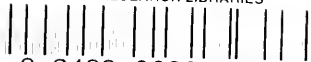
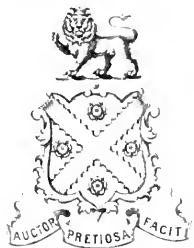


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DISCOURSES

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

By JEREMY TAYLOR, D. D.

CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO KING CHARLES THE FIRST, AND LATE
LORD BISHOP OF DOWN AND CONNOR.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME II.

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1816.



TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE AND TRULY NOBLE

RICHARD, LORD VAUGHAN,

EARL OF CARBERY, &c.

MY LORD,

I NOW present to your Lordship a copy of those sermons, the publication of which was first designed by the appetites of that *hunger and thirst of righteousness* which made your dear lady (that rare soul) so dear to God, and that he was pleased speedily to satisfy her, by carrying her from our shallow and impure cisterns, to drink out of the fountains of our Saviour. My Lord, I shall but prick your tender eye, if I shall remind your Lordship how diligent a hearer, how careful a recorder, how prudent an observer, how sedulous a practiser of holy discourses she was; and that therefore it was, that what did slide through her ear, she was desirous to place before her eye, that by those windows they might enter in, and dwell in her heart: but because by this truth I shall do advantage to the following discourses, give me leave, my Lord, to fancy that this book is derived upon your Lordship almost in the nature of a legacy from her, whose every thing was dearer to your Lordship than your own eyes; and that what

she was pleased to believe apt to minister to her devotions, and the religions of her pious and discerning soul, may also be allowed a place in your closet, and a portion of your retirement, and a lodging in your thoughts, that they may encourage and instruct your practice, and promote that interest which is, and ought to be, dearer to you than all those blessings and separations with which God hath remarked your family and person.

My Lord, I confess the publication of these sermons can so little serve the ends of my reputation, that I am therefore pleased the rather to do it, because I cannot at all be tempted, in so doing, to minister to any thing of vanity. Sermons may please when they first strike the ear, and yet appear flat and ignorant when they are offered to the eye, and to an understanding that can consider at leisure. I remember that a young gentleman of *Athens*, being to answer for his life, hired an orator to make his defence, and it pleased him well at his first reading, but when the young man by often reading it, that he might recite it publickly by heart, began to grow weary and displeas'd with it, the orator bade him consider that the judges and the people were to hear it but once, and then it was likely, they, at that first instant, might be as well pleas'd as he. This hath often represented to my mind the condition and fortune of sermons, and that I now part with the advantage they had in their delivery; but I have sufficiently answered myself in that, and am at rest perfectly in my thoughts as to that particular, if I can in any de-

gree serve the interest of souls, and (which is next to that) obey the piety, and record the memory of that dear saint, whose name and whose soul is blessed: for in both these ministries I doubt not but your Lordship will be pleased, and account as if I had done also some service to yourself: your religion makes me sure of the first, and your piety puts the latter past my fears. However, I suppose, in the whole account of this affair, this publication may be esteemed but like preaching to a numerous auditory; which if I had done, it would have been called either duty or charity, and therefore will not now so readily be censured for vanity, if I make use of all the ways I can to minister to the good of souls. But because my intentions are fair in themselves, and I hope are acceptable to God, and will be fairly expounded by your Lordship, (whom for so great reason I so much value) I shall not trouble you or the world with an apology for this so free publishing my weaknesses: I can better secure my reputation, by telling men how they ought to entertain sermons; for if they that read or hear do their duty aright, the preacher shall soon be secured of his fame, and untouched by censure.

1. For it were well if men would not inquire after the learning of the sermon, or its deliciousness to the ear or fancy, but observe its usefulness; not what concerns the preacher, but what concerns themselves; not what may take a vain reflection upon him, but what may substantially serve their own needs; that the attending to his discourses

may not be spent in vain talk concerning him or his disparagements, but may be used as a duty and a part of religion, to minister to edification and instruction. When St. *John* reckoned the principles of evil actions, he told but of three, *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*. But there was then also in the world (and now it is grown into age, and strength, and faction) another lust, *the lust of the ear*, and a fifth also, *the lust of the tongue*. Some people have an insatiable appetite in hearing; and hear only that they may hear, and talk, and make a party: they enter into their neighbour's house to kindle their candle, and espying there a glaring fire, sit down upon the hearth, and warm themselves all day, and forget their errand; and in the mean time their own fires are not lighted, nor their families instructed or provided for, nor any need served, but a lazy pleasure, which is useless and impudent. Hearing or reading sermons, is, or ought to be, in order to practice; for so God intended it, that *faith should come by hearing*, and that *charity should come by faith*, and by both together we may be saved. For a man's ears (as *Plutarch* calls them) are *virtutum ansae*, by them we are to hold and apprehend virtue; and unless we use them as men do *vessels of dishonour*, filling them with things fit to be thrown away, with any thing that is not necessary, we are by them more nearly brought to God than by all the senses beside. For although things placed before the eye affect the mind more readily than the things we usually hear; yet the reason of that is, because we hear *carelessly*, and we hear

variety : the same *species* dwells upon the eye, and represents the same object in union and single representation ; but the objects of the ear are broken into fragments of periods, and words, and syllables, and must be attended with a careful understanding : and because every thing diverts the sound, and every thing calls off the understanding, and the spirit of a man is truantly and trilling ; therefore it is, that what men hear does so little affect them, and so weakly work toward the purposes of virtue ; and yet nothing does so affect the mind of man as those voices to which we cannot choose but attend ; and *thunder* and *all loud voices* from heaven rend the most stony heart, and make the most obstinate pay to God the homage of trembling and fear ; and the still voice of God usually takes the tribute of love, and choice, and obedience. Now since hearing is so effective an instrument of conveying impresses and images of things, and exciting purposes, and fixing resolutions, (unless we hear weakly and imperfectly ;) it will be of the greater concernment that we be curious to hear, in order to such purposes which are perfective of the soul and of the spirit, and not to dwell in fancy and speculation, in pleasures and trilling arrests, which continue the soul in its infancy and childhood, never letting it go forth into the wisdom and virtues of a man. I have read concerning *Dionysius of Sicily*, that being delighted extremely with a minstrel that sung well, and struck his harp dexterously, he promised to give him a great reward ; and that raised the fancy of the man, and made him play better. But when the mu-

sick was done, and the man waited for his great hope, the king dismissed him empty, telling him, that he should carry away as much of the promised reward as himself did of the musick, and that he had paid him sufficiently with the pleasure of the promise for the pleasure of the song: both their ears had been equally delighted, and the profit just none at all. So it is in many men's hearing sermons: they admire the preacher, and he pleases their ears, and neither of them both bear along with them any good; and the hearer hath as little good by the sermon, as the preacher by the air of the people's breath, when they make a noise, and admire, and understand not. And that also is a second caution I desire all men would take.

2. That they may never trouble the affairs of preaching and hearing respectively, with admiring the person of any man. To admire a preacher, is such a reward of his pains and worth, as if you should crown a conqueror with a garland of roses, or a bride with laurel; it is an indecency, it is no part of the reward which could be intended for him. For though it be a good natured folly, yet it hath in it much danger; for by that means the preacher may lead his hearers captive, and make them servants of a faction, or of a lust; it makes them so much the less to be servants of Christ, by how much they *call any man master upon earth*; it weakens the heart and hands of others, it places themselves in a rank much below their proper station, changing from hearing *the word of God*, to admiration of *the persons and faces of men*; and it being a *fault* that falls upon the more

easy natures and softer understandings, does more easily abuse a man. And though such a person may have the good fortune to admire a good man and a wise; yet it is an ill disposition, and makes him liable to every man's abuse. *Stupidum hominem quavis oratione percelli*, said *Heraclitus*; an undiscerning person is apt to be cozened by every oration. And besides this, that preacher whom some do admire, others will most certainly envy, and that also is to be provided against with diligence: and you must not admire too forwardly, *for your own sake*, lest you fall into the hands of a worse preacher, and *for his sake*, whom, when you admire, you also love, for others will be apt to envy him.

3. But that must by all men be avoided, for envy is the worst counsellor in the world, and the worst hearer of a wise discourse. I pity those men who live upon flattery and wonder, and while they sit at the foot of the doctor's chair, stare in his face, and cry *επιθεως, ω μεγαλου φιλοσοφου* rarely spoken, admirably done! They are like callow and unfeathered birds, gaping perpetually to be fed from another's mouth, and they never come to the knowledge of the truth; such a knowledge as is effective, and expressed in a prudent and holy life. But those men that envy the preacher, besides that they are great enemies of the Holy Ghost, and are spitefully *evil, because God is good to him*, they are also enemies to themselves. He that envies the honours or the riches of another, envies for his own sake, and he would fain be rich with that wealth which sweats in his neighbour's coffers: but

he that envies him that makes good sermons, envies himself, and is angry because himself may receive the benefit, and be *improved*, or *delighted*, or *instructed* by another. He that is apt fondly to admire any man's person, must cure himself by considering, that the preacher is God's minister and servant; that he speaks God's word, and does it by the divine assistance; that he hath nothing of his own but sin and imperfection; that he does but his duty, and that also hardly enough; that he is highly answerable for his talent, and stands deeply charged with the cure of souls; and therefore that he is to be *highly esteemed for the work sake*, not for the person: his industry and his charity is to be beloved, his ability is to be accounted upon another stock, and for it the preacher and the hearer are both to give God thanks; but nothing is due to the *man* for that, save only that it is the rather to be employed, because by it we may be better instructed: but if any other reflection be made upon his person, it is next to the sin and danger of *Herod* and the people, when the fine oration was made *μετα πολλης φαντασιας*, *with huge fancy*; the people were pleased, and *Herod* was admired, and God was angry, and an angel was sent to strike him with death and with dishonour. But the envy against a preacher is to be cured by a contrary discourse, and we must remember, that he is in the place of God, and hath received the gift of God, and the aids of the Holy Ghost; that by his abilities God is glorified, and we are instructed, and the interests of virtue and holy religion are promoted; that by this

means God, who deserves that all souls should serve him for ever, is likely to have a fairer harvest of glory and service, and therefore that envy is against him; that if we envy because we are not the instrument of this good to others, we must consider that we desire the praise to ourselves, not to God. *Admiration* of a man supposes him to be inferiour to the person so admired, but then he is pleased so to be; but *envy* supposes him as low, and he is displeas'd at it: and the envious man is not only less than the other man's virtue, but also contrary: the former is a *vanity*, but this is a *vice*; that *wants wisdom*, but *this wants wisdom* and *charity* too; that supposes an absence of some good, but this is a direct affliction and calamity.

4. And after all this, if the preacher be not despised, he may proceed cheerfully in doing his duty, and the hearer may have some advantages by every sermon. I remember that *Homer* says, the wooers of *Penelope* laughed at *Ulysses*, because at his return he call'd for a loaf, and did not, to show his gallantry, call for swords and spears. *Ulysses* was so wise as to call for that he needed, and had it, and it did him more good than a whole armoury would in his case. So is the plainest part of an easy and honest sermon, it is *the sincere milk of the word*, and nourishes a man's soul, though represented in its own natural simplicity; and there is hardly any orator but you may find occasion to praise something of him. When *Plato* mislik'd the order and disposition of the oration of *Lysias*, yet he praised the

good words and the elocution of the man. *Euripides* was commended for his fulness, *Parmenides* for his composition, *Phocylides* for his easiness, *Archilochus* for his argument, *Sophocles* for the unequalness of his style: so many men praise their preacher; he speaks pertinently, or he contrives wittily, or he speaks comely, or the man is pious, or charitable, or he hath a good text, or he speaks plainly, or he is not tedious, or, if he be, he is at least industrious, or he is the messenger of God; and that will not fail us, and let us love him for that. And we know those that love can easily commend any thing, because they like every thing: and they say, fair men are like angels, and the black are manly, and the pale look like honey and the stars, and the crooknosed are like the sons of kings, and if they be flat they are gentle and easy, and if they be deformed they are humble, and not to be despised, because they have upon them the impresses of divinity, and they are the sons of God. He that despises his preacher, is a hearer of arts and learning, not of the word of God: and though, when the word of God is set off with advantages and entertainments of the better faculties of our humility, it is more useful and of more effect: yet, when the word of God is spoken truly, though but read in plain language, it will become the disciple of *Jesus* to love that man whom God sends, and the publick order and the laws have employed, rather than to despise the weakness of him who delivers a *mighty word*.

Thus it is fit that men should be affected and employed when they hear and read sermons, coming hither not as into a *theatre*, where men observe the gestures or noises of the people, the brow and eyes of the most busy censurers, and make parties, and go aside with them that dislike every thing, or else admire not the things, but the persons; but as to a *sacrifice*, and as to a *school* where virtue is taught and exercised, and none come but such as put themselves under discipline, and intend to grow wiser and more virtuous, to appease their passion, from violent to become smooth and even, to have their faith established, and their hope confirmed, and their charity enlarged. They that are otherwise affected do not do their duty: but if they be so minded as they ought, I and all men of my employment shall be secured against the tongues and faces of men who are *ingeniosi in alieno libro*, witty to abuse and undervalue another man's book. And yet, besides these spiritual arts already reckoned, I have one security more: for (unless I deceive myself) I intend the glory of God sincerely, and the service of *Jesus*, in this publication; and therefore seeing *I do not seek myself* or my own reputation, I shall not be troubled if they be *lost* in the voices of busy people, so that I be accepted of God, and *found of him in the day of the Lord's visitation*.

My Lord, it was your charity and nobleness that gave me opportunity to do this service (little or great) unto religion, and whoever shall find any advantage to their soul by reading the following

discourses, if they know how to bless God, and to bless all them that are God's instruments in doing them benefit, will, I hope, help to procure blessings to your person and family, and say a holy prayer, and name your Lordship in their litanies, and remember that, at your own charges, you have digged a well, and placed cisterns in the highways, that they may drink and be refreshed, and their souls may bless you. My Lord, I hope this, even because I very much desire it, and because you exceedingly deserve it, and above all, because *God is good and gracious*, and loves to reward such a charity, and such a religion as is your's, by which you have employed me in the service of God, and in the ministries to your family. My Lord, I am, most heartily, and for very many dear obligations,

Your Lordship's most obliged,

Most humble, and most

Affectionate Servant,

TAYLOR.

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SERMON I.



WHIT-SUNDAY.

OF THE

SPIRIT OF GRACE.

ROM. viii. 9, 10.

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the spirit is life, because of righteousness.

THIS day, in which the church commemorates the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles, was the first beginning of the gospel of *Jesus Christ*. This was the first day that the religion was professed: now the apostles first opened their commission, and read it to all the people. [*The Lord gave his spirit*] or [*The Lord gave his word,*] and great was the company of the preachers. For so I make bold to render that prophecy of *David*. Christ was the word of God, *Verbum aeternum*; but the Spirit was the Word of God, *Verbum patefactum*: Christ was *the Word manifested in the flesh*; the Spirit was the word manifested *to flesh*, and set in dominion over, and in hostility against the flesh. The gospel and the spirit are the same thing; not in substance; but *the manifestation of the spirit is the gospel of Jesus Christ*: and because he was this day manifested, the gospel was this day first preached, and it became a law to us, called *the law of the spirit of life*;* that is, a law

* Rom. viii. 2.

taught us by the Spirit, leading us to life eternal. But the gospel is called the spirit; 1. Because it contains in it such glorious mysteries which were revealed by the immediate inspirations of the Spirit, not only in the matter itself, but also in the manner and powers to apprehend them. For what power of human understanding could have found out the incarnation of a God; that two natures [a finite, and an infinite] could have been concentered into one hypostasis, (or person;) that a virgin should be a mother; that dead men should live again; that the *κοιλι οσσειαν λυθειλαν*, the ashes of dissolved bones should become bright as the sun, blessed as the angels, swift in motion as thought, clear as the purest noon; that God should so love us, as to be willing to be reconciled to us, and yet that himself must die that he might pardon us; that God's most holy Son should give us his body to eat, and his blood to crown our chalices, and his spirit to sanctify our souls, to turn our bodies into temperance, our souls into *minds*, our minds into *spirit*, our spirit into *glory*; that he who can give us all things, who is lord of men and angels, and king of all the creatures, should pray to God for us without intermission; that he who reigns over all the world should at the day of judgment *give up the kingdom to God the Father*, and yet after this resignation, himself and we with him should for ever reign the more gloriously; that we should be justified by faith in Christ, and that charity should be a part of faith, and that both should work as acts of duty, and as acts of relation, that God should crown the imperfect endeavours of his saints with glory, and that a human act should be rewarded with an eternal inheritance; that the wicked, for the transient pleasure of a few minutes, should be tormented with an absolute eternity of pains; that the waters of baptism, when they are hallowed by the spirit, shall purge the soul from sin; and that the spirit of man shall be nourished with the consecrated and mysterious ele-

ments, and that any such nourishment should bring a man up to heaven: and after all this, that all Christian people, all that will be saved, must be *partakers of the Divine nature*, of the nature, the infinite nature of God, and must dwell in Christ, and Christ must dwell in them, and they must be in the Spirit, and the Spirit must be for ever in them? These are articles of so mysterious a philosophy, that we could have inferred them from no premises, discoursed them upon the stock of no natural or scientific principles; nothing but God and God's Spirit could have taught them to us: and therefore the Gospel is *Spiritus patefactus*, the manifestation of the Spirit, *ad uedificationem** (as the apostle calls it) for edification and building us up to be a holy temple to the Lord.

2. But when we had been taught all these mysterious articles, we could not by any human power have understood them, unless the Spirit of God had given us a new light, and created in us a new capacity, and made us to be a new creature, of another definition. *Animalis homo*, ψυχικος, that is, as St. Jude expounds the word, πνευμα μὴ ἔχων, *The animal, or the natural man, the man that hath not the Spirit, cannot discern the things of God, for they are spiritually discerned*; † that is, not to be understood but by the light proceeding from the Sun of righteousness, and by that eye whose bird is the holy dove, whose candle is the gospel.

Scio incapacem te sacramenti, impie,
 Non posse coecis mentibus mysterium
 Haurire nostrum : nil diurnum nox capit. †

* 1 Cor. xii. 7.

† 1 Cor. ii. 14.

‡ Prudent.

Sinner! I know, thy bosom never glow'd
 With heavenly contemplation's hallowed fires,
 Nor felt the Eucharist's mysterious rite;
 Sooner shall beams of day illumine night.

He that shall discourse *Euclid's Elements* to a swine, or preach (as venerable *Bede's* story reports of him) to a rock, or talk metaphysicks to a boar, will as much prevail upon his assembly, as *St. Peter* and *St. Paul* could do upon *uncircumcised hearts and ears*, upon the indisposed *Greeks*, and prejudicate *Jews*. An ox will relish the tender flesh of kids with as much gust and appetite, as an unspiritual and unsanctified man will do the discourses of angels or of an apostle, if he should come to preach the secrets of the gospel. And we find it true by a sad experience. How many times doth God speak to us by his servants the prophets, by his Son, by his apostles, by Sermons, by spiritual books, by thousands of homilies, and arts of counsel and insinuation; and we sit as unconcerned as the pillars of a church, and hear the sermons as the *Athenians* did a story, or as we read a gazette? And if ever it come to pass that we tremble, as *Felix* did, when we hear a sad story of death, of *righteousness and judgment to come*, then we put it off to another time, or we forget it, and think we had nothing to do but to give the good man a hearing; and, as *Anacharsis* said of the *Greeks*, they used money for nothing but to cast account withal; so, our hearers make use of sermons and discourses evangelical, but to fill up void spaces of their time, to help to tell an hour with, or pass it without tediousness. The reason of this is a sad condemnation to such persons; they have not yet entertained the Spirit of God, they are in darkness: they were washed in water, but never baptized with the Spirit; for these things are spiritually discerned. They would think the preacher rude, if he should say they are not Christians, they are not within the covenant of the gospel: but it is certain that *the spirit of manifestation* is not yet upon them; and that is the first effect of the Spirit, whereby we can be called sons of God, or relatives of Christ. If we do not ap-

prehend and greedily suck in the precepts of this holy discipline as aptly as merchants do discourse of gain, or farmers of fair harvests, we have nothing but the name of Christians; but we are no more such really than mandrakes are men, or sponges are living creatures.

3. The gospel is called *spirit*, because it consists of spiritual promises and spiritual precepts, and makes all men that embrace it truly to be spiritual men; and therefore St. Paul adds an epithet beyond this, calling it a *quickenings spirit*,* that is, it puts life into spirits which the law could not. The law bound us to punishment, but did not help us to obedience, because it gave not the promise of eternal life to its disciples. *The spirit*, that is, *the gospel*, only does this: and this alone is it which comforts afflicted minds, which puts activeness into wearied spirit, which inflames our cold desires, and does *αναζωογονειν* *blow up sparks* into live coals, and coals up to flames, and flames into perpetual burnings. And it is impossible that any man who believes and considers the great, the infinite, the unspeakable, the unimaginable, and never-ceasing joys that are prepared for all the sons and daughters of the gospel, should not desire them; and unless he be a fool, he cannot but use means to obtain them, effective, hearty pursuances. For it is not directly in the nature of a man to neglect so great a good; there must be something in his manners, some obliquity in his will, or madness in his intellectuals, or incapacity in his naturals, that must make him sleep such a reward away, or change it for the pleasure of a drunken fever, or the vanity of a mistress, or the rage of a passion, or the unreasonableness of any sin. However, this promise is the life of all our actions, and the Spirit that first taught it is the life of our souls.

4. But beyond this, is the reason which is the consummation of all the faithful. The *gospel* is called

* 2 Cor.

the *spirit*, because by and in the gospel God hath given to us not only *the spirit of manifestation*, that is, of instruction and of catechism, of faith and confident assent; but *the spirit of confirmation* or *obsignation* to all them that believe and obey the gospel of Christ: that is, the power of God is come upon our hearts, by which in an admirable manner we are made sure of a glorious inheritance; made sure (I say) in the nature of the thing; and our own persuasions also are confirmed with an excellent, a comfortable, a discerning and a reasonable hope: in the strength of which, and by whose aid, as we do not doubt of the performance of the promise, so we vigorously pursue all the parts of the condition, and are enabled to work all the work of God, so as not to be affrighted with fear, or seduced by vanity, or oppressed by lust, or drawn off by evil example, or abused by riches, or imprisoned by ambition and secular designs. This the spirit of God does work in all his servants; and is called *the spirit of obsignation*, or *the confirming spirit*, because it confirms our hope, and assures our title to life eternal; and by means of it, and other its collateral assistances, it also confirms us in our duty, that we may not only profess in word, but live lives according to the gospel. And this is the sense of *the spirit* mentioned in the text, *Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you*: That is, if ye be made partakers of the gospel, or of the *spirit of manifestation*, if ye be truly entitled to God, and have received the promise of the Father, then are ye not carnal men; ye are *spiritual*, ye are *in the spirit*: if ye have the Spirit in one sense to any purpose, ye have it also in another: if the spirit be in you, you are in it; if it hath given you hope, it hath also enabled and ascertained your duty. For the *spirit of manifestation* will but upbraid you in the shame and horrors of a sad eternity, if you have

not *the spirit of obsequation*: if the Holy Ghost be not come upon you to great purposes of holiness, all other pretences are vain, *ye are still in the flesh*, which shall never inherit the kingdom of God.

In the spirit] that is, in the power of the spirit. So the *Greeks* call him *ἐνθεος* who is possessed by a spirit, whom God hath filled with a celestial immission; he is said to be *in God*, when God is *in him*. And it is a similitude taken from persons encompassed with guards; they are *in custodia*, that is, in their power, under their command, moved at their dispose, they rest in their time, and receive laws from their authority, and admit visiters whom they appoint, and must be employed as they shall suffer: so are men who are in the spirit; that is, they believe as he teaches, they work as he enables, they choose what he calls good, they are friends of his friends, and they hate with his hatred: with this only difference, that persons in custody are forced to do what their keepers please, and nothing is free but their wills; but they that are under the command of the spirit do all things which the spirit commands, but they do them cheerfully; and their will is now the prisoner, but it is *in libera custodia*, the will is where it ought to be, and where it desires to be, and it cannot easily choose any thing else, because it is extremely in love with this: as the saints and angels in their state of beatifick vision cannot choose but love God; and yet the liberty of their choice is not lessened, because the object fills all the capacities of the will and the understanding. Indifferency to an object is the lowest degree of liberty, and supposes unworthiness or defect in the object, or the apprehension: but the will is then the freest and most perfect in its operation, when it entirely pursues a good with so certain a determination and clear election, that the contrary evil cannot come into dispute or pretence. Such in

our proportions is the liberty of the Sons of God; it is a holy and amiable captivity to the spirit: the will of man is in love with those chains which draw us to God, and loves the fetters that confine us to the pleasures and religion of the kingdom. And as no man will complain that his temples are restrained, and his head is prisoner, when it is encircled with a crown: so when the son of God had made us free, and had only subjected us to the service and dominion of the spirit, we are free as princes within the circles of their diadem, and our chains are bracelets, and the law is a law of liberty, and *his service is perfect freedom*; and the more we are subjects, the more *we shall reign as kings*; and the faster we run, the easier is our burden; and Christ's yoke is like feathers to a bird, not loads, but helps to motion, without them the body falls; and we do not pity birds, when in summer we wish them unfeathered and callow, or bald as eggs, that they might be cooler and lighter. Such is the load and captivity of the soul, when we do the work of God, and are his servants, and under the government of the spirit. They that strive to be quit of this subjection, love the liberty of out-laws, and the licentiousness of anarchy, and the freedom of sad widows and distressed orphans: for so rebels, and fools, and children long to be rid of their princes, and their guardians, and their tutors, that they may be accursed without law, and be undone without control, and be ignorant and miserable without a teacher and without discipline. He that is *in the spirit* is under tutors and governours, until the time appointed of the Father, just as all great heirs are; only, the first seizure the spirit makes, is upon the will. He that loves the yoke of Christ, and the discipline of the gospel, he is, *in the spirit*, that is, in the spirit's power.

Upon this foundation the apostle hath built these two propositions. 1. Whosoever hath not the spirit

of Christ, he is none of his; he does not belong to Christ at all: he is not partaker of his spirit, and therefore shall never be partaker of his glory. 2. Whosoever is in Christ, is dead to sin, and lives to the spirit of Christ; that is, lives a spiritual, a holy, and a sanctified life. These are to be considered distinctly.

1. All that belong to Christ have the spirit of Christ. Immediately before the ascension, our blessed Saviour bid his disciples *Tarry in Jerusalem till they should receive the promise of the Father*. Whosoever stay at *Jerusalem*, and are in the actual communion of the church of God, shall certainly receive this promise. *For it is made to you and to your children (saith St. Peter) and to as many as the Lord our God shall call*. All shall receive the spirit of Christ, the promise of the Father, because this was the great instrument of distinction between the law and the gospel. In the law, God gave his spirit, 1. to some; to them, 2. extra-regularly, 3. without solemnity, 4. in small proportions, like the dew upon *Gideon's* fleece; a little portion was wet sometimes with the dew of heaven, when all the earth besides was dry. And the *Jews* called it *filiam vocis*, the daughter of a voice, still, and small, and seldom, and that by secret whispers, and sometimes inarticulate, by way of enthusiasm, rather than of instruction; and God spake by the prophets, transmitting the sound as through an organ-pipe, things which themselves oftentimes understood not. But in the gospel, the spirit is given without measure: first poured forth upon our head *Christ Jesus*; then descending upon the beard of *Aaron*, the fathers of the church, and thence falling, like the tears of the balsam of *Judaea*, upon the foot of the plant, upon the lowest of the people. And this is given regularly to all that ask it, to all that

can receive it, and by a solemn ceremony, and conveyed by a sacrament: and is now, not the daughter of a voice, but the mother of many voices, of divided tongues, and united hearts; of the tongues of prophets, and the duty of saints; of the sermons of apostles, and the wisdom of governours: it is the parent of boldness and fortitude to martyrs, the fountain of learning to doctors, an ocean of all things excellent to all who are within the ship and bounds of the catholick church: so that old men, and young men, maidens, and boys, the scribe and the unlearned, the judge and the advocate, the priest and the people, are full of the Spirit, if they belong to God. *Moses's* wish is fulfilled, and *all the Lord's people* are *prophets* in some sense or other.

In the wisdom of the ancients it was observed, that there are four great cords which tie the heart of man to inconvenience, and a prison, making it a servant of vanity, and an heir of corruption; 1. *pleasure*, and 2. *pain*; 3. *fear*, and 4. *desire*.

Προς το τετραχορδον δ' ὄλον,
 την ἡδονην, επιθυμιαν, λυπην, φοβον,
 ασκησεως γο και πολλης μαχης δεσι.*

These are they that exercise all the wisdom and resolutions of man, and all the powers that God hath given him.

ὅυτοι γαρ, ουτοι και δια σπλαγγχαν ασε
 χαριύουσι και κυκασιν ανθρωπων κωβ, said *Agathon*.†

* Four passions, tyrants of the human heart,
 Pleasure, and Pain, Desire, and trembling Fear,
 Rule it by turns, and for the mastery strive.

† These penetrate the inmost heart of men,
 Mix with their blood, and revel in their veins

These are those evil spirits that possess the heart of man, and mingle with all his actions; so that either men are tempted to 1. *lust by pleasure*, or 2. *to baser arts by covetousness*, or 3. *to impatience by sorrow*, or 4. *to dishonourable actions by fear*: and this is the state of man by nature, and under the law, and for ever, till the spirit of God came, and by four special operations cured these four inconveniences, and restrained or sweetened these unwholesome waters.

1. God gave us his spirit that we might be insensible of worldly pleasures, having our souls wholly filled with spiritual and heavenly relishes. For when God's spirit hath entered into us, and possessed us as his temple, or as his dwelling, instantly we begin to taste manna, and to loath the diet of *Egypt*; we begin to consider concerning heaven, and to prefer eternity before moments, and to love the pleasures of the soul above the sottish and beastly pleasures of the body. Then we can consider that the pleasures of a drunken meeting cannot make recompense for the pains of a surfeit, and that night's intemperance; much less for the torments of eternity: then we are quick to discern that the itch and scab of lustful appetites is not worth the charges of a chirurgeon; much less can it pay for the disgrace, the danger, the sickness, the death and the hell of lustful persons. Then we wonder that any man should venture his head to get a crown unjustly; or that for the hazard of a victory, he should throw away all his hopes of heaven certainly.

A man that hath tasted of God's spirit can instantly discern the madness that is in rage, the folly and the disease that is in envy, the anguish and tediousness that is in lust, the dishonour that is in breaking our faith and telling a lie; and understands things truly as they are; that is, that charity is the greatest

nobleness in the world; that religion hath in it the greatest pleasures; that temperance is the best security of health; that humility is the surest way to honour. And all these relishes are nothing but antepasts of heaven, where the quintessence of all these pleasures shall be swallowed for ever; where the chaste shall follow the Lamb, and the virgins sing there where the mother of God shall reign; and the zealous converters of souls, and labourers in God's vineyard, shall worship eternally; where *St. Peter* and *St. Paul* do wear their *crowns of righteousness*; and the patient persons shall be rewarded with *Job*, and the meek persons with *Christ* and *Moses* and all with God: the very expectation of which, proceeded from a hope begotten in us by the *spirit of manifestation*, and bred up and strengthened by the *spirit of obsignation*, is so delicious an entertainment of all our reasonable appetites, that a spiritual man can no more be removed or enticed from the love of God and of religion, than the moon from her orb, or a mother from loving the son of her joys, and of her sorrows.

This was observed by *St. Peter* [*As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.**] When once we have tasted the grace of God, the sweetnesses of his spirit; then no food but *the food of angels*, no cup but *the cup of salvation*, the *divining cup*, in which we drink *salvation to our God*, and call upon the name of the Lord with ravishment and thanksgiving. And there is no greater external testimony that we are *in the spirit*, and that *the spirit dwells in us*, than if we find joy and delight and spiritual pleasures in the greatest mysteries of our religion; if we communicate often, and that with appetite, and a forward choice, and an unwearied devotion, and a

* 1 Pet. ii. 2.

heart truly fixed upon God, and upon the offices of a holy worship. He that loaths good meat is sick at heart, or near it; and he that despises, or hath not a holy appetite to the *food of angels, the wine of elect souls*, is fit to succeed the prodigal at his banquet of sin and husks, and to be *partaker of the table of devils*: but all they who have God's spirit love to feast at the *supper of the Lamb*, and have no appetites but what are of the spirit, or servants to the spirit. I have read of a spiritual person, who saw heaven but in a dream, but such as made great impression upon him, and was represented with vigorous and pertinacious phantasms, not easily disbanding; and when he awaked he knew not his cell, he remembered not him that slept in the same dorture, nor could tell how night and day were distinguished, nor could discern oil from wine; but called out for his vision again: *Redde mihi campos meos floridos, columnam auream, comitem Hieronymum, assistentes angelos*; Give me my fields again, my most delicious fields, my pillar of a glorious light, my companion St. Jerome, my assistant angels. And this lasted till he was told of his duty, and matter of obedience, and the fear of a sin had disencharmed him, and caused him to take care lest he lose the substance out of greediness to possess the shadow.

And if it were given to any of us to see paradise, or the *third heaven*, (as it was to St. Paul) could it be that ever we should love any thing but Christ, or follow any guide but the spirit, or desire any thing but heaven, or understand any thing to be pleasant but what shall lead thither? Now what a vision can do, that the spirit doth certainly to them that entertain him. They that have him really, and not in pretence only, are certainly great despisers of the things of the world. The spirit doth not create, or enlarge our appetites of things below: spiritual men

are not designed to reign upon earth, but to reign over their lusts and sottish appetites. The Spirit doth not inflame our thirst of wealth, but extinguishes it, and makes us to *esteem all things as loss, and as dung, so that we may gain Christ*. No gain then is pleasant but *godliness*, no ambition but longings after heaven, no revenge but against ourselves for sinning; nothing but God and Christ: *Deus meus, et omnia*: and *date nobis animas, caetera vobis tollite*, (as the king of *Sodom* said to *Abraham*,) secure but the souls to us, and take our goods. Indeed this is a good sign that we have the spirit.

St. *John* spake a hard saying, but by the spirit of manifestation we are all taught to understand it: *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God*.* The seed of God is the spirit, which hath a plastick power to efform us *in similitudinem filiorum Dei*, into the image of the sons of God, and as long as this remains in us, while the spirit dwells in us, *we cannot sin*; that is, it is against our natures, our reformed natures to sin. And as we say, we cannot endure such a potion, we cannot suffer such a pain; that is, we cannot without great trouble, we cannot without doing violence to our nature: so all spiritual men, all that are born of God and the seed of God remains in them, *they cannot sin*; cannot without trouble, and doing against their natures, and their most passionate inclinations. A man, if you speak naturally, can masticate gums, and he can break his own legs, and he can sip up by little draughts mixtures of aloes, and rhubarb, of henbane, or the deadly nightshade; but he cannot do this naturally, or willingly, cheerfully, or with delight, every sin is against a good man's nature: he is ill at ease when he hath missed his usual prayers, he is

* 1 Ep. iii. 9.

amazed if he have fallen into an error, he is infinitely ashamed of his imprudence; he remembers a sin as he thinks of an enemy, or the horrors of a midnight apparition: for all his capacities, his understanding, and his choosing faculties are filled up with the opinion and persuasions, with the love and with the desires, of God. And this, I say, is the great benefit of the spirit, which God hath given to us as an antidote against worldly pleasures. And therefore St. Paul joins them as consequent to each other: [*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, &c.**] First, we are enlightened in baptism, and by *the spirit of manifestation*, the revelations of the Gospel: then we relish and taste interior excellencies, and we receive the Holy Ghost, *the spirit of confirmation*, and he gives us *a taste of the powers of the world to come*; that is, of the great efficacy that is in the article of eternal life, to persuade us to religion and holy living: then we feel that as the belief of that article dwells upon our understanding, and is incorporated into our wills and choice, so we grow powerful to resist sin by the strengths of the spirit, to defy all carnal pleasure, and to suppress and mortify it by the powers of this article: those are *the powers of the world to come*.

2. The spirit of God is given to all who truly belong to Christ, as an antidote against sorrows, against impatience, against the evil accidents of the world, and against the oppression and sinking of our spirits under the cross. There are in scripture noted two births besides the natural; to which also by analogy we may add a third. The first is to be *born of water and the spirit*. It is ἐν ᾧ δὲ δυνάμει, one thing signified

* Heb. vi. 4.

by a divided appellative, by two substantives, [*water and the spirit,*] that is, *spiritus aqueus*, the *spirit moving upon the waters of baptism*. The second is to be born of *spirit and fire*, for so Christ was promised to *baptize us with the Holy Ghost and with fire*; that is, *cum spiritu igneo*, with a fiery spirit, the spirit as it descended in Pentecost in the shape of fiery tongues. And as the watery spirit washed away the sins of the church, so the spirit of fire enkindles charity and the love of God. Το πνευ καθαρίζει, το υδαρ ἀγνίζει, (says *Plutarch*) the spirit is the same under both the titles, and it enables the church with gifts and graces. And from these there is another operation of the new birth, but the same spirit, the spirit of rejoicing, or *spiritus exultans*, *spiritus laetitiae*. *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.** There is a certain joy and spiritual rejoicing, that accompanies them in whom the Holy Ghost doth dwell; a joy in the midst of sorrow; a joy given to allay the sorrows of secular troubles, and to alleviate the burthen of persecution. This *St. Paul* notes to this purpose; [*And ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.†*] Worldly afflictions and spiritual joys may very well dwell together; and if God did not supply us out of his store-houses, the sorrows of this world would be more and unmixed, and the troubles of persecution would be too great for natural confidences. For who shall make him recompense that lost his life in a duel fought about a draught of wine, or a cheaper woman? What arguments shall invite a man to suffer torments in testimony of a proposition of natural philosophy? And by what instruments shall we

* Rom. xv. 13.

† 1 Thes. i. 6.

comfort a man who is sick, and poor, and disgraced, and vicious, and lies cursing, and despairs of any thing hereafter? That man's condition proclaims what it is to want the spirit of God, *the spirit of comfort*. Now this spirit of comfort is the hope and confidence, the certain expectation of partaking in the inheritance of *Jesus*, *This is the faith and patience of the saints*; this is the refreshment of all wearied travellers, the cordial of all languishing sinners, the support of the scrupulous, the guide of the doubtful, the anchor of timorous and fluctuating souls, the confidence and the staff of the penitent. He that is deprived of his whole estate for a good conscience, by the spirit he meets this comfort, that he shall find it again with advantage in the day of restitution: and this comfort was so manifest in the first days of Christianity, that it was no unfrequent thing to see holy persons court a martyrdom with a fondness as great as is our impatience and timorousness in every persecution. Till the spirit of God comes upon us we are *ολιγοψυχοι*. *Inopis nos atque pusilli finxerunt animi*; we have little souls, little faith, and as little patience; we fall at every stumbling block, and sink under every temptation; and our hearts fail us, and we die for fear of death, and lose our souls to preserve our estates or our persons, till the spirit of God *fills us with joy in believing*: and the man that is in a great joy cares not for any trouble that is less than his joy; and God hath taken so great care to secure this to us, that he hath turned it into a precept, *Rejoice evermore*; and *Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice*.* But this rejoicing must be only in the hope that is laid up for us, *εν ελπιδι χαριστων*: so the apostle, *rejoicing in hope*.† For although God some-

* Thes. v. 16.

† Rom. xii. 12.

times makes a cup of sensible comfort to overflow the spirit of a man, and thereby loves to refresh his sorrows; yet this is from a secret principle not regularly given, not to be waited for, not to be prayed for, and it may fail us if we think upon it: but the hope of life eternal can never fail us, and the joy of that is great enough to make us suffer any thing, or to do any thing.

————— Ibimus, ibimus,
 Utcunque praecedes, supremum
 Carpere iter comites parati.*

To death, to bands, to poverty, to banishment, to tribunals, any whither in hope of life eternal; as long as this anchor holds, we may suffer a storm, but cannot suffer shipwreck. And I desire you by the way to observe how good a God we serve, and how excellent a religion Christ taught, when one of his great precepts is, that we should *rejoice and be exceeding glad*: and God hath given us the spirit of rejoicing, not a sullen, melancholy spirit; not the spirit of bondage or of a slave, but the spirit of his Son, consigning us by a holy conscience to *joys unspeakable and full of glory*. And from hence you may also infer, that those who sink under a persecution, or are impatient in a sad accident, they put out their own fires which the Spirit of the Lord hath kindled, and lose those glories which stand behind the cloud.

* Hor. Lib. 2. od. 17. v. 10.

One day, believe the sacred oath,
 Shall lead the funeral pomp of both;
 Cheerful to Pluto's dark abode
 With thee I'll tread the dreary road.

SERMON II.

PART II.

3. THE spirit of God is given us as an antidote against evil concupiscences and sinful desires, and is then called *the spirit of prayer and supplication*. For ever since the affections of the outward man prevailed upon the ruins of the soul, all our desires were sensual, and therefore hurtful: for ever after, our body grew to be our enemy. In the loosenesses of nature, and amongst the ignorance or imperfection of Gentile philosophy, men used to pray with their hands full of rapine, and their mouths full of blood; and their hearts full of malice; and they prayed accordingly, for an opportunity to steal, for a fair body, for a prosperous revenge, for a prevailing malice, for the satisfaction of whatsoever they could be tempted to by any object, by any lust, by any devil whatsoever.

The *Jews* were better taught, for God was their teacher, and he gave the spirit to them in single rays. But as the *spirit of obsignation* was given to them under a *seal*, and within a *veil*; so the *spirit of manifestation* or *patefaction* was like the gem of a vine, or the bud of a rose, plain *indices* and significations of life, and principles of juice and sweetness; but yet scarce out of the doors of their causes: they had the infancy of knowledge, and revelations to them were given as catechism is taught to our children; which they read with the eye of a bird, and speak with the tongue of a bee, and understand with the heart of a child; that is, weakly and imperfectly. And they understand so little, that, I.

They thought God heard them not, unless they spake their prayers, at least efforming their words within their lips: and 2. Their forms of prayer were so few and seldom, that to teach a form of prayer, or to compose a collect, was thought a work fit for a prophet, or the founder of an institution. 3. Add to this, that as their promises were temporal, so were their hopes; as were their hopes, so were their desires; and according to their desires, so were their prayers. And although the psalms of *David* was their great office, and the treasury of devotion to their nation, (and very worthily;) yet it was full of wishes for temporals, invocations of God the *avenger*, on God *the Lord of hosts*, on God the enemy of their enemies: and they desired their nation to be prospered, and themselves blessed, and distinguished from all the world by the effects of such desires. This was the state of prayer in their synagogues; save only that it had also this allay; 4. That their addresses to God were crass, material, typical, and full of shadows and imaginary, and patterns of things to come; and so in its very being and constitution was relative and imperfect. But that we may see how *great things the Lord hath done for us*, God hath *poured his spirit into our hearts, the spirit of prayer and supplication*.

And now, 1. Christians *pray in their spirit*, with sighs and groans, and know that God, who dwells within them, can as clearly distinguish those secret accents, and read their meaning in the spirit, as plainly as he knows the voice of his own thunder, or could discern the letter of the law written in the tables of stone by the finger of God.

2. Likewise *the spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought*. That is, when God sends an affliction or persecution upon us, we are indeed extreme apt to lay our hand upon

the wound, and never take it off, but when we lift it up in prayer to be delivered from that sadness; and then we pray fervently to be cured of a sickness, to be delivered from a tyrant, to be snatched from the grave, not to perish in the danger. But the Spirit of God hath from all sad accidents drawn the veil of error and the cloud of intolerableness, and taught us that our happiness cannot consist in freedom or deliverances from persecutions, but in patience, resignation, and noble sufferance; and that we are not then so blessed when God hath turned our scourges into ease and delicacy, as when we convert our very scorpions into the exercise of virtues: so that now *the spirit having helped our infirmities*, that is, comforted our weaknesses and afflictions, our sorrow and impatience, by this proposition, that [*All things work together for the good of them that fear God,*] he hath taught us to pray for grace, for patience under the cross, for charity to our persecutors, for rejoicing in tribulations, for perseverance and boldness in the faith, and for whatsoever will bring us safely to heaven.

3. Whereas only a *Moses* or a *Samuel*, a *David* or a *Daniel*, a *John* the Baptist or the *Messias* himself, could describe and indite forms of prayer and thanksgiving to the tune and accent of heaven; now every wise and good man is instructed perfectly in the scriptures (which are the writings of the spirit) what things he may, and what things he must ask for.

4. The spirit of God hath made our services to be spiritual, intellectual, holy, and effects of choice and religion, the consequence of a spiritual sacrifice, and of a holy union with God. The prayer of a Christian is with the effects of the *spirit of sanctification*; and then we *pray with the spirit*, when we pray with holiness, which is the great fruit, the principal gift of the spirit. And this is by Saint *James*

called [*the prayer of faith,*] and is said to be certain that it shall prevail. Such a praying with the spirit when our prayers are the voices of our spirits, and our spirits are first taught, then sanctified by God's Spirit, shall never fail of its effect; because then it is that *the spirit himself maketh intercession for us*; that is, hath enabled us to do it upon his strengths; we speak his sense, we live his life, we breathe his accents, we desire in order to his purposes, and our persons are gracious by his holiness, and are accepted by his interpellation and intercession in the act and offices of Christ. This is *praying with the spirit*. To which, by way of explication, I add these two annexes of holy prayer, in respect of which also every good man prays with the spirit.

5. The spirit gives us great relish and appetite to our prayers; and this Saint Paul calls [*servicing of God in his spirit,** *ἐν πνεύματι μου*] that is, with a willing mind: not as *Jonas* did his errand, but as Christ did die for us; he was *straightened* till he had accomplished it. And they that say their prayers out of custom only, or to comply with external circumstances or collateral advantages, or pray with trouble and unwillingness, give a very great testimony that they have not the spirit of Christ within them, that *spirit which maketh intercession for the saints*: but he that delighteth in his prayers, not by a sensible or fantastick pleasure, but whose choice dwells in his prayers, and whose conversation is with God in holy living, and praying accordingly, that man hath the spirit of Christ, and therefore belongs to Christ; for by this spirit it is that Christ prays in heaven for us: and if we do not pray on earth in the same manner according to our measures, we had as good hold our peace; our prayers are an abominable sacrifice, and

* Rom. i. 9.

send up to God no better a perfume, than if we burned *assa foetida*, or the raw flesh of a murdered man upon the altar of incense.

6. The spirit of Christ and of prayer helps our infirmities, by giving us confidence and importunity. I put them together: For as our faith is, and our trust in God, so is our hope, and so is our prayer; weary or lasting, long or short, not in words, but in works, and in desires. For the words of prayer are no part of the spirit of prayer. Words may be the body of it, but the spirit of prayer always consists in holiness, that is, in holy desires, and holy actions. Words are not properly capable of being holy; all words are in themselves servants of things; and the holiness of a prayer is not at all concerned in the manner of its expression, but in the spirit of it, that is, in the violence of its desires, and the innocence of its ends, and the continuance of its employment. This is the verification of that great prophecy which Christ made, that [*in all the world the true worshippers should worship in spirit and in truth* ;] that is, with a pure mind, with holy desires, for spiritual things, according to the mind of the spirit, in the imitation of Christ's intercession, with perseverance, with charity or love. That is the spirit of God, and these are the spiritualities of the gospel, and the formalities of prayers as they are christian and evangelical.

7. Some men have thought of a seventh way, and explicate our praying in the spirit by a mere volubility of language: which indeed is a direct undervaluing the spirit of God and of Christ, *the spirit of manifestation and intercession* ; it is to return to the materiality and imperfection of the law; it is to worship God in outward forms, and to think that God's service consists in shells and rinds, in lips and voices, in shadows and images of things; it is to retire from Christ to *Moses*, and, at the best, it is going from real

graces to imaginary gifts. And when praying with the spirit hath in it so many excellences, and consists of so many parts of holiness, and sanctification, and is an act of the inner man; we shall be infinitely mistaken, if we let go this substance, and catch at the shadow, and sit down and rest in the imagination of an improbable, unnecessary, useless *gift of speaking*, to which the nature of many men, and the art of all learned men, and the very use and confidence of ignorant men, is too abundantly sufficient. Let us not so despise the spirit of Christ, as to make it no other than the breath of our lungs. For though it might be possible that at the first, and when forms of prayer were few and seldom, the spirit of God might dictate the very words to the apostles, and first Christians; yet it follows not that therefore he does so still to all that pretend praying with the spirit. For if he did not then, at the first, dictate words, (as we know not whether he did or no) why shall he be supposed to do so now? If he did then, it follows that he does not now; because his doing it then was sufficient for all men since: for so the forms taught by the spirit were patterns for others to imitate in all the descending ages of the church.

There was once an occasion so great, that the spirit of God did think it a work fit for him, to teach a man to weave silk, or embroider gold, or work in brass, (as it happened to *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab* :) But then every weaver or worker in brass, may, by the same reason, pretend that he works by the spirit, as that he prays by the spirit, if by *prayer* he means forming the words. For although in the case of working it was certain that the spirit did teach, in the case of inditing or forming the words it is not certain whether he did or no; yet because in both it was extraordinary, (if it was at all) and ever since in both it is infinitely needless; to pretend the spirit

in forms of every man's making, (even though they be of contrary religions, and pray one against the other) it may serve an end of a fantastick and hypochondriacal religion, or a secret ambition, but not the ends of God, or the honour of the spirit. The *Jews* in their declensions to folly and idolatry did worship the stone of imagination, that is, certain smooth images, in which, by art magick, pictures and little faces were represented, declaring hidden things and stolen goods; and God severely forbade this baseness.* But we also have taken up this folly, and worship the stone of imagination: we beget imperfect fantasm and speculative images in our fancy, and we fall down and worship them; never considering that the spirit of God never appears through such spectres. Prayer is one of the noblest exercises of christian religion; or rather it is that duty in which all graces are concentrated. Prayer is charity, it is faith, it is a conformity to God's will, a desiring according to the desires of heaven, an imitation of Christ's intercession, and prayer must suppose all holiness, or else it is nothing: and therefore all that in which men need God's spirit, all that is in order to prayer. Baptism is but a prayer, and the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper is but a prayer; a prayer of sacrifice representative, and a prayer of oblation, and a prayer of intercession, and a prayer of thanksgiving. And obedience is a prayer, and begs and procures blessings: and if the Holy Ghost hath sanctified the whole man, then he hath sanctified the prayer of the man, and not till then. And if ever there was, or could be any other praying with the spirit, it was such a one as a wicked man might have; and therefore it cannot be a note of distinc-

* Levit. xxvi. 1.

tion between the good and bad, between the saints and men of the world. But this only (which I have described from the fountains of scripture) is that which a good man can have, and therefore this is it in which we ought to rejoice; *that he that glories, may glory in the Lord.*

Thus, I have, (as I could) described the effluxes of the Holy Spirit upon us in his great channels. But the great effect of them is this: That as by the arts of the spirits of darkness and our own malice, our souls are turned into flesh, (not in the natural sense, but in the moral and theological,) and *animalis homo* is the same with *carnalis*, that is, his soul is a servant of the passions and desires of the flesh, and is *flesh* in its operations and ends, in its principles and actions: so, on the other side, by the grace of God, and the promise of the Father, and the influences of the Holy Ghost, our souls are not only recovered from the state of flesh, and reduced back to the intireness of animal operations, but they are heightened into *spirit*, and transformed into a *new nature*. And this is a new article, and now to be considered.

St. *Hierome* tells of the custom of the empire; when a tyrant was overcome, they used to break the head of his statues, and upon the same trunk to set the head of the conqueror, and so it passed wholly for the new prince. So it is in the kingdom of grace. As soon as the tyrant Sin is overcome, and a new heart is put into us, or that we serve under a new head, instantly we have a new name given us, and we are esteemed a new creation; and not only changed in manners, but we have a new nature within us, even a third part of an essential constitution. This may seem strange; and indeed it is so: and it is one of the great mysteriousnesses of the gospel. Every man naturally consists of soul and body;

but every christian man that belongs to Christ hath more: for he hath *body*, and *soul*, and *spirit*. My text is plain for it. *If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* And by [*spirit*] is not meant only the graces of God, and his gifts enabling us to do holy things: there is more belongs to a good man than so. But as when God made man, he made him *after his own image*, and breathed into him *the spirit of life*, and he was made *in animam viventem, into a living soul*: then he was made a man: So in the new creation, Christ, *by whom God made both the worlds*, intends to conform us to his image, and he hath given us *the spirit of adoption*, by which we are made sons of God; and by the spirit of a new life we are made *new creatures*, capable of a new state, entitled to another manner of duration, enabled to do new and greater actions in order to higher ends; we have new affections, new understandings, new wills: *Vetera transierunt, et ecce omnia nova facta sunt; All things are become new.* And this is called *the seed of God*, when it relates to the principle and cause of this production; But the thing that is produced is a *spirit*, and that is as much in nature beyond a soul, as a soul is beyond a body. This great mystery I should not utter but upon the greatest authority in the world, and from an infallible doctor, I mean *St. Paul*, who, from Christ, taught the church more secrets than all the whole college besides; [*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God that your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**] We are not sanctified wholly, nor preserved in safety, unless, besides our souls and bodies, our *spirit* also be kept blameless. This distinction is nice, and infinitely above human reason: but *The word of God*

* 1 Thess. v. 23.

(saith the same apostle) *is sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder the soul and the spirit*; * and that hath taught us to distinguish the principle of a new life from the principle of the old, the celestial from the natural; and thus it is.

The spirit (as I now discourse of it) is a principle infused into us by God when we become his children, whereby we live the life of grace, and understand the secrets of the kingdom, and have passions and desires of things beyond and contrary to our natural appetites, enabling us not only to sobriety, (which is the duty of the body) not only to justice which is the rectitude of the soul, but to such a sanctity as makes us like to God. For so saith the spirit of God; *Be ye holy, as I am: be pure, be perfect, as your heavenly Father is pure, as he is perfect*: which because it cannot be a perfection of degrees, it must be *in similitudine naturae*, in the likeness of that nature which God hath given us in the new birth, that by it we might resemble his excellency and holiness. And this I conceive to be the meaning of St. Peter, [*According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness; (that is, to this new life of godliness) through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature:†*] so we read it; but it is something mistaken: it is not the *της θειας φουσεως*, [*The Divine nature,*] for God's nature is indivisible, and incommunicable; but it is spoken *participative*, or *per analogiam*, [*partakers of a Divine nature,*] that is of this new and God-like nature given to every person that serves God, whereby he is sanctified and made the child of God, and framed into the likeness of Christ.

* Heb. iv. 12.

† 2 Epist. i. 3, 4.

The *Greeks* generally call this *χαρισμα*, a *gracious gift*, an extraordinary super-addition to nature; not a single gift in order to single purposes, but an universal principle; and it remains upon all good men during their lives, and after their death, and is that *white stone* spoken of in the Revelation, *and in it a new name written, which no man knoweth he that hath it* :* and by this, God's sheep at the day of judgment shall be discerned from goats. If their spirits be presented to God pure and unblameable, this great *χαρισμα*, this talent which God hath given to all Christians to improve in the banks of grace and of religion, if they bring this to God increased and grown up to the fulness of the measure of Christ, (for it is Christ's spirit; and as it is in us it is called *the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ*, † then we shall be acknowledged for sons, and our adoption shall pass into an eternal inheritance in the portion of our elder brother.

I need not to apply this discourse: the very mystery itself is in the whole world the greatest engagement of our duty that is imaginable, by way of instrument, and by the way of thankfulness.

Quisquis magna dedit, voluit sibi magna rependi; †

He that gives great things to us ought to have great acknowledgments: and *Seneca* said concerning wise men, That he that doth benefits to others, hides those benefits as a man lays up great treasures in the earth, which he must never see with his eyes unless a great occasion forces him to dig the graves, and produce that which he buried; but all the while the man was hugely rich, and he had the wealth of a

* Apoch. ii. 17. † Phil. i. 19.

‡ Large services a large return demand.

great relation. So it is with God and us: for this huge benefit of the spirit, which God gives us, is for our good deposited into our souls; not made for forms and ostentation, not to be looked upon, or serve little ends; but growing in the secret of our souls, and swelling up to a treasure making us in this world rich by title and relation, but it shall be produced in the great necessities of dooms-day. In the mean time, if the fire be quenched, the fire of God's spirit, God will kindle another in his anger that shall never be quenched: but if we entertain God's spirit with our own purities, and employ it diligently, and serve it willingly, (for God's spirit is a loving spirit) then we shall really be turned into spirits. *Irenaeus* had a proverbial saying, *Perfecti sunt qui tria sine querela Deo exhibent*: They that present three things right to God, they are perfect; that is, *a chaste body, a righteous soul, and a holy spirit*. And the event shall be this, which *Maimonides* expressed not amiss, (though he did not at all understand the secret of this mystery;) the soul of man in this life is *in potentia ad esse spiritum*, it is designed to be a spirit, but in the world to come it shall be actually as very a spirit as an angel is. And this state is expressed by the apostle, calling it [*the earnest of the spirit*:] that is, here it is begun, and given us as an antepast of glory, and a principle of grace; but then we shall have it *in plenitudine*.

—————regit idem spiritus artus
Orbe alio————*

Here and there it is the same; but *here* we have the earnest, *there* the riches and the inheritance.

* *Lucan. Lib. I. 456.*

The immortal soul survives in other worlds. A.

But then, if this be a new principle, and be given us in order to the actions of a holy life, we must take care that we receive not *the spirit of God in vain*, but remember that it is a new life: and as no man can pretend that a person is alive, that doth not always do the works of life; so it is certain no man hath the spirit of God, but he that lives the life of grace, and doth the works of the spirit, that is, *in all holiness, and justice and sobriety*.

Spiritus qui accedit animo, vel Dei est, vel daemonis (said *Tertullian*;) Every man hath within him the spirit of God or the spirit of the devil. The spirit of fornication is an unclean devil, and extremely contrary to the spirit of God; and so is the spirit of malice or uncharitableness; for the spirit of God is the spirit of love: for as by purities God's spirit sanctifies the body, so by love he purifies the soul, and makes the soul grow into a spirit, into a divine nature. But God knows that even in christian societies we see the devils walk up and down every day and every hour; the devil of uncleanness, and the devil of drunkenness; the devil of malice, and the devil of rage; the spirit of filthy-speaking, and the spirit of detraction, a proud spirit, and the spirit of rebellion: and yet all call [*Christian*.] It is generally supposed, that unclean spirits walk in the night; and so it used to be; *for they that are drunk, are drunk in the night*, said the apostle. But *Suidas* tells of certain *empusae* that used to appear at noon, at such times as the *Greeks* did celebrate the funerals of the dead; and at this day some of the *Russians* fear the *noon-day devil*, which appeareth like a mourning widow to reapers of hay and corn, and uses to break their arms and legs unless they worship her. The prophet *David* speaketh of both kinds: *Thou shalt not be afraid for the terrour by night; and, a ruina et daemonio meridiano. from the devil at*

*noon thou shalt be free.** It were happy if we were so: but besides the solemn followers of the works of darkness in the times and proper seasons of darkness, there are very many who act their scenes of darkness in the face of the sun, in open defiance of God, and all laws, and all modesty. There is in such men the spirit of impudence, as well as of impiety. And yet I might have expressed it higher; for every habitual sin doth not only put us into the power of the devil, but turns us into his very nature: just as the Holy Ghost transforms us into the image of God.

Here, therefore, I have a greater argument to persuade you to holy living than *Moses* had to the sons of *Israel*. *Behold, I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing*; so said *Moses*: but I add, that I have, upon the stock of this scripture, set before you the good Spirit and the bad, God and the devil: choose unto whose nature you will be likened, and into whose inheritance you will be adopted, and into whose possession you will enter. If you commit sin, *you are of your father the devil*, ye are begot of his principles, and follow his pattern, and shall pass into his portion, when ye are led captive by him at his will; and remember what a sad thing it is to go into the portion of evil and accursed spirits, the sad and eternal portion of devils. But he that hath the spirit of God, doth acknowledge God for his father and his lord, he despises the world, and hath no violent appetites for secular pleasures, and is dead to the desires of this life, and his hopes are spiritual, and God is his joy, and Christ is his pattern and support, and religion is his employment, and *godliness is his gain*: and this man understands the things of God, and is ready to die for Christ, and fears nothing but to sin against God; and his will is filled with

* Psal. xci. 5.

love, and it springs out in obedience to God, and in charity to his brother. And of such a man we cannot make judgment by his fortune, or by his acquaintance; by his circumstances, or by his adherences; for they are the appendages of a natural man: but *the spiritual is judged of no man*; that is, the rare excellencies that make him happy do not yet make him illustrious, unless we will reckon virtue to be a great fortune, and holiness to be great wisdom, and God to be the best friend, and Christ the best relative, and the spirit the hugest advantage, and heaven the greatest reward. He that knows how to value these things, may sit down and reckon the felicities of him that hath the spirit of God.

The purpose of this discourse is this; That since the spirit of God is a new nature, and a new life put into us, we are thereby taught and enabled to serve God by a constant course of holy living, without the frequent returns and intervening of such actions which men are pleased to call *sins of infirmity*. Whosoever hath the spirit of God lives the life of grace. The spirit of God rules in him, and is strong according to its age and abode, and allows not of those often sins which we think unavoidable, because we call them *natural infirmities*. [*But if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness.*] The state of sin is a state of death. The state of a man under the law was a state of bondage and infirmity, (as St. Paul largely describes him in the seventh chapter to the *Romans*;) but he that hath the spirit is made alive, and free and strong, and a conqueror over all the powers and violences of sin. Such a man resists temptations, falls not under the assault of sin, returns not to the sin which he last repented of, acts no more that error which brought him to shame and sorrow: but

he that falls under a crime to which he still hath a strong and vigorous inclination, he that acts his sin, and then curses it, and then is tempted, and then sins again, and then weeps again, and calls himself miserable, but still the enchantment hath confined him: to that circle; this man hath not the spirit: *for where the spirit of God is, there is liberty*; there is no such bondage, and a returning folly to the commands of sin. But because men deceive themselves with calling this bondage a *pitiabie and excusable infirmity*, it will not be useless to consider the state of this question more particularly, lest men, from the state of a *pretended infirmity*, fall into a *real death*.

I. No great sin is a *sin of infirmity*, or excusable upon that stock. But that it may be understood, we must know that every sin is in some sense or other a *sin of infirmity*. When a man is in the state of spiritual sickness or death, he is in a state of infirmity; for he is a wounded man, a prisoner, a slave, a sick man, weak in his judgment, and weak in his reasonings, impotent in his passions, of childish resolutions, great inconstancy, and his purposes untwist as easily as the rude conjuncture of uncombining cables in the violence of a Northern tempest: and he that is thus in infirmity cannot be excused: for it is the aggravation of the state of his sin; he is so infirm that he is in a state unable to do his duty. Such a man is a *servant of sin*, a slave of the devil, an heir of corruption, absolutely under command: and every man is so who resolves for ever to avoid such a sin, and yet for ever falls under it. For what can he be but a servant of sin, who fain would avoid it, but cannot? that is, he hath not the spirit of God within him; Christ dwells not in his soul; for *where the Son is, there is liberty*: and all that are in the spirit are the sons of God, and servants of righteousness, and therefore freed from sin. But then there are also

sins of infirmity which are single actions, intervening seldom, in little instances unavoidable, or through a faultless ignorance: Such as these are always the allays of the life of the best men; and for these Christ hath paid, and they are never to be accounted to good men, save only to make them more wary and more humble. Now concerning these it is that I say, No great sin is a sin of excusable or unavoidable infirmity: Because whosoever hath received the spirit of God, hath sufficient knowledge of his duty, and sufficient strengths of grace, and sufficient advertency of mind, to avoid such things as do great and apparent violence to piety and religion. No man can justly say, that it is a sin of infirmity that he was drunk: For there are but three causes of every sin, (a fourth is not imaginable.) 1. If *ignorance* cause it, the sin is as full of excuse as the ignorance was innocent. But no Christian can pretend this to drunkenness, to murder, to rebellion, to uncleanness. For what Christian is so uninstructed but that he knows adultery is a sin? 2. *Want of observation* is the cause of many indiscreet and foolish actions. Now at this gap many irregularities do enter and escape, because in the whole it is impossible for a man to be of so present a spirit, as to consider and reflect upon every word and every thought. But it is, in this case, in God's laws otherwise than in man's: the great flies cannot pass through without observation, little ones do; and a man cannot be drunk, and never take notice of it; or tempt his neighbour's wife before he be aware: therefore the less the instance is, the more likely is it to be a sin of infirmity: and yet if it be never so little, if it be observed, then it ceases to be a sin of infirmity. 3. But because great crimes cannot pretend to pass undiscernibly, it follows that they must come in at the door of *malice*, that is, of want of grace, in the absence of the spirit: they de-

stroy wherever they come, and the man dies if they pass upon him.

It is true, there is *flesh and blood* in every regenerate man, but they do not both rule: the flesh is left to tempt, but not to prevail. And it were a strange condition, if both the godly and the ungodly were captives to sin, and infallibly should fall into temptation and death, without all difference, save only that the godly sins *unwillingly*, and the ungodly sins *willingly*. But if the same things be done by both, and God in both be dishonoured, and their duty prevaricated, the pretended unwillingness is the sign of a greater and a baser slavery, and of a condition less to be endured: For the servitude which is against me is intolerable: but if I choose the state of a servant, I am free in my mind.

—————Libertatis servaveris umbram
Si quicquid jubeare velis—————*

Certain it is, that such a person who fain would, but cannot choose, but commit adultery or drunkenness, is the veriest slave to sin that can be imagined, and not at all freed by the spirit, and by the liberty of the sons of God:† and there is no other difference, but that the mistaken good man feels his slavery, and sees his chains and his fetters; but therefore it is certain that he is, because he sees himself to be, a slave. No man can be a servant of sin, and a servant of righteousness at the same time; but every man that hath the spirit of God is a servant of

* Of freedom still you will preserve the shade,
If prompt obedience be with pleasure paid. A.

† ——— Tot rebus iniquis
Parvum vieti: venia est hæc sola pudoris,
Degenerisque metus, nil jam potuisse negari. LUCAN.

No censure wounds when vanquish'd we obey,
From hard Necessity's imperious sway. A.

righteousness : and therefore whosoever find great sins to be unavoidable, are in a state of death and reprobation, (as to the present) because they willingly or unwillingly (it matters not much whether of the two) are servants of sin.

2. Sins of infirmity, as they are small in their instance, so they put on their degree of excusableness only according to the weakness or infirmity of a man's understanding. So far as men (without their own fault) understand not their duty, or are possessed with weakness of principles, or are destitute and void of discourse, or discerning powers and acts, so far if a sin creeps upon them, it is as natural, and as free from a law, as is the action of a child ; but if any thing else be mingled with it, if it proceed from any other principle, it is criminal, and not excused by our infirmity, because it is chosen ; and a man's will hath no infirmity, but when it wants the grace of God, or is mastered with passions and sinful appetites : and that infirmity is the state of unregeneration.

3. The violence or strength of a temptation is not sufficient to excuse an action, or to make it accountable upon the stock of a pitiable and innocent infirmity, if it leaves the understanding still able to judge ; because a temptation cannot have any proper strengths but from ourselves ; and because we have in us a principle of baseness which this temptation meets, and only persuades me to act, because I love it. *Joseph* met with a temptation as violent and as strong as any man ; and it is certain there are not many Christians but would fall under it, and call it a *sin of infirmity*, since they have been taught so to abuse themselves, by sewing fig-leaves before their nakedness : but because *Joseph* had a strength of God within him, the strength of chastity, therefore it could not at all prevail upon him. Some men cannot

by any art of hell be tempted to be drunk; others can no more resist an invitation to such a meeting, than they can refuse to die if a dagger were drunk with their heart-blood, because their evil habits made them weak on that part. And some man that is fortified against revenge, it may be will certainly fall under a temptation to uncleanness. For every temptation is great or small according as the man is; and a good word will certainly lead some men to an action of folly, while another will not think ten thousand pounds a considerable argument to make him tell one single lie against his duty or his conscience.

4. No habitual sin, that is, no sin that returns constantly or frequently; that is repented of and committed again, and still repented of, and then again committed; no such sin is excusable with a pretence of infirmity: because that sin is certainly noted, and certainly condemned, and therefore returns, not because of the weakness of nature, but the weakness of grace: the principle of this is an evil spirit, an habitual aversion from God, a dominion and empire of sin. And as no man for his inclinations and aptness to the sins of the flesh is to be called carnal, if he corrects his inclinations, and turns them into virtues: so no man can be called spiritual for his good wishes, and apt inclinations to goodness, if these inclinations pass not into acts, and these acts into habits, and holy customs and walkings and conversation with God. But as natural concupiscence corrected becomes the matter of virtue, so these good inclinations, and condemnings of our sin, if they be ineffective and end in sinful actions, are the perfect signs of a reprobate and unregenerated state.

The sum is this: an animal man, a man under the law, a carnal man, (for as to this they are all one) is sold under sin, he is a servant of corruption, he falls frequently into the same sin to which he is tempted,

he commends the law, he consents to it that it is good, he does not commend sin, he does some little things against it; but they are weak and imperfect, his lust is stronger, his passions violent and unmortified, his habits vicious, his customs sinful, and he lives in the regions of sin, and dies and enters into its portion. But a spiritual man, a man that is in a state of grace, who is born anew of the spirit, that is regenerate by the spirit of Christ, *he is led by the spirit*, he *lives*, in the spirit, he does the works of God cheerfully, habitually, vigorously; and although he sometimes slips, yet it is but seldom, it is in small instances; his life is such as he cannot pretend to be justified by works and merit, but by mercy and the faith of *Jesus Christ*; yet he never sins great sins: if he does, he is for that present *fallen from God's favour*; and though possibly he may recover, (and the smaller or seldomer the sin is, the sooner may be his restitution) yet for the present (I say) he is out of God's favour. But he that remains in the grace of God, sins not by any deliberate, consultive, knowing act: he is incident to such a surprise as may consist with the weakness and judgment of a good man; but whatsoever, is or must be considered, if it cannot pass without consideration, it cannot pass without sin, and therefore cannot enter upon him while he remains in that state. For *he that is in Christ, in him the body is dead by reason of sin*. And the gospel did not differ from the law, but that the gospel gives grace and strength to do whatsoever it commands; which the law did not: and the greatness of *the promise of eternal life* is such an argument to them that consider it, that it must needs be of force sufficient to persuade a man to use all his faculties and all his strength that he may obtain it. God exacted all upon this stock; God knew this could do every thing: *Nihil non in hoc praesumpsit Deus*, (said one.) This

will make a satyr chaste, and *Silenus* to be sober, and *Dives* to be charitable, and *Simon Magus* himself to despise reputation, and *Saul* to turn from a persecutor to an apostle. For since God hath given us reason to choose, and a promise to exchange for our temperance, and faith, and charity and justice, for these (I say) happiness, exceeding great happiness; that we shall be kings, that we shall reign with God, with Christ, with all the holy angels for ever, in felicity so great that we have not now capacities to understand it, our heart is not big enough to think it; there cannot in the world be a greater inducement to engage us, a greater argument to oblige us to do our duty. God hath not in heaven a bigger argument; it is not possible any thing in the world should be bigger. Which because the spirit of God hath revealed to us, if by this strength of his we walk in his ways, and be ingrafted into his stock, and bring forth his fruits, *the fruits of the spirit*, then *we are in Christ*, and *Christ in us*, then *we walk in the spirit*, and *the spirit dwells in us*, and our portion shall be there where *Christ by the spirit maketh intercession for us*, that is, at the right hand of his Father for ever and ever. *Amen.*

SERMON III.

THE

DESCENDING AND ENTAILED CURSES CUT OFF.

EXODUS XX. PART OF THE 5. VERSE.

I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me :

6. And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

IT is not necessary that a commonwealth should give pensions to orators, to dissuade men from running into houses infected with the plague, or to entreat them to be out of love with violent torments, or to create in men evil opinions concerning famine or painful deaths : every man hath a sufficient stock of self-love, upon the strength of which he hath entertained principles strong enough to secure himself against voluntary mischiefs and from running into states of death and violence. A man would think that this I have now said were in all cases certainly true ; and I would to God it were. For that which is the greatest evil, that which makes all evils, that which turns good into evil, and every natural evil into a greater sorrow and makes that sorrow lasting and perpetual ; that which sharpens the edge of swords, and makes agues to be fevers, and fevers to turn into plagues ; that which puts stings into every fly, and uneasiness to every trilling accident, and strings every whip with scorpions, (you know I must needs mean

sin; that evil men suffer patiently, and choose willingly, and run after it greedily, and will not suffer themselves to be divorced from it: and therefore God hath hired servants to fight against this evil; he hath set angels with fiery swords to drive us from it, he hath employed advocates to plead against it, he hath made laws and decrees against it, he hath dispatched prophets to warn us of it, and hath established an order of men, men of his own family, and who are fed at his own charges, (I mean the whole order of the clergy) whose office is like watchmen to give an alarm at every approach of sin, with as much affrightment as if an enemy were near, or the sea broke in upon the flat country; and all this only to persuade men not to be extremely miserable, for nothing, for vanity, for a trouble, for a disease: for some sins naturally are diseases, and all others are natural nothings, mere privations or imperfections, contrary to goodness, to felicity, to God himself. And yet God hath hedged sin round about with thorns, and sin of itself too brings thorns; and it abuses a man in all his capacities, and it places poison in all those seats and receptions where he could possibly entertain happiness. For if sin pretend to please the sense, it doth first abuse it shamefully, and then humours it: it can only feed an imposture; no natural, reasonable, and perfective appetite: and besides its own essential appendages and proprieties, things are so ordered, that a fire is kindled round about us, and every thing within us, above, below us, and on every side of us, is an argument against, and an enemy to sin; and for its single pretence, that it comes to please one of the senses, one of those faculties which are in us the same they are in a cow, it hath an evil so communicative, that it doth not only work like poison, to the dissolution of soul and body, but it is a sickness like the plague, it infects all our

houses, and corrupts the air and the very breath of heaven: for it moves God first to jealousy, (and that takes off his friendship and kindness towards us,) and then to anger; and that makes him a resolved enemy; and it brings evil, not only upon ourselves, but upon all our relatives, upon ourselves and our children, even the children of our nephews, *ad natos natorum, et qui nascentur ab illis*, to the third and fourth generation. And therefore if a man should despise the eye or sword of man, if he sins, he is to contest with the jealousy of a provoked God: if he doth not regard himself, let him pity his pretty children: if he be angry and hates all that he sees, and is not solicitous for his children, yet let him pity the generations which are yet unborn; let him not bring a curse upon his whole family, and suffer his name to rot in curses and dishonours; let not his memory remain polluted with an eternal stain. If all this will not deter a man from sin, there is no instrument left for that man's virtue, no hopes of his felicity, no recovery of his sorrows and sicknesses; but he must sink under the strokes of a jealous God into the dishonour of eternal ages, and the groanings of a never-ceasing sorrow.

God is a jealous God.] That is the first and great stroke he strikes against sin; he speaks after the manner of men; and in so speaking we know he that is *jealous*, is *suspicious*, he is *inquisitive*, he is *implacable*. 1. God is pleased to represent himself a person very *suspicious*, both in respect of persons and things. For our persons we give him cause enough: for we are sinners from our mother's womb: we make solemn vows, and break them instantly; we cry for pardon, and still renew the sin; we desire God to try us once more, and we provoke him ten times farther; we use the means of grace to cure us, and we turn them into vices and opportunities of

sin; we curse our sins, and yet long for them extremely; we renounce them publicly, and yet send for them in private and shew them kindness; we leave little offences, but our faith and our charity is not strong enough to master great ones; and sometimes we are ashamed out of great ones, but yet entertain little ones; or if we disclaim both, yet we love to remember them, and delight in their past actions, and bring them home to us, at least by fiction of imagination, and we love to be betrayed into them: we would fain have things so ordered by chance or power, that it may seem necessary to sin, or that it may become excusable, and dressed fitly for our own circumstances; and for ever we long after the flesh-pots of *Egypt*, the garlick and the onions: and we do so little esteem manna, the food of angels, we so loath the bread of heaven, that any temptation will make us return to our fetters and our bondage. And if we do not tempt ourselves, yet we do not resist a temptation; or if we pray against it, we desire not to be heard; and if we be assisted, yet we will not work together with those assistances; so that unless we be forced, nothing will be done. We are so willing to perish, and so unwilling to be saved, that we minister to God reason enough to suspect us, and therefore it is no wonder that God is jealous of us. We keep company with harlots and polluted persons; we are kind to all God's enemies, and love that which he hates: how can it be otherwise but that we should be suspected? Let us make our best of it, and see if we can recover the good opinion of God; for as yet we are but *suspected persons*. 2. And therefore God is *inquisitive*; he looks for that which he fain would never find: God sets spies upon us; he looks upon us himself through the curtains of a cloud, and he sends angels to espy us in all our ways, and permits the devil to winnow us and

to accuse us, and erects a tribunal and witnesses in our own consciences, and he cannot want information concerning our smallest irregularities. Sometimes the devil accuses: but he sometimes accuses us falsely, either maliciously, or ignorantly, and we stand upright in that particular by innocence; and sometimes by penitence; and all this while our conscience is our friend. Sometimes our conscience does accuse us unto God: and then we stand convicted by our own judgment. Sometimes, if our conscience acquit us, yet *we are not thereby justified*: for, as *Moses* accused the *Jews*, so do Christ and his apostles accuse us, not in their persons, but by their works and by their words, by the thing itself, by confronting the laws of Christ, and our practices. Sometimes the angels, who are the observers of all our works, carry up sad tidings to the court of heaven against us. Thus two angels were the informers against *Sodom*: but yet these were the last; for before that time the cry of their iniquity had sounded loud and sadly in heaven. And all this is the direct and proper effect of his jealousy, which sets spies upon all the actions, and watches the circumstances, and tells the steps and attends the business, the recreations, the publications and retirements of every man, and will not suffer a thought to wander, but he uses means to correct its error, and to reduce it to himself. For he that created us, and daily feeds us, he that entreats us to be happy, with an importunity so passionate as if not we, but himself, were to receive the favour; he that would part with his only Son from his bosom, and the embraces of eternity, and give him over to a shameful and cursed death for us, cannot but be supposed to love us with a great love, and to own us with an entire title, and therefore that he would fain secure us to himself with an undivided passion. And it cannot but be infinitely reasonable: for to whom else should

any of us belong but to God? Did the world create us? or did lust ever do us any good? Did Satan ever suffer one stripe for our advantage? Does not he study all the ways to ruin us? Do the sun or the stars preserve us alive? or do we get understanding from the angels? Did ever any joint of our body knit, or our heart ever keep one true minute of a pulse without God? Had not we been either nothing, or worse, that is, infinitely, eternally miserable, but that God made us capable, and then pursued us with arts and devices of great mercy to force us to be happy? Great reason therefore there is that God should be jealous lest we take any of our duty from him, who hath so strangely deserved it all, and give it to a creature, or to our enemy, who cannot be capable of any. But, however, it will concern us with much caution to observe our own ways, since *we are made a spectacle to God, to angels, and to men.* God hath set so many spies upon us, the blessed angels and the accursed devils, good men and bad men, the eye of heaven, and eye of that eye, God himself, all watching lest we rob God of his honour, and ourselves of our hopes. For by this prime intention he hath chosen so to get his own glory, as may best consist with our felicity: his great design is to be glorified in our being saved. 3. God's jealousy hath a sadder effect than all this. For all this is for mercy; but if we provoke this jealousy, if he finds us in our spiritual whoredoms, he is *implacable*, that is, he is angry with us to eternity, unless we return in time: and if we do, it may be he will not be appeased in all instances; and when he forgives us, he will make some reserves of his wrath; he will punish our persons or our estate, he will chastise us at home or abroad, in our bodies or in our children; for he will visit our sins upon our children from generation to generation: and if they be made miserable

for our sins, they are unhappy in such parents; but we bear the curse and the anger of God, even while they bear his rod. *God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children.* That is the second great stroke he strikes against sin, and is now to be considered.

That God doth so is certain, because he saith he doth: and that this is just in him so to do, is also as certain therefore because he doth it. For as his laws are our measures, so his actions and his own will are his own measures. He that hath right over all things, and all persons, cannot do wrong to any thing. He that is essentially just, (and there could be no such thing as justice, or justice itself could not be good, if it did not derive from him) it is impossible for him to be unjust. But since God is pleased to speak after the manner of men, it may well consist with our duty to inquire into those manners of consideration whereby we may understand the equity of God in this proceeding, and to be instructed also in our own danger if we persevere in sin.

1. No man is made *a sinner* by the fault of another man without his own consent: for to every one God gives his choice, and *sets life and death before* every of the sons of *Adam*; and therefore this death is not a consequent to any sin, but our own. In this sense it is true, that if *the fathers eat sour grapes, the children's teeth shall not be set on edge*: and therefore the sin of *Adam*, which was derived to all the world, did not bring the world to any other death but temporal, by intermedial stages of sickness and temporal infelicities. And it is not said that *sin passed upon all men, but death*; and that also no otherwise but *εφ' ὅ πάντες ἡμαρτον*, *in as much as all men have sinned*; as they have followed the steps of their father, so they are partakers of this death. And therefore it is very remarkable, that death brought in by sin was nothing *superinduced* to man; man only was *reduced* to his own natural condition, from which

before *Adam's* fall he stood exempted by supernatural favour: and therefore although the taking away that extraordinary grace or privilege was a punishment; yet the suffering the natural death was directly none, but a condition of his creation, natural, and therefore not primarily evil; but if not good, yet at least indifferent. And the truth and purpose of this observation will extend itself, if we observe, that before any man died, Christ was promised, by whom death was to lose its sting, by whom death did cease to be an evil, and was, or might be, if we do belong to Christ, a state of advantage. So that we by occasion of *Adam's* sin, being returned to our natural certainty of dying, do still even in this very particular stand between the blessing and the cursing. If we follow Christ, death is our friend: If we imitate the prevarication of *Adam*, then death becomes an evil; the condition of our nature becomes the punishment of *our own sin*, not of *Adam's*. For although his sin brought death in, yet it is only our sin that makes death to be evil. And I desire this to be observed, because it is of great use in vindicating the Divine justice in the matter of this question. The material part of the evil came from our father upon us; but the formality of it, the sting and the curse, is only by ourselves.

2. For the fault of others many may become *miserable*, even all or any of those whose relation is such to the sinner, that he in any sense may by such inflictions be punished, execrable or oppressed. Indeed it were strange, if when a plague were in *Aethiopia*, the *Athenians* should be infected; or if the house of *Pericles* were visited, *Thucydides* should die for it. For although there are some evils which (as *Plutarch* saith) are *ansis et propagationibus praedita, incredibili celeritate in longinquum penetrantia*, such which can dart evil influences, as porcupines do their

quills: yet as at so great distances the knowledge of any confederate events must needs be uncertain; so it is also useless, because we neither can join their causes, nor their circumstances, nor their accidents into any neighbourhood of conjunction. Relations are seldom noted at such distances; and if they were, it is certain so many accidents will intervene, that will outweigh the efficacy of such relations, that by any so far distant events we cannot be instructed in any duty, nor understand ourselves reprov'd for any fault. But when the relation is nearer, and is joined under such a head and common cause, that the influence is perceived, and the parts of it do usually communicate in benefit, notices, or infelicity, (especially if they relate to each other as superiour and inferiour) then it is certain the sin is infectious I mean not only in example, but also in punishment.

And of this I shall shew. 1. In what instances usually it is so. 2. For what reasons it is so, and justly so. 3. In what degree, and in what cases it is so. 4. What remedies there are for this evil.

1. It is so in kingdoms, in churches, in families, in political, artificial, and even in accidental societies.

When *David* numbered the people, God was angry with him; but he punished the people for the crime; seventy thousand men died of the plague. And when God gave to *David* the choice of three plagues, he chose that of the pestilence, in which the meanest of the people, and such which have the least society with the acts and crimes of kings, are most commonly devoured; whilst the powerful and sinning persons, by arts of physick, and flight, by provisions of nature, and accidents, are more commonly secured. But the story of the kings of *Israel* hath furnished us with an example fitted with all the stranger circumstances in this question. *Joshua* had sworn

to the *Gibeonites* (who had craftily secured their lives by exchanging it for their liberties :) almost five hundred years after, *Saul*, in zeal to the men of *Israel* and *Judah*, slew many of them. After this, *Saul* dies, and no question was made of it. But in the days of *David*, there was a famine in the land three years together; and God being inquired of, said, it was because of *Saul* his killing the *Gibeonites*.* What had the people to do with their king's fault? or, at least, the people of *David* with the fault of *Saul*? That we shall see anon. But see the way that was appointed to expiate the crime and the calamity. *David* took seven of *Saul's* sons, and hanged them up against the sun; and after that God was intreated for the land. The story observes one circumstance more: that for the kindness of *Jonathan*, *David* spared *Mephibosheth*. Now this story doth not only instance in kingdoms, but in families too. The father's fault is punished upon the sons of the family, and the king's fault upon the people of his land; even after the death of the king, after the death of the father. Thus God visited the sin of *Ahab* partly upon himself, partly upon his sons. *I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.*† Thus did God slay the child of *Bathsheba* for the sin of his father *David*: and the whole family of *Eli*, all his kindred of the nearer lines, were thrust from the priesthood, and a curse made to descend upon his children for many ages, *that all the males should die young, and in the flower of their youth.* The boldness and impiety of *Cham* made his posterity to be accursed, and brought slavery into the world. Because *Amalek* fought with the sons of *Israel* at *Rephidim*, God took up a quarrel against the nation for ever. And above all examples

* 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

† 1 Kings xxi. 29.

is that of the *Jews*, who put to death *the Lord of life*, and made their nation to be an anathema for ever, until the day of restitution: *His blood be upon us, and upon our children.* If we shed innocent blood, if we provoke God to wrath, if we oppress the poor, if we *crucify the Lord of life again, and put him to an open shame*, the wrath of God will be upon us and upon our children, to make us a cursed family; and we are the sinners, to be the stock and original of the curse; the pedigree of the misery shall derive from us.

This last instance went farther than the other of families and kingdoms. For not only the single families of the *Jews* were made miserable for their fathers' murdering the Lord of life, nor also was the nation alone extinguished for the sins of their rulers, but the religion was removed; it ceased to be God's people; the synagogue was rejected, and her veil rent, and her privacies dismantled, and the Gentiles were made to be God's people, when the *Jews'* inclosure was disparted. I need not farther to instance this proposition in the case of national churches; though it is a sad calamity that is fallen upon all the seven churches of *Asia*, (to whom the spirit of God wrote seven epistles by Saint *John*) and almost all the churches of *Africa*, where Christ was worshipped, and now *Mahomet* is thrust in substitution, and the people are servants, and the religion is extinguished, or where it remains it shines like the moon in an eclipse, or like the least spark of the *Pleiades*, seen but seldom, and that rather shining like a glow-worm than a taper enkindled with a beam of the sun of righteousness. I shall add no more instances to verify the truth of this, save only I shall observe to you, that even there is danger in being in evil company, in suspected places, in the civil societies and fellowship of wicked men.

———*Vetabo, qui Cereris sacrum
Vulgarit arcanae, sub iisdem
Sit trabibus, fragilemque mecum
Solvat phaselum. Saepe Diespiter
Neglectus, ineesto addidit integrum.**

And it happened to the mariners who carried *Jonah*, to be in danger with a horrid storm, because *Jonah* was there who had sinned against the Lord. Many times the sin of one man is punished by the falling of a house or a wall upon him, and then all the family are like to be crushed with the same ruin: so dangerous, so pestilential, so infectious a thing is sin, that it scatters the poison of its breath to all the neighbourhood, and makes that the man ought to be avoided like a person infected with the plague.

Next I am to consider, Why this is so, and why it is justly so. To this I answer, 1. Between kings and their people, parents and their children, there is so great a necessitude, propriety, and intercourse of nature, dominion, right and possession, that they are by God and the laws of nations reckoned as their goods and their blessings. *The honour of a king is in the multitude of his people; and, children are a gift that cometh of the Lord, and, happy is that man that hath his quiver full of them: and, Lo thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord; his wife shall be like the fruitful vine by the walls of his house, his children like olive-branches round about his table.* Now if children be a blessing, then to take them away in anger, is a curse:

* Hor. Lib. III. Od. ii. 26.

To silence due rewards we give,

And they, who mysteries reveal,

Beneath my roof shall never live,

Shall never hoist with me the doubtful sail.

When Jove in anger strikes the blow,

Oft with the bad the righteous bleed.

FRANCIS.

and if the loss of flocks and herds, the burning of houses, the blasting of fields be a curse: how much greater is it to lose our children, and to see God slay them before our eyes, in hatred to our persons, and detestation and loathing of our baseness? When *Job's* messengers told him the sad stories of fire from heaven, the burning his sheep, and that the *Sabeans* had driven his oxen away, and the *Chaldeans* had stolen his camels; these were sad arrests to his troubled spirit: but it was reserved as the last blow of that sad execution, that the ruins of a house had crushed his sons and daughters to their graves. Sons and daughters are greater blessings than sheep and oxen: they are not servants of profit, as sheep are, but they secure greater ends of blessing; they preserve your names; they are so many titles of provision and providence; every new child is a new title of God's care of that family: they serve the ends of honour, of commonwealths and kingdoms; they are images of our souls, and images of God, and therefore are great blessings; and by consequence, they are great riches, though they are not to be sold for money: and surely he that hath a cabinet of invaluable jewels, will think himself rich, though he never sells them. *Does God take care for oxen?* (said our blessed Saviour) much more for you: yea all and every one of your children are of more value than many oxen. When therefore God for your sins strikes them with crookedness, with deformity, with foolishness, with impertinent and caitive spirits, with hasty or sudden deaths; it is a greater curse to you than to lose whole herds of cattle, of which (it is certain) most men would be very sensible. They are our goods; they are our blessings from God; therefore we are stricken when for our sakes they die. Therefore we may properly be punished by evils happening to our relatives.

2. But as this is a *punishment to us*, so it is *not unjust as to them*, though they be innocent. For all the calamities of this life are incident to the most godly persons in the world: and since the King of heaven and earth was made *a man of sorrows*, it cannot be called unjust or intolerable that innocent persons should be pressed with temporal infelicities; only in such cases we must distinguish the misery from the punishment; for that all the world dies is a punishment of *Adam's sin*; but it is no evil to those single persons that *die in the Lord*, for they are blessed in their death. *Jonathan* was killed the same day with his father the king; and this was a punishment to *Saul* indeed, but to *Jonathan* it was a blessing; for since God had appointed the kingdom to his neighbour, it was more honourable for him to die fighting the Lord's battle, than to live and see himself the lasting testimony of God's curse upon his father, who lost the kingdom from his family by his disobedience. That death is a blessing which ends an honourable, and prevents an inglorious life. And our children, (it may be) shall be sanctified by a sorrow, and purified by the fire of affliction, and they shall receive the blessing of it; but it is to their fathers a curse, who shall wound their own hearts with sorrow, and cover their heads with a robe of shame, for bringing so great evil upon their house. 3. God hath many ends of providence to serve in this dispensation of his judgments. 1. He expresses the highest indignation against sin, and makes his examples lasting, communicative, and of great effect; it is a little image of hell; and we shall the less wonder that God with the pains of eternity punishes the sins of time, when with our eyes we see him punish a transient action with a lasting judgment. 2. It arrests the spirits of men, and surprises their loosenesses, and restrains their gayety, when we observe that the judgments of

God find us out in all relations, and turn our comforts into sadness, and make our families the scene of sorrows, and we can escape him no where : and by sin are made obnoxious, not alone to personal judgments, but are made like the fountains of the Dead Sea, springs of the lake of Sodom ; instead of refreshing our families with blessings, we leave them brimstone, and drought, and poison, and an evil name, and the wrath of God, and a treasure of wrath, and their father's sins, for their portion and inheritance. Naturalists say, that when the leading goats in the Greek islands have taken an *eryngus* or sea holly, into their mouths, all the herd will stand still, till the herdsman comes and forces it out, as apprehending the evil that will come to them all, if any of them, especially their principals, taste an unwholesome plant. And indeed it is of a general concernment, that the master of a family, or the prince of a people, from whom as from a fountain many issues do derive upon their relatives, should be springs of health, and sanctity, and blessing. It is a great right and propriety that a king hath in his people, or a father in his children, that even their sins can do these a mischief not only by a direct violence, but by the execution of God's wrath. God hath made strange bands and vessels, or channels of communication between them, when even the anger of God shall be conveyed by the conduits of such relations. That would be considered. It binds them nearer than our new doctrine will endure. But it also binds us to pray for them, and for their holiness, and good government, as earnestly as he would to be delivered from death, or sickness, or poverty, or war, or the wrath of God in any instance. 3. This also will satisfy the fearfulness of such persons who think the evil prosperous, and *call the proud happy*. No man can be called happy till he be dead ; nor then neither, if he lived

viciously. Look how God handles him in his children, in his family, in his grand-children: and as it tells that generation which sees the judgment, that God was all the while angry with him; so it supports the spirits of men in the interval, and entertains them with the expectation of a certain hope: for if I do not live to see his sin punished, yet his posterity may find themselves accursed, and feel their father's sins in their own calamity; and the expectation or belief of that may relieve my oppression, and ease my sorrows, while I know that God will bear my injury in a lasting record, and, when I have forgot it, will bring it forth to judgment. The *Athenians* were highly pleased when they saw honours done to the posterity of *Cimon*, a good man, and a rare citizen, but murdered for being wise and virtuous: and when at the same time they saw a decree of banishment pass against the children of *Lacharis* and *Aristo* they laid their hands upon their mouths, and with silence did admire the justice of the power above.

The sum of this is; That in sending evils upon the posterity of evil men, God serves many ends of providence, some of wisdom, some of mercy, some of justice, and contradicts none. For the evil of the innocent son is the father's punishment upon the stock of his sin, and his relation; but the sad accident happens to the son, upon the score of nature, and many ends of providence and mercy. To which I add, that if any, even the greatest temporal evil may fall upon a man, as blindness did upon the blind man in the gospel when *neither he nor his parents have sinned*; much more may it do so when his parents have, though he have not. For there is a nearer or more visible commensuration of justice between the parent's sin and the son's sickness, than between the evil of the son and the innocence of father and son together. The dispensation therefore is righteous and severe.

3. I am now to consider in what degree and in what cases this is usual, or to be expected. It is in the text instanced in the matter of worshipping images. God is so jealous of his honour, that he will not suffer an image of himself to be made, lest the image dishonour the substance; nor any image of a creature to be worshipped, though with a less honour, lest that less swell up into a greater. And he that is thus jealous of his honour, and therefore so instances it, is also very curious of it in all other particulars: and though to punish the sins of fathers upon the children be more solemnly threatened in this sin only, yet we find it inflicted indifferently in any other great sin, as appears in the former precedents.

This one thing I desire to be strictly observed; That it is with much error and great indiligence usually taught in this question, that the wrath of God descends from fathers to children only in case the children imitate and write after their father's copy; supposing these words [*of them that hate me*] to relate to the children. But this is expressly against the words of the text, and the examples of the thing. God afflicts good children of evil parents for their fathers sins; and the words are plain and determinate, God visits the sins of the fathers *in tertiam et quartam generationem eorum qui oderunt me*, to the third generation of them, of those fathers that hate me; that is, upon the great-grand-children of such parents. So that if the great-grand-fathers be haters of God and lovers of iniquity, it may entail a curse upon so many generations, though the children be haters of their fathers hatred, and lovers of God. And this hath been observed even by wise men among the heathens, whose stories tell, that *Antigonus* was punished for the tyranny of his father *Demetrius*, *Phyleus* for his father *Augeas*, pious and wise

Nestor for his father *Ncleus*: And it was so in the case of *Jonathan*, who lost the kingdom and his life upon the stock of his father's sins; and the innocent child of *David* was slain by the anger of God, not against the child, who never had deserved it, but the father's adultery. I need not here repeat what I said in vindication of the Divine justice; but I observed this, to represent the danger of a sinning father or mother, when it shall so infect the family with curses, that it shall ruin a wise and an innocent son; and that virtue and innocence, which shall by God be accepted as sufficient through the Divine mercy to bring the son to heaven, yet it may be shall not be accepted to quit him from feeling the curse of his father's crime in a load of temporal infelicities: and who but a villain would ruin and undo a wise, a virtuous, and his own son? But so it is in all the world. A traitor is condemned to suffer death himself, and his posterity are made beggars and dishonourable: his escutcheon is reversed, his arms of honour are extinguished, the nobleness of his ancestors is forgotten: but his own sin is not, while men, by the characters of infamy, are taught to call that family accursed which had so base a father. *Tiresias* was esteemed unfortunate, because he could not see his friends and children: the poor man was blind with age. But *Athamas* and *Agave* were more miserable, who did see their children, but took them for lions and stags: the parents were miserably frantick. But of all they deplored the misery of *Hercules*, who, when he saw his children, took them for enemies, and endeavoured to destroy them. And this is the case of all vicious parents. That a man's enemies were they of his own house, was accounted a great calamity: but it is worse, when we love them tenderly and fondly, and yet do them all the despite we wish to enemies. But so it is, that in many cases

we do more mischief to our children, than if we should strangle them when they are newly taken from their mother's knees, or tear them in pieces as *Medea* did her brother *Absyrtus*. For to leave them to inherit a curse, to leave them to an entailed calamity, a misery, a disease, the wrath of God for an inheritance, that it may descend upon them, and remark the family like their coat of arms; is to be the parent of evil, the ruin of our family, the causes of mischief to them who ought to be dearer to us than our own eyes. And let us remember this when we are tempted to provoke the jealous God; let us consider, that his anger hath a progeny, and a descending line, and it may break out in the days of our nephews. A *Greek* woman was accused of adultery, because she brought forth a blackmoor; and could not acquit herself, till she had proved that she had descended in the fourth degree from an *Aethiopian*: Her great-grand-father was a moor. And if naturalists say true, that nephews are very often liker to their grand-fathers than to their fathers; we see that the semblance of our souls and the character of the person is conveyed by secret and undiscernible conveyances. Natural production conveys original sin; and therefore, by the channels of the body, it is not strange that men convey an hereditary sin. And lustful sons are usually born to satyrs; and monsters of intemperance to drunkards; and there are also hereditary diseases; which if in the fathers they were effects of their sin, as it is in many cases, it is notorious, that the father's sin is punished, and the punishment conveyed by natural instruments. So that it cannot be a wonder, but it ought to be a huge affrightment from a state of sin; if a man can be capable of so much charity as to love himself in his own person, or in the images of his nature, and heirs of his fortunes, and the supports of

his family, in the children that God hath given him. Consider therefore, that you do not only act your own tragedies when you sin, but you represent and effect the fortune of your children, you slay them with your own barbarous and inhuman hands. Only be pleased to compare the variety of estates, of your own and your children. If they on earth be miserable many times for their father's sins, how great a state of misery is that in hell which they suffer for their own? And how vile a person is that father or mother, who for a little money, or to please a lust, will be a parricide, and imbrue his hands in the blood of his own children.



SERMON IV.

PART II.

4. I AM to consider, what remedies there are for sons to cut off this entail of curses; and whether, and by what means it is possible for sons to prevent the being punished for their father's sins. And since this thing is so perplexed and intricate, hath so easy an objection, and so hard an answer, looks so like a cruelty, and so unlike a justice, (though it be infinitely just, and very severe, and a huge enemy to sin;) it cannot be thought but that there are not only ways left to reconcile God's proceeding to the strict rules of justice, but also the condition of man to the possibilities of God's usual mercies. One said of old, *Ex tarditate si Dii sontes praetereant, et insonites plectant, justitiam suam non sic rectè resarciunt*: If God be so slow to punish the guilty, that the punishment be deferred till the death of the guilty person; and that God shall be forced to punish the innocent, or to let the sin quite escape unpunished;

it will be something hard to join that justice with mercy, or to join that action with justice. Indeed it will seem strange, but the reason of its justice I have already discoursed: if now we can find how to reconcile this to Gods mercy too, or can learn how it may be turned into a mercy, we need to take no other care, but that for our own particular we take heed we never tempt God's anger upon our families, and that by competent and apt instruments we endeavour to cancel the decree, if it be gone out against our families; for then we make use of that severity which God intended; and ourselves shall be refreshed in the shades, and by the cooling brooks of the Divine mercy, even then when we see the wrath of God breaking out upon the families round about us.

First, the first means to cut off the entail of wrath and cursings from a family is, for the sons to disavow those signal actions of impiety in which their fathers were deeply guilty, and by which they stained great parts of their life, or have done something of very great unworthiness and disreputation. *Si quis patris vitii nascitur haeres, nascitur et poenae*: The heir of his father's wickedness, is the heir of his father's curse. And a son comes to inherit a wickedness from his father, three ways.

1. By approving, or any ways consenting to his father's sin: as by speaking of it without regret or shame; by pleasing himself in the story; or by having an evil mind, apt to counsel or do the like, if the same circumstances should occur. For a son may contract a sin, not only by derivation and the contagion of example, but by approbation; not only by a corporal, but by a virtual contact; not only by transcribing an evil copy, but by commending it: and a man may have *animum leprosum in cute munda*, a leprous and a polluted mind even for nothing, even for an empty and ineffectual lust. An evil mind may contract the curse of an evil action. And though

the son of a covetous father prove a prodigal ; yet if he loves his father's vice for ministering to his vanity, he is disposed not only to a judgment for his own prodigality, but also to the curse of his father's avarice.

2. The son may inherit the father's wickedness by imitation and direct practice ; and then the curse is like to come to purpose : a curse by accumulation, a treasure of wrath : and then the children, as they arrive to the height of wickedness by a speedy passage, as being thrust forward by an active example, by countenance, by education, by a seldom restraint, by a remiss discipline ; so they ascertain a curse to the family, by being a perverse generation, a family set up in opposition against God, by continuing and increasing the provocation.

3. Sons inherit their fathers crimes by receiving and enjoying the purchases of their rapine, injustice and oppression, by rising upon the ruin of their fathers souls, by sitting warm in the furs which their fathers stole, and walking in the grounds which are watered with the tears of oppressed orphans and widows. Now in all these cases the rule holds. *If the son inherits the sin, he cannot call it unjust, if he inherits also his father's punishment.* But to rescind the fatal chain, and break in sunder the line of God's anger, a son is tied in all these cases to disavow his father's crime. But because the cases are several, he must also in several manners do it.

1. Every man is bound not to glory in or speak honour of the powerful and unjust actions of his ancestors : but as all the sons of *Adam* are bound to be ashamed of that original stain which they derived from the loins of their abused father, they must be humbled in it, they must deplore it as an evil mother, and a troublesome daughter : so must children account it amongst the crosses of their family, and the stains of their honour, that they passed through so

impure channels, that in the sense of morality as well as nature, they can *say to corruption, thou art my father, and to rottenness, thou art my mother*. I do not say that sons are bound to publish or declaim against their father's crimes, and to speak of their shame in *piuzzas* and before *tribunals*; that indeed were a sure way to bring their father's sins upon their own heads, by their own faults. No: like *Shem* and *Japhet*, they must go backward, and cast a veil upon their nakedness and shame, lest they bring the curse of their father's angry dishonour upon their own impious and unrelenting heads. *Noah's* drunkenness fell upon *Ham's* head, because he did not hide the openness of his father's follies: he made his father ridiculous; but did not endeavour either to amend the sin, or to wrap the dishonour in a pious covering. He that goes to disavow his father's sin by publishing his shame, hides an ill face with a more ugly vizard, and endeavours by torches and fantastick lights to quench the burning of that house which his father set on fire: these fires are to be smothered, and so extinguished. I deny not, but it may become the piety of a child to tell a sad story, to mourn, and represent a real grief for so great a misery, as is a wicked father or mother: but this is to be done with a tenderness as nice as we would dress an eye withal; it must be only with desigus of charity, of counsel, of ease, and with much prudence, and a sad spirit. These things being secured, that which in this case remains is, that with all intercourses between God and ourselves we disavow the crime.

Children are bound to pray to God to sanctify, to cure, to forgive their parents: and even concerning the sins of our fore-fathers the church hath taught us in her litanies, to pray that God would be pleased to forgive them, so that neither we nor they may sink under the wrath of God for them.

[Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our fore-fathers, neither take thou vengeance of our sins:] Ours in common and conjunction. And David confessed to God, and humbled himself for the sins of his ancestors and decessors: *Our fathers have done amiss, and dealt wickedly, neither kept they thy great goodness in remembrance, but were disobedient at the sea, even at the Red Sea. So did good king Josiah. Great is the wrath of the Lord which is kindled against us because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book.** But this is to be done between God and ourselves: or if in publick, then to be done by general accusation; that God only may read our particular sorrows in the single shame of our families registered in our hearts, and represented to him with humiliation, shame, and a hearty prayer.

2. Those curses, which descend from the fathers to the children, by imitation of the crimes of their progenitors, are to be cut off by special and personal repentance and prayer, as being a state directly opposite to that which procured the curse: and if the sons be pious, or return to an early and severe course of holy living, they are to be remedied as other innocent and pious persons are, who are sufferers under the burthens of their relatives, whom I shall consider by and by. Only observe this; that no publick or imaginative disavowings, no ceremonial and pompous rescision of our fathers crimes, can be sufficient to interrupt the succession of the curse, if the children do secretly practise or approve what they in pretence or ceremony disavow. And this is clearly proved, (and it will help to explicate that difficult saying of our blessed Saviour,) *Wo unto you, for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they killed them, and ye build their sepul-*

* 2 Kings xxii. 13

chres :* that is, the Pharisees were huge hypocrites, and adorned the monuments of the martyr-prophets, and in words disclaimed their fathers sin, but in deeds and design they approved it. 1. Because they secretly wished all such persons dead ; *volebant mortuos quos nolent superstites*. In charity to themselves some men wish their enemies in heaven, and would be at charges for a monument for them, that their malice, and their power, and their bones might rest in the same grave ; and yet that wish and that expense is no testimony of their charity, but of their anger. 2. These men were willing that the monuments of those prophets should remain, and be a visible affrightment to all such bold persons and severe reproachers as they were ; and therefore they builded their sepulchres, to be as beacons and publications of danger to all honest preachers. And this was the account Saint *Chrysostom* gave of the place. 3. To which also the circumstances of the place concur. For *they* only said, *If they had lived in their fathers days they would not have done as they did* : † but it is certain they approved it, because they pursued the same courses : and therefore our blessed Saviour calls them γενναυ ατιςλειουσαν, not only the children of them that did kill the prophets, but a killing generation ; the sin also descends upon you, for ye have the same killing mind : and although you honour them that are dead, and cannot shame you ; yet you design the same usages against them that are alive, even against the Lord of the prophets, against Christ himself, whom ye will kill. And as *Dion* said of *Caraculla*, πασι τοις κγαθοις ανδρασιν αχθουμενοσ, τιμαν τινασ αυταν αποθανωντασ επατιτεσ. *The man was troublesome to all good men when they were alive, but did them honour when they were dead* : and when *Herod* had killed *Aristobulus*, yet he made him a most magnificent funeral : So because the Pharisees were

* Luke xi. 47, 48.

† Mat. xxiii. 30.

of the same humour, therefore our blessed Saviour bids them to *fill up the measure of their fathers iniquity* ;* for they still continued the malice, only they painted it over with a pretence of piety, and of disavowing their fathers sin ; which if they had done really, their being children of persecutors (much less the *adorning of the prophets sepulchres*) could not have been just cause of a wo from Christ ; this being an act of piety, and the other of nature, inevitable and not chosen by them, and therefore not chargeable upon them. He therefore that will to real purposes disavow his father's crimes, must do it heartily and humbly, and charitably, and throw off all affections to the like actions. For he that finds fault with his father for killing *Isaiah* or *Jeremy*, and himself shall kill *Aristobulus* and *John the Baptist* : he that is angry because the old prophets were murdered, and shall imprison and beggar and destroy the new ones ; he that disavows the persecution in the primitive times, and honours the memory of the dead martyrs, and yet every day makes new ones ; he that blames the oppression of the country by any of his predecessors, and yet shall continue to oppress his tenants, and all that are within his gripe ; that man cannot hope to be eased from the curse of his father's sins ; he goes on to imitate them, and therefore to fill up their measure, and to reap up a full treasure of wrath.

3. But concerning the third there is yet more difficulty. Those sons that inherit their father's sins by possessing the price of their father's souls, that is, by enjoying the goods gotten by their father's rapine, may certainly quit the inheritance of the curse, if they quit the purchase of the sin, that is, if they pay their father's debts ; his debts of contract, and his debts of justice ; his debts of intercourse, and his debts of oppression. I do not say that every

* Matt. xxiii. 32.

man is bound to restore all the land which his ancestors have unjustly snatched: for when by law the possession is established, though the grand-father entered like a thief, yet the grand-child is *bonae fidei possessor*, and may enjoy it justly. And the reasons of this are great and necessary: for the avoiding eternal suits, and perpetual diseases of rest and conscience; because there is no estate in the world that could be enjoyed by any man honestly, if posterity were bound to make restitution of all the wrongs done by their progenitors. But although the children of the far-removed lines are not obliged to restitution, yet others are: and some for the same, some for other reasons.

1. Sons are tied to restore what their fathers did usurp, or to make agreement and an acceptable recompense for it, if the case be visible, evident and notorious, and the oppressed party demands it: because in this case the law hath not settled the possession in the new tenant; or if a judge hath, it is by injury; and there is yet no collateral accidental title transferred by long possession, as it is in other cases: and therefore if the son continues to oppress the same person whom his father first injured, he may well expect to be the heir of his father's curse, as well as of his cursed purchase.

2. Whether by law and justice, or not, the person be obliged, nay, although by all the solemnities of law the unjust purchase be established, and that in conscience the grand-children be not obliged to restitution in their own particulars, but may continue to enjoy it without a new sin; yet if we see a curse descending upon the family for the old oppression done in the days of our grand-fathers, or if we probably suspect that to be the cause; then, if we make restitution, we also most certainly remove the curse, because we take away the matter upon which the curse

is grounded. I do not say, we sin, if we do not restore: but that, if we do not, we may still be punished. The reason of this is clear and visible: For as without our faults, in many cases, we may enjoy those lands which our forefathers got unjustly; so without our faults we may be punished for them. For as they have transmitted the benefit to us, it is but reasonable we should suffer the appendant calamity. If we receive good, we must also venture the evil that comes along with it. *Res transit cum suo onere*: All lands and possessions pass with their proper burthens. And if any of my ancestors was a tenant, and a servant, and held his lands as a villain to his lord; his posterity also must do so, though accidentally they become noble. The case is the same: If my ancestors entered unjustly, there is a curse and a plague that is due to that oppression and injustice; and that is *the burthen of the land*, and it descends all along with it. And although I by the consent of laws am a just possessor, yet I am obliged to the burthen that comes with the land: I am indeed another kind of person than my grand-father; he was an usurper, but I am a just possessor; but because in respect of the land this was but an accidental change, therefore I still am liable to the burthen, and the curse that descends with it. But the way to take off the curse is to quit the title; and yet a man may chuse. It may be, to lose the land would be the bigger curse: but if it be not, the way is certain how you may be rid of it. There was a custom among the *Greeks*, that the children of them that died of consumptions or dropsies, all the while their fathers bodies were burning in their funeral piles, did sit with their feet in cold water, hoping that such a lustration and ceremony would take off the lineal and descending contagion from the children. I know not what cure they found by their

superstition: but we may be sure, that if we wash not our feet, but our hands of all the unjust purchases which our fathers have transmitted to us, their hydropick thirst of wealth shall not transmit to us a consumption of estate, or any other curse. But this remedy is only in the matter of injury or oppression, not in the case of other sins: because other sins were transient; and as the guilt did not pass upon the children, so neither did the exterior and permanent effect: and therefore in other sins (in case they do derive a curse) it cannot be removed, as in the matter of unjust possession it may be; whose effect (we may so order it) shall no more stick to us than the guilt of our father's personal actions.

The sum is this: As kingdoms use to expiate the faults of others by acts of justice; and as churches use to *remove the accursed thing* from sticking to the communities of the faithful, and the sins of Christians from being required of the whole congregation, by excommunicating and censuring the delinquent persons: so the heirs and sons of families are to remove from their house the curse descending from their fathers loins, By 1. Acts of disavowing the sins of their ancestors: 2. By praying for pardon; 3. By being humbled for them; 4. By renouncing the example; and 5. Quitting the affection to the crimes; 6. By not imitating the actions in kind, or in semblance and similitude: and lastly, 7. By refusing to rejoice in the ungodly purchases in which their fathers did amiss and dealt wickedly.

Secondly, but after all this, many cases do occur in which we find that innocent sons are punished. The remedies I have already discoursed of are for such children who have in some manner or other contracted and derived the sin upon themselves:

But if we inquire how those sons who have no intercourse or affinity with their fathers sins, or whose fathers sins were so transient that no benefit or effect did pass upon their posterity, how they may prevent or take off the curse that lies upon the family for their father's faults; this will have some distant considerations.

1. The pious children of evil parents are to stand firm upon the confidence of the Divine grace and mercy, and upon that persuasion to begin to work upon a new stock. For it is as certain that he may derive a blessing upon his posterity, as that his parents could transmit a curse: and if any man by piety shall procure God's favour to his relatives and children, it is certain that he hath done more than to escape the punishment of his father's follies. *If sin doth abound, and evils by sin are derived from his parents; much more shall grace super-abound, and mercy by grace.* If he was in danger from the crimes of others, much rather shall he be secured by his own piety. For if God punishes the sins of the fathers to four generations; yet he rewards the piety of fathers to ten, to hundreds, and to thousands. Many of the ancestors of *Abraham* were persons not noted for religion, but suffered in the publick impiety and almost universal idolatry of their ages: and yet all the evils that could thence descend upon the family were wiped off; and God began to reckon with *Abraham* upon a new stock of blessings and piety; and he was, under God, the original of so great a blessing, that his family for fifteen hundred years together had from him a title to many favours; and whatever evils did chance to them in the descending ages, were but single evils in respect of that treasure of mercies which the father's piety had obtained to the whole nation. And it is remarkable to observe, how blessings did stick to them for their

father's sakes, even whether they would or no. For first, his grand-child *Esau* proved a naughty man, and he lost the great blessing which was entailed upon the family; but he got, not a curse, but a less blessing: and yet because he lost the greater blessing, God excluded him from being reckoned in the elder line: for God, foreseeing the event, so ordered it, that he should first lose his birth-right, and then lose the blessing; for it was to be certain, the family must be reckoned for prosperous in the proper line; and yet God blessed *Esau* into a great nation, and made him the father of many princes. Now the line of blessing being reckoned in *Jacob*, God blessed his family strangely; and by miracle, for almost five generations. He brought them from *Egypt* by mighty signs and wonders: and when for sin they all died in their way to *Canaan*, two only excepted; God so ordered it, that they were all reckoned as single deaths; the nation still descended like a river, whose waters were drunk up for the beverage of an army, but still it keeps its name and current, and the waters are supplied by showers, and springs, and providence. After this, iniquity still increased, and then God struck deeper, and spread curses upon whole families; he translated the priesthood from line to line, he removed the kingdom from one family to another: and still they sinned worse; and then we read that God smote almost a whole tribe; the tribe of *Benjamin* was almost extinguished about the matter of the *Levite's* concubine: but still God remembered his promise which he made with their forefathers, and that breach was made up. After this we find a greater rupture made: and ten tribes fell into idolatry, and ten tribes were carried captives into *Assyria*, and never came again: But still God remembered his covenant with *Abraham*, and left two tribes. But they were restless in their provoca-

tion of the God of *Abraham*; and they also were carried captive: but still God was the God of their fathers, and brought them back, and placed them safe, and they grew again into a kingdom, and should have remained for ever, but that they killed one that was greater than *Abraham*, even the *Messias*; and then they were rooted out, and the old covenant cast off, and God delighted no more to be called *the God of Abraham*, but the *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*. As long as God kept that relation, so long *for the fathers sakes* they had a title and an inheritance to a blessing: for so saith saint *Paul*, [*As touching the election, they are beloved, for the fathers sakes.*]*

I insist the longer upon this instance, that I may remonstrate how great and how sure, and how preserving mercies, a pious father of a family may derive upon his succeeding generations: and if we do but *tread in the footsteps of our Father Abraham*, we shall inherit as certain blessings. But then, I pray, add these considerations.

2. If a great impiety and a clamorous wickedness hath stained the honour of a family, and discomposed its title to the Divine mercies and protection, it is not an ordinary piety that can restore this family. An ordinary, even course of life, full of sweetness and innocence, will secure every single person in his own eternal interest: but that piety which must be a spring of blessings, and communicative to others, that must plead against the sins of their ancestors, and begin a new bank of mercies for the relatives; that must be a great and excellent, a very religious state of life. A small pension will maintain a single person: but he that hath a numerous family, and many to provide for, needs a greater providence of God, and a bigger provision for their maintenance: and a small revenue will not keep up the dignity of

* Rom. xi. 28.

a great house; especially if it be charged with a great debt. And this is the very state of the present question. That piety that must be instrumental to take off the curse imminent upon a family, to bless a numerous posterity, to secure a fair condition to many ages, and to pay the debts of their fathers sins, must be so large, as that, all necessary expenses and duties for his own soul being first discharged, it may be remarkable in great expressions, it may be exemplar to all the family, it may be of universal efficacy, large in the extension of parts, deep in the intention of degrees: and then, as the root of a tree receives nourishment not only sufficient to preserve its own life, but to transmit a plastick juice to the trunk of the tree, and from thence to the utmost branch and smallest gem that knots in the most distant part; so shall the great and exemplar piety of the father of a family not only preserve to the interest of his own soul the life of grace and hopes of glory, but shall be a quickening spirit, active and communicative of a blessing, not only to the trunk of the tree, to the body and rightly-descending line, but even to the collateral branches, to the most distant relatives, and all that shall claim a kindred shall have a title to a blessing. And this was the way that was prescribed to the family of *Eli*, upon whom a sad curse was entailed, that there should not be an old man of the family for ever, and that they should be beggars, and lose the office of priesthood: by the counsel of *R. Johanan*, the son of *Zaccheus*, all the family betook themselves to a great, a strict, and a severe religion; and God was intreated to revoke his decree, to be reconciled to the family, to restore them to the common condition of men, from whence they stood separate by the displeasure of God against the crime of *Eli*. and his sons *Hophni* and *Phineas*. This course is sure either to take off the judgment.

or to change it into a blessing; to take away the rod, or the smart and evil of it; to convert the punishment into a mere natural or human chance, and that chance to the opportunity of a virtue, and that virtue to the occasion of a crown.

3. It is of great use for the securing of families, that every master of a family order his life so, that his piety and virtue be as communicative as is possible, that is, that he secure the religion of his whole family by a severe supervision, and animadversion, and by cutting off all those unprofitable and hurtful branches which load the tree, and hinder the growth, and stock and disimprove the fruit, and revert evil juice to the very root itself. *Calvisius Sabinus* laid out vast sums of money upon his servants to stock his house with learned men; and brought one that could recite all *Homer* by heart, a second that was ready at *Hesiod*, a third at *Pindar*, and for every of the lyrics one; having this fancy, that all that learning was his own, and whatsoever his servants knew made him so much the more skilful. It was noted in the man for a rich and prodigal folly: but if he had changed his instance, and brought none but virtuous servants into his house, he might better have reckoned his wealth upon their stock, and the piety of his family might have helped to bless him, and to have increased the treasure of his master's virtue. Every man that would either cut off the title of an old curse, or secure a blessing upon a new stock, must make virtue as large in the fountain as he can, that it may the sooner water all his relatives with fruitfulness and blessings. And this was one of the things that God noted in *Abraham*, and blessed his family for it, and his posterity: *I know that Abraham will teach his sons to fear me.* When a man teaches his family to know and fear God, then he scatters a blessing round about his habitation. And this helps to

illustrate the reason of the thing, as well as to prove its certainty. We hear it spoken in our books of religion, that the faith of the parents is imputed to their children to good purposes, and that a good husband sanctifies an ill wife, and a *believing wife, an unbelieving husband*; and either of them makes the children to be sanctified, *else they were unclean and unholy*; that is, the very designing children to the service of God is a sanctification of them; and therefore St. *Hierom* calls christian children *candidatos fidei christiane*. And if this very designation of them makes them holy, that is, acceptable to God, entitled to the promises, partakers of the covenant, within the condition of sons; much more shall it be effectual to greater blessings, when the parents take care that the children shall be actually pious, full of sobriety, full of religion, then it becomes a holy house, *a chosen generation, an elect family*; and then there can no evil happen to them, but such which will bring them nearer to God: that is, no cross, but the cross of Christ; no misfortune, but that which shall lead them to felicity; and if any semblance of a curse happens in the generations, it is but like the anathema of a sacrifice; not an *accursed*, but a *devoted* thing: for so the sacrifice upon whose neck the priest's knife doth fall is so far from being accursed, that it helps to get a blessing to all that join in the oblation. So every misfortune that shall discompose the ease of a pious and religious family, shall but make them fit to be presented unto God; and the rod of God shall be like the branches of fig-trees, bitter and sharp in themselves, but productive of most delicious fruit. No evil can curse the family whose stock is pious, and whose *branches are holiness to the Lord*. If any leaf or any boughs shall fall untimely, God shall gather them up, and place them in his temple, or at the foot of his throne, and that family

must needs be blessed, whom infelicity itself cannot make accursed.

4. If a curse be feared to descend upon a family for the fault of their ancestors, pious sons have yet another way to secure themselves, and to withdraw the curse from the family, or themselves from the curse; and that is, by doing some very great and illustrious act of piety, an action *in gradu heroico*, (as *Aristotle* calls it) a heroical action. If there should happen to be one martyr in a family, it would reconcile the whole kindred to God, and make him who is more inclined to mercy than to severity, rather to be pleased with the relatives of the martyr, than to continue to be angry with the nephews of a deceased sinner. I cannot insist long upon this: but you may see it proved by one great instance in the case of *Phineas*, who killed an unclean prince, and turned the wrath of God from his people. He was zealous for God and his countrymen, and did a heroical action of zeal: wherefore (saith God) *Behold I give unto him my covenant of peace, and he shall have it, and his seed after him; even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.* Thus the sons of *Rechab* obtained the blessing of an enduring and blessed family, because they were most strict and religious observers of their father's precepts, and kept them after his death, and abstained from wine for ever; and no temptation could invite them to taste it; for they had as great reverence to their father's ashes, as, being children, they had to his rod and to his eyes. Thus a man may turn the wrath of God from his family, and secure a blessing for posterity, by doing some great noble acts of charity; or a remarkable chastity like that of *Joseph*; or an expensive, an affectionate religion and love to Christ and his servants, as *Mary Magdalen* did. Such

things as these which are extraordinary egressions and transvolations beyond the ordinary course of an even piety, God loves to reward with an extraordinary favour; and gives them testimony by an extraordinary blessing.

One thing more I have to add by way of advice; and that is, that all parents and fathers of families, from whose loins a blessing or a curse usually does descend, be very careful, not only generally in all the actions of their lives, (for that I have already pressed) but particularly in the matter of repentance; that they be curious that they finish it, and do it thoroughly: for there are certain *ἐσπεριμνα μετανοιας*, *learnings of repentance*, which make that God's anger is taken from us so imperfectly: and although God, for his sake who died for us, will pardon a returning sinner, and bring him to heaven through tribulation and a fiery trial; yet when a man is weary of his sorrow, and his fastings are a load to him, and his sins are not so perfectly renounced, or hated as they ought, the parts of repentance which are left unfinished do sometimes fall upon the heads or upon the fortunes of the children. I do not say, this is regular and certain; but sometimes God deals thus: for this thing hath been so, and therefore it may be so again. We see it was done in the case of *Ahab*: he *humbled himself and went softly, and lay in sackcloth*, and called for pardon, and God took from him a judgment which was falling heavily upon him: but we all know his repentance was imperfect and lame: the same evil fell upon his sons: for so said God, *I will bring the evil upon his house in his sons days*. Leave no arrears for thy posterity to pay; but repent with an integral, a holy and excellent repentance, that God being reconciled to thee thoroughly, for thy sake also he may bless thy seed after thee.

And after all this, add a continual, a fervent, a hearty, a never-ceasing prayer for thy children, ever remembering, when they beg a blessing, that God hath put much of their fortune into your hands; and a transient formal *God bless thee* will not outweigh the load of a great vice, and the curse which scatters from thee by virtual contact, and by the channels of relation, if thou beest a vicious person: nothing can issue from thy fountain but bitter waters. And, as it were a great impudence for a condemned traitor to beg of his injured prince a province for his son for his sake: so it is an ineffective blessing we give our children, when we beg for them what we have no title to for ourselves; nay, when we convey to them nothing but a curse. The prayer of a sinner, the unhallowed wish of a vicious parent, is but a poor donative to give a child who sucked poison from his nurse, and derives cursing from his parents. They are punished with a double torture in the shame and pain of the damned, who, dying enemies to God, have left an inventory of sins and wrath to be divided amongst their children. But they that can truly give a blessing to their children, are such as live a blessed life, and pray holy prayers, and perform an integral repentance, and do separate from the sins of their progenitors, and do illustrious actions, and begin the blessing of their family upon a new stock. For as from the eyes of some persons there shoots forth an evil influence, and some have an *evil eye*, and are infectious, some look healthfully as a friendly planet, and innocent as flowers; and as some fancies convey private effects to confederate and allied bodies; and between the very vital spirits of friends and relatives there is a cognation, and they refresh each other like social plants: and a good man is a * friend to every good man: and (they say) that an

* Διακρίνει οὐκ ἢ τοῦτων φίλος, ἕως αὐ ἀγαθὸν ὄσιν, ἢ δ ἀγαθὸν μόνον. ARISTOT.

usurer knows an usurer, and one rich man another, there being by the very manners of men contracted a similitude of nature, and a communication of effects : so in parents and their children there is so great a society of nature and of manners, of blessing and cursing, that an evil parent cannot perish in a single death : and holy parents never eat their meal of blessing alone, but they make the room shine like the fire of a holy sacrifice ; and a father's or a mother's piety makes all the house festival and full of joy from generation to generation. *Amen.*

SERMON V.



THE INVALIDITY

OF

A LATE OR DEATH-BED REPENTANCE.

JEREMY xiii. 16.

Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains; and while ye look for light, (or, lest while ye look for light) he shall turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.

GOD is the eternal fountain of honour and the spring of glory; in him it dwells essentially, from him it derives originally; and when an action is glorious, or a man is honourable, it is because the action is pleasing to God, in the relation of obedience or imitation, and because the man is honoured by God, and by God's vicegerent: and therefore God cannot be dishonoured, because all honour comes from himself; he cannot but be glorified, because to be himself is to be infinitely glorious. And yet he is pleased to say, that our sins dishonour him, and our obedience does glorify him. But as the sun, the great eye of the world, prying into the recesses of rocks and the hollowness of valleys, receives species or visible forms from these objects, but he beholds them only by that light which proceeds from

himself: so does God, who is the light of that eye; he receives reflexes and returns from us, and these he calls *glorifications* of himself, but they are such which are made so by his own gracious acceptance. For God cannot be glorified by any thing but by himself, and by his own instruments, which he makes as mirrors to reflect his own excellency; that by seeing the glory of such emanations, he may rejoice in his own works, because they are images of his infinity. Thus when he made the beauteous frame of heaven and earth, he rejoiced in it, and glorified himself; because it was the glass in which he beheld his wisdom and almighty power. And when God destroyed the old world, in that also he glorified himself; for in those waters he saw the image of his justice, they were the looking-glass for that attribute; and God is said to *laugh at* and *rejoice in the destruction of a sinner*, because he is pleased with the economy of his own laws, and the excellent proportions he hath made of his judgments consequent to our sins. But, above all, God rejoiced in his holy Son; for he was the image of the Divinity, *the character and express image of his person*; in him he beheld his own essence, his wisdom, his power, his justice, and his person; and he was that excellent instrument designed from eternal ages to represent, as in a double mirror, not only the glories of God to himself, but also to all the world; and he glorified God by the instrument of obedience, in which God beheld his own dominion and the sanctity of his laws clearly represented; and he saw his justice glorified, when it was fully satisfied by the passion of his Son; and so he hath transmitted to us a great manner of the divine glorification, being become to us the author and the example of giving glory to God after the manner of men, that is by well-doing and patient suffering.

by obeying his laws and submitting to his power, by imitating his holiness and confessing his goodness, by remaining innocent or becoming penitent; for this also is called in the text *Giving glory to the Lord our God.*

For he that hath dishonoured God by sins, that is, hath denied by a moral instrument of duty and subordination to confess the glories of his power, and the goodness of his laws, and hath dishonoured and despised his mercy which God intended as an instrument of our piety, hath no better way to glorify God, than by returning to his duty, to advance the honour of the divine attributes, in which he is pleased to communicate himself, and to have intercourse with man. He that repents, confesses his own error, and the righteousness of God's laws, and by judging himself confesses that he deserves punishment, and therefore that God is righteous if he punishes him: and, by returning, confesses God to be the fountain of felicity, and the foundation of true, solid, and permanent joys, saying in the sense and passion of the disciples, *Whither shall we go? for thou hast the words of eternal life:* and by humbling himself, exalts God, by making the proportions of distance more immense and vast. And as repentance does contain in it all the parts of holy life which can be performed by a returning sinner, (all the acts and habits of virtue being but parts, or instances, or effects of repentance:) so all the actions of a holy life do constitute the mass and body of all those instruments whereby God is pleased to glorify himself. For if God is glorified in the sun and moon, in the rare fabrick of the honey-combs, in the discipline of bees, in the economy of pismires, in the little houses of birds, in the curiosity of an eye, God being pleased to delight in those little images and reflexes himself from those pretty

mirrors, which, like a crevice in a wall, through a narrow perspective transmit the species of a vast excellency: much rather shall God be pleased to behold himself in the glasses of our obedience, in the emissions of our will and understanding; these being rational and apt instruments to express him, far better than the natural, as being nearer communications of himself.

But I shall no longer discourse of the philosophy of this expression: certain it is, that in the style of scripture, *repentance* is the great *glorification of God*; and the prophet, by calling the people to *give God glory*, calls upon them to *repent*, and so expresses both the duty and the event of it; the event being *Glory to God on high, peace on earth, and good will towards men* by the sole instrument of *repentance*. And this was it which *Joshua* said to *Achan*, *Give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him*:* that one act of repentance is one act of glorifying God. And this *David* acknowledged; *Against thee only have I sinned: ut tu justificeris, that thou mightest be justified or cleared*:† that is, that God may have the honour of being righteous, and we the shame of receding from so excellent a perfection; or, as *St. Paul* quotes and explicates the place, *Let God be true, and every man a liar: as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged*.‡ But to clear the sense of this expression of the prophet, observe the words of *St. John*; *And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, who hath power over those plagues: and they repented not to give him glory*.§

So that having strength and reason from these so many authorities, I may be free to read the words of my text thus, *Repent of all your sins, before God*

* *Joshua* vii. 19.† *Psal.* li. 4.‡ *Rom.* iii. 4.§ *Rev.* xvi. 9.

cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains. And then we have here the duty of repentance, and the time of its performance. It must be *μετανοια ευκαιρος*, a seasonable and timely repentance, a repentance which must begin before our darkness begin, a repentance in the day-time; *ut dum dies est operimini*, that ye may work while it is to-day: lest, if we stumble upon the dark mountains, that is, fall into the ruins of old age, which makes a broad way narrow, and a plain way to be a craggy mountain, or if we stumble and fall into our last sickness; instead of health, God sends us to our grave, and instead of light and salvation, which we then confidently look for, he make our state to be outer darkness, that is, misery irremediable, misery eternal.

This exhortation of the prophet was always full of caution and prudence, but now it is highly necessary; since men who are so clamorously called to repentance that they cannot avoid the necessity of it, yet, that they may reconcile an evil life with the hopes of heaven, have crowded this duty into so little room, that it is almost strangled and extinct; and they have lopped off so many members, that they have reduced the whole body of it to the dimensions of a little finger, sacrificing their childhood to vanity, their youth to lust and to intemperance, their manhood to ambition and rage, pride and revenge, secular desires, and unholy actions; and yet still farther, giving their old age to covetousness and oppression, to the world and the devil: and after all this, what remains for God and for religion? Oh, for that they will do well enough; upon their death-bed they will think a few godly thoughts, they will send for a priest to minister comfort to them, they will pray and ask God forgiveness, and receive the holy sacrament, and leave their goods behind them, disposing them to their friends and relatives, and some dole and issues of the

alms basket to the poor; and if, after all this, they die quietly and like a lamb, and be canonized by a bribed flatterer in a funeral sermon, they make no doubt but they are children of the kingdom, and perceive not their folly till without hope of remedy they roar in their expectations of a certain, but a horrid eternity of pains. Certainly nothing hath made more ample harvests for the devil, than the deferring of repentance upon vain confidences, and lessening it in the extension of parts as well as intention of degrees, while we imagine that a few tears and scatterings of devotion are enough to expiate the baseness of a fifty or a three score years impiety. This I shall endeavour to cure, by shewing *what it is to repent*; and that repentance implies in it the duty of a life, or of many and great, of long and lasting parts of it; and then by direct arguments, shewing that repentance put off to our death-bed is invalid and ineffectual, sick, languid and impotent, like our dying bodies and disabled faculties.

I. First, therefore, Repentance implies a deep sorrow, as the beginning and introduction of this duty: not a superficial sigh or tear, not a calling ourselves sinners and miserable persons; this is far from that *godly sorrow that worketh repentance*: and yet I wish there were none in the world, or none amongst us, who cannot remember that ever they have done this little towards the abolition of their multitudes of sins: but yet if it were not a hearty, pungent sorrow, a sorrow that shall break the heart in pieces, a sorrow that shall so irreconcile us to sin, as to make us rather chuse to die than to sin, it is not so much as the beginning of repentance. But in holy scripture, when the people are called to repentance, and sorrow (which is ever the prologue to it) marches sadly, and first opens the scene, it is ever expressed to be great, clamorous, and sad: it is called *a weeping sorely* in

the next verse after my text ; a *weeping with the bitterness of heart* ; a *turning to the Lord with weeping, fasting, and mourning* ;* a *weeping day and night* ; the *sorrow of heart* ; the *breaking of the spirit* ; the *mourning like a dove*, and *chattering like a swallow*.† And if we observe the threnes and sad accents of the prophet *Jeremy*, when he wept for the sins of his nation ; the heart-breakings of *David*, when he mourned for his adultery and murder ; and the bitter tears of *St. Peter*, when he washed off the guilt and baseness of his fall, and the denying his Master ; we shall be sufficiently instructed in this *præcludium* or introduction to repentance ; and that it is not every breath of a sigh or moisture of a tender eye, not every crying *Lord, have mercy upon me*, that is such a sorrow as begins our restitution to the state of grace and divine favour : but such a sorrow that really condemns ourselves, and by an active, effectual sentence declares us worthy of stripes and death, of sorrow and eternal pains, and willingly endures the first, to prevent the second ; and weeps, and mourns, and fasts, to obtain of God but to admit us to a possibility of restitution. And although all sorrow for sins hath not the same expression, nor the same degree of pungency and sensitive trouble, which differs according to the temper of the body, custom, the sex, and accidental tenderness ;‡ yet it is not a godly sorrow unless it really produce those effects : that is, 1. That it makes us really to hate, and 2. actually to decline sin ; and 3. produce in us a fear of God's anger, a sense of the guilt of his displeasure ; and 4. then such consequent trouble as can consist with such apprehension of the Divine pleasure : which if it express not in tears and hearty complaints, must be expressed in watchings and strivings against sin ; in confessing the

* Ezek. 27. 31.

† Joel ii. 13.

‡ See Rule of H. Living, D. of Repentance, p. 335.

goodness and justice of God threatening or punishing us; in patiently bearing the rod of God; in confession of our sins; in accusation of ourselves; in perpetual begging of pardon, and mean and base opinions of ourselves; and in all the natural productions from these, according to our temper and constitution: it must be a sorrow of the reasonable faculty, the greatest in its kind: and if it be less in kind, or not productive of these effects, it is not a godly sorrow, not the *exordium* of repentance.

But I desire that it be observed, that sorrow for sins is not repentance; not that duty which gives glory to God, so as to obtain of him that he will glorify us. Repentance is a great volume of duty; and godly sorrow is but the frontispiece or title page; it is the harbinger or first introduction to it: Or, if you will consider it in the words of Saint Paul, [*Godly sorrow worketh repentance* ;*] Sorrow is the parent, and repentance is the product. And therefore it is a high piece of ignorance to suppose, that a crying out and roaring for our sins upon our death-bed can reconcile us to God: our crying to God must be so early and so lasting, as to be able to teem and produce such a daughter, which must live long, and grow from an embryo to an infant, from infancy to childhood, from thence to the fulness of the stature of Christ; and then it is a holy and a happy sorrow. But if it be a sorrow only of a death-bed, it is a fruitless shower, or like the rain of *Sodom*, not the beginning of repentance, but the kindling of a flame, the commencement of an eternal sorrow. For *Ahab* had a great sorrow, but it wrought nothing upon his spirit; it did not reconcile his affections to his duty, and his duty to God. *Judas* had so great a sorrow for betraying the innocent blood of his Lord, that it was intolerable to his spirit, and he burst in the middle.

* 2 Cor. vii. 10.

And if mere sorrow be repentance, then hell is full of penitents; for *there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth for evermore.*

Let us therefore beg of God (as *Caleb's* daughter did of her father.) *Dedisti mihi terram aridam, da etiam et irriguam,* Thou hast given me a dry land, give me also a land of waters, a dwelling-place in tears, rivers of tears; *Ut, quoniam non sumus digni oculos orando ad coelum levare, at simus digni oculos plorando caecare,* as *Saint Austin's* expression is; That because we are not worthy to lift up our eyes to heaven in prayer, yet we may be worthy to weep ourselves blind for sin. The meaning is, That we beg sorrow of God, such a sorrow, as may be sufficient to quench the flames of lust, and surmount the hills of our pride, and may extinguish our thirst of covetousness; that is, a sorrow that shall be an effective principle of arming all our faculties against sin, and heartily setting upon the work of grace, and the persevering labours of a holy life. I shall only add one word to this: That our sorrow for sin is not to be estimated by our tears and sensible expressions, but by our active hatred and dereliction of sin; and is many times unperceived in outward demonstration. It is reported of the mother of *Peter Lombard, Gratian,* and *Comestor,* that she having had three sons begotten in unhallowed embraces, upon her death-bed did omit the recitation of these crimes to her confessor; adding this for apology, that her three sons proved persons so eminent in the church, that their excellence was abundant recompence for her demerit; and therefore she could not grieve, because God had glorified himself so much by three instruments so excellent; and that although her *sin* had *abounded,* yet God's *grace* did *super-abound.* Her confessor replied, *At dole saltem, quod dolere non possis,* Grieve that thou canst not grieve. And so must we always fear, that

our trouble for sin is not great enough, that our sorrow is too remiss, that our affections are indifferent : but we can only be sure that our sorrow is a godly sorrow, when it worketh repentance ; that is, when it makes us hate and leave all our sin, and take up the cross of patience or penance, that is, confess our sin, accuse ourselves, condemn the action by hearty sentence ; and then, if it hath no other emanation but fasting and prayer for its pardon, and hearty industry towards its abolition, our sorrow is not reprobable.

2. For sorrow alone will not do it ; there must follow a total dereliction of our sin : and this is the first part of repentance. Concerning which I consider, that it is a sad mistake amongst many that do some things towards repentance, that they mistake the first addresses and instruments of this part of repentance for the whole duty of itself. Confession of sins is in order to the dereliction of them : but then confession must not be like the unlading of a ship to take in new stowage ; or the vomits of intemperance, which ease the stomach that they may continue the merry meeting. But such a confession is too frequent, in which men either comply with custom, or seek to ease a present load or gripe of conscience, or are willing to dress up their souls against a festival, or hope for pardon upon so easy terms : these are but retirings back to leap the farther into mischief ; or but approaches to God with the lips. No confession can be of any use, but as it is an instrument of shame to the person, of humiliation to the man, and dereliction of the sin ; and receives its recompence but as it adds to these purposes : all other is like *the bleating of the calves and the lowing of the oxen*, which *Saul* reserved after the spoil of *Agag* ; they proclaim the sin, but do nothing towards its cure ; they serve God's end to make us justly to be condemned out of our own mouths, but nothing at all

towards our absolution. Nay, if we proceed farther to the greatest expressions of humiliation, (parts of which I reckon fasting, praying for pardon, judging and condemning of ourselves by instances of a present indignation against a crime;) yet unless this proceed so far as to a total deletion of the sin, to the extirpation of every vicious habit, God is not glorified by our repentance, nor we secured in our eternal interest. Our sin must be brought to judgment, and, like *Antinous* in *Homer*, layed in the midst as the sacrifice and the cause of all the mischief.

Ἄλλ' ὁ μὲν ἤδη κείται ὡς αἰεὶ ἰδὸς ἐστὶν ἅπαντων.*

This is the murderer, this is the *Achan*, this is *he that troubles Israel*: let the sin be confessed and carried with the pomps and solemnities of sorrow to its funeral, and so let the murderer be slain. But if after all the forms of confession and sorrow, fasting and humiliation, and pretence of doing the will of God, we spare *Agag* and the fattest of the cuttle, our delicious sins, and still leave an unlawful king, and a tyrant-sin to reign in our mortal bodies, we may pretend what we will towards repentance, but we are no better penitents than *Ahab*; no nearer to the obtaining of our hopes than *Esau* was to his birthright, for whose repentance there was no place left, though he sought it carefully with tears.

3. Well, let us suppose our penitent advanced thus far, as that he decrees against all sin, and in his hearty purposes resolves to decline it, as in a severe sentence he hath condemned it as his betrayer and his murderer; yet we must be curious (for now only the repentance properly begins) that it be not only like the springings of the thorny or the high-way ground, soon up and soon down: For some men, when a sad-

* Hom: Od: xxii. 33.

The cause and author of those guilty deeds

Lo! at thy feet unjust Antinous bleeds.

Pope.

ness or an unhandsome accident surprises them, then they resolve against their sin, but, like the goats in *Aristotle*, they give their milk no longer than they are stung; as soon as the thorns are removed, these men return to their first hardness, and resolve then to act their first temptation. Others there are who never resolve against a sin, but either when they have no temptation to it, or when their appetites are newly satisfied with it: like those who immediately after a full dinner resolve to fast at supper, and they keep it till their appetite returns, and then their resolution unties like the cords of vanity, or the gossamer against the violence of the northern wind. Thus a lustful person fills all the capacity of his lust; and when he is wearied, and the sin goes off with uneasiness and regret, and the appetite falls down like a horseleech, when it is ready to burst with putrefaction and an unwholesome plethora, then he resolves to be a good man, and could almost vow to be a hermit; and hates his lust, as *Amnon* hated his sister *Thamar*, when he had newly acted his unworthy rape: but the next spring-tide that comes, every wave of the temptation, makes an inroad upon the resolution, and gets ground, and prevails against it, more than his resolution prevailed against his sin. How many drunken persons, how many swearers resolve daily and hourly against their sin, and yet act them not once the less for all their infinite heap of shamefully retreating purposes? That resolution that begins upon just grounds of sorrow and severe judgment, upon fear and love, that is made in the midst of a temptation, that is inquisitive into all the means and instruments of the cure, that prays perpetually against a sin, that watches continually against a surprise, and never sinks into it by deliberation, that fights earnestly, and carries on the war prudently, and prevails by a never-ceasing diligence against the temptation: that only is a pious and well begun repentance. They that have their

fits of a quartan, well and ill for ever, and think themselves in perfect health when the ague is retired, till its period returns, are dangerously mistaken. Those intervals of imperfect and fallacious resolution are nothing but states of death: and if a man should depart this world in one of those godly fits, (as he thinks them,) he is no nearer to obtain his blessed hope, than a man in the stone cholick is to health when his pain is eased for the present, his disease still remaining, and threatening an unwelcome return. That resolution only is the beginning of a holy repentance which goes forth into act, and whose acts enlarge into habits, and whose habits are productive of the fruits of a holy life.

From hence we are to take our estimate, whence our resolutions of piety must commence. He that resolves not to live well till the time comes that he must die, is ridiculous in his great design, as he is impertinent in his intermedial purposes, and vain in his hope. Can a dying man to any real effect resolve to be chaste? (for virtue must be an act of election, and chastity is the contesting against a proud and an imperious lust, active flesh, and insinuating temptation.) And what doth he resolve against, who can no more be tempted to the sin of unchastity than he can return back again to his youth and vigour? And it is considerable, that since all the purposes of a holy life which a dying man can make, cannot be reduced to act; by what law, or reason, or covenant, or revelation are we taught to distinguish the resolution of a dying man from the purposes of a living and vigorous person? Suppose a man in his youth and health, moved by consideration of the irregularity and deformity of sin, the danger of its productions, the wrath and displeasure of Almighty God, should resolve to leave the puddles of impurity, and walk in the paths of righteousness; can this resolution alone put him into the state of grace? Is he admitted to

pardon and the favour of God, before he hath in some measure performed actually what he so reasonably hath resolved; by no means. For resolution and purpose is in its own nature and constitution an imperfect act, and therefore can signify nothing without its performance and consummation. It is as a faculty is to the act, as spring is to the harvest, as seed-time is to the autumn, as eggs are to birds, or as a relative to its correspondent: nothing without it. And can it be imagined that a resolution in our health and life shall be ineffectual without performance? and shall a resolution, barely such, do any good upon our death-bed? Can such purposes prevail against a long impiety rather than against a young and a newly-begun state of sin? Will God at an easier rate pardon the sins of fifty or sixty years, than the sins of our youth only, or the iniquity of five years, or ten? If a holy life be not necessary to be lived, why shall it be necessary, to resolve to live it? But if a holy life be necessary, then it cannot be sufficient merely to resolve it, unless this resolution go forth in an actual and real service. Vain, therefore, is the hope of those persons who either go on in their sins, before their last sickness never thinking to return into the ways of God, from whence they have wandered all their life, never renewing their resolutions and vows of holy living: or if they have, yet their purposes are for ever blasted with the next violent temptation. More prudent was the prayer of *David*, *Oh spare me a little, that I may recover my strength before I go hence and be no more seen.* And something like it, was the saying of the Emperour *Charles the fifth*, *Inter vitæ negotia et mortis diem oportet spatium intercedere.* Whenever our holy purposes are renewed, unless God gives us time to act them, to mortify and subdue our lusts, to conquer and subdue the whole kingdom of sin, to rise from our grave, and be clothed with nerves and flesh, and a new skin. to overcome our

deadly sicknesses, and by little and little to return to health and strength; unless we have grace and time to do all this, our sins will lie down with us in our graves. For when a man hath contracted a long habit of sin, and it hath been growing upon him ten or twenty, forty or fifty years, whose acts he hath daily or hourly repeated, and they are grown to a second nature to him, and have so prevailed upon the ruins of his spirit, that the man is *taken captive by the devil at his will*, he is fast bound, as a slave tugging at the oar, that he has grown in love with his fetters, and longs to be doing the work of sin: is it likely that after all his progress and growth in sin, (in the ways of which he runs fast without any impediment) is it (I say) likely, that a few days or weeks of sickness can recover him? [the special hindrances of that state I shall afterwards consider.] But, can a man be supposed so prompt to piety and holy living, a man (I mean) that hath lived wickedly a long time together, can he be of so ready and active a virtue upon the sudden, as to recover in a month or a week what he hath been undoing in twenty or thirty years? Is it so easy to build, that a weak and infirm person, bound hand and foot, shall be able to build more in three days than was a building above forty years? Christ did it in a figurative sense; but in this, it is not in the power of any man so suddenly to be recovered from so long a sickness. Necessary therefore it is, that all these instruments of our conversion, *Confession of sins, praying for their pardon, and resolution to lead a new life*, should begin *before our feet stumble upon the dark mountains*; lest we leave the work only resolved upon to be begun, which it is necessary we should in many degrees finish, if ever we mean to escape the eternal darkness. “For that we should actually abolish the *whole of sin and death*; that we should *crucify the old man with his lusts*, that we should *lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily*

beset us, that we should *cast away the works of darkness*, that we should *awake from sleep, and arise from death*, that we should *redeem the time*, that we should *cleanse our hands and purify our hearts*, that we should *have escaped the corruption* (all the corruption) *that is in the whole world through lust*, that *nothing of the old leaven should remain in us*, but that we be *wholly a new lump, thoroughly transformed and changed in the image of our mind* ;[§] these are the perpetual precepts of the spirit, and the certain duty of man : and that, to have all these in purpose only, is merely to no purpose, without the actual eradication of every vicious habit ; and the certain abolition of every criminal adherence, is clearly and dogmatically decreed every where in the scripture. For (they are the words of St. Paul) *they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts* ;* the work is actually done, and sin is dead, or wounded mortally, before they can in any sense belong to Christ, to be a portion of his inheritance : And, *He that is in Christ is a new creature*. † For in Christ Jesus nothing can avail but a new creature ; ‡ nothing but a *keeping the commandments of God*. § Not all our tears, though we should weep like David and his men at Zibion, *till they could weep no more*, or the women of Ramoth, or like the weeping in the valey of Hinnom, could suffice, if we retain the affection to any one sin, or have any unrepented of, or unmortified. It is true, that *a contrite and a broken heart God will not despise*. No, he will not. For if it be a hearty and permanent sorrow, it is an excellent beginning of repentance ; and God will to a timely sorrow give the grace of repentance : He will not give pardon to sorrow alone ; but that which ought to be the proper effect of sorrow, that God shall give. He shall then open the gates of mercy, and admit you to a possibility of restitution ; so that

* Gal. v. 24. † Gal. vi. 15. ‡ Gal. v. 6. § 1 Cor. vii. 19.

you may be within the covenant of repentance, which if you actually perform, you may expect God's promise. And in this sense confession will obtain our pardon, and humiliation will be accepted, and our holy purposes and pious resolution shall be accounted for: that is, these being the first steps and addresses to that part of repentance which consists in the abolition of sins, shall be accepted so far as to procure so much of the pardon, to do so much of the work of restitution, that God will admit the returning man to a further degree of emendation, to a nearer possibility of working out his salvation. But then, if this sorrow and confession, and these strong purposes begin then when our life is declined towards the west, and is now ready to set in darkness and a dismal night; because of themselves they could but procure an admission to repentance, not at all to pardon and plenary absolution, by shewing that on our death-bed these are too late and ineffectual, they call upon us to begin betimes, when these imperfect acts may be consummate and perfect, in the actual performing those parts of holy life to which they were ordained in the nature of the thing, and the purposes of God.

4. Lastly, suppose all this be done, and that by a long course of strictness and severity, mortification and circumspection, we have overcome all our vicious and baser habits contracted and grown upon us like the ulcers and evils of a long surfeit, and that we are clean and swept; suppose that he hath wept and fasted, prayed and vowed to excellent purposes; yet all this is but the one half of repentance: (so infinitely mistaken is the world, to think any thing to be enough to make up repentance.) But to renew us, and restore us to the favour of God, there is required far more than what hath been yet accounted for. See in the 2d. of *St. Peter*, 1 chap. 4, 5. vers. *Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through*

lust: And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, and so on, to godliness, to brotherly-kindness, and to charity: These things must be in you and abound. This is the sum total of repentance: we must not only have overcome sin, but we must after great diligence have acquired the habits of all those christian graces which are necessary in the transaction of our affairs, in all relations to God and our neighbour, and our own persons. It is not enough to say, Lord, I thank thee, I am no extortioner, no adulterer, not as this publican; all the reward of such a penitent is, that when he hath escaped the corruption of the world, he hath also escaped those heavy judgments which threatened his ruin,

Nec furtum feci, nec fugi, si mihi dicat

Servus: Habes pretium; Ioris non ureris, aio.

Non hominem occidi: Non pascet in cruce corvos.*

If a servant have not robbed his master, nor offered to fly from his bondage, he shall escape the *furca*, his flesh shall not be exposed to birds or fishes; but this is but the reward of innocent slaves. It may be, we have escaped the rod of the exterminating angel, when our sins are crucified; but we shall never *enter into the joy of the Lord*, unless after we have *put off the old man with his affections and lusts*, we also *put on the new man in righteousness and holiness of life*. And this we are taught in most plain doctrine by *St. Paul*. *Let us lay aside the weight that doth so*

* Hor: Ep. xvi. 46.

Suppose a slave should say, "I never steal,"

"I never ran away." Nor do you feel

The flagrant lash. "No human blood I shed."

Nor on the cross the ravening crows have fed.

FRANCIS

easily beset us ;* that is the one half ; and then it follows, *Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.* These are the *fruits meet for repentance*, spoken of by St. John the Baptist ; that is, when we renew our first undertaking in baptism, and return to our courses of innocence.

Pareus Deorum cultor et infrequens,
 Insanientis dum sapientiae
 Consultus erro, nunc retrosum
 Vela dare, atque iterare cursus
 Cogor relictos†————

The sense of which words is well given us by St. John ; *Remember whence thou art fallen, repent, and do thy first works.* † For all our hopes of heaven rely upon that covenant which God made with us in baptism ; which is, *That being redeemed from our vain conversation, we should serve him in holiness and righteousness all our days.* Now when any of us hath prevaricated our part of the covenant, we must return to that state, and redeem the intermedial time spent in sin by our doubled industry in the ways of grace : we must be reduced to our first estate, and make some proportionable returns of duty, for our sad omissions, and great violations of our baptismal vow. For God having made no covenant with us but that which is consigned in baptism ;

* Heb. xii. 1.

† Hor : Lib : 1. Od : xxxiv. 1.

A fugitive from Heaven and prayer,
 I mock'd at all religious fear,
 Deep-scienced in the mazy lore
 Of mad philosophy ; but now
 Hoist sail, and back my voyage plow
 To that blest harbour, which I left before.

FRANCIS.

† Rev. ii.

in the same proportion in which we retain or return to that, in the same we are to expect the pardon of our sins, and all the other promises evangelical; but no otherwise: unless we can shew a new gospel, or be baptized again by God's appointment. He therefore, that by a long habit, by a state and continued course of sin, hath gone so far from his baptismal purity, as that he hath nothing of the christian left upon him but his name; that man hath much to do to make his garments clean, to purify his soul, to take off all the stains of sin, that his spirit may be presented pure to the eyes of God, who beholds no impurity. It is not an easy thing to cure a long contracted habit of sin. Let any intemperate person but try in his own instance of drunkenness; or the swearer in the sweetening his unwholesome language: but then so to command his tongue that he never swear, but that his speech be prudent, pious, and apt to edify the hearer, or in some sense to glorify God; or to become temperate, to have got a habit of sobriety, or chastity, or humility, is the work of a life. And if we do but consider that he that lives well from his younger years, or takes up at the end of his youthful heats, and enters into the courses of a sober life early, diligently and vigorously, shall find himself after the studies and labours of twenty or thirty years piety but a very imperfect person, many degrees of pride left unrooted up, many inroads of intemperance or beginnings of excess, much indevotion and backwardness in religion, many temptations to contest against, and some infirmities which he shall never say he hath mastered; we shall find the work of a holy life is not to be deferred till our days are almost done, till our strengths are decayed, our spirits are weak, and our lust strong, our habits confirmed, and our longings after sin many and impotent: for what is

very hard to be done, and is always done imperfectly, when there is length of time, and a less work to do, and more abilities to do it with all; when the time is short, and almost expired, and the work made difficult and vast, and the strength weaker, and the faculties are disabled, will seem little less than absolutely impossible. I shall end this general consideration with the question of the apostle, *If the righteous scarcely be saved*, (if it be so difficult to overcome our sins, and obtain virtuous habits, difficult (I say) to a righteous, a sober and well-living person) *where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* what shall become of him who, by his evil life, hath not only removed himself from the affections, but even from the possibilities of virtue? *He that hath lived in sin, will die in sorrow.*



SERMON VI.

PART II.

BUT I shall pursue this great and necessary truth, first, by shewing what parts and ingredients of repentance are assigned, when it is described in holy scripture: secondly, by shewing the necessities, the absolute necessities of a holy life, and what it means in scripture to *live holily*: thirdly, by considering what directions or intimations we have concerning the last time of beginning to repent; and what is the longest period that any man may venture with safety. And in the prosecution of these particulars, we shall remove the objections, those aprons of fig-leaves which men use for their shelter

to palliate their sin, and to hide themselves from that from which no rocks or mountains shall protect them, though they fall upon them; that is, the wrath of God.

First, that repentance is not only an abolition and extinction of the body of sin, a bringing it to the altar, and slaying it before God and all the people; but that we must also *Χρυσον κειρασι στερι Χρυσου*, *minge gold* and rich presents, the oblation of good works and holy habits, *with the sacrifice*, I have already proved: but now if we will see repentance in its stature and integrity of constitution described, we shall find it to be the one half of all that which God requires of christians. *Faith and Repentance* are the whole duty of a christian. Faith is a sacrifice of the understanding to God; repentance sacrifices the whole will: that gives the knowing; this gives up all the desiring faculties: that makes us disciples; this makes us servants of the holy *Jesus*. Nothing else was preached by the apostles, nothing was enjoined as the duty of man, nothing else did build up the body of christian religion. So that, as faith contains all that knowledge which is necessary to salvation: so repentance comprehends in it all the whole practice and working duty of a returning christian. And this was the sum total of all that *St. Paul* preached to the Gentiles, when, in his farewell sermon to the bishops and priests of *Ephesus*, he professed that he *kept back nothing that was profitable* to them; and yet it was all nothing but this, *Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*.* So that whosoever believes in *Jesus Christ* and repents towards God, must make his accounts according to this standard, that is, to believe all that Christ taught him, and to do all that Christ commanded. And this is remarked in *St. Paul's* catechism,† where he gives a more parti-

* Acts xx. 21.

† Heb. vi. 1.

cular catalogue of fundamentals: he reckons nothing but sacraments, and faith; of which he enumerates two principal articles, *Resurrection of the dead, and eternal Judgment*. Whatsoever is practical, all the whole duty of man, the practice of all obedience is called *Repentance from dead works*: which, if we observe the singularity of the phrase, does not mean *sorrow*, for sorrow from dead works is not sense; but it must mean *mutationem status*, a conversion from dead works, which (as in all motions) supposes two terms; from dead works to living works; from *the death of sin, to the life of righteousness*.

I will add but two places more, out of each testament one; in which I suppose, you may see every lineament of this great duty described, that you may no longer mistake a grasshopper for an eagle; sorrow and holy purposes, for the entire duty of repentance. In the xviii. of *Ezek.* 21. you shall find it thus described: “*But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.*” Or, as it is more fully described in *Ezek.* xxxiii. 14. “*When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die: If he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he hath robbed, walk in the statutes of life without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.*” Here only is the condition of pardon; to leave all your sins, to keep all God’s statutes, to walk in them, to abide, to proceed, and make progress in them; and this, without the interruption by a deadly sin, [*without committing iniquity*] to make restitution of all the wrongs he hath done, all the unjust money he hath taken, all the oppressions he hath committed, all that must be satisfied for, and repayed according to our ability: we must make satisfaction for all injury to our neigh-

bour's fame, all wrongs done to his soul; he must be restored to that condition of good things thou didst in any sense remove him from: when this is done according to thy utmost power, then thou hast repented truly, then thou hast a title to the promise; *thou shalt surely live, thou shalt not die* for thy old sins thou hast formerly committed. Only be pleased to observe this one thing; that this place of *Ezekiel* is it which is so often mistaken for that common saying, *At what time soever a sinner repents him of his sins from the bottom of his heart, I will put all his wickedness out of my remembrance, saith the Lord.* For although *at what time soever a sinner does repent*, as (repentance is now explained) God will forgive him, and that repentance as it is now stated cannot be done [*at what time soever,*] not upon a man's death-bed; yet there are no such words in the whole bible, nor any nearer to the sense of them, than the words I have now read to you out of the prophet *Ezekiel*. Let that therefore no more deceive you, or be made a colour to countenance a persevering sinner, or a death-bed penitent.

Neither is the duty of *repentance* to be bought at an easier rate in the New Testament. You may see it described in the *2 Cor. vii. 10, 11. Godly sorrow worketh repentance.* Well? but what is that repentance which is so wrought? This it is: *Behold this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation; yea what fear, yea what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea what revenge.* These are the fruits of that sorrow that is effectual; these are the parts of repentance: *clearing ourselves* of all that is past, and *great carefulness* for the future; *anger* at ourselves for our old sins, and *fear* lest we commit the like again; *vehement desires* of pleasing God, and *zeal* of holy actions, and a *revenge* upon ourselves for

our sins, called by Saint *Paul*, in another place, *a judging ourselves, lest we be judged of the Lord.** And in pursuance of this truth, the primitive church did not admit a sinning person to the publick communions with the faithful, till besides their sorrow they had spent some years in an *αγαθωεργια*, in *doing good works*, and holy living; and especially in such actions which did contradict that wicked inclination which led them into those sins whereof they were now admitted to repent. And therefore we find that they stood in the station of penitents, seven years, thirteen years, and sometimes till their death, before they could be reconciled to the peace of God, and his holy church.

———Scelerum si bene poenitet,
Eradenda cupidinis
Pravi sunt elementa; et tenerae nimis
Mentes asperioribus
Formandae studiis †——

Repentance is the institution of a philosophical and severe life, an utter extirpation of all unreasonableness and impiety, and an address to, and a final passing through all the parts of holy living.

Now consider whether this be imaginable or possible to be done upon our death-bed, when a man is frighted into an involuntary, a sudden, and unchosen piety. 'Ο μετανοών, ου φοβώ των εναντιών την του καλού πράξιν αιρησεται, saith *Hierocles*. † He that never repents till a violent fear be upon him, till he apprehend himself to be in the

* 1 Cor. xi. 31.

† Hor. Lib. iii. Od. xxiv. 1.

If you indeed your crimes detest,
Tear forth, uprooted from the youthful breast,
The seeds of each depraved desire,
While manly toils a firmer soul inspire.

† Hierocles. η δε μετάνοια αυτή φιλοσοφίας αρχη γινεται, & των ανομιών ερβαν τα & λογών φύξη, & της αμεταμελήτου ζωής η πρῶ: τη πράσσει. See Life of H. Jesus, pt. 2. Disc. of Repentance.

jaws of death, ready to give up his unready and unprepared accounts, till he sees the judge sitting in all the addresses of dreadfulness and majesty, just now (as he believes) ready to pronounce that fearful and intolerable sentence of, *Go ye cursed into everlasting fire*; this man does nothing for the love of God, nothing for the love of virtue: it is just as a condemned man repents that he was a traitor; but repented not till he was arrested, and sure to die: such a repentance as this may still consist with as great an affection to sin as ever he had; and it is no thanks to him, if, when the knife is at his throat, then he gives good words and flatters. But suppose this man in his health and the midst of all his lust, it is evident that there are some circumstances of action in which the man would have refused to commit his most pleasing sin. Would not the son of *Tarquin* have refused to ravish *Lucrece*, if *Junius Brutus* had been by him? Would the impurest person in the world act his lust in the market place? or drink off an intemperate goblet, if a dagger were placed at his throat? In these circumstances their fear would make them declare against the present acting their impurities. But does this cure the intemperance of their affections? Let the impure person retire to his closet, and *Junius Brutus* be engaged in a far distant war, and the dagger be taken from the drunkard's throat, and the fear of shame, or death, or judgment be taken from them all; and they shall no more resist their temptation, than they could before remove their fear: and you may as well judge the other persons holy, and haters of their sin, as the man upon his death-bed to be penitent; and rather they than he, by how much this man's fear, the fear of death, and of the infinite pains of hell, the fear of a provoked God, and an angry eternal Judge, are far greater than the apprehensions of a publick shame, or an abused husband, or

the poignard of an angry person.* These men then sin not, because they dare not; they are frightened from the act, but not from the affection, which is not to be cured but by discourse, and reasonable acts, and human considerations; of which that man is not naturally capable who is possessed with the greatest fear, the fear of death and damnation. If there had been time to cure his sin, and to live the life of grace, I deny not but God might have begun his conversion with so great a fear, that he should never have wiped off its impression:† but if the man dies then, dies when he only declaims against, and curses his sin, as being the author of his present fear and apprehended calamity; it is very far from reconciling him to God or hopes of pardon, because it proceeds from a violent, unnatural and intolerable cause; no act of choice, or virtue, but of sorrow, a deserved sorrow, and a miserable, unchosen, unavoidable fear.

—————moriensque recepit

Quas nollet victurus aquas ———‡

He curses sin upon his death-bed, and makes a panegyrick of virtue which in his life-time he accounted folly, and trouble, and needless vexation.

Quae mens est hodie, cur eadem non puero fuit ?

Vel cur his animis incolumes non redeunt genae ? §

* Cogimur a suetis animum suspendere rebus ;

Atque ut vivamus, vivere desinimus.

CORNEL. GAL.

In pious fear of Heaven's avenging rod

We die to pleasure, and we live to God.

A.

‡ Nec ad rem pertinet ubi inciperet, quod placuerat ut fieret.

‡ And dying quaffed, what living he had scorned.

A.

§ Hor. Lib. iv. Od. x. 7.

Why were the charms of youth consign'd

In vain profusion to so proud a mind ?

Or why, since now that pride is o'er,

Will youth, with all its charms, return no more ?

DUNCOMBE.

I shall end this first consideration with a plain exhortation; that since repentance is a duty of so great and giant-like bulk, let no man crowd it up into so narrow room, as that it be strangled in its birth for want of time and air to breath in: let it not be put off to that time when a man hath scarce time enough to reckon all those particular duties which make up the integrity of its constitution. Will any man hunt the wild boar in his garden, or bait a bull in his closet? Will a woman wrap her child in her handkerchief, or a father send his son to school when he is fifty years old? These are indecencies of providence, and the instrument contradicts the end: and this is our case. There is no room for the repentance, no time to act all its essential parts: and a child, who hath a great way to go before he be wise, may defer his studies, and hope to become learned in his old age, and upon his death-bed; as well as a vicious person may think to recover from all his ignorances and prejudicate opinions, from all his false principles and evil customs, from his wicked inclinations and ungodly habits, from his fondnesses of vice and detestations of virtue, from his promptness to sin and unwillingness to grace, from his spiritual deadness and strong sensuality, upon his death-bed (I say,) when he hath no natural strength and as little spiritual, when he is criminal and impotent, hardened in his vice, and soft in his fears, full of passion and empty of wisdom, when he is sick and amazed, and timorous and confounded, and impatient, and extremely miserable.

And now when any of you is tempted to commit a sin, remember that sin will ruin you, unless you repent of it. But this (you say) is no news, and so far from affrighting you from sin, that (God knows) it makes men sin the rather. For therefore they venture to act the present temptation, because they know, if they repent, God will forgive them; and

therefore they resolve upon both, to sin now, and repent hereafter.

Against this folly I shall not oppose the consideration of their danger, and that they neither know how long they shall live, nor whether they shall die or no in this very act of sin; though this consideration is very material, and if they should die in it, or before it is washed off, they perish: but I consider these things. 1. That he that resolves to sin upon a resolution to repent, by every act of sin makes himself more incapable of repenting, by growing more in love with sin, by remembering its pleasures, by serving it once more, and losing one degree more of the liberty of our spirit. And if you resolve to sin now, because it is pleasant, how do you know that your appetite will alter? Will it not appear pleasant to you next week, and the next week after that, and so forever? And still you sin, and still you will repent; that is, you will repent when the sin can please you no longer: for so long as it can please you, so long you are tempted not to repent, as well as now to act the sin: and the longer you lie in it, the more you will love it. So that it is in effect to say, I love my sin now, but I will hereafter hate it; only I will act it a while longer, and grow more in love with it, and then I will repent; that is, then I will be sure to hate it when I shall most love it. 2. To repent signifies to be sorrowful, to be ashamed, and to wish it had never been done. And then see the folly of this temptation: I would not sin, but that I hope to repent of it; that is, I would not do this thing, but that I hope to be sorrowful for doing it, and I hope to come to shame for it, heartily to be ashamed of my doings, and I hope to be in that condition, that I would give all the world I had never done it; that is, I hope to feel and apprehend an evil infinitely greater than the pleasures of my sin. And are these arguments fit to move a man to sin? What can affright a man from

it, if these invite him to it? It is as if a man should invite one to be a partner of his treason by telling him, if you will join with me, you shall have all these effects by it; you shall be hanged, drawn and quartered, and your blood shall be corrupted, and your estate forfeited, and you shall have many other reasons to wish you had never done it. He that should use this rhetorick in earnest might well be accounted a mad man; this is to scare a man, not to allure him: and so is the other when we understand it truly. 3. For I consider, he that repents, wishes he had never done that sin. Now I ask, does he wish so upon reason, or without reason? Surely, if he may, when he hath satisfied his lust, ask God pardon, and be admitted upon as easy terms for the time to come as if he had not done the sin, he hath no reason to be sorrowful, or wish he had not done it. For though he hath done it, and pleased himself by *enjoying the pleasure of sin for that season*, yet all is well again; and let him only be careful now, and there is no hurt done, his pardon is certain. How can any man that understands the reason of his actions and passions wish, that he had never done that sin in which then he had pleasure, and now he feels no worse inconvenience. But he that truly repents, wishes, and would give all the world, he had never done it. Surely then his present condition in respect of his past sin hath some very great evil in it, why else should he be so much troubled? True, and this it is. He that hath committed sins after baptism is fallen out of the favour of God, is tied to hard duty for the time to come, to cry vehemently unto God, to call night and day for pardon, to be in great fear and tremblings of heart, lest God should never forgive him, lest God will never take off his sentence of eternal pains; and in this fear and in some degrees of it he will remain all the days of his life: and if he

hopes to be quit of that, yet he knows not how many degrees of God's anger still hang over his head: how many sad miseries shall afflict, and burn, and purify him in this world with a sharpness so poignant as to divide the marrow from the bones; and for these reasons, as a considering man that knows what it is to repent, wishes with his soul he had never sinned, and therefore grieves in proportion to his former crimes, and present misery, and future danger.

And now suppose that you can repent when you will, that is, that you can grieve when you will, (though no man can do it, no man can grieve when he please; though he could shed tears when he list, he cannot grieve without a real or apprehended infelicity; but, suppose it) and that he can fear when he please, and that he can love when he please, or what he please; that is, suppose a man be able to say to his palate, Though I love sweet-meats, yet tomorrow will I hate and loath them, and believe them bitter and distasteful things; suppose (I say) all these impossibilities: yet since repentance does suppose a man to be in a state of such real misery, that he hath reason to curse the day in which he sinned, is this a fit argument to invite a man that is in his wits to sin? to sin in hope of repentance? as if danger of falling into hell, and fear of the divine anger, and many degrees of the divine judgments, and a lasting sorrow, and a perpetual labour, and a never-ceasing trembling, and a troubled conscience, and a sorrowful spirit, were fit things to be desired or hoped for.

The sum is this: He that commits sins shall perish eternally, if he never does repent. And if he does repent, and yet untimely, he is not the better; and if he does not repent with an entire, a perfect and complete repentance, he is not the better. But if he does, yet repentance is a duty full of fears, and sor-

row, and labour: a vexation to the spirit; an afflictive, penal, or punitive duty; a duty which suffers for sin, and labours for grace, which abides and suffers little images of hell in the way to heaven: and though it be the only way to felicity, yet it is beset with thorns and daggers of sufferance, and with rocks and mountains of duty. Let no man, therefore, dare to sin upon the hopes of repentance: for he is a fool and a hypocrite, that now chooses and approves what he knows hereafter he must condemn.

2. The second general consideration is, The necessity, the absolute necessity of holy living. God hath made a covenant with us, that we must give up ourselves, *bodies* and souls, not a dying, but a *living* and healthful *sacrifice*.* He hath forgiven all our old sins, and we have bargained to quit them, from the time that we first come to Christ, and give our names to him, and to keep all his commandments. We have taken the sacramental oath, like that of the old *Roman militia*, *πισθαρχησεν, & ποιησεν το προστατουμενον υπο των αρχοντων κατα δυναμιν*, we must *believe*, and *obey*, and do *all that is commanded us*, and keep our station, and fight against the flesh, the world, and the devil, not to throw away our military girdle; and we are to *do what is bidden us*, or to die for it, even all that is bidden us, *according to our power*. For, pretend not that God's commandments are impossible. It is dishonourable to think God enjoins us to do more than he enables us to; and it is a contradiction to say we cannot do all that we can; and *through Christ which strengthens me I can do all things*, saith *St. Paul*. However, we can do to the utmost of our strength, and beyond that we cannot take thought; impossibilities enter not into deliberation; but according to our abilities and natural powers, assisted by God's grace, so God hath cove-

* Rom. xii. 1.

nanted with us to live a holy life. *For in Christ Jesus nothing availeth but a new creature, nothing but faith working by charity, nothing but keeping the commandments of God.* They are all the words of St. Paul before quoted; to which he adds, *And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them and mercy.* This is the covenant, *they are the Israel of God,* upon those peace and mercy shall abide. If they become a new creature, wholly transformed in the image of their mind; if they have faith, and this faith be an operative, working faith, a faith that produces a holy life, a *faith that works by charity*; if they keep the commandments of God, then they are within the covenant of mercy, but not else: for *in Christ Jesus nothing else availeth.* To the same purpose are those words, *Heb. xii. 14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.* *Peace with all men* implies both justice and charity, without which it is impossible to preserve peace: *Holiness* implies all our duty towards God, universal diligence: and this must be *followed*, that is, pursued with diligence, in a lasting course of life and exercise: and without this we shall never see the face of God. I need urge no more authorities to this purpose; these two are as certain and convincing as two thousand: And since thus much is actually required, and is the condition of the covenant: it is certain that sorrow for not having done what is commanded to be done, and a purpose to do what is necessary to be actually performed, will not acquit us before the righteous judgment of God. “*For the grace of God hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live godly, justly, and soberly in this present world.*”* For upon these terms alone we must look for the blessed hope, the

* Tit. ii. 11, 12.

glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. I shall no longer insist upon this particular, but only propound it to your consideration. To what purpose are all those commandments in scripture, of every page almost in it, of *living holily*, and according to the commandments of God, of *adorning the gospel of God*, of *walking as in the day*, of *walking in light*, of *pure and undefiled religion*, of *being holy as God is holy*, of *being humble and meek as Christ is humble*, of *putting on the Lord Jesus*, of *living a spiritual life*, but that it is the purpose of God, and the intention and design of Christ dying for us, and the covenant made with man, that we should expect heaven upon no other terms in the world, but of a holy life, in the faith and obedience of the Lord Jesus?

Now if a vicious person, when he comes to the latter end of his days, one that hath lived a wicked, ungodly life, can for any thing he can do upon his death-bed be said to live a holy life; then his hopes are not desperate: but he that hopes upon this only, for which God hath made him no promise, I must say of him as *Galen* said of consumptive persons, *ἢ ὧραρον ἐλπίζουσιν ταυτη μᾶλλον, κακίως ἐχρυσσι*, *The more they hope, the worse they are*: and the relying upon such hopes is an approach to the grave, and a sad eternity.

Peleos et Priami transit, vel Nestoris aetas,

Et fuerat serum jam tibi desinere.

Eja age, rumpe moras; quo te spectabimus usque?

Dum quid sis dubitas, jam potes esse nihil.*

* MART. LIB. II. EP. 64.

Peleus and Priam, Nestor, nought could save;

Hoary with years, canst thou escape the grave?

Delay no more, delusive hope resign:

Will Death, who spares no life, abstain from thine? A.

And now it will be a vain question to ask, Whether or no God cannot save a dying man that repents after a vicious life. For it is true, God can do it if he please, and he can *raise children to Abraham out of the stones*, and he can make ten thousand worlds, if he sees good, and he can do what he list, and he can save an ill-living man though he never repent at all, so much as upon his death-bed: All this can he do. But God's power is no ingredient into this question: we are never the better that God can do it, unless he also will: and whether he will or no, we are to learn from himself, and what he hath declared to be his will in holy scripture. Nay, since God hath said, that *without actual holiness no man shall see God*, God by his own will hath restrained his power: and though absolutely he can do all things, yet he cannot do against his own word. And indeed the rewards of heaven are so great and glorious, and Christ's *burthen is so light, his yoke is so easy*, that it is a shameless impudence to expect so great glories at a less rate than so little a service, at a lower rate than a holy life. It cost the eternal Son of God his life-blood to obtain heaven for us upon that condition: and who then shall die again for us, to get heaven for us upon easier conditions? What would you do, if God should command you to kill your eldest son, or to work in the mines for a thousand years together, or to fast all thy life-time with bread and water? were not heaven a great bargain even after all this? And when God requires nothing of us but to live soberly, justly, and godly, (which very things of themselves to men are a very great felicity, and necessary to his present well-being) shall we think this to be a load, and an unsufferable burthen? and that heaven is so little a purchase at that price, that God in mere justice will take a death-bed sigh or groan, and a few unprofitable tears and promises, in exchange for all

our duty? Strange it should be so: but stranger, that any man should rely upon such a vanity, when from God's word he hath nothing to warrant such a confidence. But these men do like the tyrant *Dionysius*, who stole from *Apollo* his golden cloak, and gave him a cloak of *Arcadian* home-spun, saying that this was lighter in summer, and warmer in winter. These men sacrilegiously rob God of the service of all their golden days, and serve him in their hoary head, in their furs and grave-cloaths, and pretend that this late service is more agreeable to the divine mercy on one side, and human infirmity on the other, and so dispute themselves into an irrecoverable condition; having no other ground to rely upon a death-bed or late-begun repentance, but because they resolve to enjoy the pleasures of sin; and for heaven they will put that to the venture of an after-game. These men *sow in the flesh* and would *reap in the spirit*; live to the devil, and die to God; and therefore it is but just in God that their hopes should be desperate, and their craft be folly, and their condition be the unexpected, unfeared inheritance of an eternal sorrow.

3. Lastly. Our last inquiry is into the time, the last or latest time of beginning our repentance. Must a man repent a year, or two, or seven years, or ten, or twenty before his death? or what is the last period after which all repentance will be untimely and ineffectual? To this captious question I have many things to oppose. 1. We have entered into covenant with God, to serve him from the day of our baptism to the day of our death. He hath "*sworn this oath to us, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered from fear of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.*"* Now although God will

* Luke i. 73. 74

not τις ανδραπεινης ή κωινης ασθενειας επιλανθανεσθαι, *forget our infirmities, but pass by the weaknesses of an honest, a watchful and industrious person; yet the covenant he makes with us is from the day of our first voluntary profession to our grave; and according as we by sins retire from our first undertaking, so our condition is insecure: there is no other covenant made with us, no new beginnings of another period; but if we be returned, and sin be cancelled, and grace be actually obtained, then we are in the first condition of pardon: but because it is uncertain when a man can have mastered his vices, and obtained the graces, therefore no man can tell any set time when he must begin.* 2. Scripture describing the duty of repenting sinners, names no other time but *to-day. To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* 3. The duty of a christian is described in scripture to be such as requires length of time, and a continued industry. *Let us run with patience the race that is set before us: and consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied, and faint in your minds.** So great a preparation is not for the agony and contention of an hour, or a day, or a week, but for the whole life of a christian, or for great parts of its abode. 4. There is a certain period and time set for our repentance, and beyond that all our industry is ineffectual. There is *a day of visitation, our own day*; and there is a day of visitation that is *God's day*. This appeared in the case of *Jerusalem; O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, if thou hadst known the time of thy visitation, at least in this thy day.* Well, they neglected it; and then there was a time of God's visitation, which was *his day*, called in scripture *the day of the Lord*; and because they had neglected their own day, they fell into inevitable ruin: No repentance could have preven-

* Heb. xii. 1 and 3.

ted their final ruin. And this which was true in a nation, is also clearly affirmed true in the case of single persons. *Look diligently lest any fail of the grace of God, lest there be any person among you as Esau, who sold his birth-right, and afterwards when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for his repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.** Esau had time enough to repent his bargain as long as he lived; he wept sorely for his folly, and careflessness sat heavy upon his soul; and yet he was not heard, nor his repentance accepted: for the time was past. And *take heed*, saith the apostle, lest it come to pass to any of you to be in the same case. Now if ever there be a time in which repentance is too late, it must be the time of our death-bed, and the last time of our life. And after a man is fallen into the displeasure of Almighty God, the longer he lies in his sin without repentance and emendation, the greater is his danger, and the more of his allowed time is spent: and no man can antecedently, or before-hand, be sure that the time of his repentance is not past; and those who neglect the call of God, and refuse to hear him call in the day of grace, *God will laugh at them when their calamity comes: they shall call, and the Lord shall not hear them.* And this was the case of the *five foolish virgins* when the arrest of death surprised them: They discovered their want of oil, they were troubled at it; they begged oil, they were refused; they did something towards the procuring of the oil of grace. (for they went out to buy oil:) and after all this stir the bridegroom came before they had finished their journey, and they were shut out from the communion of the bridegroom's joys.

Therefore concerning the time of beginning to repent no man is certain but he that hath done his

* Heb. xii, 15. &c.

work. *Mortem venientem nemo hilaris excipit, nisi qui se ad eam diu composuerat*, said *Seneca*.* He only dies cheerfully who stood waiting for death in a ready dress of a long preceding preparation. He that repents to day, repents late enough that he did not begin yesterday: but he that puts it off till to-morrow is vain and miserable.

—hodie jam, †Posthume, vivere serum est:
Ille sapit quisquis, Posthume, vixit heri. †

Well; but what will you have a man do that hath lived wickedly, and is now cast upon his death-bed? shall this man despair, and neglect all the actions of piety, and the instruments of restitution in his sickness? No, God forbid. Let him do what he can then; it is certain it will be little enough: but all those short gleams of piety and flashes of lightning will help towards alleviating some degrees of misery; and if the man recover, they are good beginnings of a renewed piety: and *Ahab's* tears and humiliation, though it went no farther, had a proportion of a reward, though nothing to the portions of eternity. So that he that says, it is every day necessary to repent, cannot be supposed to discourage the piety of any day: a death-bed piety, when things are come to that sad condition, may have many good purposes: therefore, even then, neglect nothing that can be done. Well; but shall such persons despair of salvation? To them I shall only return this: that they are to consider the conditions which on one

* Epis. 30.

† Mart. Lib. ii. Ep. 90

Repent to morrow! blest alone the man,
Whose deep contrition ere this day began.

A

side God requires of us; and, on the other side, whether they have done accordingly. Let them consider upon what terms God hath promised salvation, and whether they have made themselves capable by performing their part of the obligation. If they have not, I must tell them, that, not to hope where God hath made no promise, is not the *sin* of despair, but the *misery* of despair. A man hath no ground to hope that ever he shall be made an angel, and yet that not hoping is not to be called *despair*: and no man can hope for heaven without repentance; and for such a man to despair, is not the sin, but the misery. If such persons have a promise of heaven, let them shew it, and hope it, and enjoy it: if they have no promise, they must thank themselves, for bringing themselves into a condition without the covenant, without a promise, hopeless and miserable.

But will not trusting in the merits of *Jesus Christ* save such a man? For that, we must be tried by the word of God, in which there is no contract at all made with a dying person that lived in name a christian, in practice a heathen: and we shall dishonour the sufferings and redemption of our blessed Saviour, if we think them to be an *umbrella* to shelter our impious and ungodly living. But that no such person may after a wicked life repose himself on his death-bed upon Christ's merits, observe but these two places of Scripture. *Our Saviour Jesus Christ who gave himself for us,** what to do? that we might live as we list, and hope to be saved by his merits? no, but *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* *These things speak and exhort,* saith St. Paul, but more plainly yet in St Peter, *Christ bare our sins in his own body on the tree,†* to what end? *that we*

* Titus ii. 12.

† 1 Pet. ii. 21.

being dead unto sin, should live unto righteousness. Since therefore our living a holy life is the end of Christ's dying that sad and holy death for us, he that trusts on it to evil purposes, and to excuse his vicious life, does (as much as lies in him) make void the very purpose and design of Christ's passion, and dishonours the blood of the everlasting covenant; which covenant was confirmed by the blood of Christ: but as it brought peace from God, so it requires a holy life from us.*

But why may not we be saved as well as the thief upon the cross? Even because our case is nothing alike. When Christ dies once more for us, we may look for such another instance; not till then. But this thief did but then come to Christ, he knew him not before; and his case was, as if a *Turk* or heathen should be converted to christianity, and be baptized, and enter newly into the covenant upon his death-bed: then God pardons all his sins. And so God does to christians when they are baptized or first give up their names to Christ by a voluntary confirmation of their baptismal vow: but when they have once entered into the covenant they must perform what they promise, and to what they are obliged. The thief had made no contract with God in *Jesus Christ*, and therefore failed of none; only the defaultances of the state of ignorance Christ paid for at the thief's admission: but we that have made a covenant with God in baptism, and failed of it all our days, and then return at *night when we cannot work*, have nothing to plead for ourselves, because we have made all that to be useless to us, which God with so much mercy and miraculous wisdom gave us to secure our interest and hopes of heaven.

And therefore let no Christian man, who hath covenanted with God to give him the service of his

* See *Life of Jesus*, Disc. of Repentance, part 2.

life, think that God will be answered with the sighs and prayers of a dying man: for all that great obligation which lies upon us cannot be transacted in an instant, when we have loaded our souls with sin, and made them empty of virtue; we cannot so soon grow up to a perfect man in Christ Jesus. οὐδὲν τὸν μεγάλην ἀφῆω γινεται.* You cannot have an apple or a cherry, but you must stay its proper periods, and let it blossom and knot, and grow and ripen, and in due season we shall reap, if we faint not, (saith the apostle :) Far much less may we expect that the fruits of repentance and the issues and degrees of holiness shall be gathered in a few days or hours. γναιμὸς δ' ἀνθρώπου καρτὶν θεοῦ οὐτῶ δι' ὀλίγου ἢ ευκλείας κήσαθαι; You must not expect such fruits in a little time, nor with little labour.

Suffer therefore not yourselves to be deceived by false principles and vain confidences: for no man can in a moment root out the long contracted habits of vice, nor upon his death-bed make use of all that variety of preventing, accompanying, and persevering grace, which God gave to man in mercy, because man would need it all, because without it he could not be saved; nor upon his death-bed can he exercise the duty of mortification, nor cure his drunkenness then, nor his lust, by any act of Christian discipline, nor run with patience, nor resist unto blood, nor endure with long sufferance; but he can pray, and groan, and call to God, and resolve to live well when he is dying. But this is but just as the nobles of Xerxes, when in a storm they were to lighten the ship to preserve their king's life, they did προσκυνοῦντας ἐπιτιθεῖν εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, they did their obeisance, and leaped into the sea: so (I fear) do these men, pray, and mourn, and worship, and so leap overboard into an ocean of eternal and intolerable

* Arrian, Epictet. l. 1. c. 15

calamity. From which God deliver us, and all faithful people.

*Hunc volo laudari qui sine morte potest.**

Vivere quod propero pauper, nec inutilis annis,

Da veniam; properat vivere nemo satis.

Differat hoc, patrios optat qui vincere census,

Atrique immodicis aretat imaginibus.†

* *Martial, Lib. 1.*

I praise the unhappy man that dares to live. **A.**

† *Mart. Lib. ii. Ep. 90.*

Forgive the fault your soberer years despise,

If poor, I snatch each pleasure as it flies;

See meaner spirits my pursuits deride,

The slave of avarice, and the fool of pride. **A.**

SERMON VII.



THE

DECEITFULNESS OF THE HEART.

JEREMIAH xvii. 9.

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it ?

FOLLY and subtilty divide the greatest part of mankind; and there is no other difference but this, that some are crafty enough to deceive, others foolish enough to be cozened and abused: and yet the scales also turn, for they that are the most crafty to cozen others are the veriest fools, and most of all abuse themselves. They rob their neighbour of his money, and lose their own innocency; they disturb his rest, and vex their own conscience; they throw him into prison, and themselves into hell; they make poverty to be their brother's portion, and damnation to be their own. Man entered into the world first alone; but as soon as he met with one companion, he met with three to cozen him: the serpent, and *Eve*, and himself all joined: first to make him a fool and to deceive him, and then to make him miserable. But he first cozened himself, *giving himself up to believe a lie*; and being desirous to listen to the whispers of a tempting spirit, he sinned before he fell; that is, he

had within him a false understanding, and a depraved will : and these were the parents of his disobedience, and this was the parent of his infelicity, and a great occasion of ours. And then it was that he entered for himself and his posterity into the condition of an ignorant, credulous, easy, wilful, passionate, and impotent person ; apt to be abused, and so loving to have it so, that if nobody else will abuse him, he will be sure to abuse himself ; by ignorance and evil principles being open to an enemy, and by wilfulness and sensuality doing to himself the most unpardonable injuries in the whole world. So that the condition of man in the rudenesses and first lines of its visage seems very miserable, deformed, and accursed.

For a man is helpless and vain ; of a condition so exposed to calamity, that a raisin is able to kill him ; any trooper out of the *Egyptian* army, a fly can do it, when it goes on God's errand ; the most contemptible accident can destroy him, the smallest chance affright him, every future contingency, when but considered as possible, can amaze him ; and he is encompassed with potent and malicious enemies, subtle and implacable : what shall this poor helpless thing do ? Trust in God ? Him he hath offended, and he fears him as an enemy ; and God knows, if we look only on ourselves, and on our own demerits, we have too much reason so to do. Shall he rely upon princes ? God help poor kings ; they rely upon their subjects, they fight with their swords, levy force with their money, consult with their councils, hear with their ears, and are strong only in their union, and many times they use all these things against them : but, however, they can do nothing without them while they live, and yet if ever they can die they are not to be trusted to. Now kings and princes die so sadly and notoriously, that it was used for a proverb in holy

Scripture, *Ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.* Who then shall we trust in? In our friend? Poor man! he may help thee in one thing, and need thee in ten: he may pull thee out of the ditch, and his foot may slip and fall into it himself: he gives thee counsel to chuse a wife, and himself is to seek how prudently to chuse his religion: he counsels thee to abstain from a duel, and yet slays his own soul with drinking: like a person void of all understanding, he is willing enough to preserve thy interest, and is very careless of his own; for he does highly despise to betray or to be false to thee, and in the mean time is not his own friend, and is false to God; and then his friendship may be useful to thee in some circumstances of fortune, but no security to thy condition. But what then? shall we rely upon our patron, like the *Roman* clients, who waited hourly upon their persons, and daily upon their baskets, and nightly upon their lusts, and married their friendships, and contracted also their hatred and quarrels? this is a confidence will deceive us. For they may lay us by, justly or unjustly; they may grow weary of doing benefits, or their fortunes may change; or they may be charitable in their gifts, and burthensome in their offices; able to feed you, but unable to counsel you; or your need may be longer than their kindnesses, or such in which they can give you no assistance: and indeed, generally, it is so in all the instances of men. We have a friend that is wise; but I need not his counsel, but his meat: or my patron is bountiful in his largesses; but I am troubled with a sad spirit; and money and presents do me no more ease than perfumes do to a broken arm. We seek life of a physician that dies, and go to him for health who cannot cure his own breath or gout; and so become vain in our imaginations, abused in our hopes, restless in our passions, impatient in our calamity, unsupported in our need, exposed to our ene-

mies, wandering and wild, without counsel, and without remedy. At last, after the infatuating and deceiving all our confidences without, we have nothing left us but to return home, and dwell within ourselves: for we have a sufficient stock of self-love, that we may be confident of our own affections, we may trust ourselves surely; for what we want in skill we shall make up in diligence, and our industry shall supply the want of other circumstances: and no man understands my own case so well as I do myself, and no man will judge so faithfully as I shall do for myself; for I am most concerned not to abuse myself; and if I do, I shall be the loser, and therefore may best rely upon myself. Alas! and God help us! we shall find it to be no such matter: for we neither love ourselves well, nor understand our own case; we are partial in our own questions, deceived in our sentences, careless of our interests, and the most false, perfidious creatures to ourselves in the whole world: even the *heart of a man*, a man's own heart is *deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?* And who can chuse but know it.

And there is no greater argument of the deceitfulness of our heart than this, that no man can know it at all; it cozens us in the very number of its cozenage. But yet we can reduce it all to two heads. We say concerning a false man, trust him not, for he will deceive you; and we say concerning a weak and broken staff, lean not upon it, for that will also deceive you. The man deceives because he is false, and the staff because it is weak; and the heart because it is both. So that it is deceitful above all things; that is, failing and disabled to support us in many things, but in other things where it can, it is false and desperately wicked. The first sort of deceitfulness is its calamity, and the second is its iniquity; and that is the worse calamity of the two.

1. The heart is deceitful in its strength ; and when we have the growth of a man, we have the weaknesses of a child : nay more yet, and it is a sad consideration, the more we are in age, the weaker in our courage. It appears in the heats and forwardnesses of new converts, which are like to the great emissions of lightning, or like huge fires, which flame and burn without measure, even all that they can ; till from flames they descend to still fires, from thence to smoke, from smoke to embers, and from thence to ashes ; cold and pale, like ghosts, or the fantastick images of death. And the primitive church were zealous in their religion up to the degree of cherubims, and would run as greedily to the sword of the hangman, to die for the cause of God, as we do now to the greatest joy and entertainment of a christian spirit, even to the receiving of the holy sacrament. A man would think it reasonable that the first infancy of christianity should, according to the nature of first beginnings, have been remiss, gentle, and unactive ; and that according as the object or evidence of faith grew, which in every age hath a great degree of argument superadded to its confirmation, so should the habit also and the grace, the longer it lasts, and the more objections it runs through, it still should shew a brighter and more certain light to discover the divinity of its principle : and that after the more examples, and new accidents and strangenesses of Providence, and daily experience, and the multitude of miracles, still the Christian should grow more certain in his faith, more refreshed in his hope, and warm in his charity : the very nature of these graces increasing and swelling upon the very nourishment of experience, and the multiplication of their own acts. And yet because the heart of man is false, it suffers the fires of the altar to go out, and the flames lessen by the multitude of fuel. But indeed it is because we put

on strange fire, and put out the fire upon our hearths by letting in a glaring sun-beam, the fire of lust, or the heats of an angry spirit, to quench the fires of God, and suppress the sweet cloud of incense. The heart of man hath not strength enough to think one good thought of itself, it cannot command its own attentions to a prayer of ten lines long, but before its end it shall wander after something that is to no purpose: and no wonder then that it grows weary of a holy religion, which consists of so many parts as make the business of a whole life. And there is no greater argument in the world, of our spiritual weakness and the falseness of our hearts in the matters of religion, than the backwardness which most men have always, and all men have sometimes, to say their prayers; so weary of their length, so glad when they are done, so witty to excuse and frustrate an opportunity: and yet there is no manner of trouble in the duty, no weariness of bones, no violent labours; nothing but begging a blessing, and receiving it: nothing but doing ourselves the greatest honour of speaking to the greatest person, and greatest king of the world: and that we should be unwilling to do this, so unable to continue in it, so backward to return to it, so without gust and relish in the doing it, can have no visible reason in the nature of the thing, but something within us, a strange sickness in the heart, a spiritual nauseating or loathing of manna, something that hath no name; but we are sure it comes from a weak, a faint, and false heart.

And yet this weak heart is strong in passions, violent in desires, unresistable in its appetites, impatient in its lust, furious in anger: here are strengths enough, one should think. But so have I seen a man in a fever, sick and distempered, unable to walk, less able to speak sense, or to do an act of counsel; and yet when his fever had boiled up to a *delirium*, he was

strong enough to beat his nurse-keeper and his doctor too, and to resist the loving violence of all his friends, who would fain bind him down to reason and his bed: and yet we still say, he is weak and sick to death. *Θελω γαρ ειναι τονους εν σαματι, αλλ' ως υηλαινοντι, ως αθλουοντι.** For these strengths of madness are not *health*, but furiousness and disease. *ουκ εισι τονοι, αλλα ατονω ετερον τροπον.* It is *weakness another way*. And so are the strengths of a man's heart: they are fetters and manacles; strong, but they are the cordage of imprisonment; so strong, that the heart is not able to stir. And yet it cannot but be a huge sadness, that the heart shall pursue a temporal interest with wit and diligence, and an unwearied industry; and shall not have strength enough in a matter that concerns its eternal interest to answer one objection, to resist one assault, to defeat one art of the devil; but shall certainly and infallibly fall, whenever it is tempted to a pleasure.

This, if it be examined, will prove to be a deceit, indeed, a pretence, rather than true upon a just cause; that is, it is not a natural, but a moral and a vicious weakness: And we may try it in one or two familiar instances. One of the great strengths, shall I call it? or weaknesses of the heart, is, that it is strong, violent and passionate in its lusts, and weak and deceitful to resist any. Tell the tempted person, that if he act his lust he dishonours his body, makes himself a servant to folly, and one flesh with a harlot; he *defiles the temple of God*, and him that defiles a temple *will God destroy*; Tell him that the angels, who love to be present in the nastiness and filth of prisons, that they may comfort and assist chaste souls and holy persons there abiding, yet they are impatient to behold or come near the filthiness of a lustful per-

* Arrian.

son: Tell him that his sin is so ugly, that the devils, who are spirits, yet they delight to counterfeit the acting of this crime, and descend unto the daughters or sons of men, that they may rather lose their natures, than not to help to set a lust forward: Tell them these and ten thousand things more; you move them no more, than if you should read one of *Tully's* orations to a mule: for the truth is, they have no power to resist it, much less to master it; their heart fails them when they meet their mistress; and they are driven like a fool to the stocks, or a bull to the slaughter-house. And yet their heart deceives them; not because it cannot resist the temptation, but because it will not go about it: For it is certain, the heart can, if it list. For let a boy enter into your chamber of pleasure, and discover your folly, either your lust disbands, or your shame hides it; you will not, you dare not do it before a stranger boy: and yet that you dare do it before the eyes of the all-seeing God, is impudence and folly, and a great conviction of the vanity of your pretence, and the falseness of your heart. If thou beest a man given to thy appetite, and thou lovest a pleasant morsel as thy life, do not declaim against the precepts of temperance as impossible: Try this once; abstain from that draught, or that dish. I cannot. No? Give this man a great blow on the face, or tempt him with twenty pound, and he shall fast from morning till night, and then feast himself with your money, and plain wholesome meat. And if *chastity* and *temperance* be so easy, that a man may be brought to either of them with so ready and easy instruments: let us not suffer our heart to deceive us by the weakness of its pretences, and the strength of its desires: For we do more for a boy than for God, and for twenty pound than for heaven itself.

But thus it is in every thing else. Take a heretick, a rebel, a person that hath an ill cause to manage; what he wants in the strength of his reason, he shall make it up with diligence; and a person that hath right on his side is cold, indiligent, lazy, and unactive, trusting that the goodness of his cause will do it alone. But so wrong prevails, while evil persons are zealous in a bad matter, and others are remiss in a good; and the same person shall be very industrious always when he hath least reason so to be. That is the first particular, the heart is deceitful in the managing of its natural strengths; it is naturally and physically strong, but morally weak and impotent.

2. The heart of man is deceitful in making judgment concerning its own acts. It does not know when it is pleased or displeased, it is peevish and trifling, it would and it would not, and it is in many cases impossible to know whether a man's heart desires such a thing or not. St. *Ambrose* hath an odd saying, *Facilius inveneris innocentem, quam qui poenitentiam digne egerit*; It is easier to find a man that lived innocently, than one that hath truly repented him, with a grief and care great according to the merit of his sins. Now suppose a man that hath spent his younger years in vanity and folly, and is by the grace of God apprehensive of it, and thinks of returning to sober counsels; this man will find his heart so false, so subtil and fugitive, so secret and undiscernible, that it will be very hard to discern whether he repents or no. For if he considers that he hates sin, and therefore repents; alas! he so hates it, that he dares not, if he be wise, tempt himself with an opportunity to act it: for in the midst of that which he calls hatred, he hath so much love left for it, that if the sin comes again and speaks him fair, he is lost again, he kisses the fire, and dies in its embraces. And why else should it be necessary for us to pray

that *we be not led into temptation*, but because we hate the sin, and yet love it too well; we curse it, and yet follow it; we are angry at ourselves, and yet cannot be without it; we know it undoes us, but we think it pleasant? And when we are to execute the fierce anger of the Lord upon our sins, yet we are kind-hearted, and spare the *Agag*, the reigning sin, the splendid temptation, we have some kindnesses left towards it.

These are but ill signs. How then shall I know by some infallible token that I am a true penitent? What and if I weep for my sins? will you not then give me leave to conclude my heart right with God, and at enmity with sin? It may be so. But there are some friends that weep at parting; and is not thy weeping a sorrow of affection? It is a sad thing to part with our long companion. Or it may be thou weepest, because thou wouldest have a sign to cozen thyself withal: for some men are more desirous to have a sign than the thing signified; they would do something to shew their repentance, that themselves may believe themselves to be penitents, having no reason from within to believe so. And I have seen some persons weep heartily for the loss of six-pence, or for the breaking of a glass, or at some trifling accident; and they that do so cannot pretend to have their tears valued at a bigger rate than they will confess their passion to be when they weep, they are vexed for the dirtying of their linen, or some such trifle, for which the least passion is too big an expense. So that a man cannot tell his own heart by his tears, or the truth of his repentance by those short gusts of sorrow. How then? Shall we suppose a man to pray against his sin? So did *St. Austin*; when in his youth he was tempted to lust and uncleanness he prayed against it, and secretly desired that God would not hear him: for here the heart is cunning to deceive itself. For no man did ever heartily pray against his

sin in the midst of a temptation to it, if he did in any sense or degree listen to the temptation: For to pray against a sin, is to have desires contrary to it, and that cannot consist with any love or any kindness to it. We pray against it, and yet do it; and then pray again, and do it again, and we desire it, and yet pray against the desires; and that is almost a contradiction. Now because no man can be supposed to will against his own will, or chuse against his own desires; it is plain that we cannot know whether we mean what we say when we pray against sin, but by the event: If we never act it, never entertain it, always resist it, ever fight against it, and finally do prevail; then at length we may judge our own heart to have meant honestly in that one particular.

Nay, our heart is so deceitful in this matter of repentance, that the masters of spiritual life are fain to invent suppletory arts and stratagems to secure the duty. And we are advised to mourn, because we do not mourn; to be sorrowful because we are not sorrowful. Now if we be sorrowful in the first stage, how happens it that we know it not? Is our heart so secret to ourselves? But if we be not sorrowful in the first period, how shall we be so, or know it in the second period? For we may as well doubt concerning the sincerity of the second, or reflex act of sorrow, as of the first and direct action. And therefore we may also as well be sorrowful the third time, for want of the just measure or hearty meaning of the second sorrow, as be sorrowful the second time for want of true sorrow at the first; and so on to infinite. And we shall never be secure in this artifice, if we be not certain of our natural and hearty passion in our direct and first apprehensions.

Thus many persons think themselves in a good estate, and make no question of their salvation, being

confident only because they are confident; and they are so, because they are bidden to be so: and yet they are not confident at all, but extremely timorous and fearful. How many persons are there in the world that say they are sure of their salvation, and yet they dare not die? And if any man pretends that he is now sure he shall be saved, and that he cannot fall away from grace; there is no better way to confute him, than by advising him to send for the surgeon, and bleed to death. For what should hinder him? not the sin; for it cannot take him from God's favour: not the change of his condition; for he says he is sure to go to a better: Why then does he not say, *καταπνικα*, like the *Roman* gallants when they *decreed* to die. The reason is plainly this, They say they are confident, and yet are extremely timorous; they profess to believe that doctrine, and yet dare not trust it; nay, they think they believe, but they do not: so false is a man's heart, so deceived in its own acts, so great a stranger to its own sentence and opinions.

3. The heart is deceitful in its own resolutions and purposes: For many times men make their resolutions only in their understanding, not in their will; they resolve it fitting to be done, not decree that they will do it; and instead of beginning to be reconciled to God, by renewed and hearty purposes of holy living, they are advanced so far only as to be convinced, and apt to be condemned, by their own sentence.

But suppose our resolutions advanced farther, and that our will and choices also are determined; see how our hearts deceive us.

1. We resolve against those sins that please us not, or where temptation is not present, and think by an over-acted zeal against some sins to give an indulgence for some others. There are some persons who will be drunk; the company, or the discourse, or the

pleasure of madness, or an easy nature and a thirsty soul, something is amiss, that cannot be helped : but they will make amends, and the next day pray twice as much. Or it may be, they must satisfy a beastly lust ; but they will not be drunk for all the world ; and hope by their temperance to commute for their want of chastity. But they attend not the craft of their secret enemy, their heart : for it is not love of the virtue ; if it were, they would love virtue in all its instances ; for chastity is as much a virtue as temperance, and God hates lust as much as he hates drunkenness. But this sin is against my health, or it may be it is against my lust ; it makes me impotent, and yet impatient ; full of desire and empty of strength. Or else I do an act of prayer, lest my conscience become unquiet, while it is not satisfied, or cozen with some intervals of religion : I shall think myself a damned wretch if I do nothing for my soul ; but if I do, I shall call the one sin that remains nothing but infirmity ; and therefore it is my excuse : and my prayer is not my religion, but my peace, and my pretence, and my fallacy.

2. We resolve against our sin, that is, we will not act it in those circumstances as formerly. I will not be drunk in the streets ; but I may sleep till I be recovered, and then come forth sober : or if I be overtaken, it shall be in civil and genteel company. Or it may not be so much ; I will leave my intemperance and my lust too, but I will remember it with pleasure ; I will revolve the past action in my mind, and entertain my fancy with a morose delectation in it, and by a fiction of imagination will represent it present, and so be satisfied with a little effeminacy or fantastick pleasure. Beloved, suffer not your hearts so to cozen you ; as if any man can be faithful in much that is faithless in a little. He certainly is very much in love

with sin, and parts with it very unwillingly, that keeps its picture, and wears its favour, and delights in the fancy of it, even with the same desire as a most passionate widow parts with her dearest husband, even when she can no longer enjoy him: but certainly her staring all day upon his picture, and weeping over his robe, and wringing her hands over his children, are no great signs that she hated him. And just so do most men hate, and accordingly part with their sins.

3. We resolve against it when the opportunity is slipped, and lay it aside as long as the temptation pleases, even till it comes again, and no longer. How many men are there in the world that against every communion renew their vows of holy living? men that for twenty, for thirty years together, have been perpetually resolving against what they daily act; and sure enough they did believe themselves. And yet if a man had daily promised us a courtesy, and failed us but ten times, when it was in his power to have done it, we should think we had reason never to believe him more. And can we then reasonably believe the resolutions of our hearts, which they have falsified so many hundred times? We resolve against a religious time, because then it is the custom of men, and the guise of the religion; or we resolve when we are in a great danger; and then we promise any thing, possible or impossible, likely or unlikely, all is one to us; we only care to remove the present pressure, and when that is over, and our fear is gone, and no love remaining, our condition being returned to our first securities, our resolutions also revert to their first indifferences: or else we cannot look a temptation in the face, and we resolve against it, hoping never to be troubled with its arguments and importunity. *Epictetus* tells us of a gentleman returning from banishment, who in his journey towards home called at

his house, told a sad story of an imprudent life, the greatest part of which being now spent, he was resolved for the future to live philosophically, and entertain no business, to be candidate for no employment, not to go to the court, not to salute *Cæsar* with ambitious attendances, but to study, and worship the Gods, and die willingly, when nature or necessity called him. It may be, this man believed himself, but *Epictetus* did not. And he had reason: for *ατηνησαν αυτω παρα Καισαρος πινυκιδες*, *letters from Cæsar met him* at the doors, and invited him to court; and he forgot all his promises which were warm upon his lips; and grew pompous, secular, and ambitious, and gave the gods thanks for his preferment. Thus many men leave the world, when their fortune hath left them; and they are severe and philosophical, and retired for ever, if for ever it be impossible to return: but let a prosperous sunshine warm and refresh their sadnesses, and make it but possible to break their purposes, and, there needs no more temptation; their own false heart is enough; they are like *Ephraim in the day of battle, starting aside like a broken bow*.

4. The heart is false, deceiving, and deceived, in its intentions and designs. A man hears the precepts of God enjoining us to give alms of all we possess; he readily obeys with much cheerfulness and alacrity, and his charity, like a fair-spreading tree, looks beautifully: but there is a canker at the heart; the man *blows a trumpet* to call the poor together, and hopes the neighbourhood will take notice of his bounty. Nay he gives alms privately, and charges no man to speak of it, and yet hopes by some accident or other to be praised both for his charity and humility. And if by chance the fame of his alms comes abroad, it is but his duty to *let his light so shine before men*, that God may be glorified, and some of our neighbours be relieved, and others edified. But then to dis-

tinguish the intention of our heart in this instance, and to seek God's glory in a particular which will also conduce much to our reputation, and to have no filthy adherence to stick to the heart, no reflection upon ourselves, or no complacency and delight in popular noises, is the nicety of abstraction, and requires an angel to do it. Some men are so kind-hearted, so true to their friend, that they will watch his very dying groans, and receive his last breath, and close his eyes. And if this be done with honest intention, it is well : but there are some that do so, and yet are vultures and harpies ; they watch for the carcass, and prey upon a legacy. A man with a true story may be malicious to his enemy, and by doing himself right may also do him wrong : and so false is the heart of man, so clancular and contradictory are its actions and intentions, that some men pursue virtue with great earnestness, and yet cannot with patience look upon it in another : it is beauty in themselves, and deformity in the other : is it not plain, that not the virtue, but its reputation is the thing that is pursued ? And yet if you tell the man so, he thinks he hath reason to complain of your malice or detraction. Who is able to distinguish his fear of God from fear of punishment, when from fear of punishment we are brought to fear God ? And yet the difference must be distinguishable in new converts and old disciples : and our fear of punishment must so often change its circumstances, that it must be at last a fear to offend out of pure love, and must have no formality left to distinguish it from charity. It is easy to distinguish these things in precepts, and to make the separation in the schools ; the head can do it easily, and the tongue can do it : but when the heart comes to separate alms from charity, God's glory from human praise, fear from fear, and sincerity from hypocrisy ; it does so intricate the questions, and confound the ends, and blind and en-

tangle circumstances, that a man hath reason to doubt that his very best actions are sullied with some unhandsome excrescency, something to make them very often to be criminal, but always to be imperfect.

Here a man would think were enough to abate our confidence, and the spirit of pride, and to make a man eternally to stand upon his guard, and to keep a strict watch upon his own heart, as upon his greatest enemy from without. *Custodi, libera me de meipso, Deus*; It was St. *Augustin's* prayer, Lord, keep me, Lord, deliver me, from myself. If God will keep a man that he be not *felo de se*, that he lay no violent hands upon himself, it is certain nothing else can do him mischief. *curte Zeus, curte Macra, curte equivoce*, as *Agamemnon* said; *Neither Jupiter, nor destinies, nor the furies*, but it is a man's self that does him the mischief. The devil can but tempt, and offer a dagger at the heart; unless our hands thrust it home, the devil can do nothing, but what may turn to our advantage. And in this sense we are to understand the two seeming contradictories in scripture: *Pray that ye enter not into temptation*, said our blessed Saviour; and, *Count it all joy when you enter into divers temptations*, said one of Christ's disciples. The case is easy. When God suffers us to be tempted, he means it but as a trial of our faith, as the exercise of our virtues, as the opportunity of reward; and in such cases we have reason to count it all joy; since the *trial of our faith worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience causeth hope, and hope maketh not ashamed*: but yet for all this, *Pray against temptations*: for when we get them into our hands, we use them as blind men do their clubs, neither distinguish person nor part; as soon they strike the face of their friends as the back of the enemy; our hearts betray us to the enemy, we fall

in love with our mischief, we contrive how to let the lust in, and leave a port open on purpose, and use arts to forget our duty, and give advantages to the devil. He that uses a temptation thus, hath reason to pray against it; and yet our hearts do all this and a thousand times more: so that we may engrave upon our hearts the epitaph which was digged into *Thyestes'* grave-stone:

Nolite, inquit, hospites, adire ad me; illico isthic,
 Ne contagio mea umbrave obsit:
 Tanta vis secleris in corpore haeret.*

There is so much falseness and iniquity in man's heart, that it defiles all the members: it makes the eyes lustful, and the tongue slanderous; it fills the head with mischief, and the feet with blood, and the hands with injury, and the present condition of man with folly, and makes his future state apt to inherit eternal misery. But this is but the beginning of those throes and damnable impieties which proceed out of the heart of man, and defile the whole constitution. I have yet told but the weaknesses of the heart: I shall the next time tell you the iniquities, those inherent devils which pollute and defile it to the ground, and make it *desperately wicked*, that is, wicked beyond all expression.

* Stranger, forbear with daring foot to tread
 This grave, lest foul contagion seize thy limbs;
 Such subtle venom festers in my corpse.

SERMON VIII.

PART II.

ἌΡΧΗ φιλοσοφίας συναισθησις τῆς αὐτοῦ ἀσθενείας, ἢ ἀδυναμίας περὶ τὰ ἀναγκαῖα, *It is the beginning of wisdom to know a man's own weaknesses and failings in things of greatest necessity* :* and we have here so many objects to furnish out this knowledge, that we find it with the longest and latest before it be obtained. A man does not begin to know himself till he be old, and then he is well stricken in death. A man's heart at first being like a plain table, unspotted indeed, but then there is nothing legible in it: as soon as ever we ripen towards the imperfect uses of our reason, we write upon this table such crooked characters, such imperfect configurations, so many fooleries, and stain it with so many blots and vicious inspersions, that there is nothing worth the reading in our hearts for a great while: and when education and ripeness, reason and experience, Christian philosophy and the grace of God have made fair impressions, and written the law in our hearts with the finger of God's holy spirit, we blot out this hand-writing of God's ordinances, or mingle it with false principles and interlinings of our own; we disorder the method of God, or deface the truth of God; either we make the rule uneven, we bribe or abuse our guide, that we may wander with an excuse; or if nothing else will do it, we turn head and profess to go against the laws of God. Our hearts are blind, or our hearts are hardened; for these are two great arguments of the

* Epict. Arrian.

wickedness of our hearts; they do not see, or they will not see the ways of God; or if they do, they make use of their seeing that they may avoid them.

1. Our hearts are *blind*, wilfully blind. I need not instance in the ignorance and involuntary nescience of men; though if we speak of the necessary parts of religion, no man is ignorant of them without his own fault: such ignorance is always a direct sin, or the direct punishment of a sin; a *sin* is either in its bosom, or in its retinue. But the ignorance that I now intend is a voluntary, chosen, delightful ignorance, taken in upon design, even for no other end, but that we may perish quietly and infallibly. God hath opened all the windows of heaven, and sent the Sun of righteousness with glorious apparition, and hath discovered the abysses of his own wisdom, made the second person in the trinity to be the doctor and preacher of his sentences and secrets, and the third person to be his amanuensis or scribe, and our hearts to be the book in which the doctrine is written, and miracles and prophecies to be its arguments, and all the world to be the verification of it: and those leaves contain within their folds all that excellent morality which right reason picked up after the shipwreck of nature, and all those wise sayings which singly made so many men famous for preaching some one of them; all them Christ gathered, and added some more out of the immediate book of revelation. So that now the wisdom of God hath made every man's heart to be the true *vetonica*, in which he hath imprinted his own lineaments so perfectly, that we may dress ourselves like God, and have the air and features of Christ our elder brother; that we may be pure as God is, perfect as our Father, meek and humble as the Son, and may have the Holy Ghost within us, in gifts and graces, in wisdom and holiness. This hath God done for us; and see

what we do for him. We stand in our own light, and quench God's: we love darkness more than light, and entertain ourselves accordingly. For how many of us are there that understand nothing of the ways of God; that know no more of the laws of *Jesus Christ* than is remaining upon them since they learned the children's catechism? But amongst a thousand, how many can explicate and unfold for his own practice the ten commandments, and how many sorts of sins are there forbidden? which therefore pass into action, and never pass under the scrutinies of repentance, because they know not that they are sins? Are there not very many who know not the particular duties of *meekness*, and never consider concerning *long-suffering*? and if you talk to them of *growth in grace*, or the *spirit of obsequation*, or the melancholick lectures of the cross, and *imitation of and conformity to Christ's sufferings*, or *adherences to God*, or *rejoicing in him*, or not *quenching the spirit*; you are too deep-learned for them. And yet these are duties set down plainly for our practice, necessary to be acted in order to our salvation. We brag of light, and reformation, and fulness of the spirit: in the meantime we understand not many parts of our duty. We inquire into something that may make us talk or be talked of, or that we may trouble a church, or disturb the peace of minds: but in things that concern holy living, and that wisdom of God whereby we are *wise unto salvation*, never was any age of christendom more ignorant than we. For, if we did not wink hard, we must needs see that obedience to supreme powers, denying of ourselves, humility, peacefulness, and charity, are written in such capital text letters, that it is impossible to be ignorant of them. And if the heart of man had not rare arts to abuse the understanding, it were not to be imagined that any man should bring the thirteenth chapter to

the *Romans* to prove the lawfulness of taking up arms against our rulers: but so we may abuse ourselves at noon, and go to bed, if we please to call it midnight. And there have been a sort of witty men that maintained that snow was hot. I wonder not at the problem: but that a man should believe his paradox, and should let eternity go away with the fallacy, and rather lose heaven than leave his foolish argument; is a sign that wilfulness and the deceiving heart is the sophister, and the great ingredient into our deception.

But that I may be more particular; the heart of man uses devices that it may be ignorant.

1. We are impatient of honest and severe reproof; and order the circumstances of our persons and addresses, that we shall never come to the true knowledge of our condition. Who will endure to hear his curate tell him that he is covetous, or that he is proud? *Λεγει, ω δεινις υβρισις*, it is calumny and reviling, if he speak it to his head, and relates to his person: and yet if he speak only in general, every man neglects what is not recommended to his particular. But yet if our physician tell us, you look well, sir, but a fever lurks in your spirits; *'Ασιτησον, σημερον υδαρ πιε*, drink juleps and abstain from flesh; no man thinks it shame or calumny to be told to: But when we are told that our liver is inflamed with lust or anger, that our heart is vexed with envy, that our eyes roll with wantonness; and though we think all is well, yet we are sick, sick unto death, and near to a sad and fatal sentence; we shall think that man that tells us so is impudent, or uncharitable; and yet he hath done him no more injury than a deformed man receives daily from his looking-glass, which if he shall dash against the wall, because it shews him his face just as it is, his face is not so ugly as his manners. And yet our heart is so impatient of seeing its own stains, that,

like the elephant, it tramples in the pure streams, and first troubles them, then stoops and drinks, when he can least see his huge deformity.

2. In order to this, we heap up teachers of our own, and they guide us, not *whither*, but *which way* they please: for we are curious to go our own way, and careless of our hospital or inn at night. A fair way, and a merry company, and a pleasant easy guide will entice us into the enemies' quarters; and such guides we cannot want: *Improbitali occasio nunquam deficit*; if we have a mind to be wicked, we shall want no prompters; and false teachers, at first *creeping in unawares*, have now so filled the pavement of the church, that you can scarce set your foot on the ground but you tread upon a snake. *Cicero l. 7. ad Atticum*, undertakes to bargain with them that keep the *Sybil's* books, that for a sum of money they should expound to him what he please; and to be sure, *ut quideis potius quam regem proferrent*, they shall declare against the government of kings, and say that the Gods will endure any thing rather than monarchy in their beloved republick. And the same mischief God complains of to be among the *Jews*: *The prophets prophesy lies, and my people love to have it so; and what will the end of these things be?* even the same that *Cicero* complained of, *Ad opinionem Imperatorum fictas esse religiones*;* men shall have what religion they please, and God shall be entitled to all the quarrels of covetous and ambitious persons; *καὶ Περὶ τῶν Θεῶν π. ζ' α'*, as *Demosthenes* wittily complained of the oracle, An answer shall be drawn out of scripture to countenance the design, and God made the rebel against his own ordinances. And then we are zealous for the Lord God of hosts, and will live and die in that quarrel. But is it not a strange cozen-

* De Divinat. l. 1. ☞

age that our hearts shall be the main wheel in the engine, and shall set all the rest on working? The heart shall first put his own candle out, then put out the eye of reason, then remove the land-mark, and dig down the causeways, and then either hire a blind guide, or make him so: and all these arts to get ignorance, that they may secure impiety. At first, man lost his innocence only in hope to get a little knowledge: and ever since then, lest knowledge should discover his error, and make him return to innocence, we are content to part with that now, and to know nothing that may discover or discountenance our sins, or discompose our secular designs. And as God made great revelations, and furnished out a wise religion, and sent his spirit to give the gift of faith to his church, that upon the foundation of faith he might build a holy life: now our hearts love to retire into blindness, and sneak under the covert of false principles, and run to a cheap religion, and an unactive discipline, and make a faith of our own, that we may build upon it ease, and ambition, and a tall fortune, and the pleasures of revenge, and do what we have a mind to; scarce once in seven years denying a strong and an unruly appetite upon the interest of a just conscience and holy religion. This is such a desperate method of impiety, so certain arts and apt instruments for the devil, that it does his work entirely, and produces an infallible damnation.

3. But the heart of man hath yet another stratum to secure its iniquity by the means of ignorance: and that is, incogitancy or inconsideration. For there is wrought upon the spirits of many men great impressions by education, by a modest and temperate nature, by humane laws, and the customs and severities of sober persons, and the fears of religion, and the awfulness of a reverend man, and the several arguments and endearments of virtue: and it is not in

the nature of some men to do an act in despite of reason and religion, and arguments, and reverence, and modesty, and fear; but men are forced from their sin by the violence of the grace of God, when they hear it speak. But so a *Roman* gentleman kept off a whole band of soldiers who were sent to murder him, and his eloquence was stronger than their anger or design: but suddenly a rude trooper rushed upon him, who neither had, nor would hear him speak; and he thrust his spear in that throat whose musick had charmed all his fellows in peace and gentleness. So do we. The grace of God is armour and defence enough against the most violent incursion of the spirits and the works of darkness; but then we must hear its excellent charms, and consider its reasons, and remember its precepts, and dwell with its discourses. But this the heart of man loves not. If I be tempted to uncleanness, or to an act of oppression, instantly the grace of God represents to me, that the pleasure of the sin is transient and vain, unsatisfying and empty; that I shall die, and then I shall wish too late that I had never done it. It tells me that I displease God who made me, who feeds me, who blesses me, who fain would save me. It represents to me all the joys of heaven, and the horrors and amazements of a sad eternity; and, if I will stay and hear them, ten thousand excellent things besides, fit to be twisted about my understanding for ever. But here the heart of man shuffles all these discourses into disorder, and will not be put the trouble of answering the objections; but by a mere wildness of purpose and rudeness of resolution ventures *super totam materiam*, at all, and does the thing, not because it thinks fit to do so, but because it will not consider whether it be or no; it is enough that it pleases a pleasant appetite. And if such incogitancy comes to be habitual, as it is in very many men, (first by re-

sisting the motions of the Holy Spirit, then by quenching him,) we shall find the consequence to be, first an *indifferency*, then a *dullness*, then a *lethargy*, then a direct *hating* the ways of God; and it commonly ends in a *wretchlessness of spirit* to be manifested on our death-bed; when the man shall pass hence not *like the shadow*, but like the dog, *that departeth* without sense, or interest or apprehension, or real concernment in the considerations of eternity: and it is but just, *when we will not hear our king speak and plead*, not to save himself, but us, to speak for our peace, and innocency, and salvation to prevent our ruin, and our intolerable calamity. Certainly, we are much in love with the wages of death, when we cannot endure to hear God call us back, and *stop our ears against the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely*.

Nay farther yet, we suffer the arguments of religion to have so little impression upon our spirits, that they operate but like the discourses of childhood, or the problems of uncertain philosophy. A man talks of religion but as of a dream, and from thence he awakens into the businesses of the world, and acts them deliberately, with perfect action and full resolution, and contrives, and considers, and lives in them: but when he falls asleep again, or is taken from the scene of his own employment and choice, then he dreams again, and religion makes such impressions as is the conversation of a dreamer, and he acts accordingly. *Theocritus* tells of a fisherman, that dreamed he had taken *εὐ σαρκικὸν ἰχθῦν, ἀλλὰ χρυσοῦν, a fish of gold*, upon which being overjoyed, he made a vow that he would never fish more; but when he waked, he soon declared his vow to be null, because he found his golden fish was escaped away through the holes of his eyes, when he first opened them. Just so we do in the purposes of religion: sometimes

in a good mood we seem to see heaven opened, and all the streets of the heavenly *Jerusalem* paved with gold and precious stones, and we are ravished with spiritual apprehensions, and resolve never to return to the low affections of the world, and the impure adherencies of sin: but when this flash of lightning is gone, and we converse again with the inclinations and habitual desires of our false hearts, those other desires and fine considerations disband, and the resolutions taken in that pious fit melt into indifferency and old customs. He was prettily and fantastically troubled, who having used to put his trust in dreams, one night dreamed that all dreams were vain: for he considered, if so, then this was vain, and then dreams might be true for all this: but if they might be true, then this dream might be so upon equal reason: and then dreams were vain, because this dream, which told him so, was true; and so round again. In the same circle runs the heart of man: all his cogitations are vain, and yet he makes especial use of this, that that thought which thinks so, that is vain; and if that be vain, then his other thoughts, which are vainly declared so, may be real, and relied upon. And so we do; those religious thoughts which are sent unto us to condemn and disrepute the thoughts of sin and vanity, are esteemed the only dreams: and so all those instruments which the grace of God hath invented for the destruction of impiety are rendered ineffectual, either by our direct opposing them, or (which happens most commonly) by our want of considering them.

The effect of all is this, that we are ignorant of the things of God. We make religion to be the work of a few hours in the whole year; we are without fancy or affection to the severities of holy living; we reduce religion to the believing of a few articles, and doing nothing that is considerable; we pray seldom, and

then but very coldly and indifferently; we communicate not so often as the sun salutes both the tropicks; we profess Christ, but dare not die for him; we are factious for a religion, and will not live according to its precepts; we call ourselves Christian, and love to be ignorant of many of the laws of Christ, lest our knowledge should force us into shame, or into the troubles of a holy life. All the mischiefs that you can suppose to happen to a furious, inconsiderate person, running after the wild-fires of the night, over rivers, and rocks, and precipices, without sun, or star, or angel or man to guide him; all that and ten thousand times worse, may you suppose to be the certain lot of him who gives himself up to the conduct of a passionate blind heart, whom no fire can warm, and no sun can enlighten; who hates light, and loves to dwell in the regions of darkness. That is the first general mischief of the heart, it is possessed with blindness, wilful and voluntary.

2. But the *heart is hard* too. Not only *folly*, but mischief also *is bound up in the heart of man*. If God strives to soften it with sorrow and sad accidents, it is like an ox, it grows callous and hard. Such a heart was *Pharaoh's*. When God makes the clouds to gather round about us, we wrap our heads in the clouds, and, like the malecontents in *Galba's* time, *tristitiam simulamus, contumaciae propiores*, we seem sad and troubled, but it is doggedness and murmur. Or else if our fears be pregnant, and the heart yielding, it sinks low into pusillanimity and superstition; and our hearts are so childish, so timourous, or so impatient in a sadness, that God is weary of striking us, and we are glad of it. And yet when the sun shines upon us, our hearts are hardened with that too; and God seems to be at a loss, as if he knew not what to do to us. War undoes us, and makes us violent; peace undoes us, and makes us wanton: prosperity

makes us proud; adversity renders us impatient; plenty dissolves us, and makes us tyrants; want makes us greedy, liars, and rapacious.

Πῶς οὐκ ἂν σώσειε τοὶ αὐτὴν πόλιν,
Ἡ μήτε χλινα, μήτε σισυρα ζυμφερεῖ ; *

No fortune can save that city to whom neither peace nor war can do advantage. And what is there left for God to mollify our hearts, whose temper is like both to wax and dirt; whom fire hardens, and cold hardens; and contradictory accidents produce no change, save that the heart grows worse and more obdurate for every change of Providence? But here also I must descend to particulars.

1. The heart of man is strangely proud. If men commend us, we think we have reason to distinguish ourselves from others, since the voice of discerning men hath already made the separation. If men do not commend us, we think they are stupid, and understand us not; or envious, and hold their tongues in spite. If we are praised by many, then *Vox populi vox Dei*, fame is the voice of God. If we be praised but by few, then *Satis unus, satis nullus*; we cry, These are wise, and one wise man is worth the whole herd of the people. But if we be praised by none at all, we resolve to be even with all the world, and speak well of nobody, and think well only of ourselves. And then we have such beggarly arts, such tricks to cheat for praise. We enquire after our faults and failings, only to be told we have none, but did excellently; and then we are pleased: we rail upon our actions, only to be chidden for so doing; and then he is our friend who chides us into a good.

* Aristoph. Βατραχ. Act 5. Scene 4.

How from destruction canst thou save that city.

Which neither war, nor smiling peace, amends?

A

opinions of ourselves, which however all the world cannot make us part with. Nay, humility itself makes us proud; so false, so base is the heart of man. For humility is so noble a virtue, that even pride itself puts on its upper garment: And we do like those who cannot endure to look upon an ugly or a deformed person, and yet will give a great price for a picture extremely like him. Humility is despised in substance, but courted and admired *in effigy*. And *Æsop's* picture was sold for two talents, when himself was made a slave at the price of two philippicks. And because humility makes a man to be honoured, therefore we imitate all its garbs and postures, its civilities and silence, its modesties and condescensions. And to prove that we are extremely proud in the midst of all this pageantry, we should be extremely angry at any man that should say we are proud; and that is a sure sign we are so. And in the midst of all our arts to seem humble, we use devices to bring ourselves into talk; we thrust ourselves into company, we listen at doors, and, like the great beards in *Rome*, that pretended philosophy and strict life, *ὀφελισκῶν καταπιοντες περιπατιῶμεν*, *We walk by the ob-disk*, and meditate in piazzas, that they that meet us may talk of us, and they that follow us may cry out, *ὦ μεγάλῳ εὐρισκῶ!* Behold! there goes an excellent man! He is very prudent, or very learned, or a charitable person, or a good house-keeper, or at least very humble.

2. The heart of man is deeply in love with wickedness, and with nothing else; against not only the laws of God, but against his own reason, its own interest, and its own securities. For is it imaginable that a man who knows the laws of God, the rewards of virtue, the cursed and horrid effects of sin; that knows and considers, and deeply sighs at the thought of the intolerable pains of hell; that knows the joys

of heaven to be unspeakable, and that concerning them there is no temptation, but that they are too big for man to hope for, and yet he certainly believes that a holy life shall infalibly attain thither; is it, I say, imaginable that this man should for a transient action forfeit all this hope, and certainly and knowingly incur all that calamity? Yea, but the sin is pleasant, and the man is clothed with flesh and blood, and their appetites are material, and importunate, and present; and the discourses of religion are concerning things spiritual, separate and apt for spirits, angels and souls departed. To take off this also; we will suppose the man to consider, and really to believe, that the pleasure of the sin is sudden, vain, empty, and transient; that it leaves bitterness upon the tongue, before it is descended into the bowels; that there it is poison and *makes the belly to swell, and the thigh to rot*; that he remembers, and actually considers, that as soon as the moment of sin is past, he shall have an intolerable conscience, and does at the instant compare moments with eternity, and with horror remembers that the very next minute he is as miserable a man as is in the world? Yet that this man should sin? Nay, suppose the sin to have no pleasure at all, such as is the sin of swearing; nay, suppose it really to have pain in it, such as is the sin of envy, which never can have pleasure in its actions, but much torment and consumption of the very heart: What should make this man sin so for nothing, so against himself, so against all reason and religion, and interest, without pleasure, for no reward? Here the heart betrays itself to be desperately wicked. What man can give a reasonable account of such a man, who, to prosecute his revenge, will do himself an injury, that he may do a less to him that troubles. Such a man hath given me ill-language, COUS TOU XEBOZ.HV

αλγει, ουτε τῶν οφθαλμων, ουτε τον ισχιον, ουτε την αχρον απ'αλλουι. My head aches not for his language, nor hath he broken my thigh, nor carried away my land: But yet this man must be requited well, suppose that. But then let it be proportionably; you are not undone, let not him be so. Oh yes; for else my revenge triumphs not. Well, if you do, yet remember he will defend himself, or the law will right him; at least do not do wrong to yourself by doing him wrong: This were but prudence, and self interest. And yet we see that the heart of some men hath betrayed them to such furiousness of appetite, as to make them willing to die, that their enemy may be buried in the same ruins. *Jovius Pontanus* tells of an *Italian* slave, (I think) who being enraged against his lord, watched his absence from home, and the employment and inadvertency of his fellow servants: he locked the doors, and secured himself for a while, and ravished his lady; then took her three sons up to the battlements of the house, and, at the return of his lord, threw one down to him upon the pavement, and then a second, to rend the heart of their sad father, seeing them weltering in their blood and brains. The lord begged for his third, and now his only son, promising pardon and liberty if he would spare his life. The slave seemed to bend a little, and on condition his lord would cut off his own nose, he would spare his son. The sad father did so, being willing to suffer any thing rather than the loss of that child. But as soon as he saw his lord all bloody with his wound, he threw the third son and himself down together upon the pavement. The story is sad enough, and needs no lustre and advantages of sorrow to represent it: But if a man sets himself down, and considers sadly, he cannot easily tell upon what sufficient inducement or what principle, the slave should so certainly, so horribly, so presently, and then so eternally ruin himself.

What could he propound to himself as a recompence to his own so immediate tragedy? There is not in the pleasure of the revenge, nor in the nature of the thing, any thing to tempt him; we must confess our ignorance, and say, that *the heart of man is desperately wicked*: and that is the truth in general, but we cannot fathom it by particular comprehension.

For when the heart of man is bound up by the grace of God, and tied in golden bands, and watched by angels, tended by those nurse-keepers of the soul, it is not easy for a man to wander; and the evil of his heart is but like the feritie and wildness of lions' whelps: But when once we have broken the hedge, and got into the strengths of youth, and the licentiousness of an ungoverned age, it is wonderful to observe what a great inundation of mischief in a very short time will overflow all the banks of reason and religion. Vice first is *pleasing*, then it grows *easy*, then *delightful*, then *frequent*, then *habitual*, then *confirmed*; then the man is *impenitent*, then he is *obstinate*, then he *resolves never to repent*, and then he is *damm'd*. And by that time he is come half way in this progress, he confutes the philosophy of the old moralists: For they, not knowing the vile-ness of man's heart, not considering its desperate, amazing impiety, knew no other degree of wickedness but this, that men preferred sense before reason, and their understandings were abused in the choice of a temporal before an intellectual and eternal good; but they always concluded, that the will of man must of necessity follow the last dictate of the understanding, declaring an object to be good, in one sense or other. Happy men they were that were so innocent, that knew no pure and perfect malice, and lived in an age in which it was not easy to confute them. But besides that, now the wells of a deeper iniquity are discovered, we see, by too sad experience, that there

are some sins proceeding from the heart of man which have nothing but simple and unmingled malice; actions of mere spite, doing evil because it is evil, sinning without sensual pleasures, sinning with sensual pain, with hazard of our lives, with actual torment, and sudden deaths, and certain and present damnation; sins against the Holy Ghost, open hostilities, and professed enmities against God and all virtue. I can go no farther, because there is not in the world or in the nature of things a greater evil. And that is the nature and folly of the devil: he tempts men to ruin, and hates God, and only hurts himself and those he tempts, and does himself no pleasure, and some say he increases his own accidental torment.

Although I can say nothing greater, yet I had many more things to say, if the time would have permitted me to represent the falseness and baseness of the heart.

1. We are false ourselves, and dare not trust God.
2. We love to be deceived, and are angry if we be told so.
3. We love to seem virtuous, and yet hate to be so.
4. We are melancholick and impatient, and we know not why.
5. We are troubled at little things, and are careless of greater.
6. We are overjoyed at a petty accident, and despise great and eternal pleasures.
7. We believe things, not for their reasons and proper arguments, but as they serve our turns, be they true or false.
8. We long extremely for things that are forbidden us; and what we despise when it is permitted us, we snatch at greedily when it is taken from us.
9. We love ourselves more than we love God: and yet we eat poisons daily, and feed upon toads and vipers, and nourish our deadly enemies in our bosom, and will not be brought to quit them; but brag of our shame, and are ashamed of nothing but virtue, which is most honourable.
10. We fear to die, and yet use all means we can to make death ter-

rible and dangerous. 11. We are busy in the faults of others, and negligent of our own. 12. We live the life of spies, striving to know others, and to be unknown ourselves. 13. We worship and flatter some men and some things, because we fear them, not because we love them. 14. We are ambitious of greatness, and covetous of wealth, and all that we get by it, is, that we are more beautifully tempted; and a troop of clients run to us as to a pool, which first they trouble, and then draw dry. 15. We make ourselves unsafe by committing wickedness, then we add more wickedness to make us safe and beyond punishment. 16. We are more servile for one courtesy that we hope for, than for twenty that we have received. 17. We entertain slanderers, and without choice spread their calumnies; and we hug flatterers, and know they abuse us. And if I should gather the abuses, and impieties, and deceptions of the heart, as *Chrysippus* did the oracular lies of *Apollo*, into a table, I fear they would seem remediless, and beyond the cure of watchfulness and religion. Indeed they are great and many; but the grace of God is greater; and *if iniquity abounds, then doth grace superabound*: and that is our comfort and our medicine, which we must thus use.

1. Let us watch our heart at every turn.

2. Deny it all its desires that do not directly, or by consequence, end in godliness: At no hand be indulgent to its fondnesses and peevish appetites.

3. Let us suspect it as an enemy.

4. Trust not to it in any thing.

5. But beg the grace of God with perpetual and importunate prayer, that he would be pleased to bring good out of these evils, and that he would throw the salutary wood of the cross, the merits of Christ's death and passion, into these salt waters, and make them healthful and pleasant.

And in order to the managing these advices, and acting the purposes of this prayer, let us strictly follow a rule, and choose a prudent and faithful guide, who may attend our motions, and watch our counsels, and direct our steps, and *prepare the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight*, apt and imitable. For without great watchfulness, and earnest devotion, and a prudent guide, we shall find that true in a spiritual sense, which *Plutarch* affirmed of a man's body in the natural: That of dead bulls arise bees; from the carcasses of horses hornets are produced; but the body of man brings forth serpents. Our hearts wallowing in their own natural and acquired corruptions will produce nothing but issues of hell, and images of *the old serpent the devil*, for whom is provided *the everlasting burning*.

SERMON IX.



THE

FAITH AND PATIENCE OF THE SAINTS :

OR,

THE RIGHTEOUS CAUSE OPPRESSED.

I PETER iv. 17, 18.

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God :
and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey
not the gospel of God ?

18. And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly
and the sinner appear ?

So long as the world lived by sense, and discourses of natural reason, as they were abated with human infirmities, and not at all heightened by the spirit and divine revelations ; so long men took their accounts of *good* and *bad* by their being prosperous or unfortunate : and amongst the basest and most ignorant of men. that only was accounted honest which was profitable ; and he only wise, that was rich ; and those men beloved of God, who received from him all that might satisfy their lust, their ambition, or their revenge.

———Fatis accede, Deisque ;

Et cole felices, miseros fuge : sidera terrâ

Ut distant, et flamma mari, sic utile recto.*

But because God sent wise men into the world, and they were treated rudely by the world, and exercised with evil accidents, and this seemed so great a discouragement to virtue, that even these wise men were more troubled to reconcile virtue and misery, than to reconcile their affections to the suffering; God was pleased to enlighten their reason with a little beam of faith, or else heightened their reason by wiser principles than those of vulgar understandings, and taught them in the clear glass of faith, or the dim perspective of philosophy, to look beyond the cloud, and there to spy that there stood glories behind their curtain, to which they could not come but by passing through the cloud, and being wet with the dew of heaven and the waters of affliction. And according as the world grew more enlightened by faith, so it grew more dark with mourning and sorrows. God sometimes sent a light of fire, and a pillar of a cloud, and the brightness of an angel, and the lustre of a star, and the sacrament of a rainbow, to guide his people through their portion of sorrows, and to lead them through troubles to rest; but as the Sun of righteousness approached towards the chambers of the east, and sent the harbingers of light peeping through the curtains of the night, and leading on the day of faith and brightest revelation; so God sent degrees of trouble upon wise and good men, that now in the same degree in the which the world *lives by faith*, and not by sense, in the same degree they might be able to live in vir-

* Thy actions fashion as the Gods decree,

The wealthy flatter and the wretched flee.

Nor seems the useful wider from the just,

Than fire from water, or the stars from dust.

A:

tue even while she lived in trouble, and not reject so great a beauty because she goes in mourning, and hath a black cloud of cypress drawn before her face. Literally thus: God first entertained their services, and allured and prompted on the infirmities of the infant world by temporal prosperity; but by degrees changed his method, and as men grew stronger in the knowledge of God, and the expectations of heaven, so they grew weaker in their fortunes, more afflicted in their bodies, more abated in their expectations, more subject to their enemies, and were to *endure the contradiction of sinners*, and the immission of the sharpnesses of Providence and divine economy.

First, *Adam* was placed in a garden of health and pleasure, from which when he fell, he was only tied to enter into the covenant of *natural sorrows*, which he and all his posterity till the flood ran through: but in all that period they had the whole wealth of the earth before them; they needed not fight for empires, or places for their cattle to graze in; they lived long, and felt no want, no slavery, no tyranny, no war; and the evils that happened were *single, personal* and *natural*; and no violences were then done, but they were like those things, which the law calls *rare contingencies*; for which as the law can now take no care and make no provisions, so then there was no law, but men lived *free, and rich, and long*, and they exercised no *virtues but natural*, and knew no *felicity but natural*; and so long their prosperity was just as was their virtue, because it was a natural instrument towards all that which they knew of happiness. But this publick easiness and quiet the world turned into sin; and unless God did compel men to do themselves good, they would undo themselves: and then God broke in upon them with a flood, and destroyed that generation, that he

might begin the government of the world upon a new stock, and bind virtue upon men's spirits by new bands, endeared to them by new hopes and fears.

Then God made new laws, and gave to princes the power of the sword, and men might be punished to death in certain cases, and man's life was shortened, and slavery was brought into the world, and the state of servants; and then war began, and evils multiplied upon the face of the earth; in which it is naturally certain, that they that are most violent and injurious prevailed upon the weaker and more innocent; and every tyranny that began from *Nimrod* to this day, and every usurper, was a peculiar argument to shew that God began to teach the world virtue by suffering; and that therefore he suffered *tyrannies* and *usurpations* to be in the world, and to be prosperous, and the rights of men to be snatched away from the owners, that the world might be established in potent and settled governments, and the sufferers be taught all the passive virtues of the soul. For so God brings good out of evil, turning *tyranny* into the benefits of *government*, and *violence* into *virtue*, and *sufferings* into *rewards*. And this was the *second change* of the world: *personal miseries* were brought in upon *Adam* and his posterity, as a punishment of sin in the first period; and in the second, *publick evils* were brought in by *tyrants* and *usurpers*, and God suffered them as the first elements of virtue, men being just newly put to school to infant sufferings. But all this was not much.

Christ's line was not yet drawn forth; it began not to appear in what family the *king of sufferings* should descend, till *Abraham's* time; and therefore till then there were no greater sufferings than what I have now reckoned. But when *Abraham's* family was chosen from among the many nations, and began to belong

to God by a special right, and he was designed to be the father of the *Messias*; then God found out a new way to try him, even with a sound affliction, commanding him to offer his beloved *Isaac*: but this was accepted, and being intended by *Abraham*, was not intended by God: for this was a type of Christ, and therefore was also but a type of sufferings. And excepting the sufferings of the old periods, and the sufferings of nature, and accident, we see no change made for a long time after; but God, having established a law in *Abraham's* family, did build it upon promises of *health*, and *peace*, and *victory*, and *plenty*, and *riches*; and so long as they did not prevaricate the law of their God, so long they were prosperous: but God kept a remnant of *Canaanites* in the land, like a rod held over them, to vex or to chastise them into obedience, in which while they persevered nothing could hurt them; and that saying of *David* needs no other sense but the letter of its own expression. *I have been young, and now am old; and yet I never saw the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.* The godly generally were prosperous, and a good cause seldom had an ill end, and a good man never died an ill death, till the law had spent a great part of its time, and it descended towards its declension and period. But that the great prince of sufferings might not appear upon his stage of tragedies without some forerunners of sorrow, God was pleased to choose out some good men, and honour them, by making them to become little images of suffering. *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, and *Zachariah* were martyrs of the Law; but these were single deaths: *Shadrac*, *Meshec* and *Abednego* were thrown into a burning furnace, and *Daniel* into a den of lions. and *Susanna* was accused for adultery; but these were but little arrests of the prosperity of the godly. As the time drew nearer that Christ should be manifest, so the

sufferings grew bigger and more numerous : and *Antiochus* raised up a sharp persecution in the time of the *Maccabees*, in which many passed through the red sea of blood into the bosom of *Abraham* ; and then Christ came. And that was the *third period* in which the changed method of God's providence was perfected : for Christ was to do his great work by sufferings, and *by sufferings* was to *enter into blessedness* ; and by his passions he was made prince of the catholick church, and as our head was, so must the members be. God made the same covenant with us that he did with his most holy Son, and Christ obtained no better conditions for us than for himself ; that was not to be looked for ; *the servant must not be above his master, it is well if he be as his master : if the world persecuted him, they will also persecute us : and from the days of John the baptist the kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force ; not the violent doers, but the sufferers of violence : for though the old law was established in the promises of temporal prosperity ; yet the gospel is founded in temporal adversity ; it is directly a covenant of sufferings and sorrows ; for now the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God.* That is the sense and design of the text ; and I intend it as a direct antinomy to the common persuasions of tyrannous, carnal and vicious men, who reckon nothing good but what is *prosperous* : for though that proposition had many degrees of truth in the beginning of the law, yet the case is now altered, God hath established its contradictory sin ; and now every good man must look for persecution, and every good cause must expect to thrive by the sufferings and patience of holy persons : and as men do well, and suffer evil, so they are dear to God ; and whom he loves most, he afflicts most, and does this with a design of the greatest mercy in the world.

I. Then, the state of the gospel is a state of sufferings, not of temporal prosperities. This was foretold by the prophets: *A fountain shall go out of the house of the Lord, and irrigabit torrentem spinarum*, (so it is in the vulgar Latin) *and it shall water the torrent of thorns*, that is, the state or time of the gospel, which, like a *torrent*, shall carry the world before it, and like a *torrent* shall be fullest in ill weather; and by its banks shall grow nothing but thorns and briers, sharp afflictions, temporal infelicities and persecution. This sense of the words is more fully explained in the book of the prophet *Isaiah*. *Upon the ground of my people shall thorns and briers come up, how much more in all the houses of the city of rejoicing?** Which prophecy is the same in the style of the prophets that my text is in the style of the apostles. The house of God shall be watered with the dew of Heaven, and there shall spring up briers in it: *Judgment must begin there*; but how much more *in the houses of the city of rejoicing?* how much more amongst *them that are at ease in Sion*, that serve their desires, that satisfy their appetites, that are given over to their own heart's lust, that so serve themselves that they never serve God, that *dwell in the city of rejoicing?* They are like *Dives*, whose portion was in this life, *who went in fine linen, and fared deliciously every day*: they indeed trample upon their briers and thorns, and suffer them not to grow in their houses; but the roots are in the ground, and they are reserved for fuel of wrath in the day of everlasting burning. Thus you see it was prophesied, now see how it was performed: *Christ was the Captain of our sufferings*, and he began.

He entered into the world with all the circumstances of poverty. He had a star to illustrate his birth; but a stable for his bed-chamber, and a manger for

* *Isaiah xxxii, 13.*

his cradle. The angels sang hymns when he was born; but he was cold and cried, uneasy and unprovided. He lived long in the trade of a carpenter; he by whom God made the world had in his first years the business of a mean and ignoble trade. He did good wherever he went; and almost wherever he went was abused. He deserved Heaven for his obedience, but found a cross in his way thither: and if ever any man had reason to expect fair usages from God, and to be dandled in the lap of ease, softness and a prosperous fortune, he it was only that could deserve that, or any thing that can be good. But after he had chosen to live a life of virtue, of poverty and labour, he entered into a state of death; whose shame and trouble was great enough to pay for the sins of the whole world. And I shall choose to express this mystery in the words of scripture. He died not by a single or a sudden death, but he was the *lamb slain from the beginning of the world*: For he was massacred in *Abel*, (saith *St. Paulinus*,) he was tossed upon the waves of the sea in the person of *Noah*: it was he that went out of his country when *Abraham* was called from *Charran*, and wandered from his native soil; he was offered up in *Isaac*, persecuted in *Jacob*, betrayed in *Joseph*, blinded in *Sampson*, affronted in *Moses*, sawed in *Esau*, cast into the dungeon with *Jeremiah*. For all these were types of Christ's suffering. And then his passion continued even after his resurrection. For it is he that suffers in all his members; it is he that *endures the contradiction of all sinners*; it is he that is *the Lord of life*, and is *crucified again*, and *put to open shame* in all the sufferings of his servants, and sins of rebels, and defiances of apostates and renegadoes, and violence of tyrants, and injustice of usurpers, and the persecutions of his church. It is he that is stoned in *Saint Stephen*, slayed in the person of *Saint Bartho-*

lomeu ; he was roasted upon Saint *Laurence's* grid-iron, exposed to lions in Saint *Ignatius*, burned in Saint *Polycarp*, frozen in the lake where stood forty martyrs of *Cappudocia*. *Unigenitus enim Dei ad peragendum mortis suae sacramentum consummarit omne genus humanarum passionum*, said St. *Hilary* ; The sacrament of Christ's death is not to be accomplished but by suffering all the sorrows of humanity.

All that Christ came for was, or was mingled with, sufferings : for all those little joys which God sent, either to recreate his person, or to illustrate his office, were abated or attended with afflictions ; God being more careful to establish in him the covenant of sufferings, than to refresh his sorrows. Presently after the angels had finished their hallelujahs, he was forced to fly to save his life ; and the air became full of shrieks of the desolate mothers of *Bethlehem* for their dying babes. God had no sooner made him illustrious with a voice from Heaven, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him in the waters of baptism, but he was delivered over to be tempted and assaulted by the Devil in the wilderness. His transfiguration was a bright ray of glory ; but then also he entered into a cloud, and was told a sad story what he was to suffer at *Jerusalem*. And upon *Palm-sunday*, when he rode triumphantly into *Jerusalem*, and was adorned with the acclamations of a king and a god, he wet the palms with his tears, sweeter than the drops of manna, or the little pearls of Heaven that descended upon mount *Hermon* ; weeping in the midst of this triumph over obstinate, perishing, and malicious *Jerusalem*. For this *Jesus* was like the rainbow, which God set in the clouds as a sacrament to confirm a promise, and establish a grace ; he was half made of the glories of the light, and half of the moisture of a cloud ; in his best days he was but half triumph and half sorrow : he was sent to tell of his Father's

mercies, and that God intended to spare us ; but appeared not but in the company or in the retinue of a shower, and of foul weather. But I need not tell that *Jesus*, beloved of God, was a suffering person : that which concerns this question most, is, that he made for us a covenant of sufferings ; his *doctrines* were such as expressly and by consequent enjoin and suppose *sufferings*, and a state of affliction ; his very *promises* were *sufferings*, his *beatitudes* were *sufferings* ; his *rewards*, and his *arguments* to invite men to follow him, were only taken from *sufferings* in this life, and the reward of *sufferings* hereafter.

For if we sum up the *commandments* of Christ, we shall find *humility, mortification, self-denial, repentance, renouncing the world, mourning, taking up the cross, dying for him, patience and poverty*, to stand in the chiefest rank of Christian precepts, and in the direct order to Heaven : *He that will be my disciple must deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* We must follow him that was crowned with thorns and sorrows, him that was drenched in *Cedron*, nailed upon the cross, that deserved all good and suffered all evil ; that is the sum of Christian religion, as it distinguishes from all the religions of the world. To which we may add the express precept recorded by *Saint James* ; *be afflicted, and mourn, and weep ; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into weeping.** You see the commandments : will you also see the *promises* ? these they are. *In the world ye shall have tribulation, in me ye shall have peace : And through many tribulations ye shall enter into Heaven : and he that loseth father and mother, wives and children, houses and lands for my name's sake and the gospel, shall receive a hundred fold in this life, with persecution ; that is part of his reward : and, he chas-*

* James iv, 9.

*tiseth every son that he receiveth; and if ye be exempt from sufferings, ye are bastards and not sons, these are some of Christ's promises: will you see some of Christ's blessings, that he gives his church? Blessed are the poor: blessed are the hungry and thirsty: blessed are they that mourn: blessed are the humble: blessed are the persecuted.** Of the eight beatitudes, five of them have temporal misery and meanness, or an afflicted condition, for their subject. Will you at last see some of the *rewards* which Christ hath propounded to his servants, to invite them to follow him? *When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me: when Christ is lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, that is, lifted upon the cross, then he will draw us after him. To you it is given for Christ,* (saith Saint Paul, when he went to sweeten and to flatter the *Philippians*: Well, what is given to them? some great favours surely; true) *It is not only given that you believe in Christ,* (though that be a great matter) *but also that you suffer for him.†* that is the highest of your honour. And therefore saith Saint James, *My brethren count it all joy when ye enter into divers temptations:‡* and Saint Peter, *Communicating with the sufferings of Christ rejoice;§* and Saint James again, *We count them blessed that have suffered:¶* and Saint Paul, when he gives his blessing to the *Thessalonians*, useth this form of prayer; *Our Lord direct your hearts in the charity of God, and in the patience and sufferings of Christ.∥* So that if we will serve the *king of sufferings*, whose crown was of thorns, whose sceptre was a reed of scorn, whose imperial robe was a scarlet of mockery, whose throne was the cross; we must serve him in sufferings, in poverty of spirit, in humility and mortification: and

* Matt. v.

† Philip. i. 29.

‡ James i. 2

§ 1 Pet. iv. 13.

¶ James v. 11.

∥ 2 Thes. iii. 5.

for our reward we shall have persecution, and all its blessed consequents. *Atque hoc est esse Christianum.*

Since this was done in the green tree, what might we expect should be done in the dry? Let us in the next place consider how God hath treated his saints and servants in the descending ages of the gospel; that if the best of God's servants were followers of *Jesus* in this covenant of sufferings, *we may not think it strange, concerning the fiery trial, as if some new thing had happened to us.** For as the gospel was founded in sufferings, we shall also see it grow in persecutions: and as Christ's blood did cement the corner stones, and the first foundations; so the blood and sweat, the groans and sighings, the afflictions and mortifications of saints and martyrs did make the superstructures, and must at last finish the building.

If we begin with the apostles, who were to persuade the world to become Christian, and to use proper arguments of invitations, we shall find that they never offered an argument of temporal prosperity; they never promised empires and thrones on earth, nor riches, nor temporal power: and it would have been soon confuted, if they who were whipt and imprisoned, banished and scattered, persecuted and tormented, should have promised sunshine days to others, which they could not to themselves. Of all the apostles there was not one that died a natural death but only saint *John*; † and did he escape? Yes: but he was put into a chaldron of scalding lead and oil before the *Port Latin* in *Rome*, and escaped death by miracle, though no miracle was wrought to make him escape the torture. And besides this, he lived long in banishment, and that was worse than Saint *Peter's* chains. *Sanctus Petrus in vinculis, et Johan-*

* 1 Peter iv. 12.

† Tertul. St. Hieron.

nes ante Portam Latinam, were both days of martyrdom, and church-festivals. And after a long and laborious life, and the affliction of being detained from his crown, and his sorrows for the death of his fellow-disciples, he died *full of days and sufferings*. And when St. Paul was taken into the apostolate, his commissions were signed in these words; *I will shew unto him how great things he must suffer for my name* :* And his whole life was a continual suffering. *Quotidie morior* was his motto, *I die daily* ; and his lesson that he daily learned was, to *know Christ Jesus and him crucified* ; and all his joy was to *rejoice in the cross of Christ* ; and the changes of his life were nothing but the changes of his sufferings, and the variety of his labours. For though Christ hath finished his own sufferings for the expiation of the world ; yet there are ὑπερμυατα θλιψεων, portions that are *behind of the sufferings of Christ, which must be filled up by his body the church* ; and happy are they that put in the greatest symbol : for *in the same measure you are partakers of the sufferings of Christ, in the same shall ye be also of the consolation*. And therefore concerning St. Paul, as it was also concerning Christ, there is nothing, or but very little, in scripture, relating to his person and chances of his private life, but his labours and persecutions ; as if the Holy Ghost did think nothing fit to stand upon record for Christ but sufferings.

And now began to work the greatest glory of the divine Providence : here was the case of christianity at stake. The world was rich and prosperous, learned and full of wise men ; the gospel was preached with poverty and persecution, in simplicity of discourse, and *in demonstration of the spirit* : God was on one side, and the devil on the other ; they each of them dressed up their city ; *Babylon upon earth, Jerusalem from above*. The devil's city was full of

* Acts ix. 16

pleasure, triumphs, victories, and cruelty; good news, and great wealth; conquest over kings, and making nations tributary: They *bound kings in chains, and the nobles with links of iron; and the inheritance of the earth was theirs*: The Romans were lords over the greatest parts of the world; and God permitted to the devil the firmament and increase, the wars and the success of that people, giving to him an entire power of disposing the great changes of the world so as might best increase their greatness and power: and he therefore did it, because all the power of the *Roman* greatness was a professed enemy to christianity. And, on the other side, God was to build up *Jerusalem*, and the kingdom of the gospel; and he chose to build it of hewn stone, cut and broken: The apostles he chose for preachers, and they had no learning; women and mean people were the first disciples, and they had no power; the devil was to lose his kingdom, he wanted no malice: and therefore he stirred up, and, as well as he could, he made active, all the power of *Rome*, and all the learning of the *Greeks*, and all the malice of barbarous people, and all the prejudice and the obstinacy of the *Jews*, against this doctrine and institution, which preached and promised, and brought persecution along with it. On the one side there was *scandalum crucis*, on the other *patientia sanctorum*: and what was the event? They that had overcome the world could not strangle christianity. But so have I seen the sun with a little ray of distant light, challenge all the power of darkness, and without violence and noise climbing up the hill, hath made night so to retire, that its memory was lost in the joys and sprightfulness of the morning: And christianity, without violence or armies, without resistance and self-preservation, without strength or human eloquence, without challenging of privileges or fight-

ing against tyranny, without alteration of government and scandal of princes, with its humility and meekness, with toleration and patience, with obedience and charity, with praying and dying, did insensibly turn the *world* into *Christian*, and *persecution* into *victory*.

For Christ, who began, and lived, and died in sorrows, perceiving his own sufferings to succeed so well, and that *for suffering death he was crowned with immortality*, resolved to take all his disciples and servants to the *fellowship of the same suffering*, that they might have a participation of his glory; knowing, God had opened no gate of heaven but *the narrow gate*, to which the cross was the key. And since Christ now being our *high priest*, in heaven intercedes for us by representing his passion, and the dolours of the cross, that even in glory he might still preserve the mercies of his vast sufferings, for which the Father did so delight in him; he also designs to present us to God dressed in the same robe, and treated in the same manner, and honoured with *the marks of the Lord Jesus: He hath predestinated us to be conformable to the image of his Son*. And if, under a head crowned with thorns, we bring to God members circled with roses, and softness, and delicacy, triumphant members in the militant church, God will reject us; he will not know us who are so unlike our elder brother: For we are members of the lamb, not of the lion; and of Christ's suffering part, not of the triumphant part: and for three hundred years together the church lived upon blood, and was nourished with blood; the blood of her own children. Thirty-three bishops of *Rome* in immediate succession were put to violent and unnatural deaths; and so were all the churches of the east and west built; the cause of Christ and of religion was advanced by the sword, but it was the sword of the persecutors,

not of resisters or warriors: They were all *baptized into the death of Christ*; their very profession and institution is to live like him, and when he requires it, to die for him; that is the very formality, the life and essence of christianity. This, I say, lasted for three hundred years, that the prayers, and the backs, and the necks of Christians fought against the rods and axes of the persecutors, and prevailed, till the country, and the cities, and the court itself was filled with Christians. And by this time *the army of martyrs* was vast and numerous, and the number of sufferers blunted the hangman's sword. For Christ first triumphed over the princes and powers of the world, before he would admit them to serve him; he first felt their malice, before he would make use of their defence; to shew that it was not his necessity that required it, but his grace that admitted *kings and queens to be nurses of the church*.

And now the church was at ease, and she that sucked the blood of the martyrs so long, began now to suck the milk of queens. Indeed it was a great mercy in appearance, and was so intended, but it proved not so. But then the Holy Ghost, in pursuance of the design of Christ, who meant *by suffering to perfect* his church, as himself was by the same instrument, was pleased now that persecution did cease, to inspire the church with the spirit of mortification and austerity; and then they made colleges of sufferers, persons who, to secure their inheritance in the world to come, did cut off all their portion in this, excepting so much of it as was necessary to their present being; and by instruments of humility, by patience under, and a voluntary undertaking of the cross, *the burthen of the Lord*, by self-denial, by fastings and sackcloth, and pernoctations in prayer. they chose then to exercise the active part

of the religion, mingling it as much as they could with the suffering.

And indeed it is so glorious a thing to be like Christ, to be dressed like the prince of the catholick Church, who was *a man of sufferings*, and to whom a prosperous and unafflicted person is very unlike, that in all ages the servants of God have *put on the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left*; that is, in the sufferings of persecution, or the labours of mortification; in patience under the rod of God, or by election of our own; by toleration, or self-denial; by actual martyrdom, or by aptness of disposition towards it; by dying for Christ, or suffering for him; by being willing to part with all when he calls for it, and by parting with what we can for the relief of his poor members. For know this, there is no state in the church so serene, no days so prosperous, in which God does not give to his servants the powers and opportunities of suffering for him; not only they that die for Christ, but they that live according to his laws, shall find some lives to part with, and many ways to suffer for Christ. To kill and crucify the old man and all his lusts, to mortify a beloved sin, to fight against temptations, to do violence to our bodies, to live chastely, to suffer affronts patiently, to forgive injuries and debts, to renounce all prejudice and interest in religion, and to choose our side for truth's sake, (not because it is prosperous, but because it pleases God) to be charitable beyond our power, to reprove our betters with modesty and openness, to displease men rather than God, to be at *enmity with the world* that you may preserve friendship with God, to deny the importunity and troublesome kindness of a drinking friend, to own truth in despite of danger or scorn, to despise shame, to refuse worldly pleasures when they tempt your

soul beyond duty or safety, to take pains in the cause of religion, *the labour of love*, and the crossing of your anger, peevishness and morosity; these are the daily sufferings of a Christian; and if we perform them well, will have the same reward, and an equal smart, and greater labour than the plain suffering the hangman's sword. Thus I have discoursed, to represent unto you that you cannot be exempted from the similitude of Christ's sufferings; that God will shut no age nor no man from his portion of the cross: that we cannot fail of the result of this predestination, nor without our own fault be excluded from the covenant of sufferings. *Judgment must begin at God's house*, and enters first upon the sons and heirs of the kingdom; and if it be not by the direct persecution of tyrants, it will be by the direct persecution of the devil, or infirmities of our own flesh. But because this was but the secondary meaning of the text, I return to make use of all the former discourse.

Let no Christian man make any judgment concerning his condition or his cause by the external event of things. For although in the law of *Moses*, God made with his people a covenant of temporal prosperity, and *his saints did bind the kings of the Amorites and the Philistines in chains, and their nobles with links of iron*, and then, *that was the honour which all his saints had*: yet in *Christ Jesus* he made a covenant of sufferings. Most of the graces of christianity are suffering graces, and God hath predestinated us to sufferings, and we are baptized into suffering, and our very communions are symbols of our duty, by being the sacrament of Christ's death and passion; and Christ foretold to us tribulation, and promised only that he would be with us in tribulation, that he would give us his spirit to assist us at tribunals, and his grace to despise the world, and to contemn riches, and boldness to confess every article of the Chris-

tian faith in the face of armies and armed tyrants. And he also promised that *all things should work together for the best to his servants*, that is, he would out of the eater bring meat, and out of the strong issue sweetness, and crowns and sceptres should spring from crosses, and that the cross itself should stand upon the globes and sceptres of princes; but he never promised to his servants, that they should pursue kings and destroy armies, that they should reign over nations, and promote the cause of *Jesus Christ* by breaking his commandment. *The shield of faith, and the sword of the spirit, the armour of righteousness, and the weapons of spiritual warfare*, these are they by which christianity swelled from a small company, and a less reputation, to possess the chairs of doctors, and the thrones of princes, and the hearts of all men. But men in all ages will be tampering with shadows and toys. The Apostles at no hand could endure to hear that Christ's *kingdom was not of this world*, and that their master should die a sad and shameful death; though that way he was to receive his crown, and *enter into glory*. And after Christ's time, when his disciples had taken up the cross, and were marching the king's high way of sorrows, there were a very great many, even the generality of Christians for two or three ages together, who fell a dreaming that Christ should come and reign upon earth again for a thousand years, and then the saints should reign in all abundance of temporal power and fortunes: but these men were content to stay for it till after the resurrection: in the mean time took up their cross, and followed after their Lord, the *king of sufferings*. But now-a-days we find a generation of men who have changed the covenant of sufferings into victories, and triumphs, riches and prosperous chances, and reckon their christianity by their good fortunes;

as if Christ had promised to his servants no heaven hereafter, no spirit in the mean time to refresh their sorrows: as if he had enjoined them no passive graces; but as if to be a Christian and to be a Turk were the same thing. *Mahomet* entered and possessed by the sword: Christ came by the cross, entered by humility; and his saints *possess their souls by patience*.

God was fain to multiply miracles to make Christ capable of being *a man of sorrows*: and shall we think he will work miracles to make us delicate? He promised us a glorious portion hereafter, to which, if all the *sufferings of the world* were put together, they are not worthy to be compared: and shall we, with *Dives*, choose our portion of *good things in this life*? If Christ suffered so many things only that he might give us glory, shall it be strange that we shall suffer who are to receive his glory? it is in vain to think we shall obtain glories at an easier rate, than to *drink of the brook in the way* in which Christ was drenched. When the devil appeared to *St. Martin* in a bright splendid shape, and said he was Christ; he answered, *Christus non nisi in cruce apparet suis in hac vita*. And when *St. Ignatius* was newly tied in a chain to be led to his martyrdom, he cried out, *Nunc incipio esse Christianus*. And it was observed by *Minutius Felix*, and was indeed a great and excellent truth, *Omnes viri fortes quos Gentiles praedicabant in exemplum, aerumnis suis inclyti floruerunt*; the Gentiles in their whole religion never propounded any man imitable, unless the man were poor or persecuted. *Brutus* stood for his country's liberty, but lost his army and his life: *Socrates* was put to death for speaking a religious truth: *Cato* chose to be on the right side, but happened to fall upon the oppressed and the injured; he died together with his party.

Victrix causa Diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.*

And if God thus dealt with the best of heathens, to whom he had made no clear revelation of immortal recompences; how little is the faith, and how much less is the patience of Christians, if they shall think much to suffer sorrow, since they so clearly see with the eye of faith the great things which are laid up for them that are *faithful unto the death*? Faith is useless, if now in the midst of so great pretended lights we shall not dare to trust God, unless we have all in hand that we desire; and suffer nothing, for all we can hope for. They that live by sense have no use of faith: yet our Lord *Jesus*, concerning whose passions the gospel speaks much, but little of his glorifications; whose shame was publick, whose pains were notorious, but his joys and transfigurations were secret, and kept private; he who would not suffer his holy mother, whom in great degrees he exempted from sin, to be exempted from many and great sorrows; certainly intends to admit none to his resurrection but by the doors of his grave, none to glory but by the way of the cross. *If we be planted into the likeness of his death, we shall be also of his resurrection*, else on no terms. Christ took away sin from us, but he left us our share of sufferings; and the cross, which was first printed upon us, in the waters of baptism, must for ever be born by us in penance, in mortification, in self-denial, and in martyrdom, and toleration, according as God shall require of us by the changes of the world, and the condition of the church.

* Lucan. Lib. i. 128.

The cause victorious pleased the Gods on high,
But for the vanquished, Cato dar'd to die.

A.

For Christ considers nothing but souls, he values not their estates or bodies, supplying our want by his providence; and we are secured that our bodies may be killed, but cannot perish, so long as we preserve our duty and our consciences. Christ our captain hangs naked upon the cross: our fellow soldiers are cast into prison, torn with lions, rent in sunder with trees returning from their violent bendings, broken upon wheels, roasted upon grid-irons, and have had the honour not only to have a good cause, but also to suffer for it; and by faith, not by armies, by patience, not by fighting, have overcome the world. *Et sit anima mea cum Christianis*; I pray God my soul may be among the Christians. And yet the *Turks* have prevailed upon a great part of the Christian world, and have made them slaves and tributaries, and do them all spite, and are hugely prosperous: but when Christians are so, then they are tempted and put in danger, and never have their duty and their interest so well secured, as when they lose all for Christ, and are adorned with wounds or poverty, change or scorn, affronts or revilings, which are the obelisks and triumphs of a holy cause. Evil men and evil causes had need have good fortune and great success to support their persons and their pretences; for nothing but innocence and christianity can flourish in a persecution. I sum up this first discourse in a word: In all the scripture, and in all the authentick stories of the church, we find it often that the devil appeared in the shape of an *angel of light*, but was never suffered so much as to counterfeit a persecuted sufferer. Say no more, therefore, as the murmuring *Israelites* said, *If the LORD be with us, why have these evils apprehended us?* for if to be afflicted be a sign that God hath forsaken a man, and refuses to own his religion or his question, then he that *oppresses the widow, and murders the innocent, and puts the fatherless to death,* and

follows Providence by doing all the evils that he can, that is, all that God suffers him, he, I say, is the only saint and servant of God: and upon the same ground, the wolf and the fox may boast, when they scatter and devour a flock of lambs and harmless sheep.

SERMON X.

PART II.

IT follows now, that we inquire concerning the reasons of the divine Providence in this administration of affairs, so far as he hath been pleased to draw aside the curtain, and to unfold the leaves of his counsels and predestination. And for such an inquiry we have the precedent of the prophet *Jeremiah*; *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let us talk to thee of thy judgments. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea they have taken root: they grow, yea they bring forth fruit.** Concerning which in general the prophet *Malachi* gives this account, after the same complaint made: *And now we call the proud happy; and they that work wickedness are set up, yea they that tempt God are even delivered. They that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name.*

* Jer. xii. 1. 2.

*And they shall be mine (saith the Lord of Hosts) in that day when I bind up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.** In this interval which is a valley of tears, it is no wonder if they rejoice who shall weep for ever; and *they that sow in tears* shall have no cause to complain, when God gathers all the mourners into his kingdom, *they shall reap with joy.*

For innocence and joy were appointed to dwell together for ever. And joy went not first, but when innocence went away, sorrow and sickness dispossessed joy of its habitation; and now this world must be always a scene of sorrows, and no joy can grow here but that which is imaginary and fantastick. There is no worldly joy, no joy proper for this world, but that which wicked persons fancy to themselves in the hopes and designs of iniquity. He that covets his neighbour's wife or land, dreams of fine things, and thinks it a fair condition to be rich and cursed, to be a beast and die, or to lie wallowing in his filthiness: But those holy souls who are not in love with the leprosy and the itch for the pleasure of scratching, they know no pleasure can grow from the thorns which *Adam* planted in the hedges of *Paradise*; and that sorrow which was brought in by sin, must not go away till it hath returned us into the first condition of innocence: the same instant that quits us from sin and the failings of mortality, the same instant wipes all tears from our eyes; but that is not in this world. In the mean time,

God afflicts the godly, that he might manifest many of his attributes, and his servants exercise many of their virtues.

* Mal. iii. 14, &c.

Nec fortuna probat causas, sequiturque merentes,
 Sed vaga per cunctos nullo discrimine fertur :
 Scilicet est aliud quod nos cogatque rogatque
 Majus, et in proprias ducat mortalia leges.*

For without sufferings of saints, God should lose the glories of 1. Bringing good out of evil: 2. Of *being with us in tribulation*: 3. Of sustaining our infirmities: 4. Of triumphing over the malice of his enemies. 5. Without the suffering of saints, where were the exaltation of the cross, the conformity of the members to Christ their head, the coronets of martyrs? 6. Where were the *trial of our faith*? 7. Or the exercise of long suffering? 8. Where were the opportunities to give God the greatest love, which cannot be but by dying and suffering for him? 9. How should that which the world calls folly prove the greatest wisdom? 10. And God be glorified by events contrary to the probability and expectation of their causes? 11. By the suffering of saints, Christian religion is proved to be most excellent; whilst the iniquity and cruelty of the adversaries proves the *illecebra sectae*, as *Tertullian's* phrase is; it invites men to consider the secret excellencies of that religion, *for which* and *in which* men are so willing to die: for that religion must needs be worth looking into, which so many wise and excellent men do so much value above their lives and fortunes. 12. That a man's nature is passible, is its best advantage; for by it we are all redeemed: By the passiveness and sufferings of our Lord and brother we were all rescued from the portion of devils; and by our

* Fortune betrays her own capricious faults,
 The good oft vexes, and the bad exalts,
 Then let thy prayers to Heaven's high Lord ascend,
 Who wounds in mercy, and afflicts to mend.

suffering we have a capacity of serving God beyond that of angels; who indeed can sing God's praise with a sweeter note, and obey him with a more unabated will, and execute his commands with a swifter wing and a greater power: but they cannot die for God, they can lose no lands for him; and he that did so for all us, and commanded us to do so for him, *is ascended far above all angels*, and is heir of a greater glory. 13. *Do this, and live*, was the covenant of the law; but in the gospel it is, *Suffer this and live: He that forsaketh house and land, friends and life for my sake, is my disciple*. 14. By the sufferings of saints God chastises their follies and levities, and suffers not their errors to climb up into heresies, nor their infirmities into crimes.

————— *παθων δε τι νικησιν ενωα.**

Affliction makes a fool leave his folly. If *David* numbers the people of *Judea*, God punishes him sharply and loudly: But if *Augustus Cæsar* numbers all the world, he is let alone and prospers.

Ille crucem pretium sceleris tulit, hic diadema.†

And in giving physick we always call that just and fitting that is useful and profitable: no man complains of his physician's iniquity, if he burns one part to cure all the body; if the belly be punished to chastise the floods of humour, and the evils of a surfeit. Punishments can no other way turn into a mercy, but when they are designed for medicine; and God is then very careful of thy soul, when he will suppress every

* *Juv. Sat. xiii., 105.*

* The Fool learns wisdom in affliction's school.

A.

† See different fates attend the self-same crime;

Some made by villany, and some undone,

And this ascend a scaffold, that a throne.

GIFFORD.

of its evils, when it first discomposes the order of things and spirits. And what hurt is it to thee, if a persecution draws thee from the vanities of a former prosperity, and forces thee into the sobrieties of a holy life? What loss is it? what misery? Is not the least sin a greater evil than the greatest of sufferings? God smites some at the beginning of their sin; others not till a long while after it is done. The first cannot say that God is slack in punishing, and have no need to complain that the wicked are prosperous; for they find that God is apt enough to strike: and therefore, that he strikes them, and strikes not the other, is not defect of justice, but because there is not mercy in store for them that sin and suffer not. 15. For if God strikes the godly that they may repent, it is no wonder that God is so good to his servants: but then we must not call that a misery, which God intends to make an instrument of saving them. And if God forbears to strike the wicked out of anger, and because he hath decreed death and hell against them, we have no reason to envy that they ride in a gilded chariot to the gallows: But if God forbear the wicked, that by his long sufferance they may be invited to repentance, then we may cease to wonder at the dispensation, and argue comforts to the afflicted saints, thus: For if God be so gracious to the wicked, how much more is he to the godly? and if sparing the wicked be a mercy; then, smiting the godly being the expression of his greater kindness, affliction is of itself the more eligible condition. If God hath some degrees of kindness for the persecutors, so much as to invite them by kindness; how much greater is his love to them that are persecuted? And therefore his intercourse with them is also a greater favour; and indeed it is the surer way of securing the duty: fair means may do it, but severity will fix and secure it. Fair means are more apt to be abused than harsh

physick; that may be turned into wantonness, but none but the impudent and grown sinners despise all God's judgments; and therefore God chuses this way to deal with his erring servants, that they may obtain an infallible and a great salvation. And yet if God spares not his children, how much less the reprobates? and therefore as sparing the latter commonly is a sad curse, so the smiting the former is a very great mercy. 16. For by this economy God gives us a great argument to prove the resurrection, since to his saints and servants he assigns sorrow for their present portion. Sorrow cannot be the reward of virtue; it may be its instrument and hand-maid, but not its reward; and therefore it may be intermedial to some great purposes, but they must look for their portion in the other life: *For if in this life only we had hope, then we were of all men the most miserable*: It is St. Paul's argument to prove a beatifical resurrection. And we therefore may learn to estimate the state of the afflicted godly to be a mercy, great in proportion to the greatness of that reward, which these afflictions come to secure and to prove.

Nunc et damna juvant, sunt ipsa pericula tanti:
Stantia non poterant tecta probare deos.*

It is a great matter, and infinite blessing, to escape the pains of hell; and therefore that condition is also very blessed which God sends us, to create and to confirm our hopes of that excellent mercy. 17. The sufferings of the saints are the sum of Christian philosophy: they are sent to wean us from the vanities and affections of this world, and to create in us strong de-

* Mart. Lib. 1. Ep. 13. v. 11.

To prosperous wealth few signs of grace are given,
Affliction proves the fostering hand of Heaven.

A.

sires of heaven; while God causes us to be here treated rudely, that we may long to be in our country, where God shall be our portion, and angels our companions, and Christ our perpetual feast, and never-ceasing joy shall be our condition, and entertainment. *O death, how bitter art thou to a man that is at ease and rest in his possessions!** But he that is uneasy in his body, and inquiet in his possessions, vexed in his person, discomposed in his designs, who finds no pleasure, no rest here, will be glad to fix his heart where only he shall have what he can desire, and what can make him happy. As long as the waters of persecutions are upon the earth, so long we dwell in the ark; but where the land is dry, the dove itself will be tempted to a wandering course of life, and never to return to the house of her safety. What shall I say more? 18. Christ nourisheth his church by sufferings. 19. He hath given a single blessing to all other graces; but to them that are *persecuted* he hath promised a double one: † it being a double favour, first to be innocent like Christ, and then to be afflicted like him. 20. Without this, the miracles of patience, which God hath given to fortify the spirits of the saints, would signify nothing. *Nemo enim tolerare tanta velit sine causa, nec potuit sine Deo:* As no man would bear evils without a cause, so no man could bear so much without the supporting hand of God; and we need not the Holy Ghost to so great purposes, if our lot were not sorrow and persecution. And therefore without this condition of suffering, the Spirit of God should lose that glorious attribute of *the Holy Ghost the comforter*. 21. Is there any thing more yet? Yes. They that have suffered or forsaken any lands for Christ, *shall sit upon the thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel;* so said Christ to his disciples. Nay *the saints*

* Eccles. iv. 11.

† Matt. v. 12.

shall judge angels, (saith St. Paul :) well therefore might St. Paul say, *I rejoice exceedingly in tribulation.* It must be some great thing that must make an afflicted man to rejoice exceedingly; and so it was. For since *patience is necessary, that we receive the promise,* and tribulation does work this; for a short time it worketh the consummation of our hope, even an exceeding weight of glory; we have no reason to think it strange concerning the fiery trial as if it were a strange thing. It can be no hurt. The church is like *Moses's bush,* when it is all on fire, it is not at all consumed, but made full of miracle, full of splendour, full of God: and unless we can find something that God cannot turn into joy, we have reason not only to be patient, but rejoice, when we are persecuted in a righteous cause: For, *love is the soul of christianity,* and *suffering is the soul of love.* To be innocent and to be persecuted, are the body and soul of christianity. *I, John, your brother, and partaker in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus,** said St. John: those were the titles and ornaments of his profession: That is, *I, John, your fellow-christian;* that is the plain song of the former descant. He therefore that is troubled when he is afflicted in his outward man, that his inward man may grow strong, like the birds upon the ruins of the shell, and wonders that a good man should be a beggar, and a sinner be rich with oppression; that *Lazarus* should die at the gate of *Dives,* hungry and sick, unpitied and unrelieved; may as well wonder that carrion-crows should feed themselves fat upon a fair horse, far better than themselves; or that his own excellent body should be devoured by worms and the most contemptible creatures, though it lies there to be converted into glory. That man knows nothing of nature, or Providence, or christianity, or the rewards

* Rev. i. 9.

of virtue, or the nature of its constitution, or the infirmities of man, or the mercies of God, or the arts and prudence of his loving kindness, or the rewards of heaven, or the glorifications of Christ's exalted humanity, or the precepts of the gospel, who is offended at the sufferings of God's dearest servants, or declines the honour and the mercy of sufferings in the cause of righteousness, for the securing of a virtue, for the imitation of Christ and for the love of God, or the glories of immortality. It cannot, it ought not, it never will be otherwise; the world may as well cease to be measured by time, as good men to suffer affliction. I end this point with the words of Saint Paul. *Let as many as are perfect be thus minded: and if any man be otherwise minded, God also will reveal this unto you*;* this, of the covenant of sufferings, concerning which the old prophets and holy men of the temple had many thoughts of heart: but in the full sufferings of the gospel there hath been a full revelation of the excellency of the sufferings. I have now given you an account of some of those reasons why God hath so disposed, that at this time, that is, under the period of the gospel, *judgment must begin at the house of God*: and they are either *πειρασμοι*, or *δοκιμοσιαι*, or *μαρτυριον*, or imitation of Christ's *λυτρον*, chastisements, or trials, or martyrdom, or a conformity to the sufferings of the holy Jesus.

But now, besides all the promises, we have another account to make concerning the prosperity of the wicked: *For if judgment first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?* that is the question of the apostle, and is the great instrument of comfort to persons ill-treated in the actions of the world. The first ages of the church lived upon *promises* and *prophecies*; and because some

* Phil. iii. 15.

of them are already fulfilled for ever, and the others are of a continual and a successive nature, and are verified by the actions of every day, therefore we and all the following ages live upon *promises* and *experience*. And although the servants of God have suffered many calamities from the tyranny and prevalency of evil men their enemies, yet still it is preserved as one of the fundamental truths of christianity, that all the fair fortunes of the wicked are not enough to make them happy, nor the persecutions of the godly able to make a good man miserable, nor yet their sadnesses arguments of God's displeasure against them. For when a godly man is afflicted and dies, it is his work and his business; and if the wicked prevail, that is, if they persecute the godly, it is but that which was to be expected from them: For who are fit to be hangmen and executioners of publick wrath, but evil and ungodly persons? And can it be a wonder that they, whose cause wants reason, should betake themselves to the sword? that what he cannot persuade, he may wrest? Only we must not judge of the things of God by the measures of men. *Τα αἰθερωτα, the things of men* have this world for their stage and their reward; but *the things of God* relate to *the world to come*: and for our own particulars we are to be guided by rule, and by *the end of all*; not by events intermedial, which are varied by a thousand irregular causes. For if all the evil men in the world were unprosperous, (as most certain they are) and if all good persons were temporally blessed, (as most certain they are not;) yet this would not move us to become virtuous. *If an angel should come from heaven, or one wise from the dead* and preach repentance, or justice and temperance, all this would be ineffectual to those, to whom the plain doctrines of God, delivered in the law and the prophets, will not suffice.

For why should God work a sign to make us to believe that we ought to do justice; if we already believe he hath commanded it? No man can need a miracle for the confirmation of that which he already believes to be the command of God; and when God hath expressly bidden us to *obey every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, the king as supreme, and his deputies as sent by him*; it is a strange infidelity to think, that a rebellion against the ordinance of God can be sanctified by the success and prevalency of them that destroy *the authority, and the person, and the law, and the religion*. The sin cannot grow to its height if it be crushed at the beginning; unless it prosper in its progress, a man cannot easily *fill up the measure of his iniquity*: but then that the sin swells to its fullness by prosperity, and grows too big to be suppressed without a miracle, it is so far from excusing or lessening the sin, that nothing doth so nurse the sin as it. It is not virtue, because it is prosperous; but if it had not been prosperous, the sin could never be so great.

—Facere omnia saeve

Non impune licet, nisi dum facis———*

A little crime is sure to smart; but when the sinner is grown rich, and prosperous, and powerful, he gets impunity,

Jusque datum sceleri——†

But that's not innocence: and if prosperity were the voice of God to approve an action, then no man were vicious but he that is punished, and nothing were rebellion but that which cannot be easily suppressed, and no man were a pirate but he that robs

* Perpetual guilt can ne'er unpunished 'scape. A.

† The rich patrician claims a right to sin. A

with a little vessel, and no man could be a tyrant but he that is no prince, and no man an unjust invader of his neighbour's rights, but he that is beaten and overthrown. Then the crime grows big and loud, then it calls to heaven for vengeance, when it hath been long a growing, when it hath thrived under the devil's managing; when God hath long suffered it, and with patience, in vain expecting the repentance of a sinner. He that *treasures up wrath against the day of wrath*, that man hath been a prosperous, that is, an unpunished and a thriving sinner: but then it is *the sin* that thrives, not *the man*: and that is the mistake upon this whole question; for the sin cannot thrive, unless the man goes on without apparent punishment and restraint. And all that the man gets by it, is, that by a continual course of sin he is prepared for an intolerable ruin. The spirit of God bids us *look upon the end of these men*; not the way they walk, or the instruments of that pompous death. When *Epaminondas* was asked which of the three was happiest, himself, *Chabrias*, or *Iphicrates*, he bid the man stay till they were all dead; for till then that question could not be answered. He that had seen the *Vandals* besiege the city of *Hippo*, and had known the barbarousness of that unchristened people, and had observed that *St. Augustin* with all his prayers and vows could not obtain peace in his own days, not so much as a reprieve for the persecution, and then had observed *St. Augustin* die with grief that very night, would have perceived his calamity more visible than the reward of his piety and holy religion. When *Lewis* surnamed *Pius* went his voyage to *Palestine* upon a holy end, and for the glory of God, to fight against the *Saracens* and *Turks* and *Mamelukes*, the world did promise to themselves that a good cause should thrive in the hands of so holy a man: but the event was far otherwise; his brother *Robert* was killed, and his army de-

stroyed and himself taken prisoner, and the money which by his mother was sent for his redemption, was cast away in a storm, and he was exchanged for the last town the Christians had in *Egypt*, and brought home the cross of Christ upon his shoulder in a real pressure and participation of his master's sufferings. When *Charles* the Fifth went to *Algiers* to suppress pirates and unchristened villains, the cause was more confident than the event was prosperous; and when he was almost ruined in a prodigious storm, he told the minutes of the clock, expecting that at midnight, when religious persons rose to matins, he should be eased by the benefit of their prayers: but the providence of God trod upon those waters, and left no footsteps for discovery: his navy was beat in pieces, and his design ended in dishonour, and his life almost lost by the bargain. Was ever cause more baffled than the Christian cause by the *Turks* in all *Asia* and *Africa*, and some parts of *Europe*, if to be persecuted and afflicted be reckoned a calamity? What prince was ever more unfortunate than *Henry* the sixth of *England*? and yet that age saw none more pious and devout. And the title of the house of *Lancaster* was advanced against the right of *York* for three descents. But then what was the end of these things? The persecuted men were made saints, and their memories are preserved in honour, and their souls shall reign for ever. And some good men were engaged in a wrong cause, and the good cause was sometimes managed by evil men; till that the suppressed cause was lifted up by God in the hands of a young and prosperous prince, and at last both interests were satisfied in the conjunction of two roses, which was brought to issue by a wonderful chain of causes managed by the Divine Providence. And there is no age, no history, no state, no great change in the world, but hath ministered an example of an *afflicted*

truth, and a prevailing sin. For I will never more call that sinner prosperous, who, after he hath been permitted to finish his business, shall die and perish miserably; for at the same rate we may envy the happiness of a poor fisherman, who while his nets were drying, slept upon the rock, and dreamt that he was made a king; on a sudden starts up, and leaping for joy, falls down from the rock, and in the place of his imaginary felicities, loses his little portion of pleasure and innocent solaces he had from the sound sleep and little cares of his humble cottage.

And what is the prosperity of the wicked? To dwell in fine houses, or to command armies, or to be able to oppress their brethren, or to have much wealth to look on, or many servants to feed, or much business to dispatch, and great cares to master; these things are of themselves neither good nor bad. But consider, would any man amongst us, looking and considering before-hand, kill his lawful king, to be heir of all that which I have named? would any of you chuse to have God angry with you upon those terms? would any of you be a perjured man for it all? A wise man or a good would not chuse it. Would any of you die an atheist, that you might live in plenty and power? I believe you tremble to think of it. It cannot therefore be a happiness to thrive upon the stock of a great sin. For if any man should contract with an impure spirit, to give his soul up at a certain day, it may be twenty years hence, upon the condition he might for twenty years have his vain desires; should we not think that person infinitely miserable? Every prosperous thriving sinner is in the same condition; within these twenty years he shall be thrown into the portion of devils, but shall never come out thence in twenty millions of years. His wealth must needs sit uneasy upon

him, that remembers that within a short space he shall be extremely miserable; and if he does not remember it, he does but secure it the more. And that God defers the punishment, and suffers evil men to thrive in the opportunities of their sin, it may and does serve many ends of providence and mercy, but serves no end that any evil man can reasonably wish or propound to themselves eligible.

Bias said well to a vicious person, *Non metuo ne non sis daturus poenas, sed metuo ne id non sim visurus*; he was sure the man should be punished, he was not sure he should live to see it. And though the *Messinians* that were betrayed and slain by *Aristocrates* in the battle of *Cyprus* were not made alive again; yet the justice of God was admired, and treason infinitely disgraced, when twenty years after the treason was discovered, and the traitor punished with a horrid death. *Lysiscus* gave up the *Orchomenians* to their enemies, having first wished his feet, which he then dipt in water, might rot off, if he were not true to them; and yet his feet did not rot till those men were destroyed, and of a long time after; and yet at last they did. *Slay them not, O Lord, lest my people forget it.* (saith *David*.) If punishment were instantly and totally inflicted, it would be but a sudden and single document; but a slow and lingering judgment, and a wrath breaking out in the next age, is like an universal proposition, teaching our posterity that God was angry all the while, that he had a long indignation in his breast, that he would not forget to take vengeance. And it is a demonstration, that even the prosperous sins of the present age will find the same period in the Divine revenge, when men see a judgment upon the nephews for the sins of their grandfathers, though in other instances, and for sins acted in the days of their ancestors.

We know that when in *Henry* the eighth, or *Edward* the sixth's days, some great men pulled down churches and built palaces, and robbed religion of its just encouragements and advantages; the men that did it were sacrilegious: and we find also that God hath been punishing that great sin ever since; and hath displayed to so many generations of men, to three or four descents of children, that those men could not be esteemed happy in their great fortunes, against whom God was so angry that he would shew his displeasure for a hundred years together. When *Herod* had killed the babes of *Bethlehem*, it was seven years before God called him to an account; but he that looks upon the end of that man, would rather choose the fate of the oppressed babes, than of the prevailing and triumphing tyrant. It was forty years before God punished the *Jews*, for the execrable murder committed upon the person of their king, *the Holy Jesus*; and it was so long, that when it did happen, many men attributed it to their killing of *St. James* their bishop, and seemed to forget the greater crime. But *non eventu rerum, sed fide verborum stamus*; we are to stand to the truth of God's word, not to the event of things: Because God hath given us a rule, but hath left the judgment to himself; and we die so quickly, (and God measures all things by his standard of eternity, and *a thousand years to God is as but one day*) that we are not competent persons to measure the times of God's account, and the returns of judgment. We are dead before the arrow comes; but the man escapes not, unless his soul can die, or that God cannot punish him. *Ducunt in bonis dies suos, et in momento descendunt ad infernum*, that is their fate; *They spend their days in plenty, and in a moment descend into hell.** In the mean time they drink, and forget their sorrow; but

* Job xxi. 13.

they are condemned: they have drunk their hemlock; but the poison does not work yet: the bait is in their mouths, and they are sportive; but the hook hath struck their nostrils, and they shall never escape the ruin. And let no man call the man fortunate, because his execution is deferred for a few days, when the very deferring shall increase and ascertain the condemnation.

But if we should look under the skirt of the prosperous and prevailing tyrant, we should find even in the days of his joys such allays and abatements of his pleasure, as may serve to represent him *presently miserable*, besides his final infelicities. For I have seen a young and healthful person warm and ruddy under a poor and thin garment, when at the same time an old rich person hath been cold and paralytick under a load of sables, and the skins of foxes. It is the body that makes the clothes warm, not the clothes the body; and the spirit of a man makes felicity and content, not any spoils of a rich fortune wrapt about a sickly and an uneasy soul. *Apollodorus* was a traitor and a tyrant, and the world wondered to see a bad man have so good a fortune; but knew not that he nourished scorpions in his breast, and that his liver and his heart were eaten up with spectres and images of death: his thoughts were full of interruptions, his dreams of illusions; his fancy was abused with real troubles and fantastick images, imagining that he saw the *Scythians* slaying him alive, his daughters like pillars of fire dancing round about a caldron in which himself was boiling, and that his heart accused itself to be the cause of all these evils. And although all tyrants have not imaginative and fantastick consciences, yet all tyrants shall *die and come to judgment*; and such a man is not to be feared, not at all to be envied. And in the mean time can he be said to escape who hath

an unquiet conscience, who is already designed for hell, he whom God hates, and the people curse, and who hath an evil name, and against whom all good men pray, and many desire to fight, and all wish him destroyed, and some contrive to do it? Is this man a blessed man? Is that man prosperous who hath stolen a rich robe, and is in fear to have his throat cut for it, and is fain to defend it with the greatest difficulty and the greatest danger. Does not he drink more sweetly that takes his beverage in an earthen vessel, than he that looks and searches into his golden chalices for fear of poison, and looks pale at every sudden noise; and sleeps in armour, and trusts nobody, and does not trust God for his safety, but does greater wickedness only to escape awhile unpunished for his former crimes? *Auro bibitur venenum.* No man goes about to poison a poor man's pitcher, nor lays plots to forage his little garden made for the hospital of two bee-hives, and the feasting of a few *Pythagorean* herb-eaters.

— ουκ ισασιν ὅτιο πλεον ἡμισυ παντος
 Ὅουδ' ἰσον εν μαλαχη τε ἔσφδελω μεγ' οννιαρ.*

They that admire the happiness of a prosperous, prevailing tyrant, know not the felicities that dwell in innocent hearts, and poor cottages, and small fortunes.

A Christian, so long as he preserves his integrity to God and to religion, is bold in all accidents, he dares die, and he dares be poor; but if the persecutor dies, he is undone. Riches are beholden to our fancies for their value; and yet the more we value the riches,

* Hesiod, Op. Dier: Lib. 1. v. 10.

The purer joys of life they never taste;

The soul's mild sunshine and the spare repast.

▲.

the less good they are, and by an over-valuing affection they become our danger and our sin: But on the other side, death and persecution lose all the ill that they can have, if we do not set an edge upon them by our fears and by our vices. From ourselves riches take their wealth, and death sharpens his arrows at our forges, and we may set their prices as we please; and if we judge by the spirit of God, we must *account them happy that suffer*; and therefore that the prevailing oppressor, tyrant, or persecutor is infinitely miserable. Only let God chuse by what instruments he will govern the world, by what instances himself would be served, by what ways he would chastise the failings, and exercise the duties, and reward the virtues of his servants. God sometimes punishes one sin with another; pride with adultery, drunkenness with murder, carelessness with irreligion, idleness with vanity, penury with oppression, irreligion with blasphemy, and that with atheism: and therefore it is no wonder if he punishes *a sinner by a sinner*. And if *David* made use of villains and profligate persons to frame an army; and *Timoleon* destroyed the *Carthaginians* by the help of soldiers who themselves were sacrilegious; and physicians use poison to expel poisons; and all commonwealths take the basest of men to be their instruments of justice and executions: we shall have no further cause to wonder if God raises up the *Assyrian* to punish the *Israelites*, and the *Egyptians* to destroy the *Assyrians*, and the *Ethiopians* to scourge the *Egyptians*; and at last his own hand shall separate the good from the bad in the day of separation, in the day *when he makes up his jewels*.

Που ποτε κεραυνοι Διός, η
 Που ελεσαν Ἄλλης,
 Ει ταυτ' εφοραντες
 Κρυπτους·ν ἐκαλοι;*

God hath many ends of providence to serve by the hands of violent and vicious men. By them he not only checks the beginning errors and approaching sins of his predestinate; but by them he changes governments, and alters kingdoms, and is *terrible among the sons of men*. For since it is one of his glories to convert evil into good, and that good into his own glory, and by little and little to open and to turn the leaves and various folds of providence: it becomes us only to dwell in duty, and to be silent in our thoughts, and wary in our discourses of God; and let him chuse the time when he will prune his vine, and when he will burn his thorns; how long he will smite his servants, and when he will destroy his enemies. In the days of the primitive persecutions, what prayers, how many sighings, how many deep groans, how many bottles of tears did God gather into his repository, all praying for ease and deliverances, for *halcyon days* and fine sun shine, for *nursing fathers and nursing mothers*, for publick assemblies and open and solemn sacraments: And it was three hundred years before God would hear their prayers: and all that while the persecuted people were in a cloud, but they were safe, and knew it not; and God *kept for them the best wine until the last*: they ventured for a crown, and fought valiantly; they were *faithful to the death, and they received a crown of life*; and they

* Soph. Elect. v. 925.

Why sleeps the lightning in the Thunderer's hand?
 Why opes the sun his all-resplendent eye?
 If, conscious of the daring crimes they view,
 They seek not or to punish or reveal.

are honoured by God, by angels, and by men. Whereas in all the prosperous ages of the church, we hear no stories of such multitudes of saints, no record of them, no honour to their memorial, no accident extraordinary; scarce any made illustrious with a miracle, which in the days of suffering were frequent and popular. And after all our fears of sequestration and poverty, of death or banishment, our prayers against the persecution and troubles under it, we may please to remember that twenty years hence, (it may be sooner, it will not be much longer) all our cares and our troubles shall be dead; and then it shall be inquired how we did bear our sorrows, and who inflicted them, and in what cause: and then he shall be happy that keeps company with the *persecuted*; and the *persecutors* shall be shut out *amongst dogs and unbelievers*.

He that shrinks from *the yoke of Christ*, from *the burthen of the Lord*, upon his death-bed will have cause to remember, that by that time all his persecutions would have been past, and that then there would remain nothing for him but rest, and crowns, and sceptres. When *Lysimachus*, impatient and overcome with thirst, gave up his kingdom to the *Getae*, being a captive, and having drank a lusty draught of wine, and his thirst now gone, he fetched a deep sigh, and said, *Miserable man that I am, who for so little pleasure, the pleasure of one draught, lost so great a kingdom!* Such will be their case, who, being impatient of suffering, change their persecution into wealth and an easy fortune: they shall find themselves miserable in the separations of eternity, losing the glories of heaven for so little a pleasure, *illiberalis et ingratae voluptatis causa*, as *Plutarch* calls it, for illiberal and ungrateful pleasure, in which when a man hath entered, he loses the rights and privileges and honours of a good man, and gets nothing that is

profitable and useful to holy purposes, or necessary to any; but is already in a state so hateful and miserable, that he needs neither God nor man to be a revenger, having already under his splendid robe miseries enough to punish and betray this hypocrisy of his condition; being troubled with the memory of what is past, distrustful of the present, suspicious of the future, vicious in their lives, and full of pageantry and out-sides, but in their death miserable, with calamities real, eternal and insupportable. And if it could be otherwise, virtue itself would be reproached with the calamity.

Εἰ γὰρ ὁ μὲν θανάω
 Γὰ τε ἔ ουδὲν ἀν,
 Κεῖσεται τάλας
 Οἱ δὲ μὴ παλιν
 Δρασοῦσ' ἀντιφρονους δικας,
 Ἐρροὶ τ' ἀν αἰδῶς, ἄπαντων
 τ' εὐσεβεία θνήταν.*

I end with the advice of St. Paul; *In nothing be terrified of your adversaries; which to them is an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.*†

* Soph. Elect. v. 246.

—— If the dead

As earth, and nothing more, neglected lie,
 And if no vengeance waits their crimes, farewell
 To shame; farewell to piety 'mongst men.

POTTER.

† Phil. i. 28.

SERMON XI.

PART III.

BUT now that the persecuted may at least be pitied, and assisted in that of which they are capable, I shall propound some rules by which they may learn to gather grapes from their thorns, and figs from their thistles; crowns from the cross, glory from dishonour. As long as they belong to God, it is necessary that they suffer persecution or sorrow; no rules can teach them to avoid that: but *the evil* of the suffering and the *danger* must be declined, and we must use some such spiritual arts as are apt to turn them into health and medicine. For it were a hard thing, first to be scourged, and then to be crucified; to suffer here, and to perish hereafter; through the *fiery trial* and purging fire of afflictions to pass into hell, that is intolerable, and to be prevented with the following cautions; lest a man suffer like a fool and a malefactor, or inherit damnation for the reward of his imprudent suffering.

1. They that suffer any thing for Christ, and are ready to die for him, let them do nothing against him. For certainly they think too highly of martyrdom, who believe it able to excuse all the evils of a wicked life. A man may *give his body to be burned, and yet have no charity*; and he that dies without charity dies without God: *for God is love*. And when those who fought in the days of the *Maccabees* for the defence of true religion, and were killed in those *holy wars*, yet being dead, were found having about their necks *agaveles*, or *pendants consecrated* to idols of the *Jammenscs*; it much allayed the hope which, by

their dying in so good a cause, was entertained concerning their beatifical resurrection. He that overcomes his fear of death does well; but if he hath not also overcome his lust, or his anger, his *baptism of blood* will not wash him clean. Many things make a man willing to die in a good cause: publick reputation, hope of reward, gallantry of spirit, a confident resolution, and a masculine courage: or a man may be vexed in a stubborn and unrelenting suffering: But nothing can make a man live well, but the grace and the love of God. But those persons are infinitely condemned by their last act, who profess their religion to be worth dying for, and yet are so unworthy as not to live according to its institution. It were a rare felicity, if every good cause could be managed by good men only; but we have found that evil men have spoiled a good cause, but never that a good cause made those evil men good and holy. If the governour of *Samaria* had crucified *Simon Magus* for receiving Christian baptism, he had no more died a martyr, than he lived a saint. For dying is not enough, and dying in a good cause is not enough; but then only we receive the crown of martyrdom, when our death is the seal of our life, and our life is a continual testimony of our duty, and both give testimony to the excellencies of the religion, and glorify the grace of God. If a man be gold, the fire purges him; but it burns him if he be like stubble, cheap, light, and useless: For martyrdom is the consummation of love. But then it must be supposed that this grace must have had its beginning, and its several stages and periods, and must have passed through *labour to zeal*, through all the regions of duty to the perfections of sufferings. And therefore it is a sad thing to observe, how some empty souls will please themselves with being of such a religion, or such a cause; and though they dishonour their religion, or

weigh down the cause with the prejudice of sin, believe all is swallowed up by one honourable name, or the appellative of one virtue. If God had forbid nothing but heresy and treason, then to have been a *loyal man*, or of a *good belief*, had been enough: but he that forbid rebellion forbids all swearing and covetousness, rapine and oppression, lying and cruelty. And it is a sad thing to see a man not only to spend his *time*, and his *wealth*, and his *money*, and his *friends* upon his lust, but to spend his *sufferings* too, to let the canker-worm of a deadly sin devour his martyrdom. He therefore that suffers in a good cause, let him be sure to walk worthy of that honour to which God hath called him: let him first deny his sins, and then *deny himself*; and then he may *take up his cross and follow Christ*: ever remembering, that no man pleases God in his death who hath walked perversely in his life.

2. He that suffers in a cause of God must be indifferent what the instance be, so that he may serve God. I say, he must be indifferent in the cause, so it be a cause of God; and indifferent in the suffering, so it be of God's appointment. For some men have a natural aversion to some vices or virtues, and a natural affection to others. One man will die for his friend, and another will die for his money: Some men hate to be a rebel, and will die for their prince; but tempt them to suffer for the cause of the church, in which they were baptized, and in whose communion they look for heaven, and then they are tempted, and fall away. Or if God hath chosen the cause for them, and they have accepted it, yet themselves will choose the suffering. Right or wrong, some men will not endure a prison; and some can yet choose the heaviest part of the burthen, the pollution and stain of a sin, rather than lose their money; and some had rather die twice than lose their estates once. In this, our rule is easy. Let us choose God, and let God choose all the

rest for us ; it being indifferent to us, whether by poverty or shame, by a lingering or a sudden death, by the hands of a tyrant prince or the despised hands of a base usurper or a rebel, we receive the crown, and do honour to God and to religion.

3. Whoever suffer in the cause of God from the hands of cruel and unreasonable men, let them not be too forward to prognosticate evil and death to their enemies ; but let them solace themselves in the assurance of the divine justice, by general consideration, and in particular, pray for them that are our persecutors. *Nebuchadnezzar* was the rod in the hand of God against the *Tyrrians*, and because he destroyed that city, God rewarded him with the spoil of *Egypt* : and it is not always certain that God will be angry with every man by whose hand affliction comes upon us. And sometimes two armies have met and fought, and the wisest man amongst them could not say that either of the princes had prevaricated either the laws of God, or of nations ; and yet it may be, some superstitious, easy and half-witted people of either side wonder that their enemies live so long. And there are very many cases of war concerning which God hath declared nothing : and although in such cases he that yields and quits his title rather than his charity, and the care of so many lives, is the wisest and the best man ; yet if neither of them will do so, let us not decree judgments from heaven in cases where we have no word from heaven, and thunder from our tribunals where no voice of God hath declared the sentence. But in such cases where there is an evident tyranny or injustice, let us do like the good *Samaritan*, who dressed the wounded man, but never pursued the thief : let us do charity to the afflicted, and bear the cross with nobleness, and look up to *Jesus*, who endured the cross, and despised the shame : but let us not take upon us the office of God, who will judge the nations righte-

ously, and when he hath delivered up our bodies, will rescue our souls from the hands of unrighteous judges. I remember in the story that *Plutarch* tells concerning the soul of *Thespisius*, that it met with a prophetick genius, who told him many things that should happen afterwards in the world; and the strangest of all was this, that there should be a king, *qui bonus cum sit, tyrannide vitam finiet*; an excellent prince and a good man should be put to death by a rebel and usurping power; and yet that prophetick soul could not tell that those rebels should within three years die miserable and accursed deaths. And in that great prophecy recorded by *St. Paul*, *That in the last days perilous times should come, and men should be traitors and selfish, having forms of godliness, and creeping into houses*;* yet he could not tell us when these men should come to final shame and ruin; only by a general signification he gave this sign of comfort to God's persecuted servants. *But they shall proceed no farther, for their folly shall be manifest to all men*:† that is, at long running they shall shame themselves, and *for the elects' sake those days of evil shall be shortened*. But you and I may be dead first: And therefore only remember, that they that with a credulous heart and a loose tongue are too decretory and enunciative of speedy judgments to their enemies, turn their religion into revenge, and therefore do believe it will be so, because they vehemently desire it should be so; which all wise and good men ought to suspect, as less agreeing with that charity which overcomes all the sins and all the evils of the world, and sits down and rests in glory.

4. Do not trouble yourself by thinking how much you are afflicted, but consider how much you make of it: For reflex acts upon the suffering itself can lead to nothing but to pride, or to impatience, to

* 2 Tim. iii. 1, &c.

† 2 Tim. iii. 9.

temptation or apostacy. He that measures the grains and scruples of his persecution, will soon sit down and call for ease, or for a reward; will think the time long, or his burthen great; will be apt to complain of his condition, or set a greater value upon his person. Look not back upon him that strikes thee, but upward to God that supports thee, and forward to *the crown that is set before thee*: and then consider, if the loss of thy estate hath taught thee to despise the world; whether thy poor fortune hath made thee poor in spirit; and if thy uneasy prison sets thy soul at liberty, and knocks off the fetters of a worse captivity. For then the rod of suffering turns into crowns and sceptres, when every suffering is a precept, and every change of condition produces a holy resolution, and the state of sorrows makes the resolution actual and habitual, permanent and persevering. For as the silk-worm eateth itself out of a seed to become a little worm; and there feeding on the leaves of mulberries, it grows till its coat be off, and then works itself into a house of silk; then casting its pearly seeds for the young to breed, it leaveth its silk for man, and dieth all white and winged in the shape of a flying creature: so is the progress of souls. When they are regenerate by baptism, and have cast off their first stains, and the skin of worldly vanities by feeding on the leaves of scriptures, and the fruits of the vine, and the joys of the sacrament, they incircle themselves in the rich garment of holy and virtuous habits; then by leaving their blood, which is the church's seed, to raise up a new generation to God, they leave a blessed memory, and fair example, and are themselves turned into angels, whose felicity is to do the will of God, as their employment was in this world to suffer it. *Fiat voluntas tua* is our daily prayer, and that is of a passive signification; *Thy will be done upon us*; and if from

thence also we translate it into an active sense, and by suffering evils increase in our aptnesses to do well, we have done the work of Christians, and shall receive the rewards of martyrs.

5. Let our suffering be entertained by a direct election, not by collateral aids and fantastick assistances. It is a good refreshment to a weak spirit to suffer in good company : and so *Phocion* encouraged a timorous *Greek* condemned to die ; and he bid him be confident, because that he was to die with *Phocion* : and when forty martyrs in *Cappadocia* suffered, and that a soldier standing by came and supplied the place of the one apostate, who fell from his crown being overcome with pain, it added warmth to the frozen confessors, and turned them into consummate martyrs. But if martyrdom were but a fantastick thing, or relied upon vain accidents and irregular chances, it were then very necessary to be assisted by images of things, and any thing less than the proper instruments of religion : but since it is the greatest action of the religion, and relies upon the most excellent promises, and its formality is to be an action of love, and nothing is more firmly chosen (by an after-election at least) than an act of love ; to support martyrdom or the duty of sufferings by false arches and exterior circumstances, is to build a tower upon the beams of the sun, or to set up a wooden ladder to climb up to heaven ; the soul cannot attain so huge and unimaginable felicities by chance and instruments of fancy. And let no man hope to glorify God and go to heaven by a life of sufferings, unless he first begin in the love of God, and from thence derive his choice, his *patience*, and *confidence* in the causes of virtue and religion, like *beams*, and *warmth*, and *influence* from the body of the sun. Some there are that fall under the burthen, when they are pressed hard, because they use not the proper instruments in for-

tifying the will in *patience* and *resignation*, but endeavour to lighten the burthen in imagination; and when these temporary supporters fail, the building that relies upon them rushes into coldness, recidivation, and lukewarmness: and among all instances, that of the main question of the text is of greatest power to abuse imprudent and less severe persons.

Nullos esse Deos, inane coelum,
Affirmat Coelius; probatque,
Quod se videt, dum negat hæc, beatum.*

When men choose a good cause upon confidence that an ill one cannot thrive, that is not for the love of virtue or duty to God, but for profit and secular interests, they are easily lost, when they see the wickedness of the enemy to swell up by impunity and success to a greater evil: for they have not learned to distinguish a *great growing sin* from a *thriving and prosperous fortune*.

Ulla si juris tibi pejerati
Poena, Barine, nocuisset unquam;
Dente si nigro fieres vel uno
Turpior ungui;
Crederem——†

* Mart. Lib. iv. Ep. 20.

The Eternal Godhead Coelius bold denies,
And doubts the ruling influence of the skies,
The Heavens, he cries, no signs of vengeance give,
I think with freedom, and in pleasure live.

† Hor. Lib. ii. Od. 8.

If e'er the insulted powers had shed
The slightest vengeance on thy head;
If but a tooth or nail of thee
Were blacken'd by thy perjury,
Again thy falsehood might deceive,
And I the faithless vow believe.

FRANCIS.

They that believe and choose because of idle fears and unreasonable fancies, or by mistaking the accounts of a man for the measures of God, or dare not commit treason for fear of being blasted; may come to be tempted when they see a sinner thrive, and are scandalized all the way if they die before him; or they may come to receive some accidental hardnesses; and every thing in the world may spoil such persons, and blast their resolutions. Take in all the aids you can, and if the fancy of the standers-by, or the hearing of a cock crow, can add any collateral aids to thy weakness, refuse it not; but let thy state of sufferings *begin with choice, and be confirmed with knowledge, and rely upon love, and the aids of God, and the expectations of heaven, and the present sense of duty*; and then the action will be as glorious in the event, as it is prudent in the enterprise, and religious in the prosecution.

6. Lastly, when God hath brought thee into Christ's school, and entered thee into a state of sufferings, remember the advantages of that state: consider how unsavoury the things of the world appear to thee when thou art under the arrest of death; remember with what comforts the spirit of God assists thy spirit; set down in thy heart all those intercourses which happen between God and thy own soul, the sweetnesses of religion, the vanity of sins and appearances, thy newly entertained resolutions, thy longings after heaven and all the things of God. And if God finishes thy persecution with death, proceed in them: if he restores thee to the light of the world, and a temporal refreshment, change but the scene of sufferings in an active life, and converse with God upon the same principles on which in thy state of sufferings thou didst build all the parts of duty. If God restores thee to thy estate, be not less in love with heaven nor more in love with the world; let

thy spirit be now as humble as before it was broken : and to whatsoever degree of sobriety or austerity thy suffering condition did enforce thee, if it may be turned into virtue, when God restores thee, (because then it was necessary thou shouldest entertain it by an after-choice) do it now also by a pre-election ; that thou mayest say with *David*, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, for thereby I have learned thy commandments.* And *Paphuutius* did not do his soul more advantage, when he lost his right eye, and suffered his left knee to be cut off for christianity and the cause of God, than that, in the days of *Constantine* and the church's peace, he lived (not in the toleration, but) in the active piety of a martyr's condition ; not now a *confessor of the faith* only, but of *the charity of a Christian.* We may every one live to have need of these rules ; and I do not at all think it safe to pray against it, but to be armed for it : and to whatsoever degree of sufferings God shall call us, we see what advantages God intends for us, and what advantages we ourselves may make of it. I now proceed to make use of all the former discourse, by removing it a little farther even into its utmost spiritual sense ; which the apostle does in the last words of the text, *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked and the sinner appear ?*

These words are taken out of the *Proverbs*,* according to the translation of the LXX. *If the righteous scarcely be safe.* Where the word *μολις* implies that he is safe ; but by intermedial difficulties : and *σαζεται*, *he is safe* in the midst of his persecutions ; they may disturb his rest, and discompose his fancy, but they are like the fiery chariot to *Elias* ; he is encircled with fire, and rare circumstances, and strange usages, but is carried up to heaven in a robe of

* Chap. xi. 31.

flames. And so was *Noah* safe when the flood came; and was the great type and instance too of the verification of this proposition; he was ἰ δίκαιος and δίκαιοσυνως κηρῶς, he was put into a strange condition, perpetually wandering, shut up in a prison of wood, living upon faith, having never had the experience of being safe in floods. And so have I often seen young and unskilful persons sitting in a little boat, when every little wave sporting about the sides of the vessel, and every motion and dancing of the barge seemed a danger, and made them cling fast upon their fellows; and yet all the while they were as safe as if they sat under a tree, while a gentle wind shaked the leaves into a refreshment and a cooling shade: And the unskilful, unexperienced Christian shrieks out whenever his vessel shakes, thinking it always a danger, that the watery pavement is not stable and resident like a rock; and yet all his danger is in himself, none at all from without: for he is indeed moving upon the waters, but fastened to a rock: faith is his foundation, and hope is his anchor, and death is his harbour, and Christ is his pilot, and heaven is his country; and all the evils of poverty, or affronts of tribunals and evil judges, of fears and sad apprehensions, are but like the loud wind blowing from the right point, they make a noise, and drive faster to the harbour: and if we do not leave the ship, and leap into the sea; quit the interests of religion, and run to the securities of the world; cut our cables, and dissolve our hopes; grow impatient, and hug a wave, and die in its embraces; we are as safe at sea, safer in the storm which God sends us, than in a calm when we are befriended with the world.

2. But *μολις* may also signify *raro*; *If the righteous is seldom safe*: which implies that sometimes he is, even in a temporal sense. God sometimes sends halcyon-days to his church, and when he promised

kings and queens to be their nurses, he intended it for a blessing; and yet this blessing does often-times so ill-succeed, that it is the greater blessing of the two, not to give us that blessing too freely. But *μολις*, this is *scarcely* done; and yet sometimes it is, and God sometimes refreshes languishing piety with such arguments as comply with our infirmities: and though it be a shame to us to need such allectives and infant-gaids, such which the heathen-world and the first rudiments of the *Israelites* did need; God, who pities us, and will be wanting in nothing to us, as he corroborates our willing spirits with proper entertainments, so also he supports our weak flesh, and not only cheers an afflicted soul with beams of light, and antepasts and earnest of glory, but is kind also to our man of flesh and weakness; and to this purpose he sends thunderbolts from heaven upon evil men, dividing their tongues, infatuating their councils, cursing their posterity, and ruining their families.

—αλλοτε δ' αυτε

Ἡ παν γε στρατον ευρυν απαλεισεν, η ὄρη τειχος

Ἡ νεαυ εν ποτηφ Κρονιδησ αποθινυλαι αυτων.*

Sometimes God *destroys their armies*, or their *strong holds*, sometimes breaks their *ships*. But this happens either for the weakness of some of his servants, and their too great aptness to be offended at a prosperous iniquity, or when he will not suffer the evil to grow too great, or for some end of his providence; and yet if this should be very often, or last long, God knows the danger, and we should feel the inconvenience. Of all the types of Christ, only *Joshua* and *Solomon* were noted to be generally prosperous:

* Hesiod. Op. Dier. Lib. 1. 143.

Jove wastes their army, or their city's pride,
Or sinks their navy in the whelming tide.

A.

and yet the fortune of the first was to be in perpetual war and danger; but the other was as himself could wish it, rich, and peaceful, and powerful, and healthful and learned, and beloved, and strong, and amorous, and voluptuous, and so he fell; and though his fall was, yet his recovery was not, upon record.

And yet the worst of evils that happen to the godly is better, temporally better, than the greatest external felicity of the wicked: that in all senses the question may be considerable and argumentative. *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly appear?* if it be hard with good men, with the evil it shall be far worse. But see the difference. The godly man is timorous, and yet safe; tossed by the seas, and yet safe at anchor; impaired by evil accidents, and righted by divine comforts; made sad with a black cloud, and refreshed with a more gentle influence; abused by the world, and yet an heir of heaven; hated by men, and beloved by God; loses one house, and gets a hundred; he quits a convenient lodging-room, and purchases a glorious country; is forsaken by his friends, but never by a good conscience; he fares hardly, and sleeps sweetly; he flies from his enemies, but hath no distracting fears; he is full of thought, but of no amazement: It is his business to be troubled, and his portion to be comforted; he hath nothing to afflict him, but the loss of that which might be his danger, but can never be his good; and in the recompense of this he hath God for his father, Christ for his captain, the Holy Ghost for his supporter; so that he shall have all the good which God can give him, and of all that good he hath the Holy Trinity for an earnest and a gage, for his maintenance at the present, and his portion to all eternity. But though *Paul* and *Silas* sung psalms in prison, and under the hangman's whips, and in an earthquake; yet neither the gaoler, nor the persecuting

magistrates could do so. For the prosperity of the wicked is like a winter's sun, or the joy of a condemned drunkard; it is a forgetfulness of his present danger, and his future sorrows, nothing but imaginary arts of inadvertency. He sits in the gates of the city, and judges others, and is condemned himself; he is honoured by the passers by, and is thought happy, but *he sighs deeply; he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them; he commands an army and is himself a slave to his passions; he sleeps because he needs it, and starts from his uneasy pillows which his thoughtful head hath discomposed; when he is waking he dreams of greatness, when he sleeps he dreams of spectres and illusions: he spoils a poor man of his lamb, and himself of his innocence and peace; and in every unjust purchase himself is the greatest loser.*

Ὅς δὲ κεν αὐτὸς ἔληται, ἀναιδέϊφι πιθήσας,
καὶ τε σμικρὸν εὖν, τοῦτ' ἐπαχνοῦσ φιλὸν ἦτορ.*

For just upon his oppression or injustice he is turned a devil, and God's enemy, a wolf to his brother, a greedy admirer of the baits of fishes, and the bread of dogs; he is unsafe by reason of his sin: For he hath against him the displeasure of God, the justice of the laws, the shame of the sin, the revenge of the injured person; and God and men, the laws of nations and private societies stand upon their defence against this man: he is unsafe in his rest, amazed in his danger, troubled in his labours, weary in his change, esteemed a base man, disgraced and scorned, feared and hated, flattered and derided, watched and suspected, and it may be, dies in the middle

* Hesiod. Op. Di. Lib. 1. 387

Who wrongs another, feels deprived of rest,

The stings of conscience goad his aching breast. A

of his purchase, and at the end is a fool, and leaves a curse to his posterity.

του δε τ' αμαυροτερη γενει μετ'επισηδε λελειπται,*

He leaves a generation of blacker children behind him: so the poet describes the cursedness of their posterity: and their memory sits down to eternal ages in dishonour. And by this time let them cast up their accounts, and see if of all their violent purchases they carry any thing with them to the grave but sin, and a guilty conscience, and a polluted soul; the anger of God, and the shame of men. And what help shall all those persons give to thee in thy flames, who divided and scattered that estate for which thou diedst for ever?

Audire est operae pretium, proeedere recte
 Qui macchis non vultis, ut omni parte laborent;
 Utque illis multo corrupta dolore voluptas,
 Atque haec rara, cadat dura, inter saepe peric'la.†

And let but a sober answerer tell me, if any thing in the world be more distant either from goodness or happiness, than to scatter the plague of an accursed soul upon our dearest children; to make an universal curse; to be the fountain of a mischief; to be such a person whom our children and nephews shall hate, and despise; and curse, when they

* And leaves a race more worthless than himself.

A.

† Hor. Lib. 1. Sat. 2. v. 37.

All ye who wish some dire mishap may wait
 This lustful tribe, attend while I relate
 What dangers and disasters they sustain;
 How few their pleasures, and how mix'd with pain.

FRANCIS.

groan under the burden of that plague which their father's sins brought upon the family. If there were no other account to be given, it were highly enough to verify the intent of my text: *If the righteous scarcely be saved*, or escape God's angry stroke, the wicked must needs be infinitely more miserable.

Νου δ' εγω μητ' αυτος εν ανθρατοις δικαιος
 Εινυ μητ' εμεος υιος, επει κικον ανθρα δικαιον
 Εμμεναι————*

Neither I nor my son (said the oldest of the *Greek* poets) would be virtuous, if to be a just person were all one as to be miserable. No, not only in the end of affairs, and at sun-set, but all the day long, the godly man is happy, and the ungodly and the sinner is very miserable.

Pellitur a populo victus *Cato*; tristior ille est
 Qui vicit, faciesque pudet rapuisse *Caton*;
 Namque hoc dedecus est populi, morumque ruina.
 Non homo pulsus erat; sed in uno victa potestas
 Romanumque decus—†

And there needs no other argument to be added but this one great testimony; that though the godly are afflicted and persecuted, yet even they are blessed, and the persecutors are the most unsafe. They

* Hesiod, Op. Pier. Lib. 1. 263.

I wish not virtue for myself or mine,
 For ill fares virtue in this world malign. A.

† The vanquished *Cato*, exiled from his home,
 Feels shame less keenly than the peers of Rome;
 With him all morals from their town they chase,
 And factious folly seals its own disgrace. A

are essentially happy whom affliction cannot make miserable,

(Quis curam neget esse te Deorum,
Propter quem fuit innocens ruina ?)*

but turns unto their advantages: and that is the state of the godly. And they are most intolerably accursed who have no portions in the blessings of eternity, and yet cannot have comfort in the present purchases of their sin, to whom even their sun-shine brings a drought, and their fairest is their foulest weather: and that is the portion of the sinner and the ungodly. *The godly are not made unhappy by their sorrows: and the wicked are such whom prosperity itself cannot make fortunate.*

3. And yet after all this, it is but *μωλι σωζεται*, not *μωλι εσθουεται*, he *escapes but hardly* here: it will be well enough with him hereafter. *Isaac* digged three wells. The first was called *contention*; for he drank the waters of strife, and digged the well with his sword. The second well was not altogether so hard a purchase, he got it with some trouble; but that being over, he had some room and his fortune swelled, and he called his well *enlargement*. But his third he called *abundance*; and then he dipt his foot in oil, and drank freely as out of a river. Every good man first *sows in tears*, he first drinks of the bottle of his own tears, sorrow and trouble, labour and disquiet, strivings and temptations: but if they pass through a torrent, and virtue becomes easy and habitual, they find their hearts enlarged and made sprightly by the visitations of God, and refreshment of his spirit; and then their hearts are enlarged, they know how

* That you are Heaven's chief care is clear to all,
Who 'scap'd the vengeance of the falling wall.

confessors were asked concerning their past sufferings and their present rest, and the joys of their certain expectation, you should hear them glory in nothing but in the mercies of God, and *in the cross of the Lord Jesus*. Every chain is a ray of light, and every prison is a palace, and every loss is the purchase of a kingdom, and every affront in the cause of God is an eternal honour, and every day of sorrow is a thousand years of comfort, multiplied with a never ceasing numeration; days without night, joys without sorrow, sanctity without sin, charity without stain, possession without fear, society without envying, communication of joys without lessening; and they shall dwell in a blessed country, where an enemy never entered, and from whence a friend never went away. Well might *David* say, *Funes ceciderunt mihi in præclaris, the cords of my tent (my ropes and the sorrow of my pilgrimage) fell to me in a good ground, and I have a goodly heritage*. And when persecution hews a man down from a high fortune to an even one, or from thence to the face of the earth, or from thence to the grave; a good man is but preparing for a crown, and the tyrant does but first knock off the fetters of the soul, the manacles of passion and desire, sensual loves and lower appetites: and if God suffers him to finish the persecution, then he can but dismantle the soul's prison, and let the soul forth to fly to the mountains of rest: and all the intermedial evils are but like the *Persian* punishments; the executioner tore off their hairs, and rent their silken mantles, and discomposed their curious dressings, and lightly touched the skin, yet the offender cried out with most bitter exclamations, while his fault was expiated with a ceremony and without blood. So does God to his servants; he rends their upper garments, and strips them of their unnecessary wealth, and ties them to physick and salutary discipline; and they cry out under usages

which have nothing but the outward sense and opinion of evil, not the real substance. But if we would take the measures of images, we must not take the height of the base, but the proportion of the members; nor yet measure the estates of men by their big-looking supporter, or the circumstance of an exterior advantage, but by its proper commensuration in itself, as it stands in its order to eternity: And then the godly man, that suffers sorrow and persecution, ought to be relieved by us, but needs not be pitied in the sum of affairs. But since the two estates of the world are measured by time and by eternity, and divided by joy and sorrow, and no man shall have his portion of joys in both durations; the state of those men is insupportably miserable who are fatted for slaughter, and are crowned like beasts for sacrifice; who are feared and fear, who cannot enjoy their purchases but by communications with others, and themselves have the least share, but themselves are alone in the misery, and the saddest dangers, and they possess the whole portion of sorrows; to whom their prosperity gives but occasions to evil counsels, and strength to do mischief, or to nourish a serpent, or oppress a neighbour, or to nurse a lust, to increase folly, and treasure up calamity. And did ever any man see, or story tell, that any tyrant prince kissed his rods and axes, his sword of justice and his imperial ensigns of power? They shine like a taper, to all things but itself. But we read of many martyrs who kissed their chains, and hugged their stakes, and saluted their hangmen with great endearments; and yet, abating the incursions of their seldom sins, these are their greatest evils: and such they are with which a wise and a good man may be in love. And till the sinners and ungodly men can be so with their deep groans and broken sleeps, with the wrath of God and their portions of eternity; till they can

rejoice in death and long for a resurrection, and with delight and a greedy hope can think of the day of judgment; we must conclude that their glass gems and finest pageantry, their splendid out-sides and great powers of evil, cannot make amends for that estate of misery which is their portion, with a certainty as great as is the truth of God, and all the articles of the Christian creed. Miserable men are they who cannot be blessed, unless there be no day of judgment; who must perish, unless the word of God should fail. If that be all their hopes, then we may with a sad spirit and a soul of pity inquire into the question of the text. *Where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?* Even there where God's face shall never shine, where there shall be fire and no light, where there shall be no angels, but what are many thousand years turned into devils, where no good man shall ever dwell, and from whence the evil and the accursed shall never be dismissed. *O my God, let my soul never come into their counsels, nor lie down in their sorrows.*

SERMON XII.

THE

MERCY OF THE DIVINE JUDGMENTS :

OR,

GOD'S METHOD IN CURING SINNERS.

ROMANS ii. 4.

Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance ?

FROM the beginning of time till now, all effluxes which have come from God have been nothing but emanations of his goodness clothed in variety of circumstances. He made man with no other design than that man should be happy, and by receiving derivations from his fountain of mercy, might reflect glory to him. And therefore God making man for his own glory, made also a paradise for man's use; and did him good, to invite him to do himself a greater: for God gave forth demonstrations of his power by instances of mercy, and he who might have made ten thousand worlds of wonder and prodigy, and created man with faculties able only to stare upon and admire those miracles of mightiness, did choose

to instance his power in the effusions of mercy, that at the same instant he might represent himself desirable and adorable, in all the capacities of amiability; viz. *as excellent in himself, and profitable to us.* For as the sun sends forth a benign and gentle influence on the seed of plants, that it may invite forth the active and plastick power from its recess and secrecy, that by rising into the tallness and dimensions of a tree it may still receive a greater and more refreshing influence from its fosterfather, the prince of all the bodies of light; and in all these emanations the sun itself receives no advantage, but the honour of doing benefits: so doth the Almighty Father of all the creatures; he at first sends forth his blessings upon us, that we by using them aright should make ourselves capable of greater; while the giving glory to God, and doing homage to him, are nothing for his advantage, but only for ours; our duties towards him being like vapours ascending from the earth, not at all to refresh the region of the clouds, but to return back in a fruitful and refreshing shower; and God created us, not that we can increase his felicity, but that he might have a subject receptive of felicity from him. Thus he causes us to be born, that we may be capable of his blessings; he causes us to be baptized, that we may have a title to the glorious promises evangelical; he gives us his son, that we may be rescued from hell. And when we constrain him to use harsh courses towards us, it is also in mercy: he smites us to cure a disease; he sends us sickness, to procure our health. And as if God were all mercy, he is merciful in his first design, in all his instruments, in the way, and in the end of the journey; and does not only shew the riches of his goodness to them *that do well*, but to all men that *they may do well*: He is good, to make us good; he does us benefits, to make us hap-

py. And if we, by *despising* such gracious rays of light and heat, stop their progress and interrupt their design, the loss is not God's, but ours; we shall be the miserable and accursed people. This is the sense and paraphrase of my text; *Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, &c?* *Thou dost not know*, that is, thou considerest not, that it is for farther benefit that God does thee this: the *goodness of God* is not a design to serve his own ends upon thee, but thine upon him: *The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.*

Here then is *God's method of curing mankind*, *χρηστότης, ανοχη, μακροθυμία*. First, *goodness*, or inviting us to him by sugared words, by the placid arguments of temporal favour, and the propositions of excellent promises. Secondly, *ανοχη*, at the same time, *Although God is provoked every day*, yet he does *ανειχεν*, he *tolerates* our stubbornness, he *forbears* to punish; and when he does begin to strike, takes his hand off, and gives us *truce* and respite. For so *ανοχη*, signifies *laxamentum*, and *inducius* too. Thirdly, *μακροθυμία*, still a long putting off and deferring his final destroying anger, by using all means to force us to repentance; and this especially by the way of judgments; these being the last reserves of the divine mercy, and however we esteem it, is the greatest instance of the divine long suffering that is in the world. After these instruments, we may consider the end, the strand upon which these land us, the purpose of this variety, of these labours and admirable arts, with which God so studies and contrives the happiness and salvation of man: it is only that man may be brought by these means unto repentance, and by repentance may be brought to eternal life. This is *the treasure of the divine goodness*, the great and admirable efflux of the eternal beneficence, the *πλουτος χρηστότητος*, *the riches of his goodness*,

which whosoever despises, despises himself and the great interest of his own felicity; he shall die in his impotence, and perish in his folly.

1. The first great instrument that God chooses to bring us to him, is *χρησιότης*, *profit*, or benefit; and this must needs be first, for those instruments whereby we have a being are so great mercies, that besides that they are such which give us the capacities of all other mercies, they are the advances of us in the greatest instances of promotion in the world. For from nothing to something is an infinite space: and a man must have a measure of infinite passed upon him, before he can perceive himself to be either happy or miserable: he is not able to give God thanks for one blessing, until he hath received many. But then God intends we should enter upon his service at the beginning of our days, because even then he is before-hand with us, and hath already given us great instances of his goodness. What a prodigy of favour is it to us, that he hath passed by so many forms of his creatures, and hath not set us down in the rank of any of them, till we came to be *paulo minores angelis*, a little lower than the angels? and yet from the meanest of them God can perfect his own praise. The deeps and the snows, the hail and the rain, the birds of the air and the fishes of the sea, they can and do glorify God, and give him praise in their capacity; and yet he gave them no speech, no reason, no immortal spirit, or capacity of eternal blessedness: But he hath distinguished us from them by the absolute issues of his predestination, and hath given us a lasting and eternal spirit, excellent organs of perception, and wonderful instruments of expression, that we may join in consort with the morning star, and bear a part in the *chorus* with the angels of light, to sing *hallelujah* to the great Father of men and angels.

But was it not a huge chain of mercies, that we were not strangled in the regions of our own natural impurities; but were sustained by the breath of God from perishing in the womb, where God formed us *in secreto terrae*, told our bones, and kept the order of nature, and the miracles of creation; and we lived upon that which in the next minute after we were born would strangle us if it were not removed? but then God took care of us, and his hands of providence clothed us and fed us. But why do I reckon the mercies of production, which in every minute of our being are alike and continued, and are miracles in all senses, but that they are common and usual? I only desire you to remember, that God made all the works of his hands to serve him. And indeed, this mercy of creating us such as we are, was not *to lead us to repentance*, but was a design of innocence: he intended we should serve him as the sun and the moon do, as fire and water do; never to prevaricate the laws he fixed to us, that we might have needed no repentance. But since we did degenerate, and being by God made better and more noble creatures than all the inhabitants of the air, the water and the earth besides, we made ourselves baser and more ignoble than any: For no dog, crocodile, or swine was ever God's enemy, as we made ourselves. Yet then from thenceforward God began his work of *leading us to repentance*, by the *riches of his goodness*. He causes us to be born of Christian parents, under whom we were taught the mysteriousness of its goodness and designs for the redemption of man; and by the design of which religion, *repentance* was taught to mankind, and an excellent law given for distinction of good and evil. And this is a blessing, which though possibly we do not often put into our eucharistical litanies to give God thanks for; yet if we sadly consider what had become of us, if we had been born

under the dominion of a *Turkish* lord, or in *America*, where no Christians do inhabit, where they worship the devil, where witches are their priests, their prophets, their physicians, and their oracles; can we choose but apprehend a visible notorious necessity of perishing in those sins, which we then should not have understood by the glass of a divine law to have declined, nor by a revelation have been taught to repent of? But since the best of men does in the midst of all the great advantages of *laws* and *examples*, and *promises*, and *threatenings*, do many things he ought to be ashamed of, and needs to repent of: we can understand the riches of the divine goodness best, by considering that the very design of our birth and education in the Christian religion is, that we may recover of and cure our follies by the antidote of repentance, which is preached to us as a doctrine, and propounded as a favour: which was put into a law, and purchased for us by a great expense; which God does not more command to us as a duty, than he gives us as a blessing. For now that we shall not perish for our first follies, but be admitted to new conditions, to be repaired by second thoughts, to have our infirmities excused, and our sins forgiven, our habits lessened, and our malice cured, after we were wounded, and sick, and dead, and buried, and in the possession of the devil; this was such a blessing, so great riches of the divine goodness, that as it was taught to no religion but the Christian, revealed by no lawgiver but Christ, so it was a favour greater than ever God gave to the angels and devils: For although God was rich in the effusion of his goodness towards them, yet they were not admitted to the condition of second thoughts; Christ never shed one drop of blood for them, *his goodness did not lead them to repentance*: but to us it was, that he made this largess of his goodness; to us, to whom he made himself a brother, and sucked the

paps of our mother ; he payed the scores of our sin, and shame, and death, only that we might be admitted to repent, and that this repentance might be effectual to the great purposes of felicity and salvation. And if we would consider this sadly, it might make us better to understand our madness and folly in refusing to repent ; that is, *to be sorrowful*, and *to leave all our sins*, and *to make amends by a holy life*. For that we might be admitted and suffered to do so, God was fain to pour forth all the riches of his goodness : It cost our dearest lord the price of his dearest blood, many a thousand groans, millions of prayers and sighs, and at this instant he is praying for our repentance ; nay, he hath prayed for our repentance these sixteen hundred years incessantly, night and day, and shall do so till dooms-day ; *He sits at the right hand of God making intercession for us*. And that we may know what he prays for, he hath sent us ambassadors to declare the purpose of all his design ; for St. Paul saith, *We are ambassadors for Christ, as though he did beseech you by us ; we pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God*. The purpose of our embassy and ministry is a prosecution of the mercies of God, and the work of redemption, and the intercession and mediation of Christ : it is the work of atonement and reconciliation that God designed, and Christ died for, and still prays for, and we preach for, and you all must labour for.

And therefore here consider, if it be not infinite impiety to *despise the riches of such a goodness*, which at so great a charge, with such infinite labour and deep mysterious arts, invites us to repentance ; that is, to such a thing as could not be granted to us unless Christ should die to purchase it : such a glorious favour, that is the issue of Christ's prayers in heaven, and of all his labours, his sorrows and his sufferings on earth. If we refuse to repent now, we do not so

much refuse to do our own duty, as to accept of a reward. It is the greatest and the dearest blessing that ever God gave to men, that they may repent: and therefore to deny or delay it, is to refuse health, brought us by the skill and industry of the physician; it is to refuse liberty indulged to us by our gracious Lord. And certainly we had reason to take it very ill, if at a great expense we should purchase a pardon for a servant, and he out of a peevish pride or negligence shall refuse it; the scorn pays itself, the folly is its own scourge, and sits down in an inglorious ruin.

After the enumeration of these glories, these prodigies of mercies and loving-kindnesses, of Christ's dying for us, and interceding for us, and merely that we may repent and be saved; I shall less need to instance those other particularities whereby God continues, as by so many arguments of kindness, to sweeten our natures, and make them malleable to the precepts of *Love* and *Obedience*, the twin-daughters of holy *Repentance*: but the poorest person amongst us, besides the blessings and graces already reckoned, hath enough about him, and the accidents of every day, to shame him into repentance. Does not God send his *angels to keep thee in all thy ways*? are not they *ministering spirits* sent forth to wait upon thee as thy guard? art not thou kept from drowning, from fracture of bones, from madness, from deformities, by the riches of the divine goodness? Tell the joints of thy body, dost thou want a finger? and if thou dost understand how great a blessing that is, do but remember how ill thou canst spare the use of it when thou hast but a thorn in it. The very private blessings, the blessings of immunity, safeguard, and integrity, which we all enjoy, deserve a thanksgiving of a whole life. If God should send a cancer upon thy face, or a wolf into thy breast, if he should

spread a crust of leprosy upon thy skin, what wouldest thou give to be but as now thou art? Wouldest not thou repent of thy sins upon that condition? Which is the greater blessing? To be kept from them, or to be cured of them? And why therefore shall not this greater blessing lead thee to repentance? Why do we, not so aptly, promise repentance when we are sick, upon the condition to be made well, and yet perpetually forget it when we are well? As if health never were a blessing but when we have it not. Rather I fear the reason is, when we are sick we promise to repent, because then we cannot sin the sins of our former life; but in health our appetites return to their capacity, and in all the way we *despise the riches of the divine goodness*, which preserves us from such evils, which would be full of horreur and amazement, if they should happen to us.

Hath God made any of you all chap-fallen? Are you affrighted with spectres and illusions of the spirits of darkness? How many earthquakes have you been in? How many days have any of you wanted bread? How many nights have you been without sleep? Are any of you distracted of your senses? And if God gives you *meat and drink, health, and sleep, proper seasons of the year, entire senses, and an useful understanding*; what a great unworthiness is it to be unthankful to so good a God, so benign a Father, so gracious a Lord? All the evils and baseness of the world can shew nothing baser and more unworthy than ingratitude: and therefore it was not unreasonably said of *Aristotle*, *Ἐυτυχία φιλοθεός*, *Prosperity makes a man love God*, supposing men to have so much humanity left in them, as to love him from whom they have received so many favours. And *Hippocrates* said, that although poor men used to murmur against God, yet rich men will be offering sacrifice to their deity, whose beneficiaries they are.

Now since the riches of the divine goodness are so poured out upon the meanest of us all, if we shall refuse to repent, (which is a condition so reasonable that God requires it only for our sake, and that it may end in our felicity) we do ourselves despite, to be unthankful to God: that is, we become miserable, by making ourselves basely criminal. And if any man, with whom God hath used to no other method but of his sweetness and the effusions of mercies, brings no other fruits but *the apples of Sodom* in return of all his culture and labours; God will cut off that unprofitable branch, that with *Sodom* it may suffer the flames of *everlasting burning*.

Ὅμοι σὺ τοῦς θανήσας, ὡ Νικηράτε,
 Τρυφῆς ἄτριστος μεταλλῶνας ἐν βίῳ,
 Περυρῆσαι τὸ θεῖον;*

If here we have good things, and a continual shower of blessings to soften our stony hearts, and we shall remain obdurate against those sermons of mercy which God makes us every day, there will come a time when this shall be upbraided to us, that we had not *νουν ἀντιστοῦτον*, a thankful mind, but made God to sow his seed upon the sand or upon the stones, without increase, or restitution. It was a sad alarm which God sent to *David* by *Nathan*, to upbraid his ingratitude: *I anointed thee king over Israel, I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul, I gave thee thy master's house and wives into thy bosom, and the house of Israel and Judah; and if this had been too little, I would have given thee such and such things: wherefore hast thou despised the name of the Lord?* But how infinitely more can God say to

* Thinkst thou, Niceratus, the guilty dead,
 When all the luxuries of life are fled,
 Shall 'scape sulphureous flames of penal fire?

A.

all of us than all this came to ; he hath anointed us *kings and priests* in the *royal priesthood* of christianity ; he hath given us his holy spirit to be our guide, his angels to be our protectors, his creatures for our food and raiment ; he hath delivered us from the hands of satan, hath conquered death for us, hath taken the sting out, and made it harmless and medicinal, and proclaimed us heirs of heaven, co-heirs with the eternal *Jesus* : and if after all this we despise the commandment of the Lord, and defer and neglect our repentance, what shame is great enough, what miseries are sharp enough, what hell painful enough, for such horrid ingratitude ? St. *Lewis* the king, having sent *Ivo* bishop of *Chartres* on an embassy, the bishop met a woman on the way, grave, sad, fantastick and melancholick, with fire in one hand, and water in the other. He asked what those symbols meant. She answered, My purpose is with fire to burn Paradise, and with my water to quench the flames of hell, that men may serve God without the incentives of hope and fear, and purely for the love of God. But this woman began at the wrong end : The love of God is not produced in us, after we have contracted evil habits, till God with *his fan in his hand hath thoroughly purged the floor*, till he hath cast out all the devils, and swept the house with the instrument of hope and fear, and with the achievements and efficacy of mercies and judgments. But then since God may truly say to us, as of old to his rebellious people, *Am I a dry tree to the house of Israel ?* that is, do I bring them no fruit ? do they *serve me for nought ?* and he expects not our duty till first we feel his goodness ; we are now infinitely inexcusable to throw away so great riches, to *despise such a goodness*.

However, that we may see the greatness of this treasure of goodness, God seldom leaves us thus : for he sees : (be it spoken to the shame of our natures, and the dishonour of our manners) he sees that his

mercies do not allure us, do not make us thankful, but (as the *Roman* said) *Felicitate corrumpimur*. We become worse for God's mercy, and think it will be always holyday; and are like the chrysal of *Arabia*, hardened not by cold, but made crusty and stubborn by the warmth of the divine fire, by its refreshments and mercies: Therefore, to demonstrate that God is good indeed, he continues his mercies still to us, but in another instance; he is merciful to us in punishing us, that we may be led to repentance by such instruments which will scare us from sin; he delivers us up to the pedagogy of the divine judgments: and there begins the second part of God's method, intimated in the word *αποχρη* or *forbearance*. God begins his cure by causticks, by incisions and instruments of vexation, to try if the disease that will not yield to the affectives of cordials and perfumes, frictions and baths, may be forced out by deletories, scarifications, and more salutary, but least pleasing physick.

2. *Αποχρη*, *forbearance*, it is called in the text; which signifies *laxamentum* or *inducias*: that is, when the decrees of the divine judgments temporal are gone out, either wholly to suspend the execution of them, which is *induciae* or *a reprieve*; or else, when God hath struck once or twice, he takes off his hand, that is *laxamentum*, an ease or remission of his judgment. In both these, although *in judgment God remembers mercy*, yet we are under discipline, we are brought into the penitential chamber; at least we are shewed the rod of God; and if, like *Moses's* rod, it turns us into serpents, and that we repent not, but grow more devils; yet then it turns into a rod again, and finishes up the smiting, or the first designed affliction.

But I consider it first in general. The riches of the divine goodness is manifest in beginning this new method of curing us, by severity and by a rod. And that you may not wonder that I expound this *for-*

bearance to be an act of *mercy punishing*, I observe, that besides that the word supposes the method changed, and it is a mercy about judgments, and their manner of execution ; it is also in the nature of the thing, in the conjunction of circumstances and the designs of God, a mercy when he threatens us or strikes us into repentance.

We think that the way of blessings and prosperous accidents is the finer way of securing our duty ; and that when our *heads are anointed*, our *cups crowned*, and our *tables full*, the very caresses of our spirits will best of all dance before the ark, and sing perpetual anthems to the honour of our *benefactor* and *patron*, *God* : and we are apt to dream that God will make his saints *reign* here *as kings* in a millenary kingdom, and give them the riches and fortunes of this world, that they may rule over men, and sing psalms to God for ever. But I remember what *Xenophanes* says of God,

οὐτε θεῶμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμοῖος, οὐτε νοημα.*

God is *like to men* neither in shape nor in counsel ; he knows that his mercies confirm some, and encourage more, but they convert but few ; alone they lead men to dissolution of manners, and forgetfulness of God, rather than repentance : not but that mercies are competent and apt instruments of grace, if we would ; but because we are more dispersed in our spirits, and by a prosperous accident are melted into joy and garishness, and drawn off from the sobriety of recollection. *Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked*. Many are not able to suffer and endure prosperity ; it is like the light of the sun to a weak eye ; glorious indeed in itself, but not proportioned to such an instrument. *Adam* himself (as the Rabbins say) did not dwell one night in paradise, but was poisoned with prosperity,

* Resembling mortals nor in shape nor mind.

with the beauty of his fair wife and beauteous tree ; And *Noah* and *Lot* were both righteous and exemplary, the one to *Sodom*, the other to the old world, so long as they lived in a place in which they were obnoxious to the common suffering ; but as soon as the one of them had escaped from drowning, and the other from burning, and were put into security, they fell into crimes which have dishonoured their memories for above thirty generations together, the crimes of drunkenness and incest. Wealth and a full fortune make men licentiously vicious, tempting a man with power to act all that he can desire or design viciously.

Inde irae faciles—————

Namque ut opes nimias mundo fortuna subacto

Intulit, et rebus mores cessere secundis,

—————Cultus gestare decoros

Vix miribus rapuere mares ; totoque accersitur orbe

Quo gens quaeque perit—————*

And let me observe to you, that though there are in the New Testament many promises and provisions made for the *poor* in that very capacity, they having a title to some certain circumstances and additional of grace and blessing ; yet to *rich* men our blessed Saviour was pleased to make none at all, but to leave them involved in general comprehensions, and to have a title to the special promises only, by becoming *poor in spirit*, and in preparation of mind, though not in fortune and possession. However, it is hard for God

* *Lucan Lib. 1. v. 173.*

Fortune has undermin'd the publick health

And ruined morals by the power of wealth.

The female robe usurps the manly gown

And swift destruction threatens the imperial town. A.

to persuade us to this, till we are taught it by a sad experience, that those prosperities which we think will make us serve God cheerfully, make us to serve the world and secular ends diligently, and God not at all.

Repentance is a duty that best complies with affliction; it is a symbolical estate, of the same complexion and constitution; half the work of repentance is done by a sad accident, our spirits are made sad, our gayeties mortified, our wildness corrected, the watersprings are ready to run over: but if God should grant our desires, and give to most men prosperity, with a design to lead them to repentance, all his pomp and all his employment, and all his affections and passions, and all his circumstances are so many degrees of distance from the conditions and nature of repentance. It was reported by *Dio* concerning *Nero's* mother, that she often wished that her son might be emperour, and wished it with so great passion, that upon that condition she cared not though her son might kill her. Her first wish and her second fear were both granted: But when she began to fear that her son did really design to murder her, she used all the art and instruments of diversion that a witty and a powerful, a timorous person and a woman, could invent or apply. Just so it is with us: so we might have our wishes of prosperity, we promise to undergo all the severities of repentance; but when we are landed upon our desire, then every degree of satisfaction of those sensualities is a temptation against repentance; for a man must have his affections weaned from those possessions, before he can be reconciled to the possibilities of repentance.

And because God knows this well, and loves us better than we do ourselves, therefore he sends upon us the scrolls of vengeance, *the hand-writing*

upon the wall, to denounce judgment against us: For God is so highly resolved to bring us to repentance some way or other, that if by his goodness he cannot shame us into it; he will try if by his judgments he can scare us into it: not that he strikes always as soon as he hath sent his warrants out; *οὐδὲ τοις ἡμαρτανέουσιν εὐθὺς ἐπέξισιν ὁ Θεός· ἀλλὰ δίδασκε γέροντες εἰς μετανοίαν καὶ τὴν τοῦ σφαιρημαῖος ἰάσιν.* said *Philo*. Thus God sent *Jonas* and denounced judgments against *Nineveh*; but with the *ἀνοχὴ*, with the forbearance of forty days for the time of their escape, if they would repent. When *Noah*, the great preacher of righteousness, denounced the flood to all the world, it was with the *ἀνοχὴ*, with the forbearance of a hundred and twenty years. And when the great extermination of the Jewish nation, and their total deletion from being God's people, was foretold by Christ, and decreed by God: yet they had the *ἀνοχὴ*, of forty years, in which they were perpetually called to repentance. These were reprieves and deferrings of the stroke.

But sometimes God strikes once, and then forbears. And such are all those sadnesses which are less than death: every sickness, every loss, every disgrace, the death of friends and nearest relatives, sudden discontents: these are all of them the louder calls of God to repentance; but still, instances of forbearance.

Indeed many times this forbearance makes men impudent. It was so in the case of *Pharaoh*: when God smote him, and then forbore, *Pharaoh's* heart grew callous and insensible, till God struck again: and this was the meaning of these words of God, *I will harden the heart of Pharaoh*, that is, I will forbear him: smite him, and then take the blow off: *Sic enim Deus induravit Pharaonis cor*, said *St. Basil*. For as water taken off from fire will sooner congeal and become icy, than if it had not been attenuated

by the heat: so is the heart of some men; when smitten by God, it seems soft and pliable, but taken off from the fire of affliction, it presently becomes horrid, then stiff, and then hard as a rock of adamant, or as the gates of death and hell. But this is besides the purpose and intention of the divine mercy; this is an *αντιπεριστας*, a plain contradiction to the riches of God's goodness; this is to be evil because God is good; to burn with flames, because we are cooled with water; this is to put out the lamps of heaven, or (if we cannot do it) to put our own eyes out, lest we should behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and be enamoured of his goodness, and repent and live. O take heed of despising this goodness; for this is one of God's latest arts to save us; he hath no way left beyond this, but to punish us with a lasting judgment and a poignant affliction. In the tomb of *Trentia* certain lamps burned under ground many ages together; but as soon as ever they were brought into the air, and saw a bigger light, they went out, never to be re-enkindled. So long as we are in the retirements of sorrow, of want, of fear, of sickness, or of any sad accident, we are *burning and shining lamps*; but when God comes with his *ἄνεμος*, with his *forbearance*, and lifts us up from the gates of death, and carries us abroad into the open air, that we converse with prosperity and temptation, we go out in darkness; and we cannot be preserved in heat and light, but by still dwelling in the regions of sorrow. And if such be our weaknesses or our folly, it concerns us to pray against such deliverances, to be afraid of health, to beg of God to continue a persecution, and not to deny us the mercy of an affliction.

And do not we find all this to be a great truth in ourselves? Are we so great strangers to our own weaknesses and unworthiness, as not to remember

when God scared us with judgments in the neighbourhood, where we lived in a great plague, or if we were ever in a storm, or God had sent a sickness upon us? Then we may please to remember that repentance was our business, that we designed mountains of piety, renewed our holy purposes, made vows and solemn sacraments to God to become penitent and obedient persons: and we may also remember, without much considering, that as soon as God began to forbear us, we would no longer forbear to sin, but add flame to flame, a heap of sins to a treasure of wrath already too big; being like *Pharaoh* or *Herod*, or like the ox and mule, more hardy and callous for our stripes; and melted in the fire, and frozen harder in the cold; worse for all our afflictions, and the worse for all God's judgments; not bettered by his goodness, nor mollified by his threatenings: and what is there more left for God to do unto us? He that is not won by the sense of God's mercy, can never find any thing *in God* that shall convert him; and he whom fear and sense of pain cannot mend, can never find any argument *from himself* that shall make him wise. This is sad, that *nothing from without* and *nothing from within* shall move us: nothing in heaven, and nothing in hell; neither love, nor fear; gratitude to God, nor preservation of ourselves, shall make us to repent. Θεου δε τληνην ουχ υπεσπειρα βροτος. that shall be his final sentence: *He shall never escape that ruin from which the greatest art of God could not intice, nor his terrour scare him: He loved cursing, therefore shall it happen to him: he loved not blessing, therefore shall it be far from him.*

Let therefore every one of us take the account of our lives, and read over the sermons that God hath made us: besides that sweet language of his mercy, and his *still voice* from heaven, consider what voices of thunder you heard, and presently that noise ceased,

and God was heard *in the still voice* again. What dangers have any of you escaped? Were you ever assaulted by the rudeness of an ill-natured man? Have you never had a dangerous fall, and escaped it? Did none of you ever escape drowning, and in a great danger saw the forbearance of God? Have you never been sick (as you feared) unto death? Or, suppose none of these things have happened, hath not God threatened you all, and forborn to smite you? or smitten you, and forborn to kill you? That is evident. But if you had been a privado, and of the cabinet-council with your angel-guardian, that from him you might have known how many dangers you have escaped, how often you have been near a ruin, so near, that if you had seen your danger with a sober spirit, the fear of it would have half killed you; if he had but told you how often God had sent out his warrants to the exterminating angel, and our blessed Saviour by his intercession hath obtained a reprieve, that he might have the content of rejoicing at thy conversion and repentance; if you had known from him the secrets of that providence which governs us in secret, and how many thousand times the devil would have done thee hurt, and how often himself, as a ministering spirit of God's *goodness and forbearance*, did interpose and abate, or divert a mischief which was falling on thy head: it must needs cover thy head with a cloud of shame and blushing at that ingratitude and that folly, that neither will give God thanks, nor secure thy own well-being.

Hadst thou never any dangerous fall in thy intemperance? Then God shewed thee thy danger, and that he was angry at thy sin; but yet did so pity thy person, that he would forbear thee a little longer, else that fall had been into thy grave. When thy gluttony gave thee a surfeit, and God gave thee a

remedy, his meaning then was, that thy gluttony rather should be cured than thy surfeit; that repentance should have been thy remedy, and abstinence and fasting should be thy cure. Did ever thy proud or revengeful spirit engage thee upon a duel, or a vexatious lawsuit, and God brought thee off with life or peace? His purpose then was, that his mercy should teach thee charity. And he that cannot read the purposes of God written with the *finger* of judgment, (for as yet his whole hand is not laid on) either is consigned to eternal ruin, because God will no more enleavour his cure: or if his mercy still continues and goes on in long-suffering, it shall be by such vexatious instruments, such causticks, and corrosives, such tormenting and desperate medicaments, such which in the very cure will soundly punish thy folly and ingratitude. For deceive not yourselves, God's mercy cannot be made a patron for any man's impiety: the purpose of it is to bring us to repentance: and God will do it by the *mercies of his mercies*, or by *mercies of his judgments*; he will either break our hearts into a thousand fragments of contrition, or break our bones in the ruins of the grave and hell. And since God rejoices in his mercy above all his works, he will be most impatient that we shall *despise* that in which he most delights, and in which we have the greatest reason to delight; *the riches of that goodness* which is essential, and part of his glory, and is communicated to us, to bring us to repentance, that we may partake of that *goodness*, and behold that *glory*.

SERMON XIII.

PART II.

3. Μακροθυμία, *long-suffering*. In this one word are contained all the treasures of the divine goodness: Here is the length and extension of his mercy: *Pertrahit spiritum super nos Dominus*, so the Syrian interpreter reads *Luke xviii. 7. God holds his breath: He retains his anger within him, lest it should come forth and blast us.* And here is also much of the divine justice: For although God suffers long yet he does not let us alone: he forbears to destroy us, but not to punish us: and in both, he by many accidents gives probation of his power; according to the prayer of the wise man, *ελεεις δε παντας οτι παντα δυνασαι & παρερας ἀμαρτηματα ανθρωπων εις μετανοιαν, Thou art merciful towards us all, because thou canst do all things; and thou passest by the sins of men, that they may repent.** And that God shall support our spirit, and preserve our patience, and nourish our hope, and correct our stubbornness, and mortify our pride, and bring us to him whether we will or no, by such gracious violences and merciful judgments which he uses towards us as his last remedies, is not only the demonstration of a mighty mercy, but of an Almighty power. So hard a thing it is to make us leave our follies and become wise, that, were not the mercies of God an effective pity, and clothed in all the way of its progress with mightiness and power, every sinner should perish irrevocably. But this is *the fiery trial* the last *purgatory fire* which God uses to burn the thistles, and purify

the dross. When the gentle influence of a sun-beam will not wither them, nor the weeding-hook of a short affliction cut them out; then God comes with fire to burn us, with *the axe laid to the root of the tree*. But then observe, that when we are under this state of cure, we are so near destruction, that the same instrument that God uses for remedy to us, is also prepared to destroy us; the fire is as apt to burn us to ashes, as to cleanse us when we are so overgrown; and the axe is instrumental to cut us down for fuel, as to square us for building in God's temple: and therefore when it comes thus far, it will be hard discerning what the purpose of the axe is, and, whether the fire means to burn, we shall know it by the change wrought upon ourselves. For what *Plato* said concerning his dream of purgatory is true here: *Quicumque non purgatus migrat ad inferos, jacet in luto; quicumque vero mitratus illuc accesserit, habitabit cum Deis.* He that dies in his impurity, shall lie in it for ever; but he that descends to his grave purged and mitred, that is, having quitted his vices, et superinduens justitiam, being clothed with righteousness, shall dwell in light and immortality. It is said that we put God to such extremities: And as it happens in long diseases, those which physicians use for the last remedies, seldom prevail; and when consumptive persons come to have their heads shaven, they do not often escape: so it is when we put God to his last remedies God indeed hath the glory of his patience and his long-suffering, but we seldom have the benefit and the use of it. For if when our sin was young, and our strength more active, and our habits less, and virtue not so much a stranger to us, we suffered sin to prevail upon us, to grow stronger than the ruins of our spirit, and to lessen us into the state of sickness and disability, in the midst of all those remedies which God used to our beginning diseases: much more

desperate is our recovery, when our disease is stronger, and our faculties weaker; when our sins reign in us, and our thoughts of virtue are not alive.

However, although I say this, and it is highly considerable to the purpose that we never suffer things to come to this extremity, yet if it be upon us, we must do as well as we can: But then we are to look upon it as a design of God's last mercy, beyond which if we protract our repentance, our condition is desperately miserable. The whole state of which mercy we understand by the parable of the king reckoning with his servants that were in arrears to him: *One was brought to him which owed him ten thousand talents: but forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.* The man you see was under the arrest; the sentence was passed upon him, he was a condemned man: but, before the execution of it, he fell down and worshipped, and said. *Κυριε μικροθυμισον:* *Lord, suffer me longer awhile; have patience with me and I will pay thee all.* This tells its meaning: this is, a long-sufferance, by being a forbearance only of execution of the last sentence, a putting off damnation upon a longer trial of our emendation; but in the mean time it implies no other case, but that together with his long-sufferance God may use all other severities and scourges to break our untamed spirits, and to soften them with hammers; so death be put off, no matter else what hardships and loads of sufferance we have. *Hæc ure, hæc seca, ut in æternum parcas:* So St. Austin prayed: *Here. O Lord, cut me, here burn me; spare me not now, that thou mayest spare me for ever.* And it is just like the mercy used to a madman, when he is kept in a dark room and tamed with whips; it is a cruel mercy, but such as his condition requires; he can receive no other mercy, all things else were cruelly unmerciful.

I remember what *Bion* observed wittily of the punishment inflicted upon the daughters of *Dolans*, whom the old poets feigned to be condemned in hell to fill a bottomless tub with water, and, to increase the pain, (as they fancied) this water they were to carry in sieves, and never to leave work till the tub were full; it is well, (says he) since their labour must be eternal, that it is so gentle; for it were more pains to carry their water in whole vessels, and a sad burthen to go laden to a leaky tub with unfruitful labours. Just so is the condition of those persons upon whom a wrath is gone out: It is a sad sentence, but acted with a gentle instrument; and since they are condemned to pay the scores of their sins with the sufferance of a load of judgments, it is well they are such as will run quite through them, and not stick upon them to eternity. *Omnes enim paenae non exterminantes, sunt medicinales*; all punishments whatsoever which do not destroy us, are intended to save us; they are lancets which make a wound, but to let forth the venom of our ulcers. When God slew twenty-three thousand of the *Assyrians* for their fornication, that was a final justice upon their persons, and consigned them to a sad eternity: for beyond such an infliction there was no remedy. But when God sent lions to the *Assyrian* inhabitants of *Samaria*, and the judgment drove them to inquire after *the manner of the God of the land*, and they sent for priests from *Jerusalem* to teach them how to worship the God of *Israel*: that was a mercy and a judgment too: *the long forbearance of God*, who destroyed not all the inhabitants, led the rest unto *repentance*.

1. And I must make this observation to you; that when things come to this pass, that God is forced to the last remedies of judgments, this long sufferance will little or nothing concern particular persons, but

nations and communities of men: for those who are smitten with judgment, if God takes his hands off again, and so opens a way for their repentance by prolonging their time; that comes under the second part of God's method, the *'voχn*, or *forbearance*: but if he smites a single person with a final judgment, that is a *long suffering*, not of him, but towards others; and God hath destroyed my neighbour to make me repent, my neighbour's time being expired, and the date of his possibility determined. For a man's death bed is but an ill station for a penitent; and a final judgment is no good monitor to him, to whom it is a severe executioner. They that *perished in the gainsaying of Corah* were out of the conditions of repentance. But the people that were affrighted with the neighbourhood of the judgment, and the expresses of God's anger manifested in such visible remonstrances, they were the men called unto repentance. But concerning the whole nations or communities of men this long sufferance is a sermon of repentance; loud, clamorous, and highly argumentative. When God suffered the mutinies, the affronts, the baseness and ingratitude, the follies and relapses of the children of *Israel*, who murmured against God ten times in the wilderness; God sent evil angels among them, and fiery serpents, and pestilence, and fire from heaven, and prodigies from the earth, and a prevailing sword of the enemies: and in all these accidents, although some innocent persons felt the contingencies and variety of mortality, yet those wicked persons who fell by the design of God's anger were made examples unto others, and instances of God's forbearance to the nation: and yet this forbearance was such, that although God preserved the nation in being, and in title to the first promises, yet all the particular persons that came from *Egypt* died in the wilderness, two only excepted.

2. And I desire you to observe this, that you may truly estimate the arts of the divine justice and mercy. For all the world being one continual and entire argument of the divine mercy, we are apt. to abuse that mercy to vain confidences and presumption; first mistaking the end, as if God's mercy would be indulgent to our sin, to which it is the greatest enemy in the world: for it is a certain truth, that the mercy of God is as great an enemy to sin as his justice is; and as God's justice is made the handmaid of his mercy to cure sin, so it is the servant also and the instrument to avenge our despite and contempt of mercy; and in all the way, where a difference can be, there justice is the less principal. And it were a great sign of folly and a huge mistake, to think our lord and our friends do us offices of kindness, to make themselves more capable of affronts; and that our father's care over us and provisions for us can tempt us to disobey them: the very purpose of all those emanations is, that their love may return in duty, and their providence be the parent of our prudence, and their care be crowned with our piety; and then we shall all be crowned, and shall return like the year, that ends into its own circle; and the fathers and the children, the benefactors and the beneficiary shall knit the wreath, and bind each other in the eternal inclosures and circlings of immortality. But besides, as the men who presume to sin because of God's mercy, do mistake the very end and design of God's mercy, so they also mistake the economy of it, and the manner of its ministration.

3. For if God suffers men to go on in sins, and punishes them not, it is not a mercy, it is not a forbearance; it is a hardening them, a consigning them to ruin and reprobation; and themselves give the best argument to prove it; for they continue in their sin, they multiply their iniquity, and every day grow more

an enemy to God ; and that is no mercy that increases their hostility and enmity with God. A prosperous iniquity is the most unprosperous condition in the whole world. *When he slew them, they sought him, and turned them early, and inquired after God :* but as long as they prevailed upon their enemies, *they forgot that God was their strength, and the high God was their redeemer.* It was well observed by the *Persian* ambassador of old ; when he was telling the king a sad story of the overthrow of all his army by the *Athenians*, he adds this of his own ; that the day before the fight, the young *Persian* gallants, being confident they should destroy their enemies, were drinking drunk, and railing at the timorousness and fears of religion, and against all their Gods, saying, there were no such things, and that all things came by chance and industry, nothing by the providence of the supreme power. But the next day, when they had fought unprosperously, and flying from their enemies, who were eager in their pursuit, they came to the river *Strymon*, which was so frozen that their boats could not launch, and yet it began to thaw, so that they feared the ice would not bear them ; then you should see the bold gallants, that the day before said there was no God, most timorously and superstitiously fall upon their faces, and beg of God, that the river *Strymon* might bear them over from their enemies. What wisdom, and philosophy, and perpetual experience, and revelation, and promises, and blessings cannot do, a mighty fear can ; it can allay the confidences of bold lust and imperious sin, and soften our spirit into the lowness of a child, our revenge into the charity of prayers, our impudence into the blessings of a chidden girl ; and therefore God hath taken a course proportionable : for he is not so unmercifully merciful, as to give milk to an infirm lust, and hatch the egg to the bigness of a cockatrice. And therefore observe

how it is that God's mercy prevails over all his works: it is even then when nothing can be discerned but his judgments: For as when a famine had been in *Israel* in the days of *Ahab* for three years and a half, when the angry prophet *Elijah* met the king, and presently a great wind arose, and the dust blew into the eyes of them that walked abroad, and the face of the heavens was black and all tempest, yet then the prophet was the most gentle, and God began to forgive, and the heavens were more beautiful than when the sun puts on the brightest ornaments of a bridegroom, going from his chambers of the east: so it is in the economy of the divine mercy; when God makes our faces black, and the winds blow so loud till the cordage cracks, and our gay fortunes split, and our houses are dressed with cypress and yew, and the mourners go about the streets, this is nothing but the *pompa misericordiae*, this is the funeral of our sins, dressed indeed with emblems of mourning, and proclaimed with sad accents of death; but the sight is refreshing, as the beauties of the field which God had blessed, and the sounds are healthful, as the noise of a physician.

This is that riddle spoken of in the *Psalm*, *Calix in manu domini vini meri plenus misto*; the pure impure, the mingled unmingled cup:* for it is a cup in which God hath poured much of his severity and anger, and yet it is pure and unmingled; for it is all mercy. And so the riddle is resolved, and our cup is full and made more wholesome; *Lymphatum crescit, dulcescit, laedere nescit*: it is some justice, and yet it is all mercy; the very justice of God being an act of mercy; a forbearance of the man or the nation, and the punishing the sin. Thus it was the case of the children of *Israel*; when they ran after the bleating of the idolatrous calves, *Moses* prayed passionately, and God

* *Psalm*. lxxv. 8.

heard his prayer, and forgave their sin unto them. And this was *David's* observation of the manner of God's mercy to them: *Thou wast a God and forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.** For God's mercy is given to us by parts, and to certain purposes. Sometimes God only so forgives us, that he does not cut us off in the sin, but yet lays on a heavy load of judgments: so he did to his people, when he sent them to school under the discipline of seventy years' captivity. Sometimes he makes a judgment less, and forgives in respect of the degree of the infliction, he strikes more gently; and whereas God had designed, it may be, the death of thyself or thy nearest relative, he is content to take the life of a child. And so he did to *David*, when he forbore him; *The Lord hath taken away thy sin, thou shalt not die; nevertheless the child that is born unto thee, that shall die.†* Sometimes he puts the evil off to a farther day; as he did in the case of *Ahab* and *Hezekiah*: to the first he brought the evil upon his house, and to the second he brought the evil upon his kingdom in his son's days, God forgiving only so as to respite the evil, that they should have peace in their own days. And thus when we have committed a sin against God, which hath highly provoked him to anger, even upon our repentance we are not sure to be forgiven, so as we understand forgiveness; that is, to hear no more of it, never to be called to an account: but we are happy if God so forgive us, as not to throw us into the insufferable flames of hell, though he smite us till we groan for our misery, till we *chatter like a swallow*, (as *David's* expression is.) And though *David* was an excellent penitent; yet after he had lost the child begotten of *Bathsheba*, and God had told him he had forgiven him, yet he raised up his

* Psalm. xcix. 8.

† 2 Sam. 12, 13, 14.

darling son against him, and forced him to an inglorious flight, and his son lay with his father's concubines in the face of all *Israel*. So that when we are forgiven, yet it is ten to one but God will make us to smart *and roar for our sins, for the very disquietness of our souls.*

For if we sin and ask God forgiveness, and then are quiet, we feel so little inconvenience in the trade, that we may more easily be tempted to make a trade of it indeed. I wish to God that for every sin we have committed, we could heartily cry God mercy, and leave it, and judge ourselves for it, to prevent God's anger: but when we have done all that we commonly call repentance, and when possibly God hath forgiven us to some purposes, yet it may be he punishes our sin when we least think of it: that sin which we have long since forgotten. It may be for the lust of thy youth thou hast a healthless old age, An old religious person long ago complained it was his case.

Quos nimis effraenes habui, nunc vapulo renes:

Sic hatur juvenis culpa dolore senis.*

It may be thy sore eyes are the punishment of intemperance seven years ago; or God cuts thy days shorter, and thou shalt die in a florid age: or he raises up afflictions to thee in thine own house, in thine own bowels; or hath sent a gangrene into thy estate: or with any arrow out of his quiver he can wound thee, and the arrow shall stick fast in thy flesh, although God hath forgiven thy sin to many purposes. Our blessed Saviour *was heard in all that he prayed* (said the apostle :) and he prayed for the *Jews* that crucified him, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do:* and God did forgive that great sin, but how

* I pay severely, as the Gods ordain,

A youth of folly with an age of pain.

A.

far? Whereas it was just in God to deprive them of all possibility of receiving benefit from the death of Christ, yet God admitted them to it; he gave them time, and possibilities, and helps, and great advantages to bring them to repentance; he did not presently shut them up in his final and eternal anger; and yet he had finally resolved to destroy their city and nation, and did so, but forbore them forty years, and gave them all the helps of miracles and sermons apostolical to shame them, and force them into sorrow for their fault. And before any man can repent, God hath forgiven the man in one degree of forgiveness; for he hath given him the grace of repentance, and taken from him that final anger of the spirit of reprobation; and when a man hath repented, no man can say that God hath forgiven him to all purposes, but hath reserves of anger to punish the sin, to make the man afraid to sin any more; and to represent, that when any man hath sinned, whatever he does afterwards, he shall be miserable as long as he lives, vexed with its adherences, and its neighbourhood and evil consequence. For as no man that hath sinned can during his life ever return to an integral and perfect innocence: so neither shall he be restored to a perfect peace, but must always watch and strive against his sin, and always mourn and pray for its pardon, and always find cause to hate it, by knowing himself to be for ever in danger of enduring some grievous calamity, even for those sins for which he hath truly repented him, for which God hath in many gracious degrees passed his pardon. This is the manner of dispensation of the divine mercy, in respect of particular persons and nations too.

But sometimes we find a severer judgment happening upon a people; and yet in that sad story God's mercy sings the triumph, which although it be much to God's glory, yet it is a sad story to sin-

ning people. Six hundred thousand fighting men, besides women and children and decrepid persons, came out of *Egypt*; and God destroyed them all in the wilderness except *Caleb* and *Joshua*: and there it was that God's *mercy prevailed over his justice*, that he did not destroy the nation, but still preserved a succession to *Jacob*, to possess the promise. God drowned all the world except eight persons; his *mercy* there also prevailed over his *justice*, that he preserved a remnant to mankind; his *justice* devoured all the world, and his *mercy*, which preserved but eight, had the honour of the prevailing attribute. God destroyed *Sodom* and the *five cities of the plain*, and rescued but four from the flames of that sad burning, and of the four lost one in the flight; and yet his *mercy prevailed over his justice*, because he did not destroy all.

And in these senses we are to understand the excellence of the divine mercy: even when he smites, when *he rebukes us for sin*, when he makes *our beauty to fail*, and *our flesh to consume away like a moth fretting a garment*, yet then his mercy is the prevailing ingredient. If his judgments be but fines set upon our heads, according to the mercy of our old laws, *salvo contentemento*, so as to preserve our estates, to continue our hopes and possibilities of heaven; all the other judgments can be nothing but mercies, excellent instruments of grace, arts to make us sober and wise, to take us off from our vanity, to restrain our wildnesses, which if they were left unbridled would set all the world on fire. God's judgments are like the censures of the church, in which a sinner is *delivered over to satan to be buffeted*; that the spirit may be saved. The result of all this is, that God's mercies are not, ought not, cannot be instruments of confidence to sin, because the very purpose of his mercy is to the contrary, and the very manner of his economy and

dispensation is such, that God's mercy goes along in complexion and conjunction with his judgments: the riches of his forbearance is this, that he forbears to throw us into hell, and sends the mercies of his rod to chide us unto repentance, and the mercies of his rod to punish us for having sinned, and that when we have sinned we may never think ourselves secured, nor ever be reconciled to such dangers and deadly poisons. This, this is the manner of the divine mercy. Go now, fond man, and, because God is merciful, presume to sin, as having grounds to hope that thou mayest sin, and be safe all the way! If this hope (shall I call it) or sordid flattery, could be reasonable, then the mercies of God would not lead us to repentance; so unworthy are we in the sense and largeness of a wide fortune and pleasant accident. For impunity was never a good argument to make men to obey laws. *Quotusquisque reperitur, qui impunitate proposita abstinere possit injuriis? Impunitas est maxima peccandi illecebra.* said Cicero.* And therefore the wisdom of God hath so ordered the actions of the world, that the most fruitful showers shall be wrapped up in a cover of black clouds; that health shall be conveyed by bitter and ill-tasted drugs; that the temples of our bodies shall be purged by whips, and that the cords of the whip shall be *the cords of love*, to draw us from the intanglings of vanity and folly. This is *the long suffering of God*, the last remedy to our deceased souls: and, *αναισθητος ιστις πολλη παθειν ου σαρφρονιζεται.* said Phalaris; unless we be senseless, we shall be brought to sober courses by all those sad accidents, and wholesome, but ill tasted mercies, which we feel in all the course and succession of the livine long sufferance.

The use of all the premises is that which St. Paul expresses in the text, that *we do not despise all this*: and he only despises not, who serves the ends of God

* Offic. 3.

in all these designs of mercy, that is, he that repents him of his sins. But there are a great many *despisers*; all they that live in their sins, they that have more blessings than they can reckon hours in their lives, that are courted by the divine favour and wooed to salvation, as if mankind were to give, not to receive, so great a blessing, all they that answer not to so friendly summons, they are despisers of God's mercies: and although God overflows with mercies, and does not often leave us to the only hopes of being cured by unctions and gentle cataplasms, but proceeds farther, and gives us *stibium* or prepared steel, sharp arrows of his anger, and the sword, and the hand of sickness; yet we are not sure of so much favour as to be entertained longer in God's hospital, but may be thrust forth among the *incurabili*. *Plutarch* reports concerning swine, that their optick nerves are so disposed to turn their eyes downward, that they cannot look upwards, nor behold the face of heaven, unless they be thrown upon their backs. Such swine are we: we seldom can look up to heaven, till God by his judgments throws us upon our backs; till he humbles us and softens us with showers of our own blood, and tears of sorrow: and yet God hath not promised that he will do so much for us; but for aught we know, as soon as ever the devil enters into our swinish and brutish hearts, we shall run down the hill, and perish in the floods and seas of intolerable misery. And therefore, besides that it is a huge folly in us that we will not be cured with pleasant medicines, but must be longing for coliquintida and for vomits, for knives and poniards instead of the gentle showers of the divine refreshments, besides that this is an imprudence and sottishness; we do infinitely put it to the venture whether we shall be in a saveable condition or no, after the rejection of the first state of mercies. But however,

then begins the first step of the judgment and pungent misery, we are perishing people, or, if not, yet at the least not to be cured without the abscission of a member, without the cutting off a hand or leg, or the putting out of an eye: we must be cut, to take the stone out of our hearts, and that is a state of a very great infelicity; and if we escape the stone, we cannot escape the surgeon's knife; if we escape death, yet we have a sickness: and though that be a great mercy in respect of death, yet it is as great a misery in respect of health. And that is the first punishment for the despite done to the first and most sensible mercies; we are fallen into a sickness that cannot be cured but by disease and hardship.

But if this despite runs farther, and when the mercies look on us with an angry countenance, and that God gives us only the mercy of a punishment, if we despise this too, we increase but our misery as we increase our sin. The sum of which is this; that if *Pharaoh* will not be cured by one plague he shall have ten; and if ten will not do it, the great and tenth wave, which is far bigger than all the rest, the severest and the last arrow of the quiver, then we shall perish in the red sea, the sea of flames and blood, in which the ungodly shall roll eternally.

But some of these despisers are such as are unmoved when God smites others; like *Gallio*, when the *Jews* took *Sosthenes* and beat him in the pleading place, he *cared for none of these things*; he was not concerned in that interest: and many *Gallios* there are among us, that understand it not to be a part of the divine method of God's *long sufferance*, to strike others to make us afraid. But however we sleep in the midst of such alarms, yet know, that there is not one death in all the neighbourhood but is intended to thee; every crowing of the cock is to awake thee to repentance: and if thou sleepest still, the next

turn may be thine; God will send his angel, as he did to *Peter*, and smite thee on thy side, and awake thee from thy dead sleep of sin and sottishness. But beyond this some are despisers still, and hope to drown the noises of mount *Sinai*, the sound of canons, of thunders and lightnings, with a counter noise of revelling and clamorous roarings, with merry meetings: like the sacrifices to *Moloch*, they sound drums and trumpets, that they might not hear the sad shriekings of their children as they were dying in the cavity of the brazen idol: and when their conscience shrieks out or murmurs, in a sad melancholy, or something that is dear to them is smitten, they attempt to drown it in a sea of drink, in the heathenish noises of idle and drunken company; and that which God sends to lead them to repentance, leads them to a tavern, not to refresh their needs of nature, or for ends of a tolerable civility, or innocent purposes, but, like the condemned persons among the *Levantiues*, they tasted wine freely, that they might die and be insensible. I could easily reprove such persons with an old *Greek* proverb mentioned by *Plutarch*, Περὶ τῆς Ευθυμίας, Ουτε ποδαγραὶ ἀπαλλαττοὶ καλῆς: You shall *ill be cured of the knotted gout* if you have nothing else but a *wide shoe*. But this reproof is too gentle for so great a madness: it is not only an incompetent cure, to apply the plaster of a sin or vanity to cure the smart of a divine judgment; but it is a great increaser of the misery, by swelling the cause to bigger and monstrous proportions. It is just as if an impatient fool, feeling the smart of his medicine, shall tear his wounds open and throw away the instruments of his cure, because they bring him health at the charge of a little pain. Ἐξὺς Κυρίου τληθὺς μαστιγῶν. *He that is full of stripes* and troubles, and decked round about with thorns, *he is near to God*: But he that, because he sits uncasily when he sits near the

king that was crowned with thorns, shall remove thence, or strew flowers, roses and jessamine, the down of thistles and the softest gossamer, that he may die without pain, die quietly and like a lamb, sink to the bottom of hell without noise; this man is a fool, because he accepts death, if it arrests him in civil language, is content to die by the sentence of an eloquent judge, and prefers a quiet passage to hell before going to heaven in a storm.

That *Italian* gentleman was certainly a great lover of his sleep, who was angry with the lizard that waked him when a viper was creeping into his mouth: When the devil is entering into us to poison our spirits, and steal our souls away while we are sleeping in the lethargy of sin, God sends his sharp messages to awaken us; and we call that the enemy, and use arts to cure the remedy, not to cure the disease. There are some persons that will never be cured, not because the sickness is incurable, but because they have ill stomachs, and cannot keep the medicine. Just so is his case that so despises God's method of curing him by these instances of long sufferance, that he uses all the arts he can to be quit of his physician, and to spill his physick, and to take cordials as soon as his vomit begins to work. There is no more to be said in this affair, but to read the poor wretch's sentence, and to declare his condition. As at first, when he despised the first great mercies, God sent him sharpness and sad accidents to ensober his spirits: so now that he despises his mercy also, the mercy of the rod, God will take it away from him, and then I hope all is well. Miserable man that thou art! this is thy undoing; if God ceases to strike thee because thou wilt not mend, thou art sealed up to ruin and reprobation for ever; the physician hath given thee over, he hath no kindness for thee. This was the desperate estate of

*Judah, Ah sinful nation! a people laden with iniquity: They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the holy one of Israel. Why should you be stricken any more?** This is the *αυθιςτος μαρτυρησις*; the most bitter curse, the greatest excommunication, when the delinquent is become a heathen and a publican without the covenant, out of the pale of the church; the church had nothing to do with them: *for what have I to do with them that are without?* said St. Paul: It was not lawful for the church any more to punish them. And this court Christian is an imitation and parallel of the justice of the court of heaven: When a sinner is not mended by judgments at long running, God cuts him off from his inheritance, and the lot of sons; he will chastise him no more, but let him take his course, and spend his portion of prosperity, such as shall be allowed him in the great economy of the world. Thus God did to his vineyard which he took such pains to fence, to plant, to manure, to dig, to cut, and to prune: and when after all it brought forth wild grapes, the last and worst of God's anger was this, *Auferam sepem ejus*: † God had fenced it with a hedge of thorns, and God would take away all that hedge, he would not leave a thorn standing, not one judgment to reprove or admonish them, but all the wild beasts, and wilder and more beastly lusts, may come and devour it, and trample it down in scorn.

And now what shall I say, but those words quoted by St. Paul in his sermon, *behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish?* ‡ perish in your own folly by stubbornness and ingratitude. For it is a huge contradiction to the nature and designs of God: God calls us, we refuse to hear; he invites us with fair promises, we hear and consider not; he gives us blessings, we

* Isa. 1. 4, 5. † Isa. v. 5. ‡ Acts xiii. 41.

take them and understand not his meaning; we take out the token, but read not the letter: then he threatens us, and we regard not; he strikes our neighbours, and we are not concerned: then he strikes us gently, but we feel it not: then he does like the physician in the Greek epigram, who being to cure a man of a lethargy, locked him into the same room with a madman, that he by dry-beating him might make him at least sensible of blows: but this makes us instead of running to God, to trust in unskilful physicians, or, like *Saul*, to run to a Pythonisse, we run for cure to a crime, we take sanctuary in a pleasant sin; just as if a man, to cure his melancholy, should desire to be stung with a tarantula, that at least he may die merrily. What is there more to be done that God hath not yet done? He is forced at last to break off with a *Curavimus Babylonem. et non est sanata*. We dressed and tended *Babylon*. but she was incurable: there is no help, but such persons must die in their sins, and lie down in eternal sorrow.

SERMON XIV.



OF GROWTH IN GRACE.

2 PETER, iii. 18.

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory both now and for ever. *Amen.*

WHEN Christianity, like *the day spring from the east*, with a new light did not only enlighten the world, but amazed the minds of men, and entertained their curiosities, and seized upon their warmer and more pregnant affections; it was no wonder that whole nations were converted at a sermon, and multitudes were instantly professed, and their understandings followed their affections, and their wills followed their understandings, and they were convinced by miracle, and overcome by grace, and passionate with zeal, and wisely governed by their guides, and ravished with the sanctity of the doctrine, and the holiness of their examples. And this was not only their duty, but a great instance of providence, that by the great religion and piety of the first professors, Christianity might be firmly planted, and unshaken by scandal, and hardened by persecution; and that these first lights might be actual precedents for ever, and copies for us to transcribe in all descending ages of Christianity, that thither we might run to fetch oil to enkindle our extinguished lamps. But then piety was

so universal, that it might well be enjoined by St. Paul, that, *If a brother walked disorderly*, the Christians should avoid his company: He forbade them not, to accompany with the Heathens that walked disorderly; *for then a man must have gone out of the world*; but they were not to endure so much as *to eat with, or to salute a disorderly brother*, and ill-living Christian. But now, if we should observe this canon of St. Paul, and refuse to eat or to converse with a fornicator, or a drunkard, or a perjured person, or covetous, we must also *go out of the world*: for a pious or a holy person is now as rare as a disorderly Christian was at first: and as Christianity is multiplied every where in name and title, so it is destroyed in life, essence, and proper operation: and we have very great reason to fear, that Christ's name will serve us to no end but to upbraid our baseness, and his person only to be our judge, and his laws as so many bills of accusation, and his graces and helps offered us but as aggravations of our unworthiness, and our baptism but an occasion of vow-breach, and the holy communion but an act of hypocrisy, formality, or sacrilege, and all the promises of the gospel but as pleasant dreams, and the threatenings but as arts of affrightment. For Christianity lasted pure and zealous, it kept its rules, and observed its own laws for three hundred years, or thereabouts; so long the church remained a virgin; for so long they were warmed with their first fires, and kept under discipline by the rod of persecution: but it hath declined almost fourteen hundred years together: prosperity and pride, wantonness and great fortunes, ambition and interest, false doctrine upon mistake and upon design, the malice of the devil and the arts of all his instruments, the want of zeal and a weariness of spirit, filthy examples and a disreputation of piety and a strict life, seldom precedents and infinite dis-

couragements have caused so infinite a declension of piety and holy living, that what *Papirius Massonius*, one of their own, said of the popes of *Rome*, *In pontificibus nemo hodie sanctitatem requirit; optimi putantur si vel leviter mali sint, vel minus boni quam cæteri mortales esse solent*. No man looks for holiness in the bishops of *Rome*; those are the best popes who are not extremely wicked: the same is too true of the greatest part of Christians; men are excellent persons if they be not traitors, or adulterous oppressors, or injurious drunkards, or scandalous, if they be not *as this publican*, as the vilest person with whom they converse.

Nunc, si depositum non inficiatur amicus
 Si reddat veterem cum to a aerugine follem;
 Prodigiousa fides, et Thuseis digna libellis,
 Quaeque coronata lustrari debeat agna.*

He that is better than the dregs of his own age, whose religion is something above prophaneness, and whose sobriety is a step or two from downright intemperance; whose discourse is not swearing, nor yet apt to edify, whose charity is set out in piety and a gentle yearning and saying *God help*, whose alms are contemptible, and his devotion infrequent; yet as things are now, he is *unus e millibus*, *one of a thousand*, and he stands eminent and conspicuous in the valleys and lower grounds of the present piety; for a bank is

* *Juven. Sat. 13. v. 60.*

Now if a friend, miraculously just
 Restore the entrusted coin with all its rust,
 'Tis deemed a portent, worthy to appear
 Amongst the wonders of the calendar;
 A prodigy of faith, which threatens the State,
 And a ewe lamb alone can expiate.

GIFFORD

a mountain upon a level: But what is rare and eminent in the manners of men this day, would have been scandalous, and have deserved the rod of an apostle, if it had been confronted with the fervours and rare devotion and religion of our fathers in the gospel.

Men of old looked upon themselves as they stood by the examples and precedents of martyrs, and compared their piety to the life of *St. Paul*, and estimated their zeal by flames of the *Boanerges*, *St. James* and his brother; and the bishops were thought reprobable as they fell short of the ordinary government of *St. Peter* and *St. John*; and the assemblies of Christians were so holy, that every meeting had religion enough to hallow a house, and convert it to a church; and every day of feasting was a communion, and every fasting-day was a day of *repentance and alms*, and every day of thanksgiving was a day of *joy and alms*; and religion began all their actions, and prayer consecrated them, and they ended in charity, and were not polluted with design: they despised the world heartily, and pursued after heaven greedily, they knew no ends but to serve God, and to be saved; and had no designs upon their neighbours, but to lead them to God, and to felicity; till satan, full of envy to see such excellent days, mingled covetousness and ambition within the throngs and conventions of the church, and a vice crept into an office: And then the mutual confidence grew less, and so *charity* was lessened; and heresies crept in, and then *faith* began to be sullied; and pride crept in, and then men snatched at offices, not for the work, but for the dignity; and then they served themselves more than God and the church: till at last it came to that pass where now it is, that the clergy live lives no better than the laity, and the laity are stooped to imitate the evil customs of strangers and enemies of christianity: so that we should think religion in a good condition, if that men

did offer up to God but the actions of an *ordinary, even, and just life*, without the scandal and allays of a great impiety. But because such is the nature of things, that either they grow towards perfection, or decline towards dissolution; there is no proper way to secure it but by setting its growth forward: For religion hath no station, or natural periods; if it does not grow better it grows much worse: not that it always returns the man into scandalous sins, but that it establishes and fixes him in a state of indifferency and lukewarmness; and he is more averse to a state of improvement, and dies in an incurious, ignorant and unrelenting condition.

But grow in grace—That is the remedy, and that would make us all wise and happy, blessed in this world, and sure of heaven. Concerning which we are to consider first, What the state of *grace* is into which every one of us must be entered, that we may *grow* in it: secondly, The proper parts, acts, and offices of *growing in grace*: thirdly, The signs, consequences, and proper significations, by which if we cannot perceive *the growing*; yet afterwards we may perceive that *we are grown*, and so judge of the state of our duty, and concerning our final condition of being saved.

I. Concerning the state of grace, I consider that no man can be said to be in the state of grace who retains an affection to any one sin. The state of pardon and the divine favour begins at the first instance of anger against our crimes, when we leave our fondnesses and kind opinions, when we excuse them not, and will not endure their shame, when we feel the smarts of any of their evil consequents: for he that is a perfect lover of sin, and is *sealed up to a reprobate sense*, endures all that sin brings along with it; and is reconciled to all its mischiefs; he can suffer the sickness of his own drunkenness, and yet call it plea-

sure; he can wait like a slave to serve his lust, and yet count it no disparagement; he can suffer the dishonour of being accounted a base and dishonest person, and yet look confidently, and think himself no worse. But when the grace of God begins to work upon a man's spirit, it makes the conscience nice and tender; and although the sin as yet does not displease the man, but he can endure the flattering and alluring part, yet he will not endure to be used so ill by his sin; he will not be abused and dishonoured by it. But because God hath so allayed the pleasure of his sin, that he that drinks the sweet should also strain the dregs through his throat; by degrees God's grace doth irreconcile the convert, and discovers, first its base attendants, then its worst consequents, then the displeasure of God; that here commences the first resolutions of leaving the sin, and trying if in the service of God his spirit and the whole appetite of man may be better entertained. He that is thus far entered shall quickly perceive the difference, and meet arguments enough to invite him farther: for then God treats the man as he treated the spies that went to discover the land of promise; he ordered the year in plenty, and directed them to a pleasant and a fruitful place, and prepared bunches of grapes of a miraculous and prodigious greatness, that they might report good things of *Canaan*, and invite the whole nation to attempt its conquest; so God's grace represents to the new converts and the weak ones in faith, the pleasures and first deliciousnesses of religion; and when they come to spy the good things of that way that leads to heaven, they presently perceive themselves eased of the load of an evil conscience, of their fears of death, of the confusion of their shame, and God's spirit gives them a cup of sensible comfort, and makes them to rejoice in their prayers, and weep with pleasures mingled

with innocent passion and religious changes. And although God does not deal with all men in the same method, or in manners that can regularly be described, and all men do not feel, or do not observe, or cannot for want of skill discern, such accidental sweetnesses and pleasant grapes at his first entrance into religion: yet God to every man does minister excellent arguments of invitation; and such, that if a man will attend to them, they will certainly move either his affections or his will, his fancy or his reason, and most commonly both. But while the spirit of God is doing this work in man, man must also be *συνεργός τῷ Θεῷ*. *a fellow worker with God*; he must entertain the spirit, attend his inspirations, receive his whispers, obey all his motions, invite him farther, and truly renounce all confederacy with his enemy, sin; at no hand suffering any *root of bitterness to spring up*, not allowing to himself any reserve of carnal pleasure, no clancular lust, no private oppressions, no secret covetousness, no love to this world that may discompose his duty. For if a man prays all day, and at night is intemperate; if he spends his time in reading, and his recreation be sinful; if he studies religion, and practises self interest; if he leaves his swearing, and yet retains his pride; if he becomes chaste, and yet remains peevish and imperious: this man is not changed from the state of sin into the first stage of the state of grace, he does at no hand belong to God; he hath suffered himself to be scared from one sin, and tempted from another by interest, and hath left a third by reason of his inclination, and a fourth for shame, or want of opportunity, but the spirit of God hath not yet planted one perfect plant there: God may make use of the accidentally prepared advantages: but as yet the spirit of God hath not begun the proper and direct work of grace in his

heart. But when we leave every sin, when we resolve never to return to the chains, when we have no love for the world but such as may be a servant of God: then I account that we are entered into a state of grace, from whence I am now to begin to reckon the commencement of this precept, *Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

2. And now the first part of this duty is, *to make religion to be the business of our lives*; for this is the great instrument which will naturally produce our growth in grace, and the perfection of a Christian. For a man cannot after a state of sin be instantly a saint; the work of heaven is not done by a flash of lightning, or a dash of affectionate rain, or a few tears of a relenting pity: God and his church have appointed holy intervals, and have taken portions of our time for religion, that we may be called off from the world and remember the end of our creation, and do honour to God, and think of heaven with hearty purposes and peremptory designs to get thither. But, as we must not neglect those times which God hath reserved for his service, or the church hath prudently decreed; nor yet act religion upon such days with forms and outsides, or to comply with customs, or to seem religions: so, we must take care that all the other portions of our time be hallowed with little retirements of our thoughts, and short conversations with God, and all along be guided with holy intention; that even our works of nature may pass into the relations of grace, and the actions of our calling may help towards the *obtaining the prize of our high calling*: while our eatings are actions of temperance, our labours are profitable, our humiliations are acts of obedience, and our alms of charity, and our marriages are chaste; and *whether we eat or drink, sleep or wake, we may do all to the glory of God*, by a direct intuition or by a reflex act, by design or by supple-

ment, by foresight or by an after election. And to this purpose we must not look upon religion as our trouble and our hinderance, nor think alms chargeable or expensive, nor our fastings vexatious and burthensome, nor our prayers a weariness of spirit; but we must make these, and all other the duties of religion, our employment, our care, the work and end for which we came into the world; and remember that we never do the work of men, nor serve the ends of God, nor are in the proper employment and business of our life, but when we worship God, or live like wise or sober persons, or do benefit to our brother.

I will not turn this discourse into a reproof, but leave it represented as a duty: Remember that God sent you into the world for religion: we are but to pass through our pleasant fields or our hard labours, but to lodge a little while in our fair palaces or our meaner cottages, but to bait in the way at our full tables or with our spare diet: but then only man does his proper employment, when he prays, and does charity, and mortifies his unruly appetites, and restrains his violent passions, and becomes like to God, and imitates his holy Son, and writes after the copies of apostles and saints. Then he is dressing himself for eternity, where he must dwell or abide either in an excellent beatifical country, or in a prison of amazement and eternal horror. And after all this, you may if you please, call to mind how much time you allow to God and to your souls every day, or every month, or in a year if you please; for I fear the account of the time is soon made, but the account for the neglect will be harder. And it will not easily be answered, that all our days and years are little enough to attend perishing things, and to be swallowed up in avaricious and vain attendances, and we shall not attend to religion with a zeal so great as is our revenge, or as is the hunger of one meal. Without

much time, and a weary life, and a diligent circumspection, we cannot mortify our sins, or do the first works of grace. I pray God we be not found to have grown like the sinews of old age, from strength to remissness, from thence to dissolution, and infirmity, and death: *Menedemus* was wont to say, that the young boys that went to *Athens*, the first year were *wise men*, the second year *philosophers*, the third *orators*, and the fourth were but *plebeians*, and understood nothing but their own ignorance. And just so it happens to some in the progresses of religion: at first they are violent and active, and then they satiate all the appetites of religion; and that which is left is, that they were soon weary, and sat down in displeasure, and return to the world, and dwell in the business of pride or money: and by this time they understand that their religion is declined, and passed from the heats and follies of youth, to the coldness and infirmities of old age. The remedy of which is only a diligent spirit and a busy religion, a great industry and a full portion of time in holy offices: that as the oracle said to the *Cirrhacians*, *Noctes, diesque belligerandum*, they could not be happy unless they waged war night and day: so, unless we perpetually fight against our own vices, and repel our ghostly enemies and stand upon our guard, we must stand for ever in the state of babes in Christ, or else return to the first imperfections of an unchristened soul, and an unsanctified spirit. That is the first particular.

2. The second step of our growth in grace is, *when virtues grow habitual*, apt and easy in our manners and dispositions. For although many new converts have a great zeal, and a busy spirit, apt enough (as they think) to contest against all the difficulties of a spiritual life; yet they meet with such powerful oppositions from without, and a false heart within, that their first heats are soon broken, and either they are

for ever discouraged, or are forced to march more slowly, and proceed more temperately for ever after.

Τὴν μὲντοι κακότητα ἢ ἰλαδὸν ἐστὶν ἐλίσθαι
 Ρηιδίως, ἀλιγὴ μὲν ἴδως, μάλα δ' ἐγγυδί γαίσι.

It is an easy thing to commit a wickedness, for temptation and infirmity are always too near us. But God hath made care and sweat, prudence and diligence, experience and watchfulness, wisdom and labour at home, and good guides abroad, to be instruments and means to purchase virtue.

The way is long and difficult at first; but in the progress and pursuit we find all the knots made plain, and the rough ways made smooth.

———jam monte potitus

Ridet———†

Now the spirit of grace is like a new soul within him, and he hath new appetites and new pleasures, when the things of the world grow unsavoury, and the things of religion are delicious; when his temptations to his old crimes return but seldom, and prevail not at all, or in very inconsiderable instances, and stay not at all, but are reproached with a penitential sorrow and speedy amendment; when we do actions of virtue quickly, frequently, and with delight: then we have grown in grace in the same degree in which they can perceive these excellent dispositions. Some persons there are who dare not sin; they dare not omit their hours of prayer, and they are restless in their spirits till they have done; but they go to it as to execution; they stay from it

* Hesiod Op. D. l. 1. v. 285.

Flowery and near the path that leads astray,
 And tempting pleasure guides us on the way. A.

† He smiles in triumph when the summit's gained. A.

as long as they can, and they drive like *Pharaoh's* chariots with the wheels off, sadly and heavily: and besides, that such persons have reserved to themselves the best part of their sacrifice, and do not give their will to God, they do not love him with all their heart; they are also soonest tempted to retire and fall off. *Sextius Romanus* resigned the honours and offices of the city, and betook himself to the severity of a philosophical life: but when his unusual diet and hard labour began to pinch his flesh, and he felt his propositions smart, and that which was fine in discourse at a symposiack or an acadenical dinner, began to sit uneasily upon him in the practice; he so despaired, that he had like to have cast himself into the sea, to appease the labours of his religion; because he never had gone farther than to think it a fine thing to be a wise man: he would commend it, but he was loath to pay for it at the price that God and the philosopher set upon it. But he that is *grown in grace*, and hath made religion habitual to his spirit, is not at ease but when he is doing the works of the new man; he rests in religion, and comforts his sorrows with thinking of his prayers, and in all crosses of the world he is patient, because his joy is at hand to refresh him when he list, for he cares not so he may serve God: and if you make him poor here, he is rich there, and he counts that to be his proper *service*, his *work*, his *recreation*, and *reward*.

3. But because in the course of holy living, although the duty be regular and constant, yet the sensible relishes and the flowerings of affections, the zeal and the visible expressions do not always make the same emission; but sometimes by design, sometimes by order, and sometimes by affection we are more busy, more intire, and more intent upon the actions of religion: in such cases we are to judge of

our growth in grace, if after every interval of extraordinary piety, the next return be more devout and more affectionate, the labour be more cheerful and more active, and if religion returns oftener, and stays longer in the same expressions, and leaves more satisfaction upon the spirit. Are your communions more frequent? and, when they are, do ye approach nearer to God? have you made firmer resolutions, and entertained more hearty purposes of amendment? do you love God more dutifully, and your neighbour with a greater charity? do you not so easily return to the world as formerly? are not you glad when the thing is done? Do you go to your secular accounts with a more weaned affection than before? if you communicate well, it is certain that you will still do it better: if you do not communicate well, every opportunity of doing it is but a new trouble, easily excused, readily omitted, done because it is necessary, but not because we love it: and we shall find that such persons in their old age do it worst of all. And it was observed by a *Spanish* confessor who was also a famous preacher, that in persons not very religious, the confessions which they made upon their death-bed were the coldest, the most imperfect, and with less contrition than all that he had observed them to make in many years before. For so the canes of *Egypt* when they newly arise from their bed of mud and slime of *Nilus*, start up into an equal and continual length, and are interrupted but with few knots, and are strong and beauteous with great distances and intervals: but when they are grown to their full length, they lessen into the point of a pyramid, and multiply their knots and joints, interrupting the fineness and smoothness of its body. So are the steps and declensions of him that does not grow in grace: at first, when he springs up from his impurity by the waters of baptism and

repentance, he grows straight and strong, and suffers but few interruptions of piety, and his constant courses of religion are but rarely intermitted, till they ascend up to a full age, or towards the ends of their life; then they are weak, and their devotions often intermitted, and their breaches are frequent, and they seek excuses, and labour for dispensations, and love God and religion less and less, till their old age, instead of a crown of their virtue and perseverance, ends in levity and unprofitable courses; light and useless as the tufted feathers upon the cane, every wind can play with it and abuse it, but no man can make it useful. When therefore our piety interrupts its greater and more solemn expressions, and upon the return of the greater offices and bigger solemnities, we find them to come upon our spirits like the wave of a tide, which retired only because it was natural so to do, and yet came farther upon the strand at the next rolling; when every new confession, every succeeding communion, every time of separation for more solemn and intense prayer is better spent and more affectionate, leaving a greater relish upon the spirit, and possessing greater portions of our affections, our reason and our choice; then we may give God thanks, who hath given us more grace to use that grace, and a blessing to endeavour our duty, and a blessing upon our endeavour.

4. To discern our growth in grace, we must inquire concerning our passions, whether they be mortified and quiet, complying with our ends of virtue, and under command. For since the passions are the matter of virtue and vice respectively, he that hath brought into his power all the strengths of the enemy, and the forts from whence he did infest him, he only hath secured his holy walking with God. But because this thing is never perfectly done, and yet must always be doing, grace grows according as we have

finished our portions of this work. And in this we must not only inquire concerning our passions, whether they be sinful and habitually prevalent; for if they be, we are not in the state of grace: but whether they return upon us in violences and undecencies, in transportation and unreasonable and imprudent expressions: for although *a good man* may be incident to a violent passion, and that without sin; yet *a perfect man* is not, a well-grown Christian hath seldom such sufferings; to suffer such things sometimes may stand with *the being of virtue*, but not with *its security*. For if passions range up and down, and transport us frequently and violently, we may keep in our forts and in our dwellings, but our enemy is master of the field, and our virtues are restrained, and apt to be starved, and will not hold out long. *A good man* may be spotted with a violence, but *a wise man* will not: and he that does not add *wisdom* to his *virtue*, the *knowledge of Jesus Christ* to his *virtuous habits*, will be a good man but till a storm come. But beyond this, inquire after the state of your passions in actions of religion. Some men fast to mortify their lust, and their fasting makes them peevish; some reprove a vice, but they do it with much impatience; some charitably give excellent counsel, but they do that also with a pompous and proud spirit: and passion being driven from open hostilities, is forced to march along in the retinue and troops of virtue. And although this be rather a deception and a cozenage than an imperfection, and supposes a state of sin rather than an imperfect grace; yet because it tacitly and secretly creeps along among the circumstances of pious actions, as it spoils a virtue in some, so it lessens it in others, and therefore is considerable also in this question.

And although no man must take accounts of his *being in or out of the state of grace* by his being dis-

passionate, and free from all the assaults of passion: yet, as to the securing his being in the state of grace, he must provide that he be not a slave of passion; so, to declare his *growth in grace*, he must be sure to take the measures of his affections, and see that they be lessened, more apt to be suppressed, not breaking out to inconvenience and imprudences, not rifling our spirit, and drawing us from our usual and more sober tempers. Try therefore if your fear be turned into caution, your lust into chaste friendships, your imperious spirit into prudent government, your revenge into justice, your anger into charity, and your peevishness and rage into silence and suppression of language. Is our ambition changed into virtuous and noble thoughts? can we emulate without envy? Is our covetousness lessened into good husbandry, and mingled with alms, that we may certainly discern the love of money to be gone? Do we love to despise our inferiours? and can we willingly endure to admit him that excels us in any gift or grace whatsoever, and to commend it without abatement, and mingling allays with the commendation, and disparagements to the man? If we be arrived but thus far, it is well, and we must go farther. But we use to think that all disaffections of the body are removed, if they be changed into the more tolerable, although we have not an athletic health, or the strength of porters or wrestlers. For although it be felicity to be quit of all passion that may be sinful or violent, and part of the happiness of heaven shall consist in that freedom; yet our growth in grace consists in the remission and lessening of our passions: only he that is incontinent in his lust or in his anger, in his desires of money or of honour, in his revenge or in his fear, in his joys or in his sorrows; that man is not *grown at all in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*. This only; in the scrutiny and consequent judgment con-

cerning our passions, it will concern the curiosity of our care to watch against passions in the reflex act, against pride, or lust, complacency, and pceevishness attending upon virtue. For he was noted for a vain person, who being overjoyed for the cure of his pride, (as he thought) cried out to his wife, *Cerne, Dionysia, deposui fastum, Behold, I have laid aside all my pride*; and of that very dream the silly man thought he had reason to boast; but considered not that it was an act of pride, and levity besides. If thou hast given a noble present to thy friend, if thou hast rejected the unjust desire of thy prince, if thou hast endured thirst and hunger for religion or continence, if thou hast refused an offer like that which was made to *Joseph*; sit down and rest in thy good conscience, and do not please thyself in opinions and fantastick noises abroad, and do not despise him that did not do so as thou hast done, and reprove no man with an upbraiding circumstance: for it will give thee but an ill-return and a contemptible reward, if thou shalt overlay thy infant-virtue, or drown it with a flood of breast-milk.

SERMON XV.

PART II.

5. He is well grown in or towards the state of grace, who is more patient of a sharp reproof than of a secret flattery. For a reprehension contains so much mortification to the pride and complacencies of a man, is so great an affront to an easy and undisturbed person, is so empty of pleasure and so full of

profit, that he must needs love virtue in a great degree who can take in that which only serves her end, and is displeasent to himself and all his gayeties. A severe reprehender of another's vice comes dressed like *Jacob* when he went to cozen his brother of his blessing; his outside is *rough and hairy*, but *the voice is Jacob's voice*: rough hands and a healthful language get the blessing, even against the will of him that shall feel it; but he that is *patient and even*, not apt to excuse his fault, that is less apt to anger, or to scorn him that snatches him rudely from the flames of hell, he is virtue's confessor, and suffers these lesser stripes for that interest which will end in spiritual and eternal benedictions.

They who are furious against their monitors are incorrigible: but it is one degree of meekness to suffer discipline; and a meek man cannot easily be an ill man, especially in the present instance; he appears, at least, to have a healthful constitution; he hath good flesh to heal; his spirit is capable of medicine; and that man can never be despaired of who hath a disposition so near his health as to improve all physick, and whose nature is relieved from every good accident from without. But that which I observe is, That this is not only a good disposition towards repentance and restitution, but is a sign of growth in grace, according as it becomes *natural, easy, and habitual*. Some men chide themselves for all their misdemeanours, because they would be represented to the censures and opinions of other men with a fair character, and such as need not to be reprov'd: others out of inconsideration sleep in their own dark rooms, and, until the charity of a guide or of a friend draws the curtain, and lets in a beam of light, dream on, until the grave opens, and hell devours them: but if they be called upon by the grace of God, let down with a sheet of counsels and friendly precepts, they

are presently inclined to be obedient to the heavenly monitions; but unless they be dressed with circumstances of honour and civility, with arts of entertainment and insinuation, they are rejected utterly, or received unwillingly. Therefore although upon any terms to endure a sharp reproof be a good sign of amendment; yet the growth of grace is not properly signified by every such sufferance: for when this disposition begins, amendment also begins, and goes on in proportion to the increment of this. To endure a reproof without adding a new sin is the first step to amendment; that is, to endure it without scorn, or hatred, or indignation. 2. The next is to suffer reproof without excusing ourselves: for he that is apt to excuse himself is only desirous in a civil manner to set the reproof aside, and to represent the charitable monitor to be too hasty in his judgment, and deceived in his information; and the fault to dwell there, not with himself. 3. Then he that proceeds in this instance admits the reprover's sermon or discourse without a private regret: he hath no secret murmurs or unwillingnesses to the humiliation, but is only ashamed that he should deserve it; but for the reprehension itself, that troubles him not, but he looks on it as his own medicine, and the other's charity. 4. But if to this he adds, that he voluntarily confesses his own fault, and of his own accord vomits out the loads of his own intemperance, and eases his spirit of the infection; then it is certain he is not only a professed and hearty enemy against sin, but a zealous and a prudent and an active person against all its interest, and never counts himself at ease but while he rests upon the banks of *Sion*, or at the gates of the temple; never pleased but in virtue and religion: then he knows the state of his soul, and the state of his danger; he reckons it no abjection to be abased in the face of man, so he may be gracious in

the eyes of God : and that is a sign of a good grace and a holy wisdom ; that man is *grown in the grace of God, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* *Justus in principio sermonis est accusator sui*, said the wise man, *The righteous accuseth himself in the beginning* ; that is, quickly, lest he be prevented. And certain it is, he cannot, be either wise or good, that had rather have a real sin within him, than that a good man should believe him to be a repenting sinner ; that had rather *keep his crime*, than *lose his reputation* ; that is, rather to *be so*, than to *be thought so* ; rather be without the favour of God than of his neighbour. *Diogenes* once spied a young man coming out of a tavern or place of entertainment ; who perceiving himself observed by the philosopher, with some confusion stepped back again, that he might (if possible) preserve his fame with that severe person. But *Diogenes* told him, *Quanto magis intraveris, tanto magis eris in caupona.* The more you go back, the longer you are in the place where you are ashamed to be seen. And he that conceals his sin, still retains that which he counts his shame and his burthen. *Hippocrates* was noted for an ingenuous person, that he published and confessed his error concerning the sutures of the head : and all ages since *St. Austin* have called him *pious*, for writing his book of retractions, in which he published his former ignorance and mistakes ; and so set his shame off to the world invested with a garment of modesty, and above half changed before they were seen. I did the rather insist upon this particular, because it is a consideration of huge concernment, and yet much neglected in all its instances and degrees. We neither confess our shame, nor endure it ; we are privately troubled, and publicly excuse it ; we turn charity into bitterness, and our reproof into contumacy and scorn : and who is there amongst us that can endure a personal charge, or is not to be taught his personal

duty by general discoursings, by parable and apologue, by acts of insinuation and wary distances? But by this state of persons we know the estate of our own spirits.

When God sent his prophets to the people, and *they stoned them with stones, and sawed them asunder, and cast them into dungeons, and made them beggars,* the people fell into the condition of *Babylon*. *Quam curavimus, et non est sanata; We healed her* (said the prophets) *but she would not be cured: Derelinquamus eam,* that is her doom; let her enjoy her sins, and all the fruits of sin laid up in treasures of wrath against the day of vengeance and retribution.

6. He that is grown in grace and the knowledge of Christ, esteems no sin to be little or contemptible, none fit to be cherished or indulged to. For it is not only inconsistent with the love of God to entertain any indecency or beginning of a crime, any thing that displeases him; but he always remembers how much it cost him to arrive at the state of good things, whither the grace of God hath already brought him: he thinks of his prayers and tears, his restless nights and his daily fears, his late escape and his present danger, the ruins of his former state and the difficulty and imperfect reparations of this new, his proclivity and aptness to vice, and natural averseness and uneasy inclinations to the strictness of holy living; and when these are considered truly, they naturally make a man unwilling to entertain any beginnings of a state of life contrary to that which with so much danger and difficulty, through so many objections and enemies, he hath attained. And the truth is, when a man hath escaped the dangers of his first state of sin, he cannot but be extremely unwilling to return again thither, in which he can never hope for heaven. And so it must be; for a man must not flatter himself in a small crime, and say, as *Lot* did when he begged a reprieve

for *Zoar, Alas, Lord, is it not a little one, and my soul shall live?* And it is not therefore to be entertained because it is little; for it is the more without excuse if it be little, the temptations to it are not great, the allurements not mighty, the promises not ensnaring, the resistance easy; and a wise man considers, it is a greater danger to be overcome by a little sin, than by a great one; a *greater danger* (I say) not directly, but accidentally; not in respect of the crime, but in relation to the person: for he that cannot overcome a small crime is in the state of infirmity so great, that he perishes infallibly when he is arrested by the sins of a stronger temptation; but he that easily can, and yet will not, he is in love with sin, and courts his danger, that he may at least kiss the apples of paradise, or feast himself with the parings, since he is by some displeasing instrument allighted from glutting himself with the forbidden fruit in ruder and bigger instances. But the well-grown Christian is curious of his new-trimmed soul, and, like a nice person with clean clothes, is careful that no spot or stain sully the virgin-whiteness of his robe: whereas another, whose *albes of baptism* are sullied in many places with the smoke and filth of *Sodom* and uncleanness, cares not in what paths he treads, and a shower of dirt changes not his state who already lies wallowing in the puddles of impurity. It makes men negligent and easy, when they have an opinion or certain knowledge that they are persons extraordinary in nothing, that a little care will not mend them, that another sin cannot make them much worse: but it is a sign of a tender conscience and a reformed spirit, when it is sensible of every alteration, when an idle word is troublesome, when a wandering thought puts the whole spirit upon its guard, when too free a merriment is wiped off with a sigh and a sad thought, and a severe recollection, and a holy prayer. *Polycletus*

was wont to say, that they had work enough to do who were to make a curious picture of clay and dirt, when they were to take accounts for the handling of mud and mortar. A man's spirit is naturally careless of baser and uncostly materials: but if a man be to work in gold, then he will save the tilings of his dust, and suffer not a grain to perish: and when a man hath laid his foundations in precious stones, he will not build vile matter, stubble and dirt upon it. So it is in the spirit of a man: If he have built upon the rock *Christ Jesus*, and is grown up to a good stature in Christ, he will not easily dishonour his building, nor lose his labours, by an incurious entertainment of vanities and little instances of sin: which as they can never satisfy any lust or appetite to sin, so they are like a fly in a box of ointment, or like little follies to a wise man; they are extremely full of dishonour and disparagement, they disarray a man's soul of his virtue, and dishonour him for cockle-shells and baubles, and tempt to a greater folly: which every man who is grown in the knowledge of Christ therefore carefully avoids, because he fears a relapse, with a fear as great as his hopes of heaven are; and knows that the entertainment of small sins does but entice a man's resolutions to disband; they unravel and untwist his holy purposes, and begin in infirmities, and proceed in folly, and end in death.

7. He that is grown in grace pursues virtue for its own interest, purely and simply, without the mixture and alloy of collateral designs and equally inclining purposes. God in the beginning of our returns to him entertains us with promises and threatenings, the apprehensions of temporal advantages, with fear and shame, and with reverence of friends and secular respects, with reputation and coercion of human laws; and at first men snatch at the lesser and lower ends of virtue: and such rewards as are visible, and which

God sometimes gives in hand to entertain our weak and imperfect desires. The young philosophers were very forward to get the precepts of their sect, and the rules of severity, that they might discourse with kings, not that they might reform their own manners: and some men study to get the ears and tongues of the people, rather than to gain their souls to God; and they obey good laws for fear of punishment, or to preserve their own peace; and some are worse, they do good deeds out of spite, and *preach Christ out of envy*, or to lessen the authority and fame of others. Some of these lessen the excellence of the act, others spoil it quite: it is in some imperfect, in others criminal; in some it is consistent with a beginning infant-grace, in others it is an argument of the state of sin and death: but in all cases the well-grown Christian, he that improves or goes forward in his way to heaven, brings virtue forth, not into discourses and panegyricks, but into his life and manners. His virtue, although it serves many good ends accidentally; yet by his intention it only suppresses his inordinate passions, makes him temperate and chaste, casts out his devils of drunkenness and lust, pride and rage, malice and revenge: it makes him useful to his brother and a servant of God. And although these flowers cannot choose but please his eye, and delight his smell: yet he chooses to gather honey, and licks up the dew of heaven, and feasts his spirit upon the manna, and dwells not in the collateral usages and accidental sweetnesses which dwell at the gates of other senses, but, like a bee, loads his thighs with wax, and his bag with honey, that is, with the useful parts of virtue, in order to holiness and felicity. Of which the best signs and notices we can take will be; if we as earnestly pursue virtues which are acted in private, as those whose scene lies in publick: if we pray in private, under the only eye of God and his ministering

angels, as in churches ; if we give our alms in secret, rather than in publick ; if we take more pleasure in the just satisfaction of our consciences, than securing our reputation ; if we rather pursue innocence, than seek an excuse ; if we desire to please God, though we lose our fame with men ; if we be just to the poorest servant as to the greatest prince ; if we choose to be among the jewels of God, though we be the *περιεργματα*, the off-scouring of the world : if when we are secure from witnesses and accusers, and not obnoxious to the notices of the law, we think ourselves obliged by conscience and practice, and live accordingly : then our services and intentions in virtue are right, then we are past the twilights of conversion, and the umbrages of the world, and walk in the light of God, of his word, and of his spirit, of grace and reason, as becometh not babes but men in Christ Jesus. In this progress of grace I have not yet expressed, that perfect persons should serve God out of mere love of God and the divine excellences, without the considerations of either heaven or hell : such a thing as that is talked of in mystical theology. And I doubt not, but many good persons come to that growth of charity, that the goodness and excellence of God are more incumbent and actually pressing upon their spirit than any considerations of reward. But then I shall add this, that when persons come to that height of grace, (or contemplation rather) and they love God for himself, and do their duties in order to the fruition of him and his pleasure ; *all that* is but heaven in another sense, and under another name : just as the mystical theology is the highest duty, and the choicest part of obedience under a new method. But in order to the present, that which I call a signification of our growth in grace is, a pursuance of virtue upon such reasons as are propounded to us as motives in Christianity, (such as are to glorify God, and enjoy his

promises *in the way* and *in our country*, to avoid the displeasure of God: and to be united to his glories;) and then to exercise virtue in such parts and to such purposes as are useful to good life, and profitable to our neighbours: not to such only where they serve reputation, or secular ends. For though the great physician of our souls hath mingled profits and pleasures with virtue, to make its chalice sweet and apt to be drank off; yet he that takes out the sweet ingredient, and feasts his palate with the less wholesome part, because it is delicious, serves a low end of sense or interest, but serves not God at all; and as little does benefit to his soul. Such a person is like *Homer's* bird, deplumes himself to feather all the naked callows that he sees; and holds a taper that may light others to heaven, while he burns his own fingers: but a well-grown person, out of habit and choice, out of love and virtue and just intention, goes on his journey in straight ways to heaven, even when the bridle and coercion of laws, or the spurs of interest or reputation are laid aside; and desires witnesses of his actions, not that he may advance his fame, but for reverence and fear, and to make it still more necessary to do holy things.

8. Some men there are in the beginning of their holy walking with God, and while they are *babes in Christ*, who are presently busied in delights of prayers, and rejoice in publick communion, and count all solemn assemblies festival; but as they are pleased with them, so they can easily be without them. It is a sign of a common and vulgar love, only to be pleased with the company of a friend, and to be as well without him: *Amoris at morsum qui vere senserit*, He that has felt the sting of a sharp and very dear affection, is impatient in the absence of his beloved object: the soul that is sick and swallowed up with holy fire, loves nothing else; all pleasures else seem unsavoury,

company is troublesome, visitors are tedious, families of comfort are flat and useless. The pleasures of virtue to a good and perfect man, are not like the perfumes of nard-pistick, which is very delightful when the box is newly broken, but the want of it is no trouble, we are well enough without it: but virtue is like *hunger and thirst*, it must be satisfied or we die. And when we feel great longings after religion, and faintings for want of holy nutriment, when a famine of the word and sacraments is more intolerable, and we think ourselves really most miserable when the church doors are shut against us, or like the Christians in the persecution of the *Vandals*, who thought it worse than death that their bishops were taken from them; if we understand excommunication or church censures (abating the disreputation and secular appendages) in the sense of the spirit to be a misery next to hell itself; then we have made a good progress in the charity and grace of God: till then we are but pretenders, or infants, or imperfect, in the same degree in which our affections are cold and our desires remiss. For a constant and prudent zeal is the best testimony of our masculine and vigorous heats; and an hour of fervour is more pleasing to God than a month of lukewarmness and indifferance.

9. But as some are active only in the presence of a good object, but remiss and careless for the want of it; so on the other side, an infant-grace is safe in the absence of a temptation, but falls easily when it is in presence. He therefore that would understand if he be grown in grace, may consider if his safety consists only *in peace*, or in *the strength of the spirit*. It is good that we will not seek out opportunities to sin; but are not we too apprehensive of it when it is presented? or do we not sink under it when it presses us? Can we hold our tapers near the flames, and not suck it in greedily like *naphtha* or pre-

pared nitre? or can we, like the children of the captivity, walk in the midst of flames, and not be scorched or consumed? Many men will not, like *Judah*, go into high ways, and untie the girdles of harlots: but can you reject the importunity of a beauteous and an imperious lady, as *Joseph* did? We had need pray that we be *not led into temptation*; that is, not only into the possession, but not into the allurements and neighbourhood of it; lest by little and little, our strongest resolutions be untwist, and crack in sunder like an easy cord severed into single threads: but if we, by the necessity of our lives and manner of living, dwell where a temptation will assault us, then to resist is the sign of a great grace; but such a sign, that without it the grace turns to wantonness, and the man into a beast, and an angel into a devil. *R.* *Moses* will not allow a man to be a true penitent, until he hath left all his sin, and in all the like circumstances refuses those temptations under which formerly he sinned and died: and indeed it may happen that such a trial only can secure our judgment concerning ourselves. And although to be tried in all the same accidents be not saie, nor always contingent, and in such cases it is sufficient to resist all the temptations we have, and avoid the rest, and decree against all; yet if it please God we are tempted, as *David* was by his eyes, or the martyrs by tortures, or *Joseph* by his wanton mistress; then to stand sure, and to ride upon the temptation like a ship upon a wave, or to stand like a rock in an impetuous storm, that is the sign of a great grace, and of a well-grown Christian.

10. No man is grown in grace but he that is ready for every work, that chooses not his employment, that refuses no imposition from God or his superiour. A ready hand, an obedient heart, and a willing cheerful soul in all the work of God, and in every office

of religion, is a great *index* of a good proficient in the ways of godliness. The heart of a man is like a wounded hand or arm, which if it be so cured that it can only move one way, and cannot turn to all postures and natural uses, it is but imperfect, and still half in health, and half-wounded: so is our spirit: if it be apt for prayer and close-fisted in alms, if it be sound in faith and dead in charity, if it be religious to God and unjust to our neighbour, there wants some integral part, or there is a lameness: and the deficiency in any one duty implies the guilt of all, (said St. James :) and, *Bonum ex integra causa, malum ex quolibet particulari*, every fault spoils a grace: but one grace alone cannot make a good man. But as to be universal in our obedience is necessary to the being in the state of grace; so, readily to change employment from the better to the worse, from the honourable to the poor, from useful to seemingly unprofitable, is a good character of a well-grown Christian, if he takes the worst part with indifference; and a spirit equally choosing all the events of the divine Providence. Can you be content to descend from ruling of a province to the keeping of a herd, from the work of an apostle to be confined in a prison, from disputing before princes to a conversation with shepherds? can you be willing to all that God is willing, and suffer all that he chooses, as willingly as if you had chosen your own fortune? In the same degree in which you can conform to God, in the same you have approached towards that perfection, whither we must by degrees arrive in our journey towards heaven. This is not to be expected of *beginners*; for they must be enticed with apt employments: and it may be their office and work so fits their spirits, that it makes them first in love with it, and then with God for giving it. And many a man goes to heaven in the days of peace, whose faith and

hope and patience would have been dashed in pieces, if he had fallen into a storm or persecution. *Oppression will make a wise man mad* (saith Solomon :) there are some usages that will put a sober person out of all patience, such which are besides the customs of this life, and contrary to all his hopes, and unworthy of a person of his quality. And when *Nero* durst not die, yet when his servants told him that the senators had condemned him to be put to death, *more majorum*, that is, by scourging like a slave, he was forced into preternatural confidence, and fell upon his own sword. But when God so changes thy estate, that thou art fallen into accidents to which thou art no otherwise disposed but by grace and a holy spirit, and yet thou canst pass through them with quietness, and do the work of suffering as well as the works of prosperous employment; this is an argument of a great grace and an extraordinary spirit. For many persons in a change of fortune perish, who if they had still been prosperous had gone to prison; being tempted in a persecution to perjuries and apostacy, and unhandsome compliances, and hypocrisy, and irreligion: and many men are brought to virtue, and to God, and to felicity, by being persecuted and made unprosperous. And these are effects of a more absolute and irrespective predestination. But when the grace of God is great and prudent, and masculine, and well grown, it is unaltered in all changes; save only that every accident that is new and violent brings him nearer to God, and makes him with greater caution and severity to dwell in virtue.

11. Lastly, some there are who are firm in all great and foreseen changes, and have laid up in the store-houses of the spirit (*reason* and *religion*) arguments and discourses enough to defend them against all violences, and stand at watch so much that they are safe where they can consider and deliberate; but

there may be something wanting yet: and in the direct line, in the straight progress to heaven, I call that an infallible sign of a great grace, and indeed the greatest degree of a great grace, when a man is prepared against sudden invasions of the spirit, surreptitious and extemporary assaults. Many a valiant person dares fight a battle, who yet will be timorous and surprised in a midnight alarm, or if he falls into a river. And how many discreet persons are there who, if you offer them a sin, and give them time to consider, and tell them of it before hand, will rather die than be perjured, or tell a deliberate lie, or break a promise; who (it may be) tell many sudden lies, and excuse themselves, and break their promises, and yet think themselves safe enough, and sleep without either affrightments, or any apprehension of dishonour done to their persons or their religion? Every man is not armed for all sudden arrests of passions. Few men have cast such fetters upon their lusts, and have their passions in so strict confinement, that they may not be over-run with a midnight flood, or an unlooked for inundation. He that does not start when he is smitten suddenly, is a constant person. And that is it which I intend in this instance; that he is a perfect man, and well grown in grace, who hath so habitual a resolution, and so unhasty and weary a spirit, as that he decrees upon no act before he hath considered maturely, and changed the sudden occasion into a sober counsel. *David* by chance spied *Bathsheba* washing herself, and being surprised, gave his heart away before he could consider; and when it was once gone, it was hard to recover it: and sometimes a man is betrayed by a sudden opportunity, and all things fitted for his sin ready at the door; the act stands in all its dress, and will not stay for an answer; and inconsideration is the defence and guard of the sin,

and makes that his conscience can the more easy swallow it: what shall the man do then? unless he be strong by his old strengths, by a great grace, by an habitual virtue and a sober unmoved spirit, he falls and dies the death, and hath no new strengths, but such as are to be employed for his recovery; none for his present guard, unless upon the old stock, and if he be a well grown Christian.

These are the parts, acts, and offices of our growing in grace; and yet I have sometimes called them signs: but they are signs, as eating and drinking are signs of life; they are *signs* so as also they are *parts of life*; and these are parts of our growth in grace, so that a man can grow in grace to no other purpose but to these or the like improvements.

Concerning which I have a caution or two to interpose. 1. The growth of grace is to be estimated as other moral things are, not according to the growth of things natural. Grace does not grow by observation, and a continual efflux, and a constant proportion; and a man cannot call himself to an account for the growth of every day, or week, or month: but, in the greater portions of our life, in which we have had many occasions and instances to exercise and improve our virtues, we may call ourselves to account: but it is a snare to our consciences to be examined in the growth of grace in every short revolution of solemn duty, as against every communion, or great festival.

2. Growth in grace is not always to be discerned either *in single instances*, or *in single graces*. Not in *single instances*: for every time we are to exercise a virtue, we are not in the same natural dispositions, nor do we meet with the same circumstances, and it is not always necessary that the next act should be more earnest and intense than the former: all *single acts* are to be done after the manner of men, and

therefore are not always capable of increasing, and they have their times beyond which they cannot easily swell; and therefore if it be a good act and zealous, it may proceed from a well grown grace, and yet a younger and weaker person may do some acts as great and as religious as it. But neither do *single graces* always afford a regular and certain judgment in this affair. For some persons at the first had rather die than be unchaste or perjured; and *greater love than this no man hath, that he lay down his life* for God: he cannot easily grow in the substance of that act; and if other persons, or himself, in process of time do it more cheerfully or with fewer fears, it is not always a sign of a greater grace, but sometimes of greater collateral assistances. or a better habit of body, or more fortunate circumstances: for he that goes to the block trembling for Christ, and yet endures his death certainly, and endures his trembling too, and runs through all his infirmities and the bigger temptations, looks not so well many times in the eyes of men, but suffers more for God, than those confident martyrs that courted death in the primitive church; and therefore may be much dearer in the eyes of God. But that which I say in this particular is, that a smallness in one is not an argument of the imperfection of the whole estate: because God does not always give to every man occasions to exercise, and therefore not *to improve*, every grace; and the passive virtues of a Christian are not to be expected to grow so fast in prosperous, as in suffering Christians. But in this case we are to take accounts of ourselves by the improvement of those graces which God makes to happen often in our lives; such as are charity and temperance in young men, liberality and religion in aged persons, ingenuity and humility in scholars, justice in merchants and artificers, forgiveness of injuries in great men

and persons tempted by law suits : for since virtues grow like other moral habits, by use, diligence and assiduity, there where God hath appointed our work and our instances, there we must consider concerning our growth in grace : in other things we are but beginners. But it is not likely that God will try us concerning degrees hereafter, in such things of which in this world he was sparing to give us opportunities.

3. Be careful to observe, that these rules are not all to be understood *negatively*, but *positively* and *affirmatively* : that is, that a man may conclude that he is grown in grace if he observes these characters in himself which I have here discoursed of ; but he must not conclude *negatively*, that he is not grown in grace, if he cannot observe such signal testimonies : for sometimes God covers the graces of his servants, and hides the beauty of his tabernacle with goat's hair and the skins of beasts, that he may rather suffer them to want present comfort than the grace of humility : for it is not necessary to preserve the gayeties and their spiritual pleasures : but if their humility fails, (which may easily be under the sunshine of conspicuous and illustrious graces) their virtues and themselves perish in a sad declension. But sometimes men have not skill to make a judgment ; and all this discourse seems too artificial to be tried by, in the hearty purposes of religion. Sometimes they let pass much of their life, even of their better days, without observance of particulars ; sometimes their cases of conscience are intricate, or allayed with unavoidable infirmities ; sometimes they are so uninstructed in the more secret parts of religion, and there are so many illusions and accidental miscarriages, that if we shall conclude negatively in the present question, we may produce scruples infinite, but understand nothing more of our estate, and do much less of our duty.

4. In considering concerning our growth in grace, let us take more care to consider matters that concern justice and charity, than that concern the virtue of religion; because in this there may be *much*, in the other there cannot easily be *any illusion* and cozenage. That is a good religion that believes, and trusts, and hopes in God through *Jesus Christ*, and for his sake does all justice and all charity that he can; and our blessed Lord gives no other description of *love* to God, but *obedience* and *keeping his commandments*. Justice and charity are like the *matter*, religion is the form of Christianity: but although the form be more noble and the principle of life, yet it is less discernible, less material, and less sensible; and we judge concerning the form by the matter, and by material accidents, and by actions: and so we must of our religion, that is, of our love to God, and of the efficacy of our prayers, and the usefulness of our fastings; we must make our judgments by the more material parts of our duty, that is, by sobriety, and by justice, and by charity.

I am much prevented in my intention for the perfecting of this so very material consideration: I shall therefore only tell you, that to these parts and actions of a good life, or of our growth in grace, some have added some accidental considerations, which are rather signs than parts of it. Such are: 1. To praise all good things, and to study to imitate what we praise. 2. To be impatient that any man should excel us; not out of envy to the person, but of noble emulation to the excellence. For so *Themistocles* could not sleep after the great victory at *Marathon* purchased by *Miltiades*, till he had made himself illustrious by equal services to his country. 3. The bearing of sickness patiently, and ever with improvement, and the addition of some excellent principle, and the firm pursuing it. 4. Great devotion, and much delight in our prayers. 5. Frequent inspira-

tions and often whispers of the spirit of God prompting us to devotion and obedience; especially if we add to this a constant and ready obedience to all those holy invitations. 6. Offering peace to them that have injured me, and the abating of the circumstances of honour or of right, when either justice or charity is concerned in it. 7. Love to the brethren. 8. To behold our companions, or our inferiours, full of honour and fortune; and if we sit still at home and murmur not, or if we can rejoice both in their honour and our own quiet, that is a fair work of a good man. And now. 9. After all this, I will not trouble you with reckoning a freedom from being tempted, not only from being overcome, but from being tried: For though that be a rare felicity, and hath in it much safety: yet it hath less honour, and fewer instances of virtue, unless it proceed from a confirmed and heroical grace; which is indeed a little image of heaven and of a celestial charity, and never happens signally to any, but to old and very eminent persons. 10. But some also add an excellent habit of body and material passions, such as are chaste and virtuous dreams; and suppose that as a disease abuses the fancy, and a vice does prejudice it, so may an excellent virtue of the soul smooth and calcine the body, and make it serve perfectly, and without rebellious indispositions. 11. Others are in love with *Mary Magdalen's* tears, and fancy the hard knees of *St. James*, and the sore eyes of *St. Peter*, and the very recreations of *St. John*; *Proh! quam virtute praeditos omnia decent!* thinking all things become a good man, even his gestures and little incuriosities. And though this may proceed from a great love of virtue, yet because some men do thus much and no more, and this is to be attributed to the lustre of virtue, which shines a little through a man's eye lids, though he perversely winks against the light; yet (as the former of these two is too metaphysical, so is the latter too

fantastical) he that by the foregoing material parts and proper significations of a growing grace does not understand his own condition, must be content to work on still *super totam materiam*, without considerations of particulars; he must pray earnestly, and watch diligently, and consult with prudent guides, and ask of God great measures of his spirit, and *hunger and thirst after righteousness*: for he that does so, shall certainly *be satisfied*. And if he understands not his present good condition, yet if he be not wanting in the downright endeavours of piety, and in hearty purposes, he shall then find that he is grown in grace, when he springs up in *the resurrection of the just*, and shall be ingrafted upon a tree of paradise, which beareth fruit for ever, *glory to God*, rejoicing to saints and angels, and eternal felicity to his own pious, though undiscerning soul.

Prima sequentem, honestum est in secundis aut tertiis consistere.*

Cicero.

* He, who aims at the highest prize, is worthy of honour if he attains only to the second or the third.

SERMON XVI.



OF GROWTH IN SIN :

OR, THE SEVERAL STATES AND DEGREES OF SINNERS, WITH THE
MANNER HOW THEY ARE TO BE TREATED.

JUDE EPIST. v. 22, 23.

And of some have compassion, making a difference : And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.

MAN hath but one entrance into the world, but a thousand ways to pass from thence. And as it is in the natural, so it is in the spiritual : nothing but the union of faith and obedience can secure our regeneration, and our new birth, and can bring us to see the light of heaven ; but there are a thousand passages of turning into darkness. And it is not enough that our bodies are exposed to so many sad infirmities and dishonourable imperfections, unless our soul also be a subject capable of so many diseases, irregular passions, false principles, accursed habits and degrees of perverseness, that the very kinds of them are reducible to a method, and make up the part of a science. There are variety of stages and descents to death ; as there are diversity of torments, and of sad regions of misery in hell, which is the centre and

kingdom of sorrows. But that we may a little refresh the sadnesses of this consideration; for every one of these stages of sin, God hath measured out a proportion of mercy: for, *if sin abound, grace shall much more abound*; and God hath concluded all under sin, not with purposes to destroy us, but, *ut omnium misereatur, that he might have mercy upon all*; that light may break forth from the deepest inclosures of darkness, and mercy may rejoice upon the recessions of justice, and grace may triumph upon the ruins of sin, and God may be glorified in the miracles of our conversion, and the wonders of our preservation, and glories of our being saved. There is no state of sin, but, if we be persons capable (according to God's method of healing) of receiving antidotes, we shall find a sheet of mercy spread over our wounds and nakedness. If our diseases be small, almost necessary, scarce avoidable; then God does, and so we are commanded to cure them, and cover them with a veil of pity, compassion, and gentle remedies: if our evils be violent, inveterate, gangrened, and incorporated into our nature by evil customs, they must be pulled from the flames of hell with censures, and cauteries, and punishments, and sharp remedies, quickly and rudely; their danger is present and sudden, its effect is quick and intolerable, and, there are no soft counsels then to be entertained; they are already in the fire, but they may be saved for all that. So great, so infinite, so miraculous is God's mercy, that he will not give a sinner over, though the hairs of his head be singed with the flames of hell: God's desires of having us to be saved continue, even when we begin to be damned; even till we will not be saved, and are gone beyond God's method, and all the revelations of his kindness. And certainly that is a bold and a mighty sinner, whose iniquity is swelled beyond all the bulk and heap of God's revealed loving kindness: if sin bath

swelled beyond grace, and superabounds over it, that sin is gone beyond the measures of a man: such a person is removed beyond all the malice of human nature, into the evil and spite of devils and accursed spirits: there is no greater sadness in the world than this. God hath not appointed a remedy in the vast treasures of grace for some men, and some sins; they have sinned like the falling angels, and having overrun the ordinary evil inclinations of their nature, they are without the protection of the divine mercy, and the conditions of that grace which was designed to save all the world, and was sufficient to have saved twenty. This is a condition to be avoided with the care of God and his angels, and all the whole industry of man. In order to which end my purpose now is to remonstrate to you the several states of sin and death, together with those remedies which God had proportioned out to them; that we may observe the evils of the least, and so avoid the intolerable mischiefs of the greater, even of those sins which still are within the power and possibilities of recovery; lest insensibly we fall into those sins and into those circumstances of person for which Christ never died, which the Holy Ghost never means to cure, and which the eternal God never will pardon: for there are of this kind more than commonly men imagine, whilst they amuse their spirits with gayeties and false principles, till they have run into horrible impieties, from whence they are not willing to withdraw their foot, and God is resolved never to snatch and force them thence.

1. *Of some have compassion.* And these I shall reduce to four heads or orders of men and actions; all which have their proper cure proportionable to their proper state, gentle remedies to the lesser irregularities of the soul. 1. The first are those that sin without observation of their particular state; either

because they are uninstructed in the special cases of conscience, or because they do an evil against which there is no express commandment. It is a sad calamity, that there are so many millions of men and women that are entered into a state of sickness and danger, and yet are made to believe they are in perfect health; and they do actions concerning which they never made a question whether they were just or no, nor were ever taught by what names to call them. For while they observe that *modesty* is sometimes abused by a false name, and called *clownishness* and *want of breeding*; and *contentedness* and *temperate living* is suspected to be *want of courage* and *noble thoughts*; and *severity of life* is called *imprudent* and *unsociable*; and *simplicity* and *heartly honesty* is counted *foolish* and *unpolitick*: they are easily tempted to honour *prodigality* and *foolish dissolution* of their estates with the title of *liberal* and *noble usages*; *timorousness* is called *caution*, *rashness* is called *quickness of spirit*, *covetousness* is *frugality*, *amorousness* is *society* and *genteel*, *peevishness* and *anger* are *courage*, *flattery* is *humane* and *courteous*: and under these false veils virtue slips away, (like truth from under the hands of them that fight for her) and leaves vice dressed up with the same imagery, and the fraud not discovered till the day of recompences, when men are distinguished by their rewards. But so men think they sleep freely when their spirits are loaden with a lethargy, and they call a hectic fever the vigour of a natural heat, till nature changes those less discerned states into the notorious images of death. Very many men never consider whether they sin or no in ten thousands of their actions, every one of which is very disputable, and do not think they are bound to consider: these men are to be pitied and instructed, they are to be called upon to use religion like a daily diet; their consciences must be made tender, and their catechism

enlarged; teach them, and make them sensible, and they are cured.

But the other in this place are more considerable: men sin without observation, because their actions have no restraint of an express commandment, no letter of the law to condemn them by an express sentence. And this happens, when the crime is comprehended under a general notion, without the instancing of particulars: for if you search over all the scripture, you shall never find *incest* named and marked with the black character of death; and there are divers sorts of uncleanness to which scripture therefore gives no name, because she would have them have no being. And it had been necessary that God should have described all particulars, and all kinds, if he had not given reason to man: for so it is fit that a guide should point out every turning, if he be to teach a child or a fool to return unto his father's roof. But he that bids us avoid intemperance for fear of a fever, supposes you to be sufficiently instructed that you may avoid the plague; and, when to look upon a woman with lust is condemned, it will not be necessary to add, You must not do more, when even the least is forbidden: and when to uncover the nakedness of *Noah* brought an universal plague upon the posterity of *Cham*, it was not necessary that the law-giver should say, You must not ascend to your father's bed, or draw the curtains from your sister's retirements. When the *Athenians* forbade to transport figs from *Athens*, there was no need to name the gardens of *Alcibiades*; much less was it necessary to add, that *Chabrius* should send no plants to *Sparta*. Whatsoever is comprised under the general notion, and partakes of the common nature, and the same iniquity, needs no special prohibition; unless we think we can mock God, and elude his holy precepts with an absurd trick of mistaken logic. I

am sure that will not save us harmless from a thunderbolt.

2. Men sin without an express prohibition, when they commit a thing that is *like* a forbidden evil. And when St. *Paul* had reckoned many works of the flesh, he adds *and such like*, all that have the same unreasonableness and carnality. For thus polygamy is unlawful: for if it be not lawful for a Christian to *put away his wife and marry another*, (unless for adultery,) much less may he keep a first and take a second, when the first is not put away: if a Christian may not be drunk with wine, neither may he be drunk with passion: if he may not kill his neighbour, neither then must he tempt him to sin, for that destroys him more: if he may not wound him, then he may not persuade him to intemperance, and a drunken fever; if it be not lawful to cozen a man, much less is it permitted that he make a man a fool, and a beast, and exposed to every man's abuse, and to all ready evils. And yet men are taught to start at the one half of these, and make no conscience of the other half; whereof some have a greater baseness than the other that are named, and all have the same unreasonableness.

3. A man is guilty, even when no law names his action, if he does any thing that is a cause or an effect, a part or unhandsome adjunct of a forbidden instance. He that forbade all intemperance, is as much displeased with the infinite of foolish talk that happens at such meetings, as he is at the spoiling of the drink, and the destroying the health. If God cannot endure wantonness, how can he suffer lascivious dressings, tempting circumstances, wanton eyes, high diet? If Idleness be a sin, then all immoderate mis-spending of our time, all long and tedious games, all absurd contrivances how to throw away a precious hour, and a *day of salvation* also, are

against God, and against religion. He that is commanded to be charitable, it is also intended he should not spend his money vainly, but be a good husband and provident, that he may be able to give to the poor, as he would be to purchase a lordship, or pay his daughter's portion. And upon this stock it is, that the Christian religion forbids jeering and immoderate laughter, and reckons *jestings* among the *things that are unseemly*. This also would be considered.

4. Besides the express laws of our religion, there is an universal line and limit to our passions and designs, which is called *the analogy of Christianity*; that is, the proportion of its sanctity, and the strictness of its holy precepts. This is not forbidden; but, does this become you? Is it decent to see a Christian live in plenty and ease, and heap up money, and never to partake of Christ's passions? There is no law against a judge being a dresser of gardens, or a gatherer of sycamore fruits; but it becomes him not, and deserves a reproof. If I do exact justice to my neighbour, and cause him to be punished legally for all the evils he makes me suffer, I have not broken a fragment from the stony tables of the law: but this is against the *analogy of our religion*; it does not become a disciple of so gentle a master to take all advantages that he can. Christ, that quitted all the glories that were essential to him, and that grew up in his nature when he lodged in his Father's bosom; Christ, that suffered all the evils due for the sins of mankind, himself remaining most innocent; Christ, that promised persecution, injuries and affronts as part of our present portion, and gave them to his disciples as a legacy, and gave us his spirit to enable us to suffer injuries, and made that the parts or suffering evils should be the matter of three or four Christian graces of *patience*, of *fortitude*, of *longanimity*, and *perseverance*; he that of eight beatitudes made that five of them

should be instanced in the matter of humiliation and suffering temporal inconvenience ; *that blessed Master* was certainly desirous that his disciples should take their crowns from the cross, not from the evenness and felicities of the world ; he intended we should give something, and suffer more things, and forgive all things, all injuries whatsoever. And though together with this may consist our securing a just interest ; yet in very many circumstances we shall be put to consider how far it becomes us to quit something of that, to pursue peace ; and when we have secured the letter of the law, that we also look to its analogy ; when we do what we are strictly bound to, then also we must consider what becomes us, who are disciples of such a master, who are instructed with such principles, charmed with so severe precepts, and invited with the certainty of infinite rewards. Now although this discourse may seem new and strange, and very severe, yet it is infinitely reasonable, because Christianity is a law of love and voluntary services ; it can in no sense be confined with laws and strict measures : well may the ocean receive its limits, and the whole capacity of fire be glutted, and the grave have his belly so full that it shall cast up all its bowels, and disgorge the continued meal of so many thousand years ; but love can never have a limit ; and it is indeed to be *swallowed up*, but nothing can *fill* it but God, who hath no bound. Christianity is a law for sons, not for servants ; and God, that *gives his grace without measure*, and rewards without end, and acts of favour beyond our askings, and provides for us beyond our needs, and gives us counsels beyond commandments, intends not to be limited out by the just evennesses and stricken measures of the words of a commandment. Give to God *full measure, shaken together, pressed down, heaped up, and running over* ; for God does so to us ; and

when we have done so to him, we are infinitely short of the least measure of what God does for us; *we are still unprofitable servants*. And, therefore, as the breaking any of the laws of Christianity provokes God to anger, so the prevaricating in *the analogy* of Christianity stirs him up to jealousy. He hath reason to suspect our hearts are not right with him, when we are so reserved in the matter and measures of our services: and if we will give God but just what he calls for by express mandate, it is just in him to require all of that at our hands without any abatement, and then we are sure to miscarry. And let us remember, that when God said he was *a jealous God*, he expressed the meaning of it to be, he did *punish to the third and fourth generation*. *Jealousy is like the rage of a man*: but if it be also like the anger of God, it is insupportable, and will crush us into the ruins of our grave.

But because these things are not frequently considered, there are very many sins committed against religion, which because the commandment hath not marked, men refuse to mark, and think God requires no more. I am entered into a sea of matter, which I must not now prosecute; but I shall only note this to you, that it is but reasonable we should take accounts of our lives by *the proportions* as well as by the *express rules* of our religion, because in humane and civil actions all the nations of the world use to call their subjects to account. For that which in the accounts of men is called *reputation* and *publick honesty*, is the same which in religion we call *analogy* and *proportion*; in both cases there being some things which are besides the notices of laws, and yet are the most certain consignations of an excellent virtue. He is a base person that does any thing against *publick honesty*; and yet no man can be punished, if he marries a wife the next day after his first wife's funeral: and

so he that prevaricates the proportions and excellent reasons of Christianity, is a person *without zeal* and *without love*; and unless care be taken of him, he will quickly be *without religion*. But yet these, I say, are a sort of persons which are to be used with gentleness, and treated with compassion: for no man must be handled roughly to force him to do a kindness; and coercion of laws and severity of judges, sergeants, and executioners are against offenders of commandments; but the way to cure such persons is the easiest and gentlest remedy of all others. They are to be instructed in all the parts of duty, and invited forward by the consideration of the great rewards which are laid up for all the sons of God, who serve him without constraint, without measures and allays, even as fire burns, and as the roses grow, even as much as they can, and to all the extent of their natural and artificial capacities. For it is a thing fit for our compassion, to see men fettered in the *iron bands of laws*, and yet to break *the golden chains of love*; but all those instruments which are proper to enkindle the love of God, and to turn fear into charity, are the proper instances of that compassion which is to be used towards these men.

2. The next sort of those who are in the state of sin, and yet to be handled gently and *with compassion*, are those who entertain themselves with the beginnings and little entrances of sin: which as they are to be more pitied because they often come by reason of inadvertency, and an unavoidable weakness in many degrees; so they are more to be taken care of, because they are undervalued and undiscernibly run into inconvenience. When we see a child strike a servant rudely, or jeer a silly person, or wittingly cheat his play-fellow, or talk words light as the skirt of a summer garment; we laugh and are delighted with the wit and confidence of the boy, and

encourage such hopeful beginnings: and in the mean time we consider not that from these beginnings he shall grow up till he become a tyrant, an oppressor, a goat, and a traitor. *Nemo simul malus fit, et malus esse cernitur; sicut nec scorpiis tum innascuntur stimuli cum pungunt:* No man is discerned to be vicious so soon as he is so, and vices have their infancy and their childhood; and it cannot be expected that in a child's age should be the vice of a man; that were monstrous, as if he wore a beard in his cradle; and we do not believe that a serpent's sting does just then grow when he strikes us in a vital part; the venom and the little spear was there, when it first began to creep from his little shell. And little boldnesses and looser words, and wranglings for nuts, and lying for trifles, are of the same proportion to the malice of a child; as impudence, and duels, and injurious law-suits, and false witness in judgment, and perjuries are in men. And the case is the same when men enter upon a new stock of any sin: the vice is at first apt to be put out of countenance, and a little thing discourages it, and it amuses the spirit with words, and fantastick images, and cheap instances of sin; and men think themselves safe, because they are as yet safe from laws, and the sin does not as yet out-cry the healthful noise of Christ's loud cryings and intercession with his Father, nor call for thunder or an amazing judgment; but according to the old saying, *The thorns of Dauphine will never fetch blood, if they do not scratch the first day;* and we shall find that the little indecencies and rillings of our souls, the first openings and disparkings of our virtue differ only from the state of perdition, as infancy does from old age, as sickness from death; it is the entrance into those regions, whither whosoever passes finally, shall lie down and groan with an eternal sorrow. Now in this case it may happen that a compassion

may ruin a man, if it be the pity of an indiscreet mother, and nurse the sin from its weakness to the strength of habit and impudence: the compassion that is to be used to such persons is the compassion of a physician or a severe tutor: chastise thy infant sin by discipline, and acts of virtue: and never begin that way from whence you must return with some trouble and much shame, or else, if you proceed, you finish your eternal ruin.

He that means to be temperate, and avoid the crime and dishonour of being a drunkard, must not love to partake of the songs, or to bear a part in the foolish scenes of laughter, which distract wisdom, and fright her from the company. And *Lavinia*, that was chaster than the elder *Sabines*, and severer than her philosophical guardian, was well instructed in the great lines of honour and cold justice to her husband: but when she gave way to the wanton ointments and looser circumstances of the *Baiae*, and bathed often in *Avernus*, and from thence hurried to the companies and dressings of *Lucrinus*, she quenched her honour, and gave her virtue and her body as a spoil to the follies and intemperance of a young gentleman. For so have I seen the little purls of a spring sweat through the bottom of a bank, and intenerate the stubborn pavement, till it hath made it fit for the impression of a child's foot; and it was despised, like the descending pearls of a misty morning, till it had opened its way, and made a stream large enough to carry away the ruins of the undermined strand, and to invade the neighbouring gardens: but then the despised drops were grown into an artificial river, and an intolerable mischief. So are the first entrances of sin, stopped with the antidotes of a hearty prayer, and checked into sobriety by the eye of a reverend man, or the counsels of a single sermon: but when such beginnings are ne-

glected, and our religion hath not in it so much philosophy, as to think any thing evil as long as we can endure it, they grow up to ulcers and pestilential evils; they destroy the soul by their abode, who at their first entry might have been killed with the pressure of a little finger.

Ἐρχην ἰσθθαί πολυ λαῶν πρὸς τελευτην.*

Those men are in a condition, in which they may, if they please, pity themselves; keep their green wound from festering and uncleanness, and it will heal alone: *Non procul absunt, they are not far from the kingdom of heaven*, but they are not within its portion. And let me say this, that although little sins have not yet made our condition desperate, but left it easily recoverable; yet it is a condition that is quite out of God's favour: although they are not far advanced in their progress to ruin, yet they are not at all in a state of grace: and therefore though they are to be pitied and relieved accordingly; yet that supposes the incumbency of a present misery.

3. There are some very much to be pitied and assisted because they are going into hell, and (as matters stand with them) they cannot, or they think they cannot avoid it. *Quidam ad alienum dormiunt somnum, ad alienum edunt appetitum: amare et odisse (res omnium maxime liberas) jubentur*: There are some persons whose life is so wholly in dependence from others, that they sleep when others please, they eat and drink according to their master's appetite or intemperance; they are *commanded to love or hate*, and are not left free in the very charter and privileges of nature. *Miserum est, servire sub dominis parum felicibus*. For suppose the prince or the patron be vicious, suppose he calls his servants to bathe their

* The cure is easy if applied in time.

souls in the goblets of intemperance; if he be also imperious, (for such persons love not to be contradicted in their vices) it is the loss of that man's fortune not to lose his soul: and it is the servant's excuse, and he esteems it also his glory, that he can tell a merry tale, how his master and himself did swim in drink, till they both talked like fools, and then did lie down like beasts.—*Facinus quos inquinat, aequat*: there is then no difference, but that the one is the fairest bull, and the master of the herd. And how many tenants and relatives are known to have a servile conscience, and to know no affirmation or negation but such as shall serve their landlord's interest? Alas! the poor men live by it, and they must beg their bread if ever they turn recreant, or shall offer to be honest. There are some trades whose very foundation is laid in the vice of others; and in many others, if a thread of deceit do not quite run through all their negociations, they decay into the sorrows of beggary: and therefore they will support their neighbour's vice, that he may support their trade. And what would you advise those men to do, to whom a false oath is offered to their lips, and a dagger at their heart? Their reason is surprised, and their choice is seized upon, and all their consultation is arrested; and if they did not prepare before-hand, and stand armed with religion and perfect resolution, would not any man fall, and think that every good man will say his case is pitiable? although no temptation is bigger than the grace of God, yet many temptations are greater than our strengths: and we do not live at the rate of a mighty and a victorious grace.

Those persons which cause these vicious necessities upon their brethren will lie low in hell; but the others will have but small comfort in feeling a lesser damnation.

Of the same consideration it is, when ignorant people are catechised into false doctrine, and know nothing but such principles which weaken the nerves, and enfeeble the joints of holy living; they never heard of any other: those that follow great and evil examples; the people that are engaged in the publick sins of a kingdom which they understand not, and either must venture to be undone upon the strength of their own little reasonings and weak discouragements, or else must go *qua itur, non qua eundum est*, there where the popular misery hath made the way plain before their eyes, though it be uneven and dangerous to their consciences. In these cases I am forced to reckon a catalogue of mischiefs; but it will be hard to cure any of them. *Aristippus* in his discourses was a great flatterer of *Dionysius* of *Sicily*, and did own doctrines which might give an easiness to some vices, and knew not how to contradict the pleasures of his prince; but seemed like a person disposed to partake of them, that the example of a philosopher and the practice of a king might do countenance to a shameful life. But when *Dionysius* sent him two women slaves, fair and young, he sent them back, and shamed the easiness of his doctrine by the severity of his manners; he daring to be virtuous when he was alone, though in the presence of him whom he thought it necessary to flatter, he had no boldness to own the virtue. So it is with too many: if they be left alone, and that they stand unshaken with the eye of their tempter, or the authority of their lord, they go whither their education or their custom carries them; but it is not in some natures to deny the face of a man, and the boldness of a sinner; and, which is yet worse, it is not in most men's interest to do it. These men are in a pitiable condition, and are to be helped by the following rules.

1. Let every man consider that he hath two relations to serve, and he stands between God and his master, and his nearest relative : and in such cases it comes to be disputed whether interest be preferred, which of the persons is to be displeased, God or my master, God or my prince, God or my friend. If we be servants of the man ; remember also that I am a servant of God : add to this, that if my present service to the man be a slavery in me, and a tyranny in him, yet God's service is a noble freedom. And *Apollonius* said well, It was for slaves to lie, and for freemen to speak the truth. *If you be freed by the blood of the Son of God, then you are free indeed :* and then consider how dishonourable it is to lie, to the displeasure of God, and only to please your fellow servant. The difference here is so great, that it might be sufficient only to consider the antithesis. Did the man make you what you are ? Did he pay his blood for you, to save you from death ? Does he keep you from sickness ? True : you eat at his table ; but they are of God's provisions that he and you feed of. Can your master free you from a fever, when you have drunk yourself into it ? and restore your innocence ; when you have forsworn yourself for his interest ? Is the change reasonable ? He gives you meat and drink for which you do him service : but is not he a tyrant, and an usurper, an oppressor, and an extortioner, if he will force thee to give thy soul for him, to sell thy soul for old shoes and broken bread ? But when thou art to make thy accounts of eternity, will it be taken for an answer, My patron or my governour, my prince or my master, forced me to it ? or, if it will not, will he undertake a portion of thy flames ? or, if that may not be, will it be in the midst of all thy torments any ease to thy sorrows, to remember all the rewards and cloaths, all the money and civilities, all the cheerful

looks and familiarity and fellowship of vices, which in your life-time made your spirit so gay and easy? It will in the eternal loads of sorrow add a duplicate of groans and indignation, when it shall be remembered for how base and trifling an interest, and upon what weak principles, we fell sick and died eternally.

2. The next advice to persons thus tempted is, that they would learn to separate duty from mistaken interest, and let them be both served in their just proportions, when we have learned to make a difference. A wife is bound to her husband in all his just designs, and in all noble usages and Christian comportments: but a wife is no more bound to pursue her husband's vicious hatreds, than to serve and promote his unlawful and wandering loves. It is not always a part of duty to think the same propositions, or to curse the same persons, or to wish him success in unjust designs: and yet the sadness of it is, that a good woman is easily tempted to believe the cause to be just; and when her affection hath forced her judgment, her judgment for ever after shall carry the affection to all its erring and abused determinations. A friend is turned a flatterer, if he does not know that the limits of friendship extend no farther than the pale and inclosures of reason and religion. No master puts it into his covenant that his servant shall be drunk with him, or give in evidence in his master's cause according to his master's scrolls: and therefore it is besides and against the duty of a servant to sin by that authority; it is as if he should set mules to keep his sheep, or make his dogs to carry burthens, it is besides their nature and design. And if any person falls under so tyrannical relation, let him consider how hard a master he serves, where the devil gives the employment, and shame is his entertainment, and sin is his work, and

hell is his wages. Take therefore the counsel of the son of *Sirac*; *Accept no person against thy soul, and let not the reverence of any man cause thee to fall.**

3. When passion mingles with duty, and is a necessary instrument of serving God, let not passion run its own course, and pass on to liberty, and thence to licence and dissolution; but let no more of it be entertained than will just do the work. For no zeal of duty will warrant a violent passion to prevaricate a duty. I have seen some officers of war, in passion and zeal of their duty, have made no scruple to command a soldier with a dialect of cursing and accents of swearing, and pretended they could not else speak words effective enough, and of sufficient authority: and a man may easily be overtaken in the issues of his government, while his authority serves itself with passion; if he be not curious in his measures, his passion also will serve itself upon the authority, and over-rule the ruler.

4. Let every such tempted person remember, that all evil comes from ourselves, and not from others; and therefore all pretences and prejudices, all commands and temptations, all opinions and necessities are but instances of our weakness, and arguments of our folly: for, unless we listed, no man can make us drink beyond our measures; and if I tell a lie for my master's or my friend's advantage, it is because I prefer a little end of money or flattery before my honour and my innocence. They are huge follies which go up and down in the mouths and heads of men. *He that knows not how to dissemble, knows not how to reign*: He that will not do as his company does, must go out of the world, and quit all society of men. We create necessities of our own, and then think we have reason to serve their importunity. *Non ego*

* Eccles. iv. 22.

sum ambitiosus, sed nemo aliter Romae potest vivere; non ego sumptuosus, sed urbs ipsa magnas impensas exigit. Non est meum vitium quod iracundus sum, quod nondum constitui certum vitae genus; adolescentia haec facit.

The place we live in makes us expensive, the state of life I have chosen renders me ambitious, my age makes me angry or lustful, proud or peevish. These are nothing else but resolutions never to mend as long as we can have excuses for our follies, and until we can cozen ourselves no more. There is no such thing as a necessity for a prince to dissemble, or for a servant to lie, or for a friend to flatter, for a civil person and a sociable to be drunk: we cozen ourselves with thinking the fault is so much derivative from others, till the smart and the shame fall upon ourselves, and cover our heads with sorrow. And unless this gap be stopped, and that we build our duty upon our own bottoms, as supported with the grace of God, there is no vice but may find a patron; and no age, or relation, or state of life, but will be an engagement to sin; and we shall think it necessary to be lustful in our youth, and revengeful in our manhood, and covetous in our old age: and we shall perceive that every state of men, and every trade and profession, lives upon the vices of others, or upon their miseries; and therefore they will think it necessary to promote, or to wish it. If men were temperate, physicians would be poor: and unless some princes were ambitious, or others injurious, there would be no employment for soldiers. The vintner's retail supports the merchant's trade, and it is a vice that supports the vintner's retail: and if all men were wise and sober persons, we should have fewer beggars, and fewer rich. And if our lawgivers should imitate *Demudes* of *Athens*, who condemned a man that lived by selling things belonging to funerals, as supposing he could not choose but wish the

death of men, by whose dying he got his living; we should find most men accounted criminals, because vice is so involved in the affairs of the world, that it is made the support of many trades, and the business of great multitudes of men. Certainly from hence it is that iniquity does so much abound: and unless we state our questions right, and perceive the evil to be designed only from ourselves, and that no such pretence shall keep off the punishment or the shame from ourselves, we shall fall into a state which is only capable of compassion, because it is irrecoverable: and then we shall be infinitely miserable, when we can only receive an useless and ineffectual pity. Whatsoever is necessary cannot be avoided: He therefore that shall say, he cannot avoid his sin, is out of the mercies of this text: they who are appointed guides and physicians of souls cannot to any purpose do their offices of pity. It is necessary that we serve God, and do our duty, and secure the interest of our souls, and be as careful to preserve our relations to God, as to our friend or prince. But if it can be necessary for any man in any condition to sin, it is also necessary for that man to perish.

SERMON XVII.

PART II.

4. THE last sort of them that sin, and yet are to be treated with compassion, is of them that interrupt the course of an honest life with single acts of sin, stepping aside and *starting like a broken bow*:

whose resolution stands fair, and their hearts are towards God and they sojourn in religion, or rather dwell there; but that like evil husbands they go abroad, and enter into places of dishonour and unthriftiness. Such as these all stories remember with a sad character: and every narrative concerning *David* which would end in honour and fair report, is sullied with the remembrances of *Bathsheba*; and the Holy Ghost hath called him a *man after God's own heart*, save in the matter of *Uriah*: there indeed he was a man after his own heart; even then when his reason was stolen from him by passion, and his religion was sullied by the beauties of a fair woman. I wish we lived in an age in which the people were to be treated with concerning renouncing the single actions of sin, and the seldom interruptions of piety. Men are taught to say, that every man sins in every action he does; and this is one of the doctrines for the believing of which he shall be accounted a good man: and upon this ground it is easy for men to allow themselves some sins, when in all cases and in every action it is unavoidable. I shall say nothing of the question, save that the scriptures reckon otherwise; and in the account of *David's* life reckon but one great sin, and in *Zachariah* and *Elizabeth* give a testimony of an unblameable conversation; and *Hezekiah* did not make *his confession* when he prayed to God in his sickness, and said *he had walked uprightly before God*: and therefore *St. Paul*, after his conversion, designed and laboured hard, and therefore certainly with hopes to accomplish it, that *he might keep his conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards man*; and one of *Christ's* great purposes is, to present his whole church pure and spotless to the throne of grace; and *St. John* the Baptist offended none but *Herod*; and no pious Christian

brought a bill of accusation against the Holy Virgin Mother. Certain it is, that God hath given us precepts of such a holiness and such a purity, such a meekness and such humility, as hath no pattern but Christ, no precedent but the purities of God: and therefore it is intended we should live with a life whose actions are not checkered with white and black, half sin and half virtue. God's sheep are not like *Jacob's flock, streaked and spotted*; it is an entire holiness that God requires, and will not endure to have a holy course interrupted by the dishonour of a base and ignoble action. I do not mean that a man's life can be as pure as the sun, or the rays of celestial *Jerusalem*; but like the moon, in which there are spots, but they are no deformity; a lessening only and an abatement of light, no cloud to hinder and draw a veil before its face, but sometimes it is not so serene and bright as at other times. Every man hath his indiscretions and infirmities, his arrests and sudden incursions, his neighbourhoods and semblances of sin, his little violences to reason, and peevish melancholy, and humorous fantastick discourses; unaptness to a devout prayer, his fondness to judge favourably in his own cases, little deceptions, and voluntary and involuntary cozenages, ignorances and inadvertencies, careless hours and unwatchful seasons. But no good man can ever commit one act of adultery; no godly man will at any time be drunk; or if he be, he ceases to be a godly man, and is run into the confines of death, and is sick at heart, and may die of the sickness, die eternally. This happens more frequently in persons of an infant piety, when the virtue is not corroborated by a long abode, and a confirmed resolution, and an usual victory, and a triumphant grace: and the longer we are accustomed to piety, the more unfrequent will be the little breaches of folly, and a returning to sin. But as

the needle of a compass, when it is directed to its beloved star, at the first addresses waves on either side, and seems indifferent in his courtship of the rising or declining sun, and when it seems first determined to the north, stands a while trembling, as if it suffered inconvenience in the first fruition of its desires, and stands not still in full enjoyment till after first a great variety of motion, and then in an undisturbed posture : so is the piety, and so is the conversion of a man, wrought by degrees and several steps of imperfection : and at first our choices are wavering, convinced by the grace of God, and yet not persuaded ; and then persuaded, but not resolved ; and then resolved, but deferring to begin : and then beginning, but (as all beginnings are) in weakness and uncertainty : and we fly out often into huge indiscretions and look back to *Babylon*, and long to return to *Egypt* : and when the storm is quite over, we find little bubblings and unevennesses upon the face of the waters, we often weaken our own purposes by the returns of sin : and we do not call ourselves *conquerors*, till by the long possession of virtues, it is a strange and unusual, and therefore an uneasy and unpleasant thing, to act a crime. When *Polemon* of *Athens*, by chance coming into the schools of *Xenocrates*, was reformed upon the hearing of that one lecture, some wise men gave this censure of him ; *Pergrinatus est hujus animus in nequitia, non habitavit*, His mind wandered in wickedness, and travelled in it, but never dwelt there. The same is the case of some men ; they make inroads into the enemy's country, not like enemies to spoil, but like *Dinah*, to be satisfied with the stranger beauties of the land, till their virtues are deflowered, and they enter into tragedies, and are possessed by death and intolerable sorrows. But because this is like the fate of *Jacob's* daughter, and happens not by design, but folly, not by malice, but

surprise, not by the strength of will, but by the weakness of grace, and yet carries a man to the same place whither a great vice usually does; it is hugely pitiable, and the persons are to be treated with compassion, and to be assisted by the following considerations and exercises.

First, let us consider, that for a good man to be overtaken in a single crime is the greatest dishonour and unthriftness in the whole world. *As a fly in a box of ointment, so is a little folly to him who is accounted wise,* said the *Son of Sirack*. No man chides a fool for his weakness, or scorns a child for playing with flies, and preferring the present appetite before all the possibilities of to-morrow's event: but men wondered when they saw *Socrates* ride upon a cane: and when *Solomon* laid his wisdom at the foot of *Pharaoh's* daughter, and changed his glory for the interest of wanton sleep, he became the discourse of heaven and earth: and men think themselves abused, and their expectation cozened, when they see a wise man do the actions of a fool, and a good man seized upon by the dishonours of a crime. But the loss of his reputation is the least of his evil. *It is the greatest improvidence in the world,* to let a healthful constitution be destroyed in the surfeit of one night. For although when a man, by the grace of God and a long endeavour, hath obtained the habit of Christian graces, every single sin does not spoil the habit of virtue, because that cannot be lost but as it was gotten, that is, by parts and succession; yet every crime interrupts the *acceptation* of the grace, and makes the man to enter into the state of enmity and displeasure with God. The habit is only lessened *naturally*, but the *value* of it is wholly taken away. And in this sense is that of *Josephus*, το γαρ επι μινος και μεγαλις το βανωσαι υποβουαμι εστι,* which *St. James* well renders,

* Chap. ii. 10

*He that keeps the whole law, and offends in one point, is guilty of all ; that is, if he prevaricates in any commandment, the transgression of which by the law was capital, he shall as certainly die as if he broke the whole law. And the same is the case of those single actions which the school calls deadly sins, that is, actions of choice in any sin that hath a name ; and makes a kind, and hath a distinct matter. And sins once pardoned return again to all the purposes of mischief, if we by a new sin forfeit God's former loving-kindness. When the righteous man turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, all his righteousness that he hath done, shall not be remembered : in the trespass that he hath trespassed, and in the sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.** Now then consider, how great a fool he is, who, when he hath with much labour and by suffering violence contradicted his first desires ; when his spirit hath been in agony and care, and with much uneasiness hath denied to please the lower man ; when with many prayers, and groans, and innumerable sighs, and strong cryings to God, with sharp sufferances and a long severity, he hath obtained of God to begin his pardon and restitution, and that he is in some hopes to return to God's favour, and that he shall become an heir of heaven ; when some of his amazing fears and distracting cares begin to be taken off ; when he begins to think that now it is not certain he shall perish in a sad eternity, but he hopes to be saved, and he considers how excellent a condition that is ; *he hopes when he dies to go to God, and that he shall never enter into the possession of devils ; and this state, which is but the twilight of a glorious felicity, he hath obtained with great labour, and much care, and infinite danger : that this man should throw all this structure down, and then when he is ready to reap the fruits of his labours, by one indis-*

* Ezek. xviii. 24.

discreet action to set fire upon his corn-fields, and destroy all his dear earned hopes, for the madness and loose wanderings of an hour: this man is an indiscreet gamester, who doubles his stake as he thrives, and at one throw is dispossessed of all the prosperities of a lucky hand.

They that are poor (as *Plutarch* observes) are careless of little things, because by saving them they think no great moment can accrue to their estates, and they, despairing to be rich, think such frugality impertinent: but they that feel their banks swell, and are within the possibilities of wealth, think it useful if they reserve the smaller minutes of expense, knowing that every thing will add to their heap. But then, after long sparing, in one night to throw away the wealth of a long purchase, is an imprudence becoming none but such persons who are to be kept under tutors and guardians, and such as are to be chastised by their servants, and to be punished by them whom they clothe and feed.

—αλλα ὃ ἐμπευ

Αισχρον τοι δηρον τε μνησιν, κενον τε νεοθυαι.*

These men sow much, and gather little; *stay long*, and *return empty*; and after a long voyage they are dashed in pieces, when their vessels are laden with the spoils of provinces. Every deadly sin destroys the rewards of a seven years' piety. I add to this, that God is more impatient at a sin committed by his servants, than at many by persons that are his enemies; and an uncivil answer from a son to a father, from an obliged person to a benefactor, is a

* Hom. II.

To linger here, or to return with nought?

Our martial glory withers at the thought.

greater indecency, than if any enemy should storm his house; or revile him to his head. *Augustus Caesar* taxed all the world, and God took no publick notice of it; but when *David* taxed and numbered a petty province, it was not to be expiated without a plague: because such persons, besides the direct sin, add the circumstance of ingratitude to God who hath redeemed them from their vain conversation, and from death, and from hell, and consigned them to the inheritance of sons, and given them his grace and his spirit, and many periods of comfort, and a certain hope, and visible earnest of immortality. Nothing is baser, than that such a person, against his reason, against his interest, against his God, against so many obligations, against his custom, against his very habits and acquired inclinations, should do an action,

Quam nisi seductis nequeas committere Divis,*

which a man must for ever be ashamed of, and, like *Adam*, must run from God himself to do it, and depart from the state in which he had placed all his hopes, and to which he had designed all his labours. The consideration is effective enough, if we sum up the particulars; for he that hath lived well, and then falls into a deliberate sin, is infinitely dishonoured, is most imprudent, most unsafe, and most unthankful.

2. Let persons tempted to the single instances of sin in the midst of a laudable life, be very careful that they suffer not themselves to be drawn aside by the eminency of great examples. For some think

* Pers : Sat. II. v. 4.

With splendid gifts you ne'er will seek the shrine,
To tempt the power you worship as divine.

DRUMMOND.

drunkenness hath a little honesty derived unto it by the example of *Noah*; and *adultery* is not so scandalous and intolerably dishonourable, since *Bathsheba* bathed, and *David* was defiled; and men think a flight is no cowardice, if a general turns his head and runs.

—————*Pompeio fugiente timent.*

Well might all the gowned *Romans* fear, when *Pompey* fled. And who is there that can hope to be more righteous than *David*, or stronger than *Sampson*, or have less hypocrisy than *St. Peter*, or be more temperate than *Noah*? These great examples bear men of weak discourses and weaker resolutions from the severity of virtues. But, as *Diagoras*, to them that shewed to him the votive garments of those that had escaped shipwreck upon their prayers and vows to *Neptune*, answered, that they kept no account of those that prayed and vowed, and yet were drowned: so do these men keep catalogues of those few persons, who broke the thread of a fair life in sunder with the violence of a great crime, and by the grace of God recovered, and repented, and lived; but they consider not concerning those infinite numbers of men who died in their first fit of sickness, who after a fair voyage have thrown themselves overboard, and perished in a sudden wildness; one said well, *Si quid Socrates aut Aristippus contra morem et consuetudinem fecerunt, idem sibi ne arbitretur quis licere: magnis enim illi et divinis bonis hanc licentiam assequuntur.* If *Socrates* did any unusual thing, it is not for thee, who art of an ordinary virtue, to assume the same license: For he by a divine and excellent life hath obtained leave or pardon respectively for what thou must never hope for, till thou hast arrived to the same glories. First, be as devout as *David*, as good

a Christian as *St. Peter*; and then thou wilt not dare with design to act that which they fell into by surprise: and if thou dost fall as they did, by that time thou hast also repented like them, it may be said concerning thee, that thou didst fall and break thy bones, but God did heal thee and pardon thee. Remember that all the damned souls shall bear an eternity of torments for the pleasure of a short sinfulness; but for a single transient action to die for ever, is an intolerable exchange, and the effect of so great a folly, that whosoever falls into it and then considers it, it will make him mad and distracted for ever.

3. Remember, that since no man can please God, or be partaker of any promises, or reap the reward of any actions in the returns of eternity, unless he performs to God an entire duty, according to the capacities of a man so *taught*, and so *tempted*, and so *assisted*; such a person must be curious that he be not cozened with the duties and performances of any one relation. 1. Some there are that think all our religion consists in prayers, and publick or private offices of devotion, and not in moral actions or intercourses of justice and temperance, of kindness and friendships, of sincerity and liberality, of chastity and humility, of repentance and obedience. Indeed no humour is so easy to be counterfeited as devotion; and yet no hypocrisy is more common among men, nor any so useless as to God: for it being an address to him alone who knows the heart and all the secret purposes, it can do no service in order to heaven, so long as it is without *the power of godliness*, and the energy and vivacity of a holy life. God will not suffer us to commute a duty, because all is his due; and *religion* shall not pay for want of *temperance*. If the devoutest hermit be proud; or he that *fasts thrice in the week* be uncharitable *once*; or he that gives much to the poor, gives also too much

liberty to himself; he hath planted a fair garden, and invited a wild boar to refresh himself under the shade of the fruit trees, and his guest being something rude, hath disordered his paradise, and made it become a wilderness. 2. Others there are, that judge themselves by the censures that kings and princes give concerning them, or as they are spoken of by their betters; and so make false judgments concerning their condition. For our betters, to whom we shew our best parts, to whom we speak with caution and consider what we represent, they see our arts and our dressings, but nothing of our nature and deformities: trust not their censures concerning thee, but to thy own opinion of thyself whom thou knowest in thy retirements, and natural peevishness, and unhand-some inclinations, and secret baseness. 3. Some men have been admired abroad, in whom the wife and the servant never saw any thing excellent: *A rare judge and a good commonwealth's man* in the streets and publick meetings, *a just man* to his neighbour, and *charitable to the poor*; for in all these places the man is observed, and kept in awe by the sun, by light and by voices: but this man is a tyrant at home, an unkind husband, an ill father, an imperious master. And such men are like prophets in their own countries, not honoured at home, and can never be honoured by God, who will not endure that many virtues should excuse a few vices, or that any of his servants shall take pensions of the devil, and in the profession of his service do his enemy single advantages.

4. He that hath past many stages of a good life, to prevent his being tempted to a single sin, must be very careful that he never entertain his spirit with the remembrances of his past sin, nor amuse it with the fantastick apprehensions of the present. When

the *Israelites* fancied the sapidness and relish of the fleshpots. they longed to taste and to return.

So when a *Lybian* tiger, drawn from his wilder foragings, is shut up and taught to eat civil meat, and suffer the authority of a man, he sits down tamely in his prison, and pays to his keeper fear and reverence for his meat: but if he chance to come again, and taste a draught of warm blood, he presently leaps into his natural cruelty.*

Admonitæque timent gustato sanguine fauces;
Fervet, et a trepido vix abstinet ira magistro.†

He scarce abstains from eating those hands that brought him discipline and food. So is the nature of a man made tame and gentle by the grace of God, and reduced to reason, and kept in awe by religion and laws, and by an awful virtue is taught to forget those alluring and sottish relishes of sin: but if he diverts from his path, and snatches handfuls from the wanton vineyards, and remembers the lasciviousness of his unwholesome food that pleased his childish palate: then he grows sick again, and hungry after

* *Lucan*: Lib. iv. 227.

Sic ubi dissuetae sylvis in carcere clausæ
Mansuevere ferae, et vultus posuere minaces
Atque hominem didicere pati; si torrida parvus
Venit in ora cruor, redeunt rabiesque furorque.

The savage race that wild in forests ran,
Are tam'd by art to endure the touch of man,
But blood oncè tasted, all their ire returns,
And each grim beast with former fury burns. A.

† *Lucan*: iv. 241.

Grows more ferocious from the tasted food,
And longs to revel in his keeper's blood. A.

unwholesome diet, and longs for the apples of *Sodom*. A man must walk through the world without eyes or ears, fancy or appetite, but such as are created and sanctified by the grace of God; and being once made a new man, he must serve all the needs of nature by the appetites and faculties of grace; nature must be wholly a servant: and we must so look towards the deliciousness of our religion and the ravishments of heaven, that our memory must be for ever useless to the affairs and perceptions of sin. We cannot stand, we cannot live, unless we be curious and watchful in this particular.

By these and all other arts of the spirit, if we stand upon our guard, never indulging to ourselves one sin because it is but *one*, as knowing that *one* sin brought in death upon all the world, and *one* sin brought slavery upon the posterity of *Cham*; and always fearing lest death surprise us in that *one* sin; we shall by the grace of God either not need, or else easily perceive the effects and blessings of that compassion which God reserves in the secrets of his mercy, for such persons, whom his grace hath ordained and disposed with excellent dispositions unto life eternal.

These are the sorts of men which are to be used with compassion, concerning whom we are to make a difference, *making a difference*, so says the text. And it is of high concernment that we should do so, that we may relieve the infirmities of the men, and relieve their sicknesses, and transcribe the copy of the divine mercy, who loves not to *quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed*. For although all sins are against God's commandments directly, or by certain consequents, *by line*, or *by analogy*; yet they are not all of the same tincture and mortality.

Nec vincit ratio, tantundem ut peccet idemque,
 Qui tentos caules alieni fregerit horti,
 Ut qui nocturnus div in sacra legerit——*

He that robs a garden of coleworts, and carries away an armful of spinnage, does not deserve hell, as he that steals the chalice from the church, or betrays a prince; and therefore men are distinguished accordingly.

Est inter Tanaim quiddam socerumque Viselli.†

The poet that *Sejanus* condemned for dishonouring the memory of *Agamemnon*, was not an equal criminal with *Catiline* or *Gracchus*: and *Simon Magus* and the *Nicolaitans* committed crimes, which God hated more than the complying of *St. Barnabas*, or the dissimulation of *St. Peter*; and therefore God does treat these persons severely. Some of these are restrained with a fit of sickness, some with a great loss, and in these there are degrees; and some arrive at death. And in this manner God scourged the *Corinthians*, for their irreverent and disorderly receiving the holy sacrament. For although even the least of the sins that I have discoursed of will lead to death eternal, if their course be not interrupted, and the disorder chastised; yet because we do not stop their progress instantly, God many times does, and visits us with proportionable judgments;

* Hor. Lib. 1. Sat. 3. 115.

Nor can right reason prove the crime the same
 To rob a garden, or by fear unaw'd,
 To steal by night the sacred things of God.

FRANCIS.

† Hor. Lib. 1. Sat. 1. 105.

————— For sure some difference lies
 Between the very fool and very wise.

FRANCIS.

and so not only checks the rivulet from swelling into rivers and a vastness, but plainly tells us, that although smaller crimes shall not be punished with equal severity as the greatest, yet even in hell there are eternal rods as well as eternal scorpions; and the smallest crime that we act with an infant malice, and manly deliberation, shall be revenged with the lesser strokes of wrath, but yet with the affliction of a sad eternity. But then that we also should make a difference, is a precept concerning church discipline, and therefore not here proper to be considered, but only as it may concern our own particulars in the actions of repentance, and our brethren in fraternal correction.

—————adsit

Regula quae poenas peccatis irroget aequas,
Nec scutica dignum horribili seetere flagello.*

Let us be sure that we neglect no sin, but repent *for every one*, and *judge ourselves for every one*, according to the proportion of the malice, or the scandal, or the danger. And although in this there is no fear that we would be excessive; yet when we are to reprove a brother we are sharp enough, and either by pride or by animosity, by the itch of government or the indignation of an angry mind, we run beyond the gentleness of a Christian monitor. We must remember that by Christ's law some are to be admonished *privately*: some to be shamed and corrected *publicly*; and, beyond these, there is an *abscission*, or a *cutting off* from the communion of faithful people, a *delivering over to satan*. And to this purpose is

* Hor. Lib. 1. Sat. 3. 117.

Then let the punishment be fairly weigh'd
Against the crime; nor let the wretch be flay'd,
Who scarce deserves the lash.

FRANCIS.

that old reading of the words of my text, which is still in some copies, *καὶ τοὺς μὲν εὐέλχεται διακρινόμενους*, *reprove them sharply when they are convinced, or separate by sentence.* But because this also is a design of mercy acted with an instance of discipline, it is a punishment of the flesh, *that the soul may be saved in the day of the Lord*; it means the same with the usual reading, and with the last words of the text, and teaches us our usage towards the worst of recoverable sinners.

II. *Others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.* Some sins there are which *in their own nature are damnable*, and some are such as *will certainly bring a man to damnation*: the first are curable, but with much danger; the second are desperate and irrecoverable. When a man is violently tempted and allured with an object, that is proportionable and pleasant to his vigorous appetite, and his unabated, unmortified nature, this man falls into death; but yet we pity him, as we pity a thief that robs for his necessity: this man did not tempt himself, but his spirit suffers violence, and his reason is invaded, and his infirmities are mighty, and his aids not yet prevailing. But when this single temptation hath prevailed for a single instance, and leaves a relish upon the palate, and this produces another, and that also is fruitful and swells into a family and kindred of sin, that is, it grows first into approbation, then to a clear assent, and an untroubled conscience, thence into frequency, from thence into a custom, and easiness, and a habit; this man is fallen into the fire. There are also some single acts of so great a malice, that they must suppose a man habitually sinful before he could arrive at that height of wickedness. No man begins his sinful course with killing of his father or his prince: and *Simon Magus* had preambulatory impieties; he was covetous and ambitious long before he offered to buy the Holy Ghost. *Nemo repente fuit*

*turpissimus**—And although such actions may have in them the malice and the mischief, the disorder and the wrong, the principle and the permanent effect of a habit and a long course of sin; yet because they never or very seldom go alone, but after the predisposition of other ushering crimes, we shall not amiss comprise them under the name of habitual sins: for such they are, either formally, or equivalently. And if any man hath fallen into a sinful habit, into a course and order of sinning, his case is little less than desperate; but that little hope that is remanent hath its degree, according to the infancy or the growth of the habit.

1. For all sins less than habitual, it is certain a pardon is ready to penitent persons; that is, to all that sin in ignorance or in infirmity, by surprise or inadvertency, in smaller instances or in frequent returns, with involuntary actions or imperfect resolutions.

Εξεστίνατε τὰς χεῖρας ὑμῶν πρὸς τὴν αὐτοκράτορα Θεὸν, ἰκάλουντες αὐτὸν ἰλεῶν γενέσθαι, ἅτι καὶ ἄνευ ἡμαρτετε said *Clement* in his epistle: *Lift up your hands to Almighty God, and pray him to be merciful to you in all things when you sin unwillingly; that is, in what you sin with an imperfect choice. For no man sins against his will directly, but when his understanding is abused by an inevitable or an intolerable weakness, or their wills follow their blind guide, and are not the perfect mistresses of their own actions; and therefore leave a way and easiness to repent, and be ashamed of them, and therefore a possibility and readiness for pardon. And these are the sins that we are taught to pray to God that he would pardon, as he gives us our bread, that is, every day. For in many things we offend all, said St. James, that is, in many smaller matters, in matters of surprise or inevitable*

* Juv. Sat. II. v. 83.

No man e'er reached the heights of vice at once.

DRYDEN

infirmity. And therefore *Posidonius* said, that *St. Austin* was used to say, that *he would not have even good and holy priests go from this world without the susception of equal and worthy penances* : and the most innocent life in our account is not a competent instrument of a peremptory confidence, and of justifying ourselves. *I am guilty of nothing*, (said *St. Paul*,) that is, of no ill intent, or negligence in preaching the gospel; *yet I am not hereby justified*, for God, it may be, knows many little irregularities and insinuations of sin. In this case we are to make a difference; but humility, and prayer, and watchfulness, are the direct instruments of the expiation of such sins.

But then, secondly, whosoever sins without these abating circumstances, that is, in great instances, in which a man's understanding cannot be cozened, as in drunkenness, murder, adultery, and in the frequent repetitions of any sort of sin whatsoever, in which a man's choice cannot be surprised, and in which it is certain there is a love of the sin, and a delight in it, and a power over a man's resolutions; in these cases it is a miraculous grace, and an extraordinary change, that must turn the current and the stream of the iniquity; and when it is begun, the pardon is more uncertain, and the repentance more difficult, and the effect much abated, and the man must be made miserable, that he may not be accursed for ever.

1. I say, his pardon is uncertain; because there are some sins which are unpardonable, (as I shall shew) and they are not all named in particular; and the degrees of malice being uncertain, the salvation of that man is to be wrought with infinite *fear and trembling*. It was the case of *Simon Magus*, *Repent and ask pardon for thy sin, if peradventure the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee*.^{*} If peradventure: it was a new crime, and concerning its possi-

^{*} Acts viii. 32.

bility of pardon no revelation had been made, and by analogy to other crimes, it was very like an unpardonable sin: for it was *a thinking a thought against the Holy Ghost*, and that was next to *speaking a word against him*. Cain's sin was of the same nature; *It is greater than it can be forgiven*: his passion and his fear was too severe and decretory; it was *pardonable*, but truly we never find that God did pardon it.

2. But besides this, it is uncertain in the pardon, because it may be the time of pardon is passed; and though God hath pardoned to other people the same sins, and to thee too sometimes before, yet it may be he will not now: he hath not promised pardon so often as we sin, and in all the returns of impudence, apostacy, and ingratitude; and it may be *thy day is past*, as was *Jerusalem's*, in the day that they crucified the Saviour of the world.

3. Pardon of such habitual sins is uncertain, because life is uncertain; and such sins require much time for their abolition and expiation. And therefore although these sins are not *necessario mortifera*, that is, unpardonable, yet by consequence they become *deadly*; because our life may be cut off before we have finished or performed those necessary parts of repentance, which are the severe, and yet the only condition of getting pardon. So that you may perceive, that not only every *great single crime*, but *the habit of any sin* is dangerous: and therefore these persons are to be *snatched from the fire*, if you mean to rescue them: *ἐκ τοῦ πυρὸς ἀγταζήσεις*. If you stay a day, it may be you stay too long.

4. To which I add this fourth consideration, that every delay of return is in the case of habitual sins an approach to desperation, because the nature of habits is like that of the crocodiles, they grow as long as they live; and if they come to *obstinacy* or

conformation, they are in hell already, and can never return back. For so the *Pannonian* bears, when they have clasped a dart in the region of their liver, wheel themselves upon the wound, and with anger and malicious revenge strike the deadly barb deeper, and cannot be quit from that fatal steel, but in flying, bear along that which themselves make the instrument of a more hasty death : so is every vicious person struck with a deadly wound, and his own hands force it into the entertainments of the heart ; and because it is painful to draw it forth by a sharp and salutary repentance, he still rolls and turns upon his wound, and carries his death in his bowels, where at first entered by choice, and then dwelt by love, and it last shall finish the tragedy by divine judgments and an unalterable decree.

But as the pardon of these sins is uncertain, so the conditions of restitution are hard even to them who shall be pardoned : their pardon and themselves too must be fetched from the *fire*, water will not do it ; tears and ineffective sorrow cannot take off a habit, or a great crime.

O nimium faciles, qui tristia crimina caedis
Tolli fluminca posse putatis aqua !*

Bion seeing a prince weep and tearing his hair for sorrow, asked if baldness would cure his grief. Such pompous sorrows may be good *indices*, but no perfect instruments of restitution. St. *James*† plainly declares the possibilities of pardon to great sins, in

* Ovid. Fast. Lib. 2. v. 45.

Thee, Murderer ! let not flattering hope betray,
†an tears avail to wash thy guilt away !

A.

† Chap. iv. 1. 3.

the cases of *contention, adultery, lust, and envy*, which are the four great indecencies that are most contrary to Christianity: and in the fifth chapter he implies also a possibility of pardon to an habitual sinner, whom he calls *τον πλανηθοντα απο της ιδου προς αληθειας, one that errs from the truth*, that is, from the life of a Christian, *the life of the spirit of truth*: and he adds, that such a person may be reduced, and so be pardoned, though he have sinned long; *he that converts such a one shall hide a multitude of sins.** But then the way that he appoints for the restitution of such persons is *humility and humiliation, penances and sharp penitential sorrows, and afflictions, resisting the devil, returning to God, weeping and mourning, confessions, and prayers*, as you may read at large in the fourth and fifth chapters, and there it is that you shall find it a duty, that such persons should *be afflicted*, and should *confess to their brethren*; and these are harder conditions than God requires in the former cases; these are a kind of *fiery trial*.

I have now done with my text, and should add no more, but that the nature of these sins is such, that they may increase in their *weight, and duration, and malice*, and then they increase in *mischief and fatality*, and so go beyond the text. *Cicero* said well, *Ipsa consuetudo assentiendi periculosa esse videtur et lubrica, L. 4. Acad. Qu.* The very custom of consenting in matters of civility is dangerous and slippery, and will quickly engage us in error; and then we think we are bound to defend them; or else we are made flatterers by it, and so become vicious: and we love our own vices that we are used to, and keep them till they are incurable, that is, till we never repent of them: and some men resolve never to repent, that is, they resolve they will not be saved, *they tread un-*

* Chap. v., ver. ult.

der foot the blood of the everlasting covenant. Those persons are in the *fire* too, but they will not be *pulled out*: concerning whom God's prophets must say as once concerning *Babylon*, *Curavimus, et non est sanata; derelinquamus eam*: We would have healed them, but they would not be healed; let us leave them in their sins, and they shall have enough of it. Only this: Those that put themselves out of the condition of mercy are not to be endured in Christian societies; they deserve it not, and it is not safe that they should be suffered.

But besides all this, I shall name one thing more unto you; for

—————*numquam adeo foedis adeoque pudendis
Utimur exemplis, ut non pejora supersint.**

There are some single actions of sin of so great a malice, that in their own nature they are beyond the limit of *gospel pardon*: they are not such things for the pardon of which God entered into covenant, because they are such sins which put a man into perfect indispositions, and incapacities of entering into or being in the covenant. In the first ages of the world, *atheism* was of that nature, it was against their whole religion; and the sin is worse now, against the whole religion still, and against a brighter light. In the ages after the flood, *idolatry* was also just such another; for God was known first only as the *Creator*; then he began to manifest himself in special contracts with men, and he quickly was declared the *God of Israel*; and *idolatry* perfectly *destroyed all that religion*, and therefore was never pardoned entirely, but

* *Juv. Sat. 8. v. 183.*

Shameful are these examples, yet we find,
To Rome's disgrace, far worse than these behind.

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God did visit it upon them that sinned ; and when he pardoned it in some degrees, yet he also punished it in some : and yet rebellion against the supreme power of *Moses* and *Aaron* was worse ; for that also was a perfect destruction of the whole religion, because it refused to submit to those hands upon which God had placed all the religion and all the government. And now if we would know in the gospel what answers these precedent sins ; I answer, first, the same sins acted by a resolute hand and heart are worse now then ever they were : and a third and fourth is also to be added ; and there is *apostacy*, or a voluntary malicious renouncing the faith : the church hath often declared that sin to be unpardonable. *Witchcraft*, or final impenitence and *obstinacy* in any sin, are infallibly desperate ; and in general, and by a certain parity of reason, whatsoever does destroy charity or the good life of a Christian, with the same general venom and deletery as *apostacy*, destroys *faith* : and he that is a *renegado* from charity is as unpardonable as he that returns to solemn *atheism* or *infidelity* ; for all that is directly the sin against the Holy Ghost, that is, a throwing that away whereby only we can be Christians, whereby only we can hope to be saved. To speak a word against the Holy Ghost, in the Pharisees was declared unpardonable, because it was such a word which, if it had been true or believed, would have destroyed the whole religion ; for they said that Christ wrought by *Beelzebub*, and by consequence did not come from God. He that destroys all the whole order of priesthood, destroys one of the greatest parts of the religion, and one of the greatest effects of the Holy Ghost : He that destroys government destroys another part. But that we may come nearer to ourselves : To quench the spirit of God is worse than to speak some words against him ; to grieve the Spirit of God is a

part of the same impiety; to *resist the Holy Ghost* is another part: and if we consider that every great sin does this in proportion. it would concern us to be careful lest we fall into *presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over us.* Out of this that I have spoken, you may easily gather what sort of men those are who cannot be *snatched from the fire*; for whom, as St. *John* says, *we are not to pray*; and how near men come to it that continue in any known sin. If I should descend to particulars, I might lay a snare to scrupulous and nice consciences. This only; every confirmed habitual sinner does manifest the divine justice in punishing the sins of a short life with a never-dying worm, and a never-quenched flame; because he hath an affection to sin, that no time will diminish, but such as would increase to eternal ages; and accordingly as any man hath a degree of love, so he hath lodged in his soul a spark which, unless it be speedily and effectually quenched, will break forth into unquenchable fire.

SERMON XVIII.



THE FOOLISH EXCHANGE.

MATTHEW xvi. 26.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

WHEN the eternal mercy of God hath decreed to rescue mankind from misery and infelicity, and so triumphed over his own justice; the excellent wisdom of God resolved to do it in ways contradictory to the appetites and designs of man, that it might also triumph over our weaknesses and imperfect conceptions. So God decreed to glorify his mercy by curing our sins, and to exalt his wisdom by the reproof of our ignorance, and the representing upon what weak and false principles we had built our hopes and expectations of felicity; pleasure and profit, victory over our enemies, riches and pompous honours, power and revenge, desires according to sensual appetites, and prosecutions violent and passionate of those appetites, health and long life, free from trouble, without poverty or persecution.

*Haec sunt, jucundissime Martialis,
Vitam quae faciunt beatiorem.**

* Mart. Lib. 10. 47.

These heighten all the joys of life.

These are the measures of good and evil, the object of our hopes and fears, the securing our consent, and the portion of this world; and for the other, let it be as it may. But the blessed *Jesus* having made revelations of an immortal duration, of another world, and of a strange restitution to it, even by the resurrection of the body, and a new investiture of the soul with the same upper garment, clarified and made pure, so as no fuller on earth can whiten it; hath also preached a new philosophy, hath cancelled all the old principles, reduced the appetites of sense to the discourses of reason, and heightened reason to the sublimities of the spirit, teaching us abstractions and immaterial conceptions, giving us new eyes, and new objects, and new proportions: for now sensual pleasures are not delightful, riches are dross, honours are nothing but the appendages of virtue, and in relation to it are to receive their account. But now if you would enjoy life, you must die; if you would be at ease, you must take up Christ's cross, and conform to his sufferings, if you would *save your life* you must *lose it*; and if you would be rich, you must abound in good works, you must be *poor in spirit*, and despise the world, and be rich unto God: for whatsoever is contrary to the purchases and affections of this world, is an endearment of our hopes in the world to come. And therefore he having stated the question so, that either we must quit this world or the other; our affections, I mean, and adherencies to this, or our interests and hopes of the other; the choice is rendered very easy by the words of my text, because the distance is not less than infinite, and the comparison hath terms of a vast difference. Heaven and hell, eternity and a moment, vanity and real felicity, life and death eternal, all that can be hoped for, and all that can be feared; these are the terms of our choice: and if a man have his wits

about him, and be not drunk with sensuality and senselessness, he need not much to dispute before he pass the sentence. For nothing can be given to us to recompense the loss of heaven; and if our souls be lost, there is nothing remaining to us whereby we can be happy.

What shall it profit a man? or, what shall a man give? Is there any exchange for a man's soul? the question is an *αυξησης* of the negative. Nothing can be given for an *ανταλλαγμα*, or a price to satisfy for its loss.

The blood of the Son of God was given to recover it, or as an *ανταλλαγμα* to God; and when our souls were forfeit to him, nothing less than the life and passion of God and man could pay the price, (I say) to God; who yet was not concerned in the loss, save on y that such was his goodness, that it pitied him to see his creature lost. But to us what shall be the *ανταλλαγμα*? what can make us recompense when we have lost our own souls, and are lost in a miserable eternity? what can then recompense us? Not all the world, not ten thousand worlds: and of this that miserable man whose soul is lost is the best judge. For the question is *αδουητικον*, and hath a potential signification, and means *ποσα αν δαση*, that is, suppose a man ready to die, condemned to the sentence of a horrid death, heightened with the circumstances of trembling and amazement, *what would he give to save his life? Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, and all that a man hath, will he give for his life.* And this turned to a proverb among the Jews; for so the last words of the text are, *τι δασει αυθητος ανταλλαγμα της ψυχης*; which proverb being usually meant concerning a temporal death, and intended to represent the sadnesses of a condemned person, our blessed Saviour fits to his own purpose, and translates to the signification of death eternal, which he first revealed clearly to the world. And because no interest of the world can make a man recompense for

his life, because to lose that makes him incapable of enjoying the exchange, (and he were a strange fool, who, having no design upon immortality or virtue, should be willing to be hanged for a thousand pound *per annum*) this argument increases infinitely in the purpose of our blessed Saviour; and to gain the world, and to lose our souls, in the Christian sense, is infinitely more madness and a worse exchange, than when our souls signify nothing but a temporal life. And although possibly the indefinite hopes of *Elysium*, or an honourable name, might tempt some hardy persons to leave this world, hoping for a better condition, even among the heathens; yet no excuse will acquit a Christian from madness, if for the purchase of this world he lose his eternity.

Here then, first, we will consider the propositions of the exchange, the *world* and a *man's soul*, by way of supposition, supposing all that is propounded were obtained, *the whole world*. Secondly, we will consider, what is likely to be obtained *really* and *indeed* of the world, and what are really the miseries of a lost soul. For it is propounded in the text by way of supposition, *If a man should gain the world*, which no man ever did, nor ever can; and he that gets most, gets too little to be exchanged for a temporal life. And thirdly, I shall apply it to your practice, and make material considerations.

1. First, then, suppose a man gets all the world, what is it that he gets? it is a bubble and a phantasm, and hath no reality beyond a present transient use; a thing that is impossible to be enjoyed, because its fruits and usages are transmitted to us by parts, and by succession. He that hath all the world, (if we can suppose such a man) cannot have a dish of fresh summer fruits in the midst of winter, not so much as a green fig: and very much of its possessions is so hid, so fugacious and of so uncertain purchase, that

it is like the riches of the sea to the lord of the shore; all the fish and wealth within all its hollownesses are his, but he is never the better for what he cannot get: all the shell-fish that produce pearl, produce them not for him; and the bowels of the earth shall hide her treasures in undiscovered retirements: so that it will signify as much to this great purchaser to be entitled to an inheritance in the upper region of the air; he is so far from possessing all its riches, that he does not so much as know of them, nor understand the philosophy of her minerals.

2. I consider, that he that is the greatest possessor in the world, enjoys its best and most noble parts, and those which are of most excellent perfection, but in common with the inferiour persons, and the most despicable of his kingdom. Can the greatest prince enclose the sun, and set one little star in his cabinet for his own use? or secure to himself the gentle and benign influences of any one constellation? are not his subjects' fields bedewed with the same showers that water his gardens of pleasure?

Nay those things which he esteems his ornament and the singularity of his possessions, are they not of more use to others than to himself? for suppose his garments splendid and shining like the robe of a cherub or the clothing of the fields, all that he that wears them enjoys, is, that they keep him warm and clean, and modest; and all this is done by clean and less pompous vestments; and the beauty of them, which distinguishes him from others, is made to please the eyes of the beholders; and he is like a fair bird, or the meretricious painting of a wanton woman, made wholly to be looked on, that is, to be enjoyed by every one but himself: and the fairest face and the sparkling eye cannot perceive or enjoy their own beauties, but by reflection. It is I that am pleased with beholding his gayety, and the gay man

in his greatest bravery is only pleased because I am pleased with the sight; so borrowing his little and imaginary complacency from the delight that I have, not from any inherency of his own possession.

The poorest artizan of *Rome* walking in *Cæsar's* gardens, had the same pleasures which they ministered to their lord: and although it may be he was put to gather fruits to eat from another place, yet his other senses were delighted equally with *Cæsar's*: the birds made him as good musick, the flowers gave him as sweet smells, he there sucked as good air, and delighted in the beauty and order of the place, for the same reason and upon the same perception as the prince himself; save only that *Cæsar* paid for all that pleasure vast sums of money, the blood and treasure of a province, which the poor man had for nothing.

3. Suppose a man lord of all the world, (for still we are but in supposition); yet since every thing is received not according to its own greatness and worth, but according to the capacity of the receiver, it signifies very little as to our content, or to the riches of our possession. If any man should give to a lion a fair meadow full of hay, or a thousand quince trees: or should give to the goodly bull, the master and the fairest of the whole herd, a thousand fair stags; if a man should present to a child a ship laden with *Persian* carpets, and the ingredients of the rich scarlet; all these, being disproportionate either to the appetite or to the understanding, could add nothing of content, and might declare the freeness of the presenter, but they upbraid the incapacity of the receiver. And so it does if God should give the whole world to any man. He knows not what to do with it; he can use no more but according to the capacities of a man; he can use nothing but meat and drink and cloaths; and infinite riches, that can

give him changes of raiment every day and a full table, do but give him a clean trencher every bit he eats; it signifies no more but wantonness, and variety to the same, not to any new purposes. He to whom the world can be given to any purpose greater than a private estate can minister, must have new capacities created in him: he needs the understanding of an angel, to take the accounts of his estate; he had need have a stomach like fire or the grave, for else he can eat no more than one of his healthful subjects; and unless he hath an eye like the sun, and a motion like that of a thought, and a bulk as big as one of the orbs of heaven, the pleasure of his eye can be no greater than to behold the beauty of a little prospect from a hill, or to look upon the heap of gold packed up in a little room, or to dote upon a cabinet of jewels, better than which there is no man that sees at all but sees every day. For, not to name the beauties and sparkling diamonds of heaven, a man's, or a woman's, or a hawk's eye is more beauteous and excellent than all the jewels of his crown. And when we remember, that a beast, who hath quicker senses than a man, yet hath not so great delight in the fruition of any object, because he wants understanding, and the power to make reflex acts upon his perception; it will follow, that understanding and knowledge is the greatest instrument of pleasure, and he that is most knowing hath a capacity to become happy, which a less-knowing prince or a rich person hath not: and in this only a man's capacity is capable of enlargement. But then, although they only have power to relish any pleasure rightly, who rightly understand the nature and degrees, and essences, and ends of things; yet they that do so, understand also the vanity and the unsatisfyingness of the things of this world, so that the relish which could not be great but in a great un-

derstanding, appears contemptible, because its vanity appears at the same time; the understanding sees all, and sees through it.

4. The greatest vanity of this world is remarkable in this, that all its joys summed up together are not big enough to counterpoise the evil of one sharp disease, or to allay a sorrow. For imagine a man great in his dominion as *Cyrus*, rich as *Solomon*, victorious as *David*, beloved like *Titus*, learned as *Trismegist*, powerful as all the *Roman* greatness; all this, and the results of all this, give him no more pleasure in the midst of a fever or the tortures of the stone, than if he were only lord of a little dish, and a dishfull of fountain-water. Indeed the excellency of a holy conscience is a comfort and a magazine of joy, so great, that it sweetens the most bitter potion of the world, and makes tortures and death not only tolerable, but amiable; and therefore to part with this whose excellency is so great, for the world, that is of so inconsiderable a worth, as not to have in it recompense enough for the sorrows of a sharp disease, is a bargain fit to be made by none but fools and mad men. *Antiochus Epiphanes*, and *Herod the Great*, and his grand-child *Agrippa*, were sad instances of this great truth; to every of which it happened, that the grandeur of their fortune, the greatness of their possessions, and the increase of their estate disappeared and expired like camphire, at their arrest by those several sharp diseases, which covered their head with cypress, and hid their crowns in an inglorious grave.

For what can all the world minister to a sick person, if it represents all the spoils of nature, and the choicest delicacies of land and sea? Alas! his appetite is lost, and to see a pebble-stone is more pleasing to him: for he can look upon that without loathing, but not so upon the most delicious fare that

ever made famous the *Roman* luxury. Perfumes make his head ache: if you load him with jewels, you press him with a burthen as troublesome as his grave-stone: and what pleasure is in all those possessions that cannot make his pillow easy, nor tame the rebellion of a tumultuous humour, nor restore the use of a withered hand, or straighten a crooked finger? Vain is the hope of that man whose soul rests upon vanity, and such unprofitable possessions.

5. Suppose a man lord of all this world, an universal monarch, as some princes have lately designed; all that cannot minister content to him; not that content which a poor contemplative man, by the strength of Christian philosophy, and the support of a very small fortune, daily does enjoy. All his power and greatness cannot command the sea to overflow his shores, or to stay from retiring to the opposite strand: it cannot make his children dutiful or wise. And though the world admired at the greatness of *Philip* the Second's fortune, in the accession of *Portugal* and the *East-Indies* to his principalities; yet this could not allay the infelicity of his family, and the unhandsomeness of his condition, in having a proud, and indiscreet, and a vicious young prince likely to inherit all his greatness. And if nothing appears in the face of such a fortune to tell all the world that it is spotted and imperfect; yet there is in all conditions of the world such weariness and tediousness of spirits, that a man is ever more pleased with hopes of going off from the present, than in dwelling upon that condition which, it may be, others admire and think beauteous, but none knoweth the smart of it but he that drank off the little pleasure, and felt the ill relish of the appendage. How many kings have groaned under the burthen of their crowns, and have sunk down and died? How many have quitted their pompous cares, and retired into

private lives, there to enjoy the pleasures of philosophy and religion, which their thrones denied?

And if we consider the supposition of the text, the thing will demonstrate itself. For he who can be supposed the owner and purchaser of the whole world, must either be a king or a private person. A private person can hardly be supposed to be the man: for if he be subject to another, how can he be lord of the whole world? But if he be a king, it is certain that his cares are greater than any man's, his fears are bigger, his evils mountainous, the accidents that discompose him are more frequent, and sometimes intolerable: and of all his great possessions he hath not the greatest use and benefit; but they are like a great harvest, which more labourers must bring in, and more must eat of; only he is the centre of all the cares, and they fix upon him, but the profits run out to all the lines of the circle, to all that are about him, whose good is therefore greater than the good of the prince, because what they enjoy is the purchase of the prince's acre, and so they feed upon his cost.

*Privatusque magis vivam te rege beatus.**

Servants live the best lives; for their care is single, only how to please their lord: but all the burthen of a troublesome providence and ministration makes the outside pompous and more full of ceremony; but intricates the condition, and disturbs the quiet of the great possessor.

And imagine a person as blest as can be supposed upon the stock of worldly interest; when all his accounts are cast up, he differs nothing from his

* *Hor. Lib. 1. Sat. 3. 141.*

And bliss like mine thy kingship ne'er shall know.

FRANCIS.

subjects or his servants but in mere circumstance, nothing of reality or substance. He hath more to wait at his tables, or persons of higher rank to do the meanest offices, more ceremonies of address, a fairer escutcheon, louder titles: but can this multitude of dishes make him have a good stomach, or does not satiety cloy it? when his high diet is such, that he is not capable of being feasted, and knows not the frequent delights and oftener possibilities a poor man hath of being refreshed, while not only his labour makes hunger, and so makes his meat delicate; (and then it cannot be ill fare, let it be what it will) but also his provision is such, that every little addition is a direct feast to him, while the greatest owner of the world, giving to himself the utmost of his desires, hath nothing left beyond his ordinary, to become the entertainment of his festival days, but more loads of the same meat.* And then let him consider how much of felicity can this condition contribute to him, in which he is not farther gone beyond a person of a little fortune, in the greatness of his possession, than he is fallen short in the pleasures and possibility of their enjoyment.

And that is a sad condition, when, like *Midas*, all that the man touches shall turn to gold: and his is no better, to whom a perpetual full table, not recreated with fasting, not made pleasant with intervening scarcity, ministers no more good than a heap of gold does, that is, he hath no benefit of it, save the beholding of it with his eyes. Cannot a man quench his thirst as well out of an urn or chalice, as out of a whole river? It is an ambitious thirst, and a pride of draught, that had rather lay his mouth to *Euphrates* than to a petty goblet; but if he had

* Rare volte hæc fame chista sempre a tavola.

rather, it adds not so much to his content, as to his danger and his vanity.

————— eo fit,
 Plenior ut si quos delectet copia justo,
 Cum ripa simul avulsos ferat Aufidus acer.*

For so I have heard of persons whom the river hath swept away together with the turf they pressed, when they stooped to drown their pride rather than their thirst.

6. But this supposition hath a lessening term. If a man could be born heir of all the world, it were something: but no man ever was so, except him only who enjoyed the least of it, the Son of man, that *had not where to lay his head*. But in the supposition it is, *If a man could gain the whole world*, which supposes labour and sorrow, trouble and expense, venture and hazard, and so much time expired in its acquist and purchase, that, besides the possession is not secured to us for a term of life, so our lives are almost expired before we become estated in our purchases. And indeed it is a sad thing to see an ambitious or a covetous person make his life unpleasant, troublesome and vexatious, to grasp a power bigger than himself, to fight for it with infinite hazards of his life, so that it is a thousand to one but he perishes in the attempt, and gets nothing at all but an untimely grave, a reproachful memory, and an early damnation. But suppose he gets a victory, and that the unhappy party is put to begin a new game; then to

* Hor. Lib. 1. Sat. 1. 50.

But mark his fate insatiate, who desires
 Deeper to drink than nature's thirst requires;
 With its torn banks the torrent bears away
 The intemperate wretch.

FRANCIS.

see the fears, the watchfulness, the diligence, the laborious arts to secure a possession, lest the desperate party should recover a desperate game. And suppose this with a new stock of labours, danger and expense, be seconded by a new success; then to look upon the new emergencies, and troubles, and discontents among his friends about parting the spoil; the envies, the jealousies, the slanders, the underminings, and the perpetual insecurity of his condition: all this, I say, is to see a man take infinite pains to make himself miserable. But if he will be so unlearned as to call this gallantry or a splendid fortune; yet by this time, when he remembers he hath certainly spent much of his time in trouble, and how long he shall enjoy this he is still uncertain; he is not certain of a month, and suppose it be seven years, yet when he comes to die, and cast up his accounts, and shall find nothing remaining but a sad remembrance of evils and troubles past, and expectations of worse, infinitely worse, he must acknowledge himself convinced, that to gain all this world is a fortune not worth the labour and the dangers, the fears and transportations of passions, though the soul's loss be not considered in the bargain.

But I told you all this while that this is but a supposition still, the putting of a ease, or like a fiction of law, nothing real. For if we consider, in the second place, how much every man is likely to get really, and how much it is possible for any man to get, we shall find the account far shorter yet, and the purchase most trilling and inconsiderable. For first, the world is at the same time enjoyed by all its inhabitants, and the same portion of it by several persons in their several capacities. A prince enjoys his whole kingdom, not as all his people enjoy it, but in the manner of a prince; the subject in the manner of subjects. The prince hath certain *regalia* beyond

the rest ; but the *feudal right* of subjects does them more emolument, and the *regalia* does the prince more honour : and those that hold the fees in subordinate right, transmit also it to their tenants, beneficiaries and dependants, to publick uses, to charity, and hospitality ; all which is a lessening of the lord's possessions, and a cutting his river into little streams, not that himself alone, but that all his relatives may drink to be refreshed. Thus the well where the woman of *Samaria* sate, was *Jacob's* well, and he drank of it, but so did his wives, and his children, and his cattle. So that what we call ours is really ours but for our portion of expense and use ; we have so little of it, that our servants have far more ; and that which is ours is nothing but the title, and the care, and the trouble of securing and dispensing ; save only that God, whose stewards we all are, will call such owners (as they are pleased to call themselves) to strict accounts for their disbursements. And by this account the possession or dominion is but a word, and serves a fancy or a passion, or a vice, but no real end of nature. It is the use and spending it, that makes a man, to all real purposes of nature, to be the owner of it, and in this the lord and master hath but a share.

2. But secondly, consider how far short of the whole world the greatest prince that ever reigned did come. *Alexander*, that wept because he had no more worlds to conquer, was in his knowledge deceived and brutish, as in his passion : he over-ran much of *Asia* ; but he could never pass the *Ganges*, and never thrust his sword in the bowels of *Europe*, and knew nothing of *America*. And the *οικουμενη*, or the whole world, began to have an appropriate sense, and was rather put to the *Roman* greatness as an honourable appellative, than did signify that they were

lords of the world, who never went beyond *Persia*, *Egypt*, nor *Britain*.

But why do I talk of great things, in this question of the exchange of the soul for the world? Because it is a *real bargain* which many men (too many, God knows,) do make, we must consider it as applicable to practice. Every man that loses his soul for the purchase of the world, must not look to have the portion of a king. How few men are princes, and of those that are not born so, how seldom instances are found in story of persons that by their industry became so? But we must come far lower yet. Thousands there are that damn themselves; and yet their purchase at long-running, and after a base and weary life spent, is but five hundred pounds a year: nay, it may be they only cozen an easy person out of a good estate, and pay for it at an easy rate, which they obtain by lying, by drinking, by flattery, by force; and the gain is nothing but a thousand pound in the whole, or it may be nothing but a convenience. Nay, how many men hazard their salvation for an acre of ground, for twenty pounds to please a master, to get a small and a kind usage from a superiour? These men get but little, though they did not give so much for it. So little, that *Epictetus* thought the purchase dear enough, though you paid nothing for it but flattery and observance, Ου παρεκλήθησιν ἐφ' ἑστιασιν τινος; ου γὰρ εἶδους τῶ καλοῦντι ἴσου παλῖται τ. διπλῶν ἑσθίου δ' αὐτο παλαί, δεξαμένης παλαί, Observance was the price of his meal: and he paid too dear for one that gave his birth-right for it; but he that exchanges his soul for it, knows not the vanity of his purchase, nor the value of his loss. He that gains the purchase and spoil of a kingdom, hath got that which to all that are placed in heaven, or to a man that were seated in the paths of the sun, seems but like a spot in an eye, or a mathematical point, so without vastness, that it seems to be without dimensions.

But he whose purchase is but his neighbour's field, or a few unjust acres, hath got that which is inconsiderable, below the notice and description of the map: for by such hieroglyphical representments *Socrates* chid the vanity of a proud *Athenian*.

3. Although these premises may suffice to shew that the supposed purchase is but vain, and that all which men used really to obtain is less than trifles; yet even the possession of it, whatsoever it be, is not mere and unmixt, but allayed with sorrow and uneasiness: the gain hath but enlarged his appetite, and, like a draught to an hydropick person, hath enraged his thirst; and still that which he hath not is infinitely bigger than what he hath, since the first enlargement of his purchase was not to satisfy necessity, but his passion, his lust or his avarice, his pride or his revenge; these things cease not by their fuel, but their flames grow bigger, and the capacities are stretched, and they want more than they did at first. For who wants most, he that wants five pound, or he that wants five thousand? And supposing a man naturally supported and provided for, in the dispensations of nature there is no difference, but that the poor hath enough to fill his belly, and the rich man can never have enough to fill his eye. The poor man's wants are no greater than what may be supplied by charity; and the rich man's wants are so big, that none but princes can relieve them; and they are left to all the temptations of great vices and huge cares to make their reparation.

*Dives eget gemmis, Cereali munere pauper:
Sed cum egeant ambo, pauper egens minus est.**

If the greatness of the world's possessions produce such fruits, vexation, and care, and want; the ambi-

* The miser starves, the poor with bread's unblest,
Tho' both are poor, the beggar fares the best. A.

tious requiring of great estates is but like the selling of a fountain to buy a fever, a parting with content to buy necessity, and the purchase of an unhandsome condition at the price of infelicity.

4. He that enjoys a great portion of this world hath most commonly the allay of some great cross, which although God designs in mercy, to wean his affections from the world, and for the abstracting them from sordid adherences and cohabitation, to make his eyes like stars, to fix them in the orbs of heaven and the regions of felicity; yet they are an inseparable appendant and condition of humanity. *Solomon* observed the vanity of some persons, that heaped up great riches for their heirs, and yet *knew not whether a wise man or a fool should possess them; this is a great evil under the sun.* And if we observe the great crosses many times God permits in great families, as discontent in marriages, artificial or natural bastardies, a society of man and wife like the conjunction of two politicks, full of state and ceremony and design, but empty of those sweet caresses, and natural hearty complications and endearments, usual in meaner and innocent persons; the perpetual sickness, fullness of diet, fear of dying, the abuse of flatterers, the trouble and noise of company, the tedious officiousness of impertinent and ceremonious visits, the declension of estate, the sadness of spirit, the notoriousness of those dishonours which the meanness of lower persons conceals, but their eminency makes as visible as the spots in the moon's face; we should find him to be most happy that hath most of wisdom and least of the world, because he only hath the least danger and the most security.

5. And lastly, his soul so gets nothing that wins all this world, if he loses his soul, that it is ten to one but he that gets the one, therefore shall lose the other: for to a great and opulent fortune, sin is so

adherent and insinuating, that it comes to him in the nature of civility. It is a sad sight to see a great personage undertake an action passionately and upon great interest; and let him manage it as indiscreetly, let the whole design be unjust, let it be acted with all the malice and impotency in the world, he shall have enough to tell him that he proceeds wisely enough, to be servants of his interest, and promoters of his sin, instruments of his malice, and actors of revenge. But which of all his relatives shall dare to tell him of his indiscretion, of his rage, and of his folly? He had need be a bold man and a severe person that shall tell him of his danger, and that he is in a direct progress towards hell. And indeed such personages have been so long nourished up in softness, and flattery, and effeminacy, that too often themselves are impatient of a monitor, and think the charity and duty of a modest reprehension to be a rudeness and incivility. That prince is a wise man that loves to have it otherwise: and certainly it is a strange civility and dutifulness in friends and relatives, to suffer him to go to hell uncontrolled, rather than to seem unmannerly towards a great sinner. But certainly this is none of the least infelicities of them who are lords of the world, and masters of great possessions.

I omit to speak of the habitual intemperance which is too commonly annexed to festival and delicious tables, where there is no other measure or restraint upon the appetite, but its fulness and satiety, and when it cannot or dare not eat more. Oftentimes it happens, that the intemperance of a poor table is more temperate and hath less of luxury in it than the temperance of a rich. To this are consequent all the evil accidents and effects of fulness, pride, lust, wantonness, softnesses of disposition, and dissolution of manners, huge talking, imperiousness, de-

spite and contempt of poor persons: and at the best, it is a great temptation for a man to have in his power whatsoever he can have in his sensual desires. Who then shall check his voracity, or calm his revenge, or allay his pride, or mortify his lust, or humble his spirit? It is like as when a lustful, young and tempted person lives perpetually with his amorous and delicious mistress; if *he escapes* burning, that is inflamed from within and set on fire from without, it is a greater miracle than the escaping from the flames of the furnace by the three children of the captivity. And just such a thing is the possession of the world, it furnishes us with abilities to sin and opportunities of ruin, and it makes us to dwell with poisons, and dangers, and enemies.

And although the grace of God is sufficient to great personages and masters of the world, and that it is possible for a young man to be tied upon a bed of flowers, and fastened by the arms and band of a courtesan, and tempted wantonly, and yet to escape the danger and the crime, and to triumph gloriously; (for so St. *Hierome* reports of a son of the king of *Nicomedia*;) and riches and a free fortune are designed by God to be a mercy, and an opportunity of doing noble things and excellent charity, and exact justice, and to protect innocence, and to defend oppressed people: yet it is a mercy mixt with much danger; yea it is like the present of a whole vintage to a man in a hectic fever; he will be shrewdly tempted to drink of it, and if he does, he is inflamed, and may chance to die with the kindness. Happy are those persons who use the world, and abuse it not, who possess a part of it, and love it for no other ends but for necessities of nature, and conveniences of person, and discharge of all their duty and the offices of religion, and charity to Christ, and all Christ's members. But since he that hath all the

world cannot command Nature to do him one office extraordinary, and enjoys the best part but in common with the poorest man in the world, and can use no more of it but according to a limited and a very narrow capacity, and whatsoever he can use or possess cannot outweigh the present pressure of a sharp disease, nor can it at all give him content, without which there can be nothing of felicity; since a prince in the matter of using the world differs nothing from his subjects, but in mere accidents and circumstances, and yet these very many trifling differences are not to be obtained but by so much labour and care, so great expense of time and trouble, that the possession will not pay thus much of the price; and after all this, the man may die two hours after he hath made his troublesome, and expensive purchase, and is certain not to enjoy it long; add to this last, that most men get so little of the world that it is altogether of a trifling and inconsiderable interest; that they who have the most of this world have the most of that but in title, and in supreme rights and reserved privileges, the real use descending upon others to more substantial purposes; that the possession of this trifle is mixed with sorrow upon other accidents, and is allayed with fear, and that the greatness of mens' possessions increases their thirst, and enlarges their wants, by swelling their capacity; and, above all, is of so great danger to a man's virtue, that a great fortune and a very great virtue are not always observed to grow together: he that observes all this, and much more he may observe, will see that he that gains the whole world hath made no such great bargain of it, although he had it for nothing, but the necessary unavoidable troubles in getting it. But how great a folly is it to buy so great a trouble, so great a vanity, with the loss of our precious souls, remains to be considered in the following parts of the text.

SERMON XIX.

PART II.

AND lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? And now the question is finally stated, and the dispute is concerning the sum of affairs.

De morte hominis nulla est cunctatio longa.*

And therefore when the soul is at stake, not for its temporal, but for its eternal interest, it is not good to be hasty in determining, without taking just measures of the exchange. *Solomon* had the good things of the world actually in possession, and he tried them at the touch-stone of prudence and natural value, and found them allayed with vanity and imperfection; and we that see them weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and tried by the touch-stone of the spirit, find them not only light and unprofitable, but pungent and dolorous. But now we are to consider what it is that men part with and lose, when with passion and impotency they get the world: and that will present the bargain to be a huge infelicity. And this I observe to be intimated in the word, *lose*. For he that gives gold for cloth, or precious stones for bread, serves his needs of nature, and loses nothing by it; and the merchant that found a pearl of great price, and sold all that he had to make the

* Short and uncertain is the life of man.

purchase of it, made a good venture, he was no loser: but here the case is otherwise; when a man gains the whole world, and his soul goes in the exchange, he hath not done like a merchant, but like a child or prodigal; he hath given himself away, he hath lost all that can distinguish him from a slave or miserable person, he loses his soul in the exchange. For the soul of a man all the world cannot be a just price; a man may lose it, or throw it away, but he can never make a good exchange when he parts with this jewel: and therefore our blessed Saviour rarely well expresses it by *ζημιον*, which is fully opposed to *κεδος*, *gain*; it is such an ill market a man makes, as if he should proclaim his riches and goods vendible for a garland of thistles, decked and trimmed up with the stinking poppy.

But we shall better understand the nature of this bargain, if we consider the soul that is exchanged, what it is in itself, in order, not of nature, but to felicity and the capacities of joy; secondly, what price the Son of God payed for it; and thirdly, what it is to lose it; that is, what miseries and tortures are signified by losing a soul.

1. First, if we consider what the soul is in its own capacity to happiness, we shall find it to be an excellency greater than the sun, of an angelical substance, sister to a cherub, an image of the divinity, and the great argument of that mercy whereby God did distinguish us from the lower form of beasts, and trees, and minerals.

For so it was the scripture affirms, that, *God made man after his own image*, that is, *secundum illam imaginem et ideam quam concepit ipse*; not according to the likeness of any of those creatures which were pre-existent to man's production, not according to any of those images or *ideas* whereby God created the heavens and the earth; but by a new form, to dis-

tinguish him from all other substances; he made him by a new *idea* of his own, by an uncreated exemplar. And besides that this was a donation of intelligent faculties, such as we understand to be perfect and essential, or rather the essence of God; it is also a designation of him to a glorious immortality, and communication of the rays and reflections of his own essential felicities.

But the soul is all that whereby we may be, and without which we cannot be happy. It is not the eye that sees the beauties of the heaven, nor the ear that hears the sweetness of musick, or the glad tidings of a prosperous accident, but the soul that perceives all the relishes of sensual and intellectual perfections; and the more noble and excellent the soul is, the greater and more savoury are its perceptions. And if a child beholds the rich ermine, or the diamonds of a starry night, or the order of the world, or hears the discourses of an apostle; because he makes no reflex acts upon himself, and sees not that he sees, he can have but the pleasure of a fool, or the deliciousness of a mule. But although the reflection of its own acts be a rare instrument of pleasure or pain respectively; yet the soul's excellence is upon the same reason not perceived by us, by which the sapidness of pleasant things of nature are not understood by a child; even because the soul cannot reflect far enough. For as the sun, which is the fountain of light and heat, makes violent and direct emissions of his rays from himself, but reflects them no farther than to the bottom of a cloud, or the lowest imaginary circle of the middle region, and therefore receives not a duplicate of his own heat: so is the soul of man, it reflects upon its own inferiour actions of particular sense, or general understanding: but because it knows little of its own nature, the manners of volition, the immediate instruments

of understanding, the way how it comes to meditate; and cannot discern how a sudden thought arrives, or the solution of a doubt not depending upon preceding premises; therefore above half its pleasures are abated, and its own worth less understood: and possibly it is the better it is so. If the elephant knew his strength, or the horse the vigorousness of his own spirit, they would be as rebellious against their rulers as unreasonable men against government: nay the angels themselves, because their light reflected home to their orbs, and they understood all the secrets of their own perfection, they grew vertiginous, and fell from the battlements of heaven. But the excellence of a human soul shall then be truly understood, when the reflection will make no distraction of our faculties, nor enkindle any irregular fires; when we may understand ourselves without danger.

In the mean this consideration is gone high enough, when we understand the soul of a man to be so excellently perfect, that we cannot understand how excellently perfect it is: that being the best way of expressing our conceptions of God himself. And therefore I shall not need by distinct discourses, to represent that the will of man is the last resort and sanctuary of true pleasure, which in its formality can be nothing else but a conformity of possession or of being to the will; that the understanding, being the channel and conveyance of the noblest perceptions, feeds upon pleasures in all its proportionate acts, and unless it be disturbed by intervening sins and remembrances derived hence, keeps a perpetual festival; that the passions are every of them fitted with an object, in which they rest as in their centre; that they have such delight in these their proper objects, that too often they venture a damnation rather than quit their interest and

possession. But yet from these considerations it would follow, that to lose a soul, which is designed to be an immense sea of pleasure, even in its natural capacities, is to lose all that whereby a man can possibly be, or be supposed, happy. And so much the rather is this understood to be an insupportable calamity, because losing a soul in this sense is not a mere privation of those felicities of which a soul is naturally designed to be a partaker, but it is an investing it with contrary objects and cross effects, and dolorous perceptions; for the will, if it misses its desires, is afflicted; and the understanding, when it ceases to be ennobled with excellent things, is made ignorant as a swine, dull as the foot of a rock; and the affections are in the destitution of their perfective actions made tumultuous, vexed and discomposed, to the height of rage and violence. But this is but the *αρχὴν αἰσίων*, the beginning of those throes which end not but in eternal infelicity.

2. Secondly, If we consider the price that the Son of God payed for the redemption of a soul, we shall better estimate of it than from the weak discourses of our imperfect and unlearned philosophy: not the spoil of rich provinces, not the estimate of kingdoms, not the price of *Cleopatra's* draught, not any thing that was corruptible or perishing; for that which could not one minute retard the term of its own natural dissolution, could not be a price for the redemption of one perishing soul. And if we list but to remember, and then consider, that a miserable, lost and accursed soul, does so infinitely undervalue and disrelish all the goods and riches that this world doats on, that he hath no more gust in them, or pleasure, than the fox hath in eating a turf; that if he could be imagined to be the lord of ten thousand worlds, he would give them all for any shadow of hope of a possibility of returning to life again; that

Dives in hell would have willingly gone on an embassy to his father's house, that he might have been quit a little from his flames, and on that condition would have given *Lazarus* the fee-simple of all his temporal possessions, though he had once denied to relieve him with the superfluities of his table: we shall soon confess that a moment of time is no good exchange for an eternity of duration; and a light unprofitable possession is not to be put in the balance against a soul, which is the glory of the creation; a soul, with whom God had made a contract, and contracted excellent relations, it being one of God's appellatives, that he is *the lover of the souls*.

When God made a soul, it was only *Faciamus hominem ad imaginem nostram*; he spake the word, and it was done: but when man had lost this soul which the spirit of God breathed in him, it was not so soon recovered. It is like the resurrection, which hath troubled the faith of many, who are more apt to believe that God made a man from nothing, than that he can return a man from dust and corruption: but for this resurrection of the soul, for the re-implacing the divine image, for the rescuing it from the devil's power, for the re-entitling it to the kingdoms of grace and glory, God did a greater work than the creation: he was fain to contract divinity to a span, to send a person to die for us who of himself could not die, and was constrained to use rare and mysterious arts to make him capable of dying; he prepared a person instrumental to his purpose, by sending his Son from his own bosom, a person both God and man, an enigma to all nations, and to all sciences; one that ruled over all the angels, that walked upon the pavements of heaven, whose feet were clothed with stars, whose eyes were brighter than the sun, whose voice is louder than thunder, whose understanding is larger than that infinite space which we

imagine in the uncircumscribed distance beyond the first orb of heaven; a person to whom felicity was as essential as life to God; this was the only person that was designed in the eternal decrees of the divine predestination to pay the price of a soul, to ransom us from death; less than this person could not do it. For although a soul in its essence is *finite*, yet there were *many infinites* which were incident and annexed to the condition of lost souls: for all which because provision was to be made, nothing less than an *infinite excellence* could satisfy for a soul who was lost to *infinite and eternal ages*, who was to be afflicted with *insupportable and undetermined*, that is, *next to infinite pains*; who was to bear the load of an *infinite anger* from the provocation of an *eternal God*. And yet if it be possible that infinite can receive degrees, this is but one half of the abyss, and I think the lesser: for that this person who was God eternal, should be lessened in all his appearances to a span, to the little dimensions of a man, and that he should really become very contemptibly little, although at the same time he was infinitely and unalterably great; that is, *essential, natural and necessary felicity* should turn into an intolerable, violent and immense calamity to his person, that this great God should not be admitted to pay the price of our redemption, unless he would suffer that horrid misery which that lost soul should suffer; as it represents the glories of his goodness who used such rare and admirable instruments in actuating the designs of his mercy, so it shews our condition to have been very desperate, and our loss invaluable.

A soul in God's account is valued at the price of the blood, and shame, and tortures of the Son of God; and yet we throw it away for the exchange of sins that a man naturally is ashamed to own; we lose it for the pleasure, the sottish, beastly pleasure

of a night. I need not say, we lose our soul to save our lives: for though that was our blessed Saviour's instance of the great unreasonableness of men, who by *saving their lives, lose them*, that is, in the great account of doomsday; though this, I say, be extremely unreasonable, yet there is something to be pretended in the bargain; nothing to excuse him with God, but something in the accounts of timorous men: but to lose our souls with swearing, that unprofitable, dishonourable, and unpleasant vice; to lose our souls with disobedience or rebellion, a vice that brings a curse and danger all the way in this life; to lose our souls with drunkenness, a vice which is painful and sickly in the very acting it, which hastens our damnation by shortening our lives; are instances fit to be put in the stories of fools and madmen. And all vice is a degree of the same unreasonableness; the most splendid temptation being nothing but a pretty well weaved fallacy, a mere trick, a sophism, and a cheating and abusing the understanding. But that which I consider here, is, that it is an affront and contradiction to the wisdom of God, that we should so slight and undervalue a soul, in which our interest is so concerned; a soul, which he who made it, and who delighted not to see it lost, did account a fit purchase to be made by the exchange of his Son, the eternal Son of God. To which also I add this additional account, that a soul is so greatly valued by God, that we are not to venture the loss of it to save all the world. For therefore whosoever should commit a sin to save kingdoms from perishing; or if the case could be put, that all the good men, and good causes, and good things in this world were to be destroyed by tyranny, and it were in our power by perjury to save all these; that doing this sin would be so far from hallowing the crime, that it were to offer to

God a sacrifice of what he most hates, and to serve him with swine's blood: and the rescuing all these from a tyrant or a hangman could not be pleasing to God upon those terms, because a soul is lost by it, which is in itself a greater loss and misery than all the evils in the world put together can outbalance, and a loss of that thing for which Christ gave his blood a price. Persecutions and temporal death in holy men, and in a just cause, are but seeming evils, and therefore not to be brought off with the loss of a soul, which is a real, but an intolerable calamity: and if God for his own sake would not have all the world saved by sin, that is, by the hazarding of a soul; we should do well for our own sakes not to lose a soul for trifles, for things that make us here to be miserable, and even here also to be ashamed.

But it may be, some natures or some understandings care not for all this; therefore I proceed to the third and most material consideration as to us; and I consider what it is to lose a soul. Which *Hierocles* thus explicates, *ὡς εἶεν τῆ ἀθανάτῳ οὐσίᾳ θανάτου μοίρας μεταλλάχειν, οὐ τῆς τοῦ μὴ εἶναι ἐκβάσει, ἀλλὰ τῆ τοῦ εἶναι ἀποπίπτει.* *An immortal substance can die, not by ceasing to be, but by losing all being well, by becoming miserable.* And it is remarkable, when our blessed Saviour gave us caution that we should *not fear them that can kill the body only, but fear him* (he says not that can kill the soul, but *τὸν δυναμένον καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ σῶμα ἀπολεῖν ἐν γέεννῃ.*) *that is able to destroy the body and soul in hell;** which word signifieth not death, but tortures. For some have chosen death for sanctuary, and fled to it to avoid intolerable shame, to give a period to the sense of a sharp grief, or to cure the earthquakes of fear; and the damned perishing souls shall wish for death with a desire impatient as their calamity: but this

* Matth. xix. 28.

shall be denied them, because death were a deliverance, a mercy, and a pleasure, of which these miserable persons must despair for ever.

I shall not need to represent to your considerations those expressions of scripture which the Holy Ghost hath set down, to represent to our capacities the greatness of this perishing, choosing such circumstances of character as were then usual in the world, and which are dreadful to our understanding as any thing. *Hell fire* is the common expression; for the eastern nations accounted burnings the greatest of these miserable punishments; and burning malefactors was frequent. *Brimstone and fire*, so *St. John, Revel. xiv, 10.* calls the state of punishment, *prepared for the devil and all his servants*; he added the circumstance of brimstone, for by this time the devil had taught the world more ingenious pains, and himself was newly escaped out of boiling oil and brimstone, and such bituminous matter; and the spirit of God knew right well the worst expression was not bad enough. *Σκοτος ἕξαρσις*, so our blessed Saviour calls it *the outer darkness*: that is, not only an abjection from the beatifick regions, where God and his angels and his saints dwell for ever, but then there is a positive state of misery expressed by darkness, *ζέρον σκοτους*, as two apostles, *St. Peter* and *St. Jude*, call it, *the blackness of darkness for ever*. In which although it is certain that God, whose justice there rules, will inflict but just so much as our sins deserve, and not superadd degrees of undeserved misery, as he does to the saints of glory, (for God gives to blessed souls in heaven more, infinitely more, than all their good works could possibly deserve, and therefore their glory is infinitely bigger glory than the pains of hell are great pains;) yet because God's justice in hell rules alone, without the allays and sweeter abatements of mercy, they shall have pure

and unmingled misery; no pleasant thought to refresh their weariness, no comfort in another accident to alleviate their pleasures, no waters to cool their flames. But because when there is a great calamity upon a man, every such man thinks himself the most miserable; and though there are great degrees of pain in hell, yet there are none perceived by him that thinks he suffers the greatest; it follows, that every man that loses his soul in this darkness is miserable beyond all those expressions, which the tortures of this world could furnish to the writers of the holy scripture.

But I shall choose to represent this consideration in that expression of our blessed Saviour, *Mark ix. 44.* which himself took out of the prophet *Isaiah lxi. 24.* *Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.* This is the *συνεχὴς ἔρως* spoken of by *Daniel* the prophet: For although this expression was a prediction of that horrid calamity and abscission of the *Jewish* nation, when God poured out a full vial of his wrath upon the crucifiers of his Son, and that this, which was the greatest calamity which ever did or ever shall happen to a nation, Christ with great reason took to describe the calamity of accursed souls, as being the greatest instance to signify the greatest torment: yet we must observe that the difference of each state, makes the same words in the several cases to be of infinite distinction. The worm stuck close to the *Jewish* nation, and the fire of God's wrath flamed out till they were consumed with a great and unheard of destruction, till many millions did die accursedly, and the small remnant became vagabonds, and were reserved, like broken pieces after the storm, to shew the greatness of the storm and misery of the shipwreck: but then this being translated to signify the state of accursed souls, whose dying is a continual perishing, who cannot

cease to be, it must mean an eternity of duration, in a proper and natural signification.

And that we may understand it fully, observe the place in *Isa. xxxiv. 8, &c.* The prophet prophecies of the great destruction of *Jerusalem* for all her great iniquities: *It is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Sion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day, the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste, none shall pass through it for ever and ever.* This is the final destruction of the nation; but this destruction shall have an end, because the nation shall end, and the anger also shall end in its own period, even then when God shall call the *Jews* into the common inheritance with the *Gentiles*, and all become the sons of *God*. And this also was the period of their *worm*, as it is of their *fire*, the *fire of the divine vengeance* upon the nation; which was not to be extinguished till they were destroyed, as we see it come to pass. And thus also in *St. Jude*, the *angels who kept not their first state* are said to be reserved by God in *everlasting chains under darkness*: which word *everlasting* signifies not absolutely to eternity, but to the utmost end of that period: for so it follows, *unto the judgment of the great day*, that *everlasting* lasts no longer. And in ver. 7. the word *eternal* is just so used. The men of *Sodom and Gomorrah* are set forth for an example, suffering the *vengeance of eternal fire*; that is, of a fire which burned till they were quite destroyed, and the cities and the country with an irreparable ruin, never to be rebuilt and re-inhabited as long as this world continues. The effect of which observation is this:

That these words, *for ever*, *everlasting*, *eternal*, *the never dying worm*, *the fire unquenchable*, being words borrowed by our blessed Saviour and his apostles from the style of the Old Testament, must have a signification just proportionable to the state in which they signify: so that as this worm, when it signifies a temporal infliction, means a worm that never ceases giving torment till the body is consumed; so when it is translated to an immortal state, it must signify as much in that proportion: that *eternal*, that *everlasting* hath no end at all; because the soul cannot be killed in the natural sense, but is made miserable and perishing for ever: that is, *the worm shall not die* so long as the soul shall be unconsumed, *the fire shall not be quenched* till the period of an immortal nature comes. And that this shall be *absolutely for ever* without any restriction, appears unanswerable in this, because the same *for ever* that is for the blessed souls, the same *for ever* is for the accursed souls: but the blessed souls, *that die in the Lord, henceforth shall die no more, death hath no power over them; for death is destroyed, it is swallowed up in victory*, (saith St. Paul) and *there shall be no more death*, saith St. John, *Rev. xxi. 4*. So that because *for ever* hath no end, till the thing or the duration itself have end, in the same sense in which the saints and angels *give glory to God for ever*, in the same sense the lost souls shall suffer the evils of their sad inheritance: and since after this death of nature, which is a separation of soul and body, there remains no more death, but this *second death*, this eternal perishing of miserable accursed souls, whose duration must be eternal; it follows that *the worm of conscience*, and *the unquenchable fire* of hell, have no period at all, but shall last as long as God lasts, or the measures of a proper eternity; that they who provoke God to wrath, by their base, unreasonable

and sottish practices, may know what their portion shall be in the everlasting habitations. And yet suppose that *Origen's* opinion had been true, and that accursed souls should have ease and a period to their tortures after a thousand years; I pray, let it be considered, whether it be not a great madness to choose the pleasures or the wealth of a few years here, with trouble, with danger, with uncertainty, with labour, with intervals of sickness; and for this to endure the flames of hell for a thousand years together. The pleasures of the world no man can have for a hundred years, and no man hath pleasure a hundred days together, but he hath some trouble intervening, or at least a weariness and a loathing of the pleasure: and therefore to endure insufferable calamities (suppose it be) for a hundred years, without any interruption, without so much comfort as the light of a small candle, or a drop of water amounts to in a fever, it is a bargain to be made by no man that loves himself, or is not in love with infinite affliction.

If a man were condemned but to lie still, or to lie in bed in one posture, without turning, for seven years together, would not he buy it off with the loss of all his estate? If a man were to be put upon the rack for every day for three months together, (suppose him able to live so long) what would he do to be quit of his torture? Would any man curse the king to his face, if he were sure to have both his hands burnt off, and to be tormented with torments three years together? Would any man in his wits accept of a hundred pounds a year for forty years, if he were sure to be tormented in the fire for the next hundred years together without intermission? Think then what a thousand years signify; ten ages, the age of two empires: but this account, I must tell you, is infinitely short, though I thus discourse to

you how great fools wicked men are, though this opinion should be true. A goodly comfort surely! that for two or three years' sottish pleasure, a man shall be infinitely tormented but for *a thousand years*. But then when we cast up the minutes, and years, and ages of eternity, the consideration itself is a great hell to those persons who, by their evil lives, are consigned to such sad and miserable portions.

A thousand years is a long while to be in torment; we find a fever of one and twenty days to be like an age in length: but when the duration of an intolerable misery is for ever in the height, and for ever beginning, and ten thousand years have spent no part of its term, but it makes a perpetual efflux, and is like the centre of a circle, which ever transmits lines to the circumference; this is a consideration so sad, that the horror of it, and the reflection upon its abode and duration, make a great part of the hell: for hell could not be hell without the despair of accursed souls; for any hope were a refreshment, and a drop of water, which would help to allay those flames, which, as they burn intolerably, so they must burn for ever.

And I desire you to consider, that although the scripture uses the word *fire*, to express the torments of accursed souls, yet fire can no more equal the pangs of hell than it can torment an immaterial substance; the pains of perishing souls being as much more afflictive than the smart of fire, as the smart of fire is troublesome beyond the softness of *Persian* carpets, or the sensuality of the *Asian* luxury. For the pains of hell, and the perishing or losing the soul, is, to suffer the wrath of God: *και γαρ ο Θεος ημων πυρ καταναλισκων*, *our God is a consuming fire*, that is, the fire of hell. When God takes away all comfort from us, nothing to support our spirit is left us; when sorrow is our food, and tears our drink; when it is

eternal night without sun, or star, or lamp, or sleep; when we burn with fire without light, that is, are loaden with sadness without remedy or hope of ease; and that this wrath is to be expressed and to fall upon us in spiritual, immaterial, but most accursed, most pungent and dolorous emanations; then we feel what it is to lose a soul.

We may guess at it by the terrours of a guilty conscience, those *verbera et laniatus*, those secret lashings and whips of the exterminating angel, those thorns in the soul, when a man is haunted by an evil spirit; those butcheries which the soul of a tyrant, or a violent or a vicious person, when he falls into fear or any calamity, does feel, are the infinite arguments, that hell, which is the consummation of the torment of conscience, just as manhood is the consummation of infancy, or as glory is the perfection of grace, is an affliction greater than the bulk of heaven and earth; for there it is that God pours out the treasures of his wrath, and empties the whole magazine of thunderbolts, and all the armoury of God is employed, not in the chastising, but in the tormenting of a perishing soul. *Lucian* brings in *Radamanthus* telling the poor wandering souls upon the banks of *Elysium*, Ὅποσα ἀν τις ὑμῶν πονηρῶς ἐργάσθηται περὶ τὸν βίον, καθ' ἑκάστην αὐτῶν ἀφανὴ στίγματα ἐπι τὸς ψυχῆς περιφέρει, *For every wickedness that any man commits in his life, when he comes to hell, he hath stamped upon his soul an invisible brand and mark of torment, and this begins here, and is not cancelled by death, but there is enlarged by the greatness of infinite, and the abodes of eternity.* How great these torments of conscience are here, let any man imagine that can but understand what despair means, despair upon just reason: let it be what it will, no misery can be greater than despair. And because I hope none here have felt those horrors of an evil conscience which are consignations to eternity, you may please to learn it by your own reason, or else by the sad in-

stances of story. It is reported of *Petrus Ilosuanus*, a *Polonian* schoolmaster, that having read some ill-managed discourses of absolute decrees and divine reprobation, began to be fantastick and melancholick, and apprehensive that he might be one of those many whom God had decreed for hell from all eternity. From possible to probable, from probable to certain, the temptation soon carried him: and when he once began to believe himself to be a person inevitably perishing, it is not possible to understand perfectly what infinite fears, and agonies, and despairs, what tremblings, what horrors, what confusion and amazement the poor man felt within him, to consider that he was to be tormented extremely without remedy even to eternal ages. This in a short continuance grew insufferable, and prevailed upon him so far, that he hanged himself, and left an account of it to this purpose in writing in his study; I am gone from hence to the flames of hell, and have forced my way thither, being impatient to try what those great torments are, which here I have feared with an insupportable amazement. This instance may suffice to shew what it is to lose a soul. But I will take off from this sad discourse; only I shall crave your attention to a word of exhortation.

That you take care, lest for the purchase of a little, trilling, inconsiderable portion of the world, you come into this place and state of torment. Although *Homer* was pleased to compliment the beauty of *Helena* to such a height, as to say it was a sufficient price for all the evils which the *Greeks* and *Trojans* suffered in ten years:

Ὅου κίρσις Τρώας καὶ ἐκνημίδας Ἀχαιοῦς
 Τειη δ' ἀμφὶ θυνάκῃσι πάλυι χρονον ἀλγεα πασχέειν.*

* Hom. Iliad III. 156.

—No wonder such celestial charms

For nine long years have set the world in arms.

POPE

Yet it was a more reasonable conjecture of *Herodotus*, that, during the ten years' siege of *Troy*, *Helena*, for whom the *Greeks* fought, was in *Egypt*, not in the city; because it was unimaginable but the *Trojans* would have thrown her over the walls, rather than for the sake of such a trifle have endured so great calamities. We are more sottish than the *Trojans*, if we retain our *Helena*, any one beloved lust, a painted devil, any sugared temptation; with not the hazard, but the certainty of having such horrid miseries, such invaluable losses. And certainly, it is a strange stupidity of spirit that can sleep in the midst of such thunder: when God speaks from heaven with his loudest voice, and draws aside his curtain, and shews his arsenal and his armoury, full of arrows steeled with wrath, headed, and pointed, and hardened with vengeance, still to snatch at those arrows, if they come but in the retinue of a rich fortune or a vain mistress, if they wait but upon pleasure or profit, or in the rear of an ambitious design.

But let not us have such a hardiness against the threats and representments of the divine vengeance, as to take the little imposts and revenues of the world, and stand in defiance against God and the fears of hell; unless we have a charm that we can be *αόρατοι τῷ κριτῇ*, *invisible to the judge* of heaven and earth, and are impregnable against, or are sure we shall be insensible of, the miseries of a perishing soul.

There is a sort of men, who, because they will be vicious and atheistical in their lives, have no way to go on with any plaisance and without huge disturbances, but by being also atheistical in their opinions, and to believe that the story of hell is but a bugbear to affright children and fools, easy believing people, to make them soft and apt for government and designs of princes. And this is an opinion that

befriends none but impure and vicious persons. Others there are, that believe God to be all mercy, that he forgets his justice, believing that none shall perish with so sad a ruin, if they do but at their death-bed ask God forgiveness, and say they are sorry, but yet continue their impiety till their house be ready to fall: being like the *Circassians*, whose gentlen enter not in the church, till they be threescore years old, that is, in effect, till by their age they cannot any longer use rapine; till then they hear service at their windows, dividing unequally their life between sin and devotion, dedicating their youth to robbery, and their old age to a repentance without restitution.

Our youth, and our manhood and old age, are all of them due to God, and justice and mercy are to him equally essential; and as this life is a time of the possibilities of mercy, so to them that neglect it, the next world shall be a state of pure and unmingled justice.

Remember the fatal and decretory sentence which God hath passed upon all mankind, *it is appointed to all men once to die, and after death comes judgment.* And if any of us were certain to die next morning, with what earnestness should we pray? with what hatred should we remember our sins? with what scorn should we look upon the licentious pleasures of the world? Then nothing could be welcome unto us but a prayer-book, no company but a comforter and a guide of souls, no employment but repentance, no passions but in order to religion, no kindness for a lust that hath undone us. And if any of you have been arrested with alarms of death, or been in hearty fear of its approach, remember what thoughts and designs then possessed you, how precious a soul was then in your account, and what then you would give that you had despised the world, and done your duty

to God and man, and lived a holy life. It will come to that again, and we shall be in that condition, in which we shall perfectly understand, that all the things and pleasures of the world are vain and unprofitable and irksome, and that he only is a wise man who secures the interest of his soul, though it be with the loss of all this world, and his own life into the bargain. When we are to depart this life, to go to strange company and stranger places, and to an unknown condition, then a holy conscience will be the best security, the best possession; it will be a horror, that every friend we meet shall with triumph upbraid to us the sottishness of our folly: *Lo, this is the goodly change you have made; you had your good things in your life-time, and how like you the portion that is reserved to you for ever?* The old Rabbins, those poets of religion, report of *Moses*, that when the courtiers of *Pharoah* were sporting with the child *Moses*, in the chamber of *Pharoah's* daughter, they presented to his choice an ingot of gold in one hand, and a coal of fire in the other; and that the child snatched at the coal, thrust it into his mouth, and so singed and parched his tongue, that he stammered ever after. And certainly it is infinitely more childish in us, for the glittering of the small glow-worms and the charcoal of worldly possessions, to swallow the flames of hell greedily in our choice: such a bit will produce a worse stammering than *Moses* had: for so the accursed and lost souls have their ugly and horrid dialect, they *roar and blaspheme, blaspheme and roar, for ever*. And suppose God should now at this instant send the great archangel with his trumpet to summon all the world to judgment; would not all this seem a notorious visible truth, a truth which you will then wonder that every man did not lay to his heart, and preserve there in actual, pious and effective consideration? Let the

trumpet of God perpetually sound in your ears, *Surgite mortui, et venite ad judicium*: place yourselves by meditation every day upon your death-bed, and remember what thoughts shall then possess you; and let such thoughts dwell in your understanding for ever, and be the parent of all your resolutions and actions. The doctors of the *Jews* report, that when *Absalom* hanged among the oaks by the hair of the head, he seemed to see under him hell gaping wide ready to receive him; and he durst not cut off the hair that entangled him, for fear he should fall into the horrid lake whose portion is flames and torment, but chose to protract his miserable life a few minutes in that pain of posture, and to abide the stroke of his pursuing enemies: his condition was sad when his arts of remedy were so vain.

Τι γὰρ βροτῶν ἐν σὺν κακίαις μεμνημένων
 ὀπισθεῖν ὁ μέλλον του χρόνου κέρδος φέρει. Soph.*

A condemned man hath but small comfort to stay the singing of a long psalm: it is the case of every vicious person. Hell is wide open to every impenitent persevering sinner, to ever unpurged person.

Noctes atque dies patet atri janua Ditis.†

And although God hath lighted his candle, and the lantern of his word and clearest revelations is held out to us, that we can see hell in its worst colours and most horrid representments: yet we run greedily after baubles into that precipice which swal-

* Since doomed to die, what boots a moment's respite,
 Embittered by the miseries of life!

† Virg. *Aeneid*. vi. 127.

The Gates of Hell are open night and day

lows up the greatest part of mankind ; and then only we begin to consider, when all consideration is fruitless.

He therefore is a huge fool, that heaps up riches, that greedily pursues the world, and at the same time (for so it must be) *heaps up wrath to himself against the day of wrath* ; when sickness and death arrest him, then they appear unprofitable, and himself extremely miserable : and if you would know how great that misery is, you may take account of it by those fearful words and killing rhetorick of scripture. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God* ; and, *Who can dwell with the everlasting burnings?* That is, No patience can abide there one hour, where they must dwell for ever.

SERMON XX.

OF CHRISTIAN PRUDENCE.

MATTHEW X. LATTER PART OF VER. 16.

Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

WHEN our blessed Saviour entailed a law and a condition of sufferings, and promised a state of persecution to his servants; and withal had charmed them with the bands and unactive chains of so many passive graces, that they should not be able to stir against the violence of tyrants, or abate the edge of axes, by any instrument but their own blood; being *sent forth as sheep among wolves*, innocent and silent, harmless and defenceless, certainly exposed to sorrow, and uncertainly guarded in their persons; their condition seemed nothing else but a designation to slaughter: and when they were drawn into the folds of the church, they were betrayed into the hands of evil men, infinitely and unavoidably: and when an apostle invited a proselyte to come to Christ, it was in effect a snare laid for his life, and he could neither conceal his religion, nor hide his person, nor avoid a captious question, nor deny his accusation, nor elude

the bloody arts of orators and informers, nor break prisons, nor any thing but die. If the case stood just thus, it was well eternity stood at the outer days of our life, ready to receive such harmless people: but surely there could be no art in the design, no pitying of human weaknesses, no complying with the condition of man, no allowances made for customs and prejudices of the world, no inviting men by the things of men, no turning nature into religion; but it was all the way a direct violence, and an open prostitution of our lives, and a throwing away our fortune into a sea of rashness and credulity. But therefore God ordered the affairs and necessities of religion in other ways, and to other purposes. Although God bound our hands behind us, yet he did not tie our understandings up: although we might not use our swords, yet we might use our reason: we were not suffered to be violent, but we might avoid violence by all the arts of prudence and innocence: if we did take heed of sin, we might also take heed of men. And because in all contentions between *wit* and *violence*, *prudence* and *rudeness*, *learning* and *the sword*, the strong hand took it first, and the strong head possessed it last; the strong man first governed: and the witty man succeeded him, and lasted longer: it came to pass, that the wisdom of the Father hath so ordered it, that all his disciples should overcome the power of the *Roman* legions by a wise religion; and *prudence* and *innocence* should become the mightiest guards; and the Christian, although exposed to persecution, yet is so secured that he shall never need to die, but when the circumstances are so ordered that his reason is convinced that then it is fit he should: fit, I say, in order to God's purposes and his own.

For he that is *innocent*, is safe against all the rods and the axes of all the consuls of the world, if they

rule by justice; and he that is *prudent* will also escape from many rudenesses and irregular violences that can come by injustice: and no wit of man, no government, no armies can do more. For *Cæsar* perished in the midst of all his legions and all his honours; and against *chance* and *irregularities*, there is no provision less than infinite that can give security. And although *prudence* alone cannot do this; yet *innocence* gives the greatest title to that providence, which only can, if he pleases, and will if it be fitting. Here then are the two arms defensive of a Christian: *prudence* against the evils of men, *innocence* against the evils of devils, and all that relates to his kingdom.

Prudence fences against persecution and the evil snares, against the opportunities and occasions of sin, it prevents surprises, it fortifies all its proper weaknesses, it improves our talents, it does advantage to the kingdom of Christ and the interests of the gospel, it secures our condition, and instructs our choice in all the ways and just passages to felicity, it makes us to live profitably and die wisely; and without it, simplicity would turn to silliness, zeal into passion, passion into fury, religion into scandal, conversation into a snare, civilities into temptation, courtesies into danger: and an imprudent person falls into a condition of harmless rich and unwary fools, or rather of birds, sheep and beavers, who are hunted and persecuted for the spoils of their fleece or their flesh, their skins or their entrails, and have not the foresight to avoid a snare, but by their fear and undefending follies are driven thither, where they die infallibly.

Σκαιόσι πολλοίς εἰς σφρα δινούται. Every good man is encircled with many enemies, and dangers; and his virtue shall be rifled, and the decency of his soul and spirit shall be discomposed, and turned into a heap of inarticulate and disorderly fancies, unless by the

methods and guards of prudence it be managed and secured.

But in order to the following discourse and its method, we are first to consider whether this be, or indeed can be, a commandment, or what is it. For can all men that give up their names in baptism, be enjoined to be wise and prudent? It is as if God would command us to be eloquent or witty men, fine speakers, or straight-bodied, or excellent scholars, or rich men: if he please to make us so, we are so. And prudence is a gift of God, a blessing of an excellent nature, and of great leisure, and a wise opportunity, and a severe education, and a great experience, and a strict observation, and good company; all which being either wholly or in part out of our power, may be as free gifts, but cannot be imposed as commandments.

To this I answer, that Christian prudence is in very many instances a direct duty; in some an instance and advice, in order to degrees and advantages. Where it is a duty, it is put into every man's power; where it is an advice, it is only expected according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not: and even here, although the events of prudence are out of our power, yet the endeavours and the observation, the diligence and caution, the moral part of it, and the plain conduct of our necessary duty, (which are portions of this grace) are such things which God will demand, in proportion to the talent which he hath intrusted into our banks. There are indeed some Christians very unwary and unwise in the conduct of their religion, and they cannot all help it, at least not in all degrees: but they may be taught to *do prudent things*, though *not to be prudent persons*: if they have not the *prudence of advice and conduct*, yet they may have the *prudence of obedience and of disciples*. And the event is this; without

prudence their virtue is unsafe, and their persons defenceless, and their interest is unguarded; for prudence is a handmaid waiting at the production and birth of virtue; it is a nurse to it in its infancy, its patron in assaults, its guide in temptations, its security in all portions of chance and contingencies: and he that is imprudent, if he have many accidents and varieties, is in great danger of being *none at all*, or, if he be, at the best he is but a *weak and unprofitable servant*, useless to his neighbour, vain in himself, and as to God, *the least in the kingdom*, his virtue is contingent, and by chance not proportioned to the reward of wisdom, and the election of a wise religion.

Προνοιας ουδεν ανθρωπου σπου
Κερδος λαβειν αμεινον ουδενος σπου.*

No purchase, no wealth, no advantage is great enough to be compared to a wise soul and a prudent spirit; and he that wants it, hath a less virtue, and a defenceless mind, and will suffer a mighty hazard in the interest of eternity. Its parts and proper acts consist in the following particulars.

1. It is the duty of Christian prudence to choose the end of a Christian, that which is perfective of a man, satisfactory to reason, the rest of a Christian, and the beatification of his spirit; and that is, to choose and desire, and propound to himself heaven, and the fruition of God, as the end of all his acts and arts, his designs and purposes. For, in the nature of things, that is most eligible and most to be pursued, which is most perfective of our nature, and is the acquiescence, the satisfaction, and proper rest

* Man cannot boast a treasure so divine,
As a wise spirit, and enlightened soul.

of our most reasonable appetites. Now the things of this world are difficult and uneasy, full of thorns and empty of pleasures; they fill a diseased faculty or an abused sense, but are an infinite dissatisfaction to reason and the appetites of soul; they are short and transient, and they never abide, unless sorrow like a chain be bound about their leg, and then they never stir till the grace of God and religion breaks it, or else that the rust of time eats the chain in pieces; they are dangerous and doubtful, few and difficult, sordid and particular, not only not communicable to a multitude, but not diffusive upon the whole man, there being no one pleasure or object in this world that delights all the parts of man: and, after all this, they are originally from earth and from the creatures, only that they oftentimes contract alliances with hell and the grave, with shame and sorrow; and all these put together make no great amability, or proportion to a wise man's choice. But, on the other side, the things of God are the noblest satisfactions to those desires which ought to be cherished and swelled up to infinite; their deliciousness is vast and full of relish; and their very appendant thorns are to be chosen, for they are gilded, they are safe and medicinal, they heal the wound they make, and bring forth fruit of a blessed and a holy life. The things of God and of religion are easy and sweet, they bear entertainments in their hand, and reward at their back; their good is certain and perpetual, and they make us cheerful to-day, and pleasant to-morrow; and spiritual songs end not in a sigh and a groan; neither, like unwholesome physick, do they let loose a present humour, and introduce an habitual indisposition: but they bring us to the felicity of God, *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*, they do not give a private and particular delight, but their benefit is publick, like the incense of the altar, it sends up a sweet smell to heaven, and makes atone-

ment for the religious man that kindled it, and delights all the standers by, and makes the very air wholesome. There is no blessed soul goes to heaven, but he makes a general joy in all the mansions where the saints do dwell, and in all the chapels where the angels sing: and the joys of religion are not univocal, but productive of rare, and accidental, and preternatural pleasures; for the musick of holy hymns delights the ear, and refreshes the spirit, and makes the very bones of the saint to rejoice. And charity, or the giving alms to the poor, does not only ease the poverty of the receiver; but makes the giver rich, and heals his sickness, and *delivers from death*: and temperance, though it be in the matter of meat, and drink, and pleasures; yet hath an effect upon the understanding, and makes the reason sober, and the will orderly, and the affections regular, and does things beside and beyond their natural and proper efficacy: for all the parts of our duty are watered with the showers of blessing, and bring forth fruit according to the influence of heaven, and beyond the capacities of nature.

And now let the voluptuous person go and try, whether putting his wanton hand to the bosom of his mistress will get half such honour as *Scaevola* put upon his head, when he put his hand into the fire. Let him see, whether a drunken meeting will cure a fever, or make him wise: a hearty and a persevering prayer will. Let him tell me, if spending great sums of money upon his lusts will make him sleep soundly, or be rich: charity will; alms will increase his fortune, and a good conscience shall charm all his cares and sorrows into a most delicious slumber. Well may a full goblet wet the drunkard's tongue, and then the heat rising from the stomach will dry the sponge, and heat it into the scorplings and little images of hell; and the follies of a wanton

bed will turn the itch into a smart, and empty the reins of all their lustful powers: but can they do honour or satisfaction in any thing that must last, and that ought to be provided for? No: all the things of this world are little, and trifling, and limited, and particular, and sometimes necessary, because men are miserable, wanting and imperfect; but they never do any thing toward perfection, but their pleasure dies like the time in which it danced awhile: and when the minute is gone, so is the pleasure too, and leaves no footstep but the impression of a sigh, and dwells no where but in the same house where you shall find *yesterday*, that is, in forgetfulness and annihilation; unless its only child, *Sorrow*, shall marry, and breed more of its kind, and so continue its memory and name to eternal ages. It is therefore the most necessary part of prudence to choose well in the main stake; and the dispute is not much: for if eternal things be better than temporal, the soul more noble than the body, virtue more honourable than the basest vices, a lasting joy to be chosen before an eternal sorrow, *much* to be preferred before *little*, *certainty* before *danger*, *publick good things* before *private evils*, *eternity* before *moments*; then let us sit down in religion, and make heaven to be our end, God to be our father, Christ our elder brother, the Holy Ghost the earnest of our inheritance, virtue to be our employment: and then we shall never enter into the portion of fools and accursed ill-choosing spirits. *Nazianzen* said well, *Malim prudentiæ guttam quam foecundioris fortunæ pelagus*; One drop of prudence is more useful than an ocean of a smooth fortune: for prudence is a rare instrument towards heaven; and a great fortune is made oftentimes the high-way to hell and destruction. However, thus far prudence is our duty; every man can be so wise, and is bound to it, to choose heaven and a cohabita-

tion with God, before the possessions and transient vanities of the world.

2. It is a duty of Christian prudence to pursue this great end, with apt means and instruments in proportion to that end. No wise man will sail to *Ormus* in a cock-boat, or use a child for his interpreter; and that general is a *Cyclops* without an eye, who chooses the sickest men to man his towns, and the weakest to fight his battles. It cannot be a vigorous prosecution, unless the means have an efficacy or worth commensurate to all the difficulty, and something of the excellency of that end which is designed. And indeed men use not to be so weak in acquiring the possessions of their temporals; but in matters of religion they think any thing effective enough to secure the greatest interest: as if all the fields of heaven and the regions of that kingdom were waste ground, and wanted a colony of planters; and that God invited men to heaven upon any terms, that he might rejoice in the multitude of subjects. For certain it is, men do more to get a little money than for all the glories of heaven: men *rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness*, to become richer than their neighbours; and are amazed at every loss, and impatient of an evil accident, and feel a direct storm of passion if they suffer in their interest. But in order to heaven, they are cold in their religion, indevout in their prayers, incurious in their walking, unwatchful in their circumstances, indifferent in the use of their opportunities, infrequent in their discoursings of it, not inquisitive of the way, and yet think they shall surely go to heaven. But a prudent man knows, that by the greatness of the purchase he is to make an estimate of the value and the price. When we ask of God any great thing, as *wisdom, delivery from sickness, his holy spirit, the forgiveness of sins, the grace of chastity,*

restitution to his favour, or the like, do we hope to obtain them without a high opinion of the things we ask? and if we value them highly, must we not desire them earnestly? and if we desire them earnestly, must we not beg for them fervently? and whatsoever we ask for fervently, must not we beg for frequently? And then, because prayer is but one hand toward the reaching a blessing, and God requires our co-operation and endeavour, and we must work with both hands; are we not convinced that our prayers are either faint, or a design of laziness, when we either ask coldly; or else pray loudly, hoping to receive the graces we need without labour? A prudent person, that knows to value the best object of his desires, will also know that he must observe the degrees of labour, according to the excellence of the reward: that prayer must be *effectual, fervent, frequent, continual, holy, passionate*, that must get a grace, or secure a blessing: the *love* that we must have to God must be such as *to keep his commandments*, and make us willing to part with all our estate, and all our honour, and our life for the testimony of a holy conscience: our charity to our neighbour must be expressive in a language of a real friendship, aptness to forgive, readiness to forbear, in pitying infirmities, in relieving necessities, in giving our goods and our lives, and quitting our privileges to save his soul, to secure and support his virtue: our *repentance* must be full of sorrows and care, of diligence and hatred against sin; it must drive out all, and leave no affections towards it; it must be constant and persevering, fearful of relapse, and watchful of all accidents: our *temperance* must sometimes turn into abstinence, and most commonly be severe, and ever without reproof: *He that striveth for masteries, is temperate* (saith St. Paul) *in all things*. He that does this, may with some pretence and rea-

son say, he intends to go to heaven. But they that will not deny a lust, nor refrain an appetite; they that will be drunk when their friends do merrily constrain them, or love a cheap religion, and a gentle and lame prayer, short and soft, quickly said and soon passed over, seldom returning and but little observed; how is it possible that they should think themselves persons disposed to receive such glorious crowns and sceptres, such excellent conditions, which they have not faith enough to believe, nor attention enough to consider, and no man can have wit enough to understand? But so might an *Arcadian* shepherd look from the rocks, or through the cliffs of the valley where his sheep graze, and wonder that the messenger stays so long from coming to him to be crowned king of all the *Greek* islands, or to be adopted heir to the *Macedonian* monarchy. It is an infinite love of God that we have heaven upon conditions which we can perform with greatest diligence: but truly the lives of men are generally such, that they do things in order to heaven, things (I say) so few, so trifling, so unworthy, that they are not proportionable to the reward of a crown of oak or a yellow ribband, the slender reward with which the *Romans* paid their soldiers for their extraordinary valour. True it is, that heaven is not in a just sense of a commutation, a reward, but a gift, and an infinite favour: but yet it is not reached forth but to persons disposed by the conditions of God; which conditions when we pursue in kind, let us be very careful we do not fail of *the mighty prize of our high calling*, for want of degrees and just measures, the measures of zeal and a mighty love.

3. It is an office of prudence to serve God, so that we may at the same time preserve our lives and our estates, our interest and reputation for ourselves and our relatives, so far as they can consist together. St

Paul, in the beginning of Christianity, was careful to instruct the forwardness and zeal of the new Christians into good husbandry, and to catechise the men into good trades, and the women into useful employments, that they might not be unprofitable. For Christian religion carrying us to heaven, does it by the way of a man, and by the body it serves the soul, as by the soul it serves God; and therefore it endeavours to secure the body and its interest, that it may continue the opportunities of a crown, and prolong the stage in which we are to run *for the mighty prize of our salvation*: and this is that part of prudence which is the defensative and guard of a Christian in the time of persecution; and it hath in it much of duty. He that through an indiscreet zeal casts himself into a needles danger, hath betrayed his life to tyranny, and tempts the sin of an enemy; he loses to God the service of many years, and cuts off himself from a fair opportunity of working his salvation, (in the main parts of which we shall find a long life, and very many years of reason, to be little enough;) he betrays the interest of his relatives, (which he is bound to preserve;) he disables himself of making *provision for them of his own house*, and he that fails in this duty by his own fault, *is worse than an infidel*; and denies the faith, by such unseasonably dying or being undone, which by that testimony he did not intend gloriously to confess; he serves the end of ambition and popular services, but not the sober ends of religion; he discourages the weak, and weakens the hands of the strong, and by upbraiding their weariness, tempts them to turn it into rashness or despair; he affrights strangers from entering into religion, while by such imprudence he shall represent it to be impossible at the same time to be wise and to be religious; he turns all the whole religion into a forwardness of dying or beggary, leaving no space

for the parts and offices of a holy life, which in times of persecution, are infinitely necessary for the advantages of the institution. But God hath provided better things for his servants: *quem fata cogunt, ille cum venia est miser*; he whom God by an inevitable necessity calls to sufferance, he hath leave to be undone; and that ruin of his estate or loss of his life shall secure first a providence, then a crown.

At si quis ultro se malis offert volens,
Seque ipse torquet, perdere est dignus bona
Queis nescit uti———*

But he that invites the cruelty of a tyrant by his own follies, or the indiscretions of an insignificant and impertinent zeal, suffers as a wilful person, and enters into the portion and reward of fools. And this is the precept of our blessed Saviour, next after my text, *Beware of men*; use your prudence to the purposes of avoiding their snare. *Των θηρων βροτος μαλλον ανιμερος.* *Man is the most harmful of all the wild beasts. Ye are sent as sheep among wolves; be therefore wise as serpents*: when you can avoid it, suffer not men to ride over your heads, or trample you under foot; that is the wisdom of serpents. And so must we; that is, by all just compliances, and toleration of all indifferent changes in which a duty is not destroyed, and in which we are not active, so preserve ourselves, that we might be permitted to live, and serve God, and to do advantages to religion; so purchasing time to do good in, by bending in all those flexures of fortune and condition which we cannot help, and which we do not set forward, and which we never did procure. And this is the direct meaning of *St. Paul*;

* But he who rashly plunges into ruin,
A self-tormentor, well deserves to lose
The blessings which he knows not to enjoy.

A.

*See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil :** That is, we are fallen into times that are troublesome, dangerous, persecuting, and afflictive; purchase as much respite as you can; buy or *redeem the time* by all honest arts, by humility, by fair carriage and sweetnesses of society, by civility and a peaceful conversation, by good words and all honest offices, by *praying for your persecutors*, by patient sufferance of what is unavoidable: and when the tyrant draws you forth from all these guards and retirements, and offers violence to your duty, or tempts you to do a dishonest act, or to omit an act of obligation; then come forth into the theatre, and lay your necks down to the hangman's axe, and fear not to die the most shameful death of the cross or the gallows. For so have I known angels ascending and descending upon those ladders: and the Lord of glory suffered shame, and purchased honour upon the cross. Thus we are *to walk in wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time :†* for so St. Paul renews that permission or commandment: give them no just cause of offence; with all humility and as occasion is offered, represent their duty, and invite them sweetly to felicities and virtue, but do not in ruder language upbraid and reproach their baseness; and when they are incorrigible, let them alone, lest like cats they run mad with the smell of delicious ointments. And therefore *Pothinus* bishop of *Lyons*, being asked by the unbaptized president, *Who was the God of Christians?* answered, *επι της αληθινης γωσσης*, If you be disposed with real and hearty desires of learning, what you ask you shall quickly know; but if your purpose be indirect, I shall not preach to you, to my hurt, and your no advantage. Thus the wis-

* Eph. v. 15, 16.

† Col. iv. 5.

dom of the primitive Christians was careful not to prophane the temples of the heathen, not to *revile* their false *gods*; and when they were in duty to reprehend the follies of their religion, they chose to do it from their own writings, and as relators of their own records; they fled from the fury of a persecution, they hid themselves in caves, and wandered about in disguises, and preached in private, and celebrated their synaxes and communions in grots and retirements; and made it appear to all the world they were peaceable and obedient, charitable and patient, and at this price bought their time;

Καιρος γαρ ὡς περ ἀνδρασι

Μεγιστος εγγυ παντος εστ' επιστατης*

As knowing that even in this sense *time was very precious*, and the opportunity of giving glory to God by the offices of an excellent religion, was not too dear a purchase at that rate. But then when the wolves had entered into the folds, and seized upon a lamb, the rest fled, and used all the innocent arts of concealment. St. *Athanasius* being overtaken by his persecutors, but not known, and asked whether he saw *Athanasius* passing that way, pointed out forward with his finger, *Non longe abest Athanasius*, The man is not far off, a swift footman will easily overtake him. And St. *Paul* divided the counsel of his judges, and made the Pharisees his parties, by a witty insinuation of his own belief of the resurrection, which was not the main question, but an incident to the matter of his accusation. And when *Plinius Secundus*, in the face of a tyrant court, was pressed so invidiously to give his opinion concern-

* A golden opportunity improved,

Men find the shortest road to sure success.

ing a good man in banishment, and under the disadvantage of an unjust sentence, he diverted the snare of *Marcus Regulus*, by referring his answer to a competent judicatory according to the laws; being pressed again, by offering a direct answer upon a just condition, which he knew they would not accept; and the third time, by turning the envy upon the impertinent and malicious orator: that he won great honour, the honour of a severe honesty, and a witty man, and a prudent person. The thing I have noted, because it is a good pattern to represent the arts of honest evasion, and religious, prudent honesty; which any good man may transcribe and turn into his own instances, if any equal case should occur.

For in this case the rule is easy; if we are commanded to be *wise* and *redeem our time*, that we serve God and religion, we must not use unlawful arts which set us back in the accounts of our time, no lying subterfuges, no betraying of a truth, no treachery to a good man, no ensnaring of a brother, no secret renouncing of any part or proposition of our religion, no denying to confess the article when we are called to it. For when the primitive Christians had got a trick, to give money for certificates that they had sacrificed to idols, though indeed they did not do it, but had corrupted the officers and ministers of state, they dishonoured their religion, and were marked with the appellative of *libellatici*, *libellers*; and were excommunicate and cast off from the society of Christians and the hopes of heaven, till they had returned to God by a severe repentance. *Optandum est, ut, quod libenter facis, diu facere possis*; It is good to have time long to do that which we ought to do: but to pretend that which we dare not do, and to say we have when we have not, if we know we ought not, is to dishonour the cause and

the person too: it is expressly against *confession of Christ*, of which St. Paul saith, *By the mouth confession is made unto salvation*; and our blessed Saviour, *He that confesseth me before men, I will confess him before my heavenly Father*: and if here he refuseth to own me, I will not own him hereafter. It is also expressly against Christian fortitude and nobleness, and against the simplicity and sincerity of our religion, and it turns prudence into craft, and brings the devil to wait in the temple, and to minister to God; and it is a lesser kind of *apostacy*. And it is well that the man is tempted no farther; for if the persecutors could not be corrupted with money, it is odds but the complying man would; and though he would with the money hide his shame, yet he will not with the loss of all his estate redeem his religion.

Λυπηρος δ' εχει, ει τοις μαυλις τον βιον παζω καρως. Some men will lose their lives, rather than a fair estate: and do not almost all the armies of the world (I mean those that fight in the justest causes) pretend to fight and die for their lands and liberties? and there are too many also that will die twice, rather than be beggars once; although we all know that *the second death* is intolerable. Christian prudence forbids us to provoke a danger: and they were fond persons that ran to persecution, and when the proconsul sate on the life and death, and made strict inquisition after Christians, went and offered themselves to die; and he was a fool that being in *Portugal*, ran to the priest as he elevated the host, and overthrew the mysteries, and openly defied the rights of that religion. God, when he sends a persecution, will pick out such persons whom he will have to die, and whom he will consign to banishment, and whom to poverty. In the mean time, let us do our duty when we can, and as long as we can, and with as much strictness as we can; walking *αρετως* (as the apostle's phrase is) not

prevaricating in the least tittle: and then if we can be safe with the arts of civil, innocent, inoffensive compliance, let us bless God for his permissions made to us, and his assistances in the using them. But if either we turn our zeal into the ambition of death, and the follies of an unnecessary beggary; or on the other side, turn our prudence into craft and covetousness; to the first I say, that *God hath no pleasure in fools*; to the latter, *If you gain the whole world, and lose your own soul, your loss is infinite and intolerable.*



SERMON XXI.

PART II.

4. It is the office of Christian prudence so to order the affairs of our life, as that in all the offices of our souls and conversation, we do honour and reputation to the religion we profess: for the follies and vices of the professors give great advantages to the adversary to speak reproachfully, and do alien the hearts, and hinder the compliance of those undetermined persons, who are apt to be persuaded, if their understandings be not prejudiced.

But as our necessary duty is bound upon us by one ligament more, in order to the honour of the cause of God; so it particularly binds us to many circumstances, adjuncts, and parts of duty, which have no other commandment but the law of prudence. There are some sects of Christians which have some one constant indisposition, which, as a character, divides them from all others, and makes them reprov'd on all hands. Some are so suspicious and ill-natured, that if a person of a facile nature and

gentle disposition fall into their hands, he is presently soured, and made morose, unpleasant, and uneasy in his conversation. Others there are that do things so like to what themselves condemn, that they are forced to take sanctuary, and labour in the mine of insignificant distinctions, to make themselves believe they are innocent: and in the mean time they offend all men else, and open the mouths of their adversaries to speak reproachful things, true or false, as it happens. And it requires a great wit to understand all the distinctions and devices thought of, for legitimating the worship of images: and those people that are liberal in their excommunications, make men think they have reason to say, their judges are proud, or self-willed, or covetous, or ill-natured people. These that are the faults of governours and continued, are quickly derived upon the sect, and cause a disreputation to the whole society and institution. And who can think that congregation to be a true branch of the Christian, which makes it their profession to kill men to save their souls, against their will, and against their understanding? who, calling themselves disciples of so meek a master, do live like bears upon prey, and spoil, and blood? It is a huge dishonour to the sincerity of a man's purposes, to be too busy in fingering money in the matters of religion: and they that are zealous for their rights, and tame in their devotion, furious against sacrilege, and companions of drunkards, implacable against breakers of a canon, and careless and patient enough with them that break the fifth or sixth commandments of the decalogue, tell all the world their private sense is to preserve their own interest, with scruple and curiosity, and leave God to take care of his.

Thus Christ reprov'd the Pharisees for *straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel*; the very representation of the manner and matter of fact discovers the vice by reprov'ing the folly of it. They that are

factions to get a *rich* proselyte, and think the *poor* not worth saving, dishonour their zeal, and teach men to call it covetousness: and though there may be a reason of prudence to desire one more than the other, because of a bigger efficacy the example of the one may have more than the other; yet it will quickly be discovered, if it be done by secular design; and the scripture, that did not allow the preferring of a gay man before a poor saint in the matter of place, will not be pleased that in the matter of souls, which are all equal, there should be a faction and design, and an acceptance of persons. Never let sins pollute our religion with arts of the world, nor offer to support the ark with unhallowed hands, nor mingle false propositions with true, nor make religion a pretence to profit or preferment, nor do things which are like a vice; neither ever speak things dishonourable of God, nor abuse thy brother for God's sake, nor be solicitous and over-busy to recover thy own little things, neither always think it fit to lose thy charity by forcing thy brother to do justice; and all those things which are the outsides and faces, the garments and most discerned parts of religion, be sure that they be dressed according to all the circumstances of men, and by all the rules of common honesty and publick reputation. Is it not a sad thing that the *Jew* should say, The Christians worship images? or that it should become a proverb; that *the Jew spends all in his passover, the Moor in his marriage, and the Christian in his law-suits?* that what the first sacrifice to religion, and the second to publick joy, we should spend in malice, covetousness, and revenge?

————— Pudet hæc opprobria nobis
Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.*

* These foul aspersions on our honest fame,
Must, unrefuted, tinge our cheeks with shame.

But among ourselves also we serve the devil's ends, and minister to an eternal disunion, by saying and doing things which look unhandsomely. One sort of men is superstitious, fantastical, greedy of honour, and tenacious of propositions to fill the purse, and his religion is thought nothing but policy and opinion. Another says, he hath a good religion, but he is the most indifferent and cold person in the world, either to maintain it, or to live according to it. The one dresses the images of saints with fine cloaths; the other lets the poor go naked, and disrobes the priests that minister in the religion. A third uses God worse than all this, and says of him such things that are scandalous even to an honest man, and such which would undo a good man's reputation. And a fourth yet, endures no governour but himself, and pretends to set up Christ and make himself his lieutenant. And a fifth hates all government. And from all this it comes to pass, that it is hard for a man to choose his side; and he that chooses wisest, takes that which hath in it least hurt; but some he must endure, or live without communion: and every church of one denomination is, or hath been, too incurious of preventing infamy or disreputation to their confessions.

One thing I desire should be observed, that here the question being concerning prudence, and the matter of doing reputation to our religion, it is not enough to say, we can with learning justify all that we do, and make all whole with three or four distinctions: for possibly that man that went to visit the *Corinthian Lais*, if he had been asked why he dishonoured himself with so unhandsome an entrance, might find an excuse to legitimate his act, or at least to make himself believe well of his own person; but he that intends to do himself honour, must take care that he be not suspected, that he give no occasion of reproachful language; for fame and honour is a nice

thing, tender as a woman's chastity, or like the face of the purest mirror, which a foul breath, or an unwholesome air, or a watery eye can sully, and the beauty is lost although it be not dashed in pieces. When a man, or a sect, is put to answer for themselves in the matter of reputation, they with their distinctions wipe the glass, and at last can do nothing but make it appear it was not broken; but their very abstersion and laborious excuses confess it was foul and faulty. We must know, that all sorts of men and all sects of Christians, have not only the mistakes of men and their prejudices to contest with all, but the calumnies and aggravation of devils: and therefore it will much ease our account of dooms-day, if we are now so prudent that men will not be offended here, nor the devils furnished with a libel in the day of our great account.

To this rule appertains, that we be curious in observing the circumstances of men, and satisfying all their reasonable expectations, and doing things at that rate of charity and religion which they are taught to be prescribed in the institution, there are some things which are *indecencies* rather than *sins*, such which may become a just heathen, but not a holy Christian; a man of the world, but not a man *professing godliness*: because when the greatness of the man, or the excellence of the law, hath engaged us upon great severity or an exemplar virtue; whatsoever is less than it, renders the man unworthy of the religion, the religion unworthy its fame: men think themselves abused, and therefore return shame for payment. We never read of an apostle that went to law: and it is but reasonable to expect that of all men in the world, Christians should not be such fighting people, and clergymen should not command armies, and kings should not be drunk, and subjects should not strike princes for justice, and an

old man should not be youthful in talk or in his habit, and women should not swear, and great men should not lie, and a poor man should not oppress: for, besides the sin of some of them, there is an indecency in all of them; and by being contrary to the end of an office, or the reputation of a state, or the sobrieties of a graver or sublimed person, they asperse the religion, as insufficient to keep the persons within the bounds of fame and common reputation.

But above all things, those sects of Christians, whose professed doctrine brings destruction and diminution to government, give the most intolerable scandal and dishonour to the institution; and it had been impossible that Christianity should have prevailed over the wisdom and power of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, if it had not been humble to superiours, patient of injuries, charitable to the needy, a great exacter of obedience to kings, even to *heathens*, that they might be won and convinced; and to *persecutors*, that they might be sweetened in their anger, or upbraided for their cruel injustice: for so doth the humble vine creep at the foot of an oak, and leans upon its lowest base, and begs shade and protection, and leave to grow under its branches, and to give and take mutual refreshment, and pay a friendly influence for a mighty patronage; and they grow and dwell together, and are the most remarkable of friends and married pairs of all the leafy nation. Religion of itself is soft, easy, and defenceless, and God hath made it grow up with empire, and lean upon the arms of kings, and it cannot well grow alone; and if it shall, like the ivy, suck the heart of the oak, upon whose body it grew and was supported, it will be pulled down from its usurped eminence, and fire and shame shall be its portion. We cannot complain if princes arm against those Christians, who, if they were suffered to preach, will disarm the princes; and it will be hard to persuade, that kings are bound to protect and nourish

those that will prove ministers of their own exaction: and no prince can have juster reason to forbid, nor any man have greater reason to deny, communion to a family, than when they go about to destroy the power of the one, or corrupt the duty of the other. The particulars of this rule are very many: I shall only instance in one more, because it is of great concernment to the publick interest of Christendom.

There are some persons whose religion is hugely disgraced, because they change their propositions according as their temporal necessities or advantages do return. They that in their weakness and beginning, cry out against all violence as against persecution, and from being sufferers swell up till they be prosperous, and from thence to power, and at last to tyranny, and then suffer none but themselves, and trip up those feet which they humbly kissed, that themselves should not be trampled upon; these men tell all the world, that *at first* they were pusillanimous, or *at last* outrageous; that their doctrine at first served their fear, and at last served their rage, and that they did not at all intend to serve God: and then who shall believe them in any thing else? Thus some men declaim against the faults of governours, that themselves may govern; and when the power is in their hands, what was a fault in others, is in them *necessity*; as if a sin could be hallowed for coming into their hands. Some *Greeks*, at *Florence*, subscribed the article of purgatory, and condemned it in their own dioceses: and the king's supremacy in causes ecclesiastical was earnestly defended against the pretences of the bishop of *Rome*; and yet when he was thrust out, some men were, and are, violent to submit the king to their consistories; as if he were supreme in defiance of the pope, and yet not supreme over his own clergy. These articles are managed too suspiciously.

Omnia si perdas, famam servare memento.*

You lose all the advantages to your cause, if you lose your reputation.

5. It is a duty also of Christian prudence, that the teachers of others by authority, or reprovers of their vices by charity, should also make their persons apt to do it without objection.

Loripedem rectus derideat, Aethiopem albus.†

No man can endure the *Gracchi* preaching against sedition, nor *Verres* prating against thievery, or *Milo* against homicide: and if *Herod* had made an oration of humility, or *Antiochus* of mercy, men would have thought it had been a design to evil purposes. He that means to gain a soul, must not make his sermon an ostentation of his eloquence, but the law of his own life. If a grammarian should speak solecisms, or a musician sing like a bittern, he becomes ridiculous, for offending in the faculty he professes. So it is in them who minister to the conversion of souls: if they fail in their own life, when they profess to instruct another, they are defective in their proper part, and are unskilful to all their purposes; and the cardinal of *Crema* did with ill success tempt the *English* priests to quit their chaste marriages, when himself was deprehended in unchaste embraces. For good counsel seems to be unhallowed, when it is reached forth by an impure hand; and he can ill be believed by another, whose life so confutes his rules, that it is plain

* Though all be lost, preserve your honour still.

A.

† Juv. Sat. ii. v. 23.

———The man who treads aright,
May mock the balt, the swarthy Moor, the white.

GIFFORD.

he does not believe himself. Those churches that are zealous for souls, must send into their ministeries men so innocent, that evil persons may have no excuse to be any longer vicious. When *Gorgias* went about to persuade the *Greeks* to be at peace, he had eloquence enough to do advantage to his cause, and reason enough to press it: but *Melanthius* was glad to put him off, by telling him that he was not fit to persuade peace, who could not agree at home with his wife, nor make his wife agree with her maid; and he that could not make peace between three single persons, was unapt to prevail for the re-uniting fourteen or fifteen commonwealths. And this thing *St. Paul* remarks, by enjoining that a bishop should be chosen, such an one as knew well to rule his own house, or else he is not fit to rule the church of God. And when thou persuadest thy brother to be chaste, let not him deride thee for thy intemperance; and it will ill become thee to be severe against an idle servant, if thou thyself beest useless to the publick; and every notorious vice is infinitely against the spirit of government, and depresses a man to an evenness with common persons.—*Pacinus quos inquinat aequat.* To reprove belongs to a superiour; and as innocence gives a man advantage over his brother, giving him an artificial and adventitious authority; so the follies and scandals of a publick and governing man, destroy the efficacy of that authority that is just and natural. Now this is directly an office of Christian prudence, that good offices and great authority become not ineffective by ill conduct.

Hither also it appertains, that in publick or private reproofs, we observe circumstances of *time*, of *place*, of *person*, of *disposition*. The vices of a king are not to be opened publickly, and princes must not be reprehended as a man reproves his servant; but by categorical propositions, by abstracted declamations, by

reprehensions of a crime in its single nature, in private, with humility, and arts of insinuation; and it is against Christian prudence, not only to use a prince or great personage with common language; but it is as great an imprudence to pretend, for such a rudeness, the examples of the prophets in the Old Testament. For their case was extraordinary, their calling peculiar, their commission special, their spirit miraculous, their authority great as to that single mission: they were like thunder or the trump of God, sent to do that office plainly, for the doing of which in that manner, God had given no commission to any ordinary minister. And therefore we never find, that the priests did use that freedom which the prophets were commanded to use, whose very words being put into their mouths, it was not to be esteemed a human act, or a lawful manner of doing an ordinary office; neither could it become a precedent to them whose authority is precarious and without coercion, whose spirit is allayed with Christian graces and duties of humility, whose words are not prescribed, but left to the conduct of prudence, as it is to be advised by publick necessities and private circumstances, in ages where all things are so ordered, that what was fit and pious amongst the old *Jews*, would be uncivil and intolerable to the latter Christians. He also that reproves a vice, should also treat the persons with honour and civilities, and by fair opinions and sweet addresses, place the man in the regions of modesty, and the confines of grace, and the fringes of repentance. For some men are more restrained by an imperfect, feared shame, so long as they think there is a reserve of reputation which they may secure, than they can be with all the furious declamations of the world, when themselves are represented ugly and odious, full of shame, and actually punished with the worst of temporal evils, beyond which he

fears not here to suffer, and from whence, because he knows it will be hard for him to be redeemed by an after game of reputation, it makes him desperate, and incorrigible by fraternal corruption.

A zealous man hath not done his duty, when he calls his brother drunkard and beast; and he may better do it by telling him he is a man, and sealed with God's spirit, and honoured with the title of a Christian, and is, or ought to be, reputed as a discreet person by his friends, and a governour of a family, or a guide in his country, or an example to many, and that it is huge pity so many excellent things should be sullied and allayed, with what is so much below all this. Then a reprover does his duty, when he is severe against the vice, and charitable to the man, and careful of his reputation, and sorry for his real dishonour, and observant of his circumstances, and watchful to surprise his affections and resolutions, there, where they are most tender and most tenable; and men will not be in love with virtue whither they are forced with rudeness and incivilities; but they love to dwell there, whither they are invited friendly, and where they are treated civilly, and feasted liberally, and led by the hand and the eye to honour and felicity.

6. It is a duty of Christian prudence not to suffer our souls to walk alone, unguarded, unguided, and more single than in other actions and interests of our lives, which are of less concernment. *Vae soli et singulari*, said the wise man, *Wo to him that is alone.* And if we consider how much God hath done to secure our souls, and after all that how many ways there are for a man's soul to miscarry, we should think it very necessary to call to a spiritual man, to take us by the hand to walk in the ways of God, and to lead us in all the regions of duty, and through the labyrinths of danger. For God, who best loves and best knows how to value our soul, set a price no less

upon it than the life blood of his holy son; he hath treated it with variety of usages, according as the world had new guises and new necessities; he abates it with punishment, to make us avoid greater; he shortened our life, that we might live for ever; he turns sickness into virtue, he brings good out of evil, he turns enmities to advantages, our very sins into repentances and stricter walking; he defeats all the follies of men and all the arts of the devil, and lays snares and uses violence to secure obedience; he sends prophets and priests to invite us and to threaten us to felicities; he restrains us with laws, and he bridles us with honour and shame, reputation and society, friends and foes; he lays hold on us by the instruments of all the passions; he is enough to fill our love, he satisfies our hope, he affrights us with fear; he gives us part of our reward in hand, and entertains all our faculties with the promises of an infinite and glorious portion; he curbs our affections, he directs our wills, he instructs our understandings with scriptures, with perpetual sermons, with good books, with frequent discourses, with particular observations and great experience, with accidents and judgments, with rare events of providence and miracles; he sends his angels to be our guard, and to place us in opportunities of virtue, and to take us off from ill company and places of danger, to set us near to good examples; he gives us his holy spirit, and he becomes to us a principle of mighty grace, descending upon us in great variety and undiscerned events, besides all those parts of it, which men have reduced to a method and an art: and, after all this, he forgives us infinite irregularities, and spares us every day, and still expects, and passes by, and waits all our days, still watching to do us good, and to save that soul which he knows is so precious, one of the chiefest of the works of God, and an image of divinity. Now from all these arts and mercies of

God, besides that we have infinite reason to adore his goodness, we have also a demonstration that we ought to do all that possibly we can, and extend all our faculties, and watch all our opportunities, and take in all assistances to secure the interest of our soul, for which God is pleased to take such care, and use so many arts for its security. If it were not highly worth it, God would not do it: if it were not all of it necessary, God would not do it. But if it be worth it, and all of it be necessary, why should we not labour in order to this great end? If it be worth so much to God, it is so much more to us: for if we perish, his felicity is undisturbed; but we are undone, infinitely undone. It is therefore worth taking in a spiritual guide; so far we are gone.

But because we are in the question of prudence, we must consider whether it be necessary to do so: for every man thinks himself wise enough as to the conduct of his soul, and managing of his eternal interest; and divinity is every man's trade, and the scriptures speak our own language, and the commandments are few and plain, and the laws are the measure of justice; and if I say my prayers, and pay my debts, my duty is soon summed up: and thus we usually make our accounts for eternity, and at this rate only take care for heaven. But let a man be questioned for a portion of his estate, or have his life shaken with diseases; then it will not be enough to employ one agent, or to send for a good woman to minister a potion of the juices of her country garden; but the ablest lawyers, and the skilfullest physicians, and the advice of friends, and huge caution, and diligent attendances, and a curious watching concerning all the accidents and little passages of our disease. And truly a man's life and health is worth all that and much more, and in many cases it needs it all.

But then is the soul the only safe, and the only trifling thing about us? Are not there a thousand dangers and ten thousand difficulties, and innumerable possibilities of a misadventure? Are not all the congregations in the world divided in their doctrines, and all of them call their own way necessary, and most of them call all the rest damnable? We had need of a wise instructor and a prudent choice at our first entrance and election of our side; and when we are well in the matter of faith for its object and institution, all the evils of myself, and all the evils of the church, and all the good that happens to evil men, every day of danger, the periods of sickness, and the day of death, are days of tempest and storm, and our faith will suffer shipwreck, unless it be strong, and supported and directed. But who shall guide the vessel, when a stormy passion or a violent imagination transports the man? Who shall awaken his reason, and charm his passion into slumber and instruction? How shall a man make his fears confident, and allay his confidence with fear, and make the allay with just proportions, and steer evenly between the extremes, or call upon his sleeping purposes, or actuate his choices, or bind him to reason in all his wanderings and ignorances, in his passions and mistakes? For suppose the man of great skill and great learning in the ways of religion; yet if he be abused by accident or by his own will, who shall then judge his cases of conscience, and awaken his duty, and renew his holy principle, and actuate his spiritual powers: for physicians, that prescribe to others, do not minister to themselves in cases of danger and violent sicknesses; and in matter of distemperature, we shall not find that books alone will do all the work of a spiritual physician, more than of a natural. I will not go about to increase the dangers and difficulties of the soul, to represent the assistance of a

spiritual man to be necessary. But of this I am sure; our not understanding and our not considering our soul, makes us first to neglect, and then many times to lose it. But is not every man an unequal judge in his own case? and therefore the wisdom of God and the laws, hath appointed tribunals, and judges, and arbitrators. And that men are partial in the matter of souls it is infinitely certain, because amongst those millions of souls that perish, not one in ten thousand but believes himself in a good condition; and all the sects of Christians think they are in the right, and few are patient to inquire whether they be or no. Then add to this, that the questions of souls, being cloathed with circumstances of matter and particular contingency, are or may be infinite; and most men are so unfortunate, that they have so entangled their cases of conscience, that there where they have done something good, it may be they have mingled half a dozen evils: and when interests are confounded, and governments altered. and power strives with right, and insensibly passes into right, and duty to God would fain be reconciled with duty to our relatives, will it not be more than necessary that we should have some one, that we may inquire of after the way to heaven, which is now made intricate by our follies and inevitable accidents? But by what instrument shall men alone, and in their own cases, be able to discern the spirit of truth from the spirit of illusion, just confidence from presumption, fear from pusillanimity? Are not all the things and assistances in the world little enough to defend us against *pleasure* and *pain*, the two great fountains of temptation? Is it not harder to cure a lust than to cure a fever? And are not the deceptions and follies of men, and the arts of the devil, and enticements of the world, and the deceptions of a man's own heart, and the evils of sin, more evil and more nume-

rous than the sicknesses and diseases of any one man? And if a man perishes in his soul, is it not infinitely more sad than if he could rise from his grave and die a thousand deaths over? Thus we are advanced a second step in this prudential motive: God used many arts to secure our soul's interest; and there are infinite dangers, and infinite ways of miscarriage in the soul's interest: and therefore there is great necessity God should do all those mercies of security, and that we should do all the under-ministeries we can in this great work.

But what advantage shall we receive by a spiritual guide? Much every way. For this is the way that God hath appointed, who in every age hath sent a succession of spiritual persons, whose office is to minister in holy things, and to be *stewards of God's household, shepherds of the flock, dispensers of the mysteries*, under mediators, and ministers of prayer: preachers of the law, expounders of questions, monitors of duty, conveyances of blessings: and that which is a good discourse in the mouth of another man, is from them an ordinance of God; and besides its natural efficacy and persuasion, it prevails by the way of blessing, by the reverence of his person, by divine institution, by the excellency of order, by the advantages of opinion, and assistances of reputation, by the influence of the spirit who is the president of such ministeries, and who is appointed to all Christians according to the dispensation that is appointed to them; to the people in their obedience, and frequenting of the ordinance, to the priest in his ministry, and publick and private offices. To which also I add this consideration, that as the holy sacraments are hugely effective to spiritual purposes, not only because they convey a blessing to the worthy suscipients, but because men cannot be worthy suscipients unless they do many excellent acts of virtue in order

to a previous disposition: so that in the whole conjunction and transaction of affairs, there is good done by way of proper efficacy and divine blessing: so it is in following the conduct of a spiritual man, and consulting with him in the matter of our souls; we cannot do it unless we consider our souls, and make religion our business, and examine our present state, and consider concerning our danger, and watch and design for our advantages, which things of themselves will set a man much forwarder in the way of godliness; besides, that naturally every man will less dare to act a sin, for which he knows he shall feel a present shame in his discoveries made to the spiritual guide, the man that is made the witness of his conversation. *Τους εκ Διου γαρ εικος εστι πανθ' ιδαν.** *Holy men ought to know all things from God, and that relate to God, in order to the conduct of souls.* And there is nothing to be said against this, if we do not suffer the devil in this affair to abuse us, as he does many people in their opinions, teaching men to suspect there is a design and a snake under the plantain. But so may they suspect kings when they command obedience, or the *Levites* when they read the law of tithes, or parents when they teach their children temperance, or tutors when they watch their charge. However, it is better to venture the worst of the design, than to lose the best of the assistance: and he that guides himself hath much work, and much danger; but he that is under the conduct of another, his work is easy, little and secure; it is nothing but diligence and obedience: and though it be a hard thing to rule well, yet nothing is easier than to follow, and be obedient.

* Sophocl.

SERMON XXII.

PART III.

7. As it is a part of Christian prudence to take in to the conduct of our souls a spiritual man for a guide; so it is also of great concernment that we be prudent in the choice of him whom we are to trust in so great an interest.

Concerning which it will be impossible to give characters and significations particular enough to enable a choice, without the interval assistances of prayer, experience, and the grace of God. He that describes a man, can tell you the colour of his hair, his stature and proportion, and describe some general lines, enough to distinguish him from a *Cyclops* or a *Saracen*: but when you chance to see the man, you will discover figures or little features, of which the description had produced in you no phantasm or expectation. And in the exterior significations of a sect, there are more resemblances than in mens' faces, and greater uncertainty in the signs; and what is faulty strives so craftily to act the true and proper images of things; and the more they are defective in circumstances the more curious they are in forms, and they also use such arts of gaining proselytes, which are of most advantage towards an effect, and therefore such which the true Christian ought to pursue, and the apostles actually did; and they strive to follow their patterns in arts of persuasion, not only because they would seem like them, but because they can have none so good, so effective to their purposes; that it follows, that it is not more a duty to take care that we be not corrupted with false

teachers, than that we be not abused with false signs: for we as well find a good man teaching a false proposition, as a good cause managed by ill men: and a holy cause is not always dressed with healthful symptoms, nor is there a cross always set upon the doors of those congregations who are infected with the plague of heresy.

When St. *John* was to separate false teachers from true, he took no other course but to remark the doctrine which was of God, and that should be the mark of cognizance, to distinguish right shepherds from robbers and invaders: *Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; He that denieth it, is not of God.* By this, he bids his scholars to avoid the present sects of *Ebion*, *Cerinthus*, *Simon Magus*, and such other persons as denied that Christ was at all before he came, or that he came really in the flesh and proper humanity. This is a clear note, and they that conversed with St. *John*, or believed his doctrine, were sufficiently instructed in the present questions. But this note will signify nothing to us: for all sects of Christians *confess Jesus Christ come in the flesh*, and the following sects did avoid that rock over which a great apostle had hung out so plain a lantern.

In the following ages of the church, men have been so curious to signify misbelievers, that they have invented and observed some signs which indeed in some cases were true, real appendages of false believers; but yet such which were also, or might be, common to them with good men and members of the catholick church. Some few I shall remark, and give a short account of them, that by removing the uncertain, we may fix our inquiries and direct them by certain significations; lest this art of prudence turn into folly and faction, error and secular design.

I. Some men distinguish error from truth by calling their adversaries' doctrine, *new and of yesterday*. And certainly this is a good sign, if it be rightly applied: for since all Christian doctrine is that which Christ taught his church, and the Spirit enlarged or expounded, and the apostle delivered; we are to begin the *Christian era* for our faith, and parts of religion, by the period of their preaching; our account begins then, and whatsoever is contrary to what they taught is new and false, and whatsoever is besides what they taught is no part of our religion; (and then no man can be prejudiced for believing it or not) and if it be adopted into the confessions of the church, the proposition is always so uncertain, that it is not to be admitted into the faith: and therefore if it be old in respect of our days, it is not therefore necessary to be believed; if it be new, it may be received into opinion according to its probability, and no sects nor interests are to be divided upon such accounts. This only I desire to be observed, that when a truth returns from banishment by a *postliminium*, if it was from the first, though the holy fire hath been buried, or the river ran under ground, yet we do not call that new; since newness is not to be accounted of by a proportion to our short lived memories, or to the broken records and fragments of story left after the inundation of barbarism and war, and change of kingdoms, and corruption of authors; but by its relation to the fountain of our truths, and the birth of our religion under our fathers in Christ, the holy apostles and disciples. A camel was a new thing to them that saw it in the fable; but yet it was created as soon as a cow or the domestick creatures: and some people are apt to call every thing new which they never heard of before, as if all religion were to be measured by the standards of their observation or country customs. Whatsoever was not

taught by Christ or his apostles, though it came in by *Papias* or *Dionysius*, by *Arius* or *Liberius*, is certainly new as to our account; and whatsoever is taught to us by the doctors of the present age, if it can shew its test from the beginning of our period for revelation, is not to be called *new*, though it be pressed with a new zeal, and discoursed of by unheard of arguments; that is, though men be ignorant and need to learn it, yet it is not therefore new or unnecessary.

2. Some would have false teachers sufficiently signified by a name, or the owning of a private appellation, as of *Papist*, *Lutheran*, *Calvinist*, *Zuinglian*, *Socinian*; and think it enough to denominate them not of Christ, if they are called by the name of a man. And indeed the thing is in itself ill: but then if by this mark we shall esteem false teachers sufficiently signified, we must follow no man, no church, nor no communion; for all are by their adversaries marked with an appellative of separation and singularity, and yet themselves are tenacious of a good name, such as they choose, or such as is permitted to them by fame, and the people, and a natural necessity of making a distinction. Thus the *Donatists* called themselves, *the flock of God*, and the *Novatians* called the *Catholicks*, *Traditors*, and the *Eustathians* called themselves *Catholicks*; and *the worshippers of images* made *Iconoclast* to be a name of scorn; and men made names as they listed, or as the fate of the market went. And if a doctor preaches a doctrine which another man likes not, but preaches the contradictory, he that consents, and he that refuses, have each of them a teacher; by whose name, if they please to wrangle, they may be signified. It was so in the *Corinthian* church, with this only difference, that they divided themselves by names which signified the same religion; *I am of Paul*, and *I of Apollos*,

and I am of Peter, and I of Christ. These apostles were ministers of Christ; and so does every teacher, new or old among the Christians, pretend himself to be. Let that therefore be examined: if he ministers to the truth of Christ and the religion of his master, let him be entertained a servant of the Lord; but if an appellative be taken from his name, there is a faction commenced in it, and there is a fault in the man if there be none in the doctrine: but that the doctrine be true or false, to be received or to be rejected, because of the name, is accidental and extrinsical, and therefore not to be determined by this sign.

3. Amongst some men, a sect is sufficiently thought to be reprov'd, if it subdivides and breaks into little fractions, or changes its own opinion. Indeed, if it declines its own doctrine, no man hath reason to believe them upon their word, or to take them upon the stock of reputation, which (themselves being judges) they have forfeited and renounced, in the changing that which at first they obtruded passionately. And therefore in this case there is nothing to be done, but to believe the men so far as they have reason to believe themselves; that is, to consider when they prove what they say: and they that are able to do so, are not persons in danger to be seduced by a bare authority unless they list themselves; for others that sink under an unavoidable prejudice, God will take care for them, if they be good people, and their case shall be considered by and by. But for the other part of the sign, when men fall out among themselves for other interests or opinions, it is no argument that they are in an error concerning that doctrine which they all unitedly teach or condemn respectively; but it hath in it some probability that their union is a testimony of truth, as certainly as that their fractions are a

testimony of their zeal, or honesty, or weakness, (as it happens.) And if we Christians be too decretory in this instance, it will be hard for any of us to keep a *Jew* from making use of it against the whole religion, which from the days of the apostles hath been rent into innumerable sects and under sects, springing from mistake or interest, from the arts of the devil or the weakness of man. But from hence we may make an advantage in the way of prudence, and become sure that all *that doctrine is certainly true*, in which the generality of Christians (who are divided in many things, yet) do constantly agree: and that *that doctrine is also sufficient*, since it is certain that, because in all communions and churches there are some very good men, that do all their duty to the getting of truth, God will not fail in any thing that is necessary to them that honestly and heartily desire to obtain it: and therefore if they rest in the heartiness of that, and live accordingly, and superinduce nothing to the destruction of that, they have nothing to do but to rely upon God's goodness, and if they perish, it is certain they cannot help it; and that is demonstration enough that they cannot perish, considering the justice and goodness of our Lord and Judge.

4. Whoever break the bands of a society or communion, and go out from that congregation in whose confession they are baptized, do an intolerable scandal to their doctrine and persons, and give suspicious men reason to decline their assemblies, and not to choose them at all for any thing of their authority or outward circumstances. And St. *Paul* bids the *Romans* to *mark them that cause divisions and offences*: but the following words make their caution prudent and practicable, *contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them*: they that recede from the doctrine which they have learned, they cause the

offence, and if they also obtrude this upon their congregations, they also make the division. For it is certain, if we receive any doctrine contrary to what Christ gave and the apostles taught, for the authority of any man, then we *call men, master*, and leave *our master which is in heaven*; and in that case we must separate from the congregation, and adhere to Christ: but this is not to be done, unless the case be evident and notorious. But as it is hard that the publick doctrine of a church should be riled, and misunderstood, and reprov'd, and rejected, by any of her wilful or ignorant sons and daughters: so it is also as hard that they should be bound not to see, when the case is plain and evident. There may be mischiefs on both sides: but the former sort of evils men may avoid if they will; for they may be humble and modest, and entertain better opinions of their superiours than of themselves, and in doubtful things give them the honour of a just opinion; and if they do not do so, that evil will be their own private: for, that it become not publick, the king and the bishop are to take care. But for the latter sort of evil, it will certainly become universal; if (I say) an authoritative false doctrine be imposed, and is to be accepted accordingly: for then all men shall be bound to profess against their conscience, that is, *with their mouths not to confess unto salvation, what with their hearts they believe unto righteousness*. The best way of remedying both the evils is, that governours lay no burthen of doctrines or laws but what are necessary or very profitable; and that inferiours do not contend for things unnecessary, nor call any thing necessary that is not: till then there will be evils on both sides. And although the governours are to carry the question in the point of law, reputation and publick government; yet as to God's judicature they will bear the bigger load, who in his

right do him an injury, and by the impresses of *his authority* destroy *his truth*. But in this case also, although separating be a suspicious thing and intolerable, unless it be when a sin is imposed; yet to separate is also accidental to truth: for some men separate with reason, some men against reason. Therefore here all the certainty that is *in the thing*, is, *when the truth is secured*, and all the security to the men will be in *the humility of their persons*, and the heartiness and simplicity of their intention, and diligence of inquiry. The church of *England* had reason to separate from the confession and practices of *Rome* in many particulars: and yet if her children separate from her, they may be unreasonable and impious.

5. The ways of direction which we have from Holy Scripture, to distinguish false apostles from true, are taken from their doctrine, or their lives. That of the doctrine is the more sure way, if we can hit upon it; but that also is the thing signified, and needs to have other signs. St. *John* and St. *Paul* took this way, for they were able to do it infallibly. *All that confess Jesus incarnate are of God*, said St. *John*: those men that deny it, are hereticks; avoid them. And St. *Paul* bids to *observe them that cause divisions and offences against the doctrine delivered*: them also avoid that do so. And we might do so as easily as they, if the world would only make their *depositum* that doctrine which they delivered to all men, that is, *the creed*; and superinduce nothing else, but suffer Christian faith to rest in its own perfect simplicity, unmingled with arts, and opinions, and interests. This course is plain and easy, and I will not intricate it with more words, but leave it directly in its own truth and certainty, with this only direction; that when we are to choose our doctrine or our side, we take that which is in the plain unexpounded words of scripture; for in that only our religion can con-

sist. Secondly, choose that which is most advantageous to a holy life, to the proper graces of a Christian, to humility, to charity, to forgiveness and alms, to obedience, and complying with governments, to the honour of God and the exaltation of his attributes, and to the conservation and advantages of the public societies of men; and this last *St. Paul* directs, *Let us be careful to maintain good works for necessary uses*: for he that heartily pursues these proportions cannot be an ill man, though he were accidentally and in the particular explications deceived.

6. But because this is an act of *wisdom* rather than *prudence*, and supposes *science* or *knowledge* rather than *experience*; therefore it concerns the prudence of a Christian to observe the practice and the rules of practice, their lives and pretences, the designs and colours, the arts of conduct, and gaining proselytes, which their doctors and catechists do use in order to their purposes, and in their ministry about souls. For although many signs are uncertain, yet some are infallible, and some are highly probable.

7. Therefore those teachers that pretend to be guided by a *private spirit*, are certainly false doctors. I remember what *Simmius* in *Plutarch* tells concerning *Socrates*, that if he heard any man say, he saw a divine vision, he presently esteemed him vain and proud; but if he pretended only to have heard a voice or a word of God, he listened to that religiously, and would inquire of him with curiosity. There was some reason in his fancy; for God does not communicate himself by the eye to men, but by the ear: *Ye saw no figure, but ye heard a voice*, said *Moses* to the people concerning God. And therefore if any man pretends to speak the word of God, we will inquire concerning it; the man may the better be heard, because he may be certainly reprov'd if he speaks amiss: but if he pretends to *visions* and

revelations, to a private spirit and a *mission extraordinary*, the man is proud and unlearned, vicious and impudent. *No Scripture is of private interpretation*, (saith St. *Peter*) that is, *private emission or declaration*. God's words were delivered indeed by single men. but such as were publickly designed prophets, remarked with a known character, approved of by the high priest and Sanhedrim, endued with a publick spirit, and his doctrines were always agreeable to the other Scriptures. But if any man pretends now to the spirit, either it must be a private or publick. If it be private, it can but be useful to himself alone, and it may cozen him too, if it be not assisted by the spirit of a publick man. But if it be a publick spirit, it must enter in at the publick door of ministeries and divine ordinances, of God's grace and man's endeavour; it must be *subject to the prophets*; it is discernible and judicable by them, and therefore may be rejected, and then it must pretend no longer. For he that will pretend to an extraordinary spirit, and refuses to be tried by the ordinary ways, must either prophecy, or work miracles, or must have a voice from heaven to give him testimony. The prophets in the Old Testament, and the apostles in the New, and Christ between both, had no other way of extraordinary probation; and they that pretend to any thing extraordinary, cannot, ought not to be believed, unless they have something more than their own word. *If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true*, said truth itself, our blessed Lord. But secondly, they that intend to teach by an extraordinary spirit, if they pretend to teach according to Scripture, must be examined by the measures of Scripture, and then their extraordinary must be judged by their ordinary spirit, and stands or falls by the rules of every good man's religion, and publick government; and then we are well enough. But if they speak any thing against Scripture, it is the spirit of anti-

christ, and the spirit of the devil: *for if an angel from heaven* (he certainly is a spirit) *preach any other doctrine, let him be accursed.*

But this pretence of a single and extraordinary spirit is nothing else but the spirit of pride, error, and delusion, a snare to catch easy and credulous souls, which are willing to die for a gay word and a distorted face; it is the parent of folly and giddy doctrine, impossible to be proved, and therefore useless to all purposes of religion, reason, or sober counsels; it is like an invisible colour, or musick without a sound; it is, and indeed is so intended to be, a direct overthrow of order, and government, and publick ministeries: it is bold to say any thing, and resolved to prove nothing; it imposes upon willing people after the same manner that oracles and the lying demons did of old time, abusing men, not by proper efficacy of its own, but because the men loved to be abused: it is a great disparagement to the sufficiency of Scripture, and asperses the divine providence, for giving so many ages of the church an imperfect religion, expressly against the truth of their words, who said, they *had declared the whole truth of God, and told all the will of God*: and it is an affront to the spirit of God, the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, of order and publick ministeries. But the will furnishes out malice, and the understanding sends out levity, and they marry, and produce a fantastick dream; and the daughter, sucking wind instead of *the milk of the word*, grows up to madness, and the spirit of reprobation. Besides all this, an extraordinary spirit is extremely necessary, and God does not give immission and miracles from heaven to no purpose, and to no necessities of his church; for the supplying of which, he hath given *apostles and evangelists, prophets and pastors, bishops and priests, the spirit of ordination, and the spirit of instruction, cate-*

ehists and teachers, arts and sciences, Scriptures, and a constant succession of expositors, the testimony of churches, and a constant line of tradition, or delivery of apostolical doctrine in all things necessary to salvation. And after all this, to have a fungus arise from the belly of mud and darkness, and nourish a glow-worm, that shall challenge to out-shine the lantern of God's world, and all the candles which God set upon a hill, and all that the spirit hath set upon the candlesticks, and all the stars of Christ's right hand; is to annul all the excellent, established, orderly and certain effects of the spirit of God, and to worship the false fires of the night. He therefore that will follow a guide that leads him by an extraordinary spirit, shall go an extraordinary way, and have a strange fortune, and a singular religion, and a portion by himself, a great way off from the common inheritance of the saints, who are all led by the spirit of God, and have one heart and one mind, one faith and one hope, the same baptism, and the helps of the ministry, leading them to the common country, which is the portion of all that are the sons of adoption, consigned by the spirit of God, the earnest of their inheritance.

Concerning the pretence of a private spirit for interpretation of the confessed doctrine of God, (the holy Scriptures,) it will not so easily come into this question of choosing our spiritual guides; because every person that can be a candidate in this office, that can be chosen to guide others, must be a publick man, that is, of a holy calling, sanctified or separate publickly to the office; and then to interpret is part of his calling and employment, and to do so, is the work of a publick spirit; he is ordained and designed, he is commanded and enabled to do it: and in this there is no other caution to be interposed, but that the more publick the man is, of the more authority his inter-

pretation is; and he comes nearest to a law of order, and in the matter of government is to be observed: but the more holy and the more learned the man is, his interpretation in matter of question is more likely to be true; and though less to be pressed as to the publick confession, yet it may be more effective to a private persuasion, provided it be done without scandal, or lessening the authority, or disparagement to the more publick person.

8. Those are to be suspected for evil guides, who, to get authority among the people, pretend a great zeal, and use a bold liberty in reproving princes and governours, nobility and prelates; for such homilies cannot be the effects of a holy religion, which lay a snare for authority, and undermine power, and discontent the people, and make them bold against kings, and immodest in their own stations, and trouble the government. Such men may speak a truth, or teach a true doctrine; for every such design does not unhallow the truth of God: but they take some truths, and force them to minister to an evil end. But therefore mingle not in the communities of such men, for they will make it a part of your religion, to prosecute that end openly, which they by arts of the *tempter* have insinuated privately.

But if ever you enter into the seats of those doctors that speak reproachfully of their superiours, or detract from government, or love to *curse the king in their heart*, or slander him with their mouths, or disgrace their person, bless yourselves and retire quickly: for there dwells the plague, but the spirit of God is not president of the assembly. And therefore you shall observe in all the characters which the aposties of our Lord made, for describing and avoiding societies of hereticks, false guides and bringers in of strange doctrines, still they *reckon treason and rebellion*. So St. Paul; *in the last days perilous times shall come;*

then men shall have the form of godliness, and deny the power of it ; they shall be traitors, heady, high-minded ; that is the characteristick note. So St. Peter ; The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment, to be punished : but chiefly them that walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government : presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. †* The same also is recorded and observed by St. Jude ; *Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. ‡* These three testimonies are but the declaration of one great contingency ; they are the same prophecy declared by three apostolical men, that had the gift of prophecy : and by this character, the Holy Ghost in all ages hath given us caution to avoid such assemblies, where the speaking and ruling man shall be the canker of government, and a preacher of sedition, who shall either ungirt the prince's sword, or unloose the button of their mantle.

9. But the apostles in all these prophecies, have remarked lust to be the inseparable companion of these rebel prophets : *They are filthy dreamers, they defile the flesh, so St. Jude ; They walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness, so St. Peter. They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, incontinent and sensual, so St. Paul.* And by this part of the character, as the apostles remarked, the *Nicolaitans*, the *Gnosticks*, the *Carpocratians*, and all their impure branches which began in their days, and multiplied after their deaths ; so they prophetically did fore-signify all such sects to be avoided, who, to catch *silly women laden with sins*, preach doctrines of ease and licentiousness, apt to countenance and encourage vile things, and not apt to restrain a passion, or mortify

* 2 Tim. iii. 1, &c. † 2 Pet. ii. 9. 10. ‡ Jude v. 8.

a sin: such as those; That God sees no sin in his children; that no sin will take us from God's favour; that all of such a party are elect people: that God requires of us nothing but faith; and that faith which justifies is nothing but a mere believing that we are God's chosen; that we are not tied to the law of commandments; that the law of grace is a law of liberty, and that liberty is to do what we list; that divorces are to be granted upon many and slight causes; that simple fornication is no sin. These are such doctrines, that upon the belief of them many men may do any thing, and will do that which shall satisfy their own desires, and promote their interests, and seduce their she-disciples. And indeed it was not without great reason that these three apostles joined *lust* and *treason* together. Because the former is so shameful a crime, and renders a man's spirit naturally averse to government, that if it falls upon the person of a ruler, it takes from him the spirit of government, and renders him *diffident*, *pusillanimous*, *private*, and *ashamed*: if it happen in the person of a subject, it makes him hate the man that shall shame him and punish him; it hates the light and the sun, because that opens him, and therefore is much more against government; because that publishes and punishes too. One thing I desire to be observed, that though the primitive heresies now named, and all those others, their successors, practised and taught horrid impurities, yet they did not invade government at all; and therefore those sects that these apostles did signify by prophecy, and in whom both these are concentrated, were to appear in some latter times, and the days of the prophecy were not then to be fulfilled: what they are since, every age must judge by its own experience, and for its own interest. But Christian religion is so pure and holy, that *chastity* is sometimes used for the whole

religion; and to do an act *chastely* signifies *purity of intention*, abstraction from the world, and *separation* from low and secular ends, the *virginity* of the soul, and its *union* with God; and all *deviations* and *estrangements* from God, and adhesion to forbidden objects, is called *fornication* and *adultery*.* Those sects therefore that teach, encourage, or practise impious or unhallowed mixtures and shameful lusts, are issues of the impure spirit, and most contrary to God, who can behold no unclean thing.

10. Those prophets and pastors that pretend severity, and live loosely, or are severe in small things, and give liberty in greater, or forbid some sins with extreme rigour, and yet practise or teach those that serve their interest or constitute their sect, are to be suspected and avoided accordingly. *Nihil est hominum inepta persuasione falsius, nec ficta severitate ineptius.* All ages of the church were extremely curious to observe, when the new teachers did arise, what kind of lives they lived; and if they pretended severely and to a strict life, then they knew their danger doubled: for it is certain all that teach doctrines contrary to the established religion delivered by the apostles, all they are evil men. God will not suffer a good man to be seduced damnably, much less can he be a seducer of others; and therefore you shall still observe the false apostles to be furious, and vehement in their reproofs, and severe in their animadversions of others; but then if you watch their private, or stay till their numbers are full, or observe their spiritual habits, you shall find them indulgent to themselves, or to return from their disguises, or so spiritually wicked, that their *pride* or their *revenge*, their *envy* or their *detraction*, their *scorn* or their *complacency* in themselves, their *desire of pre-eminence* and

* Eloquentia Domini, casta eloquia.

their impatience of a rival, shall place them far enough in distance from a poor *carnal sinner*, whom they shall load with censures and an upbraiding scorn; but themselves are like devils, the spirits of darkness, *the spiritual wickednesses, in high places*. Some sects of men are very angry against servants for recreating and easing their labours with a less prudent and unsevere refreshment: but the patrons of their sects shall oppress a wicked man and unbelieving person; they shall chastise a drunkard, and entertain murmurs; they shall not abide an oath, and yet shall force men to break three or four. This sect is to be avoided, because although it is good to be severe against carnal or bodily sins, yet it is not good to mingle with them who chastise a *bodily sin* to make way for a *spiritual*; or reprove a servant, that his lord may sin alone; or punish a stranger and a beggar that will not approve their sin, but will have sins of his own. Concerning such persons, St. Paul hath told us, that *they shall not proceed far, but their folly shall be manifest*, Ὁριζον χειρον δυναεις αν τις παρασασθαι τον τροπον του αυτου, said *Lysias*. *Cito ad naturam ficta reciderunt suam*. They that dissemble their sin and their manners, or make severity to serve looseness, and an imaginary virtue to minister to a real vice; they that *abhor idols*, and would *commit sacrilege*, chastise a drunkard, and promote sedition, declaim against the vanity of great persons, and then spoil them of their goods, reform manners, and engross estates, talk godly, and do impiously; these are teachers which the holy spirit of God hath by these apostles bid us to beware of and decline, as we would run from the hollowness of a grave, or the despairs and sorrows of the damned.

11. The substance of all, is this, that we must not choose our doctrine by our guide, but our guide by the doctrine; and if we doubt concerning the doc-

trine, we may judge of that by the lives and designs of the teachers: *By their fruits you shall know them*; and by the plain words of the scripture, by the apostles' creed, and by the commandments, and by the certain known and established forms of government. These are the great *indices* and so plain, apt and easy, that he that is deceived is so because he will be so; he is betrayed into it by his own lust, and a voluntary chosen folly.

12. Besides these premises there are other little candles that can help to make the judgment clearer; but they are such as do not signify alone, but in conjunction with some of the precedent characters which are drawn by the great lines of scripture. Such as are, 1. When the teachers of sects stir up unprofitable and useless questions. 2. When they causelessly retire from the universal customs of christendom. 3. And cancel all the memorials of the greatest mysteries of our redemption. 4. When their confessions and catechisms and their whole religion consists *εἰς γνῶσιν*, in *speculations* and effective notions, in discourses of angels and spirits, in abstractions and raptures, in things they understand not, and of which they have no revelation. 5. Or else if their religion spends itself in ceremonies, outward guises, and material solemnities, and imperfect forms, drawing the heart of the vine forth into leaves and irregular fruitless suckers, turning the substance into circumstances, and the love of God into gestures, and the effect of the spirit into the impertinent offices of a burthensome ceremonial: for by these two particulars the apostles reprov'd the *Jews* and the *Gnosticks*, or those that from the school of *Pythagoras* pretended conversation with angels, and great knowledge of the secrets of the spirits, choosing tutelary angels, and assigning them offices and charges, as in the church of *Rome* to this day they do to

saints. To these add, 6. That we observe whether the guides of souls avoid to suffer for their religion;* for then the matter is foul, or the man not fit to lead, that dares not die in cold blood for his religion. Will the man lay his life and his soul upon the proposition? If so, then you may consider him upon his proper grounds; but if he refuses that, refuse his conduct sure enough. 7. You may also watch whether they do not choose their proselytes among the rich and vicious; that they may serve themselves upon his wealth, and their disciple upon his vice. 8. If their doctrines evidently and greatly serve the interest of wealth or honour, and are ineffectual to piety. 9. If they strive to gain any one to their confession, and are negligent to gain them to good life. 10. If by pretences they lessen the severity of Christ's precepts, and are easy in dispensations and licentious glosses. 11. If they invent suppletories to excuse an evil man, and yet to reconcile his bad life with the hopes of heaven; you have reason to suspect the whole, and to reject these parts of error and design which in themselves are so unhandsome always, and sometimes criminal. He that shall observe the church of *Rome* so implacably fierce for purgatory and the pope's supremacy, for clerical immunities and the superiority of the ecclesiastical persons to secular, for indulgences and precious and costly pardons, and then so full of devices to reconcile an evil life with heaven, requiring only contrition even at the last, for the abolition of eternal guilt, and having a thousand ways to commute and take off the temporal; will see he hath reason to be jealous that interest is in these bigger than the religion, and yet that the danger of the soul is greater than that interest; and therefore the man is to do accordingly.

* Colloss. ii.

Here indeed is the great necessity that we should have the prudence and discretion, the *εὐδαιμονία* of serpents.

————magis ut cernamus acutum

Quam aut aquila aut serpens Epidaurius ———*

For so serpents, as they are curious to preserve their heads from contrition or a bruise, so also to safeguard themselves that they be not charmed with sweet and enticing words of false prophets, who charm not *wisely*, but *cunningly*, leading aside *unstable souls*: against these we must stop our ears, or lend our attention, according to the foregoing measures and significations. But here also I am to insert two or three cautions.

1. We cannot expect that by these or any other signs we shall be enabled to discover concerning *all men* whether they teach an error or no: neither can a man by these reprove a *Lutheran* or a *Zuinglian*, a *Dominican* or a *Franciscan*, a *Russian* or a *Greek*, a *Muscovite* or a *Georgian*; because those that are certain signs of false teachers, do signify such men who destroy an article of faith or a commandment. God was careful to secure us from death by removing the lepers from the camp, and giving certain notices of distinction, and putting a term between the living and the dead: but he was not pleased to secure every man from innocent and harmless errors, from the mistakes of men, and the failings of mortality: the signs which can distinguish a living man from a dead, will not also distinguish a black man from a brown, or a pale from a white: it is enough that we decline those guides that lead us to hell, but not to think that we are enticed to death by the weaknesses of every disagreeing brother.

* Hor. Lib. I. Sat. 3. 26.

Why so sharp-sighted in another's fame,

Strong as an eagle's ken, or dragon's beam.

FRANCIS.

2. In all discerning of sects we must be careful to distinguish the faults of men from the evils of their doctrine; for some there are that say very well, and do very ill; *ως γαρ*

Δη ναρθικοφορει πολλαι, Βακχι δε γε παυροι,

Multos Thyrsigeros, paucos est cernere Bacchos

Many men of *holy calling* and *holy religion*, that are of *unholy lives*; *homines ignava opera, philosophia sententia*. But these must be separated from the institution: and the evil of the men is only to be noted, as that such persons be not taken to our single conduct and personal ministry. I will be of the man's religion if it be good, though he be not; but I will not make him my confessor. *Μισω σοφιστην, εστις ουχ αυτω σοφος,* if he be *not wise for himself*, I will not sit down at his feet, lest we mingle filthiness instead of being cleansed and instructed.

3. Let us make our separation more, and than we may consider and act according to the premises. If we espy a design or an evil mark upon one doctrine, let us divide it from the other that are not so spotted. For indeed the publick communions of men are at this day so ordered, that they are as fond of their errors as of their truths, and sometimes most zealous for what they have felt reason to be so. And if we can by any arts of prudence separate from an evil proposition, and communicate in all the good, then we may love colleges of religious persons, though we do not worship images; and we may obey our prelates, though we do no injury to princes; and we may be zealous against a crime, though we be not imperious over men's persons; and we may be diligent in the conduct of souls, though we be not rapacious of estates: and we may be moderate exactors of obedience to human laws,

though we do not dispense with the breach of the divice; and the clergy may represent their calling necessary, though their persons be full of modesty and humility: and we may preserve our lights, and not lose our charity. For this is the meaning of the apostle, *Try all things and retain that which is good*: from every sect and community of Christians take any thing that is good, that advances holy religion, and the divine honour. For one hath a better government, a second a better confession, a third hath excellent spiritual arts for the conduct of souls, a fourth hath a fewer errors; and by what instrument soever a holy life is advantaged, use that, though thou grindest thy spears and arrows at the forges of the *Philistines*; knowing thou hast no master but Christ, no religion but the Christian, no rule but the Scriptures, and the laws and right reason: other things that are helps, are to be used accordingly.

These are the general rules of Christian prudence which I have chosen to insist upon: there are many others more particular indeed, but yet worth not only the enumerating, but observing also, and that they be reduced to practice. For the prudence of a Christian does oblige and direct respectively all the children of the institution, that we be careful to decline a danger, watchful against a temptation, always choosing that that is safe, and fitted to all circumstances; that we be wise in choosing our company, reserved and wary in our friendships, and communicative in our charity: that we be silent and retentive of what we hear and what we think, not credulous, not inconstant; that we be deliberate in our election, and vigorous in our prosecutions; that we suffer not good nature to discompose our duty, but that we separate images from substances, and the pleasing of a present company from our religion

to God and our eternal interest: for sometimes that which is counselled to us by *Christian prudence* is accounted folly by *human prudence*, and so it is ever accounted when our duty leads us into a persecution. Hither also appertain, that we never do a thing that we know we must repent of; that we do not admire too many things, nor any thing too much; that we be even in prosperity, and patient in adversity, but transported with neither into the regions of despair or levity, pusillanimity or tyranny, dejection or garishness; always to look upon the scar we have impressed upon our flesh, and no more to handle dangers and knives; to abstain from ambitious and vexatious suits; not to contend with a mighty man; even to listen to him who (according to the proverb) *hath four ears, reason, religion, wisdom, and experience*; rather to lose a benefit, than to suffer a detriment and an evil; to stop the beginnings of evil; to pardon and not to observe all the faults of friends or enemies; of evils to choose the least, and of goods to choose the greatest, if it be also safest; not to be insolent in success, but to proceed according to the probability of human causes and contingencies; ever to be thankful for benefits, and profitable to others, and useful in all that we can; to watch the seasons and circumstances of actions; to do that willingly which cannot be avoided, lest the necessity serve another's appetite, and it be lost to all our purposes, *Insignis enim est prudentiæ, ut quod non facere non possis, id ita facere ut libenter fecisse videaris*; not to pursue difficult, uncertain and obscure things with violence and passion. These, if we observe, we shall do advantage to ourselves and to the religion; and avoid those evils which fools and unwary people suffer for nothing, dying or bleeding without cause and without pity. I end this with the saying of *Socrates*,

χαρίζομενα φρονήσεως και αλλατίζομενα αντι αλλήλων, μη σκιαγραφία τις η ή τιαυτη αρετή. και τω αντι ανδραπόδαδης τε, και ουδεν ίγιες ουδ' αληθες εχνη.*

Virtue is but a shadow and a servile employment, unless it be adorned and instructed with prudence, which gives motion and conduct, spirits and vigorousness to religion, making it not only human and reasonable, but divine and celestial.

* Plat. Phaedo.

SERMON XXIII.



OF CHRISTIAN SIMPLICITY.

MATTHEW X. LATTER PART OF VER. 16.

And harmless as doves.

OUR blessed Saviour, having prefaced concerning prudence, adds to the integrity of the precept, and for the conduct of our religion, that we be simple as well as prudent, innocent as well as wary. Harmless and safe together do well; for without this blessed union prudence turns into craft, and simplicity degenerates into folly. *Prudens simplicitas* is *Martial's* character of a good man; a wary and cautious innocence, a harmless prudence and provision; *vera simplicitate bonus*. A true simplicity is that which leaves to a man arms defensive, his castles and strong forts; but takes away his swords and spears, his anger and his malice, his peevishness and spite. But such is the misery and such is the iniquity of mankind, that craft hath invaded all the contracts and intercourses of men, and made simplicity so weak a thing, that it is grown into contempt, sometimes with, and sometimes without reason: *et homines simplices, minime malos*, the Romans called *purum cautos, saepe stolidos*; unwary fools and defenceless

people were called *simple*. And when the innocence of the old simple *Romans* in *Junius Brutus'* time, in *Fabricius* and *Camillus*, began to degenerate, and to need the *Aquilian* Law to force men to deal honestly; quickly the mischief increased, till the *Aquilian* law grew as much out of power as honesty was out of countenance. And there, and every where else, men thought they got a purchase when they met with an honest man: and ηλιθιον *Aristotle* calls *χρηστων*, and τον οργιλον και τον μανηικον, υτλων. *A fool is a profitable person, and he that is simple is little better than mad; and so it is when simplicity wants prudence.* He that, because he means honestly himself, thinks every man else does so, and therefore is unwary in all or any of his intercourses, is a simple man in an evil sense: and therefore *St. Gregory Nazianzen* remarks *Constantinus* with a note of folly, for suffering his easy nature to be abused by *Georgius*, οικεινται την βασιλευς αποκτησα, ουτως ημε εγω καλω την κουφοτητα. αιδουμενος την ευλαβειαν.* *The prince's simplicity, so he calls it for reverence; but indeed it was folly, for it was zeal without knowledge.* But it was a better temper which he observed in his own father, η υτλοτιστ και το του υιους αδολον, such a *simplicity* which only wanted *craft* or *deceit*, but wanted no *prudence* or *caution*: and that is truly *Christian simplicity*, or the sincerity of an honest, and ingenuous, and a fearless person; and it is a rare band, not only of societies and contracts, but also of friendships and advantages of mankind.

We do not live in an age in which there is so much need to bid men be wary, as to take care that they be innocent. Indeed in religion we are usually too loose and ungirt, exposing ourselves to temptation, and others to offence, and our name to dishonour, and the cause itself to reproach, and we are open and ready to every evil but persecution: from that we

* Orat. 21.

are close enough, and that alone we call prudence; but in the matter of interest we are wary as serpents, subtle as foxes, vigilant as the birds of the night, rapacious as kites, tenacious as grappling hooks and the weightiest anchors, and, above all, false and hypocritical as a thin crust of ice spread upon the face of a deep, smooth and dissembling pit; if you set your foot, your foot slips, or the ice breaks, and you sink into death, and are wound in a sheet of water, descending into mischief or your grave, suffering a great fall, or a sudden death, by your confidence and unsuspecting foot. There is an universal crust of hypocrisy that covers the face of the greatest part of mankind. Their religion consists in forms and outsides, and serves reputation or a design, but does not serve God. Their promises are but fair language, and the civilities of piazzas or exchanges, and disband and untie like the air that beats upon their teeth when they speak the delicious and hopeful words: their oaths are snares to catch men, and make them confident: their contracts are arts and stratagems to deceive, measured by profit and possibility; and every thing is lawful that is gainful: and their friendships are trades of getting; and their kindness of watching a dying friend is but the office of a vulture, the gaping for a legacy, the spoil of the carcase: and their sicknesses are many times policies of state; sometimes a design to shew the riches of our bed-chamber: and their funeral tears are but the paranympths, and pious solicitors of a second bride. And every thing that is ugly must be hid, and every thing that is handsome must be seen: and that will make a fair cover for a huge deformity. And therefore it is (as they think) necessary that men should always have some pretences and forms, some faces of religion or sweetness of language, confident affirmatives or bold oaths, protracted treaties or mul-

titude of words, affected silence or grave deportment, a good name or a good cause, a fair relation or a worthy calling, great power or a pleasant wit; any thing that can be fair or that can be useful, any thing that can do good or be thought good, we use it to abuse our brother, or promote our interest. *Leporina* resolved to die, being troubled for her husband's danger; and he resolved to die with her that had so great a kindness for him, as not to outlive the best of her husband's fortune. It was agreed; and she tempered the poison, and drank the face of the unwholesome goblet; but the weighty poison sunk to the bottom, and the easy man drank it all off, and died, and the woman carried him forth to funeral, and after a little illness, which she soon recovered, she entered upon the inheritance, and a second marriage.

Tuta frequensque via est——

It is a useful and a safe way to cozen, upon colour of friendship or religion; but that is hugely criminal: to tell a lie to abuse a man's belief, and by it to enter upon any thing of his possession to his injury, is a perfect destruction of all human society, the most ignoble of all human follies, perfectly contrary to God, who is truth itself, the greatest argument of a timorous and a base, a cowardly and a private mind, not at all honest, or confident to see the sun, a vice, *fit for slaves*; *αλητον και δουλοτροπες*, as *Dio Chrysostomus* calls it; *οραν και οτι θηριον τα δειλοτατα και αχρηνοστερα, τα κεινα ψευδεται παντων μαλιστα, και εξατατα* * for the most timorous and the basest of beasts use craft, and lie in wait, and take their prey, and save their lives by deceit. And it is the greatest injury to the abused person in the world: for, besides that

* Dissert. i. de Regno.

it abuses his interest, it also makes him for ever insecure, and uneasy in his confidence, which is the period of cares, the rest of a man's spirit; it makes it necessary for a man to be jealous and suspicious, that is, to be troublesome to himself and every man else; and above all, lying, or craftiness, and unfaithful usages, rob a man of the honour of his soul, making his understanding useless and in the condition of a fool, spoiled, and dishonoured, and despised. *πᾶσα ψυχή ἀκούσα στερηταὶ τῆς ἀληθείας*, said *Plato*; *Every soul loses truth very unwillingly*: every man is so great a lover of truth, that if he hath it not, he loves to believe he hath, and would fain have all the world to believe as he does; either presuming that he hath truth, or else hating to be deceived, or to be esteemed a cheated and an abused person. *Non licet suffurari mentem hominis etiam Samaritani*, said *Moses*; *sed veritatem loquere, atque age ingenue*;* if a man be a *Samaritan*, that is, a hated person, a person from whom you differ in matter of religion, yet steal not his mind away, but speak truth to him honestly and ingenuously. A man's soul loves to dwell in truth, it is his resting-place; and if you take him from thence, you take him into strange regions, a place of banishment and dishonour. *Qui ignotos laedit, Latro appellatur; qui amicos, paulo minus quam parricida*: He that hurts strangers is a thief; but he that hurts his friends is little better than a parricide. That is the brand and *stigma* of hypocrisy and lying; it hurts our friends, *Mendacium in damnum potens*, and makes the man that owns it guilty of a crime, that is to be punished by the sorrows usually suffered in the most execrable places of the cities. But I must reduce the duty to particulars, and discover the contrary vice by the several parts of its proportion.

* Can. Fth.

1. The first office of a Christian simplicity consists in our religion and manners ; that they be open and honest, publick and justifiable, the same at home and abroad, for besides the ingenuity and honesty of this, there is an indispensable and infinite necessity it should be so ; because whoever is a hypocrite in his religion, mocks God, presenting to him the outside, and reserving the inward for his enemy ; which is either a denying God to be the *searcher of our hearts*, or else an open defiance of his omniscience and of his justice. To provoke God, that we may deceive men ; to defy his almightiness, that we may abuse our brother ; is to destroy all that is sacred, all that is prudent ; it is an open hostility to all things human and divine, a breaking from all the bands of all relations ; and uses God so cheaply, as if he were to be treated or could be cozened like a weak man, and an undiscerning and easy merchant. But so is the life of many men ;

Vita fallax, abditos sensus gerens,

Nimisque pulchram turpibus faciem induens.

It is a crafty life that men live, carrying designs, and living upon secret purposes. *Pudor impudentem celat, aulacem quies, pietas nefandum, vera fallaces probant, simulantque molles dura.* Men pretend modesty, and under that red veil are bold against superiours ; saucy to their betters upon pretences of religion ; invaders of other's rights by false propositions in theology : pretending humility, they challenge superiority above all orders of men ; and for being thought *more holy*, think that they have title to *govern the world* : they bear upon their face great religion, and are impious in their relations, false to their trust, unfaithful to their friend, unkind to their dependants ; *αφρικ ετηρκωτες, και το φρονιμον ζητουσιν εν ταις περιστασι.* turning up the white of their eye, and seeking for reputation in the

streets : so did some of the old hypocrites, the Gentile Pharisees ; *Asperum cultum, et intonsum caput, negligentiore barbam et nitidum argento odium et cubile humi positum, et quicquid aliud ambitionem via perversa sequitur* ; being the softest persons under an austere habit, the loosest livers under a contracted brow, under a pale face having the reddest and most sprightly livers. These kind of men have abused all ages of the world, and all religions ; it being so easy in nature, so prepared and ready for mischiefs, that men should creep into opportunities of devouring the flock upon pretence of defending them, and to raise their estates upon colour of saving their souls.

Introrsum turpes, speciosi pelle decora.*

Men that are like *painted sepulchres*, entertainment for the eye, but images of death, chambers of rottenness and repositories of dead men's bones. It may sometimes concern a man *to seem religious* ; God's glory may be shewed by fair appearances, or the edification of our brother, or the reputation of a cause ; but this is but sometimes : but it always concerns us, *that we be religious* ; and we may reasonably think, that if the colours of religion so well do advantage to us, the substance and reality would do it much more. For no man can have a good by seeming religious, and another by not being so ; the power of godliness never destroys any well-built fabrick that was raised upon the reputation of religion and its pretences. *Nunquam est peccare utile, quia semper est turpe*, said *Cicero* : it is never profitable to sin, because it is always base and dishonest. And if the face of religion could do a good turn, which the heart and substance does destroy, then religion itself were the greatest hypocrite in the world, and promises a

* Without, all virtue, and within all crime.

blessing which it never can perform, but must be beholden to its enemy to verify its promises. No: we shall be sure to feel the blessings of both the worlds, if we serve in the offices of religion devoutly and charitably before men and before God: if we ask of God things honest in the sight of men, *μετα φωνης ευχόμενοι*, (as *Pythagoras* gave in precept) *praying* to God with a free heart and a publick prayer, and doing before men things that are truly pleasing to God, turning our heart outward and our face inwards, that is, conversing with men as in the presence of God; and in our private towards God, being as holy and devout as if we prayed in publick, and in the corners of the streets. *Pliny* praising *Ariston*, gave him the title of an honest and hearty religion: *Ornat hunc magnitudo animi quae nihil ad ostentationem, omnia ad conscientiam refert; recteque facti, non ex populi sermone, mercedem, sed ex facto petit.* And this does well state the question of a sincere religion, and an ingenuous goodness: it requires that we do nothing for ostentation, but every thing for conscience; and we may be obliged in conscience to publish our manner of lives, but then it must be, not that we may have a popular noise for a reward, but that God may be glorified by our publick worshipings, and others edified by our good examples.

Neither doth the sincerity of our religion require that we should not conceal our sins; for he that sins and dares to own them publickly, may become impudent; and so long as in modesty we desire our shame should be hid, and men to think better of us than we deserve, I say, for no other reason but either because we would not derive the ill examples to others, or the shame to ourselves; we are within the protection of one of *Virtue's* sisters, and we are not far from the gates of the kingdom of heaven; easy and apt to be invited in, and not very unworthy to enter.

But if any other principle draws the veil, if we conceal our vices because we would be honoured for sanctity, or because we would not be hindered in our designs, we serve the interest of pride and ambition, covetousness, or vanity. If an innocent purpose hides the ulcer, it does half heal it; but if it retires into the secrecy of sin and darkness, it turns into a plague and infects the heart, and it dies infallibly of a double exulceration. The *Macedonian* boy that kept the coal in his flesh, and would not shake his arm, lest he should disturb the sacrifice, or discompose the ministry before *Alexander* the Great, concealed his pain to the honour of patience and religion: but the *Spartan* boy, who suffered the little fox to eat his bowels rather than confess his theft, when he was in danger of discovery, paid the price of a bold hypocrisy, that is, the dissimulation reproveable in matter of manners, which conceals one sin to make way for another. Οἱ καὶ μάλα σέμναι καὶ σκυβραταὶ τὰ ἔξω καὶ τὰ δημοσίᾳ φανόμενοι, εἰ παῖδες ὤφραϊον ἠγωνιακὸς κατέωλιαι ἴσα τιούσιν; *Lucian* notes it of his philosophical hypocrites, dissemblers in matter of deportment and religion; they seem severe abroad, but they enter into the vaults of harlots, and are not ashamed to see a naked sin in the midst of its ugliness and undressed circumstances. A mighty wrestler, that had won a crown at *Olympus* for contending prosperously, was observed to turn his head and go forward with his face upon his shoulder, to behold a fair woman that was present; and he lost the glory of his strength, when he became so weak that a woman could turn his head about, which his adversary could not. These are the follies and weaknesses of man, and dishonours to religion, when a man shall contend nobly, and do handsomely; and then be taken in a base or a dishonourable action, and mingle venom with his delicious ointment.

Quid? quod olet gravius mistum diapasmate virus,
Atque duplex animae longius exit odor.

When *Fescenia* perfumed her breath that she might not smell of wine, she condemned the crime of drunkenness; but grew ridiculous when the wine broke through the cloud of a tender perfume, and the breath of a lozenge. And that indeed is the reward of an hypocrite; his laborious arts of concealment furnish all the world with declamation and severity against the crime, which himself condemns with his caution. But when his own sentence too is prepared against the day of his discovery,

Notas ergo nimis fraudes deprensaque furta
Jam tollas, et sis ebria simpliciter.

A simple drunkard hath but one fault: but they that avoid discovery, that they may drink on without shame or restraint, add hypocrisy to their vicious fulness; and for all the amazements of their consequent discovery have no other recompense, but that they pleased themselves in the security of their crime, and their undeserved reputation.

Sic quae nigrior est cadente moro,
Cerussata sibi placet Lycoris:

For so the most easy and deformed woman, whose girdle no foolish young man will unloose, because she is blacker than the fallen mulberry, may please herself under a skin of Cerusse, and call herself fairer than *Pharaoh's* daughter, or the hinds living upon the snowy mountains.

One thing more there is to be added as an instance to the simplicity of religion; and that is, That we never deny our religion, or lie concerning our faith, nor tell our propositions and articles de-

ceitfully, nor instruct novices or catechumens with fraud; but that when we teach them we do it honestly, justly and severely, not always to speak all, but never to speak otherwise than it is, nor to hide a truth from them, whose souls are concerned in it that it be known. *Neque enim id est eclare, cum quid reticeas; sed cum, quod tu scias, id ignorare emolumentum tui causa velis eos quorum interest id scire:** So Cicero determines the case of prudence and simplicity. The discovery of pious frauds; and the disclaiming of false, but profitable and rich propositions: the quitting honours fraudently gotten, and unjustly detained; the reducing every man to the perfect understanding of his own religion, so far as can concern his duty; the disallowing false miracles, legends, and fabulous stories, to cozen the people into awfulness, fear and superstition; these are parts of Christian simplicity which do integrate this duty. For religion hath strengths enough of its own to support itself; it needs not a devil for its advocate: it is the breath of God; and as it is purer than the beams of the morning, so it is stronger than a tempest, or the combinations of all the winds, though united by the prince that ruleth in the air. And we find that the *Nicene* faith prevailed upon all the world, though some *Arian* bishops went from *Ariminum* to *Nice*, and there decreed their own articles, and called it *The faith read at Nice*, and used all arts, and all violence, and all lying, and diligence to discountenance it; yet it could not be, it was the truth of God, and therefore it was stronger than all the gates of hell, than all the powers of darkness. And he that tells a lie for his religion, or goes about by fraud and imposture to gain proselytes, either dares not trust his cause, or dares not trust God. True religion is open in its articles, honest in its prosecutions, just in

* Cicero, lib. iii. Offic.

its conduct, innocent when it is accused, ignorant of falsehood, sure in its truth, simple in its sayings; and (as *Julius Capitolinus* said of the emperor *Verus*) it is *morum simplicium, et quae adumbrare nihil possit*: It covers indeed a multitude of sins by curing them, and obtaining pardon for them; but it can dissemble nothing of itself; it cannot tell or do a lie: but it can become a sacrifice; a good man can quit his life, but never his integrity. That is the first duty; the sum of which is that which *Aquilius* said concerning fraud and craft; *bona fides*, the honesty of a man's faith and religion is destroyed *cum aliud simulatum, aliud actum sit*, when either we conceal what we ought to publish, or do not act what we pretend.

2. Christian simplicity or the innocence of prudence, relates to laws both in their sanction and execution; that they be decreed with equity, and proportioned to the capacity and profit of the subjects, and that they be applied to practice with remissions and reasonable interpretations, agreeable to the sense of the words and the mind of the lawgiver. But laws are not to be cozened and abused by contradictory glosses, and fantastick elusions; as knowing that if the majesty and sacredness of them be once abused, and subjected to contempt, and unreasonable and easy resolutions, their girdle is unloosed, and they suffer the shame of prostitution and contempt. When *Saul* made a law, that he that did eat before night should die, the people persuaded him directly to rescind it in the case of *Jonathan*; because it was unequal and unjust, that he who had wrought their deliverance, and in that working it, was absent from the promulgation of the law, should suffer for breaking it, in a case of violent necessity, and of which he heard nothing, upon so fair and probable a cause. And it had been well that the *Persian* had been so rescued, who, against the laws of his country,

killed a lion to save the life of his prince. In such cases it is fit the law be rescinded and dispensed withal, as to certain particulars; so it be done ingenuously, with competent authority, in great necessity, and without partiality. But that which I intend here is, that in the rescission or dispensation of the law, the process be open and free, and such as shall preserve the law and its sacredness, as well as the person and his interest. The laws of *Sparta* forbid any man to be twice admiral; but when their affairs required it, they made *Aræus* titular, and *Lysander* supravisor of him, and admiral to all real and effective purposes: this wanted ingenuity, and laid a way open for them to despise the law which was made patient of such a weak evasion. The *Lacedæmonian* ambassadour persuaded *Pericles* to turn the tables of the law, which were forbidden to be removed; and another ordained in a certain case, that the laws should sleep twenty four hours: a third decreed that *June* should be called *May*, because the time of an election appointed by the law was elapsed. These arts are against the ingenuity and simplicity of laws and lawgivers, and teach the people to cheat in their obedience, when their judges are so fraudulent in the administration of their laws. Every law should be made plain, open, honest, and significant; and he that makes a decree, and intricates it on purpose, or by inconsideration lays a snare or leaves one there, is either an imprudent person, and therefore unfit to govern, or else he is a tyrant and a vulture. It is too much that a man can make a law by an arbitrary power. But when he shall also leave the law, so that every of the ministers of justice and the judges shall have power to rule by a loose, by an arbitrary, by a contradictory interpretation, it is intolerable. They that rule by prudence should above all things see that the patrons and advocates of innocence should be harmless, and without an evil sting.

3. Christian simplicity relates to promises and acts of grace and favour; and its caution is, that all promises be simple, ingenuous, agreeable to the intention of the promiser, truly and effectually expressed, and never going less in the performance than in the promises and the words of the expression: concerning which the cases are several. 1. First, all promises in which a third or a second person hath no interest, that is, the promises of kindness and civilities, are tied to pass into performance *secundum aequum et bonum*; and though they may oblige to some small inconvenience, yet never to a great one: as, I will visit you to-morrow morning, because I promised you, and therefore I will come, *etiamsi non concoxero*, although I have not slept my full sleep; but *si febricitavero*, if I be in a fever, or have reason to fear one, I am disobliged. For the nature of such promises bears upon them no bigger burthen than can be expounded by reasonable civilities, and the common expectation of kind, and the ordinary performances of just men, who do excuse and are excused respectively by all rules of reason proportionably to such small intercourses: and therefore although such conditions be not expressed in making promises, yet to perform or rescind them by such laws is not against Christian simplicity. 2. Promises in matters of justice or in matters of grace, as from a superiour to an inferiour, must be so singly and ingenuously expressed, intended and performed accordingly, that no condition is to be reserved or supposed in them to warrant their non-performance but impossibility, or, that which is next to it, an intolerable inconvenience; in which cases we have a natural liberty to commute our promises, but so that we pay to the interested person a good at least equal to that which we first promised. And to this purpose it may be added, that it is not against Christian

simplicity to express our promises in such words which we know the interested man will understand to other purposes than I intend, so it be not less, than I mean, than that he hopes for. When our blessed Saviour told his disciples, that *they should sit upon twelve thrones*, they presently thought they had his bond for a kingdom, and dreamed of wealth and honour, power and a splendid court; and Christ knew they did, but did not disentangle his promise from the enfolded and intricate sense, of which his words were naturally capable; but he performed his promise to better purposes than they hoped for; they were presidents in the conduct of souls, princes of God's people, the chief in sufferings, stood nearest to the cross, had an elder brother's portion in the kingdom of grace, were the founders of churches, and dispensers of the mysteries of the kingdom, and ministers of the spirit of God, and channels of mighty blessings, under-mediators in the priesthood of their Lord, and *their names were written in heaven*: and this was infinitely better, than to groan and wake under a head pressed with a golden crown and pungent cares, and to eat alone, and to walk in a crowd, and to be vexed with all the publick and many of the private evils of the people, which is the sum total of an earthly kingdom.

When God promised to the obedient, that they should live long in the land which he would give them, he meant it of the land of *Canaan*, but yet reserved to himself the liberty of taking them quickly from that land, and carrying them to a better. He that promises to lend me a staff to walk withal, and instead of that gives me a horse to carry me, hath not broken his promise, nor dealt deceitfully. And this is God's dealing with mankind; he promises more than we could hope for; and when he hath done that, he gives us more than he hath promised. God

hath promised to give to them that fear him all that they need, food and raiment: but he adds, out of the treasures of his mercy, variety of food, and changes of raiment; some to get strength, and some to refresh; something for them that are in health, and some for the sick. And though that skins of bulls, and stags, and foxes, and bears, could have drawn a veil thick enough to hide the apertures of sin and natural shame, and to defend us from heat and cold, yet when he added the fleeces of the sheep and beavers, and the spoils of silk-worms, he hath proclaimed, that although his promises are the bounds of our certain expectation, yet they are not the limits of his loving kindness: and if he does more than he hath promised, no man can complain that he did otherwise, and did greater things than he said. Thus God does; but therefore so also must we, imitating that example, and transcribing that copy of divine truth, always remembering that his *promises are yea and amen*. And although God often does more, yet he never does less; and therefore we must never go from our promises, unless we be thrust from thence by disability, or let go by leave, or called up higher by a greater intendment and increase of kindness. And therefore when *Solyman* had sworn to *Ibrahim Bassa* that he would never kill him so long as he were alive, he quitted himself but ill, when he sent an eunuch to cut his throat when he slept, because the priest told him that sleep was death. His act was false and deceitful as his great prophet.

But in this part of simplicity, *we Christians* have a most especial obligation: for our religion being ennobled by the most and the greatest promises, and our faith made confident by the veracity of our Lord, and his word made certain by miracles and prophecies, and voices from heaven, and all the testimony of God himself; and that truth itself is bound upon

us by the efficacy of great endearments and so many precepts : if we shall suffer the faith of a Christian to be an instrument to deceive our brother, and that he must either be incredulous or deceived, uncharitable or deluded like a fool, we dishonour the sacredness of the institution, and become strangers to the spirit of truth, and to the eternal word of God. Our blessed Lord would *not* have his disciples to *swear at all*, (no not in publick judicature) if the necessities of the world would permit him to be obeyed. If Christians will live according to the religion, the word of a Christian were a sufficient instrument to give testimony, and to make promises, to secure a faith ; and, upon that supposition, oaths were useless and therefore forbidden. because there could be no necessity to invoke God's name in promises or affirmations if men were indeed Christians, and therefore in that case would be a taking it in vain : but because many are not, and they that are in name, oftentimes are in nothing else, it became necessary that man should swear in judgment and in publick courts. But consider who it was that invented and made the necessity of oaths, of bonds, of securities, of statutes, extents, judgments, and all the artifices of human dissidence and dishonesty. These things were indeed found out by men ; but the necessity of these was from him that is the *father of lies*, from him that hath made many fair promises, but never kept any ; or if he did, it was to do a bigger mischief, to cozen the more. For so does the devil : he promises rich harvest, and blasts the corn in the spring ; he tells his servants they shall be rich. and fills them with beggary qualities, makes them base and indigent, greedy and penurious ; and they that serve him entirely, as witches and such miserable persons, never can be rich : if he promises health, then men grow confident and intemperate, and do such things whereby they shall die the sooner,

and die longer; they shall die eternally. He deceives men in their trust, and frustrates their hopes, and eludes their expectations; and his promises have a period set, beyond which they cannot be true; for wicked men shall enjoy a fair fortune but till their appointed time, and then it ends in perfect and in most accomplished misery; and therefore even in this performance he deceives them most of all, promising jewels, and performing coloured stones and glass gems, that he may cozen them of their glorious inheritance. All fraudulent breakers of promises dress themselves by his glass, whose best imagery is deformity and lies.



SERMON XXIV.

PART II.

4. CHRISTIAN simplicity teaches openness and ingenuity in contracts, and matters of buying and selling, covenants, associations, and all such intercourses which suppose an equality of persons as to the matter of right and justice in the stipulation. *Μετα την αγορην α-ψευδειν* was the old *Attick* law: and nothing is more contrary to Christian religion, than that the intercourses of justice be direct snares, and that we should deal with men, as men deal with foxes and wolves, and vermin; do all violence, and when that cannot be, use all craft and every thing whereby they can be made miserable.

*Ἡ δόλη ἢ βίη, ἢ ἀμφαδὸν ἢ κρυφιδύ**.

There are men in the world who love to smile, but that smile is more dangerous than the furrows of

* By secret treachery or open force.

a contracted brow, or a storm in *Adria*; for their purpose is only to deceive: they easily speak what they never mean; they heap up many arguments to persuade that to others, which themselves believe not; they praise that vehemently which they deride in their hearts; they declaim against a thing which themselves covet: they beg passionately for that which they value not, and run from an object which they would fain have to follow and overtake them; they excuse a person dexterously where the man is beloved, and watch to surprise him where he is unguarded; they praise that they may sell, and disgrace that they may keep. And these hypocrisies are so interwoven and embroidered with their whole design, that some nations refuse to contract till their arts are taken off by the society of banquets, and the good-natured kindnesses of festival chalices: for so *Tacitus* observes concerning the old *Germans*; *De asciscendis principibus. de pace et bello, in conviviiis consultant, tanquam nullo magis tempore ad simplices cogitationes pateat animus, aut ad magnas incalescat*: as if then they were more simple, when they were most valiant, and were least deceitful when they were least themselves.

But it is an evil condition that a man's honesty shall be owing to his wine, and virtue must live at the charge and will of a vice. The proper band of societies and contracts is *justice* and *necessities*, *religion* and the *laws*; the *measures* of it are *equity*, and *ourselves*, and *our own desires* in the days of our need, natural or forced: but the *instruments* of the exchange and *conveyance* of the whole intercourses is *words* and *actions*, as they are expounded by custom, consent, or understanding of the interested person; in which if simplicity be not severely preserved, it is impossible that human society can subsist, but men shall be forced to snatch at what they have bought,

and take securities that men swear truly, and exact an oath that such is the meaning of the word; and no man shall think himself secure, but shall fear he is robbed, if he has not possession first; and it shall be disputed who shall trust the other, and neither of them shall have cause to be confident upon bands, or oaths, or witnesses, or promises, or all the honour of men, or all the engagements of religion.

Ουδεις γαρ αν επι πιστευσαι δυνατο υμων, ουδ' ει πανυ περιβυμαιο, ιδαν αδικουμενον τον μεγαστα φιλια προσκοβη,* said *Cyrus* in *Xenophon*: a man, though he desires it, cannot be confident of the man that pretends truth, yet tells a lie, and is deprehended to have made use of the sacred name of *friendship* or religion, honesty or reputation, to deceive his brother.

But because a man may be deceived by deeds and open actions as well as words; therefore it concerns their duty, that no man by an action on purpose done to make his brother believe a lie, abuse his persuasion and his interest. When *Pythius* the *Sicilian* had a mind to sell his garden to *Cannius*, he invited him thither, and caused fishermen (as if by custom) to fish in the channel by which the garden stood, and they threw great store of fish into their arbours, and made *Cannius* believe it was so every day; and the man grew greedy of that place of pleasure, and gave *Pythius* a double price, and the next day perceived himself abused. Actions of pretence and simulation are like snares laid, into which the beasts fall though you pursue them not, but walk in the inquiry for their necessary provisions: and if a man fall into a snare that you have laid, it is no excuse to say, you did not tempt him thither. To lay a snare is against the ingenuity of a good man and a Christian, and from thence he ought to be drawn; and therefore it is not fit we should place a danger which ourselves are therefore bound to hinder, because from thence

* Lib. 3. Instit.

we are obliged to rescue him. *Vir bonus est, qui prodest quibus potest, nocet nemini*: when we do all the good we can, and do an evil to no man, then only we are accounted good men. But this pretence of an action signifying otherwise than it looks for, is only forbidden in matter of contract, and the material interest of a second person. But when actions are of a double signification, or when a man is not abused or defeated of his right by an uncertain sign, it is lawful to do a thing to other purposes than is commonly understood. Flight is a sign of fear; but it is lawful to fly when a man fears not. Circumcision was the seal of the *Jewish* religion; and yet *St. Paul* circumcised *Timothy*, though he intended he should live like the *Gentile* Christians, and not as do the *Jews*. But because that rite did signify more things besides that one; he only did it to represent that he was no enemy of *Moses'* law, but would use it when there was just reason, which was one part of the things which the using of circumcision could signify. So our blessed Saviour pretended that he would pass forth beyond *Emmaus*; but if he intended not to do it, yet he did no injury to the two disciples, for whose good it was that he intended to make this offer: and neither did he prevaricate the strictness of simplicity and sincerity, because they were persons with whom he had made no contracts, to whom he had passed no obligation: and in the nature of the thing, it is *proper* and *natural*, by an offer to give an occasion to another to do a good action; and in case it succeeds not, then to do what we intended not; and so the offer was conditional. But in all cases of bargaining, although the actions of themselves may receive naturally another sense, yet I am bound to follow that signification which may not abuse my brother, or pollute my own honesty, or snatch or rifle his interest: because it can be no ingredient

into the commutation, if I exchange a thing which he understands not, and is by error led into this mistake, and I hold forth the fire, and delude him, and amuse his eye; for by me he is made worse.

But secondly, as our *actions* must be of a sincere and determinate signification in contract, so must our *words*: in which the rule of the old *Roman* honesty was this: *Uterque, si ad eloquendum venerit, non plus quam semel cloquetur*; every one that speaks, is to speak but *once*, that is, *but one thing*, because commonly that is truth; truth being but one, but error and falsehood infinitely various and changeable: and we shall seldom see a man so stiffened with impiety as to speak little and seldom, and pertinaciously adhere to a single sense, and yet that at first, and all the way after, shall be a lie. Men use to go about when they tell a lie, and devise circumstances, and stand off at a distance, and cast a cloud of words, and intricate the whole affair, and cozen themselves first, and then cozen their brother; while they have minced the case of conscience into little particles, and swallowed the lie by crums, so that no one passage of it should rush against the conscience, nor do hurt, until it is all got into the belly, and unites in the effect; for, by that time, two men are abused—the merchant in his soul, and the contractor in his interest: and this is the certain effect of much talking and little honesty. But he that means honestly, must speak but once, that is, one truth; and hath leave to vary within the degrees of just prices and fair conditions, which, because they have a latitude, may be enlarged or restrained, according as the merchant pleases: save only, he must never prevaricate the measures of equity, and the proportions of reputation, and the publick. But, in all the parts of this traffick, let our words be the signification of our thoughts, and our thoughts de-

sign nothing but the advantages of a permitted exchange. In this case, the severity is so great, so exact, and so without variety of case, that it is not lawful for a man to tell a *truth*, with a collateral design to cozen and abuse; and therefore, at no hand can it be permitted to lie or equivocate, to speak craftily, or to deceive, by smoothness, or intricacy, or long discourses.

But this precept of simplicity in matter of contract, hath one step of severity beyond this: in matter of contract, it is not lawful so much as to conceal the secret and undiscernible faults of the merchandize; but we must acknowledge them, or else affix prices made, diminute and lessened to such proportions and abatements as that fault should make. *Caveat emptor* is a good caution for him that buys, and it secures the seller in publick judicature, but not in court of conscience: and the old laws of the *Romans* were as nice in this affair as the conscience of a Christian. *Titus Claudius Centimelus* was commanded by the *Augurs* to pull down his house in the *Celian mountain*, because it hindered their observation of the flight of birds: he exposes his house to sale; *Publius Calphurnius* buys it, and is forced to pluck it down; but complaining to the judges, he had remedy, because *Claudius* did not tell him the true state of the inconvenience. He that sells a house infected with the plague, or haunted with evil spirits, sells that which is not worth such a price which it might be put at, if it were in health and peace; and therefore cannot demand it, but openly, and upon publication of the evil. To which also this is to be added, that, in some great faults, and such as have danger, (as in the cases now specified) no diminution of the price is sufficient to make the merchant just and sincere, unless he tells the appendant mischief; because, to

some persons in many cases, and to all persons in some cases, it is not at all valuable; and they would not possess it, if they might, for nothing. *Marcus Gratidianus* bought a house of *Sergius Orata*, which himself had sold before; but because *Sergius* did not declare the appendant vassalage and service, he was recompensed by the judges. For although it was certain that *Gratidianus* knew it, because it had been his own, yet *oportuit ex bona fide denunciari*, said the law, it concerned the ingenuity of a good man to have spoken it openly. In all cases it must be confessed in the price, or in the words: but when the evil may be personal, and more the matter of interest and money, it ought to be confessed, and then the goods prescribed; lest by my act I do my neighbour injury, and I receive profit by his damage. Certain it is, that ingenuity is the sweetest and easiest way; there is no difficulty or case of conscience in that; and it can have no objection in it, but that possibly sometimes we lose a little advantage which it may be we may lawfully acquire, but still we secure a quiet conscience: and if the merchandize be not worth so much to me, then neither is it to him; if it be to him, it is also to me; and therefore I have no loss, no hurt to keep it, if it be refused. But he that secures his own profit, and regards not the interest of another, is more greedy of a full purse than of a holy conscience, and prefers gain before justice, and the wealth of his private before the necessity of publick society and commerce, being a son of earth, whose centre is itself, without relation to heaven, that moves upon another's point, and produces flowers for others, and sends influence upon all the world, and receives nothing in return but a cloud of perfume, or the smell of a fat sacrifice.

God sent justice into the world, that all conditions in their several proportions should be equal; and he

that receives a good should pay one; and he whom I serve is obliged to feed and to defend me, in the same proportions as I serve: and justice is a relative term, and supposes two persons obliged: and though fortunes are unequal, and estates are in majority and subordination, and men are wise or foolish, honoured or despised: yet in the intercourses of justice God hath made that there is no difference. And therefore it was esteemed ignoble to dismiss a servant when corn was dear; in dangers of shipwreck to throw out an unprofitable boy, and keep a fair horse; or for *a wise man*, to snatch a plank from a drowning *fool*; or if the master of the ship should challenge the board upon which his passenger swims for his life; or to obtrude false money upon others, which we first took for true, but at last discovered to be false; or not to discover the gold which the merchant sold for Alchymy. The reason of all these is, because the collateral advantages are not at all to be considered in matter of rights: and though I am dearest to myself, as my neighbour is to himself; yet it is necessary that I permit him to his own advantages, as I desire to be permitted to mine. Now therefore simplicity and ingenuity in all contracts is perfectly and exactly necessary, because its contrary destroys that equality which justice hath placed in the affairs of men, and makes all things private, and makes a man dearer to himself, and to be preferred before kings and republicks, and churches; it destroys society, and it makes multitudes of men to be but like herds of beasts, without proper instruments of exchange and securities of possession, without faith and without propriety; concerning all which there is no other account to be given, but that the rewards of craft are but a little money, and a great deal of dishonour, and much suspicion, and proportionable scorn; watches and

guards, spies and jealousies are his portion. But the crown of justice is a fair life, and a clear reputation, and an inheritance there where justice dwells since she left the earth, even in the kingdom of the just, who shall call us to judgment for every word, and render to every man according to his works. And what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when the Lord taketh away his soul? *Tollendum esse ex rebus contrahendis omne mendacium*;* that is the sum of this rule: no falsehood or deceit is to be endured in any contract.

5. Christian simplicity hath also its necessity, and passes obligation upon us towards enemies in questions of law or war. *Plutarch* commends *Lysander* and *Philopamen* for their craft and subtility in war; but commends it not as an ornament to their manners, but that which had influence into prosperous events: just as *Ammianus* affirms, *nullo discrimine virtutis ac doli, prosperos omnes laudari debere bellorum eventus*; whatsoever in war is prosperous, men use to commend. But he that is a good soldier is not always a good man. *Callieratidas* was a good man, and followed the old way of downright hostility, *ατλων και γενναιον των ηγεμονων τροπον*.† But *Lysander* was *κτανουργος και σοφιστης αταταις δια ποικιλων τα του πολεμου*, a crafty man, full of plots, but not noble in the conduct of his arms. I remember *Euripides* brings in *Achilles* commending the ingenuity of his breeding, and the simplicity and nobleness of his own heart:

Ἐγὼ δ' ἐξ ἀνδρος εὐπαιδείστατου τραφεῖς
Χείρῳνας ἐμάθον πούς τρεπούς ἄτλους ἔχειν.†

* Cicero.

† In *Lysand.*

‡ *Iphig. in. Aul.*

Tutor'd by Chiron, venerable sage

I learnt the simple language of the heart.

The good old man *Chiron* was my tutor, and he taught me to use *simplicity* and honesty in all my manners. It was well and noble. But yet some wise men do not condemn all soldiers that use to get victories by deceit: St. *Austin* allows it to be lawful: and St. *Chrysostom* commends it.* These good men supposed that a crafty victory was better than a bloody war: and certainly so it is, if the power gotten by craft be not exercised in blood. But this business (as to the case of conscience) will quickly be determined. Enemies are not persons bound by contract and society, and therefore are not obliged to open hostilities and ingenuous prosecutions of the war; and if it be lawful to take by violence, it is not unjust to take the same thing by craft. But this is so to be understood, that, where there is an obligation, either by the law of nations or by special contracts, no man dare to violate his faith or honour, but in these things deal with an ingenuity equal to the truth of peaceful promises, and acts of favour, and endearment to our relatives. *Josephus*† tells of the sons of *Herod*, that in their enmities with their uncle *Pherora* and *Salome*, they had disagreeing manners of prosecution, as they had disagreeing hearts: some railed openly, and thought their enmity the more honest because it was not concealed; but by the ignorance and rude untutored malice, lay open to the close designs of the elder brood of foxes. In this, because it was a particular and private quarrel, there is no rule of conscience, but that it be wholly laid aside, and appeased with charity: for the openness of the quarrel was but the rage and indiscretion of the malice; and the close design was but the craft and advantage of the malice. But in just wars, on that side where a com

* Quae. 10. super *Joshuam* lib. i. de *Sacerdotio*.

† *Hist. l. 16. c. 6.*

petent authority, and a just cause warrants the arms, and turns the active opposition into the excuse and license of defence, there is no restraint upon the actions and words of men in the matter of sincerity, but that the laws of nations be strictly pursued, and all parties, promises, and contracts observed religiously, and by the proportion of a private and Christian ingenuity. We find it, by wise and good men, mentioned with honour, that the *Romans* threw bread from the besieged capitol into the stations of the *Gauls*, that they might think them full of corn: and that *Agesilans* discouraged the enemies, by causing his own men to wear crowns in token of a naval victory gotten by *Pisander*, who yet was at that time destroyed by *Conon*: and that *Flaccus* said the city was taken by *Remilius*, and that *Joshua* dissembled a flight at *Ai*, and the consul *Quinctius* told aloud that the left wing of the enemies was fled, and that made the right wing fly: and that *Valerius Levinus* bragged prudently that he had killed *Pyrrhus*; and that others use the ensigns of enemies' colours and garments. Concerning which sort of actions and words, *Agesilans* in *Plutarch* said, *ω μόνον το δικαίον, αλλά και δοξα πολλή, και το μεθ' ἡδονῆς κερδαίνειν ἐνεστί.* *It is just and pleasant, profitable and glorious.* But to call a parley, and fall in upon the men that treat; to swear a peace, and watch advantage; to entertain heralds, and then to torment them, to get from them notices of their party: these are such actions which are dishonourable and unjust, condemned by the laws of nations, and essential justice, and by all the world: and the *Hungarian* army was destroyed by a divine judgment, at the prayer and appeal of the *Mahometan* enemy, for their violating their faith and honour, and prophaning the name of Christ, by using it in a solemn oath to deceive their enemies: *το μὴν σπείσασμενον ἀδικῶν, τὰν ἑσῶν ἐσττικταφθῆναι* this is to despise

God. when men first swear by him, and then *violete* their oaths or *leagues*, their treaties or promises. In other cases liberty hath been taken by all men, and it is reprov'd by no man, since the first simplicity of fighting and downright blows did cease by the better instructed people of the world; which was, as is usually computed, about the end of the second *Carthaginian* war: since that time, some few persons have been found so noble as to scorn to steal a victory, but had rather have the glory of a sharp sword than of a sharp wit.

But their fighting gallantry is extrinsical to the question of lawful or unlawful.

6. Thus we see how far the laws of ingenuity and Christian simplicity have put fetters upon our words and actions, and directed them in the paths of truth and nobleness; and the first degrees of permission of *simulation* are in the arts of war, and the cases of just hostility. But here it is usually inquired, whether it be lawful to tell a lie or dissemble, to save a good man's life, or to do him a great benefit. A question which St. *Austin* was much troubled withal, affirming it to be of the greatest difficulty: for he saw generally all the doctors before his time allowed it; and of all the fathers, no man is noted to have reprov'd it but St. *Austin* alone, and he also (as his manner is) with some variety: those which followed him, are to be accounted upon his score. And it relies upon such precedents which are not lightly to be disallowed. For so *Abraham* and *Isaac* told a lie in the case of their own danger to *Abimelech*; so did the *Israelitish* midwives to *Pharaoh*; and *Rahab* concerning the spies, and *David* to the king of *Gath*, and the prophets that anointed *Saul*, and *Elisha* to *Hazael*, and *Solomon* in the sentence of the stolen child, concerning which *Irenaeus* hath given us a rule, That those whose actions the scripture hath re-

marked; and yet not chastised or censured, we are not without great reason and certain rule to condemn. But whether his rule can extend to this case is now to be inquired.

1. It is certain that children may be cozened into goodness, and sick men to health, and passengers in a storm into safety; and the reason of these is, because not only the end is fair, and charitable, and just, but the means are such which do no injury to the persons which are to receive benefit; because these are persons who are either naturally or accidentally ignorant, and incompetent judges of affairs: and if they be also wilful, as such persons most commonly are, there is in art and nature left no way to deal with them, but with innocent, charitable, and artificial deceptions; they are not capable of reason and solid discourses, and therefore either must be exposed to all harms, like lions' whelps when their nurse and sire are taken in a toil, or else be provided for in ways proportionable to their capacity.

2. Sinners may not be treated with the liberty we take to children and sick persons, because they must serve God with choice and election; and therefore although a sick man may be cozened into his health, yet a man must not be cozened into his duty, which is no duty at all, or pleasing to God, unless it be voluntary and chosen: and therefore they are to be treated with arguments proper to move their wills, by the instrument of understanding specially, being persons of perfect faculties, and apt to be moved by the ways of health and of a man. It is an argument of infirmity, that in some cases it is necessary to make pretences; but those pretences are not made legitimate, unless it be by the infirmity of the interested man with whom we do comply. My infirmity cannot make it lawful to make colours and images

of things : but the infirmity of him with whom I deal may be such, that he can be defended or instructed no other way. But sinners that offend God by choice must have their choice corrected, and their understandings instructed, or else their evil is not cured, nor their state amended.

3. For it is here very observable, that in intercourses of this nature we are to regard a double duty : the matter of justice, and the rights of charity ; that is, that good be done by lawful instruments : for it is certain it is not lawful to abuse a man's understanding, with a purpose to gain him sixpence ; it is not fit to do evil for a good end : or to abuse one man, to preserve or do advantage to another. And therefore it is not sufficient that I intend to do good to my neighbour : for I may not therefore tell a lie, and abuse his credulity, because his understanding hath a right as certain as his will hath or as his money : and his right to truth is no more to be cozened and defrauded than his right unto his money. And therefore such artificial intercourses are no ways to be permitted, but to such persons over whose understandings we have power and authority. *Plato* said it was lawful for kings and governours to dissemble, because there is great necessity for them so to do : but it was but crudely said, so nakedly to deliver the doctrine : for in such things which the people cannot understand, and yet ought to obey, there is a liberty to use them as we use children, who are of no other condition or capacities than children ; but in all things where they can and ought to choose, because their understanding is only a servant to God, no man hath power to abuse their credulity and reason, to preserve their estates and peace. But because children, and mad people, and diseased are such whose understandings are in minority and under tuition, they are to be governed by

their proper instruments and proportions : Το γαρ αγαθον κεραινον εστι της αληθειας, said *Proclus* ; *A good turn is to be preferred before a true saying* : it is only true to such persons who cannot value truth, and prefer an intellectual before a material interest. It is better for children to have warm clothes than a true proposition, and therefore in all senses they and their like may be so treated : but other persons, who have distinct capacities, have an injury done them by being abused into advantages ; and although those advantages make them recompense, yet he that is tied to make a man recompense hath done him injury and committed a sin, by which he was obliged to restitution : and therefore the man ought not to be cozened for his own good.

4. And now upon the grounds of this discourse, we may more easily determine concerning saving the life of a man by telling a lie in judgment. Δι με συμπρατειν τοις φιλοις, αλλα μεχρι θεου, said *Pericles of Athens*, when his friend desired him to swear on his side ; *I will assist my friend, so far as I may not dishonour God*. And to lie in judgment is directly against the being of government, the honour of tribunals, and the commandment of God ; and therefore by no accident can be hallowed ; it is καθ' αυτο φαυλον και ψευδον, as *Aristotle* said of a lie, it is *a thing evil in itself* ; that is, it is evil in the whole kind, ever since it came to be forbidden by God. And therefore all those instances of crafty and delusive answers, which are recorded in Scripture, were extrajudicial, and had not this load upon them, to be deceiving of authority in those things where they had right to command or inquire, and either were *before* or *besides* the commandment, not at all *against it*. And since the law of *Moses* forbade *lying in judgment*, only by that law we are to judge of those actions in the Old Testament which were committed after its publication : and because in the sermons

of the prophets, and especially in the New Testament, Christ hath superadded or enlarged the law of *ingenuity* and hearty *simplicity*, we are to leave the old Scripture precedents upon the ground of their own permissions, and finish our duty by the rules of our religion; which hath so restrained our words, that they must always be just, and always charitable; and there is no leave given to prevaricate, but to such persons where there can be no obligation, persons that have no right, such with whom no contract can be made, such as children, and fools, and infirm persons, whose faculties are hindered or depraved. I remember that *Secundus* extremely commends *Arria* for deluding her husband's fears concerning the death of his beloved boy: she wiped her eyes, and came in confidently, and sat by her husband's bed side; and when she could no longer forbear to weep, her husband's sickness was excuse enough to legitimate that sorrow, or else she could retire; but so long she forbore to confess the boy's death, till *Cecinna Pætus* had so far recovered, that he could go forth to see the boy, and need not fear with sorrow to return to his disease. It was indeed a great kindness and rare prudence, as their affairs and laws were ordered; but we have better means to cure our sick: our religion can charm the passion, and enable the spirit to entertain and master a sorrow. And when we have such rare supplies out of the store-houses of reason and religion, we have less reason to use these arts and little devices, which are arguments of an infirmity as great as is the charity: and therefore we are to keep ourselves strictly to the foregoing measures. *Let every man speak the truth to his neighbour, putting away lying, for we are members one of another:** and be as harmless as doves, saith our blessed Saviour

* Ephes. iv. 25.

in my text: which contain the whole duty concerning the matter of truth and sincerity. In both which places, truth and simplicity are founded upon justice and charity: and therefore wherever a lie is in any sense against justice, and wrongs any man of a thing, his judgment and his reason, his right, or his liberty, it is expressly forbidden in the Christian religion. What cases we can truly suppose to be besides these, the law forbids not, and therefore it is lawful to say that to myself which I believe not, for what innocent purpose I please, and to all those over whose understanding I have, or ought to have right.

These cases are intricate enough, and therefore I shall return plainly to press the doctrine of simplicity, which ought to be so sacred, that a man ought to do nothing indirectly which is not lawful to own: to receive no advantage by the sin of another, which I should account dishonest if the action were my own; for whatsoever disputes may be concerning the lawfulness of pretending craftily in some rare and contingent cases, yet it is on all hands condemned, that my craft should do injury to my brother. I remember that when some greedy and indigent people forged a will of *Lucius Minutius Basilus*, and joined *M. Crassus*, and *Q. Hortensius* in the inheritance, that their power for their own interest might secure the others' share; they suspecting the thing to be a forgery, yet being not principals and actors in the contrivance, *alieni facinoris minusculum non repudiaverunt*, refused not to receive a present made them by another's crime; but so they entered upon a moiety of the estate, and the biggest share of the dishonour. We must not be crafty to another's injury so much as by giving countenance to the wrong; for tortoises and the ostrich hatch their eggs with their looks only; and some have designs which a dissembling face, or an acted gesture can produce:

but as a man may commit adultery with his eye, so with the eye also he may tell a lie, and steal with one finger, and do injury collaterally, and yet design it with a direct intuition upon which he looks with his face over his shoulder: and by whatsoever instrument my neighbour may be abused, by the same instrument I sin, if I do design it antecedently, or fall upon it together with something else, or rejoice in it when it is done.

7. One thing more I am to add, that it is not lawful to tell a lie in jest. It was a virtue noted in *Aristides* and *Epaminondas*, that they would not lie, *ὡς ἢ ἐν τῶνδ' αἰσίου τῶν ἁγίων*, not in sport. And as Christian simplicity forbids all lying in matter of interest and serious rights: so there is an appendix to this precept, forbidding to lie in mirth; for *of every idle word a man shall speak, he shall give account in the day of judgment*. And such are the *jestings* which *St. Paul* reckens amongst *things uncomely*. But among these, fables, epilogues, parables, or figures of rhetorick, and any artificial instrument of instruction or innocent pleasure, are not to be reckoned. But he that, without any end of charity or institution, shall tell lies only to become ridiculous in himself, or mock another, hath set something upon his doomsday-book, which must be taken off by water or by fire, that is, by repentance or a judgment.

Nothing is easier than simplicity and ingenuity: it is open and ready without trouble and artificial cares, fit for communities and the proper virtue of men, the necessary appendage of useful speech, without which language were given to men as nails and teeth to lions, for nothing but to do mischief; it is a rare instrument of institution, and a certain token of courage, the companion of goodness and a noble mind, the preserver of friendship, the band of society, the security of merchants, and the blessing of trade; it prevents infinite of quarrels, and appeals to judges,

and suffers none of the evils of jealousy. Men by simplicity converse as do the angels, they do their own work, and secure their proper interest, and serve the publick, and do glory to God: but hypocrites, and liars, and dissemblers, spread darkness over the face of affairs, and make men, like the blind, to walk softly and timorously: and crafty men, like the close air, suck that which is open, and devour its portion, and destroy its liberty: and it is the guise of devils, and the dishonour of the soul, and the canker of society, and the enemy of justice, and truth, and peace, of wealth and honour, of courage and merchandize.

He is a good man with whom a blind man may safely converse, *dignus quicum in tenebris mices*, to whom in respect of his fair treatings the darkness and light are both alike: but he that bears light upon the face, with a dark heart, is like him that *transforms* himself into an *angel of light*, when he means to do most mischief. Remember this only; that false colours laid upon the face besmear the skin and dirty it, but they neither make a beauty nor mend it.

Apocal. xxii. 15.

For without shall be dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murtherers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

SERMON XXV.



THE

MIRACLES OF THE DIVINE MERCY.

PSALM lxxvi. 5.

For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all them that call upon thee.

MAN having destroyed that which God delighted in, that is, the beauty of his soul, fell into an evil portion, and being seized upon by the divine justice, grew miserable, and condemned to an incurable sorrow. Poor *Adam*, being banished and undone, went and lived a sad life in the mountains of *India*, and turned his face and his prayers towards Paradise; thither he sent his sighs, to that place he directed his devotions, there was his heart now where his felicity sometimes had been: but he knew not how to return thither, for God was his enemy, and by many of his attributes opposed himself against him. God's *power* was armed against him; and poor man, whom a fly or a fish could kill, was assaulted and beaten with a sword of fire in the hand of a cherubim. God's eye watched him, his *omniscience* was man's accuser, his *severity* was the judge, his *justice* the

executioner. It was a mighty calamity that man was to undergo, when he that made him armed himself against his creature, which would have died or turned to nothing, if he had but withdrawn the miracles and the almightiness of his power: if God had taken his arm from under him, man had perished. But it was therefore a greater evil when God laid his arm upon him and against him, and seemed to support him, that he might be longer killing him. In the midst of these sadnesses God remembered his own creature, and pitied it, and by his *mercy* rescued him from *the hand of his power, and the sword of his justice, and the guilt of his punishment, and the disorder of his sin,* and placed him in that order of good things where he ought to have stood. It was *mercy* that preserved the noblest of God's creatures here below; he who stood condemned and undone under all the other attributes of God, was only saved and rescued by his *mercy*: that it may be evident that *God's mercy is above all his works, and above all ours, greater than the creation, and greater than our sins.* As is his *majesty*, so is his *mercy*, that is, without measures and without rules, sitting in heaven and filling all the world, calling for a duty that he may give a blessing, making man that he may save him, punishing him that he may preserve him. And God's *justice* bowed down to his *mercy*, and all his *power* passed into *mercy*, and his *omniscience* converted into *care and watchfulness*, into *providence and observation* for man's avail; and heaven gave its influence for man, and rained showers for our food and drink; and the attributes and acts of God *sat at the foot of mercy, and all that mercy descended upon the head of man.* For so the light of the world in the morning of the creation was spread abroad like a curtain, and dwelt no where, but filled the *expansum* with a dissemination great as the unfoldings of the air's looser garment, or the

wilder fringes of the fire, without knots, or order, or combination; but God gathered the beams in his hand, and united them into a globe of fire, and all the light of the world became the body of the sun: and he lent some to his weaker sister that walks in the night, and guides a traveller, and teaches him to distinguish a house from a river, or a rock from a plain field. So is the mercy of God, a vast *expansum* and a huge ocean: from eternal ages it dwelt round about the throne of God, and it filled all that infinite distance and space that hath no measures but the will of God: until God, desiring to communicate that excellence and make it relative, *created angels*, that he might have persons capable of huge gifts; *and man*, who he knew would need forgiveness. For so the angels, our elder brothers, dwelt for ever in the house of their father, and never break his commandments; but we, the younger, like prodigals, forsook our father's house, and went into a strange country, and followed stranger courses, and spent the portion of our nature, and forfeited all our title to the family, and came to need another portion. For, ever since the fall of *Adam*, who, like an unfortunate man, spent all that a wretched man could need, or a happy man could have, *our life is repentance*, and *forgiveness is all our portion*; and though angels were objects of God's *bounty*, yet man only is (in proper speaking) the object of his *mercy*: and the mercy which dwelt in an infinite circle, became confined to a little ring, and dwelt here below, and here shall dwell below, till it hath carried all God's portion up to heaven, where it shall reign and glory upon our crowned heads for ever and ever.

But for him that considers God's mercies, and dwells a while in that depth, it is hard not to talk wildly and without art and order of discoursing. St. *Peter* talked he knew not what, when he entered

into a cloud with *Jesus* upon mount *Tabor*, though it passed over him like the little curtains that ride upon the north wind, and pass between the sun and us. And when we converse with a light greater than the sun, and taste a sweetness more delicious than the dew of heaven, and in our thoughts entertain the ravishments and harmony of that atonement which reconciles God to man, and man to felicity, it will be more easily pardoned, if we should be like persons that admire much, and say but little; and indeed we can best confess the glories of the Lord by dazzled eyes, and a stammering tongue, and a heart overcharged with the miracles of this infinity. For so those little drops that *run over*, though they be not much in themselves, yet they tell that the vessel was full, and could express the greatness of the shower no otherwise but by spilling, and inartificial expressions and runnings over. But because I have undertaken to tell the drops of the ocean, and to span the measures of eternity, I must do it by the great lines of revelation and experience, and tell concerning God's mercy as we do concerning God himself, that he is that great fountain of which we all drink, and the great rock of which we all eat, and on which we all dwell, and under whose shadow we are all refreshed. God's mercy is all this; and we can only draw great lines of it, and reckon the constellations of our hemisphere instead of telling the number of the stars, we only can reckon what we feel and what we live by: and though there be in every one of these lines of life, enough to engage us for ever to do God service, and to give him praises; yet it is certain there are very many mercies of God *upon us*, and *towards us*, and *concerning us*, which we neither feel, nor see, nor understand as yet; but yet we are blessed by them, and are preserved and secured, and we shall then know them when we come

to give God thanks in the festivities of an eternal sabbath. But that I may confine my discourse into order, since the subject of it cannot, I consider,

1. That mercy, being an emanation of the divine goodness upon us, supposes us and found us miserable. In this account concerning the mercies of God, I must not reckon the miracles and graces of the creation, or any thing of the nature of man; nor tell how great an endearment God passed upon us, that he made us men, capable of felicity, apted with rare instruments of discourse and reason, passions and desires, notices of sense, and reflections upon that sense; that we have not the deformity of a crocodile, nor the motion of a worm, nor the hunger of a wolf, nor the wildness of a tiger, nor the birth of vipers, nor the life of flies, nor the death of serpents.

Our excellent bodies and useful faculties, the upright motion and the tenacious hand, the fair appetites and proportioned satisfactions, our speech and our perceptions, our acts of life, the rare invention of letters, and the use of writing, and speaking at a distance, the intervals of rest and labour, (either of which, if they were perpetual, would be intolerable) the needs of nature and the provisions of providence, sleep and business, refreshments of the body and entertainments of the soul; these are to be reckoned as acts of bounty rather than mercy; God gave us these when he made us, and before we needed mercy; these were portions of our nature, or provided to supply our consequent necessities: but when we forfeited all God's favour by our sins, then that they were continued or restored to us became a mercy, and therefore ought to be reckoned upon this new account: for it was a rare mercy that we were suffered to live at all, or that the anger of God did permit to us one blessing, that he did

punish us so gently: but when the *rack* is changed into an *ax*, and the *ax* into an *imprisonment*, and the *imprisonment* changed into an *enlargement*, and the *enlargement* into an *entertainment* in the family, and this *entertainment* passes on to an *adoption*; these are steps of a mighty favour, and perfect redemption from our sin; and the returning back our own goods is a *gift*, and a perfect donative, sweetened by the apprehensions of the calamity from whence every lesser punishment began to free us. And thus it was that God punished us, and visited the sin of *Adam* upon his posterity. He threatened we should die, and so we did, but not so as we deserved: we waited for death, and stood sentenced, and are daily summoned by sicknesses and uneasiness; and every day is a new reprieve, and brings a new favour, certain as the revolution of the sun upon that day; and at last, when we must die by the irreversible decree, that *death* is changed into a *sleep*, and that *sleep* is in the bosom of *Christ*, and there dwells all *peace* and *security*, and it shall pass forth into *glories* and *felicities*. We looked for a *judge*, and behold a *Saviour*; we feared an *accuser*, and behold an *advocate*; we sat down in sorrow, and rise in joy; we leaned upon rhubarb and aloes, and our aprons were made of the sharp leaves of *Indian fig-trees*, and so we fed, and so were clothed; but the rhubarb proved medicinal, and the rough leaf of the tree brought its fruit wrapped up in its foldings: and round about our dwellings was planted a hedge of thorns and bundles of thistles, the *aconite* and the *briony*, the *night-shade* and the *poppy*; and at the root of these grew the healing *plantain*, which, rising up into a tallness by the friendly invitation of heavenly influence, turned about *the tree of the cross*, and cured the wounds of the thorns, and the curse of the thistles, and the malediction of man, and the

wrath of God. *Si sic irascitur, quomodo committatur?* If God be thus kind when he is angry, what is he when he feasts us with caresses of his more tender kindness? All that God restored to us after the forfeiture of *Adam*, grew to be a double kindness; for it became the expression of a bounty which knew not how to repent, a graciousness that was not to be altered, though we were; and that was it which we needed: that is the first general: all the *bounties* of the creation became *mercies* to us, when God continued them to us, and restored them after they were forfeit.

2. But as a circle begins every where, and ends no where, so do the mercies of God: after all this huge progress, now it began anew: *God is good and gracious, and God is ready to forgive.* Now that he had once more made us capable of mercies, God had what he desired, and what he could rejoice in; something upon which he might pour forth his mercies. And, by the way, this I shall observe, (for I cannot but speak without art, when I speak of that which hath no measure) God made us capable of one sort of his mercies, and we made ourselves capable of another. *God is good and gracious*, that is, desirous to give great gifts: and of this God made us receptive, first, by giving us natural possibilities, that is, by giving those gifts, he made us capable of more; and next, by restoring us to his favour, that he might not, by our provocations, be hindered from raining down his mercies. But *God is also ready to forgive*: and of this kind of mercy we made ourselves capable, even by not deserving it. Our sin made way for his grace, and our infirmities call upon his pity; and because we sinned, we became miserable; and because we were miserable, we became pitiable; and this opened the other treasure of his mercy; that because our *sin abounds*, his

grace may superabound. In this method we must confine our thoughts;

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| 1. Giving. | $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{\textit{Thou, Lord, art}} \\ \text{\textit{good, and ready}} \\ \text{\textit{to forgive,}} \end{array} \right\}$ | $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{\textit{plenteous in mercy}} \\ \text{\textit{to all them that call}} \\ \text{\textit{upon thee.}} \end{array} \right\}$ |
| 2. Forgiving. | | |

3. God's mercies, or the mercies of his *giving*, came first upon us by mending of our nature; for the ignorance we fell into is instructed, and better learned in spiritual notices than *Adam's* morning knowledge in Paradise; our appetites are made subordinate to the spirit, and the liberty of our wills is improved, having *the liberty of the sons of God*; and Christ hath done us more grace and advantage than we lost in *Adam*: and as man lost *Paradise*, and got *Heaven*; so he lost the *integrity* of the *first*, and got the *perfection* of the *second Adam*: his *living soul* is changed into a *quickeningspirit*; our discerning faculties are filled with the spirit of faith, and our passions and desires are entertained with hope, and our election is sanctified with charity, and our first life of a temporal possession, is passed into a better—a life of spiritual expectations; and though our first parent was forbidden it, yet we live of the fruits of *the tree of life*. But I instance in two great things in which human nature is greatly advanced, and passed on to greater perfections. The first is, that, besides body and soul, which was the sum total of *Adam's* constitution, God hath superadded to us a third principle, the beginner of a better life, I mean *the spirit*:* so that now man hath a spiritual and celestial nature breathed into him, and the old man, that is, the old constitution, is the least part, and in its proper operations is dead, or dying; but the new man is that which gives denomination, life, motion, and proper actions to a Christian; and that is *renewed in us day*

* Vide *Serm. ii.*

by day. But, secondly, human nature is so highly exalted and mended by that mercy which God sent immediately upon the fall of *Adam*, the promise of *Christ*, that when he did come, and actuate the purposes of this mission, and ascended up into heaven, he carried human nature above the seats of angels, to the place whither *Lucifer the son of morning* aspired to ascend, but in his attempt fell into hell. For, (so said the prophet) *The son of the morning, said, I will ascend into heaven, and sit in the sides of the north*, that is, the throne of *Jesus* seated in the east, called the sides of obliquity of the north. And as the seating of his human nature in that glorious seat brought to him all adoration, and the majesty of God, and the greatest of his exaltation: so it was so great an advancement to us, that all the angels of heaven take notice of it, and feel a change in the appendage of their condition; not that they are lessened, but that we, who in nature are less than angels, have a relative dignity greater, and an equal honour of being fellow-servants. This mystery is plain in Scripture, and the real effect of it we read in both the Testaments. When *Manoah* the father of *Sampson* saw an angel, he worshipped him;* and in the Old Testament it was esteemed lawful; for they were the lieutenants of God, sent with the impresses of his majesty, and took in his name the homage from us, who then were so much their inferiours. But when the man *Christ Jesus* was exalted, and made the Lord of all the angels, then they became our fellow-servants, and might not receive worship from any of the servants of *Jesus*, especially from prophets and martyrs, and those that are ministers of the testimony of *Jesus*. And therefore when an angel appeared to *St. John*, and he, according to the custom of

* Judges xiii.

the *Jews*, fell down and worshipped him, as not yet knowing, or not considering any thing to the contrary; the angel reprov'd him, saying, *See thou do it not; I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God; or, as St. Cyprian reads it, worship Jesus.** God and man are now only capable of worship; but no angel: God, essentially; man in the person of Christ, and in the exaltation of our great redeemer; but angels not so high, and therefore not capable of any religious worship. And this dignity of man, St. Gregory explicates fully: *Quid est quod ante redemptoris adventum adorantur ab hominibus angeli et tacent, postmodum vero adorari refugunt?†* Why did the angels of old receive worshipping, and were silent; but in the New Testament decline it, and fear to accept it? *Nisi quod naturam nostram, quam prius despexerant, postquam hanc super se assumptam aspiciunt, prostratum sibi videri pertimescunt; nec jam sub se velut infirmam contemnere ausi sunt, quam super se, viz. in caeli rege, venerantur:* The reason is, because they seeing our nature, which they did so lightly value, raised up above them, they fear to see it humbled under them; neither do they any more despise the weakness which themselves worship in the King of Heaven. The same also is in the sense of the gloss of St. Ambrose, Ansbertus, Haymo, Rupertus, and others of old; and Ribera, Salmeron, and Lewis of Granada of late; which being so plainly consonant to the words of the angel, and consigned by the testimony of such men, I tho rather note, that those who worship angels, and make religious addresses to them, may see what privilege themselves lose, and how they part with the honour of Christ, who in his nature relative to us is *exalted*

* Rev. xxii. 9. *De bono palcutiae.* † *Homil. 3. in Evangel.*

far above all thrones and principalities and dominions. I need not add lustre to this: it is like the sun, the biggest body of light, and nothing can describe it so well as its own beams: and there is not in nature or the advantages of honour any thing greater, than that we have the issues of that mercy which makes us fellow-servants with angels, too much honoured to pay them a religious worship, whose lord is a man, and he that is *'their king is our brother.*

4. To this, for the likeness of the matter, I add, that the divine mercy hath so prosecuted us with the enlargement of his favours, that we are not only fellow-ministers and servants with the angels, and in our nature in the person of Christ exalted above them; but we also shall be their judges. And if this be not an honour above that of *Joseph* or *Mordecai*, an honour beyond all the measures of a man, then there is in honour no degrees, no priority or distances, or characters of fame and nobleness. Christ is the great judge of all the world, his human nature shall then triumph over evil men and evil spirits; then shall the devils, those angels that fell from their first originals, be brought *in their chains* from their dark prisons, and once be allowed to see the light, that light that shall confound them; while all *that follow the Lamb*, and that are *accounted worthy of that resurrection*, shall be assessors in the judgment. *Know ye not* (saith St. Paul) *that ye shall judge angels?** And *Tertullian*, speaking concerning devils and accursed spirits, *De cultu foeminarum*, saith, *Hi sunt angeli quos judicaturi sumus, hi sunt angeli quibus in lavacro renunciarimus*; those angels which we renounced in baptism, those we shall judge in the day of the Lord's glory, in the great day of recompenses. And that the honour may be yet greater, the same day of sentence that condemns the evil angels shall also reward the good,

* 1. Cor. vi. 3.

and increase their glory: which because they derive from their Lord and ours, from their king and our elder brother, *the King of glories*, whose glorious hands shall put the crown upon all our heads, we who shall be servants of that judgment, and some way or other assist in it, have a part of that honour, to be judges of all angels, and of all the world. The effect of these things ought to be this, that we do not by base actions dishonour that nature that sits upon the throne of God, that reigns over angels, that shall sit in judgment upon all the world. It is a great indecency that the son of a king should bear water upon his head, and dress vineyards among the slaves; or to see a wise man, and the guide of his country, drink drunk among the meanest of his servants; but when *members of Christ* shall be made *members of an harlot*, and that which rides above a rainbow stoops to an imperious, whorish woman; when the soul that is sister to the Lord of angels shall degenerate into the foolishness or rage of a beast, being drowned with the blood of the grape, or made mad with passion, or ridiculous with weaker follies; we shall but strip ourselves of that robe of honour with which Christ hath invested and adorned our nature; and carry that portion of humanity which is our own, and which God hath honoured in some capacities above angels, into a portion of an eternal shame, and become less in all senses, and equally disgraced with devils. The shame and sting of this change shall be, that we turned the glories of the divine mercy into the baseness of ingratitude, and the amazement of suffering the divine vengeance. But I pass on.

5. The next order of divine mercies that I shall remark, is also an improvement of our nature, or an appendage to it: for, whereas our constitution is weak, our souls apt to diminution and impede faculties, our bodies to mutilation and imperfection, to

blindness and crookedness, to stammering and sorrows, to baldness and deformity, to evil conditions and accidents of body, and to passions and sadness of spirit : God hath, in his infinite mercy, provided for every condition rare suppletories of comfort and usefulness, to make recompense, and sometimes with an over-running proportion, for those natural defects, which were apt to make our persons otherwise contemptible, and our conditions intolerable. God gives to blind men better memories. For upon this account it is, that *Ruffinus* makes mention of *Dydimus* of *Alexandria*, who, being blind, was blessed with a rare attention and singular memory, and by prayer, and hearing, and meditating, and discoursing, came to be one of the most excellent divines of that whole age. And it was more remarkable in *Nicasius Mechliniensis*, who, being blockish at his book, in his first childhood fell into accidental blindness, and from thence continually grew to so quick an apprehension and so tenacious a memory, that he became the wonder of his contemporaries, and was chosen rector of the college at *Mechlin*, and was made licenciate of theology at *Louvain*, and doctor of both the laws at *Cologne*, living and dying in great reputation for his rare parts and excellent learning. At the same rate also God deals with men in other instances : want of children he recompenses with freedom from care ; and whatsoever evil happens to the body, is therefore most commonly single and unaccompanied ; because God accepts that evil as the punishment of the sin of the man, or the instrument of his virtue or his security, and it is reckoned as a sufficient antidote. God hath laid a severe law upon all women, that *in sorrow, they shall bring forth children* : yet God hath so attempered that sorrow, that they think themselves more accursed if they want that sorrow ; and they have reason to rejoice in

that state, the trouble of which is alleviated by a promise, that *they shall be saved in bearing children*. He that wants one eye, hath the force and vigorousness of both united in that which is left him: and whenever any man is afflicted with sorrow, his reason and his religion, himself and all his friends, persons that are civil and persons that are obliged, run in to comfort him; and he may, if he will observe wisely, find so many circumstances of ease and remission, so many designs of providence and studied favours, such contrivances of collateral advantage, and certain reserves of substantial and proper comfort, that in the whole sum of affairs it often happens, that *a single cross is a double blessing*, and that even in a temporal sense, *it is better to go to the house of mourning, than of joys and festival egressions*. Is not the affliction of poverty better than the prosperity of a great and tempting fortune? Does not wisdom dwell in a mean estate and low spirit; retired thoughts, and under a sad roof? And is it not generally true, that sickness itself is appayed with religion and holy thoughts, with pious resolutions and penitential prayers, with returns to God and to sober counsels? And if this be true, that God sends sorrow to cure sin, and affliction be the hand-maid to grace; it is also certain, that every sad contingency in nature is doubly recompensed with the advantages of religion, besides those intervening refreshments which support the spirit, and refresh its instruments. I shall need to instance but once more in this particular.

God hath sent no greater evil into the world, than that *in the sweat of our brows we shall eat our bread*; and in the difficulty and agony, in the sorrows and contention of our souls, we shall *work out our salvation*. But see how in the first of these God hath outdone his own anger, and defeated the purposes of

his *wrath*, by the inundation of his *mercy*; for this labour and sweat of our brows is so far from being a curse, that without it our very bread would not be so great a blessing. Is it not labour that makes the garlick and the pulse, the sycamore and the cresses, the cheese of the goats and the butter of the sheep, to be savoury and pleasant as the flesh of the roebuck, or the milk of the kine, the marrow of oxen or the thighs of birds; if it were not for labour, men neither could eat so much, nor relish so pleasantly, nor sleep so soundly, nor be so healthful nor so useful, so strong nor so patient, so noble nor so untempted. And as God hath made us beholden to labour for the purchase of many good things, so the thing itself owes to labour many degrees of its worth and value. And therefore I need not reckon, that, besides these advantages, the mercies of God have found out proper and natural remedies for labour; nights to cure the sweat of the day, sleep to ease our watchfulness, rest to alleviate our burthens, and the days of religion to procure our rest: and things are so ordered, that labour is become a duty, and an act of many virtues, and is not so apt to turn into a sin as its contrary; and is therefore necessary, not only because we need it for making provisions for our life, but even to ease the labour of our rest; there being no greater tediousness of spirit in the world than want of employment, and an unactive life: and the lazy man is not only unprofitable, but also accursed, and he groans under the load of his time; which yet passes over the active man light as a dream, or the feathers of a bird; while the disemployed is a disease, and like a long sleepless night to himself, and a load unto his country. And therefore although in this particular, God hath been so merciful in this infliction, that from the sharpness of the curse a very great

part of mankind are freed, and there are myriads of people, good and bad, who do not *eat their bread in the sweat of their brows*; yet this is but an over-running and an excess of the divine mercy; God did more for us than we did absolutely need; for he hath so disposed of the circumstances of this curse, that man's affections are so reconciled to it that *they desire it, and are delighted in it*; and so the anger of God is ended in loving-kindness, and the drop of water is lost in the full chalice of the wine, and the curse is gone out into a multiplied blessing.

But then for the other part of the severe law and laborious imposition, that we must work out our spiritual interest with the labours of our spirit, seems to most men to be so intolerable, that rather than pass under it, they quit their hopes of heaven, and pass into the portion of devils. And what can there be to alleviate this sorrow, that a man shall be perpetually solicited with an impure tempter, and shall carry a flame within him, and all the world is on fire round about him, and every thing brings fuel to the flame, and full tables are a snare, and empty tables are collateral servants to a lust, and help to blow the fire and kindle the heap of prepared temptations; and yet a man must not at all taste of the forbidden fruit, and he must not desire what he cannot choose but desire, and he must not enjoy whatsoever he does violently covet, and must never satisfy his appetite in the most violent importunities, but must therefore deny himself, because to do so is extremely troublesome? This seems to be an art of torture, and a device to punish man with the spirit of agony, and a restless vexation. But this also hath in it a great ingredient of mercy, or rather is nothing else but a heap of mercy in its entire constitution. For if it were not for this, we had nothing of our own to pre-

sent to God, nothing proportionable to the great rewards of heaven, but either all men, or no man must go thither; for nothing can distinguish man from man in order to beatitude, but *choice* and *election*, and nothing can ennoble the *choice* but *love*, and nothing can exercise *love* but *difficulty*, and nothing can make that *difficulty* but the *contradiction of our appetite*, and the crossing of our natural affections. And therefore, whenever any of you are tempted violently, or grow weary in your spirits with resisting the petulance of temptation; you may be cured, if you will please but to remember and rejoice, that now you have something of your own to give to God, something that he will be pleased to accept, something that he hath given thee that thou mayest give it him: for our money and our time, our days of feasting, and our days of sorrow, our discourse and our acts of praise, our prayers and our songs, our vows and our offerings, our worshippings and protestations, and whatsoever else can be accounted in the sum of our religion, are only accepted according as they bear along with them portions of our will, and choice of love, and appendant difficulty.

Laetius est quoties magno tibi constat honestum.*

So that whoever can complain that he serves God with pains and mortifications, he is troubled because there is a distinction of things, such as we call virtue and vice, reward and punishment; and if we will not suffer God to distinguish the first, he will certainly confound the latter: and his portion shall be blackness without variety, and punishment shall be his reward.

* While Virtue still you deem the greatest bliss.

6. As an appendage to this instance of *divine mercy*, we are to account that, not only in nature, but in contingency and emergent events of providence, God makes compensation to us, for all the evils of chance and hostilities of accident, and *brings good out of evil*; which is that solemn triumph which mercy makes over justice, when it rides upon a cloud, and crowns its darkness with a robe of glorious light. God indeed suffered *Joseph* to be sold a bond-slave into *Egypt*: but then it was that God intended to crown and reward his chastity: for by that means he brought him to a fair condition of dwelling, and there gave him a noble trial; he had a brave contention, and he was a conqueror. Then God sent him to prison: but still that was *mercy*, it was to make way to bring him to *Pharaoh's* court. And God brought famine upon *Canaan*, and troubled all the souls of *Jacob's* family: and there was a plot laid for another mercy; this was to bring them to see and partake of *Joseph's* glory. And then God brought a great evil upon their posterity, and they groaned under task-masters: but this God changed into *the miracles of his mercy*, and suffered them to be afflicted that he might do ten miracles for their sakes, and proclaim to all the world how dear they were to God. And was not the greatest good to mankind brought forth from the greatest treason that ever was committed, the redemption of the world from the fact of *Judas*; God loving to defeat the malice of man and the arts of the devil, by rare emergencies and stratagemis of mercy? It is a sad calamity to see a kingdom spoiled, and a church afflicted; the priests slain with the sword, and the blood of nobles mingled with cheaper sand; religion made a cause of trouble, and the best men most cruelly persecuted; government confounded, and laws ashamed; judges decreeing causes in fear and

covetousness, and the ministers of holy things setting themselves against all that is sacred, and setting fire upon the fields, and turning in *little foxes* on purpose to *destroy the vineyards*. And what shall make recompense for this heap of sorrows, whenever God shall send such swords of fire? Even *the mercies of God*, which then will be made publick, when we shall hear such afflicted people sing, *in convertendo captivitatem Sion*, with the voice of joy and festival eucharist, *among such as keep holiday*; and when peace shall become sweeter, and dwell the longer. And in the mean time it serves religion, and the affliction shall try the children of God, and God shall crown them, and men shall grow wiser and more holy, and leave their petty interests, and take sanctuary in holy living, and be taught temperance by their want, and patience by their suffering, and charity by their persecution, and shall better understand the duty of their relations; and at last the secret worm that lay at the root of the plant shall be drawn forth, and quite extinguished. For so have I known a luxuriant vine swell into irregular twigs and bold excrescences, and spend itself in leaves and little rings, and afford but trifling clusters to the wine-press, and a faint return to his heart which longed to be refreshed with a full vintage: but when the lord of the vine had caused the dressers to cut the wilder plant, and made it bleed, it grew temperate in its vain expense of useless leaves, and knotted into fair and juicy branches, and made accounts of that loss of blood by the return of fruit. So is an afflicted province cured of its surfeits, and punished for its sins, and bleeds for its long riot, and is left ungoverned for its disobedience, and chastised for its wantonness; and when the sword hath let forth the corrupted blood, and the fire hath purged the rest, then it enters into the double joys of res-

titation, and gives God thanks for his rod, and confesses the mercies of the Lord in making the smoke to be changed into fire, and the cloud into a perfume, the sword into a staff, and his anger into mercy.

Had not *David* suffered more, if he had suffered less? and had he not been miserable, unless he had been afflicted? He understood it well when he said, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* He that was rival to *Crassus* when he stood candidate to command the legions in the *Parthian* war, was much troubled that he missed the dignity; but he saw himself blessed that he scaped the death, and the dishonour of the overthrow, by that time the sad news arrived at *Rome*. The gentleman at *Marseilles* cursed his stars that he was absent when the ship set sail to sea, having long waited for a wind, and missed it; but he gave thanks to the providence that blest him with the cross, when he knew that the ship perished in the voyage, and all the men were drowned. And even those virgins and barren women in *Jerusalem* that longed to become glad mothers, and for want of children would not be comforted, yet, when *Titus* sacked the city, found the words of *Jesus* true, *Blessed is the womb that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck.* And the world being governed with a rare variety, the changes of accidents and providence; that which is a misfortune in the particular, in the whole order of things, becomes a blessing bigger than we hoped for then, when we were angry with God for hindering us to perish in pleasant ways, or when he was contriving to pour upon thy head a mighty blessing. Do not think the judge condemns you when he chides you, nor think to read thy own final sentence by the first half of his words. *Stand still,* and see how it will be in the whole event of things: let God speak his mind out; for it may be

this sad beginning is but an art to bring in, or to make thee to esteem, and entertain, and understand the blessing.

They that love to talk of the mercies of the Lord, and to recount his good things, cannot but have observed, that God delights to be called by such appellatives which relate to miserable and afflicted persons : He is *the father of the fatherless*, and an *avenger of the widow's cause* ; he *standeth at the right hand of the poor*, to save his soul from unrighteous judges ; and *he is with us in tribulation*. And upon this ground, let us account whether *mercy* be not the greater ingredient in that death and deprivation, when I lose a man, and get God to be my father ; and when my weak arm of flesh is cut from my shoulder, and God makes me to lean upon him, and becomes my patron and my guide, my advocate and defender. And if in our greatest misery God's mercy is so conspicuous, what can we suppose him to be in the endearment of his loving kindness ? If his evil be so transparent, well may we know that upon his face dwells glory, and from his eyes light and perpetual comforts run in channels larger than the returns of the sea, when it is driven and forced faster into its natural course, by the violence of a tempest from the north. The sum is this : God intends every accident should minister to virtue, and every virtue is the mother and the nurse of joy, and both of them daughters of the divine goodness : and therefore if our sorrows do not pass into comforts, it is besides God's intention ; it is because we will not comply with the act of that mercy which would save us by all means and all varieties, by health and by sickness, by the life and by the death of our dearest friends, by what we choose and by what we fear ; that as God's providence rules over all chances of things and all designs of men, so his mercy may rule over all his providence.

SERMON XXVI.

PART II.

7. God having by these means secured us from the evils of nature and contingencies, and represented himself to be our father, which is the great *endearment* and *tie*, and *expression* of a *natural, unalterable* and *essential kindness* ; he next makes provisions for us to supply all those necessities which himself hath made. For even *to make necessities* was a great circumstance of the mercy ; and all the relishes of wine, and the savouriness of meat, the sweet and the fat, the pleasure and the satisfaction, the restitution of spirits, and the strengthening of the heart, and not owing to the liver of the vine or the *kidneys of wheat*, to the blood of the grape or the strength of the corn, but to the appetite, or the necessity : and therefore it is, that he that sits at a full table, and does not recreate his stomach with fasting, and let his digestion rest, and place himself in the advantages of nature's intervals ; he loses the blessing of his daily bread, and leans upon his table as a sick man upon his bed, or the lion in the grass, which he cannot feed on : but he that wants it, and sits down when nature gives the sign, rejoices in the health of his hunger, and the taste of his meat, and the strengthening of his spirit, and gives God thanks, while his bones and his flesh rejoice in the provisions of nature, and the blessing of God. Are not the imperfections of infancy, and the decays of old age the evils of our nature, because respectively they want desire, and they want gust and relish, and reflections upon their acts of sense ? and *when desire fails*, presently *the mourn-*

*ers go about the streets.** But then, that those desires are so provided for by nature and art, by ordinary and extraordinary, by foresight and contingency, according to necessity and up unto conveniency, until we arrive at abundance, is a chain of mercies larger than the bow in the clouds, and richer than the trees of *Eden*, which were permitted to feed our miserable father. Is not all the earth our orchard and our granary, our vineyard and our garden of pleasure? and the face of the sea is our traffick, and the bowels of the sea is our *vivarium*, a place for fish to feed us, and to serve some other collateral appendant needs; and all the face of heaven is a repository for influences and breath, fruitful showers and fair refreshments. And when God made provision for his other creatures, he gave it of one kind, and with variety no greater than the changes of day and night, one devouring the other, or sitting down with his draught of blood, or walking upon his portion of grass: but man hath all the food of beasts, and all the beasts themselves that are fit for food, and the *food of angels*, and the *dew of heaven*, and the *fatness of the earth*; and every part of his body hath a provision made for it: and the smoothness of the olive and the juice of the vine refresh the heart, and make the face cheerful, and serve the ends of joy and the festivity of man; and are not only to cure hunger or to allay thirst, but appease a passion and allay a sorrow. It is an infinite variety of meat with which God furnishes out the table of mankind. And in the covering our sin, and clothing our nakedness, God passed from fig leaves to the skins of beasts, from aprons to long robes, from leather to wool, and from thence to the warmth of furs, and the coolness of silks; he hath dressed not only our needs, but hath fitted

* Eccles. xii.

the several portions of the year, and made us to go dressed like our mother, leaving off the winter sables when the florid spring appears, and as soon as the tulip fades we put on the robe of summer, and then shear our sheep for winter: and God uses us as *Joseph* did his brother *Benjamin*; we have many changes of raiment, and our mess is five times bigger than the provision made for our brothers of the creation. But the providence and mercies of God are to be estimated also, according as these provisions are dispensed to every single person. For that I may not remark the bounties of God running over the tables of the rich, God hath also made provision for the poorest person; so that if they can but rule their desires, they shall have their tables furnished. And this is secured and provided for by one promise and two duties, by our *own labour* and *our brother's charity*; and our faith in this affair is confirmed by all our own, and by all the experience of other men. Are not all the men and the women of the world provided for, and fed and clothed till they die? and was it not always so from the first morning of the creatures? And that a man is starved to death is a violence and a rare contingency, happening almost as seldom as for a man to have but one eye: and if our being provided for be as certain as for a man to have two eyes, we have reason to adore the wisdom, and admire the mercies of our Almighty Father. But these things are evident. Is it not a great thing that God hath made such strange provisions for our health? such infinite differences of plants, and hath discovered the secrets of their nature by mere chance, or by inspiration? Either of which is the miracle of providence, secret to us, but ordered by certain and regular decrees of heaven. It was a huge diligence and care of the divine mercy, that discovered to man the secrets of spagyrick medicines, of stones, of spirits, and the results of seven or eight

decoctions, and the strange effects of accidental mixtures, which the art of man could not suspect, being bound up in the secret sanctuary of hidden causes and secret natures, and being laid open by the concurrence of twenty or thirty little accidents, all which were ordered by God, as certainly as are the first principles of nature, or the descent of sons from the fathers in the most noble families.

But that which I shall observe in this whole affair, is, that there are, both for the provision of our tables and the relief of our sicknesses, so many miracles of providence, that they give plain demonstration what relation we bear to heaven: and the poor man need not be troubled that he is to expect his daily portion after the sun is up; for he hath found to this day he was not deceived: and then he may rejoice, because he sees by an effective probation, that in heaven a decree was made, every day to send him provisions of meat and drink. And that is a mighty mercy, when the circles of heaven are bowed down to wrap us in a bosom of care and nourishment, and the wisdom of God is daily busied to serve his mercy, as his mercy serves our necessities. Does not God plant remedies there where the diseases are most popular? and every country is best provided against its own evils. Is not the rhubarb found where the sun most corrupts the liver; and the scabious by the shore of the sea, that God might cure as soon as he wounds? and the inhabitants may see their remedy against the leprosy and the scurvy, before they feel their sickness. And then to this we may add nature's commons and open fields, the shores of rivers and the strand of the sea, the unconfined air, the wilderness that hath no hedge; and that in these every man may hunt and fowl and fish respectively; and that God sends some miracles and extraordinary blessings so for the publick good, that he will not endure they

should be inclosed and made several. Thus he is pleased to dispense the *manna* of *Culabria*, the medicinal waters of *Germany*, the muscels at *Sluce* at this day, and the *Egyptian* beans in the marshes of *Albania*, and the salt at *Troas* of old; which God, to defeat the covetousness of man, and to spread his mercy over the face of the indigent, as the sun scatters his beams over the bosom of the whole earth, did so order, that as long as every man was permitted to partake, the bosom of heaven was open; but when man gathered them into single handfuls and made them inappropriate, God gathered his hand into his bosom, and bound the heavens with ribs of brass, and the earth with decrees of iron, and the blessing reverted to him that gave it, since they might not receive it to whom it was sent. And in general, this is the excellency of this mercy, that all our needs are certainly supplied and secured by a promise which God cannot break: but he that cannot break the laws of his own promises, can break the laws of nature that he may perform his promise, and he will do a miracle rather than forsake thee in thy needs: so that our security and the relative mercy is bound upon us, by all the power and the truth of God.

8. But because such is the bounty of God, that he hath provided a better life for the inheritance of man, if God is so merciful in making fair provisions for our less noble part, in order to the transition toward our country, we may expect that the mercies of God have rare arts to secure to us his designed bounty, in order to our inheritance, to that which ought to be our portion for ever. And here I consider, that it is an infinite mercy of the Almighty Father of mercies, that he hath appointed to us such a religion that leads us to a huge felicity through pleasant ways. For the felicity that is designed to us, is so above our present capacities and conceptions,

that while we are so ignorant, as not to understand it, we are also so foolish, as not to desire it with passions great enough to perform the little conditions of its purchase. God therefore knowing how great an interest it is, and how apt we would be to neglect it, hath found out such conditions of acquiring it, which are ease and satisfaction to our present appetites. God hath bound our salvation upon us by the endearment of temporal prosperities; and because we love this world so well, God hath so ordered it, that even this world may secure the other. And of this, God in old time made open profession: for when he had secretly designed to bring his people to a glorious immortality in another world, he told them nothing of that, it being a thing bigger than the capacity of their thoughts, or of their theology; but told them that which would tempt them most, and endear obedience; *If you will obey, ye shall eat the good things of the land; ye shall possess a rich country, ye shall triumph over your enemies, ye shall have numerous families, blessed children, rich granaries, over-running wine-presses.* For God knew the cogitation of most of them was so dear between their affections and the good things of this world, that if they did not obey in hope of that they did need, and fancy, and love, and see, and feel; it was not to be expected they should quit their affections for a secret in another world, whither before they come, they must die, and lose all desire and all capacities of enjoyment. But this design of God, which was bare-faced in the days of the law, is now in the gospel interwoven secretly (but yet plain enough to be discovered by an eye of faith and reason) into every virtue; and temporal advantage is a great ingredient in the constitution of every Christian grace. For so the richest tissue dazzles the beholder's eye, when the sun reflects upon the metal, the silver and

the gold weaved into fantastick imagery, or a wealthy plainness; but the rich wire and shining filaments are wrought upon cheaper silk, the spoil of worms and flies: so is the embroidery of our virtue. The glories of the spirit dwell upon the face and vestment, upon the fringes and the borders, and there we see the beryl and onyx, the jasper and the sardonyx, order and perfection, love, and peace, and joy, mortification of the passions and ravishment of the will, adherences to God and imitation of Christ, reception and entertainment of the Holy Ghost, and longings after heaven, humility and chastity, temperance and sobriety; these make the frame of the garment, the clothes of the soul, that it may *not be found naked in the day of the Lord's visitation*: but through these rich materials a thread of silk is drawn, some compliance with worms and weaker creatures, something that shall please our bowels, and make the lower man to rejoice; they are wrought upon secular content and material satisfactions: and now we cannot be happy unless we be pious, and the religion of a Christian is the greatest security, and the most certain instrument of making a man *rich, and pleasing, and healthful, and wise, and beloved*, in the whole world. I shall now remark only two or three instances; for the main body of this truth I have other-where represented.

1. The whole religion of a Christian, as it relates to others, is nothing but justice and mercy, certain parents of peace and benefit: and upon this supposition, what evil can come to a just and a merciful, to a necessary and useful person? For the first permission of evil was upon the stock of injustice. He that kills may be killed, and he that does injury may be mischiefed; he that invades another man's right must venture the loss of his own; and when I put my brother to his defence, he may chance drive the

evil so far from himself, that it may reach me. Laws and judges, private and publick judicatures, wars and tribunals, axes and wheels were made, not for the righteous, but for the unjust; and all that whole order of things and persons would be useless, if men did do as they would willingly suffer.*

2. And because there is no evil that can befall a just man, unless it comes by *injury* and *violence*, our religion hath also made as good provisions against that too, as the nature of the thing will suffer. For by patience we are reconciled to the sufferance, and by hope and faith we see a certain consequent reward; and by praying for the persecuting man, we are cured of all the evil of the mind, the envy and the fretfulness that uses to gall the troubled and resisting man: and when we turn all the passion into charity, and God turns all the suffering into reward, there remains nothing that is very formidable. So that our religion obliges us to such duties, which prevent all evils that happen justly to men, (and in our religion no man can suffer as a malefactor, if he follows the religion truly :) and for the evils that are unavoidable and come by violence, the graces of this discipline turn them into virtues and rewards, and make them that in their event they are desirable, and in the suffering they are very tolerable.

3. But then when we consider, that the religion of a Christian consists in doing good to all men, that it is made up of mercies and friendships, of friendly conventions and assemblies of saints, that all are to *do good works for necessary uses*, that is, to be able to be beneficial to the publick, and not to be burthensome to any, where it can be avoided; what can be wished to men in relation to others, and what can be more beneficial to themselves, than that they be

* Life of Jesus Christ. Part. 3. Disc. 14.

such whom other men will value for their interest, such whom the publick does need, such whom princes and nobles ought to esteem, and all men can make use of according to their several conditions; that they are so well provided for, that, unless a persecution disables them, they cannot only maintain themselves, but oblige others to their charity? This is a temporal good, which all wise men reckon as part of that felicity which recompenses all the labours of their day, and sweetens the sleep of their night, and places them in that circle of neighbourhood and amity, where men are most valued and most secure.

4. To this we may add this material consideration: that all those graces which oblige us to do good to others, are nothing else but certain instruments of doing advantage to ourselves. It is a huge nobleness of charity to give alms, not only to our brother, but for him. It is the Christian sacrifice, like that of *Job*, who made oblations for his sons when they feasted each other, fearing lest they had sinned against God: and if I give alms, and fast and pray in behalf of my prince or my patron, my friend or my children, I do a combination of holy actions, which are of all things that I can do, the most effectual intercession for him whom I so recommend. But then observe the art of this, and what a plot is laid by the divine mercy to secure blessing to ourselves. That I am a person fit to intercede and pray for him, must suppose me a gracious person, one whom God rather will accept; so that before I be fit to pray and interpose for him, I must first become dear to God, and my charity can do him no good, for whose interest I gave it, but by making me first acceptable to God, that so he may the rather hear me; and when I fast, it is first an act of repentance for myself, before it can be an instrument of impetration for him. And

thus do I my brother a single benefit by doing myself a double one. And it is also so ordered, that when I pray for a person for whom God will not hear me, yet then he will hear me for myself, though I say nothing in my own behalf: and our prayers are like *Jonathan's* arrows; if they fall short, yet they return my friend or my friendship to me; or if they go home, they secure him whom they pray for, and I have not only the comfort of rejoicing with him, but the honour and the reward of procuring him a joy. And certain it is, that the charitable prayer for another can never want what it asks, or instead of it, a greater blessing. The good man that saw his poor brother troubled, because he had nothing to present for an offering at the holy communion, (when all knew themselves obliged to do kindness for Christ's poor members, with which themselves were incorporated with so mysterious an union) and gave him money that he might present for the good of his soul, as other Christians did, had not only the reward of alms, but of religion too; and that offering was well husbanded, for it did benefit to two souls. For as I sin when I make another sin; so if I help him to do a good, I am sharer in the gains of that talent, and he shall not have the less, but I shall be rewarded upon his stock. And this was it which *David* rejoiced in, *Particeps sum omnium timentium te*; I am a partner, a companion of all them that fear thee, I share in their profits. If I do but rejoice at every grace of God which I see in my brother, I shall be rewarded for that grace; and we need not envy the excellency of another, it becomes mine as well as his: and if I do rejoice, I shall have cause to rejoice. So excellent, so full, so artificial is the mercy of God, in making, and seeking, and finding all occasions to do us good.

5. The very charity, and love, and mercy that is commanded in our religion, is in itself a great excellency, not only in order to heaven, but to the comforts of the earth too, and such without which a man is not capable of a blessing or a comfort; and he that sent charity and friendships into the world, intended charity to be as relative as justice, and to do its effect both upon the loving and the beloved person. It is a reward and a blessing to a kind father, when his children do well, and every degree of prudent love which he bears to them is an endearment of his joy, and he that loves them not, but looks upon them as burthens of necessity, and loads to his fortune, loses those many rejoicings and the pleasures of kindness, which they feast withal, who love to divide their fortunes amongst them, because they have already divided large and equal portions of their heart. I have instanced in this relation; but it is true in all the excellency of friendship: and every man rejoices twice when he hath a partner of his joy. A friend shares my sorrow, and makes it but a moiety; but he swells my joy, and makes it double. For so two channels divide the river, and lessen it into rivulets, and make it fordable, and apt to be drunk up at the first revels of the *Sirian* star; but two torches do not divide, but increase the flame: and though my tears are the sooner dried up when they run upon my friend's cheeks in the furrows of compassion; yet when my flame hath kindled his lamp, we unite the glories, and make them radiant, like the golden candlesticks that burn before the throne of God, because they shine by numbers, by unions, and confederations of light and joy.

And now upon this account, which is already so great, I need not reckon concerning the collateral issues and little streams of comfort, which God hath made to issue from that religion to which God hath oblig-

ed us : such as are *mutual comforts, visiting sick people, instructing the ignorant, and so becoming better instructed, and fortified, and comforted* ourselves by the instruments of our brother's ease and advantages : the glories of *converting souls, of rescuing a sinner from hell, of a miserable man from the grave, the honour and nobleness of being a good man, the noble confidence and the bravery of innocence, the ease of patience, the quiet of contentedness, the rest of peacefulness, the worthiness of forgiving others, the greatness of spirit that is in despising riches, and the sweetness of spirit that is in meekness and humility* : these are Christian *graces* in every sense ; favours of God, and issues of his bounty and his mercy. But all that I shall now observe further concerning them is this, that God hath made these necessary ; he hath obliged us to have them, under pain of damnation ; he hath made it so sure to us to become happy even in this world, that if we will not, he hath threatened to destroy us ; which is not a desire or aptness to do us an evil, but an art to make it impossible that we should. For God hath so ordered it, that we cannot perish, unless we desire it ourselves : and unless we will do ourselves a mischief on purpose to get hell, we are secured of heaven ; and there is not in the nature of things any way that can more infallibly do the work of felicity upon creatures that can choose, than to make that which they should naturally choose, be spiritually their duty : and then he will make them happy hereafter, if they will suffer him to make them happy here. But hard by stand another throng of mercies, that must be considered by us, and God must be glorified in them ; for they are such as are intended to preserve to us all this felicity.

9. God, that he might secure our duty, and our present and consequent felicity, hath tied us with

golden chains, and bound us not only with the bracelets of love and the deliciousness of hope, but with the ruder cords of fear and reverence, even with all the innumerable parts of a *restraining grace*. For it is a huge aggravation of human calamity to consider, that after a man hath been instructed in the love and advantages of his religion, and knows it to be the way of honour and felicity, and that to prevaricate his only sanctions is certain death and disgrace to eternal ages; yet that some men shall despise their religion, others shall be very weary of its laws, and call the commandments a burthen, and too many, with a perfect choice, shall delight in death and the ways that lead thither; and they choose money infinitely, and to rule over their brother by all means, and to be revenged extremely, and to prevail by wrong, and to do all that they can, and please themselves in all that they desire, and love it fondly, and be restless in all things but where they perish. If God should not interpose by the hearts of a miraculous and merciful grace, and put a bridle in the mouth of our lusts, and chastise the sea of our follies by some heaps of sand or the walls of a rock, we should perish in the deluge of sin universally, as the old world did in that storm of the divine anger, *the flood of waters*. But thus God suffers but few adulteries in the world, in respect of what would be, if all men that desire to be adulterers had power and opportunity: and yet some men and very many women are, by modesty and natural shamefacedness, chastised in their too forward appetites, or the laws of man, or publick reputation, or the indecency and unhandsome circumstances of sin, check the desire, and make it that it cannot arrive at act. For so have I seen a busy flame sitting upon a sullen coal, turn its point to all the angles and portions of its neighbourhood, and reach at a heap of prepared straw,

which, like a bold temptation, called it to a restless motion and activity; but either it was at too big a distance, or a gentle breath from heaven diverted the sphere and the ray of the fire to the other side, and so prevented the violence of the burning, till the flame expired in a weak consumption, and died turning into smoke, and the coolness of death, and the harmlessness of a cinder. And when a man's desires are winged with sails and a lusty wind of passion, and pass on in a smooth channel of opportunity, God oftentimes hinders the lust and the impatient desire from passing on to its port, and entering into action, by a sudden thought, by a little remembrance of a word, by a fancy, by a sudden disability, by unreasonable and unlikely fears, by the sudden intervening of company, by the very weariness of the passion, by curiosity, by want of health, by the too great violence of the desire, bursting itself with its fullness into dissolution and a remiss easiness, by a sentence of Scripture, by the reverence of a good man, or else by the proper interventions of the spirit of grace chastising the crime, and representing its *appendant* mischiefs, and its *constituent* disorder and irregularity: and after all this, the very anguish and trouble of being defeated in the purpose hath rolled itself into so much uneasiness and unquiet reflections, that the man is grown ashamed and vexed into more sober counsels.

And the mercy of God is not less than infinite in separating men from the occasions of their sin, from the neighbourhood and temptation. For if the *hyæna* and a dog should be thrust into the same kennel, one of them would soon find a grave, and it may be both of them their death. So infallible is the ruin of most men, if they be showed a temptation: nitre and rosin, naphtha and bitumen, sulphur and pitch, are their constitution; and the fire passes

upon them infinitely, and there is none to secure them. But God, by removing our sins far from us, *as far as the east is from the west*, not only putting away the guilt, but setting the occasion far from us, extremely far, so far that sometimes we *cannot sin*, and many times *not easily*, hath magnified his mercy, by giving us safety in all those measures in which we are untempted. It would be the matter of new discourses, if I should consider concerning the variety of God's grace: his preventing and accompanying, his inviting and corroborating grace; his assisting us to will, his enabling us to do; his sending angels to watch us, to remove us from evil company, to drive us with swords of fire from forbidden instances, to carry us by unobserved opportunities into holy company, to minister occasions of holy discourses, to make it, by some means or other, necessary to do a holy action, to make us in love with virtue, because they have mingled that virtue with a just and a fair interest; to some men, by making religion that thing they live upon, to others, the means of their reputation and the securities of their honour, and thousands of ways more, which every prudent man that watches the ways of God cannot but have observed. But I must also observe other great conjugations of mercy; for he that is to pass through an infinite, must not dwell upon every little line of life.

10. The next order of mercies is such which is of so pure and unmingled constitution, that it hath at first no regard to the capacities and dispositions of the receivers, and afterwards, when it hath, it relates only to such conditions which itself creates and produces in the suscipient; I mean the mercies of the *divine predestination*. For was it not an infinite mercy that God should predestinate all mankind to salvation by *Jesus Christ*, even when he had no

other reason to move him to it, but because man was miserable, and needed his pity? But I shall instance only in the intermedial part of this mysterious mercy. Why should God cause us to be born of Christian parents, and not to be circumcised by the impure hand of a Turkish priest? What distinguished me from another, that my father was severe in his discipline, and careful to *bring me up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*, and I was not exposed to the carelessness of an irreligious guardian, and taught to steal and lie, and to make sport with my infant vices and beginnings of iniquity? Who was it that discerned our persons from the lot of dying Chrysons, whose portion must be among those who never glorified God with a free obedience? What had you done of good, or towards it, that you were not condemned to that stupid ignorance, which makes the souls of most men to be little higher than beast, and who understand nothing of religion and noble principles, of parables and wise sayings of old men? And not only in our cradles, but in our schools and our colleges, in our friendships and in our marriages, in our enmities and in our conversations, in our virtues and in our vices, where all things in us were equal, or else we were the inferiour, there is none of us but have felt the mercies of many differences. Or it may be my brother and I were intemperate, and drunk, and quarrelsome, and he killed a man; but God did not suffer me to do so: he fell down and died with a little disorder; I was a beast, and yet was permitted to live, and not yet to die in my sins: he did amiss once, and was surprised in that disadvantage; I sin daily, and am still invited to repentance: he would fain have lived and amended; I neglect the grace, but am allowed the time. And when God sends the angel of his wrath to execute his anger upon a sinful people, we are encompassed with fu-

nerals, and yet the angel hath not smitten us: what or who makes the difference? We shall then see, when, in the separations of eternity, *we sitting in glory*, shall see some of the partners of our sins carried into despair, and the portions of the left hand, and roaring in the seats of the reprobate: we shall then perceive that it is even that mercy which hath no cause but itself: no measure of its emanation but our misery, no natural limit but eternity, no beginning but God, no object but man, no reason but an essential and an unalterable goodness, no variety but our necessity and capacity, no change but new instances of its own nature, no ending or repentance but our absolute and obstinate refusal to entertain it.

11. Lastly, all the mercies of God are concentrated in that which is all the felicity of man: and God is so great a lover of souls, that he provides securities and fair conditions for them, even against all our reason and hopes, our expectations and weak discourings. The particulars I shall remark are these: 1. God's mercy prevails over the malice and ignorances, the weaknesses and follies of men; so that in the conventions and assemblies of hereticks, (as the word is usually understood, for erring and mistaken people) although their doctrines are such, that, if men should live according to their proper and natural consequences, they would live impiously, yet in every one of these there are persons so innocently and invincibly mistaken, and who mean nothing but truth, while, in the simplicity of their heart, they talk nothing but error, that in the defiance and contradiction of their own doctrines they live according to its contradictory. He that believes contrition alone, with confession to a priest, is enough to expiate ten thousand sins, is furnished with an excuse easy enough to quit himself from the troubles of a holy life; and he that hath a great many cheap ways of buying off his penances for

a little money, even for the greatest sins, is taught a way not to fear the doing of an act, for which he must repent: since repentance is a duty so *soon*, so *certainly*, and so *easily* performed. But these are notorious doctrines of the *Roman* church: and yet God so loves the souls of his creatures, that many men who trust to these doctrines in their discourses, dare not rely upon them in their lives. But while they talk as if they did not need to live strictly, many of them live so strictly as if they did not believe so foolishly. He that tells that, antecedently, God hath to all human choice decreed men to heaven or to hell, and takes away from men all care of the way, because they believe, that he that infallibly decreed that end hath unalterably appointed the means; and some men that talk thus wildly, live soberly, and are over-wrought in their understanding by some secret art of God, that man may not perish in his ignorance, but be assisted in his choice, and saved by the divine mercies. And there is no sect of men but are furnished with antidotes and little excuses to cure the venom of their doctrine: and therefore, although the adherent and constituent poison is notorious, and therefore to be declined; yet because it is collaterally cured and overpowered by the torrent and wisdom of God's mercies, the men are to be taken into the choir, that we may all join in giving God praise for the operation of his hands. 2. I said formerly, that there are many secret and undiscerned mercies, by which men live, and of which men can give no account till they come to give God thanks at their publication: and of this sort is that mercy which God reserves for the souls of many millions of men and women, concerning whom we have no hopes, if we account concerning them by the usual proportions of revelation and Christian commandments; and yet we are taught to hope some strange good things concerning them, by the analogy,

and general rules of the divine mercy. For what shall become of ignorant Christians, people that live in wildernesses, and places more desert than a primitive hermitage? people that are baptized, and taught to go to church, it may be, once a year? people that can get no more knowledge, they know not where to have it, nor how to desire it? and yet that an eternity of pains shall be consequent to such an ignorance, is unlike the mercy of God: and yet that they shall be in any disposition towards an eternity of intellectual joys, is no where set down in the leaves of revelation. And when the *Jews* grew rebellious, or a silly woman of the daughters of *Abraham* was tempted, and sinned, and punished with death, we usually talk as if that death passed on to a worse; but yet we may arrest our thoughts upon the divine mercies, and consider that it is reasonable to expect from the divine goodness, that no greater forfeiture be taken upon a law, than was expressed in its sanction and publication. He that makes a law, and binds it with the penalty of stripes, we say he intends not to afflict the disobedient with scorpions and axes; and it had been hugely necessary that God had scared the *Jews* from their sins, by threatening the pains of hell to them that disobeyed, if he intended to inflict it; for although many men would have ventured the future, since they are not affrighted with the present and visible evil; yet some persons would have had more philosophical and spiritual apprehensions than others, and have been infallibly cured in all their temptations with the fear of an eternal pain: and however, whether they had or no, yet since it cannot be understood how it consists with the divine justice to exact a pain bigger than he threatened, greater than he give warning of, we are sure it is a great way off from God's mercy to do so. He that usually imposes less, and is loth to inflict any, and

very often forgives it all, is hugely distant from exacting an eternal punishment, when the most that he threatened and gave notice of, was but a temporal. The effect of this consideration I would have to be this: that we may publickly worship this mercy of God which is kept in secret, and that we be not too forward in sentencing all heathens, and prevaricating *Jews*, to the eternal pains of hell; but to hope that they have a portion in the secrets of the divine mercy, where also, unless many of us have some little portions deposited, our condition will be very uncertain, and sometimes most miserable. God knows best, how intolerably accursed a thing it is to perish in the eternal flames of hell, and therefore he is not easy to inflict it: and if the joys of heaven be too great to be expected upon too easy terms, certainly the pains of the damned are infinitely too big to pass lightly upon persons who cannot help themselves, and who, if they were helped with clearer revelations, would have avoided them. But as, in these things, we must not pry into the secrets of the divine economy, being sure, whether it be so or no, it is most just even as it is; so we may expect to see the glories of the divine mercy made publick in unexpected instances. at the great day of manifestation. And indeed our dead many times go forth from our hands very strangely and carelessly, without prayers, without sacraments, without consideration, without counsel, and without comfort: and to dress the souls of our dear people at so sad a parting, is an employment we therefore omit, not always because we are negligent, but because the work is sad, and allays the affections of the world with those melancholick circumstances; but if God did not in his mercies make secret and equivalent provisions for them, and take care of his redeemed ones, we might unhappily meet them in a sad eternity, and without remedy weep together, and

groan for ever. But *God hath provided better things for them, that they without us, that is, without our assistances, shall be made perfect.*

SERMON XXVII.

PART III.

THERE are very many more orders and conjugations of mercies: but because the numbers of them naturally tend to their own greatness, that is, to have no measure, I must reckon but a few more, and them also without order: for that they do descend upon us, we see and feel, but what order of things or causes, is as undiscerned as the head of *Nilus*, or a sudden remembrance of a long neglected and forgotten proposition.

I. But upon this account it is that good men have observed, that the providence of God is so great a provider for holy living, and does so certainly minister to religion, that nature and chance, the order of the world and the influences of heaven, are taught to serve the ends of *the spirit of God* and *the spirit of a man*. I do not speak of the miracles that God hath, in the several periods of the world, wrought for the establishing his laws, and confirming his promises, and securing our obedience; though that was all the way the overflowings and miracles of *mercy* as well as *power*: but that which I consider is, that besides the extraordinary emanations of the divine power, upon the first and most solemn occasions of an institution and the first beginnings of a religion, (such as were

the wonders God did in *Egypt* and in the wilderness, preparatory to the sanction of that law and *the first covenant*) and the miracles wrought by Christ and his apostles for the founding and the building up the religion of the gospel and *the new covenant*; God does also do things wonderful and miraculous for the promoting the ordinary and less solemn actions of our piety, and to assist and accompany them in a constant and regular succession. It was a strange variety of natural efficacies, that manna should stink in twenty-four hours if gathered upon Wednesday and Thursday, and that it should last till forty eight hours if gathered upon the even of the sabbath; and that it should last many hundreds of years when placed in the sanctuary by the ministry of the high priest. But so it was in the *Jews'* religion; and manna pleased every palate, and it filled all appetites, and the same measure was a different proportion, it was much and it was little; as if nature, that it might serve religion, had been taught some measures of infinity, which is every where and no where, filling all things and circumscribed with nothing, measured by one omer, and doing the work of two; like the crowns of kings, fitting the brows of *Nimrod*, and the most mighty warrior, and yet not too large for the temples of an infant prince. And not only is it thus in nature, but in contingencies and acts depending upon the choice of men. For God having commanded the sons of *Israel* to go up to *Jerusalem* to worship thrice every year, and to leave their borders to be guarded by women and children and sick persons, in the neighbourhood of diligent and spiteful enemies; yet God so disposed of their hearts and opportunities, that they never entered the land when the people were at their solemnity, until they desecrated their rites, by doing, at their passover, the greatest sin and treason in the world. Till, at *Easter*, they

crucified the Lord of life and glory, they were secure in Jerusalem and in their borders: but when they had destroyed religion by this act, God took away their security, and Titus besieged the city at the feast of Easter, that the more might perish in the deluge of the divine indignation.

To this observation the *Jews* add, that in *Jerusalem* no man ever had a fall that came thither to worship; that at their solemn festivals there was reception in the town for all the inhabitants of the land: concerning which although I cannot affirm any thing, yet this is certain. that no godly person among all the tribes of *Israel* was ever a *beggar*, but all the variety of human chances were overruled to the purposes of providence, and providence was measured by the ends of the religion, and the religion which promised them plenty performed the promise, till the nation and the religion too began to decline, that it might give place to a better ministry, and a more excellent dispensation of the things of the world.

But when Christian religion was *planted, and had taken root, and had filled all lands*, then all the nature of things, *the whole creation*, became servant to the kingdom of grace; and *the head of the religion* is also the head of the creatures, and ministers all the things of the world in order to the spirit of grace: and now *angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for the good of them that fear the Lord*; and all the violences of men and things, of nature and choice, are forced into subjection and lowest ministries, and to co-operate as with an united design to verify all the promises of the gospel, and to secure and advantage all *the children of the kingdom*: and now he that is made poor by chance or persecution, is made rich by religion, and he that *hath nothing, yet possesses all things*; and *sorrow itself* is the greatest *comfort*, not only because it ministers to virtue, but because *itself*

is one, as in the case of repentance; and *death* ministers to *life*, and *bondage* is *freedom*, and *loss* is *gain*, and our *enemies* are our *friends*, and every thing turns into religion, and religion turns into felicity and all manner of advantages. But that I may not need to enumerate any more particulars in this observation: certain it is, that angels of light and darkness, all the influences of heaven and the fruits and productions of the earth, the stars and the elements, the secret things that lie in the bowels of the sea and the entrails of the earth, the single effects of all efficient causes and the conjunction of all causes, all events foreseen and all rare contingencies, every thing of chance and every thing of choice, is so much a servant to him whose greatest desire and great interest is by all means to save our souls, that we are thereby made sure, that all the whole creation shall be made to bend in all the flexures of its nature and accidents, that it may minister to religion, to the good of the Catholick church, and every person within its bosom, who are the body of him that rules over all the world, and commands them as he chooses.

2. But that which is next to this, and not much unlike the design of this wonderful mercy, is, that all the actions of religion, though mingled with circumstances of differing, and sometimes of contradictory, relations, are so concentred in God their proper centre, and conducted in such certain and pure channels of *reason* and *rule*, that no one duty does contradict another: and it can never be necessary for any man in any case to sin. They that bound themselves by an oath to kill *Paul*, were not environed with the sad necessities of murder on one side, and vow-breach on the other, so that, if they did murder him, they were man-slayers, if they did not, they were perjured; for God had made provision for this case, that no unlawful oath should pass an obligation. He that

hath given his faith in unlawful confederation against his prince, is not girded with a fatal necessity of breach of trust on one side, or breach of allegiance on the other; for in this also God hath secured the case of conscience, by forbidding any man to make an unlawful promise; and upon a stronger degree of the same reason, by forbidding him to keep it in case he hath made it. He that doubts whether it be lawful to keep the Sunday holy, must not do it during that doubt, because *whatsoever is not of faith is sin*: but yet God's mercy hath taken care to break this snare in sunder, so that he may neither sin against the commandment, nor against his conscience; for he is bound to lay aside his error, and be better instructed; till when, the scene of his sin lies in something that hath influence upon his understanding, not in the omission of the fact. *No man can serve two masters, but therefore he must hate the one, and cleave to the other.* But then if we consider what infinite contradiction there is in sin, and that the great long-suffering of God is expressed in this, that God *suffered the contradiction of sinners*; we shall feel the mercy of God in the peace of our consciences and the unity of religion, so long as we do the work of God. It is a huge affront to a covetous man, that he is the farther off from fulness by having great heaps and vast revenues; and that his thirst increases by having that which should quench it; and that the more he shall need to be satisfied, the less he shall dare to do it; and that he shall refuse to drink because he is dry; that he dies if he tastes, and languishes if he does not; and at the same time he is full and empty, bursing with a plethora and consumed with hunger, drowned with rivers of oil and wine, and yet dry as the *Arabian* sands. But then the contradiction is multiplied, and the labyrinths more amazed, when prodigality waits upon another curse, and covetous-

ness heaps up, that prodigality may scatter abroad: then distractions are infinite, and a man hath two devils to serve of contradictory designs, and both of them exacting obedience more unreasonably than the *Egyptian* task-masters; then there is no rest, no end of labours, no satisfaction of purposes, no method of things, but they begin where they should end, and begin again; and never pass forth to content, or reason, or quietness, or possession. But the duty of a Christian is easy in a persecution, it is clear under a tyranny, it is evident in despite of heresy, it is one in the midst of schism, it is determined amongst infinite disputes; being like a rock in the sea, which is beaten with the tide, and washed with retining waters, and encompassed with mists and appears in several figures, but it always dips its foot in the same bottom, and remains the same in calms and storms, and survives the revolution of ten thousand tides, and there shall dwell till time and tides shall be no more. So is our duty, uniform and constant, open and notorious, variously represented, but in the same manner exacted: and in the interest of our souls God hath not exposed us to uncertainty, or the variety of any thing that can change; and it is, by the grace and mercy of God, put into the power of every Christian to do that which God through *Jesus Christ* will accept to salvation: and neither men nor devils shall hinder it, unless we list ourselves.

3. After all this, we may sit down and reckon by great sums and conjugations of his gracious gifts, and tell the minutes of eternity by the number of the divine mercies. God hath given *his laws* to rule us, *his word* to instruct us, *his spirit* to guide us, *his angels* to protect us, *his ministers* to exhort us: he *revealed* all our duty, and he hath *concealed* whatsoever can hinder us; he hath *affrighted* our follies with fear of death, and engaged our watchfulness;

by its secret coming; he hath exercised our faith by keeping private the state of souls departed, and yet hath confirmed our faith by a promise of a resurrection, and entertained our hope by some general significations of the state of interval. His mercies make contemptible means instrumental to great purposes, and a small herb the remedy of the greatest diseases. He impedes the devil's rage, and infatuates his counsels; he diverts his malice, and defeats his purposes; he binds him in the chain of darkness, and gives him no power over the children of light; he suffers him to walk in solitary places, and yet fetters him that he cannot disturb the sleep of a child; he hath given him mighty power, and yet a young maiden that resists him shall make him flee away; he hath given him a vast knowledge, and yet an ignorant man can confute him with the twelve articles of his creed; he gave him power over the winds, and made him prince of the air, and yet the breath of a holy prayer can drive him as far as the utmost sea; and he hath so restrained him, that (except it be by faith) we know not whether there be any devil, yea or no; for we never heard his noises, nor have seen his affrighting shapes. This is that great principle of all the felicity we hope for, and of all the means thither, and of all the skill and all the strengths we have to use those means. He hath made great variety of conditions, and yet hath made all necessary, and all mutual helpers; and by some instruments and in some respects they are all equal, in order to felicity, to content, and final and intermedial satisfaction. He gave us part of our reward in hand, that he might enable us to work for more: he taught the world arts for use, arts for entertainment of all our faculties and all our dispositions: he gives eternal gifts for temporal services, and gives us whatsoever we want

for asking, and commands us to ask, and threatens us if we will not ask, and punishes us for refusing to be happy. This is that glorious attribute that hath made *order* and *health*, *harmony* and *hope*, *restitutions* and *variety*, the joys of direct possession, and the joys, the artificial joys of contrariety and comparison. He comforts the poor, and he brings down the rich, that they may be safe, in their humility and sorrow, from the transportations of an unhappy and uninstructed prosperity. He gives necessaries to all, and scatters the extraordinary provisions so, that every nation may traffick in charity, and commute for pleasures. He was the *Lord of hosts*, and he is still what he was; but he loves to be called *the God of peace*; because he was terrible in that, but he is delighted in this. His mercy is his glory, and his glory is the light of heaven. His mercy is the life of the creation, and it fills all the earth; and his mercy is a sea too, and it fills all the abysses of the deep: it hath given us promises for supply of whatsoever we need, and relieves us in all our fears, and in all the evils that we suffer. His mercies are more than we can tell, and they are more than we can feel: for all the world in the abyss of the divine mercies is like a man diving into the bottom of the sea, over whose head the waters run insensibly and unperceived, and yet the weight is vast, and the sum of them is unmeasurable; and the man is not pressed with the burthen, nor confounded with numbers: and no observation is able to recount, no sense sufficient to perceive, no memory large enough to retain, no understanding great enough to apprehend this infinity; but we must *admire*, and *love*, and *worship*, and *magnify* this mercy for ever and ever; that we may dwell in what we feel, and be comprehended by that which is equal to God, and the parent of all felicity.

And yet this is but the one half. The mercies of *giving* I have now told of; but those of *forgiving* are greater, though not more. *He is ready to forgive.* And upon this stock thrives the interest of our great hope, the hopes of a blessed immortality. For if the mercies of *giving* have not made our expectations big enough to entertain the confidences of heaven; yet when we think of the graciousness and readiness of *forgiving*, we may with more readiness hope to escape hell, and then we cannot but be blessed by an eternal consequence. We have but small opinion of the divine mercy, if we dare not believe concerning it, that it is *desirous*, and *able*, and *watchful*, and *passionate*, to keep us, or rescue us respectively from such a condemnation, *the pain* of which is insupportable, and *the duration* is eternal, and *the extension* is misery upon all our faculties, and *the intention* is great beyond patience, or natural or supernatural abilities, and *the state* is a state of darkness and despair, of confusion and amazement, of cursing and roaring, anguish of spirit and gnashing of teeth, misery universal, perfect and irremediable. From this it is which God's mercies would so fain preserve us. This is a state that God provides for his enemies, not for them that love him; that endeavour to obey, though they do it but in weakness; that weep truly for their sins, though but with a shower no bigger than the drops of pity; that wait for his coming with a holy and pure flame, though their lamps are no brighter than a poor man's candle, though their strengths are no greater than a contrite reed or a strained arm, and their fires have no more warmth than the smoke of kindling flax. If our *faith be pure*, and our *love unfeigned*, if the degrees of it be great, God will accept it into glory; if it be little, he will accept it into grace, and make it bigger. For that is the first instance of God's readi-

ness to forgive : he will, upon any terms that are not unreasonable, and that do not suppose a remanent affection to sin, keep us from the intolerable pains of hell. And indeed if we consider the constitution of the conditions which God requires, we shall soon perceive God intends heaven to us as a mere gift, and that the duties on our part are but little entertainments and exercises of our affections and our love, that the devil might not seize upon that portion which to eternal ages shall be the instrument of our happiness. For, in all the parts of our duty, it may be there is but one instance in which we are to do violence to our natural and first desires. For those men have very ill natures, to whom virtue is so contrary that they are inclined naturally to *lust*, to *drunkenness* and *anger*, to *pride* and *covetousness*, to *unthankfulness* and *disobedience*. Most men that are tempted with lust could easily enough entertain the sobrieties of other counsels, as of temperance and justice, or religion, if it would indulge to them but that one passion of lust ; and persons that are greedy of money are not fond of amorous vanities, nor care they to sit long at the wine : and one vice destroys another : and when one vice is consequent to another, it is by way of punishment and dereliction of the man, unless where vices have cognation, and seem but like several degrees of one another. And it is evil custom and superinduced habits that make artificial appetites in most men to most sins : but many times their natural temper vexes them into uneasy dispositions, and aptnesses only to some one unhandsome sort of action. That one thing, therefore, is it in which God demands of thee *mortification* and *self-denial*.

Certain it is, there are very many men in the world that would fain commute their severity, in all other instances, for a license in their one appetite ;

they would not refuse long prayers after a drunken meeting, or great *alms* together with one great *lust*. But then consider how it is for them to go to heaven. God demands of them, for his sake and their own, to crucify but one natural lust, or one evil habit, (for all the rest they are easy enough to do themselves) and God will give them heaven, where the joy is more than one. And I said it is but one mortification God requires of most men; for if those persons would extirpate but that one thing in which they are principally tempted, it is not easily imaginable that any less evil, to which the temptation is trifling, should interpose between them and their great interest. If *Saul* had not spared *Agag*, the people could not have expected mercy: and our little and inferiour appetites, that rather come to us by intimation and consequent adherences than by direct violence, must not dwell with him who hath crossed the violence of his distempered nature in a beloved instance. Since therefore this is the state of most men, and God in effect demands of them but one thing, and in exchange for that will give them all good things; it gives demonstration of his huge easiness to redeem us from that intolerable evil, that is equally consequent to the indulging to one or to twenty sinful habits.

2. God's readiness to pardon appears in this, that he pardons before we ask; for he that bids us ask for pardon, hath in design and purpose done the thing already: for, what is wanting on his part, in whose only power it is to give pardon, and in whose desire it is that we should be pardoned, and who commands us to lay hold upon the offer? He hath done all that belongs to God, that is, all that concerns the pardon; there it lies ready, it is recorded in the book of life, it wants nothing but being exemplified

and taken forth, and the holy spirit stands ready to consign and pass the privy signet, that we may exhibit it to devils and evil men, when they tempt us to despair or sin.

3. Nay, God is so ready in his mercy, that he did pardon us even before he redeemed us. For, what is the secret of the mystery, that the eternal son of God should take upon him our nature, and die our death, and suffer for our sins, and do our work, and enable us to do our own? He that did this, is God; he who *thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, he came to satisfy himself, to pay to himself the price for his own creature. And when he did this for us that he might pardon us, was he at that instant angry with us? was this an effect of his anger or of his love, that God sent his son to work our pardon and salvation? Indeed we were angry with God, at enmity with the prince of life; but he was reconciled to us so far, as that he then did the greatest thing in the world for us: for nothing could be greater than that *God, the son of God*, should die for us. Here was reconciliation before pardon: and God, that came to die for us, did love us first before he came. This was hasty love. But it went farther yet.

4. God pardoned us before we sinned; and when he foresaw our sin, even mine and yours, he sent his son to die for us; our pardon was wrought and effected by Christ's death, above sixteen hundred years ago; and for the sins of to-morrow, and the infirmities of the next day, Christ is already *dead*, already *risen from the dead*, and does now *make intercession* and atonement. And this is not only a favour to us who were born in the due time of the gospel, but to all mankind since *Adam*: for God, who is infinitely patient in his justice, was not at all patient in his mercy; he forbears to strike and punish us, but he would not forbear to provide cure for us and remedy.

For, as if God could not stay from redeeming us, he promised the *Redeemer* to *Adam* in the beginning of the world's sin; and Christ was *the lamb slain from the beginning of the world*; and the covenant of the gospel, though it was not made with man, yet it was from the beginning performed by God as to his part. as to the ministration of pardon; the seed of the woman was set up against the dragon as soon as ever the tempter had won his first battle: and though God laid his hand, and drew a veil of types and secrecy before the manifestation of his mercies; yet he did the work of redemption, and saved us by the covenant of faith, and the righteousness of believing, and the mercies of repentance, the graces of pardon, and the blood of the slain lamb, even from the fall of *Adam* to this very day, and will do till Christ's second coming.

Adam fell by his folly, and did not perform *the covenant of one little work*, a work of a single abstinence; but he was restored by faith in the seed of the woman. And of this *righteousness Noah* was a *preacher*: and by *faith Enoch* was translated, and by *faith* a remnant was saved at the flood: and to *Abraham* this was imputed for *righteousness*, and to all the patriarchs, and to all the righteous judges, and holy prophets, and saints of the Old Testament, even while they were obliged (so far as the words of their covenant were expressed) to the *law of works*: their pardon was sealed and kept within the veil, within the curtains of the sanctuary; and they saw it not then, but they feel it ever since. And this was a great excellency of the divine mercy unto them. God had mercy on all mankind before Christ's manifestation, even beyond the mercies of their covenant; and they were saved as we are, by *the seed of the woman*, by *God incarnate*, by *the lamb slain from the beginning of the world*: not by works, for we all failed of them; that

is, not by an exact obedience; but *by faith working by love*, by sincere, hearty endeavours, and believing God, and relying upon his infinite mercy, revealed in part, and now fully manifest by the great instrument and means of that mercy, *Jesus Christ*. So that here is pardon before we asked it, pardon before Christ's coming, pardon before redemption, and pardon before we sinned. What greater readiness to forgive us can be imagined? Yes, there is one degree more yet; and that will prevent a mistake in this.

5. For God so pardoned us once, that we should need no more pardon: he pardons us *by turning every one of us away from our iniquities*. That is the purpose of Christ; that he might safely pardon us before we sinned, and we might not sin upon the confidence of pardon. He pardoned us, not only upon condition we would sin no more, but he took away our sin, cured our cursed inclinations, instructed our understanding, rectified our will, fortified us against temptation; and now every man whom he pardons he also sanctifies, and *he is born of God*, and he *must not, will not, cannot sin*, so long as *the seed of God remains with him*, so long as his pardon continues. This is the consummation of pardon. For if God had so pardoned us, as only to take away our evils which are past, we should have needed a second saviour, and a redeemer for every month, and new pardons perpetually. But our blessed Redeemer hath taken away our sin, not only the guilt of our old, but our inclinations to new sins: he makes us like himself; and commands us to live so, that we shall not need a second pardon, that is, a second state of pardon: for we are but once baptized into Christ's death, and that death was but one, and our redemption but one, and our covenant the same; and as long as we continue within the covenant, we are still within the power and comprehensions of the first pardon.

6. And yet there is a necessity of having one degree of pardon more beyond all this. For although we do not abjure our covenant, and renounce Christ, and extinguish the spirit; yet we resist him, and we grieve him, and we go off from the holiness of the covenant, and return again, and very often step aside, and need this great pardon to be perpetually applied and renewed: and to this purpose, that we may not have a possible need without a certain remedy, the holy *Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith* and pardon, sits in heaven, in a perpetual advocacy for us, that this pardon, once wrought, may be for ever applied to every emergent need, and every tumour of pride, and every broken heart, and every disturbed conscience, and upon every true and sincere return of a hearty repentance. And now upon this title no more degrees can be added: it is already greater, and was before all our needs, than the old covenant, and beyond the revelations, and did in *Adam's* youth antedate the gospel, turning the *publick miseries* by *secret grace* into *eternal glories*. But now upon other circumstances it is remarkable and excellent, and swells like an hydropick cloud when it is fed with the breath of the morning tide, till it fills the bosom of heaven, and descends in dews and gentle showers, to water and refresh the earth.

7. God is so ready to forgive, that himself works our dispositions towards it, and either must in some degree pardon us before we are capable of pardon, by his grace making way for his mercy, or else we can never hope for pardon. For unless God by his preventing grace should first work the first part of our pardon, even without any dispositions of our own to receive it, we could not desire a pardon, nor hope for it, nor work towards it, nor ask it, nor receive it. This giving of *preventing grace* is a mercy of forgiveness, contrary to that severity by which some despe-

rate persons are *given over to a reprobate sense*; that is, a leaving of men to themselves, so that they cannot pray effectually, nor desire holily, nor repent truly, nor receive any of those mercies which God designed so plenteously, and the son of God purchased so dearly for us. When God sends a plague of war upon a land, in all the accounts of religion and expectations of reason, the way to obtain our peace is, to leave our sins, for which the war was sent upon us, as the messenger of wrath: and without this, we are like to perish in the judgment. But then consider what a sad condition we are in: war mends but few, but spoils multitudes; it legitimates rapine, and authorizes murder; and these crimes must be ministered to by their lesser relatives, by covetousness, and anger, and pride, and revenge, and heats of blood, and wilder liberty, and all the evil that can be supposed to come from, or run to, such cursed causes of mischief. But then if the punishment increases the sin, by what instrument can the punishment be removed? How shall we be pardoned and eased, when our remedies are converted into causes of the sickness, and our antidotes are poison? Here there is a plain necessity of God's *preventing grace*; and *if there be but a necessity of it, that is enough to ascertain us we shall have it*: but unless God should begin to pardon us first, for nothing, and against our own dispositions, we see there is no help in us nor for us. If we be not smitten, we are undone, if we are smitten, we perish: and, as young *Demarchus* said of his love, when he was made master of his wish, *salvus sum, quia pereo; si non peream, plane inteream*; we may say of some of God's judgments, we perish when we are safe, because our sins are not smitten; and if they be, then we are worse undone: because we grow worse for being miserable; but we can be relieved only by a free mercy. For *pardon is the way to pardon*: and

when God gives us our penny, then we can work for another; and a gift is the way to a grace, and all that we can do towards it, is but to take it in God's method. And this must needs be a great forwardness of forgiveness, when God's mercy gives *the pardon* and *the way* to find it, and *the hand* to receive it, and *the eye* to search it, and *the heart* to desire it; being busy and effective as *Elijah's* fire, which intending to convert the sacrifice into its own more spiritual nature of flames and purified substances, stood in the neighbourhood of the fuel, and called forth its enemies, and licked up the hindering moisture and the water of the trenches, and made the altar send forth a fantastick smoke before the sacrifice was enkindled. So is the preventing grace of God: it does all the work of our souls, and makes its own way, and invites itself, and prepares its own lodging, and makes its own entertainment; it gives us precepts, and makes us able to keep them; it enables our faculties, and excites our desires; it provokes us to pray, and sanctifies our heart in prayer, and makes our prayer go forth to act, and the act does make the desire valid, and the desire does make the act certain and persevering; and both of them are the works of God. For more is received into the soul from without the soul, than does proceed from within the soul: it is more for the soul to be moved and disposed, than to work when that is done: as the passage from death to life is greater than from life to action, especially since the action is owing to that cause that put in the first principle of life.

These are the great degrees of God's forwardness and *readiness to forgive*, for the expression of which no language is sufficient, but God's own words describing mercy in all those dimensions which can signify to us its greatness and infinity. His mercy is *great*, his mercies are *many*, his mercy *reacheth unto the*

heavens, it fills heaven and earth, it is above all his works, it endureth for ever. God pitieth us as a father doth his children; nay, he is our father, and the same also is the father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; so that mercy and we have the same relation: and well it may be so, for we live and die together; for as to man only God shows the mercy of forgiveness, so if God takes away his mercy, man shall be no more; no more capable of felicity, or of any thing that is perfective of his condition or his person. But as God preserves man by his mercy, so his mercy hath all its operations upon man, and returns to its own centre and incircumscription and infinity, unless it issues forth upon us. And therefore, besides the former great lines of the mercy of forgiveness, there is another chain, which but to produce and tell its links, is to open a cabinet of jewels, where every stone is as bright as a star, and every star is great as the sun, and shines for ever, unless we shut our eyes, or draw the veil of obstinate and final sins.

I. God is long-suffering, that is, long before he be angry; and yet *God is provoked every day*, by the obstinacy of the *Jews*, and the folly of the heathens, and the rudeness and infidelity of the *Mahometans*, and the negligence and vices of Christians: and he that *can behold no impurity*, is received in all places with perfumes of mushrooms, and garments spotted with the flesh, and stained souls, and the actions and issues of misbelief, and an evil conscience, and with accursed sins that he hates, upon pretence of religion which he loves; and he is made a party against himself by our voluntary mistakes; and men continue ten years, and twenty, and thirty, and fifty, in a course of sinning, and they grow old with the vices of their youth; and yet God forbears to kill them, and to consign them over to an eternity of horrid pains, still expecting they should repent and be saved.

2. Besides this long-sufferance and forbearing with an unwearied patience, God also excuses a sinner oftentimes, and takes a little thing for an excuse, so far as to move him to intermedial favours first, and from taunce to a final pardon. He passes by the sins of our youth with a huge easiness to pardon, if he be intreated and reconciled by the effective repentance of a vigorous manhood. He takes ignorance for an excuse; and in every degree of its being inevitable or innocent in its proper cause, it is also inculpable and innocent in its proper effects, though in their own natures criminal. *But I found mercy of the Lord, because I did it in ignorance,* saith St. Paul. He pities our infirmities, and strikes off much of the account upon that stock: the violence of a temptation and restlessness of its motion, the perpetuity of its sollicitation, the weariness of a man's spirit, the state of sickness, the necessity of secular affairs, the publick customs of a people, have all of them a power of pleading and prevailing, towards some degrees of pardon and diminution before the throne of God.

3. When God perceives himself forced to strike, yet then he takes off his hand, and repents him of the evil: it is as if it were against him, that any of his creatures should fall under the strokes of an exterminating fury.

4. When he is forced to proceed, he yet makes an end before he hath half done; and is as glad of a pretence to pardon us, or to strike less, as if he himself had the deliverance, and not we. When *Ahab* had but humbled himself at the word of the Lord, God was glad of it, and went with the message to the prophet *himself*, saying, *Seest thou not how Ahab humbles himself? What was the event of it? I will not be in the evil in his days, but in his son's days the evil shall come upon his house.*

5. God forgets our sin, and puts it out of his remembrance; that is, he makes it as though it had never been, he makes penitence to be as pure as innocence to all the effects of pardon and glory: the memory of the sins shall not be upon record, to be used to any after-act of disadvantage; and never shall return, unless we force them out of their secret places by ingratitude and a new state of sinning.

6. God sometimes gives pardon beyond all his revelations and declared will, and provides supplementaries of repentances, even then when he cuts a man off from the time of repentance, accepting a temporal death instead of an eternal; that although the divine anger might interrupt the growing of the fruits, yet in some cases, and to some persons, the death and the very cutting off shall go no farther, but be instead of explicit and long repentances. Thus it happened to *Uzzah*, who was smitten for his zeal, and died in severity, for prevaricating the letter, by earnestness of spirit to serve the whole religion. Thus it was also in the case of the *Corinthians*, that died a temporal death for their indecent circumstances in receiving the holy sacrament: *St. Paul*, who used it for an argument to threaten them into reverence, went no farther, nor pressed the argument to a sadder issue, than to die temporally.

But these supplementaries are but seldom, and they are also great troubles, and ever without comfort, and dispensed irregularly, and that not in the case of habitual sins, that we know of, or very great sins, but in single actions or instances of a less malignity; and they are not to be relied upon, because there is no rule concerning them: but when they do happen, they magnify the infiniteness of God's mercy, which is commensurate to all our needs, and is

not to be circumscribed by the limits of his own revelations.

7. God pardons the greatest sinners, and hath left them upon record; and there is no instance in the scripture of the divine forgiveness, but in such instances, the misery of which was a fit instrument to speak aloud the glories of God's mercies, and gentleness, and readiness to forgive. Such were, *St. Paul*, a persecutor, and *St. Peter*, that forswore his master, *Mary Magdalen* with seven devils, the thief upon the cross, *Manasses* an idolater, *David* a murderer and adulterer, the *Corinthian* for incest, the children of *Israel* for ten times rebelling against the Lord in the wilderness, with murmuring, and infidelity, and rebellion, and schism, and a golden calf, and open disobedience: and, above all, I shall instance in the *Pharisees* among the *Jews*, who had sinned against the holy Ghost, as our blessed Saviour intimates, and tells the particular, *viz.* in saying that the spirit of God by which Christ did work, was an evil spirit; and afterward they crucified Christ; so that two of the persons of the most holy Trinity were openly and solemnly defied, and God had sent out a decree that they should be cut off: yet, forty years time (after all this) was left for their repentance, and they were called upon by arguments more persuasive and more excellent, in that forty years, than all the nation had heard from their prophets, even from *Samuel* to *Zacharias*. And *Jonas* thought he had reason on his side to refuse to go to threaten *Nineveh*; he knew God's tenderness in destroying his creatures, and that he should be thought to be but a false prophet; and so it came to pass according to his belief. *Jonah* prayed unto the Lord and said, *I pray thee, Lord, was not this my saying when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled; for I knew thou wert a gracious God and merciful,*

*slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.** He told before hand what the event would be, and he had reason to know it; God proclaimed it in a cloud before the face of all *Israel*, and made it to be his name: *Miserator et misericors Deus: the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, &c.†*

You see the largeness of this treasure; but we can see no end, for we have not yet looked upon the rare arts of conversion; nor that God leaves the natural habit of virtues, even after the acceptance is interrupted; nor his working extra-regular miracles, besides the sufficiency of *Moses and the prophets*, and the New Testament; and thousands more, which we cannot consider now.

But this we can: when God sent an angel to pour plagues upon the earth, there were in their hands *phiale aureae, golden phials*: for the death of men is *precious and costly*, and it is an expense that God delights not in: but they were *phials*, that is, such vessels as out of them no great evil could come at once; but it comes out with difficulty, sobbing and troubled as it passes forth; it comes through a narrow neck, and the parts of it crowd at the port to get forth, and are stilled by each other's neighbourhood, and all strive to get out, but few can pass; as if God did nothing but threaten, and draw his judgments to the mouth of the *phial* with a full body, and there made it stop itself.

The result of this consideration is, that as we fear the divine judgments, so that we adore and love his goodness, and let the golden chains of the divine mercy tie us to a noble prosecution of our duty and the interest of religion. For he is the worst of men whom kindness cannot soften, nor endearment oblige, whom gratitude cannot tie faster than the bands of

* Jonah iv. 2.

† Exod. xxxiv. 6.

life and death. He is an ill natured sinner, if he will not comply with the sweetnesses of heaven, and be civil to his angel guardian, or observant of his *patron God*, who made him, and feeds him, and keeps all his faculties, and takes care of him, and endures his follies, and waits on him more tenderly than a nurse, more diligently than a client, who hath greater care of him than his father, and whose bowels yearn over him with more compassion than a mother; who is bountiful beyond our need, and merciful beyond our hopes, and makes capacities in us to receive more. *Fear* is stronger than *death*, and *love* is more prevalent than *fear*, and *kindness* is the greatest endearment of *love*; and yet to an ingenuous person *gratitude* is greater than all these, and obliges to a solemn duty, when *love* fails, and *fear* is dull and unactive, and *death* itself is despised. But the man who is hardened against kindness, and whose duty is not made alive with gratitude, must be used like a slave, and driven like an ox, and enticed with goads and whips; but must never enter into the inheritance of sons. Let us take heed; for mercy is like a rainbow, which God set in the clouds to remember mankind: it shines here as long as it is not hindered; but we must never look for it after it is night, and it shines not in the other world. If we refuse mercy here, we shall have justice to eternity.

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