformed by godly discipline ?

Will you be very careful, not to let wicked and profane people laugh you out of these holy purposes and resolutions, remembering the words of Jesus Christ ; *He that denieth me, him will God deny ?*

If this short method were conscientiously observed by every curate of souls, for thirty or forty days before every confirmation, and two or three hours every day spent in reading deliberately the short account of religion, and in asking every particular person the questions, in the hearing of all the rest, (which according to our constitution ought not to be above thirty or forty at one time,) I will venture to say, that the remembrance of *this duty* would be of more comfort to a pastor on his death-bed than *of all the rest of his labours*.

A prayer that may be used every day during the time of instruction.

O LORD, graciously behold these thy servants, who, according to the appointments of thy church, are going to dedicate themselves to thee and to thy service.

Possess their hearts with such a lively sense of thy great mercy, in bringing them from the power of Satan unto God ;— in giving them an early right to thy covenant, and an early knowledge of their duty ; that, with the full consent of their wills, they may devote themselves to thee ; that so they may receive the fulness of thy grace, and be able to withstand the temptations of the *devil*, the *world*, and the *flesh*.

Continue them, O Lord, in the unity of thy church, and grant that they may improve all the means of grace vouchsafed them in this church, of which they are members.

Preserve in their minds a constant remembrance of that love, which they are going to renew before thee and thy church.

That knowing they are the servants of the living God, they may walk as in thy sight, avoid all such things as are contrary to their profession, and follow all such as are agreeable to the same.

O Lord, who hast made them thy children by adoption, bring them in thy good time to thine everlasting kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The method of instructing such as have been confirmed, in order to prepare them for this holy ordinance.

IF Christians do frequently turn their backs upon this sacrament, and are not concerned to have it often administered, or seem little affected when they do partake of it, one may certainly conclude, *they never truly understood the meaning of it.*

This might surely, in some measure, be prevented, if due pains were taken to give young people a distinct knowledge of *this most important duty*; and of the manner of preparing themselves for it, before they should be admitted *the first time* to the sacrament; for want of which, very many continue in a gross ignorance both of the meaning and benefits of this ordinance all their days.

A good pastor, therefore, will not suffer any one to come to the holy communion, until he has taken pains to examine and inform him very particularly concerning the *meaning* of this ordinance, and the *ends* for which it was appointed;—what this sacrament *obliges* Christians to, and the benefits they may expect from it;—with what *dispositions* a Christian should come to it, and the great sin of despising it.

The young Christian should, for instance, be put in mind, that as there was in the Jewish, so there is in the Christian church, *two sacraments.*

That the sacrament of *baptism* was ordained by Christ for admitting us into his church upon certain conditions, which such as are baptized in their infancy are to perform when they come to age.

And the *holy supper* he ordained, that Christians might have an opportunity of renewing their baptismal vows, which they are but too apt to forget, and of making their peace with God, when they had broke his laws, and desire sincerely to return to their duty.

Now, as Jesus Christ did *by his death* make our peace with God, and obtain *eternal redemption for all them that obey him*, we Christians, in obedience to his command, do keep up the remembrance of his death until his coming again, after this *solemn manner.*

First, As God is the King of all the earth, we offer unto him the best things that the earth affords for the life of man, namely,

bread and wine, as an acknowledgment that all we have, whether for the support or comfort of our lives, is owing entirely to his bounty.

The bread and wine being placed upon the altar, (by which they are sanctified, that is, set apart for holy uses,) we then proceed to give God thanks for his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, *who is the life of our souls*, after this manner :

The priest, by doing what Christ did, by *prayer and thanksgiving*, by breaking the bread and pouring out the wine, obtaineth of God, that these creatures become, after a spiritual manner, the *body and blood of Christ*, by receiving of which our souls shall be strengthened and refreshed, as our bodies are by bread and wine.

For all this is done to represent the death of Jesus Christ, and the mercies which he has obtained for us ; to represent it not only to ourselves, but unto God the Father, that *as the prayers and alms of Cornelius* are said to *have gone up for a memorial before God*, so this service may be an argument with his divine Majesty to remember his Son's death in *heaven*, as we do on *earth*, and for his sake to blot out our sins, and to give us all an interest in his merits.

After this we all receive the bread and wine (being thus made the body and blood of Christ) in token of communion with Christ our head, and with all his members.

And that we may have a more lively sense imprinted upon our souls, of the *love* of God, of the *kindness* of our Redeemer, and of the *benefits* he has by the shedding of his blood obtained for us, the minister of God applieth the merits of Christ's death to the soul of every faithful receiver, in these words : *Eat and drink this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and that he may preserve thy body and soul unto eternal life.*

By explaining the meaning of *this ordinance* after some such familiar way as this, a young Christian will see,

That by joining in this sacrament, we keep up the remembrance of Christ's death, *which is our salvation* :

We plead with God for pardon, for *his Son's sake*, after a way which his Son himself appointed :

We are hereby more firmly united to Christ our head, and to the church which is his body :

And lastly, we do hereby express our faith and hope of his coming again to reward his faithful servants.

Now, these being duties of the greatest concern to Christians, it is no wonder that the church, directed by St. Paul, very seriously exhorts all Christians to examine and to prepare themselves for this holy ordinance; for if a Christian should presume to come to the Lord's table, without knowing what he is going to do, without *repentance*, without *purposes of leading a Christian life*, without *faith* in God's mercy through Christ, without a *thankful heart*, and without *charity*, he will receive a *curse* instead of a *blessing*.

Because many Christians, therefore, especially the younger sort, may not know upon what heads, and after what manner they ought to examine themselves, or lest they should do it by halves, or perhaps not at all, a faithful pastor will shew them the way, by examining them himself, after *this* or *some such like plain method*.

Concerning their repentance.

DO you know that God will not accept of the service of such as live in the practice of any known sin?

Let me therefore advise you, as you love your soul, to consider seriously, whether you are subject to any evil habit, either of *lying*, or *swearing*, or *drinking*; or of any sin of *uncleanness*; or of an *idle life*, which will lead to these? And if you find you are, your duty is, to judge yourself, to beg God's pardon, and to amend your life.

Will you do this, and in *obedience to God*, because he requires it?

Will you promise sincerely to avoid all occasions of sin, especially of such sins as you have been most apt to fall into?

If through weakness or temptation you commit any sin, will you forthwith confess your fault to God, ask his pardon, and be more careful for the time to come?

Will you endeavour to live in the fear of God, always remembering, that a good life is the best preparation for this sacrament?

Will you constantly pray for God's grace and assistance, without which all your good purposes will come to nothing?

Will you strive to keep your conscience tender and awake, that you may know when you sin, and that your heart may not be hardened, which is the greatest judgment?

Lastly, Will you be careful to keep a watch over yourself, that you may not fall into the sins you have repented of?

And will you often examine into the state of your soul, especially before you go to the Lord's table, that you may see whether you grow in grace, and get the mastery over your corruptions? For if you do so, you are certainly under the government of God's holy Spirit.

Concerning a Christian's purposes of leading a new, that is, a Christian life.

DO you sincerely purpose to make the law of God the rule of your life?

Will you do whatever you believe will please God, and avoid what you know or suspect will displease him?

Will you shew, that you believe, and fear, and love God with all your heart, by being fearful of offending him, by giving him thanks for his mercies, and by praying to him daily for pardon, for grace, and for protection?

Will you have a great regard for every thing that belongs to God, his name, his house, his day, his ministers, and his word?

Will you be careful to attend the public worship of God, and especially upon the Lord's day, as you hope for God's blessing the whole week following?

Will you be sure to behave yourself reverently in God's house, not sitting at your ease when you should stand or kneel, lest your prayers become an abomination?

Will you reverence and obey your parents, your governors, and your betters, and especially *such as are over you in the Lord*?

Will you endeavour to live peaceably and charitably with all men, avoiding all malice, revenge, ill-will, and contention?

Will you be chaste, sober, and temperate, as becomes a member of Christ and his family, avoiding all excess in meat and drink, and an idle life, which are the occasions of sins not fit to be named amongst Christians?

Will you be true in all your dealings, avoiding all wrong, oppression, and extortion?

And will you remember, that without restitution, where it can be made, there is no acceptance with God?

Will you be careful to speak the truth, avoiding the sins of

lying, of perjury, of tale-bearing, and meddling with matters which do not belong to you, as things hateful to God and man ?

Will you be content with your lot, whatever it be ; neither coveting what is another's, nor envying his prosperity, nor being glad at his calamities ?

Lastly, Will you do these things out of the love and reverence you bear to God, whose laws they are ?

And will you seriously beg of him to write all these laws in your hearts, and to incline and enable you to keep them ?

How a Christian should examine whether he hath a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ.

AS the blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled upon their doors was that which saved the Israelites from death, so the blood of Jesus Christ is that which saves all Christians that partake of it.

Do you steadfastly believe this ?

Do you trust in Jesus Christ, and in what he has done and suffered for you, and in him only, for pardon and salvation ?

Do you firmly believe that Jesus Christ is now in heaven, interceding with God, by virtue of his death, for all such as on earth do religiously keep up the remembrance of that his death, until his coming again ?

Your faith being built upon the promises of God in Jesus Christ, and all his promises being on condition that we live as becomes Christians, will you seriously purpose to do so ?

And will you remember, not to presume on God's mercy, or expect that he will communicate his graces, while you continue under the power of a sinful life ?

How a Christian may know whether he has a thankful remembrance of Christ's death.

DO you desire to have a thankful remembrance of Christ's death ?

Why then, consider what he has done for you, and for all mankind, to recover us from a state of sin and misery.

We were all *enemies to God by wicked works.* Jesus Christ undertook to restore us again to God's favour. God therefore *laid on him the iniquities of us all*: for the sake of his death God was pleased to overlook the untowardliness of our nature, to forgive us our sins, to look upon us as his children, to give us

all the grace and assistance which we shall want ; and, if we behave ourselves like his children in this state of trial, he will for Christ's sake make us happy to all eternity when we die.

You see what reason we have to remember his death with thankful hearts.

Will you therefore keep these things in your heart, and shew your thankfulness for the same, by living like one who has been redeemed from death and from damnation ?

And will you be sure to remember this ; that Jesus Christ did indeed die to redeem us from death and hell ? But then he must first redeem us from this present evil world, from our vain conversation, and from all iniquity ; that is, he must make us holy that we may be happy, for *without holiness no man can see the Lord*.

How a Christian may examine and know whether he is in charity with all men.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ having by his death restored all mankind to the favour of God, he only expects this of us ; that we should love one another as he loved us.

To this end he hath appointed, that in this sacrament we should all, as members of one family of which he is the master, as members of one body of which he is the head, that we should eat of one bread in remembrance of his death, and in token of that strict union which there ought to be amongst Christians.

Will you then *walk in love, as Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us ?*

Will you consider whether you have given any just occasion of offence, or injured any body, so as that you ought to ask their pardon, and make them restitution ?

And that no worldly shame may hinder you from doing so, you shall hear the very direction of Christ himself :—Matth. v. 23, 24. *If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee ; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way ; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*

Will you therefore desire forgiveness of all such as you have offended ?

And do you forgive all that have offended you ?

Can you heartily pray for every body ; and will you do so ?

Will you (as the apostle directs) love, *not in word only, but in deed and in truth*, that is, doing good, as well as giving good words?

You will see Jesus Christ every day in some of his members ; some naked, some hungry, some in affliction, some wanting comfort, others instruction : will you, for his sake, be kind to them, according to their wants and your power to help them ?

After this, a good pastor will let the young Christian see the benefits of receiving as often as he has opportunity, and the great sin of turning his back upon this ordinance.

He will, for instance, put him in mind, that all Christians being obliged to examine themselves before they go to this sacrament ; this will keep them from falling into a state of sin and security.

That if we find we grow in grace, we shall have the greatest comfort ; and if we have not got ground of our corruptions, this will make us more careful.

That our faith will hereby be strengthened, when we call to remembrance what Jesus Christ hath done for us, and that his love and his power are still the same if we strive to deserve his favour.

Lastly, That by duly partaking of this holy ordinance, we shall come to such a state, that it will be uneasy to us to offend God, and the very pleasure of our souls to obey his laws.

On the other hand, if a Christian turns his back upon this sacrament, (without good cause,) he transgresses an express command : *Do this in remembrance of me.* He shuts himself out of Christ's family ; he lives without hopes, and without promises.

If therefore he ask how often he should receive this sacrament, he ought to have an answer in the words of an ancient writer : " Receive it as often as you can, that the old serpent, " seeing the blood of the true Paschal Lamb upon your lips, " may tremble to approach you."

And if to these instructions a pastor exhort the young Christian to be very careful not to separate from the church, in unity with which he may expect the Holy Spirit, and all other benefits of Christ's passion : and if he likewise require him, at all times hereafter, before he designs to communicate, to give his pastor an account of it, (in obedience to the orders of the church,) that

he may receive further advice as there shall be occasion, he will have done a work worthy of a good pastor, and will undoubtedly receive a good reward for so doing.

CONCERNING FAMILY PRAYER.

THE very learned and pious bishop Pearson took occasion very often and publicly to bless God, that he was born and bred in a family in which God was worshipped daily. And certainly, it is a duty which entails very many blessings on posterity ; for which reason a pastor should labour with all his might to introduce it into every family under his charge ; at least, he should give neither himself nor his people any rest, till he has done all that lies in his power to effect so good a work ; which if he does not do, this very intimation will one day rise up in judgment against him.

And in truth this duty is so reasonable and advantageous, that a man, who will but set about it in good earnest, will find people less backward than at first he would imagine.

To acknowledge God to be the giver of all good gifts ;—to put a man's *self*, his *wife*, his *children*, his *servants*, and all that belongs to him under God's protection ;—to ask from him, as from a father, whatever we want, and to thank him for the favours we have received :—these are duties which the reason of mankind closes with as soon as they are fairly proposed.

And then the advantages of family worship will be evident to the meanest capacities.

First, To begin and end the day with God, will be the likeliest way to make *servants* faithful, *children* dutiful, *wives* obedient, and *husbands* sober, loving, and careful ; every one acting as in the sight of God.

Secondly, This will be a mighty check upon every one of the family, and will be a means of preventing much wickedness ;—at least, people will sin with remorse, (which is much better than with a seared conscience,) when every one knows he must go upon his knees before he sleeps.

Thirdly, This is the way to entail piety upon the generations to come. When children and servants, coming to have families of their own, cannot be easy till they fall into the same pious method which they have been long used to. *Train up a child*

in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it; nor perhaps his children after him for many generations.

But if there are persons upon whom these motives make no impressions, let them know the evil consequences of neglecting this duty:—

That the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked^m.

Pour out thine indignation, saith the prophetⁿ, (that is, God will do so,) upon the families that call not upon thy name.

Add to this, that *ignorance, profaneness, and a curse*, must of necessity be in that family where God is not owned; where, as one observes, not a creature but is taken care of, not a swine but shall be served twice a day, and God only is forgotten. I say, he must be worse than a heathen whom these considerations do not influence.

I know of no reason that can be offered why every family in this diocese might not be brought to observe this duty, except this one; that very many cannot read, and are too old to learn the prayers provided for them; (though it would be well if all that can read did conscientiously discharge this duty!) Now, where this is indeed the case, I make no question, but that with half an hour's patience and pains, a pastor might bring the most ignorant person to observe this following method of orderly devotion:

First, Let him speak to his family and say, Let us confess our sins to God, saying,

Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers; neither take thou vengeance of our sins: spare us, good Lord, spare thy people whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood, and be not angry with us for ever.

Then let him say to the family, Let us praise God for all his mercies, saying,

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Then let him say to the family, Let us pray for God's blessing and protection, saying,

Our Father, which art in heaven, &c.

And then let him conclude the whole, saying,

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. Amen.

^m Prov. iii. 33.

ⁿ Jer. x. 25.

There is not one person but can say these prayers already, and only wants to be put into a method of saying them after this orderly manner ; and I am sure the comfort and blessing of bringing all our people that cannot read to this, would be unspeakably great both to them and to ourselves ; and for the love of God, let it be attempted in good earnest.

AN ADMONITION PROPER FOR PARENTS.

MOST parents are concerned for their children's present welfare, and too often renounce a good conscience rather than not provide for them, while few are careful to give them such instructions and examples as, by the grace of God, may secure them an eternal inheritance.

They should therefore be often put in mind of their duty in this particular, that they may not have the torment of seeing their children for ever ruined by their negligence.

It is a strange stupidity, and they should be told of it, for parents to be much concerned to have their children dedicated to God in baptism, and yet utterly unconcerned how they behave themselves afterwards.

The least that parents can do is, to instruct, or get their children instructed, in the principles of the Christian religion ;—to pray for them daily, and to see that they pray daily for themselves ; to possess their minds with a love of goodness, and with an abhorrence of every thing that is wicked ;—and to take care that their natural corruption be not increased by evil examples.

It is a sad thing to see children under the very eye of their parents, and too often by their examples, getting habits of vanity, of idleness, of pride, of intemperance, of lying and pilfering, of talebearing, and often of uncleanness, and of many other sins which might be prevented by a Christian education.

Parents therefore should be made sensible of their great guilt, in suffering their children to take evil ways. They should be often told, that human nature being extremely corrupt, we need not be taught and be at pains to go to hell ; we shall go thither of course, if we do not make resistance, and are not restrained by the grace of God, and our own care and endeavour.

They should know (however loath they are to hear it) that they are their children's worst enemies, when they will see no

faults in them,—connive at what ought to be corrected,—and are even pleased with what ought to be reprovèd.

He that spareth his rod, saith Solomon °, hateth his son, (that is, acts as if he really did so;) but he that loveth his son chasteneth him betimes, that is, before he grows headstrong, and before he is corrupted by evil habits. For a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame P.

In short, a parent who has any conscience of his duty, will not suffer the least sin to go unreprovèd or without due correction; but then he will take the apostle's advice ^q, *not to provoke their children to wrath*, by a causeless or too great severity, lest they be discouraged, and thereby their children's love, both for religion and for themselves, be lessened.

When children are grown up to years of discretion, parents should be admonished *to fit them for confirmation*;—a privilege which both parents and children would very highly value, if they were made to understand the worth of it, which of all things a pastor should take care to explain to them.

In the next place, it would be great charity for a clergyman to interpose his good offices, (at least to offer his advice,) when parents are about to dispose of their children in marriage, upon mere worldly considerations, and very often for little conveniencies of their own, without any regard to their children's future ease and welfare.

It is seldom that either parents or children pray for God's direction and blessing upon an undertaking which is to last as long as life; but run on headlong, as humour, or passion, or worldly interest lead them, which is the true occasion of so many *indiscreet choices* and *unfortunate marriages*, which a pastor should prevent as much as may be, by admonishing Christians of their duty in this particular, both publicly and in private conversation.

And when parents are providing for their children, let this consideration be always present with them both for their own and their children's sake: *Better is a little with righteousness, (that is, honestly gotten,) than great revenues without right^r.*

When a curse goes along with a portion, it is often the ruin of the whole family. These were the remarkable words of the pious judge Hale to his children: “I leave you but little, but it “will wear like iron.”

Lastly, A pastor's advice would be very seasonable, and should

° Prov. xiii. 24.

P Prov. xxix. 15.

q Col. iii. 21.

r Prov. xvi. 8.

be often repeated to such parents as are squandering away the inheritance which was left them by their forefathers, and left them *in trust only* for those that should come after them; depriving their children of their right, exposing them to hardships, to temptations, and to curse their memory. Considerations which should make their hearts to ache, and force them to put an end to that idleness and intemperance, which are the occasion of so much sin and mischief.



INSTRUCTIONS PROPER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

IT is the great misfortune of *youth*, that wanting *experience*, *judgment*, and very often *friends* capable of giving them good advice, and following the bent of their passions, they love and seek such company and pleasures as serve to strengthen their natural corruption, which, if not prevented by charitable advice, will be their ruin.

And certainly a pastor has much to answer for, who does not lay hold of every occasion of shewing young people their *danger* and their *duty*.

The first thing a youth should be made sensible of is this :

That he has in himself the seeds of all manner of sin and wickedness, which will certainly spring up and be his ruin, if he does not watch against it, and pray daily for God's grace to preserve him from it :

That the wickedest man he knows was once as capable of salvation as he thinks himself to be ; but by provoking God to leave him to himself, sin and hell have got the dominion over him :

And that therefore it is the greatest judgment that can fall upon any man, *to be left to himself*.

To come to particulars :

First, Young people are apt to be *headstrong*, and *fond of their own ways*, and should therefore be told what God declares by Solomon^s : *Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction ; but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured.—That there is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

Secondly, They love idleness naturally, and therefore should be put in mind,—that *slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep*, that

^s Prov. xiii. 18. xiv. 12.

is, makes men as careless of what will become of them, as if they were fast asleep; and that *drowsiness will cover a man with rags*. Above all, they should be put in mind of our Lord's sentence, *Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.*

Thirdly, This being the age of *sensuality, libertinism, and vanity*; it must be a great grace, and very frequent instructions, that must secure young people from ruin.

They should therefore be often told,

That *fools* (and only fools) *make a mock of sin*, it being too dreadful a thing to be laughed at:

That *whoredom and wine take away the heart*; that is, make a man a mere brute:

That *lying lips are an abomination to the Lord*, and that *swearing and cursing* are sins easily learned, but hard to be left off, and will be punished most severely:

That *evil communications will corrupt good manners*:

That therefore young people should not, at their peril, run into unknown company and temptations, depending upon their own strength and good resolutions.—They should be told,

That nobody is very wicked at once;—that there are few but had some time good notions, good purposes, and good hopes;—and those that are profligately wicked became so after this manner: they took delight in loose and wicked company; then they neglected to pray for grace; then they cast off the fear of God; then *holiness*; after that *modesty*; then care of reputation;—and so contracting evil habits, they became at last abandoned of God, and left to themselves.

Fourthly, A good pastor will not forget to exhort young people to flee youthful lusts and all sins of impurity, filthy songs, and filthy stories, which leave cursed impressions upon the soul, do grieve God's holy Spirit, which was given them at baptism and at confirmation, and provoke him to forsake them; and then an evil spirit most certainly will take them under his government.

Fifthly, Such as have parents should be exhorted to *love, honour, and obey* them: *That, as the apostle saith^t, it may be well with them, and that they may live long on the earth.*—That they may escape that curse pronounced, Deut. xxvii. 14. *Cursed is he that setteth light by his father and mother*;—and that of the Wise Man^u, *The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to*

^t Ephesians vi. 3.

^u Prov. xxx. 17.

obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out ; that is, such a one shall act in every thing he does as if he were blind.

In short, children, as they hope for God's favour and blessing, should strive to please their parents ;—be grieved when they have angered them ;—take their advice kindly, and follow it cheerfully ;—and never marry without their consent, as they hope for happiness in that estate.

Above all things,—young people should be obliged to observe the Lord's day :—they should be taught to reverence God's house, and God's ministers who pray for them, and are to give an account of their souls.

They should be exhorted to pray daily for themselves, and against being led away by the violence of evil customs and the ways of the world, which they have renounced at their baptism.

And when they have run into errors, (which they are but too apt to do) they should be made sensible of the ruin they are bringing upon themselves, that they may return to a better mind, and after the example of the prodigal in the gospel, beg God's pardon, and sin no more ; being often forewarned, that God will, one time or other, *make them to possess the iniquities of their youth*.



OF WORLDLY-MINDEDNESS.

A PASTOR will find that *worldly-mindedness* is one of the most universal diseases of his flock, and the most difficult to be cured.

People see an absolute necessity of taking care for themselves, and duty obliges them to provide for their families.

But then this care very often increases beyond necessity, and what was at first a duty becomes at last a sin ; when Christians begin to set their hearts upon the world, to place their happiness in its favours, to dread its frowns, and to depend upon it as a good security against future evils.

Now, the consequence of such a love for the world will be, that many Christian duties must give place to worldly business ; the very commands of God shall often be broken to gain worldly ends ; men shall make a mere idol of the world ; *love*, and *fear*, and *think*, and *depend upon* it, more than upon God, and will at

last be so bewitched and blinded with it, that they shall not see the sin and vanity of all this, until the approach of death opens their eyes, and then they see the folly of their choice, but see too, that it is too late to make a better.

In short, it is hard to live in the world and not to love it; and nothing in nature can prevent or cure this disorder, but a sincere belief of the gospel, and a resolute practice of the duties of Christianity.

For the Christian religion lets us know, that while we are in this world we are in a state of banishment;—that here we have no abiding place;—that God has made our life short, on purpose that we may have no pretence to set our hearts on this world;—that it is a dreadful thing for a man to have his portion in this life^z;—that a man's true happiness does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesseth;—and that God hath ordained that all things here shall be uncertain, and full of troubles, that we may be led more easily to *set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth.*

And forasmuch as it is found by sad experience, that the more men have, the more fond they will be of the world, Christians should be often advised to receive its favours with a trembling hand, and to remember, that the more a man has, the more he must account for, the greater danger he is in, and the more pains he must take to preserve himself from ruin;—for it was not for nothing that our Lord said, *How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven!*

In short, there is no greater hinderance to piety than the love of the world; God therefore having made that and the care of our souls the great business of our lives, he has bound himself to take care of us, and that we shall want nothing that is necessary for this life. *Take no thought, saith our Lord^a, for your life, what ye shall eat; nor for your body, what ye shall put on. Does not your heavenly Father feed the fowls of the air? Does he not know that ye are better than they, and that ye have need of these things?*

Let not therefore Christians flatter themselves with the hopes that worldly business will excuse them from serving God; our Lord has already told us what sentence such people must expect^b: *Not one of those men shall taste of my supper.* That is, those that were so taken up about their oxen, their fields, and

^z Psalm xvii.^a Matthew vi. 25.^b Luke xiv. 24.

their worldly business, that they would not mind their Lord's invitation.

And indeed our Lord tells us in another place^c, that the very word of God will be lost on those whose hearts are full of the *cares of this world, which choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.*

But then Christians have another way of deceiving themselves, and that is with the *hopes of reconciling a love for the world with the love of God.*

And yet our Lord Christ assures us, that they are as utterly inconsistent as light and darkness; that *no man can serve two masters*; and that *whoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

To conclude. All Christians are by their profession obliged *not to love the world.*

They are also obliged to use all proper means to prevent this love, which would otherways ruin them.

Especially, they are obliged to great watchfulness and earnest prayers for God's grace to keep them from becoming slaves to the world;—from placing their confidence or happiness in it;—from taking delight in the possession of it;—from distracting cares about it;—from taking unjust ways to better or secure their portion in it;—from being extremely grieved at the loss of it, or unwilling to part with it, when God so orders it;—from an hard heart and a close hand, when the necessities of the poor call for it. And lastly, from being diverted, by the hurry of this world, from the thoughts of the world to come.

For what will it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?—Remember Lot's wife.

ADVICE TO MEN OF ESTATES.

MEN of estates are but too apt to abuse the advantages they have above others, and they are unwilling to hear of it; they imagine they are above advice, and for that reason they are in most danger.

But whatever they fancy, a good pastor will shew them their danger and their duty, *whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.*

^c Luke viii. 14.

Now, such persons being subject to *idleness*, to *intemperance*, and to *bear hard* upon their poor neighbours, they should have prudent hints given them to avoid these *sins which do easily beset them*.

That such, for instance, who have plenty without taking pains, may not contract an habit of idleness, which is the parent of infinite evils ; (a man that has nothing to do being ready to do any thing that the devil shall tempt him to ;)—a dislike to business ;—a love of ease ;—a dependance upon an estate more than upon God's providence ;—running into company to pass away time ;—a neglect of family duties ;—an evil example to children and servants ;—an estate going to ruin for want of God's blessing and an honest care.

And though no man can call such a person to an account for leading an idle and a useless life, yet God often does do it ; and hence it is we so often see families of an ancient standing broke, and estates crumbled into pieces, because the owners thereof were above taking pains, and neglected to pray for God's blessing upon their estates and families.

It will be great charity therefore, however such people will take it, in a pastor to put them in mind,

That we are none of us *proprietors*, but only *stewards* ; for the whole earth is the Lord's, and he disposes of it as he pleaseth :

That such as have received more than others, have more to account for :

That if they only seek to please themselves, they may justly fear the sentence of the rich man^d ; *Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, for which thou art now tormented* :

That not only the wicked, but even the *unprofitable* servant, was cast into outer darkness :

That if men have estates, they have greater opportunities of gaining God's favour, by doing good to others :

That if they have more time to spare, they have more time and more reason to serve God :

And if they feel not the afflictions of poverty, they are more obliged to assist and help them that do.

But if, instead of doing so, they consume their estates upon

^d Luke xvi. 25.

their lusts ; and when having received more favours from God, they should be examples and encouragers of religion, they become themselves the greatest contemners of religion ;—if their plenty makes them forget God, and their power more troublesome to their poor neighbours, then an estate is a curse and not a blessing.

In short, those that have estates should be charged, as the apostle directs^e, *not to be highminded ; not to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God ; that they do good ; that they be rich in good works ; ready to distribute, willing to communicate ; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.*

They should be exhorted to give God thanks for his favours ; to lay by a reasonable certain proportion of their incomes, to be bestowed in works of piety and charity ; to be examples of industry, sobriety, and godliness to their children, families, and neighbourhood.

CONCERNING THE POOR.

THE poor being God's peculiar care, they ought to have a great share in the concern of his ministers, to *relieve*, to *instruct*, and to *comfort* them.

For nature being averse to *contempt* and *sufferings*, which are often the lot of poor people, they are therefore too apt to charge God foolishly for the unequal distributions of his providence ; so that their minds must be satisfied, and their spirits supported by such considerations as these :

First, That Jesus Christ himself, though Lord of the whole creation, yet made it his choice to be born, and to live in poverty ; to convince the poor that that condition is not unhappy, if they do not make it so by their impatience.

Secondly, That there is no state whatever but has its proper difficulties and trials ; and the *rich* especially, who are so much envied, are often forced to confess, that, as our Lord has told us, *a man's life and happiness consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*—And as to the next world, the *poor* have much the advantage of the rich, in wanting so many temptations to the ruin of their souls ;—and in the less account they

^e 1 Timothy vi. 17.

have to make for what they have received. And then the poor (as an excellent poet expresses it)

—will bless their poverty, who have
No reckonings to make when they are dead.

Thirdly, They should be put in mind that God has made poverty the lot of many of his dearest servants, fitting them for future and eternal happiness by the short afflictions of this life ; weaning their affections from things temporal, and forcing them, as it were, to look for rest, and ease, and an inheritance elsewhere.

Fourthly, Let them therefore be often exhorted to *put their trust in God, who is the helper of the friendless.*

To have much in their thoughts the joys of heaven, which will enable them, as it did our Lord himself, to bear with patience the hardships of their condition ; not to envy such as are in better circumstances, nor to endeavour to better their own by unjust ways. But to believe assuredly, that, if it is not their own fault, God will make them sufficient amends in the next life for what he denied them in this.

Thus poor Lazarus no sooner expired, but he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, to enjoy perpetual rest and felicity.

Let them therefore be comforted with such scriptures as these :

Your heavenly Father knows what things ye have need of. Cast therefore all your care upon him, for he careth for you^f ?

Be content with such things as ye have, for God hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee^g.

Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith^h.

Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love himⁱ ?

But then they must be put in mind often to pray to God, to deliver them from the sins to which their poverty might tempt them.

Not to give themselves up to sloth and idleness, but to do what they well can for an honest livelihood ; to bring up their children in the fear of God, and to be sure not to set them evil examples—of murmuring against God, of coveting what is another's, of filching and stealing ; for if they should be guilty of

^f 1 Pet. v. 7.

^g Heb. xiii. 5.

^h Prov. xv. 16.

ⁱ James ii. 5.

any of these sins, they will lose all title to the promise of Jesus Christ ^k ; *Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.*

And if to these exhortations a clergyman adds his alms, or procures the charity of such as are more able than himself, he will discharge a very material part of his duty, and he will have the prayers of those who have the freest access to the throne of grace.

TO PERSONS IN AFFLICTION.

MAN (as Job saith^l) *being born to trouble*, a pastor can hardly visit his flock but he will meet with some who will want words of comfort ; with which therefore he should be always furnished, both to *guide* and to *support* the spirits of the afflicted.

For Christians in affliction are but too apt to distract themselves, and increase their burden, by considering only what flesh and blood suggest, not what faith and religion propose for their support and comfort.

They are too apt to *charge God foolishly* ;—to be angry with those whom he has made or permitted to be the instruments of their affliction ;—to grow dejected and melancholy upon the thoughts of the sins which they suppose have provoked God to visit them ;—and lastly, to despair of ever seeing an end to their sorrows.

Here then the pastor's help will be seasonable and charitable ; for he will teach such as are in trouble to seek comfort in God, and in the aids of religion.

He will convince them, (for instance,)

That events are not left to chance, but that all things come to pass by the appointment or permission of God :

That *the very hairs of our head are all numbered* :

That we are under God's care, as well when he suffers us to be troubled, as when he smiles upon us :

That he is a very undutiful child, who will love and obey his father just as long as he pleaseth him, and no longer :

That God has a right to try whether Christians are sincere or not ; that is, whether they will believe him to be their God and Father, as well when he corrects, as when he gives them their desires :

^k Luke vi. 20.

^l Chap. v. 7.

That we are in darkness, and do not ourselves know what would be best for us :

That God has made no earthly comforts *full* and *lasting*, on purpose that Christians, seeing the vanity of all worldly enjoyments, may not desire to set up their rest *here*, but be obliged to think of another life, where all tears will be wiped away :

That God often punishes us in this world, that he may not be obliged to punish us hereafter :

That the best of men have need of being awakened into a sense of their duty and danger :

That a disciple of Jesus Christ must take part in the sufferings of his Lord and Master, as he hopes to be a partaker of his glory ; *For if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.*

It is thus a Christian may be taught to submit to God's dispensations, and to make an advantage of what the world calls *misfortunes, afflictions, calamities, judgments.* And that instead of being *impatient, fretful, or dejected*, he should rather rejoice in *tribulation, in wrongs, in losses, in sufferings*, and be glad that he has a proper occasion of offering *his will* a sacrifice to the will of God, which is a most acceptable oblation.

When a pastor has made his distressed patient sensible of the *reason* and *benefit* of *afflictions*, he will then proceed to shew him how to quiet the disorders of his soul.

He will advise him (for instance) not to torment himself about the *cause* of his troubles, or the *instruments* of his afflictions, or be over anxious concerning the *issue* of them. For this will only create *vezation, fruitless complaints, and a sinful distrust*, which are all the effects of *pride* and *self-love*, and serve only to bereave him of that peace of mind, which is necessary to carry him through his trials with the resignation of a Christian.

He will then shew him, that by being brought into these circumstances, whether his afflictions be for *trial* or *punishment*, he has a special title to the favour of God, and to many great and precious promises, provided he submits to God's order and appointment. For God has declared himself to be the helper of the friendless ; the comforter of the afflicted ; a light to them that are in darkness, and know not what way to take. He has promised to be a *father to the fatherless, and an husband to the widow* ; that he will undertake the cause of the oppressed, and of such as call upon him in their distress. So that no man ought

to think himself destitute and miserable, who has God to fly to, and God's word for his comfort.

Upon the first *approach* of troubles, therefore, his spiritual guide will direct him to fall down before God,—to humble himself under his afflicting hand,—to acknowledge *that God's judgments are right, and that he of very faithfulness has caused him to be troubled*; beseeching God that he may make a good use of his troubles;—to cast his whole care upon God, trusting in his wisdom to know, and his goodness to appoint, what is best for him; resolving, by the grace of God, to make that his choice which he has prayed for all his life, *that God's will may be done*.

He will also assure him, that let his mind be never so much disordered, and his soul oppressed with sorrow, God can support and comfort him; that he has a promise of the same grace which enabled St. Paul to *take pleasure in afflictions, in persecutions, in infirmities, in reproaches*; which enabled the first Christians to *take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance*^m; which enabled holy Job, under the severest trials, to submit without repining to God's appointment, saying only, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord*.

Lastly, His pastor will tell him, that St. James is so far from looking upon the case of the afflicted as desperate, that he affirmeth, *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, (that is, approved,) he shall receive a crown of life which fadeth not away*.

And sure no man will think his own case hard, whatever his afflictions may be, when he is put in mind of the sufferings of Christ his Lord and Master, who had not where to lay his head;—who was set at nought by those he came to save;—who was called a dealer with the devil, a glutton, and a wine-bibber;—who was assaulted by all the powers of hell, so that his soul was sorrowful even to death; was betrayed by one disciple, and forsaken by all the rest;—was falsely accused by the Jews, set at naught by Herod, unjustly condemned by Pilate, barbarously treated by the soldiers, was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and suffered death, even the death of the cross.

This was the treatment which the Son of God met with when

^m Hebrews x. 34.

he was on earth ; and this will silence all complaints, or else we are very unreasonable indeed.

But after all, our greatest comfort is this : that this Jesus, who himself was *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief* ; who felt the weakness of human nature, and the troubles to which we are subject : this Jesus is our advocate with the Father ; who for his sake *will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear* ; but will enable us, as he did St. Paul, *in whatever state we are to be therewith content*.

Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls unto him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creatorⁿ.

EXHORTATIONS PROPER FOR SERVANTS.

SERVANTS make a considerable part of every clergyman's charge, and will always stand in need of a particular application. They have as many duties and temptations as other Christians, and have need of as much care—to implant the fear of God in their hearts,—to encourage them to bear with patience the difficulties of their state,—to teach them the duties of their calling,—and to secure them from such sins as they are most subject to.

Servants ought not to imagine that the meanness of their condition will free them from being accountable to God for their behaviour in that state of life in which his providence has placed them. They are as capable of eternal happiness, and as liable to eternal misery, as the masters they serve ; and as strict an account will be required of them. And therefore the apostles are very particular in setting down the duties of their calling, and the sins they ought to be most careful to avoid.

For example:—That they should be *diligent in their business, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, in singleness of heart, fearing God ; knowing that of the Lord they shall receive a reward^o.*

They should be often put in mind to make a conscience of their master's interest, that nothing under their care be lost or wasted by *their negligence*. This is *to shew all good fidelity^p*.

ⁿ I Peter iv. 19.

^o Col. iii. 22, 24.

^p Titus ii. 10.

To be exactly just and honest ; not *purlaining*, as the apostle speaks, but remembering, that he was an *unjust steward*, and not to be imitated by any honest servant, who made himself friends at his master's cost^q.

To bear with patience the orders and the reproofs of those to whom they are subject, *not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward*. St. Peter saith expressly, that such submission is not only a duty, but a duty *acceptable to God*^r.

They should have a strict charge given them to avoid *lying*, which is hateful to God^s, and *talebearing*, which is the occasion of much sin and mischief. Not to corrupt their own or others' hearts and memories with *filthy stories, wicked songs, or profane expressions*. Never to be tempted by the authority of a wicked master, or by the example of a wicked fellow-servant, to do any thing that is *unjust, extravagant, or any way unlawful*. To avoid *sloth and idleness*, which are very bad characters of a servant.

They should be often called upon to be careful to keep the Lord's day holy.

Servants have a special right and interest in that day, given them by God himself,—not to spend it in idleness and vanity, but in going to church and hearing God's word, and begging his grace, comfort, and blessing, that whatsoever their lot is in this life, they may not fail to be happy in the next.

For this reason they should be put in mind, that their state of life does not excuse them from praying to God daily as well as they can, that they may faithfully discharge their duty, and patiently bear the burden laid upon them ; which the meanest servant will be better content with, if he is put in mind of our blessed Lord, who, though he was the Son of the Most High, yet he took upon him the condition of a servant, to teach us humility, and that the lowest condition is acceptable to God, where people are careful to do the duties of such a state.

Lastly, Servants should know that labour is the punishment of sin appointed by God himself, who passed this sentence upon Adam^t, *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread* ; condemning him and his posterity to labour and toil, that they might look for rest in heaven, since there is so little true satisfaction on earth. So that such as accept of this punishment, in submission

^q Luke xvi. 1.^r 1 Pet. ii. 18, 20.^s Prov. vi. 17.^t Gen. iii. 19.

to the appointment of God, have indeed a better title to pardon and happiness, than such as spend their lives in ease and pleasure.

OF DEALING WITH FORMAL CHRISTIANS.

THERE is not a more desperate estate than that of the *formal Christian*, who has the outward *show of godliness*, but *denies the power thereof*; who performs the common duties of Christianity without any great concern to do them well;—*believes in God* without sense of his presence, or thoughts of being accountable to him; and in *Jesus Christ*, without feeling the want of a Redeemer; without considering the life of Christ, which he ought to imitate, or the gospel, which is his rule to walk by;—*who believes in the Holy Ghost*, without thinking how much he stands in need of his aids; without considering the enemies he has to deal with, the difficulties he shall meet with, the self-denial he is to undergo, or the good works he must abound in, as he hopes for heaven.

In short, he hopes for heaven with the indifference of one who scarce thinks of going thither, and believes eternal torments without being concerned to avoid them. He knows he ought to do more than he does, but he has some faint hopes that what he does may secure him from hell.

Now, this being the case of an infinite number of people, a pastor can hardly look abroad without meeting with one or other of these *formal, indifferent, thoughtless* Christians, who live without fear of dying, and, if not hindered by timely care, will die unhappily.

These Christians therefore should be often put in mind of God's displeasure against such as pretend to be his servants, without any concern to serve him faithfully;—of the folly of being indifferent when a man's soul lies at stake;—of the absolute necessity of an inward conversion, as well as of an outward religion;—of the very great sin of neglecting or abusing the means of grace which God vouchsafes unto us.

He will shew him moreover, that *without a lively faith it will be impossible to please God*;—that without a serious repentance there is no forgiveness;—and that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*.

In short, such Christians should have no rest until they shall

be forced, out of a sense of their danger, to ask in good earnest, *What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* And that it was not for nothing that he commanded his followers—to seek the kingdom of God in the *first* place, and before all other things.

He will then shew him, that all outward ordinances from the beginning were appointed either to *create* or to *promote*, or to *secure* a lively sense of God, and of the duties we owe him amongst men.

And as these ordinances are not at our peril to be neglected, so neither are they to be depended upon, unless they lead us to the love of God and of our neighbour, and become a means of recovering in us the image of God, in which we were created, which *consists in righteousness and true holiness*.

When he has convinced them of this, he will exhort them to lose no time, but to beg of God to increase their *faith*,—to plant his *fear* in their hearts,—to awaken in them an hearty concern for their souls, and to give them such a measure of hope and love of God, as may enable them to overcome the difficulties, the temptations, and the dangers of a Christian life.

And the good pastor will not fail to add to these endeavours his own earnest prayers, that God of his great mercy would awaken the careless world into a better sense of religion and care for their souls; that men may desire in good earnest to serve God, and be solicitous how to do it most acceptably, without abusing the means of grace, or deluding themselves with the foolish hopes of serving God and mammon, of being indifferent here, and happy hereafter.

OF DEALING WITH HABITUAL EVIL LIVERS.

TO visit people of this character, when they come to die, is so frightful and so difficult a part of a clergyman's duty, that one would be at any pains to prevent so afflicting and so uneasy a task; and which can only be prevented by dealing with such people very often and plainly, while they are in health.

By representing to them the danger they are in, while they live in open rebellion against God: that as sure as God is just, he will call them to a severe account for the abuse of his good creatures,—for defiling their own bodies,—for tempting others

to sin,—for mispending that very time which God has given them to work out their salvation,—for the evil example they give,—for leading an idle and unprofitable life,—and for dishonouring God, his *laws*, his *name*, his *word*, and his *day*. Upon all which accounts, they are under the displeasure of Almighty God; his judgments are hanging over their heads continually; nor have they any hopes of mercy but by a speedy repentance.

For (as it is plain from God's word^u) the sentence of eternal death is already pronounced against them, and God only knows how soon it may be executed. *Whoremongers, drunkards, unjust, profane*, and even the *unprofitable*, shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven, but shall be cast *into outer darkness, where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched.*

By doing this faithfully, a pastor will keep the conscience and the fears of a sinner awake; he will sin at least with uneasiness; and finding that sin is a *real slavery*, he may perhaps at last resolve to seek for ease in the ways of God's commandments.

That he may do so, we ought to set before him the happiness which he is yet capable, by God's grace, of obtaining; for the very design of the gospel (as Jesus Christ himself tells St. Paul^x) is, *to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance amongst them that are sanctified by faith in Christ Jesus.*

After this a pastor must endeavour to drive him from all his holds of false hopes and vain purposes. For instance,—of repenting time enough hereafter; as if sinners could repent when they please, or as if it were enough to be sorry for one's sins, which a man may be, when it is too late to amend, and to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance.*

Let him therefore see, that by deferring his repentance, he makes it still more difficult to repent; and that, when once he has filled up the measure of his sins, he must after *that* expect neither grace nor pardon.

Lest he should depend upon the goodness and longsuffering of God, let him know that *this* ought to lead him to repentance.

That it is a great mercy that God, notwithstanding all a sinner has done to provoke him, will yet restore him to favour, and be a father to him.

^u Galatians v. 19.

^x Acts xxvi. 18.

Let him know, that there is certainly evil towards that man who sins and prospers in his sin, it being a sign of God's greatest displeasure, and that he leaves such a man to himself: a condition the most to be dreaded.

Let him be assured, that if once the sentence of the unfruitful tree is passed, *Cut it down; why lumbereth it the ground?* the prayers and tears of the whole world cannot save it.

And lastly, endeavour to convince him, that God is *just* as well as *good*, and that he has already shewn that his mercy and goodness can be provoked, since he has condemned creatures of a much higher and better order than we are, even the very angels themselves, when they rebelled, *which he hath reserved in everlasting chains unto the judgment of a great day.*

After this, represent to him the mercy of God, in sparing him so long, and in not cutting him off in the midst of his sins; his readiness to forgive such as truly turn unto him; and that *there is joy in heaven over a sinner that repenteth.*

And that he may not think his case desperate, (as great sinners are apt to do, when their consciences are awake,) or that it is a thing impossible to overcome the evil habits he has contracted; let him understand, that as the goodness, so the power of God is infinite; that the same Spirit which raised up our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, can raise a sinner from *the death of sin unto a life of righteousness.*

This let him steadfastly believe, and use his endeavours, and such a faith will work wonders.

Now, if a sinner is once brought to a sense of his evil condition, and has thoughts of becoming a new man, he will still want his pastor's assistance and advice, what methods to take in order to his sincere conversion.

And first, he must be told plainly, that he has a work of labour and difficulty to go through, such as will require thoughts of heart, great patience, earnest prayers, and earnest endeavours, self-denial, and perseverance; but then he must consider, *that it is for his life*, and that Jesus Christ has told us, *that strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life.*

He must then be made sensible, that as of himself he can do nothing, so by the grace of God he can do every thing that God requires of him, which he must pray for with the concern of one that is in earnest.

To his prayers he must add his best endeavours; that is, he

must avoid the occasions of sin, keep out of the way of temptations, avoid all company that may any way divert his thoughts from his holy purposes;—he must fast, and deny himself a great many things which his corrupt heart hankers after.

And if these things appear difficult unto him, let him ask himself, whether it is better to do so now, than to dwell with everlasting burnings hereafter?

A sick man for his health will do all this: he will avoid company; he will observe rules; he will take very bitter potions; he will endure very many things to make the remainder of a short life comfortable. A sinner that considers, that his soul lies at stake, and that eternal happiness or misery will be the event, will not think any thing too much which God prescribes.

Lastly, if to these pious endeavours a pastor adds his own prayers for the sinner, that God would touch his heart, take from him all obstinacy and blindness;—that he would awaken him, give him a lively sense of his sad condition;—call him to repentance, enable him to break all his bonds, graciously forgive him, and give him all those helps that are necessary to become a new creature: a pastor (whatever is the consequence) will have the comfort of having done a good work, and his duty.

NECESSARY INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUCH AS ARE UNDER THE CENSURES OF THE CHURCH.

WHAT the church of England so passionately wishes for, (namely, that godly discipline may be restored,) this church, by God's favour, does actually enjoy. *Notorious sinners are put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls may be saved in the day of the Lord, and that others, admonished by their example, may be more afraid to offend.*

Now to make this a real blessing to our church and people, it is necessary that they should be often and plainly told the meaning and reason of church discipline.

They should be told, for instance, that the church is Christ's family;—that all the members of Christ's family ought to be blameless and holy, as they hope for any reward from him;—that none are admitted into his household, but such as do solemnly promise to live as becomes his servants;—that therefore such as, after this, turn disorderly livers, are first to be rebuked,

and by fair means, if possible, brought to reason ; if not, to be turned out of his house, till they become sensible of their error ; which if they do, and give sincere marks of their repentance, they will be readmitted into the church, and partake of its privileges as formerly.

Now that all this may be orderly performed, Jesus Christ himself ordained his apostles, and gave them power to ordain others, to be the stewards of this his family. To them he gave the keys of his house, with full power to *receive* such as they should find worthy, and to *shut out* the unworthy.

For the faithful discharge of which trust they will be accountable to him, their *Lord* and *Master* ; which consideration ought to make them very careful—to do nothing by prejudice or partiality : to use the power which the Lord hath given them for edification, and not for the destruction of his people^z.

Then let your people know, that our power is *purely spiritual* ; and that when we force people by fines and imprisonments to submit to discipline, this is by the laws of the land, and we execute those laws, not properly as Christ's ministers, but as subjects to the civil power : for when princes became Christians, and were persuaded that they were answerable to God for the manners of their subjects, they endeavoured to ease themselves of that burden, by putting it into the hands of churchmen, which has had this unhappy effect, that Christians are often more afraid of worldly punishments, than of being denied the holy sacrament and other ordinances of the Christian religion, prescribed for their salvation.

Christians therefore should be made sensible, that as by baptism they are made members of Christ's church and family, children of God ; that is, have a right to apply to God with the freedom of children, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven ; so, by church censures, they are verily cut off from these privileges, until they sincerely repent of their sins, and are restored by Christ's ministers to the peace of the church.

If any are so foolish as to say, (as some have done,) *that they can go to another church*, ask them, as the apostle did^a, *Is Christ divided ?* that is, is he the head of a party, and not of the whole church ? Is not *ours* a member of that church ? Have not Christ's ministers *here* the same authority from their Lord, as any other Christian bishops and pastors, viz. the authority of *binding* and

^y 1 Tim. v. 21.

^z 2 Cor. xiii. 10.

^a 1 Cor. i. 13.

loosing? And if we proceed according to the rules of the gospel, and our sentence be confirmed by Christ, what will it profit them, if, for want of being reconciled by their proper pastor, they shall be shut out of heaven?

Read therefore the commission which Jesus Christ has given us; read it to them out of his word^b: *Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth (proceeding according to the rules of the gospel) shall be bound in heaven, &c. and, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me^c. And whoso despiseth me, or whomsoever I send, despiseth God that sent me^d.*

Let people know, that we take no pleasure in using our authority; that we do not desire to lord it over God's heritage. Our aim and endeavour is, to oblige sinners to change their course of life, and be converted, that their souls may be saved; and that whenever they give us hopes of a sincere repentance, we receive them with open arms and joyful hearts.

Convince them, that it is not to expose offenders that we oblige them to do public penance, but that they may give glory to God, and declare to all the world, that since they have been so unhappy as to dishonour God by breaking his laws, and despising his authority, they are heartily sorry for it, and think it no shame to own it after any manner the church shall order; believing that such a submission to God's ministers will be acceptable to God himself, and a means of obtaining his pardon through their intercession.

Assure them, that in the primitive times Christians begged with prayers and tears to be admitted to public penance, as the only way to obtain the pardon of their sins; they looked upon it as much a favour, as if a man, who had forfeited his life or estate, could have them restored upon acknowledging his crimes, and promising amendment.

Lastly, let them know for certain, that if the church should not take notice of them, but admit them to her holy offices and sacraments, while they continue impenitent, this would be no more a blessing to them than it was to Judas, of whom the devil took more sure possession, after he had received the sacrament from our Lord's own hands.

By taking pains to instruct penitents (and your people too out of the pulpit) in these particulars,

^b Matth. xviii. 18.

^c John xiii. 20.

^d Luke x. 16.

Offenders will be brought to a sense of their evil condition;— they will perform penance after an edifying manner :

You will promote the honour of God, the good of sinners, the truth of religion, and the public weal, and secure the authority of the church.

OF VISITING THE SICK.

IF one seriously considers how the generality of Christians go out of the world, how ill prepared for eternity, and how seldom such as recover make that good use of sickness which God designs by such visitations; one cannot but wish, but such as have the care of souls would think in good earnest how to improve such momentous occasions to the best advantage.

And surely a good pastor must have a great concern upon his spirits, when any of his flock are visited with sickness.

For if the sickness shall be unto death, here is a soul, in a few days, to enter upon a state of endless happiness or endless misery:—a thought which should make one's heart to tremble.

But if the sick person shall recover, and is not bettered by his sickness, here is, perhaps, the last opportunity (which God may afford that man of seeing the error of his ways) for ever lost; and where the blame will lie, God himself has told us^d: *He is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.*

Why, what could the watchman do? He could at least deliver his own soul. But he must do a great deal more: so saith the Spirit of God by Elihu^e: *When a man is chastened with pain upon his bed, and his soul draweth near unto the grave: if there be with him an interpreter, that is, one able to explain the meaning and use of such visitations; if he say, I have sinned, and it profited me not, that is, if he be brought to true repentance; then will God be gracious unto him, and his soul shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.*

In short, sickness, whether mortal or not, cometh not by chance, but is a warning for men to prepare for eternity. And

^d Ezek. xxxiii. 6.

^e Job xxxiii.

it mightily concerns such as have the care of souls not to lose such occasions of doing the greatest good to the souls of men, always remembering, that *I was sick, and ye visited me not*^f, is one of those reasons for which men will be shut out of heaven.

Now, the design of this paper is,—to propose a method of answering the ends of the church in her excellent Office *for visiting the sick*. That such as are put into our hands, by the providence of God, may be dealt with as their needs require: whether it be to examine the sincerity of their faith and repentance, or to receive their confession, and administer absolution to such as earnestly desire it; or to awaken the consciences of the careless; to comfort dejected spirits; or lastly, to exhort such as recover, to consider the mercy they have received, and to dedicate the remainder of their lives to the service of God.

And, in the first place, a good pastor will not always stay till he is sent for. He knows that the repentance of the dead comes too late, and that the fear of death, which is to determine a man's state to all eternity, will make men willing to hear reproof, and to take advice: such an opportunity, therefore, he will not lose, if he can possibly help it.

They that omit the salutation,—*Peace be to this house, and to all that dwell in it*, or pronounce it so low as not to be heard, have not well considered the authority they have, as ministers of Christ, to offer peace and salvation to all that are disposed to receive it^g.

If the *short litany* and *prayers following* be said with deliberation and devotion, there cannot better be made use of: besides, they are the voice of the church, which will be sure to be heard at the throne of grace.

After these follow *two exhortations*, which should never be omitted; but then they should be read with very great deliberation, that the sick person may weigh what is said, and receive instruction and comfort from it.

And now, forasmuch as a well-grounded faith in God will be the sick person's best defence against the assaults of the devil^h, who will be sure to tempt him, either to despair of God's mercy, or to presume upon his own righteousness, or to be impatient, and to *charge God foolishly*; the church, therefore, in the next place directs us—to *examine the sick person's faith*, that is, whe-

^f Matth. xxv. 36.^g Matth. x. 13.^h Eph. vi. 16.

ther he believes as a Christian man ought to do, or no : and in order to that, to ask him,—*Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty, &c. ?*

But lest sick people, and such as are of slow understanding, should profess with their lips, what they are not able to apply to their soul's comfort ; it will be highly charitable and useful, after repeating the Creed, to propose the use that ought to be made of it, *in short questions*, after some such way as this following :

Do you believe that it is God who ordereth all things both in heaven and on earth ?

Then you must believe that nothing can come by chance ; and that, as our Lord saith, *even a sparrow does not die without God's knowledge and his leave.*

Do you believe that this present visitation of yours is from God ?

If God is our Father, his correction must be for our good.

Do you firmly believe this ; and that this sickness is ordered by him for some special end ?

Then consider for what ends a loving father corrects his child : either he is careless, or disobedient, or forgets his duty ; or takes such ways as would ruin himself, if he were let alone.

Is not this your case ?

To be sure, if it were left to your own ordering, you would never choose afflictions ; but God sees that it is good for you to be in trouble ; or it may be, God will try whether you will love and trust in him, as well in sickness as in health.

Will you therefore, like a dutiful child, be thankful that your heavenly Father takes so much care of you ?

Will you endeavour to bear your sickness patiently, and submit to God's will, whether it be for life or for death ?

Does not this affliction convince you, that nothing deserves our love but God, since no being else can help us in the day of adversity ?

Will you therefore, *in the first place*, make application to God by prayer for an happy issue out of this affliction ?

JESUS, you know, signifies a *Saviour* ; and we all hope that he will be a *Saviour* to us. But this he will not be, unless we obey him as our *Lord*, that is, as our *ruler* and *lawgiver*.

You must therefore consider wherein you have broke his

laws, and you must repent of it, ask God's pardon, and resolve to do so no more, as you hope that he will be a *Saviour to you.*

You believe *that he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary.*

Why then you are sure that he is the Son of God, *he is able to save such as come unto God by him* ; and as he was born of a woman, and took our nature upon him, he knows, for he has felt, our weaknesses, and will pity our infirmities.

You believe *that he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.*

Are you not then hereby convinced what a sad state man was in, when God could not be reconciled to him, till his own Son had suffered what man had deserved to suffer ?

And do not you see, at the same time, that no true penitent need despair, since here is a sufficient price paid for our redemption ?

Neither ought you to doubt, that God will deny us any thing, since he *spared not his own Son, but gave him up for us all.*

Do you therefore place all your hopes of mercy in Christ's death, and in the promises of God, for his sake, made to us ?

Will you endeavour to follow the example of your Lord and Saviour, who bore with submission and patience whatever God thought fit to lay upon him ?

And will you remember that he did so, though his very judge *found no fault in him* ? But we *suffer justly, for we receive the due rewards of our deeds.*

And lastly, you will do well to remember the dying words of our Saviour ; and when you come to die, *commend your spirit into the hands of God.*

You believe *that Jesus Christ rose again the third day from the dead.*

Why then you are sure that his sufferings and death were well pleasing to God, who otherwise would not have raised him to life again.

And though your soul, when you die, shall go into an unknown world ; yet, if you die in the favour of God, you will have the same God to take care of you that Jesus Christ had.

And lastly, you are hereby assured that God, who *raised Christ from the dead, will also quicken our mortal bodies* ; for so he hath declared in his word.

Since you believe *that Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, and*

sitteth at the right hand of God, you must conclude, that all power in heaven and in earth is committed unto him.

And can there be greater comfort for a sinner than this ; that he who died for us is ever with God, pleading the cause of his poor creatures that come unto God by him ?

Though therefore, for your own sake, you cannot look for favour, yet for Jesus' sake you may, *who ever liveth to make intercession for us*.

Will you therefore endeavour to set your heart above, where your Saviour is ?

And that you may do so more earnestly, remember your Saviour's words when he was leaving the world : *I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, ye may be also*.

You believe, *that Jesus Christ shall come to judge both the quick and the dead*.

If you believe this so truly as you ought to do, you will take care to judge yourself beforehand, that you may not be condemned of the Lord, when he cometh *to judge the world in righteousness*.

Will you therefore examine your life, and see wherein you have offended, that you may repent, and make your peace with God, remembering, that as death leaves you, judgment will find you ?

However, you have this to comfort your soul, if you are sincerely penitent, that he who knows our infirmities, he who died to redeem us, is to be our judge.

And God grant that you may find mercy in that great day.

You profess to *believe in the Holy Ghost*, to whom you were dedicated in baptism, and *by which you were sealed to the day of redemption*.

Now, if you have grieved this Holy Spirit, and by wicked works have driven him from you, you must sadly repent of it, and earnestly pray God to restore him, without whose aid you can never be sanctified, never be happy.

And when you call yourself to an account, consider whether you have lived in obedience to those *whom the Holy Ghost has set over you* ; that is, the ministers of the gospel.

Do you propose to live and die *in the communion of this church* in which you were baptized ?

Our Lord tells you what a blessing it is to be a member of that church, of which he is the head.

I am (saith he) the vine, ye are the branches; as the branches cannot bear fruit unless they abide in the vine, no more can ye, unless ye abide in me.

In short, a member of Christ's church has a right to the forgiveness of sins,—to the favour of God,—to the merits of Christ,—to the assistance of the Holy Ghost,—and to the ministry of the holy angels:—blessings which you can never be sufficiently thankful for.

Do you firmly believe that God, in consideration of Christ's sufferings, will forgive all such as with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him?

But then you must consider, that *forgiveness of sins* is to be hoped for only in God's own way, that is, by the ministry of those to whom God *has committed the word of reconciliation.*

And that the promise of forgiveness of sin *should be no pretence for continuing in sin in hopes of pardon.*

Do you believe that we shall all rise again, some to *everlasting happiness*, and some to *everlasting misery*?

If this faith be in you of a truth, it will convince you of the vanity of this world, its profits, pleasures, honours, fame, and its idols; so that you will not, as unbelievers do, look for your portion here.

Do not you see what a mercy it is when God punisheth sinners in this life, since they whose punishment is deferred till the next must suffer everlastingly?

And if the difficulties of repentance and an holy life affright you, consider this one thing, *Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?*

Remember the words of Christ to the penitent thief,—*This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*

Let the expectation of that happy day, and a faith and hope full of immortality, make you *diligent to make your calling and election sure*, and sweeten all the trouble and difficulties of doing it.

And may Almighty God strengthen and increase your faith, that you may die in this belief, and in the peace and communion of the church. *Amen.*

The sick Christian having thus professed his *faith in God*, the next thing necessary to be inquired into is, *the truth of his*

repentance. The church therefore orders, that now the minister shall *examine* (not *exhort* him to it only) whether he repent him truly of all his sins.

And verily the church in *this* consulted the necessities of *sick persons*, who are not able to attend to long exhortations, and are too apt to forget what is said to them after that manner ; and may be brought to know the true state of their souls by *examining* them, that is, by short, plain, and proper questions ; of which hereafter.

In the mean time a prudent pastor will find himself obliged (here) to consider more particularly the circumstances of the person with whom he has to do, that he may examine his repentance accordingly.

For instance, Christians are not always sensible of their own ailments.

First, Some are very *ignorant*, and know not why they live, or what will become of them when they die.

Secondly, Some are *vainly confident*, and must be humbled.

Thirdly, Some are *too much dejected*, and must be comforted.

Fourthly, Some are *hardened*, and must be awakened.

Fifthly and lastly, Such as hope to recover will be apt to put off their repentance, and reject the counsel of God for their good.

Now, something in all these cases should be said, to dispose the sick to a sincere repentance.

1. *To such as are very ignorant.*

Such as are *ignorant* should be made sensible, that this life is a state of trial, and a passage only to another.

That God has given men reason and conscience, and has also given them laws to walk by.

That after this life *we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, who will render to every man according to his deeds*ⁱ.

That such as have done good, shall go into life everlasting ; and such as have done evil, into everlasting misery. And that thus it will be, whether men lay these things to heart or not.

And the only comfort a sinner has is this, that God for Christ's sake will accept his sincere repentance.

I require you, therefore, as you value your soul, to make your peace with God speedily. And that you may know wherein

ⁱ Rom. ii. 6.

you have offended, I will set before you the law of God, to the end you may judge yourself, and call on God for mercy, as often as I shall put you in mind of any sin you have been guilty of.

2. *To such as are vainly confident.*

Such as are *confident* of their own righteousness, or depend upon an outward profession of Christianity, should be put in mind of our Lord's words to the Pharisees^k: *ye are they that justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts.*

They should be told, that the publican who durst not *lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful unto me a sinner,* returned justified before him who thought too well of himself.

And that our Lord invited such only as were *weary and heavy laden* to come to him, because these only are prepared to become his true disciples.

Thou sayest that thou art rich, and hast need of nothing, (saith our Lord to the church of Laodicea,) *and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*^l.

You see how sad a thing it is to have too good an opinion of one's self.

And it is only because Christians do not consider the many duties that they have omitted, and the many sins they have been guilty of, that makes them *speak peace to their souls.*

In the laws of God, therefore, which I am going to set before you, you will see, as in a glass, the charge that is against you; and I require you to judge yourself, as you expect favour from God.

3. *To such as want comfort, being dejected.*

And first, if the sick person is under agonies of mind, on account of some great sin, or wickedness long lived in, a prudent pastor will not too hastily speak peace to him; he will rather endeavour that he may continue to *sorrow after a godly sort*: that is, not so much for having offended against a God *who can destroy both body and soul in hell*, but as having offended a gracious Father, a merciful Saviour, and an holy Spirit.

Such a sorrow as this will not lessen a Christian's horror for sin, but will make him more humble, more fearful of offending;—

^k Luke xvi. 15.

^l Revelation iii. 17.

In short, no man will have reason to despair, if he considers, *that God doeth nothing in vain* : and that if he visits a sinner ; if he exhorts him by his ministers ; if he touches his heart ; if he gives him time to consider his ways, when he might have taken him away without warning ; why, it is because he designs to be gracious, if the sinner is not wanting to himself.

I will therefore set before you the law of God, not to *affright* you, but that you may *know, and confess, and forsake your sin, and find mercy, as God hath promised*^x.

4. *To such as are hardened in wickedness, and must be awakened.*

This is indeed a melancholy case ; but a good pastor, while God continues life, will continue his endeavours, for he does not know but *this* is God's time.

He will therefore try what the *sword of the Spirit* will do, that *word* which, the same *Spirit* tells us, is profitable for correction as well as for instruction^y.

He will therefore put him in mind, that if he dies in his sins unrepented of, he will go out of the world a professed enemy to that *God who can destroy both body and soul in hell ; who will, as the holy Scriptures assure us, take vengeance on all them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and who shall be punished with everlasting destruction*^z.

He will let him know, that this may be his condition in a few days ; for our Lord assures us, that as soon as ever the wicked man died, he was carried to hell^a.

That this is the last time, perhaps, that ever God will afford you to beg his pardon ; and you will be desperately mad to neglect it.

It is true, *God is not willing that any should perish*, and he can conquer the stubbornest heart, but he will not do it by force.

He has shewn his mercy in afflicting your body, and in taking from you the power to do evil.

What is this for, but that you may open your eyes, and see your danger, and ask his pardon, and beg his assistance, and be delivered from the severity of his wrath, which you must certainly feel, without a speedy repentance ?

It may be, you do not know *the charge that is against you* ;

^x Isaiah lv. 7. ^y 2 Tim. iii. 16. ^z 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. ^a Luke xvi. 23.

I will therefore repeat to you the substance of those laws which you have broken, and by which you must be judged.

If you have any concern for your soul, if you have any fear of God in your heart, you will hear, and judge, and condemn yourself, that you may escape in the dreadful judgment of the last day.

5. *To such as, in hopes of recovery, put off their repentance.*

Such should be made sensible,—that sickness is not only the *punishment*, but the *remedy of sin*^b.

That it is the chiefest of those ways, by which God shews men their sin,—by which he discovers to them the vanity of the world that bewitches them,—by which he takes down the pride of the heart, and the stubbornness of the will which has hindered their conversion.

In short, it is God's time : so that not to repent in sickness is in effect to resolve never to repent.

For what shall incline a man to repent when he recovers, which does not move him now.

His hopes of heaven, and his fears of hell, will not be greater then than now.

And it would be the highest presumption to expect that God will give that man an extraordinary degree of grace, who despises the most usual means of conversion.

A pastor, therefore, will set before him the law of God, which he has transgressed, that he may see the need he has of repenting, and that he may not provoke God to cut him off before his time, because there is no hopes of amendment.

Examination of the sick person's repentance.

DEARLY beloved, you are, it may be, in a very short time to appear before God.

I must therefore put you in mind, that your salvation depends upon the truth of your repentance.

Now, forasmuch as you became a sinner, by breaking the laws of God, you have no way of being restored to God's favour, but by seeing the number and the greatness of your sins, that you may hate them heartily, lament them sorely, and cry mightily to God for *pardon*.

^b Micah vi. 9.

I will therefore set before you the laws of God, by which God will judge you; and I will ask you such questions as may be proper to call your sins to your remembrance; and you will do well, wherever you shall have reason, to say with the publican,—*God be merciful unto me, for I have offended in this or that thing.*

And be not too tender of yourself; but remember, that the more severe you are in accusing and condemning yourself, the more favour you may expect from God.

Your duty to God, you know, is, to fear him, to love him, to trust in him, to honour, and to obey him.

Consider, therefore, seriously,—Have you not lived as if there were no God to call you to an account?

Has the knowledge of God's almighty power, and his severe justice, made you fearful of offending him?

Are you convinced that you have not loved God so much as his goodness and care of you deserved?

Has the love of God made you desirous to please him?

Have you so put your trust in God as to be contented with what he has appointed, without murmuring, and without questioning the wisdom of his choices?

Have you not been unthankful for God's mercies?

Have you never, as you know of, taken any false oath?

Have you never been accustomed to swear, to curse, or to take God's name in vain?

Have you not very often spent the Lord's day idly?

Have you not been careless and irreverent in God's house?

Have you been careful to pray to God daily for his pardon, his grace, and his protection?

Have you constantly received the Lord's supper when you have had an opportunity?

Have you never gone profanely to the sacrament without examining yourself, and without purposing to lead a new life?

Have you not despised God's word, his ministers, or his house?

Your duty to your neighbour is, to love him as yourself.

Have you so loved all men, as to wish and pray sincerely for their welfare?

Have you not hated your enemies?

Have you paid due reverence in heart, in word, in behaviour,

to your parents, and to all such as were over you in place and authority?

Have you not been subject to sinful, unadvised anger?

Have you never done any thing to shorten the life of your neighbour?

Have you not lived in malice or envy, or wished any man's death?

Have you not been accustomed to sow strife and dissension amongst your neighbours?

Have you not fallen into the sins of drunkenness, gluttony, tippling, or an idle life?

Have you kept yourself free from the sins of whoredom impurity, or uncleanness?

Have you none of the sins of injustice, extortion, or of any way wronging your neighbour, to answer for?

Have you not been unfaithful in any matters of trust committed to you?

Have you not been subject to the evil habits of lying, slandering, or talebearing?

Have you never given false evidence, outfaced the truth, or countenanced an evil cause?

Have you not been pleased with evil reports; and have you not been too forward to propagate them?

Have you not been vexatious to your neighbour, and grieved him without cause?

Have you not been dissatisfied with the condition which God allotted you?

Have you not coveted your neighbour's goods, envied his prosperity, or been pleased with his misfortunes?

Have you done to others as you wish they should have done to you?

Can you call to mind any injury or injustice, for which you ought to ask pardon, or make restitution?

And remember you are told the truth, that the unrighteous and unjust shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Is there any body that has grievously wronged you, to whom you ought to be reconciled?

Remember, that if you forgive not, you will not be forgiven; and that *he will receive judgment without mercy, who hath shewed no mercy.*

Are you therefore in charity with all the world?

Have you been kind to the poor according to your ability ?

And remember that the moment Zaccheus resolved to do right to every body, and to be kind to the poor, our Lord tells him, that *salvation was then come to his house.*

You would do well therefore, as a proof of your thankfulness to God, to be liberal to the poor, according to your ability.

And if you have not already settled your worldly concerns, and declared what you owe, and what is owing to you ; it is fit you do so now, for the discharging a good conscience, and for preventing mischief after your death.

And be very careful that in making your will, you do no wrong, discover no resentment, that the last act of your life may be free from sin.

And now I will leave you for a while to God, and to your own conscience ; beseeching him to discover to you the charge that is against you ; that you may know, and confess, and bewail, and abhor the errors of your life past ; that your sins may be done away by his mercy, and your pardon sealed in heaven, *before you go hence and be no more seen.*

CONCERNING CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION.

CONCERNING confession, archbishop Usher has these words : “ No kind of confession, either public or private, is disallowed by our church, that is any way requisite for the execution of the ancient power of the keys, which Christ bestowed on the church^e.”

Concerning absolution, bishop Andrews hath these words : “ It is not said by Christ, *Whose sins ye wish and pray for, or declare to be remitted ;* but, *Whose sins ye remit :—*to which he addeth a promise, that he will make it good, and that his power shall accompany the power he has given them, and the lawful execution of it in his church for ever.”

And indeed the very same persons baptize for the remission of sins, and administer the Lord’s supper as a seal of the forgiveness of sins to all worthy communicants.

It is not water that can wash away sin, nor bread and wine ; but these rightly administered, by persons truly authorized, and to persons duly qualified by faith and repentance. And thus

^e Answer to the Jesuit, p. 84.

'absolution benefiteth, by virtue of the power which Jesus Christ has given his ministers^d.

In short,—our Lord having purchased the forgiveness of sins for all mankind, he hath committed the ministry of reconciliation to us; that having brought men to repentance, we may in Christ's name, and in the person of Christ^e, pronounce their pardon.

And this will be the true way to magnify the power of the keys, which is so little understood, or so much despised; namely, to bring as many as possibly we can to repentance, that we may have more frequent occasions of sealing a penitent's pardon by our ministry.

And now, if the sick person has been so dealt with as to be truly sensible of his condition, he should then be instructed in the nature and benefit of confession (at least of such sins as do trouble his conscience) and of absolution.

For instance,—he should be told, that as under the law of Moses, God made his priests the judges of leprosy^f, and gave them rules, by which they were to determine who were clean and fit to enter into the congregation, (which was a type of heaven,) and who were not clean :

Even so, under the gospel, he has given his priests authority to judge sin, which is the leprosy of the soul. He has given them rules to judge by, with authority to pronounce their pardon, if they find them qualified; for this is their commission from Christ's own mouth, *Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.*

But then we dare not take upon us to exercise this authority, until sinners give such signs of a sincere faith and true repentance, as may persuade one charitably to believe, that amendment of life will follow, if God shall think fit to grant them longer time.

At the same time, therefore, that we are bound to encourage penitents earnestly to desire absolution, and to exhort them to receive the Lord's supper, as a pledge to assure them of pardon; we must sincerely admonish them not to hope for any benefit either from the one or the other, but upon condition of their sincere repentance.

It will be proper, therefore, before absolution, and for more satisfaction, to ask the sick person some such questions as these :

Have you considered the sins which you have been most subject to ?

^d John xx. 23.

^e 2 Cor. ii. 10.

^f Lev. xiii.

Are you convinced that *it is an evil thing and bitter to forsake the Lord?*

Are you resolved to avoid all temptations, and occasions of the sins you have now repented of?

Do you verily believe that you shall not fall into any of these sins again?

If you should do so, will you immediately beg God's pardon, and be more watchful over yourself?

Will you strive with all your might to overcome the corruptions of your nature, by prayers, by fasting, and by self-denial?

Do you purpose, if God shall prolong your days, *to bring forth fruits meet for repentance?*

Are you in perfect charity with all the world?

Every Christian, whose life has been, in the main, unblamable, and whose repentance has thus been particularly examined, and who has given a satisfactory answer to these questions, ought not to leave the world without the benefit of absolution, which he should be earnestly pressed to desire, and exhorted to dispose himself to receive, as the church has appointed.

CONCERNING HABITUAL SINNERS.

IF a person of this character be visited with sickness, a prudent pastor will not presently apply comfort, or give him assurances of pardon; he will rather strive to increase his sorrow to such a height, as, if God should spare him, might produce *a repentance not to be repented of.*

It was thus (as Dr. Hammond observes) that God himself dealt with such kind of sinners^g.

The children of Israel did evil again; that is, they went on in their wickedness, upon which God sorely distresses them. They cried unto God, but he answers them, I will deliver you no more. However, this did not make them utterly to despair; for they knew that his mercy had no bounds; they therefore still went on to apply to him for pardon and help, and resolved to do what was at present in their power towards a reformation;—at last God was prevailed on to accept and deliver them.

And thus should we deal with habitual sinners:—we should not *break the bruised reed*;—we should indeed give them assur-

^g Judges x. 6.

ances of pardon, upon their sincere repentance : but forasmuch as it is very hard, even for themselves to know, whether their sorrow and resolutions are such as would bring forth fruit answerable to amendment of life : all that a confessor can do is, to exhort such persons to do all that is in their present power ;—to take shame to themselves ;—to give glory to God in a free confession of their crimes, (which St. James saith is of great use towards obtaining their pardon ;)—to pray without ceasing ;—to warn others to beware of falling into the same sad condition ;—and to consider, that a wicked life, to which God has threatened eternal fire, cannot be supposed to be forgiven by an easy repentance.

And though the church has no rules in this case to go by, but such as are very afflicting, yet God is not tied to rules ; he sees what is in man, and may finally absolve one whom his ministers dare not, until after a long probation they have reason, in the judgment of charity, to believe that his repentance is sincere.

And this a prudent pastor will be careful to observe, both to prevent the scandal of an hasty absolution, and because he knows such ministrations do no good to those that receive them.

TO SUCH AS HAVE RECOVERED FROM SICKNESS.

AND, in the first place, a pastor should be very careful to put his people in mind, that the first fruits of health should always be offered to God.

And forasmuch as there is nothing more common, nor more to be lamented, than for people in sickness to make very solemn promises of better obedience, and upon their recovery to forget all, and to return to their former careless life ;—a pastor will warn them betimes how God hates such backslidings, how unthankful, how provoking it is, and the readiest way to draw down a worse evil, or to be given over to a reprobate mind.

And indeed a man that has received the sentence of death in himself,—that has seen the hazard of a death-bed repentance,—that has felt the horror of sin, when it is most frightful ;—for such a person to grow secure, is an amazing instance of the corruption of our nature ; and therefore it will require a pastor's greatest care to prevent a relapse. Especially to guard his pco-

ple against general purposes of amendment, which lull the mind asleep ; and before people are aware, they are just where they were before sickness seized them.

A love for sin returns ;—God is provoked, and grace withdrawn ;—and every relapse makes a Christian's case more desperate.

A Christian, therefore, who is in good earnest, must be put upon rectifying the errors of his life immediately, as he hopes for mercy, whenever God visits him again.

If an idle life has been his fault, he must take to business ;—if intemperance, he must at his peril be sober ;—if he has been given to appetite, to ease, and to luxury, he must deny himself, and labour to mortify these corrupt affections ;—if he has observed no method of living, he must for the future fix proper times for prayer, for fasting, for retirement, and for calling himself to an account. In short, he must avoid, as much as possible, all occasions and temptations to sin ;—if he is overtaken in a fault, he must immediately repent of it, and be more careful ; he must *not* be discouraged with the difficulties he will meet with, for the power of God is sufficient to make a virtuous life *possible, easy, and pleasant*, to the weakest Christian that depends upon his grace.

Let him therefore be exhorted to persevere in his good resolutions ;—to depend upon God's power and promises, to assist him to pray daily for light to discover, and for strength to overcome the corruptions of his nature ;—and lastly, to be always afraid of backsliding :—and then sickness and death, whenever they come, will be a blessing.

And as a faithful discharge of this duty will give a curate of souls the greatest comfort at the hour of death, so there is nothing doth more preserve the authority which a faithful pastor ought to have over his flock.

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