

H. Steiner

A

DISCOURSE

OF THE

PASTORAL CARE.

BY THE RIGHT REV. FATHER IN GOD,

Burnet,
GILBERT, LATE LORD BISHOP OF SARUM.

Burnet
FIFTEENTH EDITION.

PRINTED VERBATIM FROM THE AUTHOR'S LAST CORRECTED EDITION.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

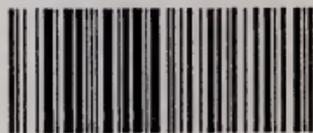
—◆—
London :

WILLIAM TEGG AND Co., CHEAPSIDE.

M.DCCC.XLIX.

BV4009
B8
1849

LC Control Number



tmp96 031636

TO THE QUEEN'S
MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY*.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,

THE title of Defender of the Faith is so inherent in the royal dignity, and so essential a part of its security, as well as of its glory, that there was no need of papal bulls to add it to the crown your Majesty now wears : you hold it by a much better tenure, as well as by a more ancient possession. Nor can one reflect on the pope's giving it to king Henry VIII., without remembering what is said of Caiaphas, that "being high priest that year, he prophesied." For since that time the true faith hath been so eminently defended by our princes, and that of both sexes, we having had our Pulcherias as well as our Constantines and our Theodoses, that this church has been all along the chief strength and honour of the Reformation, as well as the main object of the envy and spite of those of the Roman communion.

But though your Majesty's royal ancestors have done so much for us, there remains yet a great deal to be done for the completing of our reformation, especially as to the lives and manners of men.

* Mary, the pious and excellent queen of King William III.

DEDICATION.

This will most effectually be done, by obliging the clergy to be more exemplary in their lives, and more diligent and faithful in the discharge of their pastoral duty. And this work seems to be reserved for your Majesties, and designed to be the felicity and glory of your reign. To serve God by promoting this great and glorious design, which is so truly worthy of your Majesty's best care and endeavours, I have purposely written this treatise, which I do with all humility dedicate and present to your Sacred Majesty.

May that God who is the King of kings, and hath blessed us with two such excellent princes, preserve you both long to us, and make you as happy in us as we are in you! May you reign over us till you have accomplished all those great designs for which God hath raised you up, and with which he hath filled your hearts: and may this church be made, by your means, the "perfection of beauty," and "the joy of the whole earth!"

These are the daily and most fervent prayers of,

May it please your Majesty,

Your Majesty's most loyal,

Most humble, and most obedient

Subject and Chaplain,

GIL. SARUM.

CONTENTS.

	Page
LIFE OF THE AUTHOR	i
The Preface to the First Edition.....	xviii
The Preface to the Third Edition.....	xxxiv

CHAPTER I.

Of the Dignity of Sacred Employments, and the Names and Designations given to them in Scripture	51
---	----

CHAPTER 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	63
--	----

CHAPTER III.

Passages out of the New Testament relating to the same Matter	75
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

Of the sense of the Primitive Church in this Matter.	97
--	----

CHAPTER V.

An Account of some Canons in divers Ages of the Church, relating to the Duties and Labours of the Clergy	122
--	-----

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER VI.

	Page
Of the declared Sense and Rules of the Church of England in this Matter.....	138

CHAPTER VII.

Of the due Preparation of such as may, and ought to be put in Orders.....	167
---	-----

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Functions and Labours of Clergymen.....	197
--	-----

CHAPTER IX.

Concerning Preaching.....	229
The Conclusion.....	253

CHAPTER X.

Of Presentations to Benefices and Simony.....	262
---	-----

LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

GILBERT BURNET, bishop of Salisbury, was born at Edinburgh, Sept. 18, 1643. His father was the younger brother of an ancient family in the county of Aberdeen, and was bred to the civil law, which he studied for seven years in France: at the Restoration he was made one of the lords of the session by the title of lord Cramond. His wife, our author's mother, was very eminent for her piety and virtue, and a warm zealot for the presbyterian discipline, in which way she had been very strictly educated.

Our author received the first rudiments of his education from his father; under whose care he made so quick a progress, that, at ten years of age, he perfectly understood the Latin tongue; at which time he was sent to the college of Aberdeen, where he acquired the Greek, and went through the usual course of Aristotelian logic and philosophy with uncommon applause. He was scarcely fourteen when he commenced master of arts, and then applied

himself to the study of the civil law ; but, after a year's diligent application to that science, he changed his resolution, and turned his thoughts wholly to the study of divinity. At eighteen years of age, he was put upon his trial as a probationer or expectant preacher ; and, at the same time, was offered the presentation to a very good benefice, by his cousin-german, sir Alexander Burnet ; but thinking himself too young for the cure of souls, he modestly declined that offer. His education, thus happily begun, was finished by the conversation and advice of the most eminent Scotch divines. In 1663, about two years after his father's death, he came into England, where he first visited the two universities. At Cambridge he had an opportunity of conversing with Dr. Cudworth, Dr. Pearson, Dr. Burnet, author of the " Sacred Theory," and Dr. Henry More, one of whose sayings, in relation to rites and ceremonies, then made a great impression on him : " None of these," said he, " are bad enough to make men bad, and I am sure none of them are good enough to make men good." At Oxford our author was much caressed, on account of his knowledge of the councils and fathers, by Dr. Fell, and Dr. Pocock, that great master of Oriental learning. He was much improved there, in his mathematics and natural philosophy, by the instructions of Dr. Wallis, who likewise gave him

a letter of recommendation to the learned and pious Mr. Boyle, at London. Upon his arrival there, he was introduced to all the most noted divines, as Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Patrick, Lloyd, Whichcote, and Wilkins; and, among others of the laity, to sir Robert Murray.

In 1665 he was ordained a priest by the bishop of Edinburgh, and presented by sir Robert Fletcher to the living of Saltoun, which had been kept vacant during his absence. He soon gained the affections of his whole parish, not excepting the presbyterians, though he was the only clergyman in Scotland that made use of the prayers in the liturgy of the church of England. During the five years he remained at Saltoun, he preached twice every Sunday, and once on one of the week-days: he catechised three times a week, so as to examine every parishioner, old or young, three times in the compass of a year: he went round the parish from house to house, instructing, reproofing, or comforting them, as occasion required: the sick he visited twice a day: he administered the sacrament four times a year, and personally instructed all such as gave notice of their intention to receive it. All that remained above his own necessary subsistence, (in which he was very frugal,) he gave away in charity. A particular instance of his generosity is thus related: one of his parishioners had been in execu-

tion for debt, and applied to our author for some small relief, who inquired of him how much would again set him up in his trade: the man named the sum, and he as readily called to his servant to pay it him: "Sir," said he, "it is all we have in the house." "Well," said Mr. Burnet, "pay it this poor man: you do not know the pleasure there is in making a man glad."

In 1669 he was made professor of divinity at Glasgow; in which station he executed the following plan of study. On Mondays he made each of the students, in their turn, explain a head of divinity in Latin, and propound such theses from it as he was to defend against the rest of the scholars; and this exercise concluded with our professor's decision of the point in a Latin oration. On Tuesdays he gave them a prelection in the same language, in which he proposed, in the course of eight years, to have gone through a complete system of divinity. On Wednesdays he read them a lecture, for above an hour, by way of a critical commentary on St. Matthew's Gospel; which he finished before he quitted the chair. On Thursdays the exercise was alternate; one Thursday he expounded a Hebrew Psalm, comparing it with the Septuagint, the Vulgar, and the English version; and the next Thursday he explained some portion of the ritual and constitution of the primitive church, making the

apostolical canons his text, and reducing every article of practice under the head of one or other of those canons. On Fridays he made each of his scholar, in course, preach a short sermon upon some text he assigned; and, when it was ended, he observed upon any thing that was defective or amiss in the handling of the subject. This was the labour of the mornings: in the evenings, after prayer, he every day read some parcel of scripture, on which he made a short discourse; and, when that was over he examined into the progress of their several studies. All this he performed during the whole time the schools were open; and, in order to acquit himself with credit, he was obliged to study hard from four till ten in the morning; the rest of the day being of necessity allotted, either to the care of his pupils, or to hearing the complaints of the clergy, who, finding he had an interest with men of power, were not sparing in their applications to him. In this situation he continued four years and a half, exposed, through his principles of moderation, to the censure both of the episcopal and presbyterian parties. About this time he was intrusted, by the dutchess of Hamilton with the perusal and arrangement of all the papers relating to her father's and uncle's ministry, which induced him to compile "Memoirs of the dukes of Hamilton," and occasioned his being invited to

London, to receive farther information, concerning the transactions of those times, by the earl of Lauderdale; between whom and the duke of Hamilton he brought about a reconciliation. During his stay in London he was offered a Scotch bishoprick, which he refused. Soon after his return to Glasgow he married the lady Margaret Kennedy, daughter of the earl of Cassilis. In 1673 he took another journey to London; where, at the express nomination of the king, after hearing him preach, he was sworn one of his majesty's chaplains in ordinary. He became likewise in high favour with his majesty and the duke of York. At his return to Edinburgh, finding the animosities between the dukes of Hamilton and Lauderdale revived, he retired to his station at Glasgow; but was obliged the next year to return to court, to justify himself against the accusations of the duke of Lauderdale, who had represented him as the cause and instrument of all the opposition the measures of the court had met with in the Scotch parliament. Thus he lost the favour of the court; and, to avoid putting himself into the hands of his enemies, he resigned the professor's chair at Glasgow, and resolved to settle in London, being now about thirty years of age. Soon after he was offered the living of St. Giles's, Cripplegate, which he declined accepting, because he heard that it was intended for Dr. Fowler, after-

wards bishop of Gloucester. In 1675, our author, at the recommendation of lord Holles, and notwithstanding the interposition of the court against him, was appointed preacher at the Rolls chapel, by sir Harbottle Grimstone, master of the Rolls. The same year he was examined before the house of commons in relation to the duke of Lauderdale, whose conduct the parliament was then inquiring into. He was soon after chosen lecturer of St. Clement's, and became a very popular preacher.

Although our author at this time had no parochial cure, he did not refuse his attendance to any sick person who desired it; and was sent for, amongst others, to one who had been engaged in a criminal amour with Wilmot, earl of Rochester. The manner he treated her, during her illness, gave that lord a great curiosity of being acquainted with him; and for a whole winter, in a conversation of at least one evening in a week, Burnet went over all those topics with him, upon which sceptics, and men of loose morals, are wont to attack the Christian religion. The effect of these conferences, in convincing the earl's judgment, and leading him to a sincere repentance, became the subject of a well-known and interesting narrative, which he published in 1680, entitled, "An account of the Life and Death of the earl of Rochester." This work has lately been reprinted more than once, perhaps owing to

the character Dr. Johnson gave of it in his "Life of Rochester:" he there pronounces it a book "which the critic ought to read for its elegance, the philosopher for its arguments, and the saint for its piety."

In 1682, when the administration was wholly changed in favour of the duke of York, he continued steady in his adherence to his friends, and chose to sacrifice all his views at court, particularly a promise of the mastership of the Temple, rather than break off his correspondence with them. As he was about this time much resorted to by persons of all ranks and parties, as a pretence to avoid the returning of so many visits, he built a laboratory, and, for above a year, went through a course of chemical experiments. Upon the execution of the lord Russel, with whom he was familiarly acquainted, he was examined before the house of commons, with respect to that lord's speech upon the scaffold, in the penning of which he was suspected to have had a hand. Not long after he refused the offer of a living of three hundred pounds a year, in the gift of the earl of Halifax, who would have presented him, on condition of his residing still in London. In 1683 he went over to Paris, where he was well received by the court, and became acquainted with the most eminent persons, both popish and protestant. The year following

the resentment of the court against our author was so great, that he was discharged from his lecture at St. Clement's by virtue of the king's mandate to Dr. Hascard, rector of that parish; and in December the same year, by an order from the lord-keeper North to sir Harbottle Grimstone, he was forbidden preaching any more at the Rolls chapel. Upon the death of king Charles, and accession of king James, having obtained leave to go out of the kingdom, he went first to Paris, where he lived in great retirement, to avoid being involved in the conspiracies then forming in favour of the duke of Monmouth. But, having contracted an acquaintance with brigadier Stoupe, a protestant officer in the French service, he was prevailed upon to take a journey with him into Italy, and met with an agreeable reception at Rome and Geneva. After a tour through the southern parts of France, Italy, Switzerland, and many places of Germany, he came to Utrecht, and intended to have settled in some quiet retreat, within the Seven Provinces; but, being invited to the Hague by the prince and princess of Orange, he repaired thither, and had a great share in the councils then carrying on, concerning the affairs of England. The high favour shewn him at the Hague disgusting the English court, king James wrote two severe letters against him to the princess of Orange, and insisted, by his ambassador, on his being for-

bidden the court; which, at the king's importunity, was done; though our author continued to be employed and trusted as before. Soon after a prosecution for high treason was commenced against him, both in Scotland and England, but the States refusing, at the demand of the English court, to deliver him up, designs were laid of seizing his person, and even destroying him, if he could be taken. About this time Dr. Burnet married Mrs. Mary Scott, a Dutch lady of large fortune and noble extraction. He had a very important share in the whole conduct of the Revolution in 1688; the project of which he gave early notice of to the court of Hanover, intimating that the success of this enterprise must naturally end in an entail of the British crown upon that illustrious house.

King William had not been many days on the throne before Dr. Burnet was advanced to the see of Salisbury, and consecrated March 31, 1689. Our prelate had scarcely taken his seat in the house of lords, when he distinguished himself by declaring for moderate measures with regard to the clergy who scrupled to take the oaths, and for a toleration of the protestant dissenters; and when the bill for declaring the rights and privileges of the subject, and settling the succession of the crown, was brought into parliament, he was the person appointed by king William to propose naming the

dutchess (afterwards electress) of Brunswick, next in succession after the princess of Denmark and her issue; and when this succession afterwards took place, he had the honour of being chairman of the committee to whom the bill was referred. This made him considered by the house of Hanover as one firmly attached to their interests, and engaged him in an epistolary correspondence with the princess Sophia, which lasted to her death. After the session of Parliament was over, the bishop went down to his diocese, where, by his pious, prudent, and vigilant discharge of the episcopal functions, he gained universal esteem.

As we have before given some account of his conduct as a parish priest, and as professor of divinity, it is no less necessary to specify some particulars of his management when in this higher station.

As he had always looked upon confirmation as the likeliest means of reviving a spirit of Christianity, he wrote a short "Directory," for preparing the youth upon such occasions, and sent copies of it, some months beforehand, to the minister of every parish where he intended to confirm. Every summer he made a tour, for six weeks or two months, through some district of his bishoprick, daily preaching and confirming from church to church, so as, in the compass of three years (be-

sides his triennial visitation), to go through all the principal livings of his diocese. In these circuits he entertained all the clergy that attended upon him at his own expense, and held conferences with them upon the chief heads of divinity. During his residence at Salisbury he constantly preached a Thursday's lecture, founded at St. Thomas's church: he likewise preached and confirmed every Sunday morning, in some church of that city, or of the neighbourhood round about it; and, in the evening, he had a lecture in his own chapel, wherein he explained some portion of scripture. Every week, during the season of Lent, he catechised the youth of the two great schools in the cathedral church, and instructed them in order for confirmation. He endeavoured, as much as possible, to reform the abuses of the bishops' consistorial court. No part of the episcopal office was more strictly attended to by him, than the examination of candidates for holy orders. He examined them himself as to the proofs of the Christian religion, the authority of the Scriptures, and the nature of the gospel covenant; and, a day or two before ordination, he submitted all those whom he had accepted to the examination of the dean and prebendaries. As the qualification of clergymen for the pastoral care was always uppermost in his thoughts, he instituted at Salisbury a little nursery of students

in divinity, being ten in number, to each of whom he allowed a salary of thirty pounds a year. Once every day he examined their progress in learning, and gave them a lecture on some speculative or practical point of divinity, or some part of the pastoral function. But this foundation being considered as reflecting upon the method of education at the universities, he was prevailed upon, after some years, to lay it wholly aside. He was a warm and constant enemy to pluralities, where non-residence was the consequence of them, and in some cases hazarded a suspension, rather than give institution. In the point of residence he was so strict, that he immediately dismissed his own chaplains, upon their preferment to a cure of souls. He exerted the principle of toleration, which was deeply rooted in him, in favour of a nonjuring meeting-house at Salisbury, which he obtained the royal permission to connive at; and this spirit of moderation brought over several dissenting families of his diocese to the communion of the church.

In 1692 he published a treatise entitled "The Pastoral Care," in which the duties of the clergy are laid down with great strictness, and enforced with no less zeal and warmth. In 1694 our author preached the funeral sermon of archbishop Tillotson, with whom he had long kept up an intimate acquaintance and friendship, and whose

memory he defended in "A Vindication of Abp. Tillotson," 1696. The death of queen Mary, which happened the year following, drew from our author's pen that "Essay on her Character," which her uncommon talents merited at the hands of a person who enjoyed so high a degree of her favour and confidence. After the decease of that princess, through whose hands the affairs and promotions of the church had wholly passed, our prelate was one of the ecclesiastical commission appointed by the king to recommend to all bishopricks, deaneries, and other vacant benefices in his majesty's gift.

In 1698 the bishop lost his wife by the small-pox: but the consideration of the tender age of his children, and his own avocations, soon induced him to supply that loss by a marriage with Mrs. Berkley. This year he was appointed preceptor to his highness the duke of Gloucester, and employed great care in the education of that young prince.

In 1704 the scheme for the augmentation of poor livings, first projected by bishop Burnet, took place, and passed into an act of parliament. This learned and eminent prelate died the 17th of March 1714-15, in the seventy-second year of his age, and was interred in the parish church of St. James, Clerkenwell, in London.

The events of his life shew that both at home

and abroad he stood high in the estimation of his contemporaries; and his errors and prejudices, of whatever kind, would not have excited so many enemies, had not his talents given him an unusual degree of consequence both in church and state. We shall conclude this article with some particulars of his private habits, which, as well as the above account of his life, stand uncontradicted, and surely entitle him to our respect.

His time, we are told, was employed in one regular and uniform manner: he was a very early riser, seldom in bed later than five or six o'clock in the morning. Private meditation took up the two first hours, and the last half-hour of the day. His first and last appearance to his family was at the morning and evening prayers, which he always read himself, though his chaplains were present. He took the opportunity of the tea-table to instruct his children in religion, and in giving them his own comment upon some portion of scripture. He seldom spent less than six, often eight, hours a day in his study. He kept an open table, in which there was plenty, without luxury: his equipage was decent and plain; and all his expenses generous, but not profuse. He was a most affectionate husband to his wives; and his love to his children expressed itself, not so much in hoarding up wealth for them, as in giving them the best education.

After his sons had perfected themselves in the learned languages, under private tutors, he sent them to the university, and afterwards abroad, to finish their studies at Leyden. In his friendships he was warm, open-hearted, and constant; and though his station and principles raised him many enemies, he always endeavoured, by the kindest good offices, to repay all their injuries, and overcome them by returning good for evil. He was a kind and bountiful master to his servants, and obliging to all in employment under him. His charities were a principal article of his expense. He gave an hundred pounds at a time for the augmentation of small livings; he bestowed constant pensions on poor clergymen and their widows, on students for their education at the universities, and on industrious, but unfortunate families: he contributed frequent sums towards the repairs or building of churches and parsonage-houses, to all public collections, to the support of charity schools (one of which, for fifty children, at Salisbury, was wholly maintained by him), and to the putting out apprentices to trades. Nor were his alms confined to one nation, sect, or party; but want, and merit, in the object, were the only measures of his liberality. He looked upon himself, with regard to his episcopal revenue, as a mere trustee for the church, bound to expend the whole in a decent

maintenance of his station, and in acts of hospitality and charity ; and he had so faithfully balanced this account, that, at his death, no more of the income of his bishoprick remained to his family than was barely sufficient to pay his debts.

P R E F A C E

TO THE

FIRST EDITION, PUBLISHED IN 1692.

THIS subject, how important soever in itself, yet has been so little treated of, and will seem so severe in many parts of it, that if I had not judged this a necessary service to the church, which did more decently come from one, who, how undeserving soever he is, yet is raised to a post that may justify the writing on so tender a head; I should never have undertaken it. But my zeal for the true interests of religion, and of this church, determined me to set about it: yet since my design is to correct things for the future rather than to reproach any for what is past, I have resolved to cast it rather into advices and rules, into plain and short directions, than into long and laboured discourses, supported by the shews of learning, and citations from fathers, and historical observations: this being the more profitable, and the less invidious way of handling the subject.

It ought to be no imputation on a church, if too many of those that are dedicated to her service have not all the characters that are here set forth, and that are to be desired in clergymen. Even in the apostles' days there were false apostles, and false teachers: as one of the twelve was a traitor, and had a devil. Some loved the pre-eminence; others loved this present world to a scandalous degree. Some of those that preached Christ, did

it "not sincerely, but out of contention*:" they vied with the apostles, and hoped to have carried away the esteem from them, even while they were suffering for the faith: for envying their credit, they designed to raise their own authority, by lessening the apostles, and so hoped to have "added affliction to their bonds." In the first and purest ages of the church we find great complaints of the neglects and disorders of the clergy of all ranks. Many became the stewards and bailiffs of other people's estates, and while they looked too diligently after those cares which did not belong to them, they even in those times of trial grew very remiss in the most important of all cares, which was their proper business.

As soon as the empire became Christian, the authority, the immunity, and the other advantages, which by the bounty of princes followed the sacred functions, made them to be generally much desired; and the elections being then for the most part popular, (though in some of the greater cities the magistracy took them into their hands, and the bishops of the province were the judges both of the fitness of the person and of the regularity of the election); these were managed with much faction and violence, which often ended in blood, and that to so great an excess, that if we had not witnesses to many instances of this among the best men in those ages, it would look like an uncharitable imputation on those times, to think them capable of such enormities. Indeed the disorders, the animosities, the going so oft backwards and forwards in the matters of faith, as the emperors happened to be of different sides, are but too ample a proof of the corruptions that had then got into the

* Phil. i. 16.

church. And what can we think of the breach made in the churches of Africa by Donatus and his followers, upon so inconsiderable a point, as whether Cecilian and his ordainers had denied the faith in the last persecution, or not? which grew to that height, that almost in every town of Africa there were divided assemblies, and separating bishops, upon that account. Nor was this wound healed but with the utter ruin of those churches. St. Jerome, though partial enough to his own side, as appears by his espousing Damasus' interests, notwithstanding that vast effusion of blood that had been at his election; which was set on by him, and continued for four days with so much violence, that in one night, and at one church, a hundred and seven and thirty were killed; yet he could not hold from laying open the corruptions of the clergy in a very severe style. He grew so weary of them, and they of him, that he went and spent the rest of his days at Bethlehem.

Those corruptions were so much the more remarkable, because the eminent men of those times procured a great many canons to be made, both in provincial and general councils, for correcting abuses as soon as they observed them creeping into the church. But it is plain from St. Chrysostom's story, that though bad men did not oppose the making good rules, while they were so many dead letters in their registers, yet they could not bear the rigorous execution of them: so that those good canons do shew us indeed what were the growing abuses, of the times in which they were made, and how good men set themselves against them; but are no sure indications of the reformation that was effected by them.

The tottering state of the Roman empire, which had then fallen under a vast dissolution of discipline and man-

ners, and coming into feeble hands, was then sinking with its own weight, and was become on all sides an easy prey to its invaders, who were either Pagans or Arians, ought to have awakened the governors of the church to have apprehended their approaching ruin ; to have prevented it by their prayers and endeavours ; and to have corrected those abuses which had provoked God, and weakened and distracted both church and empire. But if we may believe either Gildas here in Britain, or Salvian in France, they rather grew worse, more impenitent, and more insensible, when they saw the judgments of God coming upon the empire, province after province rent from it, and overrun by the barbarians.

When that great wound was in some sort healed, and a second form of Christianity rose up and prevailed again in the western parts, and the world became Christian, with the alloy that dark and superstitious ages had brought into that holy doctrine ; then all the rules of the former ages were so totally forgotten, and laid aside, that the clergy universally lost their esteem : and though Charles the Great, and his son, held a great many councils for correcting these abuses, and published many capitulars on the same design, yet all was to no purpose. There was neither knowledge nor virtue enough left to reform a corruption that was become universal. The clergy by these disorders fell under a general contempt ; and out of that rose the authority, as well as the wealth of the monastic orders ; and when riches and power had corrupted them, the begging orders took away the credit from both : yet even their reputation, which the outward severity of their rule, habit, and manner of life did both establish and maintain long, was at last so generally lost, that no part or body of the Roman clergy had credit enough to stop the progress of

the Reformation : which was in a great measure occasioned by the scorn and hatred that fell on them, and which was so spread over all parts of Europe, that to it even their own historians do impute the great advances that Luther's doctrine made for about fifty years together ; whole kingdoms and provinces embracing it as it were all of the sudden.

It has now for above an hundred years made a full stand, and in most places it has rather lost ground than gained any. The true account of this is not easily given ; the doctrine is the same ; and it has been of late defended with greater advantages, with more learning, and better reasoning, than it was at first ; yet not with much less success. The true reason of the slackening of that work, must be imputed to the reformation made in several points with relation to the manners and the labours of the clergy, by the church of Rome, and the depravation under which most of the reformed churches are fallen. For the manners and the labours of the clergy, these are real arguments, which all people do both understand and feel ; they have a much more convincing force, they are more visible, and persuade more universally, than books can do, which are little read and less considered. And indeed the bulk of mankind is so made, that there is no working on them, but by moving their affections, and commanding their esteem. It cannot be denied but that the council of Trent established the errors of popery in such a manner as to cut off all possibility of ever treating, or re-uniting with them ; since those decisions, and their infallibility, which is their foundation, are now so twisted together ; yet they establish such a reformation in discipline, as may make churches that pretend to a more glorious title justly ashamed. For though there are such

reserves made for the plenitude of the papal authority, that in great instances, and for a favourite, all may be broke through; yet the most notorious abuses are so struck at, and this has been in many places so effectually observed, chiefly where they knew that their deportment was looked into, and watched over by protestants, that it must be acknowledged, that the cry of the scandals of religious houses is much laid. And though there is still much ignorance among their mass priests; yet their parish priests are generally another sort of men, they are well instructed in their religion, lead regular lives, and perform their parochial duties with a most wonderful diligence: they do not only say mass, and the other public functions daily, but they are almost perpetually employing themselves in the several parts of their cures: instructing the youth, hearing confessions, and visiting the sick: and besides all this, they are under the constant obligation of the breviary: there is no such thing as non-residence or plurality to be heard of in whole countries of that communion; and though about cathedrals, and in greater cities, the vast number of priests give still great and just occasion to censure, yet the parish priests have almost universally recovered the esteem of the people: they are no more disposed to think ill of them, or to hearken to any thing that may give them a just cause, or at least a plausible colour, for departing from them. So that the reformation that popery hath been forced to make, has in a great measure stopped the progress of the reformation of the doctrine and worship that did so long carry every thing before it.

But this is the least melancholy part of the account that may be given of this matter. The reformers began that blessed work with much zeal; they and their first

successors carried it on with learning and spirit: they were active in their endeavours, and constant and patient in their sufferings; and these things turned the esteem of the world, which was alienated from popery, by the ignorance and scandals of the clergy, all towards them. But when they felt the warmth of the protection and encouragement that princes and states gave them, they insensibly slackened: they fell from their first heat and love; they began to build houses for themselves, and their families, and neglected the house of God; they rested satisfied with their having reformed the doctrine and worship; but did not study to reform the lives and manners of their people: and while in their offices they lamented the not having a public discipline in the church, as it was in the primitive times; they have either made no attempts at all, or at least very faint ones, for restoring it. And thus, while popery has purified itself from many former abuses, reformed churches have added new ones to the old, that they still retain, and are fond of. Zeal in devotion, and diligence in the pastoral care, are fallen under too visible and too scandalous a decay. And whereas the understanding of the Scriptures and an application to that sacred study, was at first the distinguishing character of protestants, for which they were generally nicknamed gossellers: these holy writings are now so little studied, that such as are obliged to look narrowly into the matter, find great cause of regret and lamentation, from the gross ignorance of such as are either in orders, or that pretend to be put in them.

But the most capital and comprehensive of all abuses is, that the false opinion of the worst ages of popery, that made the chief, if not the only obligation of priests to be the performing offices, and judged, that if these were done,

the chief part of their business was also done, by which the pastoral care came to be in a great measure neglected, does continue still to leaven us: while men imagine that their whole work consists in public functions, and so reckon, that if they either do these themselves, or procure and hire another person in holy orders to do them, that then they answer the obligation that lies on them. And thus the pastoral care, the instructing, the exhorting, the admonishing and reprovng, the directing and conducting, the visiting and comforting the people of the parish, is generally neglected; while the incumbent does not think fit to look after it, and the curate thinks himself bound to nothing but barely to perform offices according to agreement.

It is chiefly on design to raise the sense of the obligations of the clergy to the duties of the pastoral care, that this book is written. Many things do concur in our present circumstances, to awaken us of the clergy, to mind and do our duty with more zeal and application than ever. It is very visible, that in this present age the reformation is not only at a stand, but is going back, and grows sensibly weaker and weaker. Some churches have been plucked up by the roots, and brought under a total desolation and dispersion; and others have fallen under terrible oppressions and shakings. We have seen a design formed, and carried on long, for the utter destruction of that great work. The clouds were so thick gathered over us, that we saw we were marked out for destruction: and when that was once compassed, our enemies saw well enough, that the rest of their designs would be more easily brought about. It is true, our enemies intended to set us one upon another by turns, to make us do half their work; and to have still an abused party among us ready to carry on

their ends ; for they thought it too bold an attempt to fall upon all at once : but while they were thus shifting hands, it pleased God to cut them short in their designs, and to blast that part of them in which we were concerned, so entirely that now they carry them on more bare-facedly ; and drive at conquest, which is at one stroke to destroy our church and religion, our laws and our properties.

In this critical state of things, we ought not only to look at the instruments of the calamities that have fallen so heavily on so many protestant churches, and of the dangers that hang over the rest ; but we ought chiefly to look up to that God, who seems to be provoked at the whole Reformation, because they have not walked suitably to the light that they have so long enjoyed, and the blessings which had been so long continued to them, but have corrupted their ways before him. They have lost the power of religion, whilst they have seemed to magnify the form of it, and have been zealous for opinions and customs : and therefore God has, in his wrath, taken even that form from them, and has loathed their solemn assemblies ; and brought them under a famine of the word of the Lord, which they had so much despised. While these things are so, and while we find that we ourselves are as a brand plucked out of the fire, which may be thrown back into it again, if we are not alarmed by the just but unsearchable judgments of God, which have wasted other churches so terribly, while they have only frightened us : what is more evident, than that the present state of things, and the signs of the times, call aloud upon the whole nation to bring forth fruits meet for repentance : since the axe is laid to the root of the tree. And as this indeed concerns the body of the nation, so we, who are the priests and ministers of the Lord, are under more particular obligations,

first to look into our own ways, and to reform whatsoever is amiss among us, and then to be intercessors for the people committed to our charge; to be mourning for their sins, and, by our secret fastings and prayers, to be standing in those breaches which our crying abominations have made: and so to be averting those judgments which may be ready to break in upon us; and chiefly to be lifting up our voices, like trumpets, to shew our people their transgressions: to be giving them faithful warning, from which we may expect this blessed success, that we may at least gain upon such a number, that for their sakes, God who will not slay the righteous with the wicked, may be yet entreated for our sins; and that the judgments which hang over us, being quite dissipated, his gospel, together with peace and plenty, may still dwell among us, and may shine from us, with happy influences, to all the ends of the earth. And even such pastors as shall faithfully do their duty, but without any success, may depend upon this, that they shall save their own souls; and shall have a distinguished fate, if we should happen to fall under a common calamity: they having on them not only the mark of mourners and intercessors, but of faithful shepherds; whereas, if an overflowing scourge should break in upon us, we have all possible reason, both from the judgments of God and the present situation of affairs, to believe that it will begin at the sanctuary, at those who have profaned the holy things, and have made the daily sacrifice to be loathed.

There is another, and perhaps yet a more dismal character of the present state of the age, that calls on the clergy to consider well both their own deportment and the obligations that lie upon them; which is the growing atheism and impiety that is daily gaining ground, not only

among us, but indeed all Europe over. There is a circulation observed in the general corruptions of nations: sometimes ignorance and brutality overruns the world, that makes way for superstition and idolatry: when mankind is disgusted with these, then fantastical and enthusiastical principles, and under these hypocritical practices, have their course: these being seen through, give great occasions to profaneness; and with that atheism, and a disbelief of all religion, at least of all revealed religion, is nourished: and that is very easily received by depraved minds, but very hardly rooted out of them. For though it is very easy to beat an inquirer into things out of all speculative atheism; yet when a disbelief of sacred matters, and a profane contempt of them, has once vitiated one's mind, it is a very extraordinary thing, and next to miraculous, to see such an one reduced. Now this I am forced to declare, that having had much free conversation with many that have been fatally corrupted that way, they have very often owned to me, that nothing promoted this so much in them, as the very bad opinion which they took up of all clergymen of all sides; they did not see in them that strictness of life, that contempt of the world, that zeal, that meekness, humility and charity,—that diligence and earnestness, with relation to the great truths of the Christian religion, which they reckoned they would most certainly have, if they themselves firmly believe it. Therefore they concluded, that those, whose business it was more strictly to inquire into the truth of their religion, knew that it was not so certain, as they themselves, for other ends, endeavoured to make the world believe it was: and that though for carrying on of their own authority or fortunes, which, in one word, they call their trade, they seemed to be very positive in affirming the truth of their

doctrines ; yet they in their own hearts did not believe it ; since they lived so little suitable to it, and were so much set on raising themselves by it ; and so little on advancing the honour of their profession, by an exemplary piety, and a shining conversation.

This is a thing not to be answered by being angry at them for saying it, or by reproaching such as repeat it, as if they were enemies to the church ; these words of heat and faction signifying nothing to work upon, or convince any. For how little strength soever there may be in this, as it is made an argument, it is certainly so strong a prejudice, that nothing but a real refutation of it, by the eminent virtues and labours of many of the clergy, will ever conquer it. To this, as a branch or part of it, another consideration from the present state of things is to be added, to call upon the clergy to set about the duties of their calling ; and that is, the contempt they are generally fallen under, the injustice they daily meet with, in being denied their rights, and that by some out of principle, and by others out of downright and undisguised sacrilege. I know a great deal of this is too justly and too truly to be cast on the poverty of the clergy : but what can we say, when we find often the poorest clerks in the richest livings ? whose incumbents, not content to devour the patrimony of the church, while they feed themselves, and not the flock out of it, are so scandalously hard in their allowance to their curates, as if they intended equally to starve both curate and people. And is it to be supposed, that the people will think themselves under a very strict obligation of conscience, to pay religiously all that is due to one, who seems to think himself under no obligation to labour for it ? And since it is a maxim, founded upon natural equity, that the benefice is given for the

office; men will not have great scruples in denying the benefice, where the office is neglected, or ill-performed. And as for the too common contempt that is brought on the clergy, how guilty soever those may be, who out of hatred to their profession despise them for their work's sake; yet we who feel ourselves under these disadvantages, ought to reflect on those words of the prophet, and see how far they are applicable to us: "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. But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law;—therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law*." If we studied to honour God, and so to do honour to our profession, we might justly hope that he would raise it again to that credit which is due to it; and that he would make even our enemies to be at peace with us, or at least afraid to hurt or offend us. And in this we have good reason to rest assured, since we do not find many instances of clergymen, who live and labour, who preach and visit as they ought to do, that are under any eminent degrees of contempt: if some do despise those that are faithful to their trust, yet they must do it secretly; they dare not shew it, as long as their deportment procures them the esteem which we must confess does generally follow true worth, and hearty labours in the ministry.

These are things of such consequence, that it may seem a consideration too full of ill nature, of emulation, and of jealousy, if I should urge upon the clergy the divisions

* Mal. ii. 7, 8, 9.

and separation that is formed among us ; though there is a terrible word in the prophet, that belongs but too evidently to this likewise : “ The pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the Lord ; therefore, they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered*.” If we led such exemplary lives as became our character, if we applied ourselves wholly to the duties of our profession, if we studied to outlive and outlabour those that divide from us ; we might hope, by the blessing of God, so far to overcome their prejudices, and to gain both upon their esteem and affections, that a very small matter might go a great way towards the healing of those wounds which have so long weakened and distracted us. Speculative arguments do not reach the understandings of the greater part, who are only capable of sensible ones : and the strongest reasonings will not prevail, till we first force them to think the better of our church for what they see in ourselves, and make them wish to be of a communion in which they see so much truth, and unaffected goodness and worth : when they are once brought so far, it will be easy to compass all the rest. If we did generally mind our duties, and discharge them faithfully, this would prepare such as mean well in their separation from us, to consider better of the grounds on which they maintain it. And that will best enforce the arguments that we have to lay before them. And as for such as divide from us with bad designs and an unrelenting spite, they will have a small party, and a feeble support, if there were no more occasion given to work on the affections of the people by our errors and disorders.

If, then, either the sense of the wrath of God, or the

* Jer. x. 21.

desire of his favour and protection ; if zeal for our church and country ; if a sense of the progress of atheism and irreligion ; if the contempt that falls on us, and the injustices that are daily done us ; if a desire to heal and unite, to purify and perfect this our church ; if either the concerns of this world, or of the next, can work upon us, and affect us ; all these things concur to call on us, to apply our utmost care and industry to raise the honour of our holy profession, to walk worthy of it, to perform the engagements that we came under at the altar, when we were dedicated to the service of God and the church ; and in all things both to adorn our religion and our church.

It is not our boasting that the church of England is the best reformed and the best constituted church in the world, that will signify much to convince others : we are too much parties to be believed in our own cause. There was a generation of men that cried, The temple of the Lord ! the temple of the Lord ! as loud as we can cry, The church of England ! the church of England ! when yet by their sins they were pulling it down, and kindling that fire which consumed it. It will have a better grace to see others boast of our church, from what they observe in us, than for us to be crying it up with our words, when our deeds do decry it. Our enemies will make severe inferences from them ; and our pretensions will be thought vain and impudent things, as long as our lives contradict them.

It was on design to raise in myself, and in others, a deep sense of the obligations that we lie under, of the duties of our functions, of the extent of them, and of the rewards that follow them ; and to observe the proper methods of performing them, so as they may be of the greatest advantage both to ourselves and others, that I have

entered on these meditations. They have been for many years the chief subjects of my thoughts : if few have writ on them among us, yet we have St. Gregory Nazianzen's Apologetic, St. Chrysostom's Books of the Priesthood, Gregory the Great's Pastoral, and Bernard's Book of Consideration, among the ancients : and a very great number of excellent treatises, writ lately in France, upon them. I began my studies in divinity with reading these, and I never yet grew weary of them ; they raise so many noble designs, they offer such schemes, and carry so much of unction and life in them, that I hope an imperfect essay this way may have some effect. For the Searcher of hearts knows, I have no design in it, save this of stirring up, in myself and other, the gift which was given by the imposition of hands.

P R E F A C E

TO

THE THIRD EDITION.

IT is above twenty years since this book was first published by me ; and now that those who have a concern in it think fit to reprint it, I thought it became me to review it carefully, to see if there was cause given to alter any part of it, or to add any thing to it.

I wrote it when I was newly put into the post in which, by the providence of God, I still am ; so that a longer course of experience and observation may have brought more things to my view than I could at that time reflect on.

I own this is my favourite book : which, if it has raised indignation in the minds of some, who are perhaps sensible that many things in it touch them in too tender a part ; yet, on the other hand, it has brought me such serious acknowledgments from many persons, to me otherwise unknown but by their letters, of the benefit they received by it, that I humbly bless God who made me an instrument in any sort of promoting his glory, and edifying his church, by awakening the consciences of so many clergymen to a better sense of their duty, and to more diligence in the discharge of it.

I am now in the 70th year of my age ; and as I cannot speak long to the world in any sort, so I cannot hope for a more solemn occasion than this, of speaking with all due

freedom both to the present and to the succeeding ages : therefore I lay hold on it to give a free vent to those sad thoughts that lie on my mind both day and night, and are the subject of many secret mournings. I dare appeal to that God to whom the secrets of my heart are known, and to whom I am shortly to give an account of my ministry, that I have the true interests of this church ever before my eyes, and that I pursue them with a sincere and fervent zeal : if I am mistaken in the methods I follow, God, to whom the integrity of my heart is known, will not lay that to my charge. I cannot look on without the deepest concern, when I see imminent ruin hanging over this church, and by consequence over the whole reformation. The outward state of things is black enough, God knows ; but that which heightens my fears rises chiefly from the inward state into which we are unhappily fallen. I will, in examining this, confine myself to that which is the subject of the following book—I mean the clergy.

Our ember weeks are the burden and grief of my life. The much greater part of those who come to be ordained are ignorant to a degree not to be apprehended by those who are not obliged to know it. The easiest part of knowledge is that to which they are the greatest strangers ; I mean the plainest parts of the Scriptures, which they say, in excuse of their ignorance, that their tutors in the universities never mention the reading of to them ; so that they can give no account, or at least a very imperfect one, of the contents even of the gospels. Those who have read some few books, yet never seem to have read the Scriptures. Many cannot give a tolerable account even of the catechism itself, how short and plain soever. They cry, and think it a sad disgrace to be denied orders, though the ignorance of some is such, that, in a well-regulated state

of things, they would appear not knowing enough to be admitted to the holy sacrament.

This does often tear my heart. The case is not much better in many, who having got into orders, come for institution, and cannot make it appear that they have read the Scriptures, or any one good book, since they were ordained; so that the small measure of knowledge upon which they got into holy orders not being improved, is in a way to be quite lost; and then they think it a great hardship if they are told, they must know the Scriptures and the body of divinity better, before they can be trusted with a care of souls. These things pierce one's soul, and make him often cry out, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest!" What are we like to grow to? In what a case are we, to deal with any adversary, atheist, papist, or dissenters, or in any sort to promote the honour of God, and carry on the great concerns of the Gospel, when so gross an ignorance in the fundamentals of religion has spread itself so much among those who ought to teach others; and yet need that one teach them the first principles of the oracles of God.

Politics and party eat out among us not only study and learning, but that which is the only thing that is more valuable, a true sense of religion, with a sincere zeal in advancing that for which the Son of God both lived and died, and to which those who are received into holy orders have vowed to dedicate their lives and labours. Clamours of scandal in any of the clergy are not frequent, it is true; and God be thanked for it: but a remiss unthinking course of life, with little or no application to study, and the bare performing of that which, if not done, would draw censures when complained of,

without ever pursuing the duties of the pastoral care in any suitable degree, is but too common, as well as too evident.

But if there is too visible a coldness among us in that which requires our greatest heat and zeal, there is a great deal of flaming heat about matters in which more gentleness and a milder temper would both look better, and more effectually compass that which is designed by it; I mean the bringing the dissenters into our communion. Bitter railings, and a rough behaviour, cannot make many converts. To study the grounds of their separation thoroughly, to answer them calmly and solidly, and to treat their persons with all gentleness, expressing no uneasiness at the liberty granted them by law, is a method that will never fail of succeeding to a great degree, especially on the rising generation. Other methods do confirm their prejudices, and heighten their aversion to those who treat them as enemies on design to ruin them, and not as friends on design to gain them.

God be thanked, we are delivered from a remnant of popery that stuck too long to us, I mean persecution for conscience sake; for the breaches on a man's liberty or goods are as really a persecution, as that which strikes at his person. They may be in some instances more uneasy, as a single death is not so formidable as to be forced to live under great necessities, perhaps with a numerous family. And if we judge of this matter by our Saviour's rule, of doing to others what we would have others do to us, our consciences would soon decide the question: if we will but honestly ask ourselves, how we would have those of another religion deal with us, if we were living in countries where we must depart from the legal establish-

ment, if we do truly follow the dictates of our conscience. But if our zeal in point of conformity seems too strong, there is no great reason to suspect many of much zeal with relation to popery, though that is our standing enemy, perpetually employed in working our ruin, with many hands and much heat; while we seem to be in a state of indolence and insensibility on that side, as if there was no danger from thence. When at any time we are in a fright, we are apt to cry out; but that is no sooner over, than we are in no apprehensions of any further danger. And, to their great comfort, we have found out a new division to add to those we laboured under before; which we know they managed very dexterously for their own ends; shifting sides as a turn was to be served by it: but now the mine is more successfully played, since not only the breach between us and dissenters is very artfully widened, but we are unhappily broken among ourselves; and under the names of high and low church, there is a new scene opened for jealousy and animosity, which has been managed with such art and success, that bodies of men, owning the same religion and worship, and the same government both in temporals and spirituals, are yet as much alienated from one another, if not more, than if their differences were ever so great and visible.

I will say nothing that may justly provoke any; but since I myself am ranked among the low churchmen, I will open all that I know that is particular to them; and then leave it to others to judge what reason can be given for entertaining such hard thoughts of them.

They are cordially and conscientiously zealous for the church, as established by law; but yet they think no human constitution is so perfect, but that it may be made better, and that the church would be both more secure

and more unexceptionable, if the administration of the discipline were put into other hands, and in a better method. They lay the foundation of all that they believe in the Christian religion in the Scriptures: these and these only are the measures and standard of their faith. No great names nor shews of authority overawe them; they search the Scriptures, there they seek and find their faith.

They think that in matters declared to be indifferent, no harm could follow on it, if some regard were had to the scruples of those who divide from us, in order to the fortifying the whole by uniting us among ourselves; but till that can be done, they think a kind deportment towards dissenters softens their prejudices, and disposes them to hearken to the reasons which they offer to them, with all the force they can, but without the asperity of words, or a contemptuous behaviour; in which they have succeeded so well, that they see no cause to change their conduct.

They do indeed make a great difference between dissenters and papists: they consider the one as a handful of people true to the protestant religion and to our national interests, not capable of doing us much mischief, and who are, as far as appears to them, contented with their toleration, and are only desirous to secure and maintain it. They have another and a very different opinion of popery: they consider that church, not only with relation to the many opinions and practices held by them, such as transubstantiation, purgatory, and the worshipping saints and images, and a great many more; they are persuaded that these are false and ill-grounded, but they could easily bear with them, as they do with other errors: but they consider popery as a conspiracy against the

liberty and peace of mankind, on design to engross the wealth of the world into their own hands; and to destroy all that stand in their way, sticking at no practice, how false, base, or cruel soever, that can advance this. This is the true ground of their zeal against popery, and indeed against every thing that has a tendency that way.

The pretending to an independency of the church on the state, is not only, in their opinion, a plain attack made on the supremacy vested by law in the crown, and a casting a disgrace on our reformers, and on every step made in the reformation, which are openly owned by the chief promoters of this new conceit; but it is a direct opposition to the famed place, so much stretched by the same persons to serve other purposes, in the xiiith of the Romans, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers;" in which all subjects are equally comprehended. The laws of God are certainly of a superior obligation to any human authority: but where these laws are silent, certainly all subjects, of what sort soever, are bound to obey the laws of the land where they live.

The raising the power and authority of sacred functions beyond what is founded on clear warrants in Scripture, is, they think, the readiest way to give the world such a jealousy of them, and such an aversion to them, as may make them lose the authority that they ought to have while they pretend to that they have not.

They dare not unchurch all the bodies of the protestants beyond sea; nor deny to our dissenters at home the federal rights common to all Christians, or leave them to uncovenanted mercy. They do not annul their baptisms, or think that they ought to be baptized again in a more regular manner, before they can be accounted Christians.

They know of no power in a priest to pardon sin, other than the declaring the Gospel pardon, upon the conditions on which it is offered. They know of no sacrifice in the eucharist, other than the commemorating that on the cross, with the oblation of the prayers, praises, and almsgiving, prescribed in the office. They are far from condemning private judgment in matters of religion: this strikes at the root of the whole Reformation, which, could never have been compassed, if private men have not a right to judge for themselves: on the contrary, they think every man is bound to judge for himself, which indeed he ought to do in the fear of God, and with all humility and caution. They look on all these notions as steps towards popery: though they do not conclude, that all those who have made them designed that by so doing.

This is a short account of the low churchmen's notions, with relation to matters of religion among us. As to our temporal concerns, they think all that obedience and submission that is settled by our laws, to the persons of our princes, ought to be paid them, for conscience sake; but if a misguided prince shall take on him to dissolve our constitution, and to subject the laws to his pleasure, they think that if God offers a remedy, it is to be received with all thankfulness. For these reasons they rejoice in the revolution, and continue faithful and true to the settlement then made, and to the subsequent settlements. They think there is a full power in the legislature to settle the crown, and to secure the nations: and so they have taken the oaths enjoined with a good conscience, and with fixed resolutions of adhering firmly to them, without any other views but such as the laws and the oaths pursuant to them do direct. They know of no

unalterable or indefeasible right, but what is founded on the law.

This is their fixed principles, and they are the more fixed in this, when they remember that a prince educated among us, and singularly obliged by the zeal our church expressed for his advancement to the throne, upon which he made great acknowledgments and promises, and who by his temper seemed as much inclined to keep them as his religion could admit of; yet upon his elevation did so entirely forget all this, that he seemed peculiarly sharpened against those who of all others had the least reason to have expected it from him.

This was notorious and evident in the father: what then can be expected from him who calls himself his son, who has had his breeding in an absolute government, where protestants are persecuted with an unrelenting cruelty, and who has been obliged to wander so long beyond sea, and stands attainted and abjured here, and is loaded with other indignities, but that as his religion is still the same cruel and bloody conspiracy against protestants that it was, so it must have its full swing in one sharpened by so much provocation?

It betrays a monstrous ignorance of the principles and maxims, as well as of the history of popery, to imagine that they can ever depart from the design of extirpating heretics settled by so much authority, held sacred by them. Every look in the low churchman towards a popish pretender is to him both perjury and treason.

I have thus freely opened all that I know of the principles of those called the low churchmen among us. I will not pretend to tell what are the principles of those called the high churchmen: I know them too little to pretend to tell what their maxims and views are. I will

with great joy own my mistakes and misapprehensions of any of them, who, upon this candid avowing what the low churchmen hold, will come to have juster and more charitable thoughts of them; and upon that will concur with them in such measures and counsels as may yet give us some hope, if that is not now too late, or may be at least an abatement of our misery, if not a reprieve from it. I unwillingly mention a long disappointing among us as to convocation matters.

I will avoid saying any thing that may give a new irritation, my design being to do all I can to heal our breaches. I will not enter into the merits of the cause further, than to observe that the bishops have begun no new practices, but go in the steps in which their predecessors went, without varying from their practices in a tittle: they find themselves bound down to the methods they adhere to, by such a series of precedents, that unless the legislature interposes, they think they cannot alter them. They have made no new attempts, nor have they invaded any rights of which they found the clergy in possession. And what is there in all this to occasion such tragical outcries; and to engage so many of the bodies of the clergy into jealousies of their bishops, and into combinations against them, as if they were betraying the church and its liberties?

'Tis true, many of us opposed the occasional bill, from which such great things were expected. We thought there were ill designs under it; we thought it ill-timed; we looked on it as tending to a breach on the toleration: and now that the bill is past without any opposition, we hear of no great effects it has had; nor are jealousies extinguished: the chief promoters of it are scarce thanked for it. But since we are so openly attacked, and, as it

were, exposed to the insults and fury of distracted multitudes, we may be pardoned if we venture on somewhat like an imitation of what the great apostle writ upon a like occasion, calling it indeed a folly, for it will pass for such with inveterate and inflamed spirits. What have other bishops done to express their zeal for the church, and their fidelity to their vows and to what became their character and station, that we have not done? Have we not lived so that we may say, Ye are witnesses? and, which is more, God also, how holily, justly, and unblameably we have behaved ourselves among you? How ready have we been preaching, in season and out of season, opening the whole counsels of God to the flock committed to our charge! How careful are we in examining and instructing those who come to us for orders and institutions! How frequent in confirming, and in the other duties belonging to our function! So that we may say, What have we done, or what have we left undone, to merit the unkind returns we meet with? What reason have we given to the world, by our manner of living, to think we had our posts only for the advantages we reap by them, and that we do it even against our consciences, and are only waiting an opportunity to betray them?

This is such a pitch both of impiety and baseness, that few of the worst sort of libertines are capable of it; and yet how oft have we been charged with it! If this had come only from the enemies of our present constitution, on design to destroy the reputation to which we hope we have some right, it was what we might expect from active and indigent writers, who are looking for another face of things, hoping then to be enriched by our spoils. But that those who have taken all the oaths enjoined by law, and who daily concur in all the public devotions,

should entertain and spread such calumnies, and act as the under-workmen to those who seek our ruin, is that which deserves the severest censures.

Great regard is indeed due to such as avow their principles, and act according to them; especially when they are losers and sufferers by it: even their passions and frailties are to be lamented and gently censured. But the impiety of men's taking oaths against their consciences, and, in hope to compensate for that, their acting contrary to them, is of so monstrous a nature, that our language does not afford words black enough to set out its deformity.

We are soon to go off the stage, to a region of peace and love, where malice and envy cannot follow us. He to whom our integrity is known, will pardon all our frailties, and even all our omissions, and will deal with us according to our sincere endeavours; from whose hands we may expect to receive the more entire reward, the less of it that we receive from men.

Our late blessed primate was persecuted by malice to the grave; and that has followed him ever since he was laid in the dust. His great concern at those black efforts of malice that he was pursued with, was, because he saw they stood in the way to defeat all the good designs with which his mind laboured. It is true, that retirement to which his high post led him, he never embarking in designs that he thought foreign to it, gave him leisure to review and retouch the noblest body of sermons that, I hope I may be allowed to say, this nation or the world ever saw; which I mention the rather here, because they have been published since this book was first printed.

His chief support, next to his own conscience, and his

confidence in God, was from our late blessed queen, who was incessantly employed in possessing her mind with the best schemes that were either laid before her by others, or suggested to her by her own royal heart, for correcting every thing that was amiss, and improving every thing that wanted finishing among us. And she was waiting for a happy peace to set about the executing them : she had arrived at such a superior degree of knowledge, and had such a force of reasoning with an irresistible sweetness of temper, that if our sins had not provoked God to blast all those hopes by her early admission to a better crown, we might have seen a glorious face put on our church with relation to all its concerns.

I am in some sort obliged to mention her, because I writ this book by her order, as well as by our primate's, as an attempt to prepare the scene to many noble designs, which may be opened at some time or other, if ever we are so happy as to endeavour to carry on our constitution to perfection ; which, in our present distracted, if not desperate state, is far out of view, and therefore must be reserved to a more proper occasion.

But to return to the sad view of our distractions at home : the bishops who find themselves so unjustly censured, and their designs so unhappily obstructed, ought to humble themselves before God ; for it is meet to be said to him, I have borne chastisement ; that which I know not, teach thou me. They ought to examine and consider how far their other sins may have provoked God to deny his blessing to their best endeavours ; they ought to ask themselves, what have they done to render them unworthy to build up the house of God, and to repair its breaches : they ought to mourn in secret, both for their own sins, and for the sins of those who set themselves

against them. They ought to search and try their own hearts, to find out if their pride or vanity, their love of ease and pleasure, or any other secret sin, is at root, and defeats all their labours; they ought to pray more earnestly both for themselves and their families, for their clergy and their people; and in so doing they may hope either to draw down a blessing from heaven on all that they set about, or at least that their prayers shall return into their own bosom.

They ought also to cry mightily to God, that if they are to have a share in the fiery trial, they may be so strengthened in the inner man, that they may by no unbecoming practices decline or avoid it; but may rejoice if they are called to suffer for the name of Christ, and to seal that doctrine, which they have so long preached, with their blood; and so may glorify him by their patient continuance in well-doing, till they receive their crown. This will be, through the blessing of God, an effectual means, either to dissipate the clouds that seem to gather, and are ready to break out into a storm and horrible tempest, or to procure such a measure of Divine assistances to them in their sufferings, as may make their blood a seed for a noble spring of a better state of things among us. If with bishops so employing their time, many both of their clergy and laity did concur in lying in the dust before God, and turning to him with their whole hearts, we might hope to see better times than we have now in view. God has often delivered us, when we were near the last extremities; we have seen in our own time such a chain of kind providences happily interposing, when we saw no reasonable prospect, that we ought not to give all or lost, how dark soever the face of things may look, if we bring our

selves to such a state, that we may have still a right to hope for the like protection.

It cannot be denied but the appearance is formidable, when we see that prince who has engaged the longest and the deepest in the design of extirpating our religion, get out of all his troubles, and accomplish his vast designs, that seemed once to be so blasted that they could not be retrieved; another scene is now opening to him that promises all he can wish for, and must bring such an accumulation of power and treasure to him, that, humanly speaking, nothing can stand in his way. When a great alliance is once quite dissolved, and when a word so often broken, and edicts so often violated, are trusted to and relied on; such an unexpected turn will no doubt be construed as a reward from heaven for his zeal against heresy; and may very probably encourage him to finish what he has done at home, by bringing us under the same calamity.

We know what engagement he lies under to a dying prince; but we cannot know how far his bigotry may even outdo these, when he finds himself at the height of power and wealth that he is almost possessed of: promises and oaths can work but feebly on one so accustomed to break through them.

When not only dispensations, but solicitations from Rome, with the practices of a confessor, the view of that glory that the work must bring him on earth, with the imaginary view of a more eternal weight of glory in heaven, concur; what may not be apprehended from thence? Chiefly when such of that religion, whose interests obliged them hitherto to join in preserving us, seeing these all abandoned and blasted, may either be at best indifferent

spectators, or the bigotry that surrounds them may be quickened, by a desire of revenging what they will call the giving them up, to concur in completing our ruin ; which in such a state of things cannot reasonably be thought to be far from us. Besides, if an avowed departing from the sacred ties of treaties and alliances is once openly practised, it may prove a fatal precedent. Such maxims are catching and contagious. The woe denounced by the prophet against those that deal treacherously when they are not dealt treacherously with, that when they shall make an end to deal treacherously they shall be dealt treacherously with, may come heavily, with a face of retribution, and without pity.

Upon the whole matter, that I may bring this discourse to a conclusion ; as our disunion does not only weaken us, but diverts us from that which ought to be our main concern, to the unhappy consequences that follow formed parties ; so if we will not take warning from our Saviour's words, " That a city or kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, but must come to an end ;" we have reason to apprehend that such a breach, even without the advantage that an enemy may make of it, will be fatal ; while, by our devouring one another, we may come to be consumed of one another : but how much more certain will this be, if we have a watchful and powerful enemy so near us, to whom we may justly apply the character given of the evil spirit, that he " goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." But even our union, though it may fortify us in the methods of human policy, yet it will not signify much, unless we do unite in order to our applying ourselves to the great duties of our profession, so as to secure the favour and protection of Heaven. We ought not to hope that if we continue still in

our sins, and in our security, saying with the Jews, The temple of the Lord ! the temple of the Lord ! or in the modern style, The church ! the church ! we shall not at last fall under the severest of all judgments, denounced by St. Paul against the unbelieving Jews, in the words of Isaiah : “ Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand ; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive ; for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”

To avert all this, let us, the priests, and ministers of the Lord, weep before him, and say, “ Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach, that the heathen (or idolaters) should rule over them. Wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God,” where is their Church, where is their Reformation ? In these exercises I desire to employ many of my own hours ; and to these I invite all who have a true zeal for God and his Church.

GIL. SARUM.

Salisbury, 15th of
November, 1712.

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 peo-

ple 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 appropriated 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*;" this is a title that

* 1 Tim. v. 17.

speaks both the dignity and likewise the duty belonging to this function.

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 especially 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 lead-

ing them that were with young*." 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†." 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‡, 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.

They are also called ambassadors, and this upon the noblest and most desirable message; for their

* Isa. xl. 11. † John x. 11. ‡ 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

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—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, who, as they are of a pure and sublime nature, and are called a flaming fire†, so they do

* 2 Cor. v. 19, 20.

† Rev. ii. 3.

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 was not enough, they are in one place called not only the messengers or angels of the churches, but also the glory of Christ. 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†, 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 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

* 2 Cor. viii. 23.

† Heb. ii. 7.

only labour without honour, being borrowed from labours that are hard, but no way honourable.

They are often called watchmen*, 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†: 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

* Ezek. iii. 17.

† 1 Cor. iii. 10.

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‡. This imports a continual return of daily and hard labour, which requires both pain and diligence||. They are also called soldiers, 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 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

* 1 Cor. iii. 9. † Matt. xx. 1. ‡ Matt. ix. 37, 38.

|| 1 Cor. iii. 6. § Philip. ii. 25.

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*." 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 the last and lowest in his service, was by so doing really the first.

He himself descended to the "washing his disciples' feet†," 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

* Matth. xx. 28.

† John, xiii. 5.

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 affectations of a strictness of method: and therefore I will give one full view of this whole matter, without any other order 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* we find many very particular rules given for the washing and consecration of the priests and Levites, chiefly of the holy priest.

* Levit. viii.

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, 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

* Levit. xxi. 1.

ought to perform those offices that belonged to their functions* ; 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 † ;" 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 ‡ : " 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 ||, 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.

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.

* Levit. xxii. 3, 4.

† Levit. x. 1.

‡ Ver. 3.

|| 1 Sam. ii. iii.

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;” 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

* Is. lvi. 10.

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 or 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*, had been then alive to 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†;" and their corruption went so far, that they

* Jer. v. 2. Ezek. xiv. 14.

† Jer. ii. 8.

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*." And upon that a "woe is denounced against the pastors that destroyed and scattered the sheep of God's pasture†." 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." 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‡," 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||."

In Ezekiel we find the solemn and severe charge given to watchmen twice repeated; that they

* Jer. v. 31. vi. 13.

† Jer. xxiii. 1.

‡ Jer. xxiii. 4.

|| Jer. iii. 15.

“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*.” 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.” This is more fully prosecuted in the xxxivth chap. 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 wool ; ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the flock||.” 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

* Ezek. iii. 17. xxxiii. 7.

† Chap. xxii. 26.

‡ Chap. xxxiv. 2.

|| Ver. 3.

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*:" 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†." And in the xlvth chap. 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

* Ezek. xxxiv. 4.

† Ver. 10.

as the stars for ever and ever*.” 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.” 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 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

* Dan. xii. 3.

† Hosea iv. 1, 2, 6.

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 God*?” There is in Micah a very black character of a depraved priesthood : “ Their priests teach for hire, and their prophets divine for money †.”

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.” 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

* Joel, ii. 17. † Chap. iii. 11. ‡ Zech. xi. 17.

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, ye have caused many to stumble at the law: Ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people; according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law." 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

* Mal. ii. 2.

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 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 postles: 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 shews 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 shew 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*:" 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

* Matt. ix. 38.

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* :” 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 xth 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

* Luke xii. 42.

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 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 fleeth." 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?" 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

* John xxi. 15.

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 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 purchased with his own blood*”. 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 department, 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 publicly, and from house to house‡.” Upon which he leaves them, calling them all to witness that “ he was pure from the blood of all men||.” 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

* Acts xx. 28.

† Ver. 19.

‡ Ver. 20.

|| Ver. 26.

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 teacheth, on teaching; he that ruleth, with diligence*." 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." 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‡." 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 cer-

* Rom. xii. 7. † 1 Cor. iv. 1. ‡ 1 Cor. ix. 14.

tainly 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*." 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 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†." 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 the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son

* Acts, vi. 4.

† 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*." 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.†"

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 attend-

* Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13.

† Col. iv 17.

ance 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 those that hear them.” 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.” 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

* 1 Tim. iv. 12—16.

† Tim. v. 21, 22

all such as are not past feeling, use great care and caution in this sacred trust. Bishops are the depositories 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 burthens 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.” 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 Calcedon, 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

* 2 Tim. ii. 2, 3, 4,

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*," not by deceiving the people with pious frauds, hoping that our good 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†.") 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

* 2 Tim. ii 5.

† Ver. 15.

not strive ; but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth*.” 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†.” 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

* Tim. ii. 24, 25, 26.

† 2 Tim. iii. 15.

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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*." The apostle goes on, and gives Timothy the most solemn charge that can be set out in words; which, if understood 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†," (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 afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of (or fulfil) thy ministry‡." 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 departure drew nigh, he was ready to be offered up||," as a

* 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

† 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

‡ Ver. 5.

|| Ver. 6.

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*” : 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† ;” 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‡.”

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

* 2 Tim. iv. 7.

† 2 Tim. iv. 8.

‡ Ver. 10.

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* ;” and that he might do his duty with the more advantage, he charges him to “shew himself in all things a pattern of good works; in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity; and using such sound speech as could not be condemned; that so those who are 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†.” 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‡.” The same is likewise in his Epistle to Timothy, with this addition, “Let no man despise thy youth||.” But these words do import, that it is in a bishop’s own power to pro-

* Tit. i. 9.

† Tit. ii. 7, 8.

‡ Ver. 15.

|| 1 Tim. iv. 12.

cure 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 have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation*." 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 illnature 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,

* Heb. xiii. 7.

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*." Here obedience and submission are 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 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 works' sake." Here both the submission and esteem, as well as the acknowledgment that is due to the clergy, is said to be for their works' 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 written on this head, "That if any would not work he should not eat;" which, if it is a rule binding all men, seems to lie much heavier on the clergy.

* Heb. xiii. 17.

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 wrote, 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, Epist. 1. chap. v. ver. 1. to a level with them, calling himself no better than a "fellow-elder, and a witness of the suffering 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, live of the gospel*.” If I had a

* 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.

mind to make a great shew 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 made of these passages of scripture. Indeed all who have either written 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; 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 effects 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 dregs 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 Spalato 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 showed 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 Nazianzen, 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 seems 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 confi-

dence, 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 gave 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 become 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 unmixed 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 vocation, 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 measures 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 childhood, 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 rhetorically, and asks them, "what they thought of the commonest employments, such as the playing of instruments, or of dancing, in comparison with Divine wisdom: for acquiring the one, they knew great pains and much practice was necessary: 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 persons, 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, Zachariah and Malachi, which relate to the corruptions of the priests and shepherds 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 shew 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 them 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. Chrysostom, 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, 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 priesthood, 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; therefore, 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 tentmakers), 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, answering that of angels. When a priest performs the holy functions, 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 ever so much. Ambitious men, that loved to set themselves forward, were of all others the most exposed to temptations. They were apt to be inflamed by the smallest provocations, 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, indecent 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 unworthiness of many in that post. Certainly a worthy priest has no ambitious aspirations; 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 indispensable 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 as 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 reproof 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 himself 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 all together. 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 meddling, 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 pretending 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 reflections on the vast burden that follows the care of souls. In his fourth book he runs through a variety of arts and professions, and shews how much skill and labour were 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 gainsayers, 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 temptations 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 temptations 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 answer 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 commendation 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 explained: 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 peculiar 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 encourage 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 adjured 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 receive 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 350 bishops, two canons were made, (the 11th and the 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 perform 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 anywhere 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 Calcedon, pluralities do first appear: for they are mentioned and condemned in the tenth 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 vain glory; 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 alms-house 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 or love the other, or cleave to the one and despise the other : let every one therefore, according to the apostle’s words, continue 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 foundation 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 Calcedon 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 covetousness, 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 ministry 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 presume 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 covetousness 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 unanimously 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 congregation 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 cure 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 dependence 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 the 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 and 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 past in the sixth session, runs thus:—"This synod admonishes all that are set over any cathedral churches, by what title soever, that they take 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; therefore, 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 the 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 sponson 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 Areopagite, 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 bishops,—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 clogged 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 performance. 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 officers 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 500 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 nor 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 trea-

sure was committed to their charge: the church and congregation whom you 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 hinderance 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 themselves 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 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 non-residence, 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 construction 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 the example and doctrine, those things that thou learnest out of the holy Scriptures?" 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 determined 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 diocese, 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 into their hands: "Give heed to reading, exhortation, 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 comprehensive 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 him 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 degrees 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 finds, 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." Chapter 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 discharging 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 regard 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 commination, "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 de-

sign 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 bene-

fices. 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 and 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 and 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 pre-

judices 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 offi-

ciate 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 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 complacence 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 department, 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 will 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 flights of wit, and shews 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 own 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 es-

teem 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 his 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; 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 mea-

sure 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 this extreme went as far to the other hand at the Reformation, when the church was almost stript 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 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 aim 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 burthensome 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 re-

moved, 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 indecency. 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 gifts, 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 mea-

tures, 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 of 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 it 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, Plutarch's Lives, and, above all 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. Scott'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 tendencies 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 farther, 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 Limburgh 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 Sanderson, 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 his-

tory. 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 commonplace 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 his 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;" 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 ale-houses, except some urgent occasion require 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 va-

nities 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 diversion 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 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 views 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 Ro-

man 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 as 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 most powerful 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 most solemn 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 to 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 broken in upon the third head of his duty, his private labours in his parish. He understands little of 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 reproofing 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 tenour 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 practises, 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 inactive 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 ; the 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 on 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 dear-bought 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 rend 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 generous 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 in-

quired 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 reason 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 that 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 intolérable 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 ad-

vices 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 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 exercise, 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 person 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. Chry-

sostom 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 shews 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 reprovng, 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 illustrate 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 be 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 and 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 shewn 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 particulars 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 shewn 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 passages of the Scriptures relating to it may be sought for, that so the matter may be left upon the auditory in the most solemn 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 to 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 these 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 flip-pant 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 him, 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 pronunciation: 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 a 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 possibly 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 most part they are, to read true, to pronounce with an emphasis, and to raise their heads, and 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 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 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 and forbidden appetites, passions, or projects, to prepossess 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 high 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 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 most solemn 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 dio-

cese ;" 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 most perfect 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 pronounciation, 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 wrote it, with all the simplicity and freedom that I thought the subject required,

and sent it to him; by whose particular approbation I published it, as I wrote it at his direction.

There is, indeed, one of my motives that I have not yet mentioned, 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 the treatise from me, which I have written 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 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 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 inter-

* Apology.

cessions, 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*," 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 three-fold 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† 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,

* 2 Chron. xiii. 3.

† Hom. in Acta Ap.

that as St. Peter said to Simon, “Thy money perish with thee, so may thy ambition perish with thee.” St. Jerome* 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. Jerome often complaining. This was condemned by the Council of Chalcedon†, in a most solemn manner. “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.

* In Isai.

† Can. 6.

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*. 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† 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 profaned‡.” It seems he had this in his eye, when by another law he condemns 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;

* *Fundus, Edificatio, et Dos.*

† *Nov. 57, c. 2.*

‡ *Ibid. 6, c. 1.*

and, to keep out not only corruption, but partiality, from having a share in them, he by a special law required*, “That all persons, seculars 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 give their vote upon their knowledge of the merits of the person:” 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 three-fold division of simony together, “manus, oris, et ministerii.” Hincmar cites the prophet’s words‡, “He that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes;” in the Vulgar it is, “from every bribe,” applying it to three sorts of simony. And in that Letter to Louis III., 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

* Nov. 137, c. 2.

† Tom. ii. 195.

‡ Isa. xxxiii. 15.

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*, 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†, 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 way whatsoever, directly or indirectly." This would go as far, as those who took it considered them-

* Synod. Exon. 1287, c. 8.

† Sess. 12.

selves bound by an oath, to secure elections from corruption or practice.

I will go no farther to prove, that both fathers and councils, in their provisions against simony, considered the practices 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 three-fold 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 the daily mass said for them. To us this effect ceases; but still it is a noble piece of property, since a patron has a 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 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 stumbling-blocks 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?” 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

* 1 Sam. ii. 36.

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 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 indispen-

sable 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 grounds 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 blest, 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*," I have laboured 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†."

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

* Isa. xxiv. 16.

† 1 Pet. v. 4.

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 do 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 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." 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.

* Prov. xix. 14.

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.

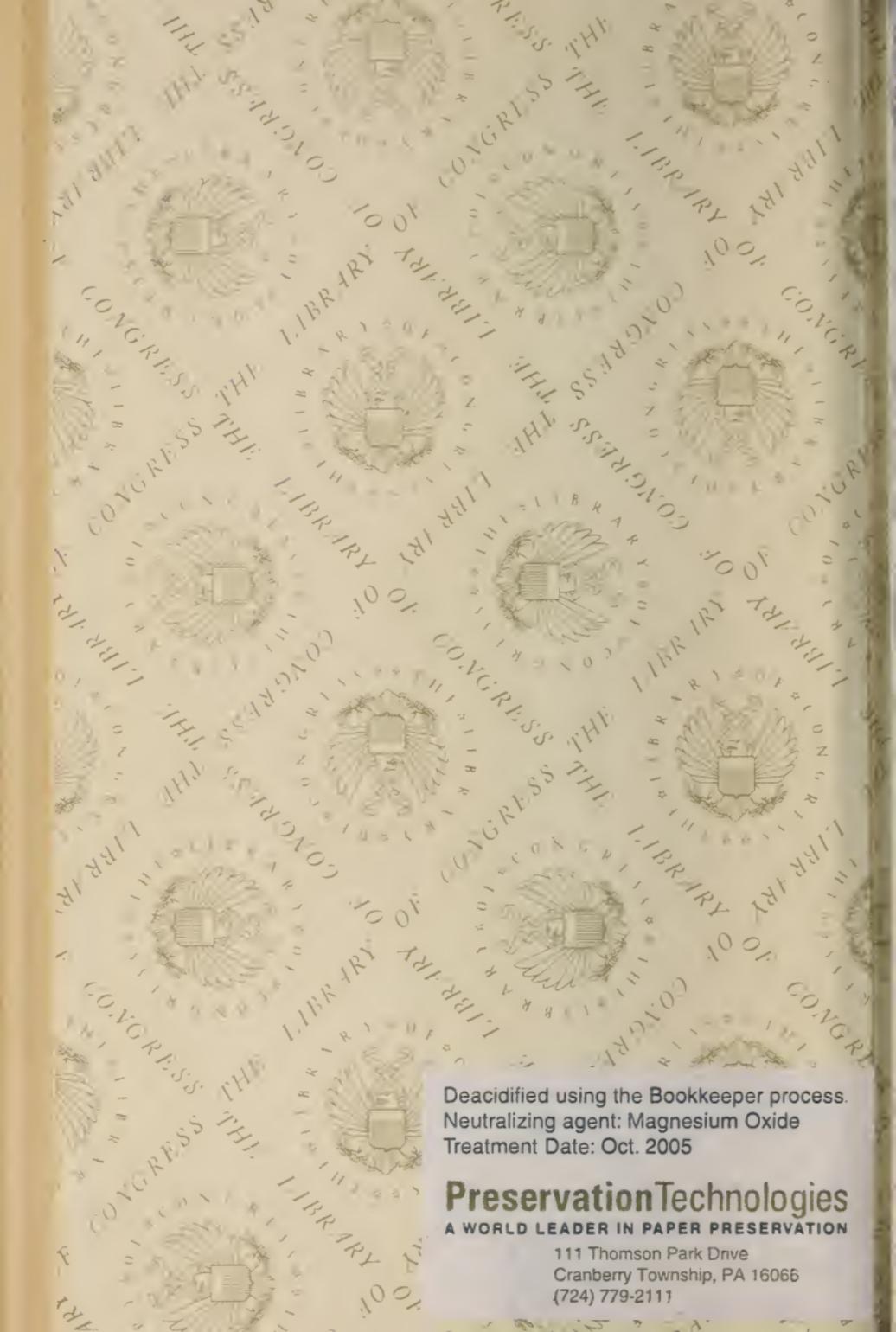
THE END.

Page 5463

OXFORD:

PRINTED BY H. ALDEN, CORN-MARKET STREET.





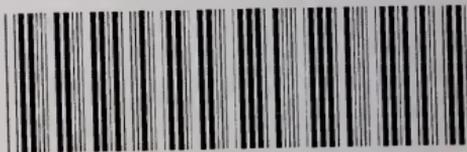
Decadified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Oct. 2005

Preservation Technologies

A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 017 075 757 9

