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SERMONS

BY

MARK FRANK, D.D.

MASTER OF PEMBROKE HALL, CAMBRIDGE,  
ARCHDEACON OF ST. ALBANS,  
PREBENDARY AND TREASURER OF ST. PAUL'S, ETC.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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OXFORD:  
JOHN HENRY PARKER.

MDCCCXLIX.

Handwritten circular stamp or mark, possibly containing a date or reference number, located in the upper left corner.

LONDON:

R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.

S E R M O N S,

Preached by the Reverend

D<sup>r</sup>. Mark Frank;

(Master of *Pembroke Hall* in *Cambridge*, Archdeacon  
of *St. Albans*, Prebend, and Treasurer  
of *St. Pauls*, &c.)

BEING,

A Course of Sermons,

Beginning at

*Advent*, and so continued through the *Festivals*.

To which is added,

also

A Sermon Preached at ST. PAULS CROSS,  
in the Year Forty One,

And then Commanded to be Printed

2 vol.

By King CHARLES the First.

*Idem & Sermo & Vita.*

LONDON,

Printed by *Andrew Clark* for *John Martyn*, *Henry Brome*, and  
*Richard Chiswell*, and are to be sold, at the *Bell* in *St. Pauls*  
Church-yard, at the *Gun* at the West-end of *St. Pauls*,  
and at the *Two Angels* and *Crown* in  
*Little Britain*, 1672.

Sermons  
- Fasts + feasts. - Sermon  
ch. festivals, See

50/3  
22/9/90



## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF DR. FRANK.

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MARK FRANK, the author of the following Sermons, was born at Brickhill in Buckinghamshire, in 1613. In July, 1627, he was admitted into Pembroke Hall, Cambridge; of which society he became a Foundation Scholar in 1630; and after graduating in Arts, a Fellow in 1634. In 1641 he took the degree of Bachelor in Divinity; and we find him soon after preaching before the civic authorities of London a Sermon, which attracted the notice of King Charles I. Three years after this, while holding the office of Treasurer in his College, the peaceful tenour of his academical life was abruptly cut short by the authority, then dominant and triumphant, of the rebellious Parliament. When the Earl of Manchester, accompanied by his two Puritan chaplains, Ash and Good, required of the "malignant" members of the University, as the sole condition of retaining their posts, the subscription of the Solemn League and Covenant, Mr. Frank was associated with the Master of his College, Dr. Benjamin Laney, Dean of Rochester, and many worthy confessors of other colleges, Cosins, Sterne, Comber, &c., as a determined recusant of the unlawful imposition. He was in consequence ejected from his Fellowship, and compelled in three days to quit the University of Cambridge altogether.

The period of deprivation and adversity, from 1644 to 1660, was borne by our confessor, as by other faithful sons of the Church, with patience and constancy. On the restoration of King Charles II., he was not only reinstated in his lost Fellowship, but obtained in the same year,

1660, the further dignity of Archdeacon of S. Albans, and Treasurer of the Chapter of S. Paul's. In the following year, he took the degree of Doctor in Divinity; in April, 1662, became a Prebendary of S. Paul's; and in August of the same year, succeeded Dr. Laney, who had been advanced to the See of Peterborough, as Master of Pembroke Hall in Cambridge. He was, at the same time, Chaplain to Archbishop Sheldon;<sup>a</sup> and in February, 1663, he was inducted to the Rectory of Barley, in Hertfordshire. Dr. Frank died in 1664, and was buried near the north door of the old Cathedral of S. Paul's. The inscription, though defaced by the great fire of the following year, and since entirely obliterated, has been preserved in the records of his College, and is as follows:—

SUB HOC MARMORE TUMULATUR  
DOCTRINA PIETAS ET CHARITAS  
QUIPPE MONUMENTUM EST  
ILLIUS MARCI FRANK, S. T. P.  
REVERENDISSIMO GILBERTO ARCHIEPISCOPO CANTUARIENSI  
A SACRIS  
STI. ALBANI ARCHIDIACONI  
HUIUS ECCLESIE THESAURARIJ ET PRÆBENDARIJ  
AULE PEMBROCHIANÆ CANTABRIG. PRÆFECTI  
CUJUS  
VIRTUTEM HUMILITATEM ELOQUENTIAM  
IN SINGULISQUE SAGACITATEM  
DICTIS METIRI NON LICEAT  
DICAT POSTERITAS  
OBIIT ÆTATIS ANNO LI.  
SALUTIS HUMANÆ MDCLXIV.

W. H. M.

October, 1849.

<sup>a</sup> The licensing of theological books was part of the duty of a Lambeth Chaplain of that day. The following critical notice, bearing the name of Dr. Frank, is seen appended to the third edition of the learned work of Dr. Windet, entitled, מנהג בלילה sive Στρωματεὺς ἐπιστολικὸς de Vita functorum Statu, ex Hebræorum et Græcorum comparatis sententiis concinnatus, and is characteristic of the style of its author.

*Imprimatur denuo.* Quicquid enim de vita functorum statu eruditus Auctor statuit, hoc certe de eo statuendum: nec vita fructurum sine honore, nec functurum sine gloria.

M. FRANK, S. T. P.  
Reverendissimo in Christo Patri  
ac Domino Archiep. Cant. a  
Sacris Domesticis."

TO

THE MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

GILBERT,

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, HIS GRACE,

PRIMATE OF ALL ENGLAND, AND METROPOLITAN, ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S  
MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY COUNCIL, &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE,

THOUGH by that infinite distance I am in to your Grace, I ought to make all the apologies in the world for this attempt; yet when I reflect upon your own admired candour in receiving the most inferior addresses, and my own duty in making this, I need not, I hope, use a compliment to excuse that, which I neither could nor ought not but to have done. For the Author of these Sermons had that relation to your Grace, and yourself that favour for him, that no other name is so fit or so worthy to prefix to any thing of his as your Grace's. And besides, I may very reasonably suppose, that there may be something in the following papers, that may not be unfit to be offered to such a personage. I humbly therefore pray, that either the one or the other, may excuse the forwardness of this dedication. As to my own very great obligations to your Grace, I will not be so conceited as to mention them; for when I have told so public, I need not add any private reasons; and besides, it may be looked upon by the world, as a design to

gain a reputation to myself, by talking of favours from a person of such eminence. Yet I beg that I may have leave to say, that I reckon it my greatest honour, in having the advantage of presenting this offering, which ought to be made to your Grace, by

Your Grace's

Meanest and most Dutiful Servant,

THOMAS POMFRET.

## TO THE READER.

---

THOUGH I do not call, I suppose thee judicious, and shall therefore give to thee, and to myself, the ease of saying little. For I am sensible enough, that the Author of these following Sermons will be, to all that read them, so much his own advocate, that they will not want any orator in the preface. And to those that read them not, he said nothing, nor shall I. Passing then by, on purpose, those artifices of procuring a fair reception to the book, by the ordinary pageantry of commendations, I think it will be enough to assure thee, that as the Author left the copies fairly writ by his own hand, so they come as truly his to thine. For this reverend person doing me the honour of leaving me his executor, by that I had the possession and care of all his papers; and amongst them, these I found to be so worthy of the public, that I concluded it a trespass against the common interest to keep them in my own hands. But that too which made me the more confident of their value, was the earnestness of many, and to that the approbation of as great a person as the Church has any, for their impression. And accordingly I did forthwith, upon the Doctor's death, commit the copies to a stationer, who very disingenuously for some years delayed, and at last utterly refused (for what ends I know not) the printing them. But retrieving them

from him, I have put them now into honest men's hands, from whence I hope they will come well corrected into thine. And then I am very confident they will speak enough for themselves, and need no more from him who is

Thy humble Servant,

THOMAS POMFRET.

IMPRIMATUR

Hic Liber cui Titulus, A Course  
of Festival Sermons, Preached  
By Dr. Frank.

SAM. PARKER.

*June 29, 1670.*

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*And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.*

“BLESSED is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!” Blessed is any coming and going that comes so: Hosanna to him, God bless him, or Hosanna for him; God be blessed for him, whoever he be. All that went before, and all that follow, all men will say so.

And yet *in nomine Domini incipit omne malum*, said Luther once, “In the name of the Lord begins all mischief.” (And we still find it so) the whole game of mischief begun and carried on *in nomine Domini*, “under the name of God,” as the Lord’s work. How should we do, then, to discern the right *in nomine Domini*, when he that comes in the name of the Lord comes truly so? Many ways, peradventure, may be given to know it by, but this is the shortest: If the multitudes that went before, and that followed after, cry Hosanna to him; if the saints of former ages and their successors approve the manner of his coming; if it be in a way the Church of Christ has from its first beginning allowed for Christian; that is, if he come meek and lowly, humbly riding upon an ass, with palms and olives, the ensigns of peace and love; then he comes *in nomine Domini* right: but if proud and scornful, with horse and chariot, sword and spear, instead of

SERMON  
I.

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SERMON  
I.

olive boughs and branches, with a sword to cut in sunder the bond of peace and unity, and a spear to keep off charity, let him cry out *in nomine Domini*, talk of the Lord, and take his name into his mouth never so much, it is but a mere *in nomine*, and no more; a mere pretence and name, no *Domini*, nothing in it really of God; neither the multitudes before, nor multitudes that follow, nor any of the Primitive Christians ever sung Hosanna, gave any blessing or approbation, to such comers or their comings. He that comes here in the text, came nothing so; and he that will come after him must not come so: Hosanna to no such.

But Hosanna to him that truly comes in the name of the Lord: God's blessing with him. To him that comes so in the text, "to the Son of David," to Him no question. It is the business, both text and time; the words in hand, the days in hand, the days of holy Advent, are to teach us to sing Hosannas to our Saviour, to bless God for his coming, to bless him for his coming, all his comings, all his ways of coming to us; to bless his day that is a-coming, whence all his other comings come; to bless him in the highest, with heart, and tongue, and hand, to the highest we can go, that he may also bless us for it in the highest.

That it might be done the better, Holy Church has designed four Sundays to prepare us for it, wherein to tune our pipes, and fit our instruments and voices to sing Hosanna in the right key, the highest pitch, to praise God as is fitting for Christ's coming.

A business sure well worth the doing, and some good time for it worth the observing, if we either think him worth it that is here spoke of as coming, or his coming worth it. Indeed, the coming in the text is not the coming of that Feast that is now a-coming, but it is one of the ways prescribed by the Church for our better coming to the Feast, by preparing with these multitudes some boughs and branches, some Hosannas and Benedictuses, some provision of holy thoughts and divine affections for it. They "that went before," and they "that followed," in the text, sung Hosanna for a lesser coming of Christ's than that was in the flesh: we may well do it for a greater, especially making this in the text a degree or note to ascend to that, one coming to

usher to the other; the humility of his coming to Jerusalem, a way to exalt the greater humility of his coming into the world. And we have the multitudes before, and the multitudes that follow; all Patriarchs before rejoicing with Father Abraham at his day, and all the Fathers since; all that went before or followed since his coming—former and later Christians—for our example. They all, in their several generations, thought fit yearly to remember it; and so long, even four Advent Sundays together, to prepare the multitudes and people for it; that so, by preaching to them the way and manner of all Christ's comings, they might—1, Perfectly be instructed who it was, and is, that truly comes blessed "in the name of the Lord," and not be deceived by pretenders and pretences; and 2, Also truly and duly give the blessing where it ought, sing the Hosanna when, and where, and to whom we should, celebrate the memory of Christ's coming right, and Hosanna it as is meet.

Thus did all that went before; and it is fit they that come after should do as much, unless they were wiser or better than all that went before them. And all will do it; but those who are afraid to have their comings discovered to be no comings "in the name of the Lord," by the unlikeness of their comings; afraid to lose their *in nomine*, the name however, to have the multitudes that follow them fall off from them, if they should be taught by day, or time, or text, how far different their ways and comings are from the humble lowly comings and ways of Christ, whose name they so much pretend to come in, though their own name be the only name they truly come for.

Better example we have here before us, and by God's blessing we will bless with them—follow them in blessing Christ, both himself and coming, in the time and manner all that have followed him ever did it. And to do it the better, and more according to text and time, let us consider—

I. Who they were that here blessed Christ for his coming: "The multitudes that went before, and that followed:" both of them, says the text.

II. What was their way of blessing, how they did it, *ἐκραζον*, says the Evangelist; they "cried," cried it aloud.

III. Their song of blessing, what they cried, "Hosanna to

SERMON  
I.

the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest."

When we have thoroughly considered these particulars, there will remain nothing but a word of exhortation to follow them that thus go before us; as they cried it and sung it before, so are we still to cry it and sing it after them. I begin with the persons, that we may, in the first place, know whom it is we follow, the "multitudes that went before, and that followed."

And that to the letter is no more than those companies of people, men, women, and children, who went out to Mount Olivet to meet our Saviour at his coming to Jerusalem, when he came riding thither upon an ass, some of them before him, some behind him, crying out Hosanna.

Many they were, it seems, and not a single multitude neither, ὄχλοι, multitudes in the plural, several multitudes that did it: and though it be no argument to prove anything good or lawful because the multitudes do it, yet when the multitudes do good it is good to take some notice of it; nay, when so many do it, it looks the better. The song of praise sounds never better than in the great congregation, and among much people; the music never sweeter in the ears of heaven than when the choir is fullest; a good note to teach us to fill holy assemblies, to bear our parts in the congregation.

And in this congregation, 2, the music, it seems, has all its keys and voices; men, women, and children all sing their parts; no sex or age to think themselves exempted from bearing part in God's service: though the Apostle will not suffer women to preach and teach, he will give them leave to sing and pray, to answer the responses, antiphones, and versicles, the Hymns and Psalms; the little children, too, to learn betimes to lisp them out; no better seasoning of their mouths than with prayers and praises to their Redeemer.

Nor, 3, were these multitudes merely the rout of people; there were men of all conditions in them, though it may be not many Josephs or Nicodemuses, yet some, no doubt,—so many of the rulers having had their sick servants, or wives, or children healed by him. There are none too good or great for God's service. It is no disparagement to any man's



honour to be among those multitudes that go out at any time to meet Jesus; no dishonour to say Amen with the meanest in them, to join with them in any part or point of God's service. You may remember the nobility of the Bereans above the Thessalonians is, by the scripture heraldry, placed in this, that "they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily;" in short, were more religious, and devout, and earnest in the way of Christ, to worship him, than the other.

SERMON  
I.

Acts xvii.  
11.

Nor, 4, were these multitudes choirs of priests and clerks, or only orders of religious men; it was a congregation of seculars, though there were priests and Apostles in it. It is S. Chrysostom's own note, to tell us, men are not to put off the work of devotion and religion wholly to the priest and clerk, as if they only were to sing the Benedictus, Hosannas, or Alleluiahs, and the multitudes only stand looking on; or think men in some religious orders were only obliged to live orderly and like Christians, all secular or laymen as they pleased. *Non ita sane, non ita est*, says he, "It is not so indeed, it is not so." *Hoc plane est quod evertit orbem universum*. It is this, "it is plainly this," this false opinion or fancy, "that ruins all the world." <sup>a</sup> Behold the multitudes here going before, crying, and the multitudes following after, answering them in their "Hosanna to the Son of David;" all ranks of people, the most secular, so religious grown since Christ's coming. It is to be feared he is going from us, or will be quickly, if we omit our parts, if we forget our duties, if we once begin to think too much of bearing part or share in his service, either in the congregation or out of it.

But, 5, however, they that pretend to go out to meet Christ, to have more sense of devotion and zeal to it than others, they above all surely will be easily heard in their Hosannas or Benedictus. The more devout we are, we sing the louder; the more earnest we be to meet our Lord, the

<sup>a</sup> [The passage is in S. Chrysostom's treatise "Against the Opponents of the Introducers of Monasticism," (πρὸς τοὺς πολεμοῦντας τοῖς ἐπὶ τὸ μονάζειν εἰσαγάγουσιν,) lib. iii. cap. 14. Referring to S. Paul's exhortation to all men to follow Christ, he says: Τὸ πᾶσαν ἀνατρέψαν τὴν οἰκουμένην τοῦτο ἐστίν, ὅτι

μείζονος οἰόμεθα δεῖν ἀκριθείας τῷ μονάζοντι μόνῳ, τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς ἐξεῖναι βραθύμως ζῆν. Οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν, οὐκ ἔστιν· ἀλλὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀπαιτούμεθα, φησὶ, πάντες φιλοσοφίαν· καὶ σφόδρα φαίην ἂν ἔγωγε· μάλλον δὲ οὐκ ἔγώ, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ὁ μέλλων κρίνειν ἡμᾶς. (S. Joan. Chrysost. Opp. tom. i. p. 125, ed. Paris, 1836.)—Ev.]

SERMON  
I.

more welcome will we give him, the higher gratulations and acclamations to him. Whoever fail in their parts, methinks such should not. If we pretend to love him more than others, then more prayers and praises to him than others: if we love him more, they will be more, and we will not be ashamed to profess it in the multitude, nor think much to be in the multitude among the meanest or poorest at it.

Surely not; seeing, 6, the Jews themselves think not much to do so, seeing them so ready, so eager, so violent, in giving honour to him, can it be expected that Christians should be behind? but they before, and we not behind? Too much it is that they before and we behind; it should be rather, we before and they behind: though they got the start in time to get before us, we should sure in measure get it, go there before them. Christ came to them, and they go out to meet him. He comes to us, and we go from him. He came to them at this time with a sad message of destruction, and therefore weeps in the mount of his triumph to look upon the city, and yet they entertain him with Hosannas. Blessed be the name of the Lord, so come things to pass. He comes to us with tidings of great joy, such the angels term it, his birth no other coming; yet we think much to sing Hosannas for it, to keep a day of praise, or a song of praise, or a face and garb of praise; the more unchristian they that do so, less sensible of Christ's favours than the very multitude, than the Jew himself. Rare Christians the while, that think no better, speak no better, rejoice no better at Christ's coming, at his greatest and most gracious coming.

I cannot say this multitude, to the letter, and in the story, are any unanswerable argument for our Hosannas. Yet when a multitude does well, it is good to follow them; but take it now, 2, in the mystery, and there needs no greater to persuade us.

The multitudes before are, in the mystery, the holy Patriarchs, and they that followed are the Prophets. Now what the Patriarchs and Prophets have rejoiced at, that must we. Abraham says, Christ himself "rejoiced to see my day, he saw it and was glad." Yes, your father Abraham was glad. He was glad to see Christ a-coming. The Prophets are

everywhere full of joyful expressions at the mention of the Messiah's coming; their eyes looked, and their hearts longed for him; and the Prophet Zachary calls to us to tell it out with joy to the daughter of Sion, tells punctually even of this very joy and coming too. And "what was written beforetime," either by Patriarch or Prophet, "was written for our learning," says the Apostle. We may do what they did, what they would have us.

SERMON  
I.

Zech. ix. 9.

Rom. xv. 4.

Or, 2. The multitudes before in the mystery are the Jews; the multitudes that follow are the Gentiles. Both bidden by the Apostle to rejoice, "Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people:" his people, the Jews, before, and the Gentiles behind, all shall rejoice in his salvation: for glory is now coming to the Jews, glory to his people Israel, and light unto the Gentiles, to light them by his coming. So sang old Simeon in his song.

Rom. xv. 10.

[Deut.  
xxxii. 43.]

Luke ii. 32.

3. The multitudes before is the Jewish synagogue; the multitudes behind, the Christian Church; a multitude, indeed, that cannot be numbered, of emperors, and kings, and princes; bishops and priests; doctors, martyrs, confessors, and virgins, all in their several orders and generations, crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David," the "whole world gone after him." Before, indeed, only *Notus in Judæa Deus*, God only known in Jewry; his coming only talked of in Israel; but, after, *Quam admirabile nomen tuum in universa terra!* "O Lord our Governor, how wonderful (or excellent) is thy name in all the world!" All these multitudes—the Jew, with his multitude of patriarchs, priests, and Levites, and singers, and prophets, with his sacrifices of bulls, and rams, and goats, and sheep, of types and figures, all crying out Messiah is coming;—the Christians, apostles, martyrs, confessors, doctors, virgins, bishops, priests, and deacons, and all several orders in their choirs and churches throughout the world, crying out, He is come; all the corners of the earth resounding out Hosannas and Allelujahs to him. *Una est fides præcedentium atque sequentium populorum*, says St. Gregory; all believing and professing the same He that cometh here; they, the Jews, before, crying "He that cometh;" we, the Christians, crying "He that is come," or rather, He that cometh still, that every day comes to us by his grace, and

Rev. vii. 9.

Ps. lxxvi. 1.

Ps. viii. 7.

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through his word, and in his sacraments: "Blessed is he that cometh" still, not a tence or tittle changed; he that comes being the same for ever; eternity and things eternal being ever coming, never gone or going.

So now the congregation is full, what should we do but begin our service? when we have Law, and Prophets, and Gospel to countenance and bear us company in our *Te Deum* and *Benedictus*, at our prayers and praises, in our joys and festivals; all of them crying nothing but Christ, nothing but Christ, blessed be he, blessed be he, and blessed be his coming, and blessed be his day, and blessed be his deeds; the whole practice of all Christian churches and congregations that ever were gathered together *in nomine Domini*, "in the name of the Lord," till these mere nominal verbal Christians, that are afraid of the name of Him that cometh, of the name of Jesus, of blessing it or bowing at it; all Christians, all that came before in the name of Christ, till these pretenders that follow nobody but their own fancies; all agreeing in the same welcome to their Redeemer, joining in the same prayers and praises: what should we do but add our voices and sing with them? Better, sure, with the multitudes before and behind, the whole multitude of saints of so many ages, than with a few scattered, headless, heedless companies forbear it; better pray and praise with them, than prattle and prate with these; better their Hosanna and *Benedictus* to Him "that cometh in the name of the Lord," than these men's senseless sermons and discourses, who come in their own name, and of their own heads, without God's sending them at all. Having, then, so full a choir, so many voices to bear us company, let us also now sing with them.

Yet that we may be sure to sing in tune, let us first listen a little to the key and note they bless in: it is a loud one, for it is a crying; "they cried:" not in the sense we often take it, for a mournful tone or note (for it is an expression of joy and gladness; so *S. Luke xix. 37*, "They began to rejoice," &c.), but with a loud voice it was they praised him, that is the meaning, so expressed in the same verse by that Evangelist.

Indeed true it is, God has turned our songs of joy into the

voice of weeping (as the prophet complains) ; taken away our feasts and gaudy days ; and we may well cry, and cry aloud in that sadder sense of the word “crying :” yet for all that, must we not lay down the other, or forget the song of prayer and praise, especially upon the point of Christ’s coming to us. Here it must be crying in another tone, singing, speaking, proclaiming the great favour and honour of Him “that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Blessing, and honour, and glory to him that so cometh. Now that we be not out in tune or note, let us mind the word ; we shall find the sweetest ways of blessing in it.

1. It is a loud crying, such is *ἔκραζον* ; and that teaches us to be devout and earnest in our prayers and praises, in blessing Christ.

2. It is loud and to be heard, to instruct us not to be ashamed of our way of serving Christ ; he that is, Christ will be ashamed of him ; so Christ professes, S. Mark viii. 38.

3. It is the crying of a multitude, many multitudes ; and intimates to us what prayer and praise does best, even the public and common service.

4. It is the crying of several multitudes the same thing, and insinuates peace and unity ; that is the only Christian way of praising God : one God, and one faith, and one Christ, says the Apostle, and one heart and mind of all that profess them ; and it were best one way of doing it ; the same Hosanna, the same Benedictus, the same voice and form of prayer, and praise, and worship, if it could be had.

5. It is of some before, and some that follow ; it is not a confused or disorderly note, or way, huddling and confounding all together, but the voice of order, where every one sings in time, in tune, and place ; some begin and others follow, and the chorus joins, all in decency and order. This to preach decency and order to them that come in at any time, or call anywhere upon the name of Christ ; even the very multitude here in Christ’s praise keep their parts and order.

6. It is a crying, yet of joy, we told you, the voice of mirth and gladness, that we may know Christ is best served with a cheerful spirit. Christianity is no such dull, heavy thing as some have fancied it ; it admits of mirth and songs, so they be *in nomine Domini*, either to the praise of God, or not

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to his dishonour, so they be not light, or wanton, or scurrilous, or such like.

7. This crying here is general, and our praises of God must be so too; all that is without me, and "all that is within me, praise his holy name:" all the powers of my soul, superior and inferior, all the organs of my body, all the instruments of my life and living, my estate and means, all to concur in giving praise to God, in celebrating the mercies, the humilities, the condescensions, the out-goings and incomings, of my Redeemer.

Thus we have the key and tune of blessing God and Christ devoutly, confidently, publicly, unanimously, orderly, cheerfully, and universally, with all our faculties and powers. Let us now hear the song of praise, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he," &c. And that we may sing in tune, let us know our parts.

Three parts there are in it as in other songs, *bassus*, *tenor*, and *altus*—the bass, the tenor, and the treble. "Hosanna to the Son of David;" there is the bass, the deepest and lowest note, the humanity of Christ *in filio David*, being "the Son of David:" the bass sings that, that is low indeed for him, we can go no lower. "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;" there is the tenor or middle part, he and the name of the Lord joined together, God and man united—that is a note higher than the first, the Mediator between God and man; God in the highest, Son of David in the lowest; the middle note then follows. And *Hosanna in altissimis*, the *altus* or treble, the highest note of all: we can reach no higher, strain we never so high.

We begin low, that is the way to reach high; "Hosanna to the Son of David:" yet as low as it is, it is hard to hit, hard to reach the meaning of it. Hosanna, a hard note, so interpreters have found it.

St. Augustine will have it an interjection only, to express rejoicing, like that *ἰὸ Παῖαυ* among the Greeks, or *Io triumphe* among the Latins. The truth is, it is an expression and voice of joy and gladness, though no interjection: an expression used by the Jews at the Feast of Tabernacles, a joyful acclamation, enough to authorize common and received expressions of joy, though it may be they that use them do not

perfectly understand them ; especially joy inexpressible (such as ours should be for the “ Son of David’s ” coming) may be allowed to express itself as it can, or as it does in other rejoicings, when it can do no better.

Some interpret it redemption ; others, an hymn, or praise ; others, grace ; others, glory ; others, boughs “ to the Son of David : ” all yet concur in this, that it is a joyful wish for prosperity to Christ, under the title of “ the Son of David : ” grace, redemption, praise, and glory, psalms and hymns, and all the other outward expressions of thanks, respect, and joy be given to Him who now comes to “ restore the kingdom of his father David.” Nothing too much to be given to the Messiah, for him they always mean by “ the Son of David : ” no inward or outward joy enough for the coming of our Redeemer.

But though “ Hosanna ” mean all these several renderings, yet the construction is no more than, *Salvum fac*, or *salve obsecro*, “ Save, we beseech thee,” like our *Vivat Rex*, “ God save the King.” “ Save the Son of David, we beseech thee,” and save us by “ the Son of David.” For both it is : a prayer to God to preserve and prosper him, that he may have good luck with his honour, and ride on ; and a prayer to God to save and deliver us by and through him, or to him to do it ; *Salva obsecro, O fili David, (O fili for filio.)* “ Save us, we pray thee, O Son of David.”

By this time you understand “ Hosanna ” to be both a prayer and a thanksgiving, a short collect and a hymn both, an expression of rejoicing for Christ’s coming, with a prayer that it may come happy both to him and us. Thus you have it in Psalm cxviii. 24, 25, whence this seems either to be taken or to relate. “ This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it ; ” there is the voice of rejoicing : then follows *אֲנִי יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעֵה נָא* “ Help me now, O Lord ; O Lord, send us now prosperity : ” the prayer upon it.

It is an easy observation hence, that our rejoicings are to consist in prayers and praises, in hymns and collects ; no true Hosannas to Christ, no true blessing him but so ; no keeping Christmas or any feast without them. To spend a day in idleness, or good cheer, is not to keep holiday : to

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keep Christmas is not to fill our mouths with meat, but our lips with prayers and praises; not to sit down and play, but to kneel down and pray; not to rest from work and labour, but, by some holy rest and retirement from temporal labour, to labour so to enter into eternal rest. The business of a "holiday" is holy business; "Hosanna" business of Christmas, Christ's coming so to be solemnized with solemn prayers, and praises, and thanksgivings.

And there is more than so in this "Hosanna." It was the close of certain prayers and litanies used by the Jewish synagogues; like our *Libera nos Domine*, our "Good Lord deliver us," in our litanies. They first reckoned up the names of God; God, Lord, King of kings, &c., and to each, "Hosanna;" then his attributes, his mercy, truth, &c., to each, "Hosanna;" then what they desired, both in public and private, and for each, "Hosanna." All resound "Hosanna," all echo out "Hosanna,"—save, and help, and prosper us. It is no new thing, it seems, or of popish original, to use public litanies and liturgies; it is but what the Church of God has ever had in use; the way, from the beginning, it always served him in. The very petitions of the Lord's Prayer are taken out of the Jewish "Sedar," or Common-Prayer Book; and if Christ himself, who wanted neither words nor spirit to pray, thought fit yet notwithstanding to make use of received expressions and ancient forms, I conceive not why any that profess him should think themselves wiser than their Master, and reject old and accustomed forms of prayers and praise. Yet, indeed, we cannot well expect they should keep a form, that will not keep a day to bless him for his coming. We that resolve of this, may be resolved of the other, that no way like the old to do it in.

That teaches us to pray the Messiah that Christ may reign, that his kingdom may prosper and be enlarged; that we ourselves may be of it, and prosper in it; that we may have redemption and salvation, grace and glory; sing hymns and songs of praise to him, both in his kingdom here upon earth, and in his kingdom in heaven. This the way of entertaining him at his coming, to entertain ourselves, and time, in blessing him for his goodness, and desiring of his blessing.

And yet, besides, there is as much faith as devotion to be



here learned from the multitude, in this "Hosanna." There is an acknowledgment of his office, that he was Messiah. They, it seems, believed it. I suspect they that love not to have a day to mind them of his becoming "the Son of David," of his nativity, do scarce believe it. If they thought his coming real, we should have some real doings at it; they would be as busy in it as the best. Were *filio David* well grounded in us, did we really believe him "the Son of David," we would also become the sons of David, who was a man of prayer and praise,—sons of praise, sing Hosannas as fast as any. It is only want of faith that hinders works; we believe not in him as we should, whatever we talk, else we would do to him as we should, accept all his comings, even upon our knees, at least with all thankfulness, and such devotion as time and place required of us.

And, 2, we would raise our voices a note higher, add *Benedictus* to Hosanna: "Blessed is he that cometh," &c. Bless God, and bless him, and bless his coming, and bless his goodness, and bless his power, and bless his fulness, and bless his work, and bless his purpose; desire God to bless him, and man to bless him, and also bless ourselves in him; for no less than all these is in the words.

"Blessed," first, "be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;" "blessed be the Lord God of Israel," that "he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up a mighty salvation for us in the house of his servant David." So old Zachary, S. Luke i. 68, 69. Blessed be God the Father, for the Son; God the Father, for the Son of David's coming to us.

Blessed, 2, be the Son; blessed be he that cometh, blessed be our Lord Jesus Christ for his coming; for to him is blessing due, that he would vouchsafe to come and bless: bless the Father for sending, the Son for coming; blessing to them both for thus blessing us.

Blessed, 3, be his coming, all his comings; his coming in the flesh, his coming in the Spirit, his coming in humility, his coming in glory. His coming in the flesh, that is a blessing coming for us, whereby all other blessings come unto us; his coming in the Spirit, or by his grace, a blessed coming too, and still daily coming; his coming in glory,

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that may be a blessed coming to us too, if we bless him duly for his other comings: if we truly and devoutly rejoice at his first and second coming, no doubt but we shall also triumph at his last. That he cometh, came, and will come unto the end, is blessed news; we therefore with these multitudes so bless him for it.

Blessed, 4, be his goodness, and that is evident enough in his coming to us: bless him for that he would be so good to come, when all good was going from us, when we ourselves were gone away from him, ran away as far as well we could, that he would come after us.

Blessed, 5, be his power and authority, for "in the name of the Lord" he comes, not in his own name, but in the  
John v. 43. Father's that sent him; confess, acknowledge, submit to his power and authority, that is the true way to bless him.

Blessed, 6, be his greatness and fulness of blessing; blessed be his blessedness, for he is full of blessings; in him all fulness is and dwells. "God blessed for ever." Let us make this acknowledgment of him, profess and proclaim it as they do here call him, the ever blessed.  
Col. ii. 9.  
Rom. ix. 5.

Blessed, 7, be all his works, actions, and passions, the works of our redemption, justification, sanctification, glorification, which all come to us only through his Name and merits. Attribute we all to him and to his Name: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name be the praise" and glory of all these great and wonderful things.

Blessed, lastly, be all his purposes and intentions towards us. He came to reveal his Father's will unto us; bless him for that; bless we should all such that make known unto us the will of God. *Beati pedes evangelizantium*, "Blessed be the feet of the ministers of the Gospel," much more this great Archbishop of our souls that sends them. He came to glorify the Father, to teach us to do so; bless him for that. He came to save and deliver us from all kinds of evil, however we wilfully thrust daily into it some or other; bless him for that; say all good of him, that wishes and works all good to us: but, which is only truly to bless, further we all purposes what we can, and help them forward, that he and we may be glorified by the hand.  
John viii.  
49.

For this blessing is not merely a form of words; we must,

1, earnestly and heartily desire God to bless, to bless all Christ's ways of coming to us, that we may joyfully, and cheerfully, and devoutly entertain him. Desire God, 2, to bless him that cometh in his name, him, whoever he be, that he sends to us; but this 'Ο ἐρχόμενος especially, that his coming may come abroad to all the world, all come in unto him. Desire, 3, that man may bless him; incite the sons of men to sing praise too unto him. "Praise him, all ye nations; praise him, all ye people;" strive what we can to get all we come nigh to come with us, and bear a part in blessing him.

In a word, bless we ourselves in him; think, and profess, and proclaim ourselves blessed that Christ is come to us, that we have our part and portion in him; place all our joy, all our rejoicing, all our triumph that he is with us, that the "name of the Lord is declared" unto us, that by his coming the name of the Lord is called upon us, that we are now of his retinue, that we now belong unto him, that he is daily coming in us.

And for this *Hosanna*, now, 3, *in excelsis* indeed, "Hosanna to him in the highest:" sing we it as loud as we can reach, as loud as we can cry it.

And that may pass for the first interpretation of *in excelsis*, that we are to cry it as loud as we can cry it, do what we can to express our joy, how we can to give him thanks, to exalt his praise what we are able, *in excelsis*, "to the highest" of our power; so, 1, "Praise him in the height."

Ps.  
cxlviii. 1.

We all of us *in excelsis*, in our highest, yea, and 2, the very highest, the very most *in excelsis* of us all, the highest of us, is too low to praise him worthily; yet praise him, O ye highest, ye kings and princes of the earth, "Kings of the earth and all people," come down from your *excelsis*, and lay your crowns and sceptres at the feet of this King (as S. Luke) that cometh, and submit all your kingdoms to the kingdom of Christ; make ye all your kingdoms to bless his, that your kingdoms also may be blessed.

Ps.  
cxlviii. 11.

Nay, and yet there are higher than these highest, who are to praise him: "Praise him, all ye heavens," "Praise him, all ye angels: praise him, all his hosts." So S. Luke intimates it when he expresses it, "Peace on earth, in heaven, and glory

Ps.  
cxlviii. 4.

ver. 2.

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Col. i. 20.

in the highest;" glory in heaven for the peace that is made between heaven and earth by Him that cometh here in the name of the Lord; by whom, says the Apostle, all things are reconciled, "whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." "Hosanna in the highest," for this peace with the highest, sung be it by heaven and earth, by angels and men. The angels sang somewhat a like song at his birth when he was coming into the world, according as S. Luke interprets it; and will sing it again if we invite them, as the Psalmist does, to sing with us; and we must desire it, that God may be praised: all glory both in heaven and earth.

That is the way, indeed, to "Hosanna in the highest," as it is a song of praise; but it is also, we told you, a prayer, that even our praises, and the ground of them, may continue.

A prayer, 1, to God *in excelsis*, the most highest, as the Psalmist speaks, "Save us, O thou most highest." No salvation but from those everlasting hills of mercy, salvation to be looked for from none else; the very meanest of the multitude know that.

A prayer, 2, for salvation *in excelsis*, that he would deliver us with a high hand, work salvation with a mighty arm, such as all the world might see it; that he would magnify this King that cometh, and exalt his Kingdom that cometh to the clouds, set it above the reach and power of malicious men, make it grow and prosper, maugre all contradiction and opposition of the highest and strongest of the earth.

A prayer, 3, for salvation *in excelsis* indeed, for salvation in the highest heavens; not only to be delivered here, but to be saved hereafter; not only for grace and righteousness here of the highest pitch, but for glory of the highest order: a prayer that God, as he has exalted Him that here came in his name, so he would exalt us, all that call upon his name, to sit at his right hand in heavenly places, in the highest right. So these multitudes pray, and so pray we; so praise they, and so praise we. Do what we can ourselves to praise and bless him, and do what we can to get others to do it; call upon the angels to join with us, do it with all our might and strength, stretch out our voices, screw up our strings; nothing content or satisfy us in our prayers or praises, but

the highest,—the highest thankfulness, the highest devotion, the highest expression and way of both, that either the multitudes before, or the multitudes that follow, Jews or Christians, former or latter saints, ever used before us.

All, perhaps, cannot spread carpets, cloths, and garments to entertain him, nor have all boughs of palms or olives to meet him with; all have not wherewith to make a solemn show and flourish; but all have tongues, all may sing Hosannas to him; or if that word be hard, all may cry, “Save us, Lord,” and “Blessed be he that came and cometh.” If we have neither substance to praise him with, nor solemn ceremonies allowed us to praise him by, nor solemn services permitted to pray to him, or to praise him, we have yet words, and Psalms, and prayers to do it with, and times and places that none can hinder us. And if we set about it *in excelsis*, with high courage, such as becomes the servants of the Highest, and neither fear the face of man nor devil; we may do it *in excelsis* too, with high solemnities. Our Hosanna to be saved, “Save us, O King of Heaven, when we call upon thee;” our prayers will save us from any thing that can hurt us; He that is in the highest will succour and defend us, preserve and bless us: and if we follow him strongly with our cries, follow these multitudes close in their devotion to follow Christ, sing out his praise with courage, pray with fervency, go out to meet him with joy, entertain him with gladness, own his coming with confidence, celebrate it with holy worship, do all to the highest of our powers: our Hosannas shall be quickly turned into Allelujahs, our blessing him into being blessed ourselves by him, and we, with all the Saints that went before or followed him, sing Benedictuses and Allelujahs in the highest; to the highest God in the highest heavens, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A SERMON  
ON THE  
SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

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S. MARK i. 3.

*Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

SERMON  
II.

S. JOHN BAPTIST is here sent, in the verse before the text, to prepare his way. Holy Church sends her baptists and preachers still, four several days together before the time (for so many Advent Sundays or great days of preparation there are in her holy Calendar) to do as much. Conceive me the voice of one of them to-day, of one crying in the wilderness, in a land as wild and barren of good, as any wilderness of water, "Prepare ye the way," &c.

Indeed he had need of a better voice than mine, that cries it now to any purpose. Need there is of a loud crier indeed, of *vox clamantis* at the highest, one to cry it aloud, and ring it in men's ears, to get them to it; they have so almost forgotten, many of them, both day and preparation—his day and his way, so many new ones have they of their own.

Nay, and where old day and way are both pretended to be observed, there is too much wilderness and desert; so many wild, irregular, unmortified passions and affections, such dry, barren doings, so much of our own ways, and ends, and interests, even in religious business, the straight way deserted but too much, that we had need of some rough John Baptist to thunder it to awaken us.

Nor will once crying it serve the turn. One single "Prepare" will do no good. "Prepare, make straight," both little

enough; and three Evangelists to cry it so after the Baptist has done crying: again and again, over and over, scarce sufficient to keep wild passions under, to work us to a sufficient preparation, to make straight paths, or keep them.

S. John, the Gospeller for the day, has only the first part of the text, the other three have both, S. Matt. iii. 3, S. Luke iii. 4, and S. Mark here in the text. The Prophet Isaiah, whence the words are taken, has so too, with some addition. Were we what S. John would have us, we should need no addition; but being what we are, "line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little," are too little for it. It is best to take the fullest, that our preparation may be the fuller; to take it too out of the mouths of two or three witnesses, that so every word may be established in our hearts and in our memories: the Lord's way prepared, his paths made straight, the work done against his coming, whensoever, and howsoever, and which way soever he shall vouchsafe to come unto us.

The words are originally the Prophet Isaiah's, prophesied Isa. xl. 3. by him, but proclaimed by S. John Baptist, Christ's herald to proclaim his coming, and his harbinger to take up his lodging for him in the hearts of the sons of men. And a proclamation they are to all to prepare and to make ready, make all ready to entertain him: and two points there are of it, two parts of the preparation required in it.

I. To prepare his way.

II. To make straight his paths.

This way of his divides itself, you see, into the great open road, and into narrow paths: and each has its proper way of ordering; "prepare" to one, and "make straight" to the other. Prepare his way, make straight his paths.

But to prepare it for the fuller and easier understanding (for I preach to all), I shall do with the text as we do with our rooms and houses, when we prepare and make them ready; in doing that, we turn things upside down, remove them this way and that way, hither and thither, till we find where to place them best. I shall use the words so here; disturb their order, that I may bring all into the better order, and we all make the better preparation, and set all things straight.

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II.

Be pleased, then, to forgive me the disorder, and consider this "way" and "paths:" first, what they are: then, secondly, whose they are: then, thirdly, this preparation, that it must be: what, fourthly, or how, it must be: and, fifthly, by whom it must be.

I. What the way that is to be prepared, and what the paths to be made straight, we must understand by the connexion of these words with the former, and by the way S. John went before us.

II. Whose they are, the *Domini* will tell us, "the Lord's" they are.

III. That prepared they must be, the mood and tense of the verbs *parite* and *facite*, being the imperative command here to do it, will assure us.

IV. How prepared, the use and sense of the same words will show us, when we examine what it is ordinarily to prepare and make straight.

V. By whom they must be prepared and straightened, the number of the verb, plural, and indefinite, will satisfy us. We are all to do it.

So, I. what this way is, and what these paths mean; II. whose they are; III. that prepared they must be; IV. how prepared they should be; and, V. by whom prepared they ought to be—are the particulars, by which I shall lead you in the way, and in the preparation, prepare you the way to prepare the way of the Lord, and make his paths straight; the only way to have any comfort of his coming. I begin with "the way," to show you what it is, that we err not from it.

I. This way, say some, is the soul of man, *cor spatiosum*, so Origen; and these paths, the powers and operations of it. "His way is in this sea, and his paths in these deep waters." Here the wind blows, and the tempest rises, and the waves roar; the unruly passions make a noise and tumult, and so, as the Psalm has it, "His footsteps are not known." We cannot discern his track by reason of their tumultuous doings. These are they that are to be prepared, and stilled, and quieted; the soul calmed, and laid, and smoothed, that Christ may come into it. But this is the way into which, and not by which, he comes.



1. The way by which he comes, or we meet him, is, first, the way of Faith. Faith is the way by which he comes into the souls of men, the way in which S. Paul worshipped the "God of his fathers," in and by which we first come unto our Lord, and worship him as did our fathers. Prepare your hearts for it, prepare them for him, that when he comes he may find faith upon the earth, in this earth of ours, wherever else he miss it. And here, as faith is the way, so the several articles of it may pass for the paths. God grant we keep them right and straight, and ourselves straight to them, in this perverse and crooked generation.

SERMON  
II.Acts xxiv.  
14.Luke xviii.  
8.

2. The way, secondly, by which we meet him is the Law; *mandata legalia*, says another. Not much distant from S. Paul's styling it, schoolmaster to Christ, the way to bring us to him. The terrors and threatenings of the law a good way to prepare us for his coming: the types and figures, a good way to lead us to him, that we may see he is the same that was, and is, and is to come; the Saviour of all that were, and are, and shall be saved; the same the patriarchs promised, the sacrifices prefigured, the prophets prophesied of, the Jews expected, the apostles preached of, the world believed on, and all must be saved by. With such thoughts as these, then, are we to set upon our preparation: 1. To break our high and haughty spirits by the consideration of the terrors of the law, the curses due to them that break it (and, alas! who is it that does not?), so to make way to let him in. Then, 2, by the types and figures, to confirm our faith, and make them so many several paths to trace out his footsteps and know his coming.

Gal. iii. 24.

3. The third way by which we are prepared, or which we are to prepare for him, is Repentance. The very way S. John Baptist came to preach. His "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," being the same with this, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Those words of the prophet the text, and his the comment. No way indeed to Christ but by this way. No way but by repentance to begin it. "Turn ye, turn ye," says the prophet; we are all out of the way, God knows, from the beginning. If we will into the way again, into the way of our Lord, turn we must, repent we must of our former ways and doings, get

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us into better ways. And then "paths" here will be the strait and narrow ways, the rigours and austerities of repentance, the straitening ourselves of all our former liberties and desires; making our paths so strait and narrow that no tumour of pride, no swellings of lust, no pack-horses or heavy carriages of the world or devil, may pass by that way any more; nothing but Christ and his little flock of humble virtues, such as can enter at the strait gate, none else henceforward to walk in it. Prepare we repentance, and all its parts and paths, for the third way and its paths.

Acts xxii.  
16.Mark xvi.  
16.

4. A fourth is Baptism, the way S. John Baptist came in too; a way that named him so, the way that was always thought to lead all to Christ and his kingdom, that came there in any ordinary way. "Arise, and be baptized," that is the way to the Lord Jesus. The way he sent his disciples in to bring in the world unto him, whatever shorter way our new men of late have found for their disciples. The articles and conditions of the covenant of baptism, promised and undertaken by the baptized, either in their own persons, or by proxy, are the title "paths" of this great way, the several tracks that make it up, the ways and paths we are to walk in, if we intend ever to meet the Lord.

5. The fifth way is God's commandments, a way that we all must make ready for him; his own way indeed, drawn out by his own hands and fingers; a way of which himself professes, that he came not to destroy it (as some vainly delude themselves) but to fulfil it, to perfect, to exalt it to a greater height; from the outward act to the inward thought; from the lower degree of virtue to the highest of it; from bare precepts to additional counsels; from mere external performances to right and regular intentions in them. And here, as the moral precepts are the great plain way, so the Christian enhancements of them to the highest pitch, the regulations of them to right intentions and Christian counsels, are the paths, the narrow and straiter paths. The sum and short is this: Holy Christian life and conversation, in all its parts, according to our powers and capacities, is the fifth way to be prepared by them that seek the Lord, and expect to see his face.

6. And yet if there be room and leave for a private conjec-

ture, the "way" of God's providence, in his judgments and mercies towards Jerusalem; the way of his mercy in saving the believing, and destroying the unbelieving Jew, now near at hand, may come in for a sixth way of the Lord: a way, indeed, past finding out in all its secret paths, yet to be prepared for, and more than pointed at by the prophet Isaiah, in that place whence the words are taken, and by S. John in this. God there bids comfort his captive people, for their deliverance from Babylon was now nigh at hand, and their enemies near destruction; calls to them, therefore, to prepare themselves for it, to make ready and expect it. And here S. John Baptist tells the people the kingdom of heaven "is now at hand:" which (by comparing it with that "wrath to come" threatened to the Pharisees and Sadducees, ver. 7, with his exhortation to flee from it; and by the coming of the "great and dreadful day of the Lord," mentioned by the prophet Malachi, iv. 5, in the place where S. John Baptist's coming is foretold; and the dreadfulness of it expressed, chap. iii. 2, where he is said to come to prepare his way before him; but, ver. 1, &c., S. John's inviting to repentance to divert or shun it,) can be no other than Christ's coming in judgment against Jerusalem, to execute vengeance upon his enemies, and deliver his faithful servants. Vengeance and deliverance,—the two great manifestations of his power and kingdom. And sure no more, then, need to cry out to us to prepare and make right paths against that coming, make way for his judgments to pass by us, and his mercies to come to us.

Thus you have the way and paths, observe them: many several paths, but one only way to Christ and heaven, observe that too; and though many ways I showed you, they all come into one Law and Gospel; baptism and repentance, faith and obedience, mercy and judgment, precepts and counsels, all into one. (1.) It is "way," in the singular, to show that peace and unity is the only way of the Lord, the only way of Christ.

Yet, (2,) both "paths" and way it is. We must descend to particulars, every one to cleanse his own, his own private paths. Not only, "Show me thy ways, O Lord," says David, Ps. xxv. 3. but "teach me thy paths" too. Not only to rectify the

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outward action, but the inward thoughts; not to content ourselves with a general profession, but to come to a particular practice of religion of the way of Christ. Observe that too.

Particular practice, I say, and yet, (3,) of the general way, of the way generally and catholically held by all: and, further, of all things generally in that way, all the several tracks of virtue, none to be omitted, seeing the paths indefinitely, one as well as another (none, as I hear, excepted), are here to be made straight: that is a third thing I wish observed.

But lastly, the way first prepared, then the paths made straight. Christ's way is a way of order. First, a general resolution to make all straight and ready, then a particular entering into every path to do it. Resolve first upon the way of piety, then take the paths that lead best to it; *parate* first, then *facite*; prepare good resolutions, then set to do them. Nothing done well before them, nothing well done without them. And *viam* first, then *semitas*; the plain way of the Commandments for beginners, the harder and straighter way of counsels for great proficients and perfect men.

II. The way and path thus now found out, we are next to inquire whose it is, or to whom it leads. *Viam Domini*, "the Lord's" it is; so the Septuagint and Evangelists all render it in the genitive. And *Domino* it is too; so the Hebrew in the dative; to him it is, or for him it is; to him it is it leads, for him it is prepared, the preparation all for him.

*Viam Domini*. 1. His way first, and not our own. *Non sunt viæ meæ, viæ vestræ*. His ways are not ours; ours are lust, covetousness, ambition, hypocrisy, mere superficial and external works, vanity, and error. The ways we spoke of, mercy and truth, faith, hope, charity, obedience, and all good ways, are his, not ours; we have no good ones of our own. Nay, even our souls, those ways, too, into which he comes, are his: his, and not our own; the soul of the father, and the soul of the son; of all fathers and sons: all mine, says God. Our bodies, too, they are God's; bodies and spirits all his, made and prepared for his own way and service; all again to be prepared by us, that they may be fit for him to walk and be in.

For, 2, *Viam Domino* it is. To him all our ways and paths

Ezek. xviii.  
4.  
1 Cor. vi. 20.

must be directed, to his glory and worship: all lead to him as to the end of all; from him all good ways come, to him all good ways tend: he is Alpha and Omega, is and must be the beginning and end of them. They are *Domini et Domino*, both of the Lord and to the Lord, all our ways and preparations, or all are wrong. To him as to my Lord the King, visiting us in mercy and gracing us with his presence; and to him as to my Lord Judge, to visit us in judgment, and punish all offenders; as a Lord to us, or a Lord against us; as our own King in triumph, or another King in fury; and to him in each consideration there is a proper way, and a proper way of preparing it.

III. And now, thirdly, Be it what way it will, and to the Lord, under what notion or way we will, a preparation there is due, a preparation next enjoined us.

Indeed there is no meeting him unprepared. Better meet a lion in the way, or a bear robbed of her whelps, than him unprepared. "Prepare your hearts unto the Lord," 1 Sam. vii. 3. says the Prophet Samuel. And make "straight paths for your feet," says the Apostle. Law and Gospel both for preparation. If thou come to serve the Lord, "prepare thy soul," says the Son of Sirach. 2. If thou goest into his house, prepare thy foot, keep it, keep an eye over it, that it slip not there, says the Son of David; go not in rashly and in haste. 3. Prepare thy mouth too, that it be not too hasty to utter anything, says he. 4. If thou goest any where to pray, before thou prayest, prepare thyself; they that fear the Lord will do so: will prepare their hearts, yea, and ponder their paths too; for so Solomon advises us, "Ponder the paths of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established." Nay, ponder them, and all thy ways shall be established, so it may be read; and so Jotham found it, "became mighty," says that text, "because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God." No way to become great, mighty, and powerful with God and man, like preparing God's ways in righteousness, keeping ourselves straight to the ways of God; a reward sufficient to establish it for a duty. That we may do it as we should, we are now next to inquire what is meant by this preparing and making straight, and how we are to do it.

Heb. xii. 13.  
Eccles. ii. 1.  
Eccles. v. 1.  
Eccles. v. 2.  
Eccles. xviii. 23.  
Eccles. ii. 17.  
Prov. iv. 26.  
2 Chron. xxvii. 6.

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IV. The word in the original is either from פָּנִים, *panim, facies*, and may be construed either by *faciem date*, i.e. *speciem*, make the way look fair, give it a handsome face, and so to prepare the way will be to cleanse the way: or, by *faciem obvertere*, or *à facie amovere*, change the face of it, or remove things off the surface of it; and so to prepare it, will be to clear the way of rubs and blocks, to remove our sins out of the way. Or, 2, from זָנָה, *angulus*, a corner, and may be rendered *angulate*, corner it out, and lay it to the line and rule. And then to prepare, will be to make it smooth, regular, and equal.

Put them together, and to “prepare the way” will be to remove all soil and filth, all blocks and impediments, all roughness and unevenness out of our ways, which are like anywise to hinder our Lord’s coming to us; so to put all by, that he may have way to come to us, and we the easier and fuller receive him when he comes. Thus to prepare his way, will be to remove all hindrances; and to make his paths straight, will be to bring all furtherances to his coming. To remove our sins by repentance, which else would hinder him from coming, is to prepare the way; to regulate and order our paths to the rule of his commandments, to the squares of righteousness, is to make straight paths. Both together complete the preparation, which we will consider first in general, then in particular: first, how his way generally is to be prepared; then how particularly, after a more particular and special way and manner.

We cannot find how in general to prepare his way better than by the words that follow immediately in the Prophet Isaiah, xl. 4, and are so repeated also by S. Luke, iii. 5: “Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain shall be brought low, and the crooked ways shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth.”

“Every valley must be filled:” the empty valleys of our souls filled up with the fruits of all good works; these valleys must stand so thick with such holy corn, with all good fruits, that they laugh and sing, make us sing merrily, the praises of the Lord. 2. “Every mountain and hill must be brought low;” all our proud, high thoughts laid down. The greater mountains and lesser hills, mole-hills as well as mountains,

as well great as less, and as well less as greater sins, cast down ; our very natural reason and understanding submitted to the obedience of faith. 3. "The crooked ways must be made straight;" all our crooked ways, distorted actions, perverse affections, all that is awry or swerving from the rule of God's commandments, must be rectified and set right. 4. "All the rough ways made smooth;" all our roughnesses and unevennesses, natural or customary, made smooth and level, no stones of offence, no thorns or bushes, hedges or ditches, in the way.

That the way be neither mountainous with pride, nor dark with ignorance, nor dirty with lust, nor thorny with worldly cares, nor hollow with hypocrisy, nor slippery with riot, nor washy with drunkenness, nor tedious through slothfulness, nor uneven with irresolution and inconstancy. Fill the low valleys we must with high heavenly affections and contemplations, with high degrees of piety and devotion. Bring down the hills by humility and obedience. Straighten the crooked by righteousness and uprightness. Smooth the rough ways with meekness, gentleness, and charity. Pull down the haughty towering thoughts, raise up the grovelling mind, rectify the perverse intentions, smooth the rough and uneven passions of the soul ; prepare them all ; remove out of them every thing that may offend, and bring them all into the way of the Lord.

Thus in general. But we have a more particular and special way : for we may consider the way of the Lord, either as the way of a king (for he is both Lord and King), coming against us with his armies, or as a king coming to us in his triumph, to honour us and rejoice with us.

If we consider the way of the Lord as of one coming against us for destruction, prepare we then as the men of Bethulia did against Holofernes : "They sent messengers into all the coasts, they possessed themselves beforehand of the tops of the high mountains, they fortified the villages, laid up victuals for the provision of war, and gave charge to keep the passages." So they prepared, do we so too : possess we the tops of the mountains, by setting our affections upon things above ; fortify we the poor villages of our weak natures, by strong and holy resolutions ; gather we together

Judith iv.  
4, 5.Judith iv.  
7.

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all kind of provision for our souls out of the Holy Scriptures, by constant reading and meditation; keep all the passages of them with care and vigilance; and send out messengers into all the coasts of heaven and earth, send up our prayers to the God of heaven for help, our desires to the saints upon the earth to assist us with their devotions, advice, and company.

2 Chron.  
xxvi. 14.

Eph. v.  
14—18.

Eccelus.  
xxix. 13.

Prepare we armour too with Uzziah: "Shields, and spears, and helmets, habergeons, and bows, and slings." Stand we thus ready armed in the way; our head covered with the hope of salvation for a helmet, our breast armed with righteousness for a breastplate, our body defended with the habergeon of a holy conversation, in our left hand the shield of faith, and in our right hand alms, "far better than the strongest spear," says the son of Sirach; the sword of the Holy Spirit, the word of truth girt to our loins; the bow and arrows of the holy fear of God's judgments hanging on our shoulders; the cross of Christ for our sling, and himself for the stone, to smite our grand enemy in the forehead, and put him to a perpetual shame. Thus make ready to entertain him.

But if, 2, he come to us in the way of triumph, or grace, and favour, then prepare we the way as is usual at the entertainment of great princes. Now at such times, they sweep or wash the ways and streets, they pave, they gravel them, they rail them in, they hang them with tapestry, they strew them with rushes and flowers, they set guards to fence the ranks, and place themselves in order to cry out *Vivat Rex*, or some such thing, to receive them with joyful acclamations.

Let us go and do likewise. Wash all our ways with tears, sweep them with the besom of confession, pave them with pious vows and purposes, spread them over with fair amendment, rail them in by the obedience of faith and daily caution, adorn them by the imitation of the lives of holy saints, set them like so many pictures in tapestry before thee, strew them with sweet herbs and flowers: the roses of chastity, the lilies of purity, the balm of charity, the hyssop of humility, the violets of patience, the woodbines of hope and love, the bays of constancy, all the sweets of piety and virtue. Guard the way; guard all the ways with attention and godly



zeal, and make all the streets and ways resound again with the echo of praises and thanksgivings. This it is to prepare his way. SERMON  
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And thus every way of his we spoke of must be prepared. Our souls so ordered, our meditations of the law so regulated, our repentance so adorned, our baptisms so accompanied, our obedience so fulfilled, God's providence and way of dealing with us so accepted, with clean hearts, grounded resolutions, an even temper, with care and diligence, with exemplary virtue, sweetness, and moderation, zeal and attention, humility and thanksgiving.

All this while, "make straight," must not be forgotten. All this must be done now also with upright hearts, sincere intentions; not in outward form and appearance only, not for fear of punishment, not for hope of reward and praise, not merely to avoid danger, nor yet, lastly, to be seen of men. All these the Pharisees did, and yet for all that, none of them keeps the law, says Christ. The law is not fulfilled by the external act, the commandments not kept by the outward performance; it is the inward spirit of charity, when they are done with that, that only keeps them: it is that only that makes right ways, sound paths; without it they are but rotten ways, or hollow ones; such as Christ will not choose to come by, or rather will choose not to come by: right good sound ways they must be, if they be his. John vii.  
19.

And, 2, right straight ways too, no turning to the right hand or to the left; not do one way in adversity, another way in prosperity; one religion when the days are calm and quiet, another when the days are stormy and troublesome. *Rectas facite in deserto*, so it is in the Prophet, and Hebrew text. "Make his paths straight in the desert," even when we are deserted of all; when we are in the barren and dry wilderness, where no water is, no earthly comfort about us, in the greatest tribulation, we must keep us still to uprightness and honesty; that is the way to Christ: however for a while he seem to be far from us, thither it will bring us after a while; keep innocency, and do the thing that is right, and "that will bring a man peace at the last." Isa. xl. 3.  
Ps. xxxvii.  
33.

Yet, 3, one path or two made straight is not sufficient; *semitas*—it is an indefinite somewhat akin to an universal;

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James ii.  
10.

it must be all: he that fails or offends in one, is guilty of all. If all be not straight,—all the paths as well as the ways that you have heard, all the little ways as well as the great, according to our poor power,—if at least we do not study and endeavour it, it is not, it is not right.

Nor is it so, or will it be, unless we take in, 4, the Prophet's *in deserto* too; desert and forsake ourselves a little, renounce our own ways quite, seek not our own but his; straighten ourselves a little of our own lusts and liberties, of our own desires and ways: that the only way to make his straight, and make Christ come straight to us.

V. We have one point yet behind: who it is to whom all this is spoken, and is given in charge. I confess, the ministers and preachers of the Word, are the public messengers and harbingers who are sent to prepare the Lord's way (as S. John Baptist was) before him: yet every one must sweep his own door. For the words are by S. John Baptist preached to all Pharisees and Sadducees, publicans and soldiers, and all the people that came to him; every one to have a share: and so he gives it them; tells people, and publicans, and soldiers what to do; sets every one his path, his part of the way to prepare and straighten. Give me leave to do so too.

Luke iii.  
10, 11, et  
seq.

The ministers of the Gospel, they come first; they have the greatest share with S. John Baptist, to go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way. But how? Luke i. 77. "To give knowledge of salvation," says old Zachary, "to his people, for the remission of sins;" or somewhat more, even to give remission too, to give absolution; so to give knowledge to the people, or instruct them, and to absolve them, is some part at least of the minister's share; but to baptize also with the Baptist, and to consecrate with Christ himself, is to prepare his way too, to make way for him. To raise the valleys: to comfort the dejected, the cast down and afflicted soul against his sorrows, the penitent against his sins, the fearful against the fear of death, the weak-hearted against trouble and persecution; to encourage them to lift up their heads and look to the recompence of reward, to raise up the grovelling souls of men from earth and flesh to heaven and heavenly business. 2. To cast down

the mountains of pride and singularity, schism and heresy, that lift up themselves against the obedience of Christ.

3. To rectify the perverse and crooked souls of men. And

4. To smooth and soften them: to lay the way of Christ smooth and plain before them, make them know his yoke is easy and his burthen light, by continual preaching to them, and instructing them, so preparing them for the way of Christ. Thus the minister prepares his way in the people's hearts; sometimes cleansing the young infant's way by baptism, and sometimes rectifying the young and old man's ways by advice and exhortation; sometimes clearing them with absolution, sometimes purifying them with the Holy Sacrament, some way or other always preparing them against the Lord's coming. And it lies upon him so to do.

And, 2, for the People. There needs no more than has been said. The ways already mentioned concern us all. There is none so righteous but needs some kind of preparation; and he that is not, he needs them all.

And if we consider now the time, so much the more in that his coming is nearer whom we prepare for. It is now but a few days to the day he once came to us in the flesh. Let us think of that, and prepare ourselves to give him thanks; to cry Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh, blessed this blessed way of his coming, and blessed the blessed day of his so coming.

It is not many more days, 2, to the coming of his flesh and blood in the Holy Sacrament unto us. We are expecting and hoping for it, and it is fit we should be preparing for it. Better preparation than you have heard, I cannot give you for the one or the other. Only I may add *in solitudine* again. Withdraw yourselves aside into some desert and solitary place to prepare you in: retire in private to your souls, and to your business. "I will bring her into the wilderness," Hos. ii. 14. says God, concerning Israel, "and speak comfortably unto her." The place to hear the voice of divine and heavenly comfort is in our solitude, when we are alone, God only and ourselves together. Remember then we go into our closets, and there prepare ourselves; forget no point of the preparation, but sweep, and cleanse, and smooth, and adorn our souls with all holy virtues or resolutions, and come well

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guarded with attention, care, and vigilance, that nothing unbecoming pass from us in the way; raise up our spirit with holy thoughts and heavenly desires; cast down our souls with reverence and humility; come without any roughness or unevenness in our affections or behaviour, in our ways or paths; so shall the Lord come, and come with comfort, and take us with him, and bring us safely to the end of our way, the end of our hope, to those things which neither eye hath seen, or ear heard, or ever entered into the heart of man, which he has prepared for them that prepare for him, in the city prepared for us in the heavens.

Is. lxiv. 1,  
4, 5.

A SERMON  
ON THE  
THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

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S. LUKE xxi. 27, 28.

*And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.*

AND because the day of your redemption draweth nigh, SERMON  
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the day in which your Redeemer came in a cloud of flesh and clay, we are this day, by the course of holy Church, to wish you to look up, and lift up your heads to see the Son of man, your Redeemer, in his second coming, coming in a cloud of glory.

That we, knowing it is the same Son of man, who was once born in a stable, and cradled in a manger, that shall one day come to be the Judge of heaven and earth, we might so celebrate his first coming in flesh, that when all flesh shall stand before him, we might lift up our heads with joy and comfort.

For many there are which shall hang down theirs; such who have not thought aright of his coming into the world, or not worthily entertained it, or not walked with him in it along the stage of his humility, or never rightly pondered the terrors of this second coming in the day of judgment, which he himself here preaches to his disciples, that they might "take heed to themselves lest at any time their hearts should be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness," (the Luke xxi.  
34.

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disease that usually infects all our Christmases,) “and cares of this life,” (the disease that infects all our days,) “and so that day come upon them unawares;” but that “watch” they should, “and pray always, that they might be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

They had but three days before accompanied him to Jerusalem in his progress of meekness; and now, in one of his returns, he begins to tell them of another kind of coming to it, in judgment and fury. His disciples, who by the sight of such strong and goodly buildings could not conjecture they should end unless the world fell with them, ask him presently upon it, when those things should come to pass, and when should be the end of the world. Their Master, that he might at once both satisfy and blind their curiosity, mingles the signs of the particular destruction of Jerusalem, and of the general ruin of the world, together; that he might the better keep them awake to attend both his general and particular coming, and make both them and us, at the approach of particular judgments upon cities or nations, always mindful and prepared for the general judgment of the last day: which he here calls the coming of the Son of man, and tells us how to entertain it.

So that in the text, as the verses, so the parts are two.

Luke xxi.  
27.  
Verse 28.

I. Christ's coming. “Then shall they see the Son,” &c.

II. The Christian's comfort. “When these things,” &c.

In Christ's coming—

1. The time when. “Then,” after the signs forementioned, “then shall they see.”

2. The generality of it. “They,” all that can see, shall see his coming.

3. The evidence of his coming, so plain, he may be “seen,” seen by the eye of faith.

4. The certainty. They “shall see him,” to be sure.

5. The form in which he comes, as “the Son of man.”

6. The end to which he comes. He comes “with power,” with the power of a Judge for quick and dead.

7. The manner of his coming. “In a cloud, with power and great glory.”

In the Christian's comfort—

1. Where it begins. "When these things begin to come to pass," then that begins too. "Then look up."

2. To whom it belongs. You, disciples, do you look up.

3. What kind of comfort it is. A looking up, a "lifting up the head," when all heads else droop with fear and grief.

4. Whence this comfort arises, from what ground it springs; for "your redemption draweth nigh."

I go on with all in order as they lie; so that if you remember the words, you cannot forget the order and method. "Then shall," &c.

At Christ's coming there we begin; but when is that? The heavens shall tell you, the earth shall tell you, the sea shall tell you, men shall tell you. The heavens, by signs and wonders, by storms and tempests; the lights of heaven shall lose themselves in darkness, and forsake their spheres, and their constantest powers shall be shaken out of their course and harmony. The earth shall quake for fear, and change its place. The waves shall fright themselves with their own roarings, and "men's heart shall fail for fear;" neither knowing how to stand, nor to avoid this dreadful coming. When these, with all the host of heaven and earth, startled out of their natural seats and postures, shall have prepared and ushered him the way, then shall he come. He comes not till all things else have done their motion and have gone their last.

Nor is it fitting so great a coming should be without an universal preparation, where every creature, forgetting its own nature, begins at last to study his. There is nothing that can stand when God comes: heaven itself is at a loss, and remembers not its perpetual motion, when it but apprehends his approach. Every thing is a wonder to itself when he appears. If nature itself be thus terrified, which groans not for itself but for us—what shall we be with all our sins about us; how can we abide his coming?

Yet then shall he appear when we know not how to appear: heaven and earth will change their faces, men and angels will hide theirs, only He it is that dares be seen. Sins or imperfections make all the creatures cover themselves with some disguises, or endeavour it; only he, who is all purity, all perfection, comes then to show himself.

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Mark xiii.  
32.

Yet when this "then" shall be, when that day and hour shall come, "no man knows, no, not the Son" of man himself, as man: he that could tell you that come he would, and could tell you the immediate signs that would forerun it, knew not then the time when those signs should be, or knew it not to tell you; that we might always be waiting for his coming.

Had it been fit for us to know, no doubt he would have told us; but so far unnecessary it seems to be acquainted with that secret time, that he gives us signs which rather puzzle than instruct us: signs which we sometimes think fulfilled already; signs which have often been the forerunners of particular ruins and fates of countries and kingdoms; signs which at the same time we fear past already, yet think they are not; that so by this hard dialect of tokens in heaven and earth, we might behold our presumptuous curiosity deluded into a perpetual watching for this last coming.

2 Thess.  
ii. 2.

2 Thess.  
ii. 3.

Mark xiii.  
35.  
Ver. 35.

There were in the Apostles' times, and there are still in ours, men who loved to scare the people with prophecies and dreams of the end of the world, as if this "then" already were at hand; such as would define the year and day, as if they had lately dropped out of God's council-chamber: but "we beseech you," says S. Paul, "that you be not troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." "Let no man deceive you;" they do but deceive you, they vent their own dreams and fond presumptions. They know not when the Master of the house will come, "whether at midnight, or at the cock crowing or at the dawning;" for as a "snare it shall come on all them that dwell on the face of the earth."

It is enough for us to know there shall be a day of judgment, against which we must provide every day to make up our accounts, lest that day come upon us unawares, lest death at least hurry us away to our particular doom, which will there leave us, where the last judgment will be sure to find us, in the same condition; no power or tears of ours being then able to change or alter it.

So that the punctual time of this coming, as Christ did not intend to declare, so it matters not to know. A "then," a time there will be of his coming!



2. A time when "they shall see" him come. "They;" and who are "they" but all mankind—but all the creatures? "Every eye shall see him, they also that pierced him:" they also that crucified him, and condemned him. "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power," says Christ himself, to those who were his torturers and his judges. Nay, "we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." None of us all must think to escape. There we must give account what we have done amiss; every action, every idle word, every vain and wanton thought, every inward desire, must we yield account of in the day of judgment. Thy crown and throne, O king! cannot exempt thee. Your honours and compliments, O ye nobles! cannot excuse you. Thy riches, O thou son of pelf! cannot buy out thy absence. Thy sleights, O thou crafty politician! cannot evade it. Thy strength, O soldier! cannot defend thee from the angel that will drive thee thither. Your learning, O ye learned of the earth! can find no argument to keep you from it. Nor can ye, O ye worms of the earth, ye meanest, find holes in it to hide you at this coming.

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Rev. i. 7.

Matt. xxvi.  
64.Rom. xiv.  
10.

Come you must all together at this coming, and see you shall the Son of man as he is coming. The wicked eyes, indeed, though Christ comes in glory, shall see nothing of his glory. The Son of man they shall behold, his humanity, but not his Deity. They shall see the wounds their sins have made, the hands and feet they have nailed, the side they have pierced, the head they have planted with thorns; all these to their grief and sorrow, to see him their Judge, whom they have so abused and wronged, so trampled and scorned, that he yet bears the marks of their malice and cruelty even in his throne of glory.

But the good man's eyes, they shall see his glory too; they shall behold his glorious face, which the eyes of the sinners and the ungodly are not able to perceive, by reason of that veil of sin and darkness that covers them. Both, then, shall see him; these only the Son of man, those the Son both of God and man, in his cloud, and in his glory.

Who are they, then, that think to hide themselves, who live as if they never thought to come to judgment? Did men certainly but seriously ponder, that, will they nill they,

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they must one day see Christ, they would use him better in his members than they do ; better in his Church and ministers ; better in his worship and service. Do they not, think you, imagine they shall never see him ?—that they can shelter themselves somewhere from his presence—that dare use him thus contemptuously, thus proudly, thus sacrilegiously and profanely ? Lay but this close every day to your bosoms as you rise, That you must one day come to appear before him ; and all your actions will be more regular, and your thoughts higher concerning Christ, and all that is his, or pertains to him ; and you the better able to answer them when you see him.

3. For, thirdly, “see” him you shall ; not only hear your doom and pass away, but see him pronouncing it. When he came to redeem the world, the eye saw him. Simcon’s and Anna’s, and all Judea’s, many Greeks’ and Gentiles’ too. He came then that all might see him. But in his second coming, when he comes to judge it, then he comes that all shall see him, every eye behold him. The eyes that slept in dust before his first arrival—the eyes that in the time of his abode could never see him for their distance—the eyes that ever since have seen the world, shall all then see him, as well as they that pierced him, nay, as well as they who lived with him, and daily saw him.

He might, considering how unworthy the best of us carry ourselves of that corporeal presence which he once vouchsafed us, considering how he was then misused and handled, have for ever denied us any sight of his glorious body ; but he forgets the injuries he met with, and will once more show himself to our bodily sight ; not so much to confound his persecutors, as to manifest the justice of his judgment, that the whole world may evidently see that He who came into the flesh then only to redeem us, comes in the same flesh again to judge us, that all may see our faith in our crucified God was neither vain nor unprofitable ; but, by the evidence of their own eyes, confess and acknowledge it the only true way to eternal happiness.

And if these eyes now must one day behold their Lord and Master, how should we wash them every day, and cleanse them from earthly defilements with our tears, that they may

be worthy to see that blessed object! Wash your eyes, ye wantons, from unclean and lascivious glances. Cleanse your eyes, ye proud ones, from scornful looks. Wipe your eyes, ye covetous minded, from that yellow dust that blinds your sight. Open your eyes, ye ignorant and seduced souls, that ye run not headlong to your own destruction, hoodwinked to hell, then only to uncloset your deceived sight when you can see no comfort. Remember, you are all one day to appear before Christ's tribunal, where if you expect any comfort to your eyes, you must come thither with them washed, and wiped, and cleansed, and pure—no spots, no films, no blemish, no bloodshot in them. Whether to your comfort or no, "see" you shall. That is certain.

4. "Shall see." Can we not shut our eyes, then, when this day shall come? Can nothing lock up our eyelids in eternal night, no bar set before us but we must see this Son of man? Can no hills hide us, nor no mountains cover us? Can we not sleep in dust, and rest quiet in our confusion? Can we not vanish into that nothing out of which we first arose; or at least lie hid in that eternal pit, from ever seeing anything but the regions of everlasting darkness? Must we needs rise out of our wretched caves to see him, who cannot but afflict us at his coming? So it is; we must see him. See we must, though but to see the justice of our own damnation.

Nothing can be more certain than this sight. Sight it is the surest sense, and to see him at his coming is to be certain of it at the least; but to see the Son of man at his coming, is certainly with evidence; and to be bound to see it, to have such a tie upon us, such a condition on us, that we shall see it whether we will or no, is a certainty with a necessity upon it.

That so no man may doubt of a final retribution, whilst he is certain he shall one day see him, who will reward every man according to his work. Let not, then, the unjustly oppressed innocent, let not the less prosperous godly spirit droop; or the glorious and yet triumphing sinner, the prosperous rebel, or thriving atheist, pride himself in the success of his sins; for He is coming that shall come, and make the just man's eyes run over with joy and happiness

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for his fore-passed tears, and fill the others' eyes with shame and confusion for all their glory. It may be long before he comes, but come he will at last, and his reward is with him.

5. But "who is this that comes?" So the Prophet once; so we now. Or in what shape will he appear? God is the Judge of all the earth, and who is it that can see God? John v. 22. Or if "He has committed all judgment to the Son," yet who can see Him either, being of one substance with the Father, the same individual and invisible essence? That therefore he may be seen, he comes in the form of "the Son of man."

This was that which Daniel foresaw in his night visions, Dan. vii. "One like the Son of man coming with the clouds of 13. heaven." That which S. Peter told Cornelius, "that he it Acts x. 42. was, who was ordained to be the judge of quick and dead." Not as he was Lord of heaven and earth, or as he was the eternal offspring of the Deity, (for so he could not be ordained, he himself being from all eternity,) but as the John v. 27. Son of man: for he "hath given him authority to execute judgment also, *because* he is the Son of man."

That was it by which he obtained the throne of judgment, having in that form both done and suffered all things for our salvation; God thinking but just that he should be our judge, who came to save us from judgment; that he should judge us, who had been partaker of our infirmities, and knew our weaknesses, and would, by the compassion of nature, easier acquit us, or with more evidence of justice condemn us, himself having once been subject to the like human though not sinful passions.

This is the form in which all eyes may see him, all nations behold him. Nor shall the scars of his wounds be covered, but that even by them we may acknowledge our crucified Saviour is become our Judge; who, whilst he judges us in the form of man, will condemn us for nothing above the power of man. And yet even by his actions, as he was man, will he condemn ours. His humility, our pride; his abstinence, our gluttony and excess; his patience, our impatience; his chastity, our lusts; his paying Cæsar beyond his due, our undutiful withdrawals from him; in a

word, his goodness, piety, and devotion, our ungodliness, impieties, and profaneness.

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And as it is a mercy thus to be judged by one who is sensible of our frail condition, so is it a glory besides that our nature is so high exalted as to be the Judge of the world, not of men only, but angels too. What favour may we not expect when he is our Judge who is our Saviour; who will not lay aside our nature in his glory, that he may retain that sympathy and compassion to us, which was taken with it when he took it from us?

6. I shall not here need to spend much time to tell you, 6, what he comes for, who have told you so often of a day of judgment, and the Son of man to sit on the tribunal. His coming is to judgment, for he comes "with power," and that power of a judge.

Only I must tell you, (2,) that his motion is no faster than an easy coming. So loth is he to come to judgment, so unwilling to enter into dispute with flesh and blood, that he delays the hasty prayers of the afflicted saints under the altars of heaven; seems a little to withhold the full beams of mercy which he has laid up for the saints, rather than to post to the destruction of the wicked. Yet for the elect's sake hasten he does a little; and therefore he makes a "cloud" the chariot of his power, that when he once begins to come he may come quickly.

And not so only, but come in "glory," which is the last observable in his coming—"in a cloud, with power and great glory."

In a cloud he ascended; and the angel told the disciples there, that he should so come as they saw him go. "In the clouds," say the other Evangelists; they speak of more than one: his cloud is not a single cloud, there are attendant clouds upon it. Angels surround his throne; the trumpet of the archangel sounds before him; his throne is a throne of glory; and his apostles' thrones are round about him, and "all things are in subjection under his feet."

Acts i. 9.  
Matt.  
xxv. 31.  
2 Thess. i. 7.  
Matt.  
xix. 28.  
1 Cor. xv.  
27.

Thus is he rewarded with majesty and glory for his meekness and humility; that we, seeing the recompense of those despised virtues, may learn to embrace them by so strong incentives and allurements.

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4, 5.

What will ye one day say, O ye obstinate Jews, when you shall see his glory, whose poverty you so despised? What will ye do at his throne of judgment, who would not receive him in his cradle of merey? How will his enemies bemoan themselves with them, "We fools thought his life madness, and his end without honour: how is he now numbered among the children of God, the firstborn amongst many brethren!" Fools indeed to count him what we did! for he shall come again with majesty and glory. Glory is a word, by which Christ seems as it were ever and anon to refresh the fainting spirits of his disciples, which are ready to betray their masters to despair, upon the apprehension of the fears and terror which their Lord had told them should precede and accompany the latter day. This word recalls their spirits, that they begin to look up again, and lift up their heads: for, having thus as it were amazed their thoughts, and unhinged their patience, he settles them again with some special comfort, that "when these things begin to come to pass," they should "look up, and lift up their heads, for," however it fall out to others, "their redemption draweth nigh."

Never could words of comfort come better than in the full discourse of the day of judgment; nor can comfort ever be more welcome, than in the midst of those affrightments. Christ never spoke out of season, but here he seems to have even studied it. "When these things begin to come to pass," before they are at their full height, even "then look up." Worldly comforts come not so early. The heat and fury of the disease must be abated, ere they yield us any refreshment. They are only heavenly comforts that come so timely to prevent our miseries, or to take them at the beginning.

Nor is it yet only when the day begins to dawn, wherein the Son of man comes forth to judgment, that we should first begin to take courage to approach, but whilst the foregoing signs of that day are now first coming on. Those terrors that affright others, should not startle us: even whilst the lightnings run upon the ground, whilst the earth trembles, the sea roars, the winds blow, and heaven itself knows not how to look, the righteous is as bold as a lion, he

stands in the midst of security and peace. This is the state we are to labour for: so to put our trust in the Most High, that no changes or chances of this mortal life may either remove or shake it, or make us to miscarry. Every calamity should teach us to "look up," but these should teach us also to "lift up our heads." Whilst common fears and troubles march about us, our Christian patience will teach us cheerfulness; but "when these things begin to come to pass," these, which are the ushers to our glory, these should rejoice and cheer us up, that our reward is now a-coming to us.

Us, I say; for this comfort is not general, to all that shall see the Son of man coming in glory, but his disciples only, such as have followed him on earth to meet him in heaven. "Lift up your heads:" to his servants he speaks, such as hear his words, and attend his steps, and do his precepts.

Others indeed must hold down theirs; the ungodly shall not be able to look up in judgment. The covetous man has looked so always downward, that he is not now able to look up. The drunkard has so drowned his eyesight in his cups, so overburthened his brain, that he can neither lift up his head nor his eyes at this day. The voluptuous man has dimmed his eyes with pleasures, that he cannot look about: and the ambitious man has so lost his hopes of being high and glorious, and is become so low and base in the eyes of God, that he is ashamed to lift up his head.

These only that are the true disciples of their Master, whose eyes are used to heaven, who have so often lifted up their eyes thither to pray and praise him, they only can look up when these things come to pass.

Nothing can affright the humble eye; nothing can amaze the eye that ever dwells in heaven; nothing can trouble the eye that waits upon her God, as the eye of a maiden upon the hand of her mistress. The humble, devout, and faithful eye may look up cheerfully, whilst all things else dare not be seen for shame. O blessed God, how fully dost thou reward thy servants, that wilt thus have them distinguished from others by their looks in troubles! who hast so ordered all things for them, that nothing shall affright them, nothing make them to hold down their heads.

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This is a kind of comfort by itself, above ordinary, that grief or amazement should not appear so much as in our eyes or looks, though so many terrors stand round about us.

“I will lift up my eyes unto the hills,” and “I will lift up mine eyes to thee, O thou that dwellest in the heavens,” are the voice of one that looks up for help; and in the midst of these dreadful messengers of judgment, it will not be amiss for us even so to lift up our eyes, to beg assistance and deliverance. But that is not all our comfort, though it be a great one, that we can yet have audience in heaven amidst these fears; we have besides, the refreshment of inward joy, whereby we rejoice at our approaching glory. “The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance,” even when the day of vengeance comes; and the “righteous shall rejoice in their beds,” whilst they are now rising up and lifting up their heads out of their graves to come to judgment.

Nor must it seem strange to see the righteous with cheerful looks, whilst all other faces gather blackness. It is not the others’ misery that they rejoice at, but at their Saviour’s glory, and their own happiness. For their “redemption draweth nigh,” that is the ground of all their joy.

And would you not have men rejoice, who are redeemed from misery and corruption, from the slavery of sin, and the power of death? Would you not have poor prisoners rejoice at the approach of their delivery? You cannot blame them if at such news, with Paul and Silas, they sing in prison; sing aloud for joy, so loud that the doors dance open for joy, though the keepers awake and even sink for fear.

“Your redemption draweth nigh.” They are words will make the scattered ashes gather themselves together into bones and flesh; words that will make the soul leave heaven with joy, to lift up the head of her dear beloved body out of “the land where all things are forgotten.” Yea, the insensible creatures that groan now under the bondage of corruption, will at these words turn their tunes, when they see at hand the days of the liberty of the sons of God.

Death and destruction are things terrible; but when the fear of them is once overpoised by the near approach of a redemption to eternal life and glory, O Death, then where



is thy sting? O Grave, then where is thy victory? They shrink in their heads, and pull in their stings, and cannot hurt us while we with joy and gladness lift up our heads. SERMON  
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What are all the signs and forerunners of the day of judgment, that they should trouble us, when we know the day of judgment is our day of redemption, our day of glory? What are the darkness of sun and moon, the falling of the stars, the very totterings of heaven itself, to us, who even thereby expect new heavens? where there is neither need of sun, nor moon, nor star to give us light; for the "glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb," this Son of man that is coming in his cloud, "is the light of it." What are the quakings of the earth and roarings of the sea, to them who neither need land nor sea in their journey to heaven? What are wars and rumours of wars, famines, and plagues, and pestilences, and false brethren? what are persecutions and delivering up to rulers, to death and torments? what are those perplexities and fears that rob men of their hearts and courage "for looking after those things which shall come upon the earth?" what are all these together, to them who are thus by those very things redeemed out of all their troubles? S. Paul is bold to set up a challenge: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these we are more than conquerors through him" (this Him in the text) "that loved us." And he goes on yet higher, "For I am persuaded," says he, "that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus." Rev. xxi.  
23.  
  
Rom. viii.  
35-39.

And if thus nothing can ever separate us from Christ's love, what should trouble us at his coming, whose coming is but to draw us nearer to himself? "Be not troubled, be not terrified," says he, but "in patience possess your souls," for there "shall not a hair of your heads perish." Others may fall, and sink, and perish; but do they what they can against you those that hate you, yet care not for it; "look up," look up to me, I am coming to redeem you; "lift up your heads," and behold the glory into which I am at hand to lift you up. Luke xxi.  
9.  
Ver. 18.  
Ver. 17.  
Ver. 28.

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The sum of all now is, that in the midst of all your troubles, all your amazements, all your fears and dangers, you, first, still lift up your heads, and look to heaven for comfort, and fetch it thence by prayers and petitions.

2. That in the midst of all calamities you yet remember your redemption is a-coming, and so lift up your heads with joy in the heat and fury of them all, knowing that they are nothing else but so many forerunners of your glory.

Lastly. That you "look up and lift up your heads" with thankfulness, that he has thus accounted you worthy to see him in his glory, and that your redemption is no further off. That having thus begun to look up and lift up your voices in praises and thanksgiving upon earth, he may lift you up into heaven in soul and body, at his coming there, to sing Allelujahs with the saints and angels, and the four-and-twenty elders, to Him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for evermore: there to be partakers of all his glory.

A SERMON  
ON THE  
FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

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PHILIPPIANS iv. 5.

*Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.*

THE text is a part of the Epistle for the day, chosen, you may conceive, because "the Lord," that is, the time of his coming, "is at hand." A fit preparation, thought by the Church, for Christmas now so near, to prepare us how to entertain the happy day, the joyful news of our Lord Christ's coming in the flesh. To entertain it, I say, not with excess and riot, but moderation; not with rude tricks and gambols, but softness and meekness; not in vanity of clothes, but modesty; not in iniquity, but equity, somewhat departing from our own right, and seeking occasions to do others right; that all men may see and know we behave ourselves like servants expecting their Lord's coming, according to all the several senses of the ἐπιεικὲς, translated "moderation" in the text, but stretching further than any one English word can express it.

A word chosen by the Apostle to comprehend the whole duty (if it might be) of a Christian preparing for his Lord, in the midst of much affliction, and long-wearied expectation, backed with an assurance that the Lord was now hard by a-coming to deliver them. The poor Philippians were somewhat sad, or sad-like, by the persecutions they suffered from the unbelieving Jews and Gnostic heretics that were among

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them ; many were daily falling off by reason of them ; and much hurt those “ dogs,” as the Apostle calls them, “ the concision,” that is, those heretics, had done or were likely to do them. But for all that, says he, “ Rejoice,” and again, “ Rejoice,” in the verse before the text ; rejoice, too, that all men may see it, see your joy in the Lord, and in your sufferings for him, yet so that they may see your “ moderation” in it too : that as you are not sad, like men without hope, so you are not merry, like men out of their wits, but as men that know their Lord is nigh at hand, as well to behold their actions as to free them from their sufferings, to see their patience and moderation as well as their trouble and persecution.

A persuasion it is, or exhortation to patience and meekness, and some other Christian virtues (which, by examining the word, you will see anon) from the forementioned consideration. A persuasion to moderation, from a comfortable assurance of a reward—“ the Lord at hand” to give it. A persuasion to prepare ourselves, because our Lord is coming : a persuasion so to do it that all may know what we are a-doing, and what we are expecting ; that they may see we are neither ashamed of our religion nor of our Lord ; that we neither fear men’s malice nor our Lord’s mercy ; that we are confident he is at hand, ready to succour and rescue all that patiently and faithfully suffer for him, to take vengeance on his enemies, and deliver his servants out of all. The time is now approaching, even at the doors.

And if we apply this, as we do all other Scriptures, to ourselves, to teach us moderation, and whatever else is contained under the word which is so rendered, and draw down the Lord’s being at hand in the text to all Christ’s comings in flesh, in grace, in glory, it will no way disadvantage the text, but advance it rather, improve the Apostle’s sense and meaning to all Churches and times, to prepare them all to go out to meet the Lord, when or howsoever he shall come unto them.

And “ moderation” must be it we must meet him with, be the times what they will, come the Lord how or when he please, know we the time or know it not : be what will unknown, our moderation must be known. And yet his coming, as

unknown as it may be, must be considered: always in our minds it must be, that the Lord is, one way or other, continually at hand.

Indeed I must confess the times were troublesome and dangerous when the Apostle thus exhorted and comforted the Philippians: but the best times are dangerous; danger there is as much of forgetting Christ in prosperity, as of falling from him in adversity: and as much need there is of moderation when all happinesses flow in upon us, as when all afflictions fall upon us: so the advice cannot be unseasonable. And though we called the text S. Paul's advice, or the Christian's duty in sad times, and his comfort in them; and so divide the words, yet they will reach any times, ours to be sure, which, call we them what we will, much danger there is in them of falling away from the true faith of Christ, and so as much need of the Apostle's counsel and comfort in them.

Yet take the division of the words in the most proper sense.

I. S. Paul's counsel, or the Christian's duty in sad times. In the first words, "Let your moderation be known unto all men;" that it be, is the Christian's duty; that it should be, is S. Paul's counsel.

II. The Christian's comfort in such times; or S. Paul's comforting them with it, in the following, "The Lord is at hand." With this they are to cheer up their spirits, and S. Paul tells it unto that purpose; which will afford us a third point to be considered.

III. The connexion of them; that our moderation is therefore to be known to all men, because our Lord and the Lord of all men is at hand to see what we do, and do to us according to our doings: therefore set down here indefinitely, only "The Lord is at hand," without determining how, or where, or when, or to what purpose, that we might be the more careful in our duty, more universal in our moderation.

And the Apostle dealing thus indefinitely, and but silently pointing at the sad condition of the times they saw, we shall take leave to be as general, and not bind the counsel or the comfort to sad times, though so they would fit us too, as well as the Philippians. The advice is good, and the comfort

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sweet, both necessary at any time whatsoever. I begin with S. Paul's counsel, or the Christian duty for moderation. "Let your moderation," &c. Three points I shall consider in it. (i.) Let there be "moderation." (ii.) Let it be "known." (iii.) Let it be known "unto all men." Let our moderation be, be manifested, be extended unto all.

(i.) Let there be moderation, or let our moderation be; let moderation be ours, be our practice; that stands first to be considered. And the word so rendered has divers significations, all indifferently applicable both to the context, and the Christian's duty against his Lord's coming.

The word is τὸ ἐπιεικὲς, and first and primarily signifies equity. So Aristotle takes ἐπιεικεία. A duty as fit for Christianity as any; not only to be just, but equal: nay, to prefer equity before justice; to depart somewhat from our own right rather than exact the extremity of justice; rather to let go a coat or a cloak than go to law about it; rather to take a blow, an affront, an indignity, nay turn the cheek for a second, than draw a sword; for a third, turn the other cheek, rather than venture turning out of heaven for turning violently again upon them, out of a false opinion of gallantry and valour: rather go a mile or two above our stint and share, than to make disturbance for it. This our Master's counsel and command too, to all his disciples, confirmed to us by his example. Tribute paid by him that was not due, only lest he should offend them.

Matt. v. 40,  
41, 42.  
Matt. xvii.  
27.

Indeed it is not equity, but iniquity, in them that require more than is right; yet it is a point of a Christian sometimes (in petty matters always) not to stand rigorously upon our right, when there is like to come nothing but continual dissension and long-lived enmities by exacting it.

So far should we be from doing so, that we should be ready by all fair compliances to remove all unneighbourly contentions from among us, if the parting with trifles, giving way a little, or the forgiving small trespasses, will do it. More than so there is in this ἐπιεικεία, in seeking occasions and opportunities to do good. Our blessed Lord "went about doing good," says S. Peter; from city to city, says S. Matthew; from one place to another, "all the cities" of Judea over; from one opportunity to another, seeking

Acts x. 38.  
Matt. ix. 35.

distressed souls, to do good unto : one point of that *ἐπιείκεια*, that "gentleness of Christ," by which S. Paul beseeches the Corinthians, his was, not to leave sinners as they deserve; ours, not [to] deal with our brethren always as they perhaps deserve of us, but deal better with them than so ; to proffer them some condescensions, seek some such ways and means to reconcile them to us.

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2 Cor. x. 1.

This is truly Christian, if to be like Christ be to be truly Christian, and as fit it is for such times as the Philippians then were in ; nothing more fit in the times either of growing heresies, or pressing troubles, than to descend a little to win the one, and give a little to avoid the other.

And as well it answers to our English rendering it, "moderation." Equity is nothing else but a moderating that *summum jus*, a bringing rigorous right to moderate terms, and so striving to be good to them with whom the contestation is ; to overcome them into peace and agreement with us, and so avoid the trouble and vexation that else is like to come from them to us, and likely from us to them again, that we be not found smiting our fellow-servants, fighting with one another when our Lord comes. A fit virtue this, to answer that part of the text too, the Lord's being "at hand."

2. A second interpretation there is that suits as well ; for "humanity" and "civility" it is taken. And truly Christianity teaches not to be uncivil, allows not uncivil language, not so much as a "thou fool;" threatens "hell fire" to such a tongue ; allows not that which is less, a "Raca," any kind of expression of contempt, or vilifying our brother. Such a fault must come before "the council;" we must be brought to the council-table, for it, of God and Christ, and fined at what they please for the misdemeanour, though the common law peradventure will not reach to punish it. It is none of Christ's religion that teaches men to be uncivil ; no, not to return one incivility with another : no, not "revile again though we be reviled," says S. Peter, and brings Christ for an example. Others doing us wrong, nay shrewdly persecuting us too, will not authorize us to do it, to requite our very persecutors with any incivility. A good memorandum for those who make it an especial sign of their being better Christians than others, to be rude and uncivil to their

Matt. v. 22.

1 Pet. ii. 23.

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betters, to be saucy and unmannerly to any, to all that run not riot with them into the same madness and folly, sacrilege and heresy; that cannot be content to do men wrong, and rob them of their dues, but must do it with ill language and incivility. They forget, sure, "the Lord is at hand;" that there is any such thing as a Lord, any superior above them, either at hand or afar off, either in this world or in the other. The Apostle's *ἐπιείκεια* is for moderation in this point too, civil and handsome terms, gestures, and carriage; that we should carry ourselves like men, at least, if we will not like Christians. And for such times as the text refers to, it is but seasonable—1. That the sufferers do not increase their sufferings with their own incivilities, or corrupt or dishonour them by so doing: and, 2. That those that cause them to suffer, do not enhance the others' sufferings; remembering that themselves also are but men, and the spoke of the wheel, (as that captive king observed,) which is now above, may by and by be below again; especially if it be true (as true it is) that the Lord is at hand, his chariot is coming after, and the mother of Sisera, the greatest captain, need not ask, Why tarry the wheels of it so long, why is it so long a-coming? It will come and will not tarry. It is happy if it come not on us whilst we are ranting and railing against any whomsoever.

3. There is a third signification of the word, for "modesty;" so the Latin renders it, *modestia*. As fit a posture for sad times, for any times—be the Lord at hand, or be he not—  
 1 Tim. ii. 9. as any whatsoever. Not the peculiar virtue of women only, though of them, but of men too; an especial way to win our adversaries, to win infidels to Christianity, when they shall behold our conversation in all sweetness and composure, our bodies comely and decently appareled, our gait sober, our gesture grave, our eyes modest, our countenance composed, our speech discreet, our behaviour all in order: when they shall see us merry without lightness, jesting without scurrility, sober without sullenness, grave without doggedness, composed without affectedness, serious without dulness; all our demeanour wholly bent to all Christian well-pleasingness, at all times, with all companies, upon all occasions, in all places and businesses. This is nothing but "moderation"



neither; we may keep the English still, moderation in our garb and habit, and discourse, and motion; modesty, that is, "moderation," in them all.

4. Yet there is a fourth acceptation of the word, for that sweet, and meek, and gentle temper of the mind, whereby we carry ourselves patiently and unmoved in persecution, not rendering evil for evil to them that persecute us, not vexing and tearing ourselves upon it, not studying revenge, or returning mischief, but, on the contrary, good for evil, blessing for cursing, prayers for imprecations; committing our cause and ourselves to God, that judgeth righteously. This is the true Christian "moderation," that to which we are called, says S. Peter; that of which Christ gave us an example, suffered as well for that, to give us an example of it, as anything else;—that to which belongs the blessing, from this Lord that is at hand. It is the very vocation of a Christian; the very design of the Christian's Lord; a blessedness there is in the very doing it; when and whilst we so suffer, we are blessed, even before that "great reward in heaven;" bidden therefore "to rejoice and be exceeding glad" upon it; bidden by S. James to "count it all joy;" bidden by S. Paul, in the verse before the text, to "rejoice" and "rejoice again" upon it. Nay, so exceeding joy, it seems, the Christian feels in it, that he is fain upon the back of it in this very verse to call to us to be "moderate" in the expressing it, to call to us for moderation in it, lest we should even burst with it, or overflow into some extraordinary effusions of it, and so provoke more affliction by it. Rejoice the Apostle would have us, in our sufferings for Christ, but yet with "moderation;" be meek, and patient, and contented, and resigned in them, yet not as we were senseless, careless, or desperate, but discreet and "moderate" in them all: neither so sensible of them, nor anxious in them, as to forget others, and our respects due to any of them; nor so senseless and careless [as] to forget ourselves, and the care due unto ourselves. This the "moderation" most proper to the persons and time, persons under persecution, and in the time of being so, the most seasonable advice: and as seasonable to be given when "the Lord is at hand:" moderation to be observed in the expectation of his coming. They were

1 Pet. ii. 21,  
22, 23.

Matt. v. 5.  
[Blessed  
are the  
meek: for  
they shall  
inherit  
the earth.]  
Matt. v. 10.  
Matt. v. 11.

James i. 2.

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2 Thess. ii. 2. not too hastily to expect it. The Thessalonians were almost shaken in mind and troubled by so hasty a conceit, that the "day of Christ was at hand;" that Christ was just then a-coming. S. Paul was fain to stop their haste, to moderate their expectation, to tell them, though the day was near, it was not so near as they supposed it; they must be content to expect a little longer; some things were to be done first. So necessary seems moderation in this point too, lest, expecting the Lord too soon, and failing of him, they should be shaken, and fall away from him, as if he had deceived them; quit their faith and religion for want of "patience" and "moderation." Thus you have the four senses of ἐπιείκεια, four kinds of moderation: equity or clemency, humanity or civility, modesty or sobriety, and meekness or gentleness.

It follows next that they be showed, that we show them all, that we make them known. "Let your moderation be known."

(ii.) For sufficient it is not always to do well; we must be known to do it; though not do it to be known, yet be known to do it. Indeed, when we fast, or pray, or give alms, or do any good work, we must not do it that we may appear to men to do so; yet it must appear to men, for all that, sometimes that we do so. "Ye," that is, ye Christians, "are the light of the world," and a light is not to be put "under a bushel, but on a candlestick, to give light unto all that are in the house. Let your light therefore shine before men." Shine so before them that they may see your good works, see and glorify, glorify God that has given such graces unto men; glorify him again by taking thence an example of such things to themselves. There have been, are still, doubtless, many that brag much of faith and holiness and purity; nay, of meekness and moderation too; but if we call them to S. James's "Show us them," as he requires them, "by their works," we may say, as Christ said of the lepers that were cleansed, There are scarce found one of ten that show that return of glory unto God; if one, they count him but a Samaritan, no true Israelite, for it: though S. James says expressly, faith is "dead," where there is no such expression: and for those other virtues, the very action is so evidently outward, that they must needs be known

Matt. vi. 3,  
4, 6, 18.

Matt. v. 15.

Ver. 16.

[James ii.  
18.]

Luke xvii.  
18.

where they are ; they cannot be hid—are not the virtues they pretend to, if not known. It were strange to hear of equity, or civility, or modesty, or moderation, that could not be seen ; ridiculous to call him merciful or equitable, that shows it not by some condescension ; to style him civil whose behaviour is nothing less, him modest who shows nothing but immodesty, him meek who expresses nothing but fury and impatience. These are virtues we must needs see, wherever they be.

It is reported of S. Lucian the Martyr, that he converted many by his modest, cheerful, and pious look and carriage ; and of S. Bernard, that, *In carne ejus apparebat gratia quædam spiritualis*, &c. “There appeared a kind of spiritual grace throughout his body ;” there shone a heavenly brightness in his face ; there darted an angelical purity and dove-like simplicity from his eyes : so great was the inward beauty of his inward man, that it poured out itself in his whole outward man abundantly over all his parts and powers ; no motion in them but with reason and religion. Where such virtue is, it will be “known ;” must be too : must so be expressed that men may know and feel the benefits and effects. *Γνωθήτω* : Let your “moderation” speak for you, whose servants you are, what Lord you are under, what is your expectation and your faith.

(iii.) Nor is it, thirdly, enough to have it known to one or two, to a few, or to the household of faith alone. “To all men,” says the Apostle, Jew and Gentile, friend and foe, brethren and strangers, the orthodox and heretics, good and bad, Christian and Infidel. “Condescend to men of low estate,” the very lowest, says our Apostle. “Provide things honest in the sight of all men ;” “live peaceably with all men ;” do all possible to live so. “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that by your good works which they shall behold, they may glorify God in the day of visitation ;” full of equity, that they may not speak evil of you as rigorous and unmerciful ; full of courtesy and civility, that the doctrine of Christ be not blasphemed for a doctrine of rudeness and incivility ; full of modesty, that the adversary speak not reproachfully of the word of truth, have no occasion to do so by your immodesty ; full of moderation, that

Rom. xii.  
16.

Ver. 17.

Ver. 18.

1 Pet. ii. 12.

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all good men may glorify God for your professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ—to those hard points in hard times, to meekness and moderation, when your adversaries are so violent and immoderately set against you. Known must our moderation be in all its parts, that all may know the purity of our profession, the soundness of our religion, the grace of God appearing in us, the adversary be convinced, the Christian brethren incited by our examples to the same grace and virtue.

One note, especially, we are to carry hence, that it is no excuse for our impatience, harshness, or any immodest or immoderate fierceness against any, that they are men of a contrary opinion, we use so ill. Men they are, and even under that notion moderation to be used towards them; much more if we acknowledge the same Lord, or his being any way near either to reward or punish. And so I pass to the second general, the Christian's comfort, that holds up his head in the bitterest storms, and makes him moderate quite through them all: "The Lord is at hand."

Now the Lord is several ways said to be at hand, many ways to be near us.

Acts xvii. 27. He is at hand, or near us, by his Divine essence, "not far," says S. Paul, "from every one of us." He is everywhere; we therefore nowhere, but that he is near us.

He is near us (2) by his humanity. The taking that upon him has brought him nigh indeed, to be bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh.

John xiv. 20. He is nearer us yet (3) by his grace: one with us, and we with him; one Spirit, too, he in us and we in him.

He is at hand and nigh us (4) in our prayers. So holy David: "The Lord is nigh unto them that call upon him, all such as call upon him faithfully."

Rom. x. 8. He is nigh us (5) in his word, in our mouths, and in our hearts, by the word of faith that is preached to us.

We need not up to heaven, nor down to the deep, says the Apostle, to find out Christ; that eternal Word is nigh enough us in his word.

He is nigh us (6) in the sacraments; so near in baptism as to touch and wash us: especially so near in the blessed sacrament of his body and blood as to be almost touched by

us. There he is truly, really, miraculously present with us, and united to us. It is want of eyes if we discern not his body there in that, or see not his power in the other.

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He is at hand (7) with his judgments; "Behold, the Judge standeth at the door." Just before he had said, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh;" but at the second look he even sees him "at the door." Now of this coming, two sorts we find expected, even in the Apostles' times; his coming in judgment against Jerusalem to destroy his crucifiers, the unbelieving Jews, and the apostate Christians, the Gnostic heretics, that together with the Jews persecuted the Church of Christ; and his last coming at the general judgment. We may add a third: his being always ready at hand to deliver his faithful servants out of their troubles, and to revenge them in due time of all those that causelessly rise up against them. The first kind of his coming to judgment, that against Jerusalem, is the coming by which the Apostle comforts his Philippians, That the Lord was now coming to deliver the persecuted saints out of their hands. The third is that by which our drooping spirits are supported in all distresses, That he is near to help us in them all. The second his coming at last in the general judgment, then, howsoever, to make a full amends for all, is the great stay of all our hope, all Christians from first to last. No great matter how we are here from time to time driven to our shifts; the time is coming will pay for all.

1 Cor.  
xi. 29.  
James v. 9.

Nor do any of the other comings want their comfort: it is a comfort that God is so near us in his essence, so that "in him we live, and move, and have our being;" our life and being are surely the better by it. 2. It is a great comfort that our Lord would vouchsafe us so great an honour as to become like one of us: to walk, and speak, and eat, and drink, and be weary, and weep, and live, and die like one of us. 3. It is an inward and inexpressible comfort, that he will dwell in us by his grace and Holy Spirit; make us holy as himself is holy. 4. It is a gracious comfort that he suffers us so ordinarily to discourse with him in our prayers. 5. It is an especial comfort, and that such a one as he affords not to other nations, to give us by his word the knowledge of his laws; to reveal unto us his whole will and

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pleasure. 6. It is a comfort, to a miracle, that he will yet draw nearer to us, and draw us nearer to himself, by the mysterious communication of himself, his very blood and body, to us. No greater establishment to our souls, no higher solace to our spirits, no firmer hopes of the resurrection of our bodies, than by his thus not only being at hand, but in our hands, and in our mouths. I speak mysteries in the spirit, but the comfort never a whit the less: the joy of the spirit far the greater ever. But all these comforts heaped together, what comfort in the world like the faithful Christian's?—all so great, so certain, so nigh at hand.

And yet if I take hint from the Church's choice of this text for the front of her Epistle this day to her children, and say, the Lord may be said to be at hand too, because the feast of his coming, that coming which gave rise to all the rest, the original of all the rest of his gracious comings, is at hand to us, I shall not strain much; and to those that truly love his appearance, that can really endure to hear of his coming, any day that shall put them in mind of his being at hand must needs be a comfort, a day of good tidings; and this, as well as any of the rest, will afford us an argument to persuade to moderation, to make it known to all men whatsoever at the time when the grace of God appeared to all men whatsoever. Which passes me over to the third general,—the connexion of the Christian's duty and his comfort, or the persuasion to the duty from the comfort of the Lord coming. And so many persuasive arguments there are from it as there are comings; so many reasons to persuade moderation, as there are ways of our Lord's being at hand; nay, one more, and it shall go first, because it stands so.

“The Lord” it is we do it to—to the Lord, and not unto men: let that go for the first reason. It is to him, and for his sake, we are enjoined it. S. Paul thought it a good argument to persuade servants to their duties, to do their service with a good will too: and we all are servants, and here is our Lord.

Here, 2, and “at hand,” on every hand. We cannot go out of his presence. Let that teach us righteousness and equity, modesty and moderation,—to do all things as in his pre-

sence. Would we but think this when we go about any thing, did we but consider seriously the Lord was so near us, heard us, and looked upon us, our words would be wiser and our actions better. We durst not look an immodest look, nor speak an uncivil word, nor do any iniquity, or any thing out of order. "The Lord is at hand," and sees what we are doing; let all then be done with moderation.

3. The Lord has taken on our nature, and come nearer; yet given us by it an example so to do: to be so moderate as to wash even Judas's feet. To do good, to be civil and modest and moderate, even towards them that are ready to betray us, who will do so the next hour, have bargained for it already. He came so nigh us in our nature, that we might so come nigh him in his graces; took up our nature, that we might take up his example; drew so nigh us, that we might not draw off our affection from our brethren, but serve them in love, how ill soever they serve us; he took hands and feet to be at hand, to teach our hands and feet how to behave and moderate themselves towards others.

4. He is at hand with his grace to help us; there is no excuse of impossibility. "By him I can do all things," Phil. iv. 13. says the Apostle, "by Christ that strengthens me." Be it never so hard, his grace is sufficient for us, sufficient to enable us to all grace and virtue, even the hardest, and in the most difficult exigencies and occasions. This he offers to us; offers it abundantly, more abundant grace. Let us accept it then, and walk worthy of it, in all modesty and moderation.

5. He is at hand to our prayers: let us then desire the grace we just now spake of. Deny us he will not; do but knock, and he comes presently. "To him that knocks," says he, "it shall be opened." Let us but come with meek and patient spirits, in love and charity with all men, forgiving them that we may be forgiven, and speed we shall; be merciful and moderate towards them, so will God be merciful and moderate towards us: moderate at least the punishments due to our iniquities. "The Lord is at hand" always to hear such a man's prayers; learn we therefore moderation.

6. The Lord is near us in his word. This is his command and will, must therefore be performed. If the will of the Lord be so, that we must suffer for righteousness' sake,

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IV.1 Pet. iii.  
15.  
Ver. 14.

let every answer to our persecutors be “with meekness and fear,” says S. Peter; “for happy are you,” says he, and therefore “be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;” moderate your passions and your fears, and esteem yourselves happy by so suffering, by so doing. It is your Master’s revealed will that so it should be; it is his way to draw you nearer to himself, by working you to the image of his sufferings.

7. The Lord is at hand, the Judge is coming. At hand to reward us for all our sufferings, all our patience and moderation, all our modest and civil conversation, all our righteousness and mercy. Not one sparrow, not the least feather of a good work shall fall to the ground, not one half farthing be lost, not a hair of any righteous action perish: he is at hand to take all up that nothing be lost. At hand he is, 2, to deliver us out of the hands of all that hate us: if temporal deliverance be best, to give us that; if not, to deliver us however over into glory. At hand, 3, to take revenge upon his enemies, to repay his adversaries. He came presently after this Epistle to do so to Jerusalem, to destroy the incredulous Jews and apostate heretics, those persecutors of the Christian faith; came with a heavy hand, that they fell to their utter ruin and desolation. Thus he being at hand to reward and punish may well serve as an argument to persuade us to be patient for so short a while, to be moderate both in our fears and desires, in our words and in our actions, to bear a while and say nothing, to endure a while and do nothing; for One there is a-coming, nay, now at hand to deliver us, to plead our cause, to revenge our quarrel: let us commit it to Him. He is the Judge of all the world, and judges right. Let us do nothing but with moderation, and not think much to show it unto all, when we are sure to be rewarded for it, and those that observe it not, are sure to be punished.

8. The Lord is at hand in the blessed sacrament; and that is also now at hand, but a week between us and it. And moderation of all kinds is but a due preparation to it, some special act of it to be done against it. “Righteousness and equity is the habitation of his seat,” says David; the Lord sits not nor abides where they are not. The holy sacra-



ment that is his seat, a seat of wonder, is not set but in the righteous and good soul, has no efficacy but there. Modesty and humility are the steps to it; into the modest and humble soul only will he vouchsafe to come. All reverence and civility is but requisite in our addresses unto it. But moderation, meekness, and patience, and sweetness, and forgiving injuries is so requisite, that there is no coming there, no offering at the altar, till we be first reconciled to our brother. "Go, be first reconciled to thy brother," says our Lord himself; so that now if we desire a blessing of the blessed sacrament unto us, if we desire the Lord should there come to us, "let our moderation be known to all men" before we come. Let us study the art of reconcilment; let us not stand upon points of honour or punctilios with our brother, upon quirks and niceties; let us part with somewhat of our right; let us do it civilly, use all men with courtesy and civility, express all modesty and sweetness in our conversation; all softness and moderation, patience and meekness, gentleness and loving-kindness towards all, even the bitterest of our enemies; considering "the Lord is at hand:" the Lord of righteousness expects our righteousness and equity; the Lord in his body, and looks for the reverent and handsome behaviour of our bodies; the Lord of pure eyes, and cannot endure any unseemliness or intemperance either in our inward or outward man; the Lord that died and suffered for us, and upon that score requires we should be content to suffer also anything for him, not to be angry, or troubled, or repine, or murmur at it, or at them that cause it. At the holy sacrament he is so near at hand, that he is at the Table with us; reaches to every one a portion of himself, yet will give it to none but such as come in an universal charity, with all the forementioned moderations.

Give me leave to conclude the text as I began it, and fix the last argument upon the time. The time is now approaching wherein the Lord came down from heaven, that he might be the more at hand. Fit it is we should strive to be the more at hand to him, the readier at his command and service: the time wherein he moderated himself and glory as it were to teach us moderation, appeared

S. Matt. v.  
24.

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so to all, that our moderation also might appear to all, of what size, or rank, or sect whatsoever.

I remember a story of Constantia, Queen of Arragon, who having taken Charles, Prince of Salerno, and resolving to sacrifice him to death, to revenge the death of her nephew Conradinus, basely and unworthily put to death by his father, Charles of Anjou,—sent the message to him on a Friday morning, to prepare himself for death. The young prince (it seems, not guilty of his father's cruelty) returns her this answer: That, besides other courtesies received from her Majesty in prison, she did him a singular favour to appoint the day of his death on a Friday, and that it was good reason he should die culpable on that day whereon Christ died innocent. The answer related so much moved Constantia, that she sends him this reply: "Tell Prince Charles if he take contentment to suffer death on a Friday because Christ died on it, I will likewise find my satisfaction to pardon him also on the same day that Jesus signed my pardon, and the pardon of his executioners, with his blood. God forbid I shed the blood of a man on the day my Master shed his for me! I will not rest upon the bitterness of revenge: I freely pardon him."

Behold a speech of a queen worthy to command the world, worthy a Christian indeed. To apply it, is only to tell you, we may often take excellent occasions of virtue and goodness from times and days, and bid you go and do likewise. The time that is at hand, is a time to be celebrated with all Christian joy and moderation: some particular and special act of charity, equity, modesty, meekness, moderation, to be sought out to be done in it, or to welcome it; the feast of love to be solemnized with an universal charity; the Lord at hand to be honoured with the good works of all our hands. His coming to pardon and save sinners, to be accompanied with a general reconcilment and forgiveness of all enemies and injuries, of a moderation to be exhibited unto all. Let your moderation then keep time as well as measure—be now especially shown, and known, and felt, and magnified by all with whom we have to do; that thus attending all his comings, he may come with comfort, and carry us away with honour; come in grace and hear us,

come in mercy and pardon us, come in his word and teach us, come in Spirit and dwell with us, come in his sacrament and feed and nourish us, come in power and deliver us, come in mercy and reward us, come in glory and save us, and take us with him to be nearer to him, more "at hand," to sit at his right hand for evermore.

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## THE FIRST SERMON

ON

### CHRISTMAS-DAY.

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ISAIAH xi. 10.

*And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.*

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“AND in that day there shall be:” and in this day there was, a root of Jesse that put forth its branch. That day was but the Prophecy; this day is the Gospel of it. Now first, (to speak in the Psalmist’s phrase,) “truth flourished out of the earth:” now first the truth of it appeared.

Rom. xv.  
12.

Some indeed have applied it to Hezekiah, and perhaps not amiss in a lower sense; but the Apostle, who is the best commentator ever upon the Prophets, applies it unto Christ. (Rom. xv. 10.) There we find the text, and him it suits to more exactly every tittle of it, and of the chapter hitherto, than to Hezekiah or any else.

Isa. xi. 2.

He was properly the Branch that was then to grow out of old Jesse’s root. For Hezekiah was born and grown up already some years before, thirteen at least. He, 2, it is whom “the Spirit of the Lord does rest upon,” upon Hezekiah and all of us; it is the Dove going and returning. Upon Him, 3, only it is, that the Spirit in all its fulness, with all its gifts, wisdom and understanding and counsel and might and the rest, is poured out upon. He, 4, it is alone, that judges the earth in righteousness, which is said of this root. He, 5, it is that shall “smite the earth with the rod

Isa. xi. 4.

or spirit of his mouth," as it is so attested. He, 6, it is that can make the wolf and lamb, the leopard and the kid, the calf, the young lion and the fatling, lie down and dwell together, as is prophesied of him. He the only Prince and God of peace, that can reconcile all enmities and difference, that can unite all disagreeing spirits. In a word, he is the very only He whom God hath set up "for an ensign to the people," to whom all the Gentiles flock in, to whom rest and glory both properly belong; the only "root" too from whence all good things spring, or ever sprung, either to Jesse, or David, or any other. Nor is it the apostle, or we Christians only that thus expound it of Christ; the learnedest of the Jewish Rabbies do so too. *Tam Christiani, quam tota circumcisio fatetur*, says S. Jerome: all the circumcised expositors confess as much; all understand it of the Messiah, only a temporal Messiah they would have, and err in that, because ours, the true one, they will not acknowledge. But we have enough from what they do, from their own confessing it to be spoken of the Messiah, or the Christ.

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Isa. xi. 4; 2  
Thess. ii. 8.  
Isa. xi. 6.

Of whom we have here four particulars to consider: the stock from whence he was to come; the design upon which he was to come; the success of his design; and the glory of his success.

1. The stock from whence he was to come, is the "root of Jesse."

2. The design upon which he was to come, is, to "stand for an ensign to the people" to come in unto him.

3. The success of his design, is their coming in, and seeking to him: "to it shall the Gentiles seek."

4. The glory of his success: "And his rest shall be glorious." Rest he shall have in it, and glorious he shall be by it.

And to bring both ends of the text together, nay all the ends of it together, I shall lastly add the time, when this rest shall spring, when this ensign shall stand up, when the Gentiles shall seek, when this rest and glory, or glorious rest, shall be. "In that day," says the text. In this day, says the time. In the birth of Christ. In the times of Christ all this should be, and all this was. Both days are

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one, and this of his birthday, the very first of all these things here, beginning to be fulfilled.

And the sum of all is no more but this, that notwithstanding the most calamitous times, (such as were threatened to the Jews, by bringing upon them the Assyrian, in the former chapter,) there should a day of deliverance at last appear, a day of rest and glory, when the Messiah or Christ should come to perfect all their deliverances; and not only theirs but the Gentiles also; and build up a Church out of them both unto himself, and dwell and rest gloriously among them, and bring them also to his eternal rest and glory. I begin at the root of this great design, to show you who he is, and whence he comes, that shall thus stand up for the rest and glory of the people. And the root of Jesse here he is called: "There shall be a root of Jesse."

In the first verse his style somewhat differs: he is called, "a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots:" and he is them all; and this root in the text, but a metonymy to express them all.

1. He is a rod; the rod, the staff that so comforted old Ps. xxiii. 4. David; that even raises his dead bones out of the grave, and makes him as it were walk still among the living.

Heb. xi. 21. The staff that supported dying Jacob, which he leaned upon, and worshipped, which we may worship too without any idolatry. A rod, a staff he is to lean upon, a staff that will not fail us; not like the reeds of Egypt, the supports and succours that the world affords us: they will but run into our hands and hurt us, to be sure never be able to hold us up. This Christ is the only staff for that; a staff that will comfort us when we are ready to die, that we may trust to upon our death-beds, that we may commit our dying spirits to, as S. Stephen did. No other can do that but this of Christ. Indeed, no rod hath either comfort or strength to hold by but only he.

Aets. vii.  
59.

Ps. ii. 9. Yet a rod, 2, he is, to rule and correct us too, as there is need; a rod of iron by which God bruises the rebellious spirits. The rod or sceptre of Judah, the shepherd's rod or hook; one to show his kingly power, the other, his priestly power over us. So the word denotes two of his prime offices out to us, and may yet intimate a third; the shepherd's rod

being not so much to strike, as to direct and lead the straggling sheep into the way : a part of his prophetic office. So a word well chosen to signify unto us all his three offices. And the rod or wand that is carried before the judge, when he goes to the judgment-seat, may not unfitly be added to the other, and put us in mind that this our King, and Priest, and Prophet, shall also come to be our Judge ; and we therefore so to carry it, so to yield our obedience to him, so to submit to his rod, as we intend to answer it when he comes to be our Judge, as we expect or hope to have his favour in the day of judgment.

But he is a rod, 3, new springing out of the root ; a kind of pliable tender thing, so stiled for his meekness and humility, ready to be wound and turned any way for our service, to become any thing, to become all things, for our good. A rod so pliant, so flexible, so pliable, so tender ; never any son of man so pliant to his father's will, so flexible to all good, so pliable to do or suffer, so tender over us ; never so meek, and humble, and lowly, never any.

Nor did, 4, ever rod grow out of a more unlikely stem, rod : the word used here imports a dead trunk cut close down to the earth, no appearance of life or power in it. The royal family of David was come to that ; nothing appeared above ground that could give hope of the least bud or leaf. And then it was, that notwithstanding this rod came forth. So low may things be brought to human eyes, and yet rise again : God's time is often then. When our eyes are ready to fail with expectation, and all hopes have given up the ghost ; when the family of David, from whence all the promised and looked for hope, was in a condition near an extinguishment ; when Herod had usurped the throne, and the Romans settled him and his succession in it ; when not so much as a sprig, or bud, or string of hope could be seen by the quickest sight, then out starts this rod upon a sudden, and prospers to a wonder. Well might the prophet put " Wonderful " for one of his names ; there was never any like him : and it may teach us, first, to adore this wonder, to kiss this rod,—support or comfort us, rule or correct us how it will ; and, 2, thankfully admire God's goodness that thus does so unexpectedly often for us.

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And upon this next title we may do as much: for he is not only a bare single rod, but a "branch" that spreads itself abroad into twigs and little boughs. Two main ones at the first, his divinity and his humanity; from which infinite little twigs and leaves, infinite graces and blessings, are extended to us. "My servant the Branch," God calls him; Zech. iii. 8. and the "Man whose name is the Branch." The word Zech. vi. 12. in both places descends from צמח, which signifies any thing that springs or rises, either from above or from below. His divinity, that springs from above, from heaven; and to that alludes the Latin in both those places, which translates צמח by *Oriens*, the east or rising sun; and is alluded to by Luke i. 78. Zachary in his *Benedictus*, when he calls him the "Day-spring from on high," *Oriens ex alto*. His humanity, that riseth from beneath, from earth, and is sufficiently signified by the "root of Jesse." You have them both together, Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. "I will raise unto David a righteous branch," and "This is his name, The Lord our Righteousness." And from these two all the leaves and fruits of righteousness whatsoever.

For it is not, 2, a mere sprout, or yet a barren one, but Isa. iv. 2. flourishing and flowering too. "Beautiful" and "glorious," (Isa. iv. 3,) "excellent" and "comely," in the same place. *Flos*, the Vulgar reads it, a fair goodly "flower." The "rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys;" a sweet-smelling flower that sent forth its odour into all the world. *Flos odorem suum succisus reservat, et contritus accumulatur, nec avulsus amittit; ita et Dominus Jesus in illo patibulo crucis, nec avulsus evanuit, nec contritus emarcuit, sed illâ lanceæ punctione succisus speciosior fusi cruoris colore vernavit, mori ipse nescius et mortuis æternæ vitæ munus exhalans*, says S. Ambrose. "A flower when it is cut off loses not its scent, and being bruised it increaseth it: so our Lord Jesus," says he, "lost none of his beauty, or sweetness, by being broken and bruised upon the cross; when he was here taken off from the stock of the living, the blood that issued out of his wounds made his beauty more fresh and orient; and his bruising there extracted from him so sweet an odour, that even still every day raiseth the fainting soul out of its swoon, and revives even the dead, that they flourish out of their graves by a



resurrection to life eternal." The original of the word נצר is from נצר, *servavit*, to reserve or keep; and may therefore not unfitly denote the great sweetness and virtue that is reserved and laid up in Christ to sweeten and adorn the stinking and nasty houses of our sinful souls and bodies.

And from the same Hebrew root, so signifying *servavit*, we have *Servator*, our Saviour and Conservator, pointed to us. This נצר, this "branch," this "flower," bears in its name the Saviour; and hath been by some drawn into *Nazareus*, to raise a conjecture that Christ was called a Nazarene from Isaiah's *Netzer*, from the word here translated "branch," or "flower." But this to be sure can be no mistake, to tell you, either from the word or any way else, that our Saviour is designed by it; and this "rod," and "branch," and "root" is none but he.

And "root," indeed he is, as well as a rod or branch; a root without a metonymy, as well as by it. The very root of all our happiness. The root in which our very life is hid. "Our life is hid with Christ in God," says the Apostle. Col. iii. 3. The "root," 2, and foundation upon which we all are built; we are all but so many twigs of this great vine-root, so many "branches" from him. The "root," 3, whence all good John xv. 5. springs up to us, all flowers of art, of nature, all the staves of comfort and rods of hope, all the branches of grace and glory; no name properer to him in all these respects. Nay, 4, even the very "root of Jesse" too, from whom Jesse had his original, from whom Jesse's family throve into a kingdom, from whence his youngest son's sheep-hook sprang into a sceptre: the "root of David" himself too, so says he of Rev. xxii. 16. himself. Why, then, say we, or why says the prophet, "the root of Jesse?" Why? Not without reason neither. Jesse was but a poor man in Israel. My family, what is it? says 1 Sam. David himself; yet from Jesse would God raise up Christ, xviii. 18. that we might know that God can bring any thing out of any thing. He can raise empires out of sheepecotes; so he did Cyrus, so he did Romulus: the one the founder of the Persian monarchy, the other of the Roman. He raised the first governor of the Jews out of a bulrush-basket, and the first states of the Christian Church out of a fisher-boat: and "not many mighty, not many noble," saith S. Paul; 1 Cor. i. 26.

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1 Cor. i. 27,  
28.

“but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things that are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.” So little is God taken with our greatness, our great birth or breeding.

And it is, 2, to shame our pride, who undervalue mean things; ready enough to say with the unbelieving Jews, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Can any great eminent person spring out of the root of Jesse? Yes it can.

And our great ancestors will but shame us, as well as be ashamed of us, if we have nothing to glory of but our relation to their ashes: our high descent is not worth the speaking of, and perhaps if we but trace it a little higher than our own memories (to be sure if to the first beginning) the best and gloriousest princes will find themselves derived from as mean an original as any poor Jesse whatsoever. And this may serve well to cut our plumes, to stop our rantings of our descent and birth, or anything, and teach humility.

To drive that lesson home, I may note to you, 3, that it is the root of Jesse here, not David, (though elsewhere he is called the “Root of David,” as Rev. v. 5,) lest he should seem either to receive glory from David, or need his name to cover the obscurity of his beginning. There is no glory to that of humility, nor any so truly honourable as the humble spirit.

And “of Jesse,” 4, not David, to point out as it were the very time of our Messiah’s coming; even then when there was scarce any thing to be seen or heard of the house of David; the royal line as it were extinct, and David’s house brought back again to its first beginning, to that private and low condition it was in in the days of Jesse. Thus again would God teach us to be humble in the midst of all our ruff, and glory, by thus showing us what the greatest families of the greatest princes may quickly come to, where they may take up ere they are aware. And, 2, to give us the nearest sign both of Christ’s coming, and of himself; that when things were at the lowest, then it would be, and that his coming would be in a low condition too; in poverty and humility: “Root” and “Jesse” both intimate as much.

And lastly, if we may with some etymologists derive it

from נִשְׁתָּה, and interpret it a gift, there will be as good a reason as any why it is here said rather of Jesse than of David; even because this root of all this good to us, comes merely of free gift. "So God loved the world," says S. John, John iii. "that he gave his only-begotten Son;" and "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy," says S. Paul, this great kindness of God our Saviour appeared toward us, this Lord our Saviour appeared to us, as a root, as a rod, as a branch; a root to settle us, a rod to comfort us, a branch to shelter us; a root to give us life, a rod to rule us in it, a branch to crown us for it; a close stubbed root, a weak slender rod, a tender branch full of loveliness, meekness and humility.

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And he appeared as they all do, out of the earth, watered by the dew of heaven; they have no other father than the heavenly showers: so by the descending of the Holy Ghost upon the Blessed Virgin, as rain into a dry ground, this holy "root" put forth, this "branch" sprang up, without other father of his humanity; which is the meaning both of *erit* in the text, and *egredietur* in the beginning, both of this "shall be" here, and that "shall come forth," or "there shall grow up," in the first verse of the chapter. And thus we have the first part of the text, the descent, and stock, and nature, and condition, and birth of Christ, with other things pertaining to it. And now for his design, to be "set up," or "stand for an ensign to the people."

II. And indeed, for that he was born, to gather the strag-  
gling world into one body, to unite the Jew and Gentile under one head, to bring the straying sheep into one fold, to draw all the armies of the earth together into one heavenly host, that we might all march lovingly under the banner of the Almighty, under the command of heaven.

Men had long marched under the command of flesh, earth, and hell. God had suffered all nations, saith S. Paul, to do so, to "walk after their own ways." But now he commands otherwise, commands to repent, and leave those unhappy standards to come in to his.

And he exempts none, debars none; all men every where are called to it; "every nation," and "every one" in every nation, that will come shall be "accepted." "Every

Acts xiv.  
16.

Acts xvii.  
30.

Acts xvii.  
30.  
Acts x. 35.

SERMON V.  
 Mark xvi. 15.  
 Gal. iii. 28.  
 Matt. xi. 28, 29.

creature," says he himself; "Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female," all one here. Be we never so heavy laden with sins and infirmities, under this banner we shall "find rest." Be we never so hotly pursued by our fiercest enemies, here we shall have shelter and protection. For he is not only an ensign set up to invite us in, but an ensign to protect us too by the armies it leads out for us.

And as it first is set up to call us, and secondly to bring us into a place of defence and safety, so does it, thirdly, stand to us, and not leave us. An ensign may be set up and quickly taken down, but this stands, and stands for ever. It is not idly said, when it is here said particularly, it is to "stand." Human forces, devices, and designs may be set up, and not stand at all; but God's and Christ's,—theirs will: the gates of hell itself cannot disappoint them, cannot throw down this banner. "His counsels shall stand, he will do all his pleasure." They do but "fight against God" that go about to resist it, says Gamaliel, the great doctor of the law.

Matt. xvi. 18.  
 Isa. xlv. 10.  
 Acts v. 39.

And will you know the staff, the colours, and the flag or streamer of this "ensign?" Why, the staff is his cross, the colours are blood and water, and the streamer the Gospel, or preaching of them to the world. The staff that carried the colours was of old time fashioned like a cross: a cross bar near the top there was, from which the flag or streamer hung; so as it were prefiguring, that all the hosts and armies of the nations were one day to be gathered under the banner of the cross, to which soldiers should daily flow out of all the nations and kingdoms of the earth. By blood and water, the two sacraments, is the way to him; and the word or Gospel preached is the flag waved out to invite all people in.

Come we then in, first, and let not this flag of reconciliation, of peace and treaty—for to such ends are flags sometimes hung out—be set up in vain; let it not stand like an ensign forsaken, upon a hill: come we in to treat with him at least about our everlasting peace, lest it become a flag of defiance by and by.

Come we in, 2, and submit to the conditions of peace, submit to his orders and commands. The Septuagint reads *ὁ ἀρχόμενος ἐθνῶν*, here, to intimate this: He that stands for an ensign is to be the great Ruler and Commander of the

nations; it is requisite therefore that we come in and obey him.

Come we, 3, to this standard, and remember we are also to fight under it: that is the prime reason of ensigns and banners. We promise to do it when we are baptized, and it must be our business to perform it. It is not for us to be afraid of pains or labour, of danger or trouble, of our lives and fortunes, for Christ's service. A soldier scorns it, even he who fights but for a little pay, and that commonly ill paid. And shall we turn cowards when we fight for a kingdom, and that in heaven, which we may be sure of if we fight well?

Above all, 4, if this ensign stand up for us, let us stand up to it, and stand for it to the last. A soldier will venture all to save his colours; rather wrap himself up in them, and die so, than part with them. For Christ, for his word, for his sacraments, for his cross, for our Gospel and religion we should do as much. But I am ashamed; the age has showed us too many cowards, that have not only run away from this standard, but betrayed it too; the more unworthy certainly that they should ever reap fruit or benefit, twig or branch, from the root of Jesse. The very Gentiles in the next words will sufficiently shame them. For to it, to this ensign, "do all the Gentiles seek."

III. "Shall,"—it is, I confess, in the future tense here, reached no further in the prophet's time, but now it does; the prophecy is fulfilled, it so came to pass. And it quickly came so, after the ensign was set up, the cross reared, and the resurrection had displayed it. "For I, if I be lifted up from the earth," says he himself, "will draw all men to me." Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, the dwellers in Mesopotamia and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and Libya, Rome and Cyrene, as well as the dwellers in Judea; Cretes and Arabians, as well as Israelites; proselytes, as well as Jews; he will draw all in to him. The vast multitudes that came daily in from all quarters of the world, so many Churches of the Gentiles, so suddenly raised and planted, are a sufficient evidence to this great truth. And the term the Jews at this day give the Christians, of גוים, the very word in the text for Gentiles,

John xii.  
32.

[Acts ii. 9.]

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 Gen. xlix. 10. confirms as much by their own confession. So true was both  
 Rom. xv. 12. Isaiah's prophecy here, and father Jacob's so long before,  
 that to him should "the gathering of the people be." But  
 that which is an evidence as great as any, if not above all, is,  
 S. Paul applies the text as fulfilled then. And there is  
 this only to be added for our particular, that we still go on  
 and continue seeking him.

IV. But there is rest and glory here added to the success  
 of this great design: "his rest shall be glorious."

Now by "his rest," we in the first place understand the  
 Church, the place where the Psalmist tells us "his honour  
 dwells;" the place of which himself says no less than "This  
 shall be my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have  
 delight therein." And glorious it is the Apostle tells us,  
 Eph. v. 27. "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle;" so glorious  
 Isa. lx. 3. that the Prophet says, "The Gentiles shall come to its light,  
 and kings to the brightness of its rising." They shall "bring  
 Ver. 7. gold and increase from Sheba; the flocks of Kedar, and the  
 rams of Nebaioth shall come with acceptance to his altar;"  
 Ver. 13. "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto it;" "They  
 Ver. 18. shall call the walls of it salvation, and the gates praise;"  
 Ver. 19. "The Lord is an everlasting light unto it, and God is  
 its glory." So that we may well cry out with David,  
 "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O thou city of God!"  
 Thy Church, thy congregation, O thou Root of Jesse, thou  
 Son of David, which thou hast gathered, and thy churches or  
 holy temples too, which are raised to thee, exceed in glory;  
 the beauty of holiness, thy holy mysteries, thy blessed self  
 art there!

And, indeed, in the holy mysteries of the blessed sacra-  
 Cant. i. 7. ment, is his second place of rest. There it is that he "feeds  
 his flock, and rests at noon." And he is glorious there,  
 glorious in his mercies, illustrious in his benefits, wonderful  
 in his being there. No such wonder in the world as his  
 being under these consecrated elements, his feeding our  
 souls with them, his discovering himself from under them,  
 by the comforts he affords us by them.

His cratch to-day was a third place of his rest: glorious it  
 was, because, 1, the God of glory rested there: because, 2,  
 the glorious angels displayed their wings, and gave forth their

light and sung about it : because, 3, kings themselves came from far to visit it, and laid all their glories down there at his feet. There his rest was glorious too.

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Luke ii.  
13, 14.

Nay, 4, his sepulchre, the place of his rest in death, was as glorious, is as glorious still, as any of the other : and I must tell you, the Latin reads it, *sepulchrum ejus gloriosum*. From thence it is he rose in glory, and by that it was he gained a glorious victory over death and hell : from thence he came forth a glorious conqueror. Thither have devout Christians flocked in incredible numbers. There have miracles been often wrought, there have kings hung up their crowns, there have millions paid their homage. And thence have we all received both grace and glory ; from his sepulchre, where he lay down in death and rose again to life.

There is one rest still behind, and it is not only glorious, but itself is glory. His "rest" himself calls it, yet a rest into which he would have us enter too. And in heaven it is ; no rest to this, no rest indeed any where but there, and perfect glory nowhere else.

Heb. iii.  
11.  
Heb. iv.  
9. 11.

And now to wind up all together. This rest and glory, or glorious rest, which ends the text (and it is the best end we can either make or wish), springs from the "root" at the beginning. The Church itself, and all the rest and glory the Churches ever had, or have, or shall enjoy, grows all from that. Our holy temples, our holy sacraments, our holy days,—this day, the first of all the rest,—all the benefits of his death, resurrection, and ascension into glory,—nay our greatest glory in heaven itself, comes from this little Branch of Jesse, this humble Root ; and the way to all is by him and his humility.

And the time suits well, and the day hits fair for all. In that day, says the text, all this you have heard shall be ; and that day now is this. To-day the Root sprang forth, the Branch appeared. To-day the Ensign was displayed to all the people ; from this day the Gentiles began their search. This day he began to call in his Church, and the shepherds were the first. To-day he first was laid to mortal rest ; to-day the glory of his star appeared to wait upon his cradle. To-day we also may enter into his rest, one or other of them.

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Heb. iv.  
11.

One of his places of rest we told you was in the church, or holy place: let us seek him there. Another rest of his we mentioned to be in the blessed sacrament: let us seek him there. His ensign is there set up; let us go in to him, and offer our lives and fortunes at his feet, proffer to fight his battles and obey his commands. Strive we, as the Apostle adviseth us, to "enter into his rest." Root we and build ourselves upon him. Root we ourselves upon him by humility; build we upon him by faith: grow we up with him "rooted and grounded in love," and sprouting out in all good works. Rest we ourselves upon him, and make him our only stay and glory. So when this Root shall appear the second time, and blow up his trumpet, as he here set up his ensign, and our dead roots spring afresh out of their dust, we also may appear with him, with palms and branches in our hands, to celebrate the praises of this Root and Branch of Jesse, and enter joyfully into his rest, into the rest of everlasting glory.



## THE SECOND SERMON

ON

### CHRISTMAS-DAY.

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S. LUKE ii. 7.

*And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger ; because there was no room for them in the inn.*

I SHALL not need to tell you who this "she," or who this "him." The day rises with it in its wings. This day wrote it with the first ray of the morning sun upon the posts of the world. The angels sung it in their choirs, the morning stars together in their courses. The Virgin Mother, the Eternal Son. The most blessed among women, the fairest of the sons of men. The woman clothed with the sun : the sun compassed with a woman. She the gate of heaven : he the King of Glory that came forth. She the mother of the everlasting God : he God without a mother ; God blessed for evermore. Great persons as ever met upon a day.

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Yet as great as the persons, and as great as the day, the great lesson of them both is to be little, to think and make little of ourselves ; seeing the infinite greatness in this day become so little, Eternity a child, the rays of glory wrapt in rags, Heaven crowded into the corner of a stable, and He that is everywhere want a room.

I may at other times have spoke great and glorious things, both of the persons and the day : but I am determined to-day to know nothing but Jesus Christ in rags, but Jesus Christ in a manger. And I hope I shall have your company along :

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your thoughts will be my thoughts, and my thoughts yours, and both Christ's; all upon his humility and our own. This is our firstborn, which we are this day to bring forth, for it is a day of bringing forth; this we are to wrap up in our memories, this to lay up in our hearts; this the blessed mother, this the blessed babe; this the condition, and place, and time we find them in, the taxing time, the beast's manger, the swaddling-clouts,—all this day preach to us.

The day indeed is a high day, the persons high estates; but the case we find them in, and the esteem too the day is lately in, is low enough to teach us humility, and lowliness at the lowest.

With this the day is great, and the persons great, and the text great too; and time, perhaps, you think it is that it bring forth. Come, then, let us see what God hath sent us in it.

A mother and a child, swaddling-clouts to wrap it, and a manger for a cradle to lay it in, and all other room or place denied it quite. These are the plain and evident parcels of the text, in number five.

But the whole business is between two persons, the mother and the child; and it hath two considerations besides the letter, a moral lesson and a mystery. The one sufficiently brought forth, and laid before us; a plain lesson of humility from all points and persons. The other, wrapped up and involved in the swaddling-clothes, and manger, and want of inn-room; nay in the tender mother, her care and travel. For each may have its mystery, and the text no injury; nay hath its mystery, and the text injury if it be not so considered. That is the way, that not one *λίωτα*, one tittle, of the Law or Gospel may fall to the ground, or scrap or fragment may be lost.

We shall do so then;—read you first that great lecture of humility, which Christ this day taught us by his birth, and all the circumstances of it here so punctually expressed;—and then show you a mystery in every circumstance. For so great a business as this fell not out by chance, nor the circumstances at hap-hazard; but a reason of all there is to be given: why Christ was born, why of such a mother, at such a time, under such a name, in such a place, why so

wrapt and laid, and no fit room allowed him. And when we have done so, we will see whether he shall now meet better usage with us, than in the inn he did to-day; and learn you by his happy mother, how to wrap, and where to lay him.

I begin to run over the words first, as so many points of his humility. And seven degrees it rises by; seven particulars in them we take it from. 1. His being "brought forth" or born. 2. His mother, "she." 3. His wrapping up. 4. His clothes he was wrapped in. 5. His laying in the manger. 6. The no respect he meets with in the inn, "no room" there for him. And lastly, the time when this was done. In the days of the taxing, then was this blessed mother's time accomplished, in the words just before: and then "she brought forth her first-born son." Thus the *et*, the "and," couples all, and gives us the time of the story, that we may know where and how to find it, in the Roman records by the year of the taxes.

The first step of his humiliation was to be "born," and brought forth by a woman; the only-begotten Son of the Immortal God, to become the first-born of a mortal woman. The first-born of every creature, to become the first-born of so silly a creature. Lord, what is man, that thou shouldst become the son of a woman? But if thou wouldst needs become a man, why by the way of a woman? Why didst thou not fit thyself of a body some other way? Thou couldst have framed thyself a human body of some purer matter than the purest of corrupted natures: but such is thy humility, that "thou didst not abhor the virgin's womb," wouldst be brought forth as other men, that we might not think of ourselves above other men, how great or good soever thou makest us.

But, 2, if he would be born of a woman, could he not have chosen an other gates than "she," than a poor carpenter's wife? Some great queen or lady had been fitter far to have made as it were the Queen of Heaven, and mother to the heir of all the world. But *respexit humilitatem ancillæ*, it was the lowliness of this his holy handmaid that he looked to; it was for her humility he chose to be born of her before any other: that we may know, 1, whom it is that the Eternal Wisdom

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will vouchsafe to dwell with, even the humble and lowly; that, 2, we may see he even studies to descend as low as possible, that so even the meanest might come to him without fear; that, 3, we should henceforth despise no man for his parentage, nor bear ourselves high upon our birth and stock.

Our descent and kindred are no such business to make us proud. Christ comes as soon to the low cottage as to the loftiest palace, to the handmaid as to the mistress, to the poor as to the rich; nay, prefers them here, honours a poor humble maid above all the gallant ladies of the world. For God thus to be made man, man of a woman, the eternal Being begin to be, Infinity to be encompassed in a virgin's womb; He whose goings out are from everlasting, now to seem first to be brought forth, but now lately born; riches itself the son of poverty; so far to debase himself! Who, indeed, can sufficiently express this his generation? also the poorness, meanness, contemptibleness, humbleness of it? His delight surely is to be with the lowly, that thus picks and culls out low things.

You will say so, 3, most, if you consider his wrapping up, as well as his coming forth. He that measures the heavens with his span, the waters in the hollow of his hand, who involves all things, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, in whom all our beings and well-beings, the decrees and fates of the world, are wrapped from all eternity; he now come to be wrapped and made up like a new-born child;—who can unwind or unfold his humility? Will our Master be thus dealt with as a child—thus handled like the common infant? and shall we hereafter think much the best of us to be used like other men? Away with all our nicenesses henceforward, and be content that ourselves and ours should be in all things subject to the common fate of the sons of men.

Nor think we much, 2, to be wrapped up, and bound sometimes, and denied the liberty of a straggling power to hurt ourselves; but ever thank the hand that binds us up, and takes care of us when we either cannot or know not how to help ourselves; would undo ourselves, if we were left loose; which in another English is too true, too often left undone. He that binds all things with his word, makes them up in

his wisdom, and wraps them in the mantle of his protection, was content to be bound up as a child, when he was a child; as if he had wholly laid aside his power, humbled himself to be under the power and discretion of a simple woman, nurse and mother. To teach us again the humility of a child, to behave ourselves in every condition, and submit in it as it requires; if children, to be content with the usage of children; if subjects, with the condition of subjects; if servants, of servants, and the like.

The clothes his dear mother wrapped him in are, 4, the very badges of humility; *σπάρργανον* is a rag, or torn and tattered clothes: such were the clothes she wrapped him in—such, he is so humble, he will be content with, even with rags. What make we then such ado for clothes? Jacob would bargain with God no further than for raiment to put on: he covenanted with him not for fashion, nor colour, nor stuff, nor trimming: and our blessed Lord here is content with what comes next. But, Lord! to see what ado have we about our apparel! this lace, and that trimming; this fashion, and that colour; these jewels, and those accoutrements; this cloth, and that stuff; this silk, and that velvet; this silver, and that gold; this way of wearing, and that garb in them; as if our whole life were raiment, our clothes heaven, and our salvation the handsome wearing them. We forget, we forget our sweet Saviour's rags, his poor ragged swaddling-clothes; and our garments witness against us to our faces, our pride, our follies, our vanities at the best. He that, as Job says, makes the cloud "the garment of the sea, and thick darkness a swaddling-band for it," he lets his own swaddling-bands be made of any thing, his own clothes of any *σπάρργανον*, any torn pieces; to give us a lesson not to be solicitous of what we should put on, or wherewith we should be clothed, but be content to be clothed as he does the grass, when and how he pleases. It is no shame to be in rags and tatters, if they be but Christ's; if they come by him, not by our own ill husbandries, and intemperances; if for his sake or cause we are brought to them. Clothes are but to cover shame, and defend us from the cold; they make not a man, nor commend any to God. Lazarus's rags are better wearing than Dives' purple and fine linen.

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There is a part of humility as well as modesty, that consists in apparel; and this part is here commended to us by our Saviour's condition, that howsoever the giddy gallants of the world think of it, the sober Christians of the Church should not think strange to see themselves in rags, which our Lord hath thus rent and torn out to us.

5. Well, but though he was content to be wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and those none of the handsomest neither, may we not look for a cradle at least to lay him in? No matter what we may look for, we are like to find no better than a manger for that purpose, and a lock of hay for his bed, and for his pillow, and for his mantle too. A poor condition, and an humble one indeed, for him whose chariot is the clouds, whose palace is in heaven, whose throne is with the Most High. What place can we hereafter think too mean for any of us? Stand thou here, Sit thou there, under my foot-stool—places of exceeding honour compared to this. What, not a room among men, not among the meanest, in some smoky cottage, or ragged cell; but among beasts? Whither hath thy humility driven thee, O Saviour of mankind? Why, mere pity of a woman in thy mother's case, O Lord, would have made the most obdurate have removed her from the horses' feet, the asses' heels, the company of unruly beasts, from the ordure and nastiness of a stable: but that we, O Lord, might see what we had made ourselves, mere beasts, as lustful as the horse, as sottish as the ass, as proud and untamed as the bulls, as bent to earthly drudgeries and yokes as the ox and heifer, that thou wert fain even to come thither to find us out and redeem us. This note will humble us if any can, and make us not think much, if God at any time deal with us as beasts, whip us, and spur us, beat us with the staff, prick us with the goad, feed us with hard meat, like such things as they, seeing we are now become like them, as says the Psalmist. To descend from the society of cherubims and seraphims, and all the host of heaven, to be the companion of beasts; from the bosom of his Father, to the concave of a manger; is such a descent of humility, that we have no more understanding than the very beasts to express it. Go, man, and sit down now in the lowest room thou canst, thou canst not sit so low as lay thy

Saviour. S. Jerome was so much devoted to the contemplation of this strange humility of his Master in this particular, that he spent many of his years near the place of this hallowed manger. And S. Luke, in S. Ambrose's interpretation, pleases himself much in the recounting of this circumstance of his Saviour's birth; and indeed any may so conjecture it, that considers how often he repeats it in so little compass, thrice within ten verses—the 7th, 12th, and 16th. And, say I, let others seek him in the courts of princes, in the head of an army, under a canopy of state, in a cradle of gold or ivory; I will seek him to-day where he was laid, whither the angel sent the shepherds to seek him, where the shepherds found him, in a manger, in a stable,—in the humble and lowly heart, that, in an humble sense of his own unworthiness, cries out with Agur, “Surely I am more brutish than man, and have not the understanding of a man,” even thinks himself fit for a manger; nay, not worthy of it, since his Lord lay in it. PROV. xxx. 2.

6. But the manger is not the worst; the disrespect that forced him thither, that is the hardest: “that there was no room for them in the inn,”—*αὐτοῖς, εἰς*; “no room for *them*,”—mark that. It is not said there was no room, no room at all in the inn, but none for them; they were so poor, it seems, and their outward appearance so contemptible, that notwithstanding the condition of a woman great with child, and so near her time, they were put away without respect or regard. To have fallen by chance or some accident into so mean a place, or have been driven thither by some sudden storm or tempest, and so frightened into travail, had been no such wonder, peradventure; but to be driven thither by the unkindness and inhumanity of one's own countrymen and tribe too, is a trial of humility indeed; but to choose to be so, (for he knew all from the beginning before it came to pass,) so to contrive all things for it, and suffer the uncivil ruggedness of men to drive him out to dwell and lodge among beasts; to have contempt thrown upon his poverty, and neglect added to all inconveniences, is, sure, to teach us humility in the harshest usages we meet with. He that made all places, finds none himself, and is content. He that hath many mansions for others in his Father's house, hath not the

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least lobby in an inn, and repines not at it. He that would have given this churlish host an eternal house in heaven for asking for, cannot have a cabin for any hire, because his parents seem so poor; and yet he fetches not fire from heaven to consume him for his inhumanity.

How unlike us, I pray! for whom no downy pallets are soft enough, no room sufficiently spacious and majestic, no furniture enough costly, no attendance sufficient, all respect too little. Do we ever call to mind this our Saviour's first entertainment in the world, or think we are no better than our Master? He could have come in state, in glory, in all magnificence and pomp, attended with all respect and honour; but would not, for our sakes most, that we might see what he most delights in, and learn it as much by his example as his precept.

7. And yet there is a seventh degree of his humility,—to let all this be done to him in such a public time and place; when the whole world was met together to be taxed, where so many were gathered in such a place of meeting as an inn, when the whole city is filled from one corner to another, there and then to be so used, so despised, so scorned, as a sign of men, and the outcast of the people, ranked with the horse and ass. To have so many witnesses of affronts and contempts put upon him, to condescend and order so to have it done, is the highest of humility: for not only to think meanly of ourselves, but to desire to have all others think meanly of us, is so hard a text, that I fear me few can bear it. Whatever we suffer, or to whatsoever meannesses and under offices we condescend, we would not willingly have others think the worse of us for it; there is too oft a pride in our good works, that lies lurking under them, we scarce can throw it off; but it is that, it is that above the rest, that we should endeavour,—to be content to be trampled on and despised for Him who was so for us.

Sum we up now the points of Christ's humility: to leave his Father's bosom for the Virgin's womb, the great riches in heaven for great poverty upon earth, to wrap up his immensity in swaddling clothes, his robes of glory in clouts and rags, forsake his throne for a manger, the adoration of saints and angels for the disrespects of a surly host, to be seen in



this mean pickle to all the world. *Domine, quis similis tui?* SERMON VI.  
 O Lord, who is like to thee? Who is like to thee? may we  
 say this way also in thy humility as well as in thy glory. And [Exod. xv. 11.]  
 sure we cannot hereafter any of us grudge to be in rags, in  
 sheep-skins and goat-skins, in dens and caves of the earth,  
 destitute, neglected, forsaken, repulsed, contemned; but  
 humble ourselves to the meanest condition, without any great  
 reflection upon our birth or former estates and conditions, if  
 Christ shall at any time require it of us; seeing the servant  
 is not better than his Master, nor the dry tree than the  
 green; and if to him all this was done, we should frame our  
 minds at least to a humility ready to undergo it.

I have run over the plain song of the words, the plain  
 lesson of humility that is in them without straining. I  
 must back over again to descant out the mysteries that lie  
 under them.

“And she brought forth.” “Before she travailed she  
 brought forth; before her pain came she was delivered of a  
 man child;” so prophesied Isaiah, and so the Fathers do Isa. lxvi. 7.  
 apply it. She conceived without corruption, and brought  
 forth without sorrow; the very text may bear witness to it:  
 for “she wrapped it in the swaddling clothes, and she laid it  
 in the manger,” says S. Luke. No women, it seems, near to  
 help her: for she who needed not the help of man to con-  
 ceive, needed no help of woman, sure, to bring forth: no  
 corruption, no sorrow. A great mystery—none ever like it  
 —to begin with.

But she a virgin, thus bringing forth, affords us a second  
 too, to instruct us what souls they are of whom Christ is  
 born: pure and virgin, chaste and holy, only, that bring  
 forth him. And the first-born he will be, ever should be, of  
 all our thoughts; will be acknowledged so whenever born;  
*primogenitus*, one before whom none; for that only is the  
 sense of first-born here, not referring to any after, but to  
 none before: “begotten before any creature,” in honour Col. i. 15.  
 above all creatures, endued with all the rights of primogeni-  
 ture, even as man also. Now, three things belonged to the  
 first-born son: the priesthood, the pre-eminence or regal  
 dignity, and a double or larger portion. He is the “High- Heb. iii. 1.  
 priest of our profession;” the great High-priest of the

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Christian profession and religion. He, 2, "the Head of his Church," "To whom all power is given in heaven and earth." He, 3, also "anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows;"—a portion of "grace" far above others. "That in all things he might have the pre-eminence, being the first-born, as well of the dead as of the living," says S. Paul. All these mysteries we have wrapped up in the title of the First-born, that by it he is intimated to be our Prince, our Priest, our Elder Brother, one in whom all fulness; who should be therefore so acknowledged and used, be first entertained in our affections, be the first birth our souls should travail with and our affections and actions bring forth.

Col. i. 18.  
Matt.  
xxviii. 18.  
Ps. xlv. 7.  
John i. 16.  
Col. i. 18.

But there are more wrapped up in his being wrapped in swaddling clothes, than can readily be expressed. All the benefits that came by him were wrapped up and not understood, till the clothes both of the manger and the grave were unwrapped by his resurrection. He seemed not what he was, showed not what he came for, until then. All the while before, nothing but folds and things folded up: the cross made up or involved in his cratch, (for of the form of a cross the cratch, some say, was made,) man's salvation in God's incarnation, the Church's growth in the Virgin's bringing forth, many brethren in the First-born among them.

His glory, 2, that was wrapped up in those clothes: his Godhead in the manhood, the Word in flesh, eternity in days, righteousness in a body like to a body of sin, wisdom in the infancy of a child, abundance in poverty, glory in disrespect, the fountain of grace in a dry barren dusty land, eternal light in clouds, and everlasting life in the very image of death. Will you see the clothes that hid this treasure, not from men only, but from devils? The espousals of just Joseph and holy Mary hid Christ's conception of a virgin; the crying of an infant in a cradle, the bringing forth without sorrow; the purification, her entire virginity; the circumcision, his extraordinary generation without any sin: his flight concealed his power, his baptism his unspotted innocence; his open prayers to his Father, his infinite authority and equality with him: his sad sufferings obscured his perfect righteousness; the poverty and meanness of his

life, the height and greatness of his birth; and the ignominy of his death, the immensity of his glory.

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His gospel, 3, that was wrapped up in clothes, that seeing we might see and not presently understand, a mystery kept secret since the world began; his doctrine wrapped in parables, his grace covered in the sacraments, the inward grace in the outward elements, his great apostolic function in poor simple fishermen, his Universal Church in a few obscured disciples of Judæa, the height of his knowledge in the simplicity of faith, the excellency of his precepts in the plainness of his speech, and the glory of the end they drive to in the humility of the way they lead. Well may the prophet exclaim, *Vere tu es Deus absconditus!* "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour!" Well may we admire thy folds and wrappings up, O God, and not strive to pry into thy secrets, thy goings out and thy comings in: and all thy counsels are past finding out; to thee only it belongs to know them, to us to obey and submit to them and adore them.

Yet, 4, he was thus wrapped up to show us our condition, that the beauty and sweetness of Christianity as well as Christ, of Christians as well as Christ, appears not outwardly, or but in rags. We cannot see the Christian's strength for the weaknesses that surround him, nor his joy for the afflictions that encompass him, nor his happiness for the worldly calamities that oppress him, nor his wisdom for the foolishness of preaching that so much delights him, nor his riches for the poor condition he is sometimes brought to, nor his honour for the scoffs and reproaches of the world he often labours under. He seems unknown when he is well known, dying when he only lives, killed when he is but chastened, sorrowful though always rejoicing, poor yet making rich, as having nothing and possessing all things. Thus the Christian, you see, is wrapped up as soon as he is born; nay, and his very life also is wrapped up "with Christ in God."

Nay, lastly, our practice and duty is wrapped up with him. He is wrapped up in poor clothes, that we might be wrapped up in *stolá primá*, "the best robe," his robe of righteousness, that we might put on the white linen of the

Isa. xlv. 15.

2 Cor. vi.

9, 10.

Col. iii. 3.

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saints. Wrapped up again, 2, he was, his hands and feet bound up like a child's, that by the virtue of it our hands and feet might be loosed to do the works of Christ, and run the way of peace: he is made a child, that we might be perfect men in him; he brought forth, that we might bring forth the fruits of good works and godly living.

The next mysteries lie couched with him in the manger; where in a strait and narrow compass he lies, that he may open heaven wide to all believers, all that keep a strait and strict watch over their ways and actions.

Where, 2, uses to lie the beasts' provender, there lies He also who is the Bread that came down from heaven to feed us, who are often more unreasonable than the beasts. They know their owner: the ox and ass does so, says God, but my people do not theirs; they will but satisfy nature, we burthen it; they will but eat and drink to satisfy, men are grown so sensual they cannot be satisfied. We have made ourselves fit for the manger, which made Christ lie there, to see if he could fill us, seeing nothing can.

3. In the manger among the beasts, that we might sadly consider what we have made ourselves, and change our sensual lives, now he is come into the stable to call us out.

4. There he lies in a place without any furniture or trimming up:—that we might by the place be instructed that the beauty of Christ wants no external setting out; that, 2, his beauty is *omnis ab intus*, “all within,” and his spouse is all-glorious within; that, 3, our eyes might not be diverted from him by any outward splendours, but wholly fixed upon himself; that, 4, by his very first appearance we might know his kingdom was not of this world,—he was no temporal king, we might see by his furniture and palace; that, lastly, we might know he came to teach us new ways of life, and sanctify to us the way of poverty and humility.

Ps. xlv.

5. In the stable. For so *φάτνη*, the word for manger, is, a place for horses by the way; that we might understand our life here is but a journey, and our longest stay but that of travellers by the way; and therefore there he places himself for all comers, by his incarnation and birth, to conduct them home into their country, our country which is above.

Nor is it, 6, without a mystery, that there was no room for him in the inn. Inns are places of much resort and company, and no wonder if Christ be too commonly thrust out thence. They are made houses of licentiousness and revelling; no wonder if Christ be not suffered to be there. They are places of more worldly business; and no wonder neither that there is often there no room for him, when the business is so different from his, and men's minds so much taken up with it. Into the stable, or whither he will, he may go for them, they heed him not; "there is no room for him in the inn," that is, where much company, or riot, or too much worldly business is.

That "there was no room for him in the inn," puts us to inquire how it came about, and we find it was a time of the greatest concourse; and in that also, lastly, there is a mystery. All this done at such a time, that so all might know that it belonged to all to know the birth and posture of their Saviour, his coming, and his coming in humility to save them. At such a time, in such a place, in such a case, so poor, so forlorn, so despicable, without respect, without conveniences, wast thou born, O Lord; that we through thy want might abound, through thy neglect might be regarded, through thy want of room, room on earth, might find room in heaven! Oh happy rags, more precious than the purple of kings and emperors! Oh holy manger, more glorious than their golden thrones! The poverty of those rags are our riches, the baseness of the manger our glory; his wrapping and binding up, our loosing from death and hell; and his "no room," our eternal mansions.

Thus we have twice run over the text, picked out both the moral and the mystery of every circumstance in it of our Saviour's birth; I hope we have showed you mystery enow, and you have seen humility enough. But it is not enough to see the one or the other, unless now we take up the Virgin Mary's part, which is behind, bring forth this First-born to ourselves; suffer him to be born in us, who was born for us; and bring forth Christ in our lives, wrap him and lay him up with all the tenderness of a mother.

The pure virgin pious soul is this "she" that brings forth Christ; the nourishing and cherishing of him and all his

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gifts and graces, is this wrapping him in swaddling clothes; the laying up his word, his promises and precepts in our hearts, is the laying him in the manger.

What though there be no room for him in the inn, though the world will not entertain him? The devout soul will find a place to lay him in, though it have nothing of its own but rags, a poor ragged righteousness: for our righteousness, says the prophet, "is but menstruous rags:" yet the best it hath it will lay him in; and though it have nothing but a manger, a poor strait narrow soul, none of the cleanliest either to lodge him in; yet, such as it is, he shall command it, his lying there will cleanse it, and his righteousness piece up our rags.

What though there be no room for him in the inn? I hope there is in our houses for him. It is Christmas time, and let us keep open house for him; let his rags be our Christmas raiment, his manger our Christmas cheer, his stable our Christmas great chamber, hall, dining-room. We must clothe with him, and feed with him, and lodge with him at this feast. He is now ready by and by to give Himself to eat; you may see him wrapped ready in the swaddling clothes of his blessed sacrament; you may behold him laid upon the altar as in his manger. Do but make room for him, and we will bring him forth, and you shall look upon him, and handle him, and feed upon him: bring we only the rags of a rent and torn and broken and contrite heart, the white linen cloths of pure intentions and honest affections to swathe him in, wrap him up fast, and lay him close to our souls and bosoms. It is a day of mysteries: it is a mysterious business we are about; Christ wrapped up, Christ in the sacrament, Christ in a mystery; let us be content to let it go so, believe, admire, and adore it. It is sufficient that we know Christ's swaddling clothes: his righteousness will keep us warmer than all our winter garments; his rags hold out more storms than our thickest clothes: let us put them on. His manger feeds us better than all the Asian delicates, all the dainties of the world; let us feed our souls upon him. His stable is not hanged here with arras, or decked with gilded furniture; but it is hung infinitely with gifts and graces: the stable is dark, but there is the Light of the world to enlighten it.

The smell of the beasts, our sins, are perfumed and taken away with the sweet odours of holy pardon and forgiveness; the incondite noise of the ox and ass and horse are stilled with the music of the heavenly host; the noise of our sins, with the promises of the Gospel this day brought to us. Let us not then think much to take him wrapped up, that is, in a mystery, without examining how and which way we receive him; it is in the condition he comes to us. Let us be content with him in his rags, in his humblest and lowest condition; it is the way he comes to-day: let us ourselves wrap and lay him up in the best place we can find for him, though the best we have will be little better than a manger.

What though there be no room for him in the inn, in worldly souls? I hope yet ours will entertain him, invite him too, and say, as Laban said to Abraham's servant, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord;" come in, come in, thou blessed Child, come in. "Wherefore standest thou without? I have prepared the house, and room for the camels;" the house for thee, my soul for thee thyself, and my body for the camels,—those outward elements that are to convey thee. They are not fitted, they are not fitted as thou deservest; but thou that here acceptedst of rags, accept my poor ragged preparations. Thou that refusedst not the manger, refuse not the manger of my unworthy heart to lie in, but accept a room in thy servant's soul; turn in to him and abide with him. Thy poverty, O sweet Jesu, shall be my patrimony, thy weakness my strength, thy rags my riches, thy manger my kingdom; all the dainties of the world, but chaff to me in comparison of thee; and all the room in the world, no room to that, wheresoever it is, that thou vouchsafest to be. Heaven it is wheresoever thou stayest or abidest; and I will change all the house and wealth I have for thy rags and manger.

Gen. xxiv.  
31.

These holy births and raptures, or the like, must our souls this day bring forth to answer this day's blessed birth. It is a day of bringing forth; sure, then, there is no being barren. Bring forth fruits therefore worthy of repentance; these Christ this day came to call for: bring forth fruits worthy of the day, and the blessing of it, holiness, thankfulness, and humility, faith and piety, they become it. Bring our first-

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born, our first and chiefest thoughts, our prime and chief endeavours, to attend him from his cratch to his cross : wrap we up and bind our souls with holy resolutions to his perpetual service, lay them humbly at his feet ; let not his poverty, or rags, or manger, or reproach, fright or scare us from it, but make room for him, and receive him ; lay him up and bind him fast unto our souls, visit him with the shepherds, and sing of him with the angels, and rejoice in his birth, with all its happy and mysterious circumstances. So when the First-born from the dead shall come again to raise us up, come wrapped in clouds, and robed in glory, we shall be caught up to meet him in the clouds, and be received of him into eternal dwellings, there to follow him in long white robes, and be with him for ever.

Be it so unto thy servants, O Lord.



## THE THIRD SERMON

ON

### CHRISTMAS-DAY.

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S. JOHN i. 16.

*And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.*

OF his fulness! Of whose fulness? Of *Verbum Caro's*, for thither this *ejus* points us, this day leads us. To "the Word made flesh," to Christ's, to His. Yet of his fulness when so made? Of his emptiness, it would be rather. Of his emptiness to-day it is, that we have all received, that we still receive all; there is nothing we receive, but it is from this day's emptiness; and there is nothing that we receive not from it, from his this day's emptying himself into the form of a servant, from this day's exinanition.

Yet it is a day of "fulness" too. His thus very emptying himself for us, his thus very emptying himself upon us, is the very fulness of his grace and favour to us: the day, then, wherein it was, a day of fulness, wherein he was full, and we were filled; he full of grace, and we filled from it. "The fulness of time," the apostle calls it upon this account; Gal. iv. 4. a day wherein law and prophets, types and promises, came all to their full, were fulfilled: we received them all fulfilled to us. A day wherein he gave and we received; gave himself with all his fulness, and we received him. So then we here did, and I hope we here will do so too.

A day then this worthy to be observed in our generation, wherein to fill our hearts with gladness and our tongues with joy; to return back somewhat for our great receipts; to con-

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John i. 14.

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fess we received a great grace to-day by his coming to us, grace upon grace, favour upon favour by it. To return, therefore, 2, *gratiam pro gratiâ*, thanks to him for his grace; and do it, 3, to the full too, with full mouths, in full congregations, so to answer to his “fulness” somewhat like.

For to us this “we” reacheth too, this fulness pours out still. We, therefore, in all reason to acknowledge it, as well as any “we” whatsoever, at any time whensoever, at all times whatsoever; but at the full time, this time howsoever. No time comes amiss to do it in, but this time it comes best; a word in season always best. Now here is a day of fulness, and a text of fulness. There wants nothing but our fulness of praise and duty for it; fulness of humility and thankfulness to receive it. All the “we” in the text received it so, no doubt; all that will be of the “we” of S. John’s congregation will receive it in the day, will be glad this day to receive it, and thank God for it,—God for sending, Christ for coming with this fulness to us: be glad with Abraham to see a day, with the shepherds to hear a text, that brings news and tidings of it; be full glad at it.

And it will become us well to do so; we have good reason, for all this fulness is for us. His fulness for our filling: he full, that we might be filled. The fulness his, the redundance ours; ours the benefit; we receive the grace, “grace for grace,” one grace after another, till we also come to a kind of fulness too, “the fulness of the stature of Christ.”

That we may then receive it as we ought, know we that in the text there is a fulness and a filling to be considered: the fulness his, the filling ours. “Of his fulness we all;” there is his fulness,—a complete, gracious, glorious, communicative, universal fulness. “Of his we have all received, and grace for grace;” there is our filling,—a good, plentiful, gracious, universal filling too.

Yet to understand them fully both, both the fulness and the filling, we must consider this fulness. 1, whose it is; 2, what it is; 3, in what respect it is; 4, how great it is; 5, how large it is: five particulars. First, his it is whom we read of a verse or two before; for *ejus* is a relative, and refers to the antecedent. Secondly, a fulness it is that is answerable to his greatness, fulness with a double article,

τοῦ αὐτοῦ; an emphatic fulness, a perfect fulness. Thirdly, to him it is, or his it is, as he is *Verbum Caro*—God and man both; both natures' fulness, according to them both: for this *ejus* has not more syllables than natures, and relates as well to the one as to the other. Fourthly, so great it is, that it may—nay, that it does—communicate itself, and yet is fulness still. *De plenitudine*: nor case, nor preposition can take any thing from it, to diminish it. Fifthly, so large that it extends as far as all; all some way or other partake of it, more or less, according to their capacity and receipt.

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John i. 14.

Consider we must again, 2, in the filling:—that, 1, it is not an active but a passive filling, as it were, a being filled, a receiving: that, 2, it is a receiving of, not a receiving all; not a perfect fulness, but a proportional: that it is, 3, a receiving *gratis*; nothing but mere *gratia* in it; of “grace,” not of desert: that it is, 4, yet a receiving sufficient, full, every one enough; and that not single grace neither, but one for another, one after another, one upon another: that it is, 5, a general business; all receiving somewhat, some grace or other, and that seldom or never by itself; none without receiving: that, 6, it is from Christ; from him it is, from his grace, and from his fulness, that we receive whatever we receive: that, lastly, “grace for grace” it is; for some end and purpose it is that we receive it;—receive grace that we may say grace, give thanks, and acknowledge it; 2, receive grace, that we may show grace; receive grace from God that we may show it unto men; 3, receive grace even for grace itself, to increase and grow in it daily more and more till both it and we come both to perfection.

Of all these this is the sum: that in Christ there is “fulness,” all fulness, fulness in both natures, fulness that contents not itself till it have filled others, till it fills us all. That from this fulness “we receive,” receive all we have; all we have, though not all he has, all sorts of graces fitting for us; and all *gratis*, are therefore to give thanks for it, as we have received, so to repay again “grace for grace.” And of all, this is the scope—the exaltation of Christ and of his grace; the scope of the text, the sermon, and the day. It is but making it yours too, and then all will be full. And that it may so, I begin now particularly to open to you all this

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fulness. Where I am first to show you whose it is. "His  
fulness."

i. "His," you know, is a relative, must relate to somewhat that is before; "his," to some that was spoken of before. Who is that? One to whom S. John bare witness, that "he was before," long before, in the "beginning;" but was fain to draw nearer, ere we could see him or his fulness; to draw himself into the flesh, ere we could fully discern his grace or behold his glory; was made flesh, "the Word made flesh," the only-begotten of the Father become the only-born of a Virgin mother, before we hear of any one "full of grace and truth."

This Word, this eternal Word, this only-begotten Son of God, is He this "his" belongs to: yet this fulness then fully his, when he was made the Son of Man. In that first appeared the fulness of his love, the fulness of his word and promise, the fulness of his grace and mercy, the infinite grace and favour done to our flesh, the fulness of his truth and reality above all those empty types and shadows, which more amused than filled the world. The body, that is "of Christ," says the Apostle; the full body of truth, full bodied grace, never till he took a body to make it full. The Law, that could not fill us; the very life of things there was poured out at the foot of the altar, and all the rest went into smoke. The Prophets, they could not fill us with any thing but expectation, fill us with good words; but alas! they are but wind, would have proved so too, had He not embodied them. All the world could not fill us; the fulness of time was not come upon it till the Son of fulness came: all that was in it till he came was vanity and emptiness—could neither satisfy itself nor us. It is Christ "that filleth all in all." He the end of the Law, the completion of the Prophets, the fulness of the world. To him it is that this fulness is attributed, to the "fulness of Christ." In him it is it "dwells." So it pleased God, says the Apostle there, so to "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in him." Fulness must needs be his, in whom all things are gathered all together, in whom earth and heaven together.

ii. Thus the fulness you see is his; and it being the fulness

of heaven and earth, you see in general what his fulness is. SERMON VII.  
 In particular, it cannot be measured. "It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? the measure of it is longer than the earth and broader than the sea." There is no end of his fulness, no more than of his greatness: in him are hid "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" all wisdom and knowledge treasured up in him; all in the very knowing him; all the very treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the choicest to be found there; all even hidden and obscured by his, swallowed up in that. He knows all, and to know him is to know all; the highest wisdom, the deepest knowledge, is but silliness and ignorance in respect of his—hides itself at the comparison, as lesser lights do at the sun's glaring beams; in him is all knowledge, and in the knowledge of him is all wisdom hidden and contained. In him, 2, is the "fulness of grace;" "Full of grace are thy lips;" and if the lip is full, the heart is not empty; for out of the abundance there, the fulness here,—the very "stature of fulness." In him, 3, is the "fulness of truth;" so full, that he is styled the very truth itself: "I am the truth;" the truth of the promises, all the promises since the creation. All the promises of God are "in him, yea," and "in him, amen." The truth of all the types and shadows and sacrifices from the world's first cradle; the true Paschal Lamb, the true Scape-Goat, the true High Priest: Adam, and Isaac, and Joseph, and Joshua, and Samson, and David, and Solomon, were but the representations of him, or what was to be more substantially done by him. They are but the draughts and pictures, he the substance all the way. To him they all related; had not their offices, actions, or passions, scarce their very names, fulfilled but in him; all their fulness was in him. Their truth, and all truth besides; the doctrine of truth never fully delivered, never fully revealed or known, till he came with it. We knew it but in pieces, we saw it but in clouds, we heard it but in dark and obscure prophecies, till he came, a "light into the world," to manifest it all; it is then we first hear of the whole will of God, and the declaring that, the "whole counsel of God:" truth was not at the fulness till he taught it. Acts xx. 27.

Nor, 4, was his the fulness of wisdom and knowledge,

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 grace and truth, but of the Spirit too: not "by measure," but immeasurably full He; all the graces of the Spirit, and all of them to the full in him. The Spirit himself proceeds from him; he must, therefore, needs be full of that.

John iii. 34.  
 John xv. 26.  
 Eph. iii. 8. Full, 5, with the fulness of riches too, the "unsearchable riches of Christ," says S. Paul; so full that we can find out no bottom of it, come to no end of it—unsearchable.

His fulness, 6, was the fulness of glory too. "We saw it," says S. John (two verses before the text), "such a glory as of the only-begotten Son of the Father," and that sure is all the fulness of God. Yet, to put all out of doubt, this fulness was the fulness of the Godhead, too, expressly; "all the fulness" of it, and all of it "bodily" too, says S. Paul. "Bodily," how is that? Why, that is full in all dimensions—in all dimensions of a body, length and breadth, and height and depth; the length and infinity of his power, the extent and breadth of his love, the height and eminency of his majesty, the depth and unfathomedness of his wisdom, all met together in Christ.

iii. Nor will this seem strange at all, if we consider, for our third point, in this fulness, how and in what respect it is his: and it is his, both as he is God, and as man. He could not be thus full as I have told you, unless he were God; could not have the Godhead dwell in him bodily, unless God were in the body, unless he were incarnate God. Nor could other kinds of his fulness be in him, unless he were man. He could not be a full and sufficient sacrifice, and so offered for one, had he not been man; nor a perfect High Priest to mediate for us, if not taken from among men: the great promise that contains all the rest—that of the seed of the woman—could not have been fulfilled, would not have had its fulness from him, but as man. The very attribute of fulness speaks him God; none full but God; no fulness or satisfaction but in him: yet some kinds of his fulness evidence him man—are not the fulnesses of God, as God, but as God made man: and so the Evangelist by the context delivers it: as the fulness of the "Word made flesh," of the Eternal Word becoming man. This fulness is the fulness of Christ; and Christ is both God and man, so the fulness of both.

iv. And such a fulness that none runs over; "anointed

with the oil of gladness above his fellows;" that is fulness, but that is not all. So above them too it is, as it runs down upon his fellows: he is not full only for himself; for us it was that he was born, that he was given, that he was anointed, that he was full, full of grace, and full of truth, and full of glory, that we might be filled with grace, and truth, and glory. He, indeed, is the head that was anointed with oil, but that Head is ours; the Church is the body upon which it runs down from the Head.

v. And that not to the near parts alone—to the beard or shoulders—but even to the skirts of the garment it runs, so full it runs. *Ex hoc omnes*,—all the members, nay all the clothes; not only those that are true members of the Church, but even those who have but an outward relation to it: all that have but an external right or adherence, as skirts and clothes, have yet some benefit of this oil, of this fulness of his. Christ is no niggard, his fulness nothing so stinted, as some narrow and envious souls will have it; here is enough for all—enough for the whole world to take, and yet leave all full still. You may light a thousand candles at one, and yet the light of it no way lessened by it. You may fill a thousand worlds, if there were so many, from his fulness, and yet he never a whit the less full. Take all you can cope, all that will, nay, all that are or shall be, here is still for all, as much as at the first. "Oh the depth of the riches of the fulness of Christ!" I could fill the hour, I could fill the day, I could fill all the remnant of my days, with the discourses of it; and should I do it, I could yet say nothing of it near the full, but be as far from sounding the depth of it at the end as I was at the beginning. I pass, therefore, to that which we can better comprehend, easier reach—our filling out of this fulness, the second general.

II. Our filling is here said to be "receiving." Be our fulness never so great, it is no other; we have received it all. Alas, poor things! we have nothing of ourselves. "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" says the Apostle. 1 Cor. iv. 7. Is it grace? That grows not in our gardens—it comes from paradise: what we have is transplanted from thence. Is it nature? Why that, too, is received. We did not make ourselves; we received as well our natural as our spiritual

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endowments from Him that made us. Is it glory? Why, God calls it "his glory:" a thing he will not share but by beams and glances. What should I now mention worldly riches, estate, and honour? They are too evidently received, Prov. x. 22. to be denied they are so. It is the "blessing of the Lord Ps. xci. 15. that makes rich;" so riches are received. "I shall deliver him, and bring him to honour," says God; so honour is Ps. cxv. 16. received. And "the earth hath God given to the children of men;" so our estates and lands, every clod and turf of them is received. For "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof;" and from his fulness we receive of it what we have.

Enough this to humble us; for if thou hast received it, "why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not?" It is S. Paul's inference upon it. Thou hast no reason to boast thyself, O man; thy honour, thy riches, thy good parts, thy graces, they are not from thyself, thou didst but receive them, thou hast nothing of thine own; why art thou proud?

And, 2, if all received,—all we have nothing, but so many receipts; look we then well to our accounts, they are things we are to reckon for: we had best see how we expend them, that at the general audit we may give up our accounts with joy.

To do so, it will be convenient to think often of our receipts, our own poverty and indigence. A third business we may learn hence—to grow sensible of our emptinesses and necessities, that we are a mere bill of receipts, so much received to-day, so much yesterday, so much day by day; item our souls, item our bodies, item our health, item our wealth, and so onward, nothing but received, and, without receiving, nothing.

Upon this reflection upon our own vacuities, we cannot, 4, but open our hearts to receive, our hands to take, any thing from his fulness to supply us; to desire to have them filled, ourselves filled out of his fulness, something thence to make us full.

III. Yet, 3, we must not expect to be so filled that we should have an absolute or perfect plenitude, a plenitude without a diminishing preposition before it: *plenitudinem*, properly speaking, it will not be; *de plenitudine*, that is the proper



speech—somewhat taken from fulness, a kind of ablative, secondary, proportional one. We are not capable of other; somewhat taken off the height, somewhat bated of the perfection of it. With this fulness it was that the Blessed Virgin, the protomartyr S. Stephen, S. Peter, S. Paul, S. Barnabas, and other saints, are said in holy Scripture to be full or filled, full of grace, or full of faith, or full of the Holy Ghost; full as the bucket, not as the spring; full as the streams, not as the ocean; full as the measure, not as the immeasurable; full with a fulness of abundance, not of redundance; of sufficiency, not of efficiency; full enough for ourselves, but not for others. Alas, poor narrow shallow things that we are, we cannot hold enough for ourselves and others too!

Take from the bucket or the stream, and the bucket will not be full, and the stream will want of what it had. “Lest there be not enough for us and you,” was more than a just fear of the wise virgins. There is not, will not, cannot be enough. No man is sanctified by another’s grace, no man justified by another’s faith: the father’s goodness will not satisfy for the son’s ungraciousness, nor the mother’s piety for the daughter’s vanity; their righteousness, be it as full as it can, will but suffice only for themselves: it is only Christ’s fulness, his grace, his righteousness, that can communicate itself, that we can take any thing from to fill up our own. Sufficient I think this, to read us a second lesson of humility, not to think too much of our own righteousness, nor to pride ourselves in our receipts; for of another they are, but from them no other; they are received of his, but none receive of ours.

Sufficient, 2, this too to teach us not to trust to the piety of our forefathers, as if their fulness of good works should excuse our emptiness. They had but their share, what would serve their turns; we must afresh to the Spring-head, to have enough to serve ours. And the comfort is in the next point, that it will cost us nothing; we have it gratis, for *gratia* it is, of free grace and favour that we receive it.

3. That we may not doubt it, it is doubled in the text, redoubled; grace, all merely grace, nothing but grace, from it, and for it, and by it. Nothing from desert, nothing from works;

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 Rom. xi. 6. "for if of works, not of grace," says S. Paul, that is plain ;  
 Isa. lv. 1. for if of desert, not of grace, but duty ; not bought or pur-  
 Rom. xi. 35. chased neither,—“freely, without money,” says the Prophet.  
 Eph. i. 4. Come, drink and eat, and fill yourselves. The ocean runs not  
 Rom. xi. 35. freer than his grace. “Who hath first given unto him?”  
 Eph. i. 4. says the Apostle. Who first? Why nobody, sure: for before  
 there was any body, “before the foundation of the world,”  
 he began with us; even then *gratificavit nos*, he accepted  
 us; all grace from the beginning.

Hence too is a lesson of humility; the text and day is full of it, from one end of the text to the other, one end of the day to the other: grace, grace, to put down all opinion of merit or desert; as if it meant to teach us to be filled with humility from the fulness of it this day showed by Christ, and to be read from all the texts that concern it: as if grace itself had this day appeared to teach it.

IV. So much perhaps to be pressed the rather from the fulness of the grace that now follows to be considered in the next particular: lest by the abundance of it we should be  
 2 Cor. xii. 7. “exalted above measure,” as S. Paul, by the abundance of his revelations. For men may be proud of graces, and here are store received in the text.

1. *Gratiam pro gratiâ*, the grace of the gospel for the  
 Rom. v. 17, grace of the law; that is the more abundant, says S. Paul;  
 20. though this was a grace too, a favour, when time was,—and that such, he showed no such grace to any people as to the  
 Rom. ix. 4, Jew. To them the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the  
 5. giving of the law, the service of God, the promises, the Fathers, the coming of Christ also according to the flesh,—all these graces appertained: these all were great ones,  
 Heb. vii. 19. but the “law brought nothing to perfection.” The very  
 Rom. x. 4. “end of it” was Christ. The Law, as great a favour as it was, was but the law still: full of shadows and imperfections, full of rigours without ability to perform them. That came by Christ: the very grace and beauty and glory of the Law was Christ: the grace of the Gospel, that was it which was the perfection of the Law—the fulness of the adoption, the performance of the covenants, the finishing, bringing in a better service, the fulfilling of the promises, the expectation of the fathers, the fulness of Christ,

not according to the weakness of the flesh, but according to the power of the Spirit, and of an endless grace. This is *de plenitudine* right, over and above all graces and favours that were showed before, all that ever any received before us.

So much above them, as spiritual and eternal blessings are above the temporal, as the reward of glory is above all other rewards; for "grace for grace," 2, is grace for glory: grace given us by Christ, to the end we may obtain eternal glory by it. All the graces, if I may so call the good works of the law, tended only to temporal promises: read the whole law over, and show me any other if you can. The grace of the Gospel of Christ it is that first revealed the hopes of glory: thence the kingdom of heaven is heard of first,—there first of grace for glory: grace was single grace, till Christ took a second nature to double it, to grace all to us.

And, 3, here is "glory" again "for grace," according to other interpreters: the reward as sure as the work is. Grace is not only given us to purchase glory, but glory as surely given us for that grace. The glory of the law, or the works of the law, had no grace at all; was but a kind of dark, dusky thing. The glory of the Gospel, and the glory after it, and from it, is that only that exceeds in glory. Thus grace is doubled upon grace; we have grace for glory, grace to come to glory, and glory again to reward our grace; two great ingredients of the fulness we receive, *et gratiam pro gratiâ*, even each of these for the other.

Yet, to make the glory yet more glorious, the grace more gracious, here is, 4, "grace for grace" yet in another sense; one grace for another, one to advance another; grace upon grace, that we may have glory upon glory. For Christ will fill us, if we will, with more than a simple grace or glory; increase and advance us by degrees in both. "Grace for grace," is put to signify abundance of graces: as "skin Job ii. 4. for skin," skin after skin, one thing after another, "will a man give for his life." "Grace for grace," that is, grace after grace will God give us, one after another: never leave giving; will not only give us one or two simple graces, but a confluence and full tide of them; one crowding upon the other, *gratiam cumulatum*, graces upon heaps, "all spiritual blessings," Eph. i. 3.

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Eph. i. 7,  
9, 13.

“redemption, forgiveness of sins,” “the knowledge of the mystery of his will,” “the seal of the Spirit,” all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, all holy virtues and accomplishments, all sanctifying and edifying graces, for to procure us grace in the eyes of God, and graces to gain us grace in the eyes of men; grace to make ourselves gracious in the sight of God, and grace to make others gracious also, to bring others into grace, into the grace of the Gospel. Thus also we receive: and this “and” here hath an emphasis, and it is this, to denote this fulness and abundance of grace,—that especially, whatever else.

Yet this “and” may be an adversative, as much as *sed*, or *quamvis*; peradventure thus we receive, and grace we receive, and grace in this abundance, but not all grace alike, but “grace for grace;” that is, either according to His grace wherewith he loves us:—some more, some less, one this, another that, according to the “measure of the gift of Christ;”—or, 2, “grace for grace;” according to the measure of the use we make of one grace, we receive another: Mat. xiii. 12. “He that hath, to him shall be given;”—or, 3, “grace for grace,” that is, “one after this manner, another after that;” 1 Cor. vii. 7. one receives one grace, another receives another; not all 1 Cor. xii. 8. alike, not all the same: “To one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another faith,” &c. and so onward: and, which adds much to the fulness of this grace, it reaches now, fifthly, unto “all;”—“we all have received.”

V. “All” is a large word, yet no larger than Christ’s grace. Isa. lv. 1. “Ho, every one,” cries the Prophet, “every one,” come take it; he disgraces Christ’s grace, nay ungraces it, that ties it up only to I know not what elect ones. “All things were made John i. 3. by him,” and received they nothing by it? “He fills all Ps. cxlv. 16. things living with plenteousness,” and receive they nothing? John i. 9. “He enlightens every man that comes into the world,” and is that nothing neither? 1. Does he that receives light from Christ, receive nothing? Yes, yes, all receive some benefit or other from Christ’s coming. It were to deny his fulness, to deny that.

All the patriarchs that went before, all drank of the 1 Cor. x. 4. same rock, “which rock was Christ;” they received their fill

of him, according to the capacity of their vessels. All the prophets that followed after, they also were partakers of the same grace, in another manner. But they that followed him, they, Gentiles as well as Jews, they above all "received, and grace for grace." Nay, I am persuaded that there was no man, no creature—there is no man, no creature, the devils only excepted—but receive some benefit or other from this fulness; the goodness of God, which is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," and to everlasting life, would not suffer any to perish for want of receiving that without which they could not but perish: that first grace which might in some measure dispose him for a second, and so forward, were he but willing to work with it.

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2 Pet. iii. 9.

Nay, even "we." And what were we? We that were his enemies, S. Paul tells us, we receive reconciliation by his grace; and why not any enemies as well as we? We that were "haters of God," and "hateful to men;" we that were "dead in trespasses and sins," full of all abominable iniquities; we received pardon of them all, and were received to grace: and what reason have we then to exclude any?—who, be they what they will, cannot be worse than we were once, nor in less capacity to receive it. To be sure, *omnes* will reach them all; and God is gracious to all, not only to them that call upon him, but to them also that never seek him, nor call upon him. This is grace indeed, and it is that makes up the fulness, that shows it full.

Rom. i. 30.  
Tit. iii. 3.  
Eph. 2. 1.

Isa. lxxv. 1.

VI. It is time we should know to whom we owe it. Look we back again once more to the *ejus*, and you have it. "Of his fulness," that is, of Christ's, it is that we thus all receive; that we receive all this. "In the beloved" it is that we are thus gratified, thus graced, thus begraced. And "the beloved" is he in whom "he was well pleased" with us all. "Grace and truth"—why, that is true grace, and that "came by Jesus Christ," in the verse next the text. We were all ungracious children; He the only gracious Son, who makes us gracious. "In him he chose us;" "in him he predestinated us to the adoption of children;" "in him he hath made us accepted;" "in him we have redemption, forgiveness, and the very riches of grace." All in him, and without him nothing. So get him, and get all; lose him, and lose

Eph. i. 6.

Matt. iii. 17.

Eph. i. 4—  
7.

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 Acts iv. 12. all. There is "no other name" but his, no other grace but his, "by which we can be saved." From the grace he had with his Father from the beginning, we have ours in time; from the grace he hath purchased with him, to which he was Phil. ii. 9. "exalted" by his obedience, we are also exalted to his grace. From the grace wherewith he loved us, are we made partakers of his grace. He designed it for us, he deserved it for us; he infuses it into us, he works it in us; and after all he has yet reserved a greater for us, an eternal glory for the reward of grace.

VII. How can we now then, lastly, but render "grace for grace;" say grace, and bless him over this plenty and Zech. iv. 7. fulness; cry, "Grace, grace unto it," as the Prophet has it; proclaim and tell it to the world, fill our lips with songs and hymns of praise, fill the congregations with his glory, and the world with telling out his goodness?

To do it the better, to do the greater right to his grace, let us take the grace-cup in our hand and do it—the cup which Christ blessed, and gave us to remember him and his grace in. We call it a receiving, let us then receive it; receive, and answer this receiving in the text with the receiving in the day; receive we him and his fulness, him and his graces, him with all thankfulness, reverence, and devotion. Set we ourselves to do it, to "draw waters out of these wells of salvation," by the hand of faith and the bucket of humility, out of these fountains of our Saviour—so the Latin reads it—whose side runs out blood and water, full streams of grace and pardon, and all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, if we will but come hither to draw or drink them. We call it a receiving, and so it is, the most signal receiving that we have, a receiving him full and whole; body and blood, flesh and spirit, really though not corporally both; let us therefore receive it. Open we but our mouths wide, and he will fill them; open we our mouths to beg, and we shall receive; open them wide and full, and we shall be filled with fulness too, to-day at this full table, a table at this time full of all heavenly delicacies and dainties.

Yet, as we must open our mouths, so we must open our hands too: our mouths to receive, our hands to give. We receive of Christ; it is fit we give somewhat out of our receipts: we receive of his fulness; it is but proportionable

that we give out of our fulness to those that are not full, that our abundance may be the supply of others' want, as Christ's fulness is of ours. It is a day of fulness; and all would be full, the poor as well as the rich, that all mouths might this day be filled with his praise. "This is not to eat the Lord's body, for one to be full," (I give it the easiest word,) "another to be hungry:" the poor must have their share; "they that have not," says the Apostle, that is, the poor. It is a communion; and all must communicate, one way or other, poor and all. It is a feast of fulness, both in the Church and in the house; all must communicate of this day's fulness, one way or other, in one sort or other: and surely, when we have filled ourselves with the fulness of this house, we cannot but fill others with the fulness of ours.

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1 Cor. xi. 20.

And yet there is one more *ἀντὶ χάριτος*, another fulness, to which this grace and fulness leads us: to be filled henceforward with good works, to be filled with the fruits of righteousness, and all the knowledge of Christ. For this it is that this fulness is received, that this grace is received, that this grace-cup, the cup of salvation, is received, that all gifts and graces are received; that we increase in grace, go on in goodness, proceed in all kinds of holy virtues, till we come to the fulness of Christ, to the fulness of his grace here, and of his glory hereafter.

Send down thy grace, O heavenly Father, that we may all receive this fulness at thy hand; empty us of our sins, empty us of ourselves, that we may henceforward be only filled with thee; fill us this day with the plenteousness of thy table, and reject us not, though too unworthy; fill us every day with the plenteousness of thy grace, and leave us not to our own weakness, that we may go on from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from virtue to virtue, till we come to be filled with the plenteousness of thy house, to the fulness of joy, and pleasure, and grace, and glory for evermore. Amen.

Now to the God and Author of all this fulness, all our receipts, all our gifts and graces,—to the Father that gives, to the Son that purchased, to the Holy Ghost that conveys them to us,—be all the fulness of thanks, and praise, and honour, and glory, for ever and ever.

## THE FOURTH SERMON

ON

### CHRISTMAS-DAY.

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1 TIMOTHY i. 15.

*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

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“THIS is a faithful saying.” And this is the day that made it so, faithful and true, wherein it could first be truly said that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;” for which both text and day are well worthy of acceptance.

Turn the whole Scripture over, you will find no saying there more faithful, that speaks God more faithful, more to have kept his promise, than this, that tells us “that Christ Jesus is come into the world;” He in whom all his promises are fulfilled. And run through the year, you will find no day more faithful than this, that presents us the ground of all our faith, “Christ Jesus come to save sinners.”

“Worthy of all acceptance,” too, they must needs be both, both text and day, that bring salvation: above all, to “sinners,” of which ye are a part, and the preacher “chief.” I cannot but with gladness preach it, nor you but with joy and attention hear it, especially to-day, the day he came in; “in a time accepted, in the day of salvation,” when text and time so happily meet. The day makes the text seasonable. The business of the text makes the day acceptable. The necessities of poor sinners make both comfortable. God make the sermon profitable, too! and we have all we can desire to-day.



The text, to be sure, promises fair; and S. Paul himself finds so much comfort in it by his own experience of the truth and sweetness of it in the former verses, 12, 13, that he here commends it to us as a saying worthy all the respect that we can give it; worthy to be preached, worthy to be believed, worthy to be laid hold on, worthy to be laid up faithfully and remembered, "That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." After which saying, nor he nor we have any more to say than that we are the chief of them, so particularly to apply it. And that I hope we will to-day.

For the whole end, both of the saying itself, and S. Paul's saying it, is but to dispose and move us worthily to accept Christ, now he is come, for whose coming the Church and we have been this month preparing. And the sum of it to put us in comfort, first, that how sadly soever things looked with us before his coming, by his coming now we may be saved, for "Christ Jesus came to save sinners;" and to put us, secondly, in the way how we may; by believing, 1, this faithful saying for a truth; by accepting it, 2, for a word worthy all acceptance; by confessing, 3, lastly, ourselves the most unworthy of it, yet the chief that need it.

Thus you have the full sense of the text, and both the doctrine and use of Christmas in it.

The doctrine, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—the doctrine of Christmas.

The use of it, to take it every one of us to himself; take himself to be the *quorum primus*, the chief of the quorum concerned in it—the chief of sinners; and therefore chiefly interested in Christ's coming.

This the use both of the doctrine and the day; to apply them both, and cry out every one of us with S. Paul, It is I, and I, and I, for whom he came.

In the doctrine, I. there are these particulars—

- i. That "Christ Jesus came into the world."
- ii. That he came "to save sinners."
- iii. That he came to save "the chiefest of them," the very *quorum primi* of them. What is it else to S. Paul or us? or why does he bring himself in upon no better title?
- iv. That all these are "faithful sayings, and worthy of

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acceptation ;” all single, such ; but all together make up a saying “ worthy all acceptation ;” the very  $\delta$   $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ , the saying above all sayings, the whole Word and Gospel itself ; the word after which no word can be said : nothing beyond it.

Of which, therefore, surely the use, II. must needs be great if we thoroughly apply it : and four ways there are to do it in the text, four uses we are to make of it.

i. If a saying, a “ faithful saying” it be, we then faithfully to believe it.

ii. If “ worthy acceptation,” we then worthily to accept it.

iii. If it reach the “ chief sinners ” too, our chief business then, with S. Paul, humbly to apply it to our own particular ; not think much any of us to say, *quorum ego primus* ; not to stick to confess ourselves the chiefest among them that are sinners, so we may be found chief, or second, or any one among them that are saved.

iv. ‘O  $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  it is ; a special saying this is, not to be wrapped up in silence then, nor huddled up within private walls, but to be spoken, and spoken out, cried and proclaimed to all the world.

v. And all this, lastly, I add, to be done to-day. That, indeed, is not in the text, but it is in the time, and never better to be done than now to-day. That is the right use of this holy time—that to which the Church designs Christmas—to proclaim “ Christ’s coming into the world to save sinners,” and to call them in all to come to him.

I. To carry on the design, I go on now with the text, and begin with the first branch of the doctrine there, that “ Christ Jesus came into the world.”

i. That he did so this great day is witness ; worthy, therefore, to be kept for ever for a witness of it ; and they that keep it not, to be suspected that they do not think he did, nor believe that there was any such matter.

Yet, that such a one there was, one Jesus that “ went about doing good,” the Jews, his rankest enemies, will not deny it.

That that Jesus was the Christ, though the Jews will not, John iv. 42. the Samaritans will confess it. Christ and Jesus too, the Christ, the Saviour of the world ; nay, the Christ indeed,

and the Saviour indeed, and they know it, they say there. Nay, of the Jews, too, many believed it—believed and justified it.

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John vii.  
31.

Nor did they it without good ground; the many miracles that he did in the confirmation of it; the performing what was prophesied of the Messiah; the opening the eyes of the blind; the making the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak; the cleansing the lepers, the raising the dead, the preaching to the poor the gospel of peace, those pure, and holy, and comfortable doctrines that he taught,—were a sufficient resolution to S. John Baptist's question: that it was "He that should come," and we should "look for no other," no other than he.

Isa. xxxv. 6.  
and lxi. 1.

Matt. xi.  
3—5.

Indeed we need not: for this Jesus is a Jesus of another sort, of another manner of spelling, it is observed, than all former Jesus's—than Jesus the son of Nun, or Jesus the son of Josedec, or Jesus the son of Syrach; this Jehoscuah Jesus, or a Jehoscuah, (for it is so in the Hebrew,) is with the points of Jehovah in it, a Jehovah Jesus, a Saviour that is the Lord, as the Angel tells us. A Jesus, never the like before; a Jesus above every Jesus, a name now above every name, a name to which heaven and earth and hell must bow: never did they to any Jesus else.

Luke ii. 11.

And as this name now "above every name," so this coming of his above every coming. We sometimes call our own births, I confess, a coming into the world; but, properly, none ever came into the world but he. For, (1.) he only truly can be said to come, who is before he comes: so were not we; only he so. (2.) He only strictly comes who comes willingly; our crying and struggling at our entrance into the world shows how unwillingly we come into it. He alone it is that sings out, "Lo, I come." He only properly comes, who comes from some place or other. Alas! we had none to come from but the womb of nothing. He only had a place to be in before he came. Now, such a Jesus as this—as has God in his name, and must be conceived to be also so by the way of his coming—may well be the Messiah "that should come into the world," Jesus the Christ. We need seek no further, especially if it be the Jesus that comes to "save sinners." And he it is, says our next particular.

Psal. xl. 9.

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ii. Nay, the Angel said so before he was born. He had the name given him for the purpose: "Thou shalt call his name Jesus:" for why? "For he shall save his people from their sins." Himself professes he came for the purpose, "to call sinners to repentance," and that is to save them; yea, so for them, that there is a *non veni* to others; he came for no other. To speak truth, there were no others to come for: *omnes aberraverunt*, we were all sinners: so if he came for the best of us, he yet came for sinners, for them or nobody. But so for such, as not for them that were not such; so altogether for sinners, as not at all for the righteous. "I came not to call the righteous," not them, "but sinners"—as it were in opposition to them. Indeed, *opus non habent*, "they had no need" of his coming. "The whole need not the physician, but they that are sick;" and they are sinners. In a word, not only so for sinners, as before the righteous, and as it were against the righteous, but so for sinners too, as for the worst first, for the greatest of them above the least: the *quorum primi* to be the *primi*, the chiefest sinners he chiefly came for. That is the third point of this great doctrine of the text.

iii. Look the company he keeps, you will say so. "Publicans and sinners," the most emphatical of the name, there you find him so often, that he is accused for it by the righteous—the Scribe and Pharisee. So for the most enormous sinners, it seems, that the righteous cannot bear it, they are scandalized at it. One would think they were so still, that are so much against Christ's saving any body but themselves, that they will allow him neither to save, nor come to save, any body but "the elect." True, indeed, he saves none but the elect; that is, he saves none but them that are and shall be saved; but he came to save even them too that shall not be saved. "Not for our sins only," says S. John expressly, "but for the sins of the whole world." The whole world, be it as large as it will, and the sins of it, be they as great as they can, and all the sins of the world indefinitely, be they whose they will in it; for wicked Manasses' as well as good Hezekiah's; for Noah's drunkenness, Lot's incest, David's adultery, Solomon's idolatry, S. Peter's apostasy, S. Paul's persecuting and blaspheming, for all sorts of sins and sinners.

Matt. i. 21.

Luke v. 32.

Matt. ix.

12.

Mark ii.

16.

1 John ii. 2.

‘So they be saints,’ say they; ‘though they be of the world,’ says he. “He is a propitiation” for them all; “would have all men saved,” says S. Paul; even them that deny him. When he has “bought them,” says S. Peter. It is neither a true nor faithful saying, nor much worth the accepting, as many receivers as it has, that says otherwise, that binds up his coming only to the elect. For if not for all, they may be out, for all their brags; may be too righteous to be in, among the sinners; among the righteous, that he says himself he came not for. This saying that we are for, “that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, is a faithful saying, worthy all acceptation,” even the chiefest the world affords,—to be received by all, whilst itself rejects none. And that it is so, we are now to show you in all particulars: that it is a “faithful saying.” First, that word has many senses; and this saying is faithful in them all, in all those senses, in all its parts.

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<sup>1</sup> Tim. ii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Pet. ii. 1.

iv. Πιστός is *certus et indubitatus*; and “a faithful saying” is, (1) a certain and undoubted truth. Christ’s coming is no less. “We know it,” says S. John; “know that the Son of God is come, even his Son Jesus Christ:”—“come,” and “come in the flesh,” that is, sure enough, into the world; and none but “the spirit of Antichrist,” says he, none but heretics, will deny it. An angel this day proclaimed it; a whole choir came this day down to celebrate it; the wise men a while after came from the ends of the earth to see it. Nothing but what “we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled,” do we declare in it, says S. John. The whole land of Judæa daily saw it, millions have died for the truth of it, and the whole world is witness of it.

<sup>1</sup> John v.

<sup>20.</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John iv.

<sup>3.</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John i. 1.

And it is certain he came for sinners, “to seek and save” them; keep them from being lost; came and went for them; came into the world, and went out of it; died to save them. “Whilst we were yet sinners” he did so; gave commission besides, that when he was gone, remission should be preached to sinners all the world over in his name.

Luke xix.

<sup>10.</sup>

Rom. v. 8.

Luke xxiv.

<sup>47.</sup>

This takes in the chiefest, makes that certain too, that he excludes none; for “to save” the world “he came,” says he that lay in his bosom, and knew his heart; to save “and

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not to judge it." That comes but *ex eventu*, when men will not be saved. To judge or condemn them was not his business, unless they were such as would not be saved; and are there any so great sinners as would not?

(2.) And all this is not only true and faithful, or certain in itself, but makes (2) all God's former sayings to be so too. It fulfils the promises, it perfects the sacrifices, it answers the types, it completes all the prophecies that went before: all was shadow till this substance came; all their good and happiness was but coming till Jesus came; all was but say and say, mere words, till this Eternal Word leapt down from heaven. This coming of Christ gave faith and credit to them all. Now God is fully proved to be "faithful," and all his promises and prophecies full and true. Now Jacob's "Shiloh," Isaiah's "Immanuel," Jeremiah's "Branch," Daniel's "Messiah," Zachariah's "Day-spring," Haggai's "Desire of all Nations," is come into the world; and all the sacrifices of bulls, and rams, and lambs, and goats, recapitulated in this holy Lamb; and all the types from the beginning of the world completed in this great Antitype to-day beginning to appear, Heb. ix. 26. in the "end of the world," as the Apostle speaks, "to put away sin."

Ay, that is the business that makes this "saying" yet more "faithful" in the way we are now speaking of; this putting away sin, or saving sinners. This, "Lo, I come," puts an end and period to all burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin. No more of them to be heard of when this true sacrifice is once brought into the world. All the old prophecies end here too. For to "bear our iniquities," to "make his soul an offering for sin," to "make intercession for the transgressors," comes this "righteous Servant," as the prophet Psa. xl. 9. Isaiah styles him. And, "to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity," comes Daniel's Messiah. And now he is come, they all are at an end, their words made good; and all is true, all faithful and true. And if iniquity, transgressions, and sins be enough to take in all sorts of sinners, (as no doubt it is,) his coming to save the chiefest of them does but the more fulfil the truth of all.

(3.) But the words are "faithful" in another sense; not

the fulfilling only of our forefathers' faith, but the full of ours. For to believe "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," is to believe all we are obliged to believe, either of God, or Christ, or of ourselves.

In the word "Christ" is the whole Trinity, his own person and offices comprised; in "Jesus" and his "coming," both his natures; in "sinners" is our own. And in his coming into the world "to save" them is the whole work and business of our redemption. Will you see them how they rise?

Why, to be Christ, is to be "anointed;" and to be "anointed" supposes as well him that does anoint, which S. Peter says was God the Father, the first person—and Acts iv. 27 that with which he is anointed, which the same Apostle tells us was the Holy Ghost, the third person—as well as him Acts x. 38. that is anointed, whom the second Psalm makes God the Son, the second person. And this anointing, too, implies all his offices of King, Priest, and Prophet: they anointed all of them, and he anointed to be them all. Here are all the persons in the Trinity; and therein his own, with all his offices besides.

(2.) "Jesus" is his name; that signifies a Saviour, and that speaks him God. *Ego sum, et præter me non est.* None can be truly so but he. But his coming into the world, that showed us he was man. There is both his natures. And Isa. xliiii. 11.

(3.) In the title of "sinners," there is our own, that tells us what we poor things are: poor wretched sinners that want a Saviour.

Lastly, his "coming into the world" is but a short expression of all he did and suffered in it; and "to save sinners" is to take thence a Church unto himself, to purify and cleanse them from their sins, to raise them first from the death of sin here to the life of righteousness, to the communion of saints, and to raise them at last from the death of the grave unto the life of glory, yea, the communion of saints hereafter. This is the sum of the Christian faith, and it is all summed up here: all the Articles of the Creed, nay the whole Gospel itself, in this one single period, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners:" a saying which is not only πιστὸς, but πιστός, now not only "faithful," but the full faith itself.

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“Faithful” it is (4) in another acceptation. *Fidelis est qui nunquam fallit*; not like those *aquæ infideles* that the prophet Jer. xv. 18. Jeremiah complains of, those faithless streams, those shallow brooks, that fail and dry away when we most need them. Zech. xiii. 1. When all other waters fail us, this fountain that was set open for Judah and Jerusalem, will run still. When all other comforts are dried up and gone, this of Christ Jesus’ coming will be coming still. When all other sayings put together will not heal our wounds, nor refresh our weariness, nor cool our heat, nor quench our drought, this will do all. When all things else desert and leave us, and nor friends, nor fortunes, nor wit, nor eloquence, nor strength, nor policy will help us, this will be faithful to us, this Christ Jesus will stand to us. No such well-spring of life in the world as he; and nothing can come so bad to us in the world, but his coming makes good, a world of good of.

Nay, this very saying, that he “came into the world to save sinners,” and the chiefest not excepted, well laid to, will stick close to us in all distresses, disperse the terrors of our sins, defeat the devices of the devil to disturb and fright us: this will support us in our weaknesses, sustain us in our faintings, raise us out of our despairs, relieve us in our sicknesses, ease us in our pains, refresh us in our agonies, comfort us on our death-beds, revive us when we are even dead, go with us out of the world, and never leave us till it has brought and laid us at His feet who came to save us, and 2 Pet. iii. 9. is “not willing that any should perish,”—no, not the greatest sinner, not any, first nor last.

(5.) Well may this saying, 5, pass for *χρηστός* now, as S. Ambrose and S. Augustine seem to have read it, as well as *πιστός*; be styled *humanus* or *jucundus sermo*, a sweet and pleasant saying, as well as faithful.<sup>b</sup> Pleasing and joyful news it is to hear, that such a person as this speaks of is come amongst us: for all the while we were without this Eph. ii. 12. Christ, we were, says S. Paul, “without God,” too, “in the world.” From his coming only it is that we can say with

<sup>b</sup> [See S. Ambrose, Comm. in Epist. ad Timo. i. cap. 1. (Op., 2051. B. ed. Paris. 1549.) “Humanus sermo.”—and S. Aug. Serm. 8. De verbis Apostoli, (1 Tim. i. 15.) “Humanus

sermo.”—The next sermon is on the same text with the reading “Fidelis sermo.” (Op., tom. x. p. 97. F. and p. 99. C. ed. Col. Agr. 1616.)]



S. Peter, *Bonum est esse hic*, that it is good being here, that the world is worth the staying in. It were not without him; no company worth being with till he came; no pleasure in it till he brought it with him. For this it is that *χρηστός* makes no mistake; the saying may be said pleasant without an error.

Indeed, what more pleasant, if to save sinners be his coming? Liberty, and health, and life, and salvation, are pleasing news; liberty to the captives, health to the sick, life to the dying, salvation to the lost and perishing; and to save sinners is to give all of them to them all. Such a saying to them must needs please them all.

And upon this we must needs allow it lastly to be "faithful" in another sense: *πιστός* is *fide dignus*, a saying worthy of our faith, worth our believing. All true, and certain, and profitable, nay, and pleasing sayings, are not so: no matter whether some of them believed or no. This is a truth of so great concernment, and so truly all, that S. Paul himself, that great doctor of the world, is content, nay "determined, to know nothing" else, nothing "but Jesus Christ, and him <sup>1 Cor. ii. 2.</sup> crucified." "Him crucified" is "him come into the world to save sinners;" for by his cross he saved them, and upon his cradle the foot of it was reared; and from his coming into a cross and peevish world, he began to be crucified and bear it. All other knowledges are not worth the knowing, all other truths not worth the believing: the Law of Moses is but an A B C learning to this knowledge. All the Jewish Kabala, all the wise sentences of the wisest Rabbies, all the wisdom of the heathen world, of all the world—all that is without Christ Jesus in it, but mere fables, endless genealogies; to no end or purpose all of them but to fill the head with empty notion, and the heart with vexation, and the tongue with strife; all mere *σκύβαλα*, "very dross and <sup>Phil. iii. 8.</sup> dung," in respect of the knowledge of "Christ Jesus coming into the world to save sinners."

Yet after all this, were there not *ὁν πρώτος*, to them all—were either not the "chiefest" sinners in, or might not the chiefest of them make a particular application of it to himself—were Christ's coming only to a few, and all the rest excluded by some inevitable decree—there would be but a

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starved kind of comfort in it at the best; nor could it well command our faith, seeing it might so command us to believe a lie, and cheat ourselves. To make the saying either worth the saying or the believing, it must be applicable to the chiefest sinners; and so it is here, and the greatest sinner among us may lay hold upon it.

And now, it being a saying so "faithful" and true in itself, faithful both to our fathers and to us, the fulfilling of their faith and the ground of ours, and the sum of it too; a saying that will never fail us in any exigence and distress, but bear up our spirits at every turn, and stick firm to us upon all occasions: a saying so pleasing, so worthy of our faith, and so close to every one of us,—it is "worthy," sure, lastly, "of all acceptance," all the best entertainment we can give it.

It is worthy of it (1) for the Person it brings to us: one Psa. xlv. 3. that is "fairer than the children of men," worth entertaining.

Worthy (2) for the way it brings him to us, in an humble and familiar way (such was his coming); he comes into the world like other men, that we may the easier approach him, and so the more readily entertain him.

Worthy (3) for the good things it tells us he brings with him, for the salvation he comes with to us—a thing worth accepting.

Worthy (4) for the persons it brings all this good to, or for the extent and fulness of that goodness, that it is to sinners, sinners indefinitely and at large, sinners of all sizes, all degrees and latitudes; this certainly worthy all acceptance, by all to be accepted, for all interested in it.

And (5) to be accepted, too, with all acceptance, all the best ways we can imagine; with soul and body, with hand and heart, with all the expressions of love, and reverence, and joy, and thankfulness; love of his beauty, reverence to his humility, joy in his salvation, and thankfulness for the freeness and fulness of it. If a friend come but a long journey to us, we give him all the welcome we can make, and think nothing enough. This Friend came to us as far as heaven is from us, farther than all the corners of the earth. If a great person come to visit us, we meet him with all the

respect and reverence we can contrive; none too much. This is the greatest person can come to us. If there come one to save, too, when we are now ready to perish, how do our hearts leap, and our spirits dance for joy! How glad are we! Nothing can be more. Here is one comes to do it, and to do it to the utmost, that none or nothing of us may be lost: What can we now do to him again, who is and does all this for us? All we can do is all too little, all expressions too low to receive him with; and this saying that thus assures him to us, worthy to be written in tables of gold, with pens of diamonds; to be written however on all our hearts, never to be rased out, nor ever to be brought forth but with devotion and reverence, with exultation and joy.

II. And now I am fallen upon my second general, the use we are to make of this faithful saying: and a fourfold use it will be; To believe, to accept, to apply, to proclaim it: I add, To make this the day to begin it in.

i. "This is a faithful saying;" we are, first, therefore to believe it: such it is "to them that believe," to others not. S. Paul, I confess, says only to them "especially." But <sup>1 Tim. iv.</sup> that "especially" is only too; for Christ is effectually the <sup>10.</sup> Saviour of none else. The Saviour, truly, of all, come down for all, set up for all; yet not any saved by him but believers, for all that. Nor all they neither, only such as are "careful <sup>Tit. iii. 8</sup> to maintain good works." This saying not faithful but to believers, nor any believers "faithful," but such as show it by good works. Thus S. Paul limits the words, "This is a faithful saying," in those two last-cited places, that we may not cheat ourselves out of the text, or the good things in it.

Indeed, if we believe not, yet "He abideth faithful" in <sup>2 Tim. ii.</sup> himself, he and all his sayings too; that is "a faithful <sup>11-13.</sup> saying" too. But, nor He nor any of his sayings faithful to us, whatever in themselves, if we be not faithful and believing, if we distrust either the beginning or end of his coming to us, or by our sins, or foolish scruples, or despair, thrust ourselves out of our interests in any of them. For the second use we are to make of this saying is, not only to believe it, but to accept it.

Use ii. Now, to accept it, is very highly to prize and value

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it; and well we may,—it is worthy of it. Prize it, then, as we do jewels, as that merchant in the Gospel did the pearl,—sell all to buy it: there is none to it. Lay it up safe, as we do treasures, that neither moth corrupt, nor thief steal it from us, nor sin nor Satan rob us of it; there is no treasure like it. Keep it as we do the records and tenures of our estates, part with it upon no score. Our state in heaven depends upon it: it is our title to it. Lord, where were we without this assurance to save sinners? Where all our hopes, if this were lost? Whereto all our treasures, if this were gone? We had need prize and value it, and keep it sure; and this is to accept it.

And yet to give it all acceptation is somewhat more: To accept it, as Tertullus tells Felix they did his noble deeds, Acts xxiv. 3. *πάντοτε καὶ πανταχοῦ καὶ μετὰ πάσης εὐχαριστίας*, always, and everywhere, and with all thankfulness.

Do we it, then, (1) not now and then, not to-day only, or one day or two, but every day, every day we rise, every opportunity that presents itself, on every occasion that appears; that is *πάντοτε*.

Do we it, again, (2) *πανταχοῦ*, “in all places;” engrave it upon our doors, carve it upon our posts, write it upon our hands, profess it everywhere we come; not in our closets and chambers only, but in the church, in the high priest’s palace, in Pilate’s hall, at the pillar, and at the cross; no where ashamed or afraid to own it.

Do it (3) *μετὰ πάσης εὐχαριστίας*, “with all thankfulness.” And how is that? By some good deeds, sure, as well as words. Present we him ever and anon with some good thing or other: now a basket of good fruits, (so S. Paul sometimes styles good works;) now a bottle of good wine, the wine of devout and pious tears; now with a present of gold or silver, to adorn his house or his attendants; now with a garment, to clothe his naked members; now with a dish, to feed his poor and hungry children; now with this gift, now with another. This is the way of thankfulness among men, that they call good acceptance among themselves. These and all the ways we can; *πάντη τε*, (for so some Greek copies read for *πάντοτε*;) will take all in. But above

Rom. xii. 1. all, “our souls and bodies a living sacrifice,” will be the

most acceptable present we can make him, and indeed the fittest for him that came to save them.

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This will do well; yet, (iii.) S. Paul's *quorum ego primus*; the apostle's applying the only bad word in the text with an emphasis to himself—his reckoning himself the chief of sinners, shows us the best way to apply this faithful saying to ourselves, the confessing ourselves no ordinary sinners. The third use of the doctrine of the text.

But thou, O blessed Apostle, the chief of sinners! What then, O Lord, are we? *Primo primi*, the chief of chiefs, is a style too little. And yet, can either he or we now say it, and say truth? If not, the lie may redound peradventure to God's glory, but it will work to our own damnation. Best look to that.

It is an hyperbole, most think; yet it is no handsome hyperbolizing with God, methinks. We may find out a way, I doubt not, so to say it, as yet to say nothing but our own bosom thoughts.

Three things observed, we may both say and think we are any of us the chief of sinners. (1.) Look we upon our own sins with the severest eye, with all the aggravations of them we can imagine. Look we (2) upon other men's with the most favourable one, with all the extenuations we can invent. And then (3) compare we them so together, and the work is done: we may really suppose ourselves of all men the greatest sinners.

To begin with our own sins, and to aggravate them to purpose, consider we them ever in their foulest colours: how base and wretched in themselves, how dishonourable to God, how prejudicial to our brother, how scandalous to our religion, and how destructive to ourselves. Consider we next, upon what poor grounds they were committed, upon what slight temptations, to what silly ends, with what perfect knowledge, with what full deliberation, with what impudent presumption, how wilfully against all good motions, how resolutely against all assistances and persuasions to the contrary, how desperately against all dangers threatened from them, and how ungratefully to God and Christ. In a word, what a long train of mischiefs they probably draw after them; how many we involve, commonly, either in the

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guilt, or in the punishment, or in the example; and thereby lay as it were a seed of wickedness for ever, and so sin even in our worms and dust. Thus we are to look upon our own transgressions.

But (2) when we look upon other men's, we must do that but cursorily and glancing, think they are never so bad as they are represented, not so foul by much as they appear at first; that their intentions perhaps were good, or that it falls out far otherwise than they intended; that what was done was upon mistake or error; that it was but a slip, or weakness, or surreption; that they have not the light, the strength, the grace, the power, that God gives us; that they had not the means or opportunity to shun those sins; that they were overpowered by strong temptations, or were merely overtaken, or plainly forced to it and could not help it, or had not the opportunity to do better; that they did it ignorantly, meant no hurt at all, and possibly none may come of it; that whatever it be, they are heartily sorry for it; that, however, they have a thousand virtues and good things in them to overpoise the evils they have done. These are the ways we are to consider the sins of other men.

And then, (3) if after this we compare our sins and theirs together—ours under all the circumstances of aggravation, with theirs under all extenuating considerations; our greatest sins, with their little ones; our presumptions, with their infirmities; our vices, with their virtues; our bad or sinister intentions, with their good and fair professions; our corrupt natures, with their good dispositions; ourselves, as we are by nature and depressed by sin, with them as exalted by any grace and virtue;—it will be no marvel, no way strange, if we think ourselves the greatest sinners.

And, indeed, we have no reason to do other. We know only our own hearts, those we are sure are wicked; but we cannot say so of other men's, can at the best but suppose theirs; of which in charity we ought always to think the best, ever at least better than our own, especially when even little and ordinary sins in some, may be often worse than crying sins in others, according to the difference of light and grace, and the variety of circumstances that may

attend them. All which considered, if we profess ourselves the worst, we shall now need no hyperbole to make it good ; nor fear it will be any whit worse for us, though it be true. S. Paul, it seems, held it the surest course, thus by the greatest and humblest confession of his own unworthiness, to plead his interest in this "faithful saying," in "Christ Jesus coming into the world to save sinners."

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And now sure, (iv.) we may proclaim it,—must do so too. It is not a saying to be kept secret, no mysterious cabala not to be revealed, or committed only to a few. "This thing," says S. Paul, "was not done in a corner." Into the world He came, that came to save us. And to the world, and through the world, let it therefore be proclaimed for ever. "It is good," says the Angel to old Tobit, "to keep close the secret of a king, but it is honourable to reveal the works of God."

Tob. xii. 11.

And to-day is a good day to do it in. A day wherein the lepers said among themselves, "If we hold our peace, some mischief will come upon us." I am sure there was enough upon us, when men upon this day held their peace. Well, tell we now our news as they did theirs, to the court, to the city, to the country, to the world. The Church bids us do so to-day. Let the preacher preach it, let the people tell it, let the singers begin it and go before, and the minstrels and music follow and answer it to-day, that "Christ Jesus is come into the world to save sinners."

2 Kings vii.  
9.

Yet to-day we must do more than tell it. We are to believe, to accept, to apply it too. We have to-day the best opportunity to do all; to exercise our faith, and to advance it, to give a proof of our acceptance of Christ's saving mercies, and the sense of our own sins and miseries.

Yonder, under the blessed elements, we shall meet our Saviour coming to us. Shall I tell you how to accept that favour, how receive and entertain him? Why, when great personages are coming to us, we make clean the house, we trick up the rooms, we set everything in order, we set forth our choicest furniture, put on our best apparel; we look out ever and anon to see if they be coming; and when they are, we go out to meet them, we make our addresses with all humble and lowly reverence, we welcome them with the

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best words we have, we present them with some lovely present, and take care that nothing unseemly be done before them whilst they stay.

Let us do so to Him that came into the world to-day. Cleanse we our hearts, and purify our hands; dress up all the rooms, all the powers and faculties of our souls and bodies, with graces and virtues; set our affections and passions all in rule and order; put on the garments of righteousness and true holiness; let us long and thirst and hunger after him, let us go out to meet him, accost him with reverence, welcome him with prayers and praises, present him with holy vows and resolutions, and so every way demean ourselves with that humility and devotion, that care and diligence over all our ways and steps, that nothing appear in us distasteful or offensive to him now he is come; and say we to him, in the words of Elizabeth to his mother, "Whence is this to me, that my Lord himself is come unto me?" to me a sinner, to me the chief of sinners!

Thus if we will entertain him when he comes, thus if we will receive him now he is coming towards us, he will not only come unto us, but tarry with us, till he take us with him to himself; make us his world to be in, till he remove us into a better; where the soul that humbly here confesses itself the chief of sinners, shall be saved and set among the chiefest saints when he shall come again in glory.



## THE FIFTH SERMON

ON

### CHRISTMAS-DAY.

PSALM xlv. 3.<sup>1</sup>

12

*Thou art fairer than the children of men: full of grace are thy lips,<sup>2</sup> because<sup>3</sup> God hath blessed thee for ever.*

<sup>2</sup> Grace is poured in to thy lips.  
<sup>3</sup> therefore.

“MY heart is inditing a good matter;”<sup>4</sup> and I could wish “my tongue” were “the pen” therefore, “of a ready writer,” that “I might speak the things I have made touching the King,” this day’s new-born King, as I ought to speak, as they ought to be spoken. But,

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<sup>4</sup> So the Psalm begins, and so the Sermon.

“Non mihi si centum linguæ sint, oraque centum,”

“Had I a hundred mouths, and as many tongues,” and they the tongues of angels too, I could not yet sufficiently set forth the beauty of this Fair One, the majesty of this King, the grace of his person, or the comfort of his day,—this day wherein he came to be first reckoned among the “children of men.”

Yet something must be said, both for the day’s sake, and the Person’s. It is a day of good tidings, so the Angel tells us, and then we must not hold our peace: the very lepers, that are to hold their hands upon their mouths, cannot hold them at this; say “We do not well:” if we do, “some mischief will come upon us.” And lips so full of grace will require the return of the lips at least. We can do little, if we cannot speak again when we are spoken to, when God speaks to us, as the Apostle tells us, by his Son; if we will not render a word in answer to this Eternal Word, speak of

<sup>2</sup> Kings  
vii. 9.

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the beauty, and grace, and blessing that we see in him, and find by him. God hath blessed him for ever, blessed us to-day, will bless us too, hath already blessed us in blessing him; will bless us more and more in him, to-day and for ever: good reason, then, we bless him to-day, who from this day began to bless us for ever.

All this while you understand me who I mean, who is so “fair,” so “gracious,” so “blessed.” The question is, whether the Psalmist means the same. Indeed they give it out for an *epithalamium*, or marriage-song at Solomon’s espousals with Pharaoh’s daughter. And in such songs the praise and commendation of the bridegroom and the bride, and good wishes to them, are the usual subjects. It is so here; Solomon and his bride commended, blessed, well-wished too in it: but yet, “behold, a greater than Solomon is here,” a fairer, graciously, blessed than he; Christ married to his Church, or rather the Divinity contracted to the humanity, Christ made the “fairest” of the “children of men,” *ex* as well as *præ*; more gracious words out of his mouth than ever out of Solomon’s; more truly ever-blessed, *αὐτὸ μακάρσιος*, than he; the song sung in a fuller key, the words more punctually applicable, the prophecy more exactly fulfilled, in him than in Solomon himself. The Fathers have so expounded it before us; the Church has added authority to it by the choice of the Psalms for a part of the Office of the Day: nay, S. Paul has so applied it. So I am in no ways singular: indeed, I love not to be in such points as Heb. i. 8, 9. these; I tread the ancient track; though I confess I think I can never take occasions enough—nor I, nor any else—to speak of Christ, of his beauty and grace and blessedness, either to-day or any day, though every day whatsoever.

And though I must say with S. Hilary,<sup>c</sup> *Filium mens mea veretur attingere, et trepidat omnis sermo se prodere*, I can neither think without a kind of fear, nor speak without a kind of trembling, of a person of that glory; yet because it is our Eternal Solomon’s, the Word’s wedding-day, and the text part of the wedding-song: and in such days and songs the very children, all comers, bear a part; and if they

<sup>c</sup> [Filium mens consternatur attingere, et trepidat omnis sermo se prodere.—S. Hilar. De Trinitate, lib. ii. —Op., p. 13. col. 2. D. ed. Paris. 1631.]

did not, the stones would do it—indeed, the stones and walls should this day all ring of it; and if they, I must not be the only senseless stone to hold my peace. Indeed, here is a beauty would make any man an orator; lips that would make the dumb man eloquent, grace would make the most ungracious full of good words and holy language, were they well conceived and considered.

That so they may, the words are now to be considered as a part of an *epithalamium*, or marriage-song, wherein Christ, our eternal Bridegroom, is set forth in all his lustre. Now, in a bridegroom, the chief things we look at are good parts, and a good estate. Our Bridegroom here has both. Fair-faced and fair-spoken, full of grace and beauty for his parts: and a fair estate he has too, God be thanked for it; a blessed lot, a goodly heritage in a fair ground; blessedness itself enstated upon him, and that for ever. Both far above the parts and portions of the children of men; the Son's parts above the parts of the children of men, and the Father's blessing above the blessings of the fathers of men; and neither the one nor the other to be concealed, but even spoken and sung of while you will, by us as well as David; as loud, too, and in as high a key. Run this division upon it if you please, and take these parts, to sing of in their order.

I. His beauty, Christ's excellent beauty. "Thou art fairer than the children of men."

II. His eloquence, Christ's infinite grace in speaking. "Full of grace are thy lips."

III. The original whence they come: from God's blessing; *eo quod*, in one way of rendering, "Because God hath blessed thee for ever:" because he hath blessed thee, therefore art thou so fair, so full of grace.

IV. The effect of them, what they cause: God's blessing again: so the other rendering the word by *propterea*, "therefore," that is, because of this excellent grace and beauty; therefore "has God blessed thee for ever."

V. The end whither they move and tend, the great business they aim at—even to the blessing of God again. For so the Hebrew writers supply the sense, with a *Dico ego*: "Therefore say I;" and so say we, or are to say so, "God

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hath blessed thee for ever." Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and blessed be our Lord Jesus Christ, for all this grace, for all this blessing. If our Spouse so fair, then we, sure, should be faithful : if his lips so full of grace, our lips as full of thanks : if he blessed of God, we, again, bless God and him for so great a blessing : so great blessings, so continually descending upon us ; so lasting, so everlasting, never sufficiently answered but by all our ways of blessing ; and so blessing him always, all our days, whilst we live, for ever. We to sing our parts, and praise him in the song ; sing or say, "Thou art fairer," thou, O Christ, art fairer, &c.

For this is the sum and whole meaning of the text, to give us a view of Christ's beauty and the Christian's duty both together ; so to show and set forth to us the lustre and splendour of Christ's incomparable beauty, and the overflowing fulness of his grace, as to make us really in love with him, to ravish our hearts and tongues and hands to his service and praise, that we may to-day, and every day, serve, and praise, and magnify him all the day long, the only way to blessedness for ever. I begin with his beauty, for that is a principal attractive to him.

John xii.  
32.

"When I shall be lift up, I shall draw all men to me," says he himself. That lifting up was upon the cross ; and if that be so attractive, if he be so powerful in his humiliation, when his face is clouded with darkness, his eyes with sadness, his heart with sorrow, when his body is so mangled with wounds, deformed with stripes, besmeared with blood and sweat and dust, that "will draw all men to him ;" how infinitely prevalent, then, must he needs be when we see him in his excellence, smooth and even and entire in all the parts of his soul and body ! For in both, fair he is ; *formosus*, "fair ;" *formosus præ*, "very fair ;" *formosus præ filiis*, "fairer than the fairest and sweetest child," in whom commonly is the sweetest beauty ; *præ filiis hominum*, "than the children of men," when they come to their full strength and manly beauty. By these degrees we shall arrive to the perfection of his beauty ; fair he is, very fair, fairer than the sweetest, fairer than the perfectest beauty of the sons of men, so in both his body and his soul.

i. In his body first. And fair and comely, sure, must that body be, which was immediately and miraculously framed by the Holy Ghost; pure flesh and blood that was stirred together by that pure Spirit, out of the purest blood and spirits of the purest virgin of the world. The shadows of that face must needs be beautiful, that were drawn by the very finger and shadowing of the Holy Ghost; those eyes must needs have *quid sidereum*, as S. Jerome,<sup>d</sup> some star-like splendour in them, which were so immediately of the heavenly making. The whole frame of that body must needs be excellent, which was made on purpose, by God himself, for the Supreme Excellence to dwell in, to reside in, to be united to, so united by the union hypostatical. A body without sin, must needs be purely fair; a body without concupiscence, must needs be sweet; without defect, must needs be lovely; without vacuity, must needs be complete; without superfluity, must needs be so far handsome; without inordination, must needs be perfect; without death, must needs be firm; without dust, must needs be singular; without corruption, must needs be curious and delicate; without any of them, must needs be excellent. And all these were Christ's body—without sin, without concupiscence, without defect, without vacuity, without superfluity, without inordination, death and dust and corruption could not get the least dominion over it; "Thou shalt not suffer my flesh to see corruption," says the Psalm; he did not suffer it to see it, says the Gospel: raised incorruptible it quickly was; went down into the grave, but stayed not there; came not into the dust at all, into any corruption at all; had none all the while it was upon the earth, had none under it.

Fair (1) he was in his conception, conceived in purity, and a fair angel brought the news. Fair (2) in his nativity: *ωραῖος* is the word in the Septuagint—*tempestivus*, in time, that is, all things are beautiful in their time. "And in Ecl. iii. 11. the fulness of time" it was that he was born, and a fair star pointed to him. Fair (3) in his childhood: he grew up in grace "and favour." The doctors were much taken with Luke ii. 52. him. (4.) Fair in his manhood: Had he not been so,

<sup>d</sup> [S. Hieron. ad Principiam Virgini- tom. iii. 71. H. ed. Francofurt. ad  
nem. explan. Ps. xlv. (xlv.) Op., Moen. 1684.]

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says S. Jerome,<sup>e</sup> had there not been something admirable in his countenance and presence, some heavenly beauty, *nunquam secuturi essent apostoli*, &c. ; the apostles and the whole world, as the Pharisees themselves confess, would not so suddenly have gone after him. Fair (5) in his transfiguration ; white as the light, or as the snow ; his face glittering as the sun, even to the ravishing the very soul of S. Peter, that “ he knew not what he said ;” could let his eyes dwell upon that face for ever, and never come down the mount again. (6.) Fair in his passion : *nihil indecorum*, no uncomeliness, in his nakedness ; his very wounds, and the bloody prints of the whips and scourges, drew an *Ecce* from the mouth of Pilate, “ Behold the man !” The sweetness of his countenance and carriage, in the midst of filth and spittle, whips and buffets—his very comeliness upon the cross, and his giving up the ghost—made the centurion cry out he “ was the Son of God ;” there appeared so sweet a majesty, so heavenly a lustre in him, through that very darkness that encompassed him. (7.) Fair in his resurrection : so subtle a beauty, that mortal eyes, even the eyes of his own disciples, were not able to see or apprehend it, but when he veiled it for them. (8.) Fair in his ascension : made his disciples stand gazing after him so long, (as if they never could look long enough upon him,) till an angel is sent from heaven to rebuke them, to look home.

Acts i. 11.

If you ask Eusebius, Evagrius, Nicephorus, Damascen,<sup>f</sup> and some others, how fair he was, they will tell you so fair, that the painter sent from Agbarus, king of Edessa, to draw his picture, could not look so steadfastly upon him as to do it, for the rays that darted from his face ; and though the Scripture mention no such thing, it is no greater wonder to believe than what we read of Moses’ face, which shone so glorious, that the children of Israel could not behold it. Lentulus, the Roman President, his epistle to the Emperor Antonius, describes him of very comely colour, shape, and

2 Cor. iii.  
7.

<sup>e</sup> [Nisi enim habuisset et in vultu quiddam sidereum, nunquam eum statim secuti fuissent Apostoli, nec qui ad comprehendendum eum venerant, corruissent. — S. Hieron. ubi supra.]

<sup>f</sup> [Euseb. Eccles. Hist. lib. i. c. 13.

—Evagr. Eccles. Hist. lib. iv. c. 27. —Niceph. Eccles. Hist. lib. ii. c. 7.—S. Joh. Damasc. De Fide Orthodoxa, lib. iv. c. 16.—All these writers tell the story of Agbarus, but the particular incident here mentioned is narrated only by the two last.]

figure; and so do others. Not such a beauty yet as that which darts from it wanton rays, or warms the blood or stirs the spirits to vain desires or secular respects and motions; but a sweetness without sensual daintiness, a lustre without lightness, a modest look without dejectedness, a grave countenance without severity, a fair face without fancy, eyes sparkling only heavenly flames, cheeks commanding holy modesty, lips distilling celestial sweetness, beauty without its faults, figure, and proportion, and all such as was most answerable and advantageous to the work he came about, every way fitted to the most perfect operations of the reasonable and immortal soul;—the most beautiful then, sure, when beauty is nothing else but an exact order and proportion of things, in relation to their nature and end, both to themselves and to each other.

Take his description from the spouse's own mouth: "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand; his head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy" (or curled) "and black as a raven; his eyes are as the eyes of doves, by the rivers of water, washed with water and fitly set," (that is, set in fulness, fitly placed, and as a precious stone in the foil of a ring); "his cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers; his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh; his hands are as gold rings set with beryl; his belly as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires; his legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold; his countenance like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; his mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." This is our beloved too. Solomon indeed has poetically expressed it; yet something else there is in it besides a poetic phrase. Beautiful he thus supposes He is to be, who was to be this spouse; have the beauty of all beautiful things in the world conferred upon him; at least, to have the finest and subtlest part of all worldly beauties—those imperceptible yet powerful species of them, which make them really amiable and attractive: a head, and locks, and eyes, and hands, and feet—quantity, colour, and proportion—such as darted from them not only a resemblance, but the very spirit of heavenly beauty, innocence, purity, strength, and vigour. Poets,

Cant. v. 10.  
—16.

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when they commend beauty, call it divine and heavenly ; this of his it was truly so, a kind of sensible divinity through all his parts.

Shall I give you his colour, to make up the beauty ? He was white, pure white, in his nativity, ruddy in his passion, bright and glistening in his life, black in his death, azure-veined in his resurrection. No wonder, now, to see the spouse sit  
Cant. ii. 3. “down under his shadow with great delight ;” we, sure, ourselves now can [not] do less, and yet this is but the shadow of his beauty. The true beauty is the soul’s : the beauty of the soul, the very soul of beauty ; the beauty of the body, but the body, nay the carcase of it. And this of the soul’s he had (ii.) in its prime perfection.

ii. Now, beauty consists in three particulars : the perfection of the lineaments, the due proportion of them each to other, and the excellency and purity of the colour. They are all complete in the soul of Christ. The lineaments of the soul, are its faculties and powers ; the proportion of them, is the due subordination of them to God and one another. The colours, are the virtues and graces that are in them.

(1.) His powers and faculties would not but be complete, which had nothing of old Adam in them. His understanding without ignorance, he knew all, the very hearts of all ;  
Luke v. 22. thoughts as they rose, what they thought within themselves ; thoughts before they rose, what the Pharisees with other would have done to him, had he committed himself unto them. Now, Tyre and Sidon would have repented, had they  
Luke x. 13. had the mercy allowed to Chorazin and Bethsaida. His will without wilfulness or weakness, his passions without infirmity or extravagance, his inferior powers without defect or maim, his understanding clear, his will holy, his passions sweet, all his powers vigorous. Hear the Wise Man describe him under the name of Wisdom : “In her,” that is in  
Wisd. vii. 22, 23. him, who is the Wisdom of the Father, “is an understanding spirit, holy, one only, manifold, subtle, lively, clear, undefiled, plain, not subject to hurt, loving the thing that is good, quick, which cannot be letted, ready to do good, kind to man, steadfast, sure, free from care, having all power, overseeing all things, and going through all understanding,



pure, and most subtle spirits." "A pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty, the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness." SERMON  
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Ver. 25. 26.

The powers of his soul being thus pure, vigorous, and unspotted, they cannot (2) but be in order; the will following his understanding, the passions subordinate to them both, all the inferior powers obedient and ready at command and pleasure. He had no sooner expressed a kind of grievance in his sensitive powers, at the approach of those strange horrors of his death and sufferings, but presently comes out, *Non mea sed tua*, "Not my will but thine;" all in a moment at peace and in tranquillity. No rash or idle word, no unseemly passage, no sour look, nor gesture or expression unsuitable to his Divinity, throughout his life; the very devils to their own confusion cannot but confess it, "We know thee, who thou art, the Holy One of God." Mark i. 24.

(3.) To this, add those heavenly colours and glances of grace and virtues, and you have his soul completely beautiful: meekness, and innocence, and patience, and obedience, even to the death; mercy, and goodness, and piety, and what else is truly called by the name of good, are all in him: insomuch that the Apostle tells us, the very "fulness of the Godhead" dwells in him "bodily." No Divine grace or virtue wanting in him. In him are all the "treasures of wisdom and knowledge." In him all sanctity and holiness, not so much as the least "guile in his mouth." So holy, that he is "made holiness and sanctification unto us." *Sancti quasi sanguine uncti*, we saints and holy become hallowed by the sprinkling of his blood. In him, lastly, is all the power and virtue, *omnis virtus*, that is, *omnis potestas*, "all the power in heaven and earth," fully given to him. Col. ii. 9.  
Col. ii. 3.  
1 Pet. ii. 22.  
1 Cor. i. 30.  
Matt.  
xxviii. 18.

So that now we shall need to say little of the other particular of this first general point of Christ's perfect beauty, that he is not only *formosus*, but *formosus præ*, not only "fair," but "very fair;" for where there is so much as you have heard, exceeding and excellent it must needs be—where the body is complete in all its parts, the soul exact in all its powers, the body without any ill inclination, natural or habitual, the soul without the least stain of

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thought, or glance of irregularity, nothing to sully the soul or body, all wisdom, and holiness, and power, and virtue. We can say no less of him than the Psalmist of Jerusalem, "Very excellent things are spoken of thee, thou City of God," thou miraculous habitation of the Almighty, thou very dwelling, not of God only, but the very Godhead too.

Nor shall I need to say much of the third, the *præ filiis*, that his beauty is more sweet and innocent than the newborn babe's. Alas! the sweetest, fairest child comes sullied into the world with Adam's guilt. Some of that dust that God cast upon him, when he told him, Dust he was, and into dust he should return, sticks so upon the face and body, the very soul and spirit too, of the prettiest infant, that it is nothing to this day's Child. *In omnibus sine* Heb. iv. 15. *peccato*: "In all without sin," says the Apostle; the very temptations he suffered were not from the sinfulness of his nature, any original concupiscence; *non novit*, says the 2 Cor. v. 21. Apostle in another place; he knew it not, "knew no sin" at all. In this he might use S. Peter's phrase, "Man, I know not what thou meanest;" I know not what this condition of man so much as means. *Præ filiis*; he is as much purer than the child we call innocent, as much before it in purity and innocence, as he is in time and being. Nay, yet again, though we see the sweetest beauty is commonly that of children whilst they are so, yet even that beauty must needs have some kind of stain, or mole, or some insensible kind of defect, though we know not what nor how to term it, which was not in him. The very natural inordination of our powers must needs give a kind of dull shadow to our exactest beauty, and silently speak the inward fault by some outward defect, though we are too dull, being of the same mould, to apprehend it: whilst there could be no such darkness in the face of Christ; no genius in it which was not perfectly attractive, and exactly fitted to its place and office.

This, perhaps, may seem a subtlety to our duller apprehensions; but it is plain that I shall tell you, though but briefly, in the fourth particular, that he is "fairer than the children of men," than men come to their perfect beauty. Alas! alas! before that time long, sin had so sullied

them, that we may read dark lines in all their faces. The physiognomist will tell you all their faults; our sins and deformities are by that time written in our foreheads, engraven in our hands; our beauty is almost clean lost into corruption. Could we see as angels do, those eyes that seem to sparkle flames would look terrible as the fires of hell; those cheeks, that seem beauteous in their blushes, would be seen to have no other than the colour of our sins; those lips, which we cry up for sweetness, would stink in our conceit with rottenness; the teeth that look white as ivory, we should behold black with calumny and slander, as the soot of the foulest chimneys; the fair curled locks would look like snakes, the young spawn of the great red dragon; the hands that look so white and delicate, would appear filthy, bloody, and unclean. We, poor we, are but blind moles and bats. We see nothing; we know not what is beautiful, what is lovely. If we did, these earthly beauties would seem what I have said them—nay, worse; Christ only would be beautiful; no body but Christ's body, no body but that wherein Christ dwells, in whose eyes, and cheeks, and lips, and head, and hands, you might see Christ's beauty, meekness, love, charity, goodness, justice, mercy, innocence, piety, with the rest of those lines of beauty which were in him. But whatever we would then say of the bodies, we can say no other even now of the souls of men—that none are fair, but that are well coloured and proportioned to those heavenly lines; and in this point freely acknowledge the pre-eminence of Christ, the prerogative of this spouse. And well may we say of him, with the Psalmist, that he is "fairer than the children of men," whom daily sins deform and render ugly, when the Apostle sets him before the sons of God, the angels, the cherubims, and seraphims—which you will of them; "for to which of them," says he, "has he said at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" Heb. i. 5. begotten thee after mine own image, the very "express Heb. i. 3. image of my person, the brightness of my glory." "Fairer than the children of men," no doubt, who is as fair and bright as God; who is higher than all the sons of men, all the people, by the head, by the Godhead which is in him. Which being in him, there needs no more to say, but that it

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is of necessity he must be the fairest of the sons of men, through whose eyes, and face, and hands, and whole body, the rays of the divine beauty are continually darting from within. Well may we now also expect some of it at his lips; and so we find it here in the very next words, very fully issuing there, "Full of grace are thy lips." That is the second general of the text: *Gratia diffusa in labiis*, "Grace in the lips," as well as beauty in the forehead, in face, or other parts of soul and body.

II. Three degrees we observe in the words to make up this fulness—*Gratia est, gratia diffusa, diffusa in labiis*:—that (1) grace there is in him as well as beauty; (2) grace abundant, and in full measure; and (3) so abundant and so full, that it falls into the lips, comes out full spout there; there above all it issues, and manifests, and appears.

Grace first: that is, good with beauty; all beauty but deformed without it;—a good hint to you, by the way, to get those souls filled with grace, whose bodies God has made fine with beauty. If God has given thee beauty, beg of him that he would also give thee grace—beautify thy soul as well as body; and strive thou also what thou canst possibly thyself to adorn thy beauty with grace and goodness: or if thou hast little or no beauty in thy body, make amends for it by the beauty and sweetness of thy soul: though thy face be not fair, thy lips may be gracious, thou mayest be full of good words and works, and thou mayest do God more service with the grace of thy lips, than with the beauty of thy fairest face, that so amazes and ravishes worldly lovers.

Now, a threefold grace there is in Christ. And first, the grace of his person, or personal grace wherewith his own person was endued, so far as to be free from all kind of sin; the grace of the head, whereby he disperses his graces into all his members, as the Head of the Church into the Body, into the souls of Christians and believers; and then the grace of union, that ineffable grace whereby the Godhead is united to the manhood. By the first, he himself is holy; by the second, he makes us so; by the third, he wrought all the means to do it. For the first, let us reverence his person; for the second, let us embrace him, and be ruled by him; for the third, let us perpetually admire and adore him.

It is ready to conceive now, that he was full indeed, beyond measure full; the Spirit not given to him by measure: so he says himself, and his witness is true, though he bear witness of himself; anointed with it above his fellows, as it follows, words repeated and applied expressly to him by S. Paul. So full that he pours out upon us, pours in all we have. We are but empty vessels, till he pour into us; without grace, or any good, till he pour it in, *diffusa in*, as well as *effusa ex*. It is "spread abroad in our hearts," says the Apostle, as well as spread upon his lips.

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John iii.  
34.  
John viii.  
14.  
Ps. xlv. 8.  
Heb. i. 9.

Rom. v. 5.

Yet is our fulness but the fulness of earthy pitchers—but five or six firkins apiece at most, when they are filled to the brim: his fulness the fulness of the fountain, that pours itself over all the neighbouring valleys, and yet empties not itself; runs still as fresh as ever; only holds when there are no more vessels, or the vessels there will hold no more. His fulness minds us either of our emptiness or shallowness: and if grace we have either in our hearts or lips, we will deplore it; fill our eyes with tears, and our lips with prayers, that he may fill our hearts with grace, make us some way partakers of his fulness.

And that we need not doubt of, now it is gotten into his lips. They are the conduits of his grace; they convey it to us. Three several graces we gather from his lips.

1. His gracious miracles. By his bare word he healed the lame, and cured the blind, and restored the sick, and cleansed the leper, and dispossessed the devils, and raised the dead. He spake the word, and all was done. "Full of grace" indeed, to do such deeds of grace, so willingly, so readily, so generally; and in the "lips" indeed, when it was all done only by the word of his mouth.

2. The gracious instructions that proceeded out of his mouth; insomuch that all wondered at it, says S. Luke. He only taught with authority and a grace; all other teachers, the long-winded Pharisee himself, but wind and bubble to him.

Luke iv.  
22.  
Matt. vii.  
29.

3. The gracious promises of the Gospel—pardon and forgiveness, grace, and mercy, and peace, and heaven, and happiness, all fully preached and revealed by him. "By the word of his mouth were the heavens made," says David;

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 Heb. xi. 40. made over now to us, kept in store, provided and prepared for us, with that privilege too, *præ filiis hominum*, before all the children of men that were before us, "that they without us should not be made perfect."

John vii. 46. We may without question apply *præ filiis hominum* to this point, to say here also that his lips are fuller of grace than the children of men; for even the officers of his enemies were forced to confess it long ago: "Never any man spake like this man;" never so graciously, never so comfortably, never so effectually, never so powerfully, never so sweetly, never so much grace, and goodness, and glory.

Mal. ii. 7. And it is still *diffusa*, lasts still. His lips are his ministers and preachers, and by them he still diffuses his graces daily to us: *Labia sacerdotis custodiunt*, they keep grace for others, even when they keep none for themselves. The ministry of the Word and Sacraments, though it comes sometimes through corrupt and putrid channels, is not defiled or made unprofitable by it. "Out of the children's," that is, ignorant simple ministers' "mouths," sometimes "God perfects praise," and makes the stony, the most stony and obdurate sinner among them, cry out loud enough to do others good, to soften others, though they continue hard and impenitent themselves.

The Sacraments (2) are his lips, too, in which grace is diffused, full grace given and poured out upon us—poured in into us. Never grace so fully given as in those holy mysteries; there you see *diffusa* to the eye, the outward pouring out the wine; and must believe, though you do not see, the inward pouring out the Spirit. Never so gracious words proceeded out of his mouth as those you hear there: "This is my body, which was given for you. This is my blood, which was shed for you. Take and eat" the one; "Take and drink" the other. What more abundant grace, what higher favour, than thus to have our lips, and mouths, and hearts filled with himself, and all the benefits of himself? Wonder we may at it, for it is a work of wonder—an ineffable mystery.

Matt. xi. 28.

Matt. ix. 13.

Gracious, indeed, always were his words: "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will refresh you." "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to

repentance." "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom." "Ye that have followed me, in the regeneration, shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him should be saved." "Behold, I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." "He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax." "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Great and gracious effusions these, full of grace; yet to give himself daily for our food and nourishment, and call us to it, is to set seal to all those other sayings, to bring them home particularly to every one of us, the very "Amen" and summing up of all the rest.

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Luke xii.  
32.  
Matt. xix.  
28.  
John iii.  
17.  
Luke x. 19.

Matt. xii.  
20.  
Matt.  
xxviii. 20.

III. It is time, now, to inquire whence all this fulness—all this fairness; *Eo quod Deus benedixit*, reads one translation, "because God hath blessed him." Christ's beauty is God's blessing; all beauty is so, be it what it will; from Him it comes, is but a ray of that eternal beauty, that inaccessible light, that *summe pulchrum* as well as *summe bonum*, the everlasting brightness of the Father: all the beauty of the mind and body, all the integrity and vigour of all our powers, are merely from his blessing, not our merit—a good lesson from it, not to be proud of any of them. Christ himself, as man, had not his beauty any other way; no, nor his grace neither. His manhood could not merit the union of the Godhead; it was the mere gift of God so to anoint the humanity with the Deity, without which he could not have been the Saviour—could not have made satisfaction for so infinite a mass of sins. God's blessing merely it was; his mere goodness and blessing so to contrive salvation to us, to enable the manhood with the Godhead to go through the work of our redemption. "God so loved the world, that he sent his Son" into the world in our mortal nature, thus enabled, thus beautified, thus filled, that we might all be partakers of his fulness.

IV. Yet, in the fourth place, though Christ, as mere man, could not deserve this grace and beauty, yet when once the manhood was united to the Godhead, then he deserved the

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Phil. ii.  
8, 9.

second blessing. Then *propterea*, “therefore God hath blessed” him, is as true a rendering as the other: then, when “being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death,” then comes in S. Paul’s “therefore” or “wherefore,” rightly: “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow;” that we should bow ourselves in humility and thankfulness unto him, that every tongue should confess, all tongues bless him, and bless God for him, that we might praise him in the Church, in the midst of the congregation.

Ephes. v.  
27.

For, a double blessing has Christ purchased to himself—a blessing upon his person, and a blessing upon his Church. By his grace and beauty he has first purchased to himself a name, and then a Church—a glorious one, too; made himself the head of it: for it pleased God that in him should all fulness dwell; it pleased him also by that fulness “to reconcile all things to himself,” to make him the head of all, the Saviour of them all; to bless him in the ordinary style of Scripture, where children are called “the blessing of the Lord;” to bless him with an everlasting seed—a Church and people to the end of the world, do the gates of hell what they can against it.

V. There remains nothing, now, but our *benedixit* to answer God’s—our blessing to answer his: we to bless him again for all his blessings: for to that purpose is both Christ’s grace, and God’s blessing—all his blessings; therefore fulness of grace in him, that it might be diffused and poured out upon us; therefore diffused and poured out upon us, that we might pour out something for it; *bene fecit* for *benedixit*, some good works or other; at least *benedixit* for *benedixit*, good words for it, blessing for blessing.

Indeed, it is but *benedixit* here with God; but *dixit et fecit*, he said and it was done. Saying and doing are all one with God; should be so with us if we would be like him; our deeds as good as our words, our piety as fair as our pretences; that is the only truly blessing God.

And the likest, too, to last *in sæcula*, to hold for ever. Good words, and praising God in words, is but the leaves of the tree of blessing; and leaves, you know, will wither: the



stock and trunk is blessing God in earnest by good works, by expressing the diffusions of this grace in our lives and actions, by imitating and conforming ourselves to the beauty of this beloved.

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If he be so fair as you have seen it, how can we now but love him? If his lips so full of grace, how can we but delight to hear him, to hear his word? If blessed, how can we less than strive to be partakers of his blessing? If for ever, how can we but desire to be ever with him, perpetually attending him? If his beauty was God's blessing, let us humbly acknowledge ours comes all from him. If the grace of his lips were the blessing of God's, let us know we are not able of ourselves to speak so much as a good word as of ourselves. If, again, he was therefore blessed because he was so beautiful, and so diffused his grace, used both his beauty and eloquence, to bring about the children of men to become the children of God; let us so employ those smaller glimmerings of beauty and gifts of grace we have, to the service and glory of God and his Christ.

We dote much upon worldly beauties; we think, we talk, we dream of them; our minds and affections are ever on them, wholly after them. Why do we not so on Christ, and after him? He is the "fairest of ten thousand;" "Solomon in all his glory" not like him; none of all the sons of Adam comes near him. Why do we not then delight to look upon him, to discourse with him, to talk of him, to be ever with him? What is the reason we do not season our labours, our recreations, our retirements, our discourses, with him?

We are easily won with fair words and gracious speeches. Lo, here are lips the most eloquent that ever were: why do we not even hang upon them?—Why do we not, with the spouse in the Canticles, desire him to kiss us with the kisses of his lips, to communicate his fulness to us? Indeed, I can render no cause at all, but that we are so immersed in flesh and earthly beauties, that we cannot see the true heavenly beauty of Christ, or we do not believe it.

And yet this Jesus is everywhere to be seen; his ministers, his word, his daily grace, preventing, directing, and assisting, preserving and delivering us; the creatures plainly and evidently enough discover him daily to us.

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But to-day we have a fairer discovery and sight of him. This Jesus that is so fair, this Jesus so full of grace, this Jesus so blessed of God for ever, is this day presented to us in his blessed sacrament; there is he himself in all his beauty, all his fulness. Say we then to him, Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, come in; we have made ready and prepared the house for thee and for thy camels—for thyself and those consecrated elements that carry and convey thee. Get we our vessels ready, and shut the door to us, as the poor widow did shut out all worldly thoughts and wandering fancies, that he may pour out his oil, his grace into them, till they be full. And pour we out our souls before him in all devotion and humility, in all praise and thanksgiving. Is not the cup we are to take, the “cup of blessing,” in the Apostle’s style? Take we it, then, and bless him with it; “taste and see how gracious the Lord is;” see and behold how fair he is, how amiable and lovely; and be ravished with his beauty and sweetness, and never think we can be satisfied with it, with seeing, or hearing, or blessing him, but be always doing so for ever.

So shall he make us fair with his beauty, good with his grace, happy with his blessedness, bring us one day to see his face in perfect beauty, and so see his grace poured out into glory, there to bless, and praise, and magnify him for ever.

## THE SIXTH SERMON

ON

### CHRISTMAS-DAY.

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S. LUKE i. 68, 69.

*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people. And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.*

IT is a blessed day, our blessed Saviour's birthday; and a blessed text we have here for it—both a day and text to bless him in; a text top-full of blessings, and a day wherein they came; blessed persons, and blessed doings in the text. Blessed persons: the blessed God, our blessed Lord, blessed David; and a blessed people, for a redeemed people are so. "Blessed are the people that are in such a case." Blessed doings in it too. God blessing, and man blessing: God visiting, redeeming, saving mightily, saving Israel: and one of Israel, in the name of all the rest, mightily blessing him for so doing to it. All these blessings as well remembered as came in the day. Never was text so fraught with blessings: never rose day so fair with blessings: never saw Israel such a one before: never shall Israel or any people see such a day again for blessings, till we come into the land of blessedness.

All that can be said to dim it is, that this is not the day that blessed Zachary gave this blessing in; it may be, nor was this the day that God gave this blessing, neither. Time itself runs upon such uneven wheels, that we are fain to borrow hours and minutes to make up the reckoning of our years and days. It is enough that we count near it; it were

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enough if it were a day only set apart by holy Church to recount it in, though it were nothing near it, nothing near the day when the Lord God of Israel thus visited and redeemed his people. Our business is, not to be exact chronologers of the days of our salvation, but exact performers of our duties, our thanksgivings and praises for it.

Good Zachary does it here before this redemption was fully wrought, six months before this "horn of salvation" did appear. If we do it a few days before or after, it matters not. To bless God for it, that is the business: only we must be allowed a day to do it in, either first or last; but the Church having pitched it generally everywhere much about this time, we take it as we find it; quarrel no more with the Church for doing it now, than we do with Zachary for doing it then, when he more forestalled the time than we can possibly mistake it.

Being, therefore, come hither to-day upon that account—the account of blessing God; and having here a day of blessing, and a text of blessing, we shall divide the words into blessings too.

God's blessing and man's blessing; God's blessing man, and man's blessing God again.

I. God's blessing hath in it these particulars.

(1.) His visiting: "he hath visited." (2.) His redeeming us: "and redeemed." (3.) His saving or raising up a "salvation for us." That salvation, (4,) no mean or little one, but "a mighty salvation:" so one of our translations. A salvation (5) with a horn to hold by, "a horn of salvation:" so the other, "a sure salvation." "For us," (6,) all of us, the very people to hold by; an universal salvation. A salvation (7) "raised up;" an eminent salvation. "Raised up" (8) in the right house, "in the house of David," a royal, a glorious salvation. Raised up, lastly, upon a right ground too—David's relation to him: "his servant David;" or God's goodness to his servants: a singular and especial salvation for them above the rest. This is God's blessing man, the first general with the particulars.

II. Man's blessing God is the second, and that has these:

(1.) An acknowledgment of God's blessings, and his blessedness, visiting, redeeming, saving, &c. That blessings they

are, and his they are: he visited, he redeemed, &c. He therefore blessed for so doing.

(2.) A particular applying and setting ourselves to bless for them; a *Benedictus*, a hymn set and begun upon it.

(3.) A desire that others, even all, would do so too; for *εὐλογητὸς* may have as well *ἔστω* as *ἐστὶ* after it; *Benedictus*, as well *sit* as *est* to follow it, (for there is neither here;) so *may be* and *is*,—as well a wish that others would, as a way that we ourselves may, bless him by.

This is all man's blessing God, the poor pittances we bless him with; acknowledgments, endeavours, and desires, all that we can give him for all his blessings; a very short return, however, to be given him, such as it is; and to-day, however, a day set apart to do it in.

For all these blessings either rose upon us with the sun to-day, or are to rise from us ere it rise to-morrow; our Lord's nativity being the chief ground both of God's blessing us and our blessing him. To-day it was he began to visit, to redeem, to save, to raise up his horn and ours. To-day then, sure, we to raise up our voices for it in a *Benedictus*, in hymns and praises. All that is in the text was on his part set on foot as it were to-day; no reason in the world but what is on ours should be so too. That it may, I shall first spread God's blessings here before you, so the better to stir up yours.

I. Man's blessing indeed it is that stands first here; yet God's it is that is so. He first blesses before we bless, before we either can, or can think to do it. But you must know it is a day, and a business too, where all things seem out of order at the first: high things made low, and low things high: the first made last, and the last first. God made man, and man God: the very course of nature out of order, quite. No wonder, then, that the words that tell us it are so too; that our blessing should be set before God's. However, this certainly it must teach us,—that the first thing we ought now to think or speak of is blessing God. Yet the way to do that best, is to understand his blessings first. I shall take them in their order; so his visiting I begin with.

Indeed, there they begin all: *Ἐπεσκέψατο*, that is the rise of all God's blessings. His looking down upon us, or looking

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over us, (so the word signifies before it comes to visiting,) is the source of all his mercies. There is nothing else to cause them, but that loving eye he hath to his poor creatures, the pleasure he takes to look upon them. That here brings him down to visit them.

For I must tell you now, this visiting is a coming down : down from heaven, down from his glory, down from himself ; a coming to purpose, and down to purpose, when he came so low as flesh ; and a visiting indeed, when he came so near us. He visited in former times, but by his proxies, by his angels, the ushers of his glory, or by his prophets, or by a cloud, or by a fire. Here it was first he visited in person. Ἐπεσκέψατο was but a looking down from heaven till now, a looking on us at a distance ;—(and that was a blessing too, that he would any way look upon such poor worms as we;)—it could not be construed visiting properly till this day came. Now first it is so without a figure.

Yet is not good old Zachary too quick ? Does he not cry out ἐπεσκέψατο too soon ? Our blessed Saviour was not yet born ; how says he then, the Lord “hath visited and redeemed his people ?” Answer we might, The good old man here prophesied,—(it is said so just the verse before,)—and after the manner of prophets speaks of things to come as done already. But we need not this strain to help us out. Christ was already really come down from heaven, had been now three months incarnate, had begun his visit, Luke i. 48. had beheld the “lowliness of his handmaid,” says his blessed mother. The angel had told her twelve weeks since, Luke i. 28. “Her Lord was with her,” verse 28 of this chapter. Blessed Zachary understood it then, no less than his wife Elizabeth Luke i. 43. that proclaimed it, verse 43, though he could not speak it. As soon as he could, he does, and breaks out into a song of praise, (that was his prophesying,) for this new made visit, this new raised “salvation.”

That word slipped ere I was aware—comes in before the time. But it is well it did ; you might else perhaps have mistaken visiting for punishing : so it went commonliest in Scripture till to-day. It does not here. This business has altered it from its old acception. And yet punishing some-

times is a blessing too; it is a mercy we oft stand in need of to bring us home to God; but it is infinitely a greater when he comes himself to fetch us home, as now he does. Shall I show you how great it is?

Why, then (i.) it is a visit of grace and honour that he made us here; he visited us, as great and noble persons do their inferiors, to do them honour. Hence, "Whence is it to me," says S. Elizabeth, "that the mother of my Lord should come unto me?" &c. She, good soul, knew not how to value such an honour, nor whence it was. Whence then is this, O Lord, that the Lord of that blessed mother, my Lord himself, should come unto me? That is a far higher honour, and no reason of it to be given, but that so it shall be done to those whom this great King of heaven and earth delighteth thus to honour. It is a blessing, first, this that we speak of, by which God owns and honours us.

(ii.) It was a visit of charity. He visited his people, as charitable men do the poor man's house, to seek some occasion to bestow an alms. He "went about doing good," says S. Peter. As poor as he was, (and the Apostle tells us, poor he was,) he had a "bag for the poor;" and "for our sakes" it was "he became poor," says S. Paul; emptied bag and himself, and all to make us rich. His visit now (ii.) is a blessing that makes us rich.

(iii.) It was a visit of service too. He visited us as the physician does his patient, to serve his necessity, to cure and recover him. The innumerable multitudes of the sick, and lame, and blind, and deaf, and dumb, and lepers, and possessed, that he daily healed and cured, will sufficiently evince he visited them also as a physician. So it was a blessing (iii.) that cures all diseases, makes all sound and whole again.

His visit (iv.) was a visit of brotherly love and kindness. He visited us, as David did his brethren, to supply their wants, "carry them provision, and take their pledge." He did so, and much more; becomes himself by this visit our provision, makes his body our meat, and his blood our drink, and himself our pledge; supplies all our defects and wants, and enters himself body for body, and soul for soul,

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to make all good. This a visiting no brother could do more  
—no brother so much.

Psal. lxxv.  
9—11.

His visit (v.) was not of petty kindnesses, but great mercies, abundant mercies too. He visited us as holy David says he does the earth: "Thou visitest the earth and blessest it: thou makest it very plenteous. Thou waterest her furrows, thou sendest rain into the little valleys thereof; thou makest it soft with the drops of rain, and blessest the increase of it." He not only furnishes our necessities, but replenishes us with abundances, makes us soft, and plump, and fat, and fruitful, by his heavenly dews and showers. This (v.) a visit of abundant, superabundant mercies.

John xv.  
15.

His visit (vi.) was a visit of friendship, and that is more yet. He visited us, as blessed Mary did her cousin Elizabeth; came to us to rejoice and be merry with us. So acquainted has he now vouchsafes to call us "friends;" he eats, and drinks, and dwells, and tarries with us; makes it his delight to be among the sons of men. This is a visit, I know not a name good enough to give it.

(vii.) And yet, lastly, his visit was not of a common and ordinary friendship neither, but of a friendship that holds to death. He visited us, as the priest or confessor does the dying man. When health, and strength, and mirth, and physicians, and friends, have all given us over, he stands by and comforts us, and leaves us not till he has fitted us wholly to his own bosom. A visit of everlasting friendship, or an everlasting visit, was this visit in the text.

Thus I have showed you a sevenfold visit that our Lord has made us;—made God's first blessing into seven. A visit of honour, a visit of charity, a visit of service, a visit of kindness, a visit of mercy, a visit of friendship, and a visit of everlasting love. All these ways he visited his people, and still visits them all the ways he can imagine, to bless them and do them good.

And yet I should have thought I had forgot one, if it did not fall in with the blessing we are to consider next: redeeming. For he visited us also, as he is said to do the children of Israel: to bring us out of the land of Egypt,

Gen. 1. 24.



out of the house of bondage. He visited us to redeem us, or "visited and redeemed." SERMON  
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(2.) Now, if "redeemed," captives it seems we were. And so we were, under a fourfold captivity. To the world, to sin, to death, and to the devil.

"The world" (i.)—that had ensnared and fettered us, so wholly taken us, that it had taken away our names, and we were called by the name of the world, instead of that of men; as if we were grown such worldlings, that we had even lost our natures and our names, even the best of us. John iii.  
17.  
John xv.  
19.  
The elect are sometimes called so too. To redeem our honours and us thence, "God sent his Son," (says S. John) and "he chose us out of it."

"Sin" (ii.)—that had made us captives too; chained us up so fast, that the best of us cannot but cry out sometimes, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" And none but this Visitor could or can,—"God through Jesus Christ;" so S. Paul presently adds upon it, and would have us thank and bless him for it. Rom. vii.  
24.

"Death" (iii.)—that had also got dominion over us: for "no more dominion" signifies it had it once, and kept us shrewdly under. But "Christ Jesus by his appearing," (they are the Apostle's words,) "has abolished death;" "made us free from sin and death." Rom. vi. 9.  
17.  
2 Tim. i. 10.  
Rom. viii.  
2.

The "devil," (iv.)—he took us "captive also at his will." But "for this purpose was the Son of God manifested," says S. John, "that he might destroy the works of the devil." And, as high as the fiend carries it, he will "bruise him under our feet." Now to be delivered from such masters as these, is a blessing without question. 2 Tim. ii.  
26.  
1 John iii.  
8.  
Rom. xvi.  
20.

All the question is, how either Zachary could say so long before our Saviour's birth, or we so presently upon it, he "hath redeemed;" when S. Peter says, it was by his "blood;" S. Paul, "through his death." Why, very well both the one and the other. At his birth was this redemption first begun, the foundation laid; at his death it was finished. In his incarnation and nativity, he took the flesh that died, and the blood he shed; and we might truly have been said to be redeemed by his blood, though he had not shed it, and by his death, though he had not died;

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because he had already taken on our flesh and blood, and from that very moment became mortal, and began to die; or, to speak a little plainer, he brought the price of our redemption with him at his birth, he paid it down for us at his death. The writings, as it were, and covenants between God and him about it, were agreed on at his birth, were engrossing all his life, and sealed by him at his death. So it is as true to day as any day, he "redeemed." And had not this day been first in the business, the other could not have been at all, or first or last. O blessed day, that hast thus laid the foundation of all our good ones! O ever blessed Lord, who hast thus "visited and redeemed" us; what shall we do unto thee, how shall we bless thee?

(3.) Nay, and yet (3) thou hast "saved" us too. That is the next blessing to be considered. And it is worth considering.

For redeemed indeed we might be, and yet not saved; redeemed, and yet fall again into the same bad hands, or into worse; redeemed from evils past, and yet perish by some to come. It is this salvation that makes all safe.

Luke i. 71. Where (i.) we are "saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us," every thing that may hereafter hurt us, as well as we were redeemed from all that did.

Rom. viii. 39. "Nor life, nor death, nor height, nor depth, nor any thing can separate us" now, "from the love of God in Christ

Rom. viii. 28. Jesus;" all things shall continually "work for good;" all work henceforward for our salvation.

Especially seeing he saves us (ii.) from our sins, as the Matt. i. 21. Angel tells us; does not redeem us only from the slavery of our former sins, and the punishments we lay sadly under for them, but preserves and saves us from slipping back into the old, and from falling into new ones. It is a continual salvation.

Nay, (iii.) it is an eternal one too he saves us with; he Heb. v. 9. "the author of eternal salvation." There we shall be safe indeed. All salvations here may have some clouds to darken them, some winds to shake them, something sometimes to interrupt them, somewhat or other to tarnish or soil their glory. New enemies may be daily raised up to us.

Sin will be always bustling with us : here we had need to be saved and saved again, daily and hourly saved ; but with this salvation, once saved and saved for ever. Well may we pray with holy David : " Oh visit us with this salvation," Ps. cvi. 4. And well may we term it now, as our translation does, a " mighty salvation."

(4.) And mighty, sure, we may justly style it. For it required a mighty power, a mighty Person, a mighty price, and mighty works, to bring such mighty things to pass. And it had them all.

(i.) A mighty power,—almighty too. No created power could do it. Horse and man and all things else " but vain things to save a man," " to deliver his soul from the hand of hell." Ps. xxxiii. 16. lxxxix. 47.

(ii.) A mighty Person, the very God of might. " I the Saviour, and besides me none." No other person able to effect it. Isa. xliii. 11.

(iii.) A mighty price it cost. No " corruptible things," says S. Peter. Nothing but the blood of the Son of God, the precious blood of Jesus Christ ; no less could compass it. 1 Peter i. 18.

(iv.) Mighty works, lastly, and mighty workings to work things about ; miracles and wonders, good store, it cost to accomplish the work of our salvation, such as He only who was " mighty before God and all the people," could bring to pass. And this adds much to the glory of this salvation, that it was done by such great hands and ways as these. Luke xxiv. 19.

But not the works only that wrought it, but the works it wrought, speak the salvation mighty too. Mighty, for certain, which neither the unworthiness of our persons, nor the weaknesses of our natures, nor the habits of our sins, nor the imperfections of our works, nor the malice of our enemies, nor any power, or strength, or subtlety of men or devils, were able to hinder or control ; but that, maugre all, it spread itself to the very ends of the earth, carried all before it. A salvation we may trust to, we need not fear ; " in this mercy of the Most Highest we shall not miscarry."

(5.) For (5) we have here gotten a good horn to hold by ; " a horn of salvation," the original gives it ; a salvation not only strong but sure. Salvation, that is a Saviour too, one

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that we may confidently lay hold on, one that neither can nor will deceive or fail us : for,

(i.) He is a king ; so the horn signifies in the prophetic phrase. The four, and seven, and ten horns there, so many kings ; and it stands not with the honour of a king to deceive or disappoint us.

(ii.) And he is not a king without a kingdom. He hath a kingdom (ii.) and power to help us. The horn signifies that too in the style of prophecy : because in the horn lies the strength, and power, and dominion, as it were, of the creature that hath it. And the power of a kingdom, I can tell you, is good hold.

(iii.) And this kingdom (iii.) is not an ordinary kingdom neither. As this horn is above the flesh, so this kingdom too, “ not of this world ;” the likelier still to conduct us to the other, and there set us safe.

And yet, likelier (iv.) because it is not a fading but a durable one, a horn that will hold. Saul was anointed with a “ vial ” of oil, to intimate the brittleness and shortness of his kingdom ; but David with a “ horn,” to signify the continuance and strength of his ; that it should be a “ throne established for ever.” And made good it was by this day’s Horn raised out of his house, of whose “ kingdom there shall be no end,” says the Prophet. So no failure to be afraid of here. It is a sure salvation we have by him.

And if I may now have the liberty to tell you more particularly what kind of horn he may most fairly be said to be, you will be the more ready to catch at it.

He is, then, (i.) a horn of oil to anoint us also “ kings and priests ;” for so he makes us, says S. John.

He is (ii.) the true *cornucopia*, the horn of plenty, “ full of grace and truth,” and all good things else : for “ out of his fulness we all receive” ours, says the same Apostle.

He is (iii.) one of the horns of the altar, or indeed all of them, whither we may safely fly in all our dangers and distresses ; where we may lie secure when all the world has left us ; a sure hold now, you will confess, that is so high, so strong, so powerful, so above corruption, so lasting, so everlasting, so full of lasting honours, plenties, and securities.

(6.) And yet, as mighty, and sure, and as easy to catch hold on as this salvation is,—were it not for this *ἡμῶν*, were it not for “us,” had we no claim, no interest in it,—what were we the better either for the horn or the salvation? It is this “for us,” that comes next to be considered, that raises up our horns, that makes us glad. <sup>1</sup>

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For this *ἡμῶν*, this “us,” is not the Jews alone; they had the first title, right indeed, but not the only to it. There is an “Israel of God,” (“peace be upon it,” says the Apostle,) Gal. vi. 16. as well as an “Israel after the flesh.” There are sons of Abraham’s faith, as well as of his body, to whom this salvation is sent as well as unto them. Blessed Zachary brings in “those that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death” Luke i. 79. into the number; the Gentiles as well as Jews into the light of it; it is *omni populo*, “to all people” whatsoever, in the angels’ message, chapter ii. of our Evangelist, verse 10.

All people, and all degrees and orders of them, rich and poor, one with another; so *populus* signifies, not the *plebes* taken out of it, not the lowest or meanest of the people escaped or forgotten. It is an universal salvation that is here set up. God does not straiten heaven, though men do: he “would have all men to be saved,”—(though some men need a horn, indeed, to get such a salvation down, yet so it is)—and to this purpose he “has raised this salvation up,” which is the next advance of this salvation we are next to handle. I Tim. ii. 1.

(7.) And he raised it (i.) as a beacon or standard upon a hill, that all nations and languages, all kind of persons, might flock in unto it.

Raised it (ii.) as from the dead, *ἡγερσε*. All hopes of it now were in the dust. For the temporal condition of the Jews—their enemies oppressed them and had them in subjection; long they had so; and all the attempts for deliverance had been so often baffled that they durst hope no longer. For their spiritual condition—both Jew and Gentile were all concluded under sin; the one blinded with his own superstition, the other shut up in ignorance and darkness; when, on a sudden, was this “day-spring from on high,” this horn, this ray of light,—for I see not why this horn, as well as those of Moses’ face, may not be construed so,—this ray,

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this "horn," I say, raised up to light them both into the ways of salvation.

Raised up, (iii.) as the horn out of the flesh; a Saviour raised up thence to-day. Though from above he came, into the flesh he came, that thence being made sensible of our infirmities, he might the easier bear with them.

Raised up, (iv.) lastly, to raise up our thoughts from all inferior expectations, and fix them where they should be for deliverance and salvation; *cornu exaltatum*; this salvation eminent for the vastness, the opportunity, the convenience, the proportion it carries:—the seventh particular we observe in God's blessing, the fourth advancing of this salvation.

(8.) There is an eighth: and it is salvation in the right house. The Lord of the ascendant of our salvation in the kingly house; the best house to make it the more glorious, the house of David. Men would willingly be saved honourably, by a person of honour rather than a base hand. Men love not to owe their lives or honours to an unworthy person; would be beholding to the right king rather than an usurper for them. The house of David here hits right for that; and we cannot but acknowledge a huge blessing in it, even upon this account, that how poorly, sneakingly, and basely we every day betray ourselves into the hands of our enemies, we are yet thus by Christ brought off with honour, and enjoy by him an honourable salvation.

(9.) And yet there is one thing more we would desire, not to owe ourselves to a villain, or a miscreant, or to a wicked and ungodly house or person. To crown his blessings, God has contrived them "in the house of his servant David." So God honoureth his servants; so he encourages them to be good. They are the persons, theirs the houses, where salvation dwells. They are the pillars of the earth. To "David his servant," and "Abraham his servant," and "Isaac his servant," and "Israel his servant," so run the promises both of a Saviour and salvation, "to them and to their seed for evermore."

Sum we up God's blessings now. Gracious visits; perfect redemptions; salvations many, mighty, sure, general, eminent, seasonable, honourable, salvations to us and ours; everlasting too. What would you more? There is nothing

behind now, but our blessing God for all these blessings. I hope that shall not be so long; for it is but little that is required for so much, and but three particulars that make it up: an acknowledgment of God's blessings; a setting ourselves to some way to bless him for them; and a desire that all would do so too.

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II. (1.) The acknowledgment begins it; the acknowledging of God's blessings, the first part of ours: so sure a point of it, that *confiteri*, to acknowledge or confess the blessing, or him that sends it, is above sixty times in the Book of Psalms set down for blessing. And whole Psalms you have that are nothing else but an enumeration and catalogue of blessings; the 66th, the 103d, the 104th, the 105th, the 107th, the 136th. And the more particular we are in it, the more we bless him. You have heard how particular Zachary is in it here:—"He hath visited," "he hath redeemed," &c.;—given us nine particulars; leaves neither gift nor giver unacknowledged. Honourable it is to do so: honourable to reveal, to "reveal the works of God," says the angel; Tob. xii. 7. honourable to him, honourable to us: we cannot honour God without it, nor expect honour from him if we will not acknowledge it. "Come, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul," is the best way to begin our blessing.

(2.) But it is but to begin it. We must go on to the next way of blessing, set close to it: *εὐλογητός* from *εὐλογεῖν*, and *benedictus* from *benedicere*; both tell us there is much of it in words. Only *verbum* is *factum*, and *dicere* is *facere*, sometimes in the holy page. So we must take both words and deeds to do it with. The word by the hand of thy servant, as the Scripture sometimes speaks, is the best way to bless him with. Yet to our *benedicere* in the first sense first. (i.) And to do that, to give him good words, is the least that we can give him; let us be sure, then, not to grudge him them. Confess we that he is good, and gracious, and merciful, full of mercy, plenteous in goodness and truth. Straiten we not his visits, stifle we not his redemption, coop we not up his salvation to a corner; suffer we it to run large and full, that the whole world may bless him for it.

Let us (ii.) speak it out. God's blessings were not done in a corner, no more must ours. Public and solemn they would

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be. And the Church has made it (and text) part of the public service, that every one might bear a part in blessing God. Every one of us, and every thing of us too, our souls and all that is within us, heart and mind and all; all within us, and all without us; our lips praise him, our mouths praise him, our hands praise him, our flesh praises him, our bones say, Who is like him? all the members of our body turn themselves into tongues to bless him.

Bless we him (iii.) in set hymns on purpose, in good votes and wishes, that his Church may prosper, his name be magnified, his glory advanced to the highest pitch, for *bene dicere* is *bene vovere* too.

And *sanctificare* is no less. To bless is sometimes to sanctify. So "God blessed the seventh day," is God "hallowed" it; and to sanctify a day or place to bless him in, is to bless him by his own pattern that he hath set us: well said, if well done, I dare assure you, to set apart both times and places to bless him in.

But *dicere* is not all, sung never so sweetly, said never so well. "The Lord bless thee," in common phrase, is, "The Lord do good unto thee." Indeed, God's blessing is always such; his *benedicere* is *bene facere*. His saying is a doing; his blessing a making blessed. It is fit our blessing should be somewhat like it. To himself, indeed, we can do no good. He neither wants it, nor can be bettered by it. To his we may. Though not to his head, yet to his feet: the poor, we may bless them. And the blessing them is blessing him: for "inasmuch as ye have done it unto these, you have done it unto me," says he himself. And truly it must needs be a poor blessing that cannot reach his feet. Nay, it is a poor one if it reach no higher.

Matt. xxv.  
40.

Eccelus.  
xxxv. 2.

Prov. iii. 9.

Indeed "he that giveth alms, he sacrifices praise," says the Son of Syrach. And praise is blessing. But to bless is to honour too. And "honour the Lord with thy substance," says a wiser than the Son of Syrach. Something must be done to his own honour: something given or offered to support that here among us; for to bless is to give thanks, and that intimates somewhat to be given to him, as well as said or spoken to him: it will else be *verba dare* and not *gratias*, a mere cheating him of our thanks. As soon as



Naaman the Syrian was cured of his leprosy, he begs of the Prophet to accept "a blessing" for it. Nature had taught him God was to be blessed so. When the captains of Israel found by their whole numbers how God had delivered them, they come with a blessing in their hands of "sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels" of gold for the house of God. David and his people, the story tells us, blessed him so too; offered incredible sums of gold and silver for the service of the house of God. And let me tell you, without begging for it, that the house of God being now by this visit in the text made the very office of salvation, where he daily visits us, and entertains us with his body and blood, with holy conferences and discourses, where he seals us every day to the day of redemption, and offers to us all the means of salvation, there can be no way of blessing God so answerable and proportionable to his thus blessing us, as thus blessing him again.

Yet where there is nothing thus to bless him with, there is yet another way of blessing him; nay, where there are other ways, this must be too. To bless him is to glorify him, and a good life does that. By our ill lives "the name of God is blasphemed," says the Apostle. Then, by our good ones it must needs be blessed. Zachary seems to point at this way of blessing, when he tells us we were delivered that we might serve our Visitor in "holiness and righteousness." And thus, he that has neither eyes to look up, nor hands to lift up, nor feet to go up to the house of blessing, nor tongue to bless him, nor so much as a cross to bless himself or God, not a mite to throw into his treasure, may truly bless him, and be accepted. To this and all the other ways of blessing is the text set. And let all now come in and bear a part in blessing. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel," is now, lastly, a call to call them in.

(3.) The Prophet David does so. Sun and moon and stars and light, heaven and earth and waters, both above and under them, dragons and deeps, fire and hail, and snow and vapour, and wind and storm, and hills and trees, and beasts and cattle, worms and fowl, kings and people, princes and judges, young men and maidens, old men and children, all sexes, degrees, and ages, men and angels, and all kind

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X.2 Kings v.  
15.Numb.  
xxxi. 52.1 Chron.  
xxix. 20,  
21.

Matt. v. 16.

Rom. ii. 24.

Luke i. 75.

Ps. cxlviii.

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of beings, does he call on to praise, and bless, and magnify their Creator: indeed the whole creation is blessed by this visit, so it is but just they should bless God for it.

Yet how should all these things we mentioned do it? Many of them have no tongues to say, many no sense to understand it. Why, they do it yet: the sun by day, the moon by night, may become torches to light his servants' service. The earth brings forth her corn and wine to furnish out his table; the deep gives up her riches, and brings home golds and silks to adorn his holy altars; the earth brings stones and minerals, the hills and mountains trees and cedars to his house; the fire kindles tapers for it; all the meteors of the air, and all the seasons of the years, do somewhat; every wind blows somewhat towards it. The very birds and swallows get as near the altar as they can to bless him; the snow and cold and ice crowd as near Christmas as they can, to bear a part in this great solemnity, in our solemnest thanksgivings. Only he that has no need of this visit, no need of Christ or his redemption, that cares not to be saved, needs keep no Christmas, may stand out, or sit, or do what he will, at this *Benedictus*.

But, sure, when all things else thus come in throngs to bless him, and even ice and snow come hot and eager to this feast, and willingly melt themselves into his praises, we should not, methinks, come coldly on to bless him, but come and bring our families and children and neighbours with us, to make the choir as full as possibly we can. Tell one another what Christ did to-day, what he every day does for us; how he visited us to-day, how he still visits us every morning; how he redeemed us to-day, how he does day by day, from one ill or other; how he began to-day to raise up salvation for us, and will not leave raising it for us till we can rise no higher. Tell we our children next, how in this God had respect to David his anointed, and that they must learn to have so. How he had regard to David his servant; will have so to them if they be his servants: let them therefore be sure they be so; fit them thus to sing their parts betimes in hymns, and anthems, and praises to their God; that they that cannot speak, may yet lisp it out; and when they can speak out, sing it loud and shrill, that the hollow

vaults and arches may echo and rebound his praises : not your children only, but stones also be thus raised up for children unto Abraham. It is in the power of your hands—grave senators, fathers, and brethren—to make “the stones cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber to answer,” Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power to him that has raised up to us so great salvation.

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I look upon this great solemnity of yours as a mere design of blessing God ; and the torches that light you hither, as so many lights set up to make the light of your good works shine the greater. You have not only these blessings in the text, but millions more, to invite you to it. Not to repeat the blessings and deliverances I have told you ; all blessings and salvations else you owe to this day’s visit of the Almighty, to this horn he raised up for us. Let us bring them also into the roll, and thus bless him for them.

[Hab. ii.  
11.]

Some of you he has delivered out of trouble : bless you him for that. Some of you he has recovered lately from a sickness : bless you him for that. Some of you he has delivered lately from a danger : bless you him for that. You he has visited in distress, visit you his temples, his poor and needy servants ; and bless him so. You he has redeemed of late from the gates of death ; redeem you the time hereafter, walk circumspectly and soberly, and for the rest of your life serve him better ; and bless him so. You he has saved out of the hands of heretics and seducers, save you yourselves henceforward from that untoward generation, and come no more among them. Pay him visit for visit, redemption for redemption, one salvation for another ; and bless him so. You he has raised to some honour and preferment, raise you up some pillar of thanksgiving for it. You he has raised to an estate, raise you up some memorial to him out of it. You he has raised out of nothing, you out of a desperate condition, your house and family out of ruins ; help you God again to raise his house, and he will say you bless him for it. Let there be some token of gratitude set up here, as God set the rainbow in the clouds, that he may look upon it, and remember and save you in the time of need with his mercy for it.

Gen. ix. 15.

In a word, God has signally and strangely visited us of

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late years with his salvation; redeemed us from our enemies and all that hate us;—those horns, that, like those in Daniel, pushed down and scattered all before them, that threw down our temples, took away our daily service, set up the “abomination of desolation” in these holy places,—horse, and foot, and arms, and all the instruments of desolation,—and stamped upon all holy things and persons: he has raised us up a mightier horn, to make those horns draw in theirs; a horn “in the house of his servant David:” restored our David his anointed to us, kept him his servant, returned him as he went, safe and sound in the principles of his religion; restored him and his house, us and ours, kept them at least from utterly pulling down. Oh that men would therefore now praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders he has lately done for the children of men!

As many scarlets now as you please, to adorn your grati- tudes; as many torches now as you please, that we may see them; what solemn processions now as you judge fit to make to evidence your blessings to the Lord God of Israel, for what he has done for us, for either our souls, bodies, or estates. So shall God again bless all your blessings to you; the poor shall bless us, and the Church shall bless us, and these walls shall bless us, and the children yet unborn shall bless us, and all our blessings be continued to us; we shall be visited, and redeemed, and saved, upon all occasions, in all necessities, on every hand and at every turn, till he bring us at last to his eternal salvation, to sing eternal Allelujahs, everlasting *Benedictuses*, hymns, and praises, with all the blessed saints and angels, to God blessed for evermore.

To this glorious blessing He bring us all, who this day came to visit us that he might; Jesus Christ. To whom, &c.

## THE SEVENTH SERMON

ON

### CHRISTMAS-DAY.

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2 COR. viii. 9.

*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

“FOR ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” And do you know any grace of the Lord Jesus Christ like this day’s grace, the grace of Christmas? any grace or favour like that grace and favour he this day did us, when he so graced our nature as to take it on him? Surely, whether this grace be his becoming poor, or our making rich, never was it seen more than this day it was. Never was he poorer than this day showed him, a poor little naked thing in rags. Never we rich till this day made us so, when he being rich became poor, that we being poor might be made rich.

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XI.

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And rich, not in the worst, but in the best riches; rich in grace, but above all grace in Christmas grace, in love and liberality to the poor, the very grace which the Apostle brings in the poverty of Christ here to persuade the Corinthians to. “See,” says he, “that ye abound in this grace <sup>2 Cor. viii.</sup> also.” “For ye know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.” <sup>7.</sup> He was so full of it, “that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor;” made himself poor to make us rich, that being made rich we might be rich: to the poor, bestow some of his own riches upon him again, some at least upon

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him who gave us all; supply his poverty who enriched ours; be the more bountiful to the poor, seeing he is now become like one of them, that as through his poverty we were made rich, so even in our very poverty we might abound also to the "riches of liberality." So the Macedonians did; so would he fain have the Corinthians too here, in covert terms; so he would be understood, and so are we to understand him. Christ's poverty here brought in as an argument to persuade to liberality.

2 Cor. viii.  
2.

A grace so correspondent to the pattern of the Lord Jesus, so answerable both to the purport of Christmas and the purpose of the text, that it is hard to say, whether the day better explains the text, or the text the day. For whether we take the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ towards us, downward, or the grace of the Lord Jesus in us towards him, upward—whether for the grace he did us in becoming poor for our sakes, or for the grace we are to show to his poor members for his sake again, for his becoming poor and making of us rich—I see not how or where I could have chosen a better Christmas text, a text for the day, or a day for the text.

For here is both the doctrine and use of Christmas; the doctrine of Christ's free grace, and the free use and application of it too. The doctrine, that "our Lord Jesus Christ, though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that through his poverty we might be rich."

The use, that we are to "know" it, and acknowledge it; know it for a grace and favour; yea, know the grace, know it for a pattern too: "for ye know" it, that is, to that end ye know it, to take pattern by it, to return grace again for grace, to show grace to his for his grace to us, to supply his poverty in his members for his so gracious supplying ours, to answer the riches of his grace with being rich; in this "grace" also, in the grace of love and charity to the poor; the best way to be rich, and to abound to the riches of his glory.

But more to appropriate it to the day, you may please to take it in these particulars: Christ's birth; the Christian's benefit; the evidence of both; the inference upon all.

I. Christ's birth. *Egenus factus*, when "he became poor."

II. The Christian's benefit. *Propter vos* it was, "for your sakes" it was,—*et ut vos divites*, "that ye through his poverty might be rich."

III. The evidence of both. *Scitis*; no less than that of science; "ye know" it.

IV. The inference upon all. *Scitis enim*, for ye know it;—for what? For a grace and favour. *Scitis gratiam*, the first: and *ut vos divites essetis*, "that ye might be rich" in the same grace he was. Then, secondly, that ye may do answerable to your knowledge; for *propter nos* it is, for "our sakes he became poor," that for his sake we might look the better upon the poor; for that he made us rich, that we might be rich in good works; for that he made us rich by the way of poverty, that we might know our riches have a near relation to poverty, are given us for the poor as well as for ourselves.

These are the parts. And of all these the sum is, that Christ's birth is the Christian's benefit; the knowledge of which ought to stir us up to Christian charity: or, nearer the phrase of the text, that our Lord Jesus Christ, though he was rich, became poor to make us rich; rich in all good gifts and graces, but especially in this of love and mercy to the poor; came down in grace to us to that purpose, both in the text and in the day, the whole and business of them both. I shall prosecute it in order, and begin with those words in the text that seem to point us to the birth of Christ—*egenus factus*: and if that were the original, the *factus* would be plain for his being made man. But as it is it is plain enough; he could not become poor but by becoming man.

I. For there is not so poor a thing as man; indeed no creature poor but man: no creature lost its estate, and place, and honour, thrust out of doors, and turned as it were a-begging abroad into the wide world, but man. Other creatures keep their nature and place to which they were created; man only he kept nothing; first lost his clothes, his robe of innocence in which he was first clad; was then turned naked out of his dwelling, out of Paradise, only his nakedness covered a little with a few ragged leaves;

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fain upon that to work, and toil, and labour for his living to get his bread; forced to run here and there about the world to get it. All the creatures that were lately but his servants stood gazing and wondering at him, and knew him not, would no longer own him for their lord, he looked so poor, so despicable, when he had sinned; they that before were all at his command, by the dominion he had received over them, now neither obeyed his command nor knew his voice, so perfectly had he lost the very semblance of their late great master, so perfectly poor was he become. The devil kept a power, and awe, and principality, though he lost his seat; got a kingdom, though he lost his glory: but man lost all, glory and grace, riches and honour, estate and power, peace and ease, shelter and safety and all: so that to become poor can be nothing else but to become man; and Christ's becoming so, must be his becoming man.

Yet not to know it only, but to know it for a grace, as S. Paul would have us, we must know (1) who it is that became poor;—(2) how poor he became, who became poor;—(3) what he was still, though he became poor. “Our Lord Jesus Christ,” says the text, he it is; *egenus factus*, he came to very want, *ἐπτώχευσε*, to a kind of penury like that of beggars. Yet *πλούσιος ὢν* for all that it is; he continued rich still, though he was poor; he could not lose his infinity of riches, though he took on his poverty; quitted not his Deity, though he covered it with the rags of his humanity.

We first look upon his person, our “Lord Jesus Christ.” He is a Lord, it seems, that became poor, that (i.) first: and truly, the first and only time that we read he entitled himself Lord, it follows presently, he hath need. “The Lord hath need.” This may be true, as the Italian observes, of the lords and princes of the world; none need commonly so much as they, nor they before they came to be lords and princes; but of the Lord and Prince of Heaven, as our Lord surely is, that is somewhat strange that he should have any need; yet so it is: and it may serve to teach the best of us, of men, lords, and great ones too, to be content sometimes to suffer need, seeing the Lord of lords was found poor.

Matt. xxi.  
3.



“Jesus” (ii.) it is, was found so. “Jesus” is a Saviour, and that is stranger. A Saviour that is poor is like to prove but a poor Saviour. Yet this is oftentimes God’s method; the “poor and base things of the world, and things that are despised,” to “confound the rich,” and “noble,” and the “mighty;” “that no flesh,” as the Apostle infers there, “might glory in his presence.” This very name of Jesus was then sent by an angel to be given him, when he had first told he should be born, born of a poor virgin, and yet save his people from their sins; that we may know God needs nothing to help him; his very poverty is our salvation. Jesus poor; the poorest contemptible means he can save us by.

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1 Cor. i. 28.

Matt. i. 21.

Nay, even the Christ, (iii.) the Messiah so long expected, comes poor when he was expected rich, to show the vanity of men’s conceit and fancies when they will go alone. Christ, the King of Israel, the great Prophet, the everlasting High Priest and Archbishop of our souls, he came poor, that men might give over looking upon the outward appearance of things, and think it no diminution to the calling of priest or prophet to be sometimes in a low and mean condition, seeing the Christ himself, anointed with the holy oil above all priests and prophets, came in no other.

And now this we have gotten by considering the person, that if he that is Priest, and Prophet, and Saviour, and Lord, and the Lord of all, may become poor, and God do all his work notwithstanding by him; then poverty is neither dishonourable in itself, nor so disadvantageous in its own nature, but that God can still make use of it to his service; does still most make use of it, dispenses his heavenly treasure to us more commonly in “earthen vessels” than in gold and silver; and we therefore not to slight the ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ, though become poor, “their bodily presence weak, and their speech contemptible,” as S. Paul’s undervaluers speak. For their Lord and ours became poor himself, as poor as the poorest; which will appear by the second consideration. I am now to show you how poor he became, of whom it is here said he “became poor.”

2 Cor. iv. 7.

2 Cor. x. 10.

(2.) And that, not only that poor thing called man, that

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poor worm and dust, that poor vanity and nothing we call man, but the very poorest of the name; the *novissimus virorum*, the lag and fag of all, “a very scum of men,” says the Prophet, “and the very outcast of the people.” So poor, that there is not a way to be poor in but he was poor in.

(i.) Poorly descended; a poor carpenter’s wife his mother.

(ii.) Poorly born; in a stable among beasts; poorly wrapped in rags, poorly cradled in a manger, poorly bedded upon a lock of hay, poorly attended by the ox and ass, poorly every way provided for; not a fire to dress him at in the depth of winter, only the steam and breath of the beasts to keep him warm; cobwebs for hangings, the dung of the beasts for his perfumes, noise and lowings, neighing and brayings, for his music; every thing as poor about him as want and necessity could make it.

Mark vi. 3. (iii.) Poorly bred too; a carpenter, it seems by S. Mark (vi. 3), at his reputed father’s trade.

(iv.) Poorly living too; not a house to put his head in, not a pillow of his own to lay his head on, not a room to sup in but what he borrowed; no money, nor meat, but by miracle, or by charity; not so much as a bucket to draw water, or a cup to drink it in. Nay more, for *ἐπτώχευσε* is more, he was poor even to beggary, was fain to beg even water itself, in the last cited chapter; had a bag carried always by one of his disciples to receive anything that charitable-minded people would put into it; his disciples were so low driven, following him, that they were fain sometimes to “pull the ears of corn” as they passed by, to satisfy their hunger: “five or seven loaves, with two or three little fishes” among them all, was great provision with them. Indeed, we read not punctually that he begged at any time, but we see him as near it as was possible, if he did not; and the word *ἐπτώχευσε* in all profane writers never signifies less.

But let it be but what we translate it, merely poor—though the Prophet David, in the person of Christ, cries *mendicium et pauper*: “I am a poor beggar;” be it yet but poor, yet so poor it is he was, that he was poor in all, every way poor. Poor in spirit; none poorer, none more willing to be trampled on; suffered men to “plough upon his back, and make long furrows;” make a poor thing of him indeed, do anything what

they would with him. Poor in flesh too. "They may tell all my bones," says the Prophet of him; "they stand staring and looking upon me;" a mere gazing-stock of poverty, a miracle of poverty, marvellous poor. Poor in reputation. "He made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant," says S. Paul; of a servant, of a slave; valued at the lowest price a man could be, "thirty pieces of silver." So poor he could scarce speak out. *Non clamabit*, says the Prophet, "he shall not cry." He did not, says the Evangelist. It was fulfilled: you could scarce hear his voice in the streets. In a word, so poor, that he was, as I may say, ashamed of his name; denied it, as it were, to him that called him by it: "Why callest thou me good?" when yet he only was so.

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Ps. xxii. 17.

Phil. ii.  
7, 8.

[Isa. xlii. 2.]

Matt. xii.  
18, 19.Matt. xix.  
17.

Lastly, poor he was in his death too; betrayed by one disciple, denied by another, forsaken by the rest; stripped off to his very skin, abused, derided, despised by all; died the most ignominious death of all—the death of slaves and varlets. And can you now tell me how he should become poorer? or can you tell me why we should think much at any time to become poor like him? or not rather cry out, Oh blessed poverty, that art now sanctified by Christ's putting on! How canst thou but be desirable and becoming, since Christ himself became poor? If God become man, what man would be an angel, though he might? If Christ, the eternal riches, think it becomes him to be poor, who would make it his business to be rich? Give me rags for clothes, bread for meat, and water for drink, a stable for a palace, the earth for a bed, and straw for a covering, so Christ be in them, so he be with them, so this poverty be his, so it be for him. I will lay me down in peace and take my rest upon the hardest stone or coldest ground, and I will eat my brownest bread and pulse, and drink my water or my tears with joy and gladness, now they are seasoned by my Master's use. I will neglect my body, and submit my spirit, and hold my peace, even from good words too, because he did so; I will be content with all, because he was so. The servant must not be better than his Lord, nor the disciple than his Master. Our Lord poor, our Jesus poor, our Christ poor,—and we striving to be rich! What an incongruity! The camel and the needle's eye

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never fitted worse. Poverty we must be contented with, if we will have him; poor at least in spirit we must be, ready for the other when it comes; and when it comes we must think it is becoming,—very much become the disciple to be like the Master, the servant wear his Lord's livery. "For our sakes he became poor;" and we must not therefore think much to be made so for his, be it to an ἐπτώχευσε, the extremest.

Especially seeing poverty is no such Gorgon, no such terrible-looking monster, since Christ wore it over his richest robes, even chose to be poor though he was rich, would needs be poor, and appear to be so for all his riches. Indeed, it was the riches of his grace that made him poor; had he not been rich, superlatively rich in that, in grace and favour to us, he would never have put on the tatters of humanity, never at least have put on the raggedest of them all, not only the poverty of our nature, but even the nature of poverty, that he might become like one of us, and dwell among us. And it was the riches of his glory, too, that could turn this poverty to his glory. What glory like that which makes all things glorious, rags and beggary?—what riches like his, or who so rich as he, that can make poverty more glorious than the robes and diadems of kings and emperors?—who so often, for his religion's sake, have quitted all their secular glories, plenties, delicates, and attendants, for russet coats, and ordinary fare, and rigours, and hardships, above that which wandering beggars suffer in the depth of winter. Christianity no sooner began to dawn into day, Acts iv. 34. but that we find the professors selling all, as if they thought it an indecency at least to possess more than their Master did; though they were rich they became poor, because their Lord became so though he was rich.

(3.) But when men of rich become poor, the case is much different yet from that of Christ's; men cease to be rich when they come to poverty, but not so Christ: he is poor and rich together: πλούσιος ὧν ἐπτώχευσε, being rich he yet showed poor. "The rich and poor meet together" never truer any way than here; *et utriusque operator est Dominus*, the Lord is both himself, as well as worker of them both in others. For in this low condition of his it is that S. Paul

yet talks so often of the riches of Christ, the “riches of his grace,” the “riches of his glory,” the “riches of the glory of his inheritance,” the “exceeding greatness of his power,” the “exceeding riches,” the “unsearchable riches of Christ;” Christ, he “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,” his very reproach and poverty “greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.” So Moses thought and reckoned, says the Apostle, when he saw his riches but under a veil; saw but a glimpse and shadow of them, at two thousand years’ distance too. So rich is Christ, *ὁ πλούσιος*, the only rich; so great are his riches.

Indeed, the riches of the Godhead—that is, all riches indeed—dwell all in him; though he became man, he left not to be God; our rags only covered the robes of the Divinity; his poverty only served for a veil to cover those “unspeakable riches;” to teach us (i.) not to boast and brag at any time of our riches, not to exalt ourselves when we are made rich, or when the glory of our house is increased, but to be as humble notwithstanding as the poorest and lowest wretch;—to teach us, (ii.) that riches and poverty may stand together as well in Christians as in Christ; the riches of grace and the poverty of estate, and again the riches of estate and poverty of spirit;—to teach us, (iii.) not to put off the riches of grace for fear of poverty; not quit our religion or our innocence for fear of becoming poor by them;—to teach us, (iv.) lastly, that we may be rich in God’s sight, in truth and verity, how poor soever we are in the eyes of the world, how needy and naked soever we appear. He that, “being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God,” even whilst he was so, “made himself of no reputation”—of as low a rank as [Phil. ii. 6, 7.] could be; and being “the brightness of his Father’s glory, the express image of his person,” and “upholding all things [Heb. i. 3.] with the word of his power,” veils all this glory, darkens all this brightness, conceals all this power, under the infirmities and necessities of flesh and poverty; yet only veils all this great riches, hides and lays it up for us, that “through his poverty we might be rich.” The next point we are to handle,—the Christian’s benefit from Christ’s birth, the Christian’s gain by Christ’s losses, the Christian’s making rich by Christ’s being made poor.

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Ephes. i. 7.  
Ephes. iii.  
16.  
Ephes. i. 18.  
Ephes. i. 19.  
Ephes. ii. 7.  
Ephes. iii. 8.  
Col. ii. 3.  
Heb. xi. 26.

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II. And need had he to be rich indeed, to enrich so many ; need to be rich, whose very poverty can enrich us. To speak the very truth, his very poverty is our riches. It is his rags that clothed our nakedness, it is his stable that builds us palaces, it is his hunger that filled our emptiness, it is his thirst that takes off our dryness, it is his necessity that supplies all ours ; he made himself a slave to make us free, a servant to make us sons ; he came down, to lift us up ; he became, as it were, nothing, to make us all. The very poverty of Christ is the riches of the Christian ; and he that can cheerfully put that on after him, is rich indeed, can want nothing : for he that can be content to be poor for Christ, who though he has nothing is content, he wants not though he has not ; and if he want not, he is rich—nay, only rich : for he that wants but the least, though he have never so much, never so full coffers, never so many possessions, nay, and kingdoms too, he is not rich, with all his riches. The poor pious soul that lives contented in his cell, and feeds on nothing but bread and water, and joys in it because it is for Christ, he is rich, and abounds, and has all ; sleeps securer in a wilderness amongst wild beasts, softer upon Jacob's pillar, warmer under the vast canopy of heaven, than great princes in their fortified castles, upon the down of swans, with all their silks and embroideries about them : for neither a " man's life," nor his riches, consist " in the abundance of the things that he possesseth." He is rich whom Christ's poverty, or poverty for Christ, enriches with godliness and contentment. That is

Luke xiii.  
15.

[1 Tim. vi.  
6 ]

"great gain;" that is great riches, says S. Paul : so great that we need not look after the petty, fading, transitory riches of the world ; they are but dross and dung, compared to the true riches, the riches of grace and glory we have by Jesus Christ.

For, call the rich man whom you will—seek all the expressions the Scripture has to call the rich man by—he that is rich in the grace of Christ may lay title to them all. He that abounds in gold and silver, is he rich ? Behold, Christ

Rev. iii. 18.

Isa. lv. 1.

1 Pet. i. 7.

calls to us to " buy gold " of him, " tried in the fire, that we may be rich ;" and he sells all " without money ;" it is then easy coming by it, easy being rich ; nay, the very trial of our faith is " more precious than gold." A Christian in the sorest trials, poverty or reproach or death, is rich, you hear,

in being so. He that has abundance of rich clothes and garments, is he rich? Christ calls us to buy them too at the same easy rate; "white raiment," the raiment of princes and great men, in the forenamed place of the Revelation; and with the long white robe of Christ's righteousness the faithful Christian is appareled; so none richer in clothes than he. He that heaps up silver like the dust, and molten gold like the clay in the streets; is he rich? How rich then is he that counts the silver like the dust, and the gold like clay; who is so rich that he contemns those riches! He that has his garners full of wheat, and his presses with new wine; is he rich, say ye? How rich then is he that lives wholly upon heavenly manna, and drinks the wine of angels, as the true Christian does? He that "washes his steps in butter," and has "rivers of oil" flowing to him "out of the rock;" is he rich? How much richer then is he that is anointed with the heavenly oil, with the oil of perpetual joy and gladness in the Spirit, as the true believer is! He that abounds in cattle, who cannot number his herds and flocks; is he rich, tell me? How mightily far richer is he that possesses God, whose are "all the beasts of the mountains," and all "the cattle upon a thousand hills!" and him he possesses that possesses Christ: that is, one of his, the poorest of them. He that has stately and magnificent houses, good store, richly decked and furnished too; is he rich, think you? If he be, how infinitely more rich are they who have heaven for their house, and all the furniture fit for theirs! In a word, may he be called rich who is highly born, richly seated, gloriously attended? How rich then is he that is born of God, as the true Christian is, whom he makes to "sit together with him in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" upon whom the angels continually attend, about whom they daily pitch their tents, to whom they are all but "ministering spirits, sent forth to wait upon them as upon the heirs of salvation!" Will not all this serve the turn? What then plainer now at last, than that he tells us he has made us "kings and priests?" Kings, they cannot come under a lower notion than rich; and though priests, of late, are not always so, yet a "royal priesthood," as S. Peter calls us, will be rich.

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XI.[Job xxix.  
6.]

[Ps. l. 10.]

Ephes. ii. 6.

Heb. i. 14.

Rev. i. 6.

1 Pet. ii. 9.

So that now, after the several styles of rich men in Scrip-

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ture, you see the Christian may be truly styled rich, if either abundance or increase, clothes or furniture, houses or attendants, may be said to make one rich, or if kings themselves may be called such.

Yet, above all this, he is richer still ; even in poverty he is rich, and can make others rich. “ As poor,” says the Apostle, “ yet making many rich ; and as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” Here is the prerogative of christian riches above all others : none can rob us of them ; no poverty can lose them. “ I know how to abound, and how to want,” says S. Paul ; how to abound in the midst of want. They are riches, the riches of grace, that thieves cannot steal nor moths corrupt ; such as satiate the weary soul, such as make us, with S. Paul, in all estates to be content, count all riches, all joy, even the sorest and bitterest poverty or temptation. And when the riches of grace have heaped up our treasures here with all cheerfulness, then open they to us the treasures of glory, riches so far beyond what the world call so, that all here is but mere beggary, and want, and misery, in comparison, not to be named or thought on.

The use of this is to instruct us henceforward to labour only for the true riches ; to be rich in grace, to be plentiful in good works ; not to squander away our days, like children in running after painted butterflies, in heaping up gold and silver, as S. James speaks, to lie and rust, and cry out against us ; not to build our dwellings, or fix our desires, or place our affections upon earthly rubbish ; not to precount our lands or houses, our clothes or furniture, our full bags or our numerous stock and daily increase, our riches ; but to reckon Christ our riches, his grace our wealth, his reproach our honour, his poverty our plenty, his glory the sum and crown of all our riches and glory. For if “ you know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,” this you know also, that it is worth the seeking ; that it is riches, and honour, and glory, how poor soever it looks to the eye of the world. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ it is only that makes us rich, and poverty his way to enrich us by, contrary to the way of the world : “ and this ye know,” says the Apostle ; it is so plain and evident I need not tell you, for ye know it. The third point,—the evidence of all that has been said.

[James v.  
3.]



III. "For ye know" it: for ye know nothing if you know not this. It was a thing not done in a corner; all the corners of the world rang of it, from the utmost corners of Arabia to the ends of the earth. The wise men came purposely from the east to see this poor little new-born child: *et tibi serviet ultima Thule*, sang the poet; the utmost confines of the west came in presently to serve him; the whole world is witness of it long ago. Nor were ever Christians ashamed either of this grace or poverty until of late. It was thought a thing worth knowing, worth keeping in remembrance by an anniversary too.

Indeed, were it not a thing well known, it would not be believed that the Lord of all should become so poor as to have almost nothing of it all. But "we saw it," says S. John, the "Word made flesh;" this great high Lord made John i. 14. little, and low enough, "heard it, saw it with our eyes, looked upon it, and our hands too handled it;" had all the 1 John i. 1. evidence possibly could be had, the evidence of ear, and eye, and hand; know it by them all. And not we only, not S. John only, but all men know it. For "this grace of God that bringeth salvation," that is, the true grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, "hath appeared unto all men," says S. Paul. Tit. ii. 11. So that they either know it, or if they know it not it is their own fault; for it has appeared, and has been often declared unto them: so that it is no wonder that the Apostle should tell the Corinthians that they know it; they could not be Christians without knowing it, nor it seems men in those days neither that knew it not.

And yet, as generally as it was known, it was a "grace" to know it; one of the most special gifts and graces, the knowledge of the grace of Christ. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and that ye know it, is his grace. You could not know it without it; none but they to whom it is given can know it as they should.

IV. That we may know it so as well as they, we are now, in the last place, to consider what the Apostle would infer upon us by it, what should be the issue of this knowledge. (1.) The acknowledgment of the grace: and then (2.) the practice of it. "For ye know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich," yet he so loved the poor as

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to bestow all his riches freely upon them ; upon us that were poor and naked and miserable, and being thrust out of our first home, never since could find any certain dwelling-place. And, therefore, we after his example, being now enriched by him, should be rich in our mercy and bounty to the poor ; for if his grace was such to us when we were poor, we should show the like to the poor now we are rich.

But that we may be the readier to this, we must first be sensible of the other, thoroughly sensible of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ; acknowledge it for a grace, a thing merely of his own good will and favour, that he would thus become poor to make us rich. Know we and acknowledge many graces in this one grace.

A grace to our humanity, that he would grace it with putting on.

A grace to poverty, that he would wear that too.

A grace to our persons as well as to our natures, that it was for our sakes he did it.

A grace to our condition, that it was only to enrich it.

Know we then again and acknowledge it from hence.

(i.) That poverty is now become a grace ; a grace to which  
 Matt. v. 3. the “ kingdom of God is promised,” poverty of spirit. Nay,  
 1 Cor. i. 28. “ the poor, and vile, and base things too hath God chosen,”  
 saith S. Paul ; the poor are now elect, contrary quite to the  
 fancy that the Jews had of them, whose proverb it was,  
 that the Spirit never descended upon the poor ; answer-  
 able to which it was then the cry, “ Can any good thing  
 [John i. 46.] come out of Nazareth ?” any prophet or great good come  
 out of so poor a place as that ?

(ii.) Know we again, that Christ’s poverty, above all, or  
 poverty for his sake, is a grace indeed ; for to you it is given,  
 Phil. i. 29. given as a great gift of grace and honour “ to suffer for his  
 1 Pet. ii. 21. name.” And it is a part of our “ calling,” says S. Peter,  
 a specialty of that grace.

(iii.) Know we that our riches are his grace too. In  
 vain we rise up early, and go late to bed ; all our care, and  
 pains, and labour, is nothing to make us rich without his  
 [Prov. x. 22.] blessing : “ The blessing of the Lord it is that maketh rich.”

(iv.) Know we, however these may prove, the riches of  
 Christ can prove no other. All the virtues and graces of our

souls, all the spiritual joy, fulness, and contentment, are merely his; they the proper "grace" of the Lord Jesus Christ; no grace above them, no grace near them; nothing can render us so gracious in the eyes of God as they; they are above gold and rubies and precious stones. These and all the rest being acknowledged in the text, we may well acknowledge that there was good reason to put an article, an emphasis, upon *χάρις*: *τὴν χάρις*, the grace.

Yet to make all up, all these graces, you must know all the several graces, outward and inward, come all from this one grace of Christ's becoming poor, being made man and becoming one of us. To this it is we owe all we have or hope, to the grace of Christ at Christmas; and therefore now are to add some practice to all this knowledge, to return some grace again for all this grace.

(i.) *Gratia* is thanks: let us return that first; thank God and our Saviour for this grace of his, whence all grace flows, and for all the several graces as they at any time flow down upon us. *Gratia Deo*, thanks to God.

(ii.) *Gratia* is goodwill and favour; let us show that to others. "Goodwill towards men."

(iii.) But goodwill is not enough: good works are graces; let us study to increase and abound, and to be rich in them.

(iv.) Yet *gratia* is, in S. Paul's style in this chapter, ver. 1,<sup>§</sup> and elsewhere, bounty and liberality to the poor; rich in this grace especially we are to be. It is the peculiar grace of Christmas, hospitality and bounty to the poor. It is the very grace S. Paul here provokes the Corinthians to, by the example of those of Macedonia and Achaia, who, "to their power and beyond their power," he bears them witness, were not only willing to supply "the necessities of the saints," but even entreated him and them to take it. By the example also of Christ, who both became himself poor, that we might be the more compassionate to the poor now he was in the number; and made us rich, that we might have wherewith to show our compassion to them. Now, surely if Christ be poor, and put himself among them, who would not give freely to them, seeing he may chance even to give to Christ

<sup>§</sup> ["Moreover, brethren, we do you on the churches of Macedonia." — to wit of the grace of God bestowed 2 Cor. viii. 1.]

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Matt. xxv.  
40.

himself among them when he gives? However, what is given to any of them he owns it as to himself: "What ye do to any of the least of these my brethren, ye do it unto me." And can any that pretends Christ be so wretchedly miserable as not to part with his money upon this score? Can any be so ungrateful as not to give him a little, who gave them all? Shall he become poor for our sakes, and we not show ourselves rich for his? It were too little in reason not to make ourselves poor again for him, not to be as free to him as he to us. Yet he will be contented with a little for his all, that we should out of our abundance supply the want of his poor members. He is gracious: behold the grace of our Lord in this too, in complying with our infirmities; not commanding us, as he might, to impoverish ourselves with acts of mercy, but to be only rich and abundant in them; to which yet he promises more grace still, the reward of glory. "Come, ye blessed of my Father,"—ye who supply and help my poor ones,—“come, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;” where ye that have followed me in my poverty, or become poor for my sake, or have been rich in bounty to the poor, as it were to a kind of poverty, shall then reign with me amidst all the riches of eternal glory.

[Matt. xxv.  
34.]

## THE EIGHTH SERMON

ON

### CHRISTMAS-DAY.

PSALM viii. 4, 5.

*What is man, that thou art mindful of him : and the son of man, that thou visitest him? <sup>1</sup> Thou madest him lower than the angels : to crown him with glory and worship.*

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<sup>1</sup> For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned.

BUT, Lord, what is man, or the son of man, that thou didst this day visit him? that thou this day crownedst him with that glory, didst him that honour? So we may begin to-day; for it is a day of wonder, of glory and worship; to stand and wonder at God's mercy to the sons of men, and return him glory and worship for it.

For, Lord, "what is man," that the Son of God should become the Son of man to visit him? that God should make Him lower than the angels, who is so far above them, that he might crown us, who are so far below them, with glory and honour equal to them or above them? It was a strange mercy, that God should make such a crumb of dust as man to have dominion over the works of his own hands; that he should put all things in subjection under his feet; that he should make the heavens, the moon, and stars for him: and the Psalmist might very well gaze and startle at it. But to make his Son such a thing of nought too, such a *Quid est*, that nobody can tell what it is, what to speak low enough to express it; such a *novissimus hominum*, such an abject thing as man, such a cast-away as abject man, as the most abject man; bring him below angels, below men; and then raise him up to glory again, that he might raise up that vile

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thing called man together with him, and restore the dominion when he had lost it; is so infinitely strange a mercy that it is nearer to amazement than to wonder.

And indeed the Prophet here is in amaze, and knows not what to say. Both these mercies he saw here, but he saw not how to speak them:—God’s mercy in man’s creation, and God’s mercy in man’s redemption too; what God made man at first, and to what he exalted him when he had made him; what God made his Son for man at last, what he made him first and last; lower than the angels first, higher than they at last, that he might show the wonders of his mercy to poor man both first and last.

But if David did not see both in the words he spake, the Apostle did; for to Christ he applies them. And that is authority good enough for us to do so, to bring it for a Christmas text; especially Christ himself applying the second verse, “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength,” as spoken in relation to himself. And that is authority somewhat stronger. Yet to omit nothing of God’s mercy, to do right on all hands to Prophet and Apostle and Christ too, we shall take them in both senses. To refer them to man, the plain letter with the whole design and context of the Psalm is sufficient reason. To understand them yet of Christ, he himself and his Apostle will bear us out. And though the text be full of wonder, it is no wonder that it has two senses; most of the Old Testament and prophecies have so—a lower and a higher, a literal and a more sublime sense. Thus, “Out of Egypt have I called my son;” “Rachel’s weeping for her children;” “I have set my King upon my holy hill of Sion;”—all applied to Christ or his business and affairs, and yet spoken first to other purposes, of Israel or David. I should lose time to collect more places. It is better I should tell you the sum of this, that it is the Prophet David’s wonder at God’s dealing towards man, and his dealing towards Christ, that he should deal so highly mercifully towards man, and so highly strangely towards Christ: so mercifully with man, as to remember him, to visit him, to make him but little “lower than the angels, and crown him with glory and worship:” so strangely with Christ, as to make him a “Son

Heb. ii. 6,7.

Matt. xxi.  
16.

Hos. xi. 1.

Jer. xxxi.  
15.

Psal. ii. 6.

of man" and lower than the angels first, then afterward to crown him with glory and worship. Things all to be highly wondered at;—and the text best to be divided into God's mercy, and David's wonder.

I. God's mercy manifested here in three particulars.

1. In his dealing with man. "What is man?" &c. In the literal sense of the words.

2. In his dealing with Christ, in respect to man. "What is the Son of man?"

3. In his dealing with man, in the sublimer sense of the text, again in respect to Christ. "What is man, and the Son of man?" in the same sense too.

1. His mercy in his dealing with man will best appear (i.) by what he did: and (ii.) for whom he did it; that he should do so much for man; that he should do it for so little; so little, so inconsiderable a thing as man.

Six branches there are here of what he did.

(1.) He was and is ever "mindful of him." (2.) He "visits" him. (3.) He "made him but a little lower than the angels," but one step below. (4.) He did that only, too, to exalt him, "to crown him," as we read it. (5.) He crowned him also. (6.) He crowned him "with glory and with worship" too.

If you will know (ii.) for whom all this: it is

(1.) For man. Adam, a piece of clay.

(2.) For the son of man. Enos, a piece of misery.

(3.) For a mere *Quid est*, for a thing we know not what to call it.

(4.) It is for one that the prophet wonders God should mind or think on; that he should come into God's mind, much more into his eye to be visited by him: such a one that it is a wonder he should be thought on.

2. His dealing with Christ in respect to man, which is the Apostle's interpretation of the words, is a second manifesto of his mercy, and showed

(i.) In his exinanition. That God, for man's sake, should (1) make him "lower than the angels." That (2) he should make him so low as man. As man (3) and "the son of man." Such a son of man (4) that we cannot know how to name him; such a *Quid est*, such a we cannot tell what, a wonder, a gazing-stock, not worth seeing or remembering.

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And all only that man by him might be visited and remembered.

(ii.) In his exaltation. That, notwithstanding all this, God should, a while afterwards, remember him, "visit" him, "crown" him, "crown him with glory and honour."

(iii.) And both exinanition and exaltation. That he might yet visit man the more, remember him with greater mercies, crown him with richer graces; crown him with higher honours here than he did in the creation, and with higher glory hereafter than the first nature could pretend to.

II. Upon all these the second general, the prophet's wonder comes in well; will follow handsomely, as the conclusion of all, the application of all, to teach us to wonder and admire at all this mercy, and take up the text and say it after David, "What is man, Lord, what is man, that thou," &c.

That we may wonder and worship too, and give God glory and worship for this wonderful mercy, for the glory and worship that he has given us, I begin now to show you his mercy in all the acts here specified; and the first is, his being mindful of us, or remembering us.

- Psa. ciii. 14. 1. And "he remembers that we are but dust," and so deals accordingly; blows not too hard upon us, lest he should blow us clean away. That is a good remembrance, to remember not to hurt us; and "the Lord hath been mindful of us," says the Psalmist again, hath and will ever be "mindful of his covenant," though we too often forget ours; "the bride may forget her ornaments," and "the mother her sucking child;" Jer. ii. 32. "yet will not I," says God, "forget you." Isa. xlix. 15. The Hebrew here is in the future, as the Latin is in the present: but all times are alike with God; what he is, he will be to us; even when he seems to forget us, he is mindful of us. *Recordaris operationum ejus*,<sup>h</sup> says the Chaldee; "Thou rememberest his works, to reward them;" but that is too narrow: Thou rememberest his substance, all his bones and members, forgettest none, to preserve them; thou rememberest his soul, to speak comfortably to it; thou rememberest his body, to feed and clothe it; thou rememberest his goings out and his comings in, to direct and prosper them; thou rememberest his very tears, and putteth them up in bottles: all these things are

Psa. cxxxix.  
15.

<sup>h</sup> תָּרַךְ יוֹדָיו Targ. Jonath. in Ps. viii. 5.]



noted in his book,—put down there. When we are shut up in the ark, and all the floods about us, then he remembers us as he did Noah, and in due time calls us out. When we are unhappily fallen into Sodom, among wicked hands, and the city ready to be all on fire about our ears, then he remembers us as he did Lot,—nay, as he did Abraham rather, when he delivered Lot. He is so good, that he remembers us for one another: remembers us for Abraham's, Isaac's, Jacob's, and David's sake; remembers the son for the father, the nephew for the uncle, the friend for the friend's, Job's friends for Job's sake. So mindful is God of us, so continually minding us, such a care of us he has, he careth for all: "No God like him for the care of all." I would we were as careful again to please him, as mindful of him.

Gen. xix. 29.

Job xlii. 8.

Wisd. xii.  
13.

2. And yet he is not only mindful of man, but visits him too. And "thy visitation," says holy Job, "has preserved my spirit." Will you know what that is? "Thou hast granted me life and favour;" so the words run just before; not life only, for his being mindful of us says that sufficiently, but favour also: his visiting intimates some new favour, somewhat above life and safety.

Job x. 12.

Indeed, visiting is (i.) sometimes punishing: "I will visit their sin." And it is a mercy to man sometimes that God visits and punishes him; it keeps him from sin, increases him in grace, advances him in glory. "And what is man, that thou thus visitest him," O Lord, and sufferest him not to run headlong to destruction, though he so deserve it?

Exod.  
xxxii. 34.

But visiting here (ii.) is in a softer, milder way; it is to bestow some favour on us. Thus holy Job, in words somewhat like the text, "What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him, and that thou shouldst set thine heart upon him;" and "that thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment?" So God's visiting, in Job's interpretation, is a magnifying of man, a setting of his heart upon him to do him good, a visiting him with some mercy or other every morning, a purging and purifying him from tin and dross. In the prophet Jeremiah's style, it is the "performing his good word" unto us; and in the Psalmist's, a "visiting with his salvation." Great mercy, without question.

Job vii. 17,  
18.Jer. xxix.  
10.  
Psa. cvi. 4.

Hence it is that he visits us by his Son, to bring us to

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salvation. Thus good old Zacharias understood it, when he starts out, as it were on a sudden, with his *Benedictus*, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people.” He visits us when we are sick, and heals our sicknesses: he visits us in our sadness, and dispels our sorrows; he visits us in prison, and pays our debts; he visits us in our dangers, and delivers us out; he visits us in our prosperities, and rejoices with us in them; he visits us by his mercies, by his prophets, by his graces, by his Spirit. Yet all these are nothing to this visiting by his Son, or little they are without it; or else they are all included in it: health and joy, liberty and deliverance, peace and mercy, comfort and instruction, grace and spirit; all in it; all in the coming down of Christ to visit us. How infinite is thy mercy, that thou thus dost visit poor sinful man!

Luke i. 68.

3. But thou wert infinitely merciful to him long before, when thou first madest him, when “thou madest him but little lower than the angels.” *Βραχύ τι*, some little thing, but not much. Thou gavest him understanding as thou didst them, only theirs is a little clearer and without discourse. But they understand, and so does man; they have wills, and so has he; they are spirits, and he has one. They are God’s ministers, and so is man; only they do all with more nimbleness and perfection; for they have no bodies to hinder them, but man has. In that he is somewhat under them, yet not much neither, since Christ has so exalted our nature as to unite it to the Godhead, and made all his angels worship it.

And which takes much too from this diminution, this *minuisti eum*—it is but *βραχύ τι*, in a second sense, “for a little while” (for so it is possible to be rendered), whilst we live here, for a few years and days: it will not be long ere we be *ἰσάγγελοι*, “equal to the angels” we are now below.

Luke xx.  
36.

And yet we are a degree nearer to them now, if we expound the word that we render angels as S. Jerome, Pagnin,<sup>i</sup> and some others do. The word is *Elohim*, one of the names of God; and S. Chrysostom<sup>k</sup> found a translation with *βραχύ τι*

<sup>i</sup> [S. Hieron. in Psalm viii. Opera, tom. viii. p. 9. x. Pagnin. in Ps. viii. 6. Bibl. Heb. Lat. Antv. 1584.]

<sup>k</sup> [S. Chrys. Exposit. in Psalm viii. Edit. Paris. 1836. tom. v. p. 105.]

παρὰ Θεὸν, “ he made us but a little lower than God himself.” SERMON  
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 And may well seem so when he sets a *Dixi, Dii estis* upon us ; Psa. lxxxii.  
6.  
 tells us that “ he said we were gods,” and “ the children of the Most High.”

4. But bear it what sense it will, what diminution it can, it is all but to exalt us by it, to crown us. Thou hast made Christ to crown him, only to crown ; so we read it in the old translation : our very diminutions are sent us to augment our glory ; so infinitely great is God’s mercy to us, that our very lessenings are for our greatening : a rare excess of mercy, to make us lower so to make us higher.

5. And it is high indeed when it exalts us to a crown ; and past doubting too, when it comes to a *coronasti*, thou hast done it, as it is here both in the old Latin and the new English ; certain to hold, too ; not to be one of those corruptible crowns the Apostle speaks of, of bays or laurel, in the Olympic games. 1 Cor. ix.  
29. If we add the other reading mentioned by S. Chrysostom,<sup>1</sup> *coronabis*, thou shalt crown him ; hast already, and shalt again, shalt continue crowning him ; here is a mercy will hold as well as stretch, as everlasting as it is infinite. Two senses there are of *coronasti*, of this crowning : it may signify either plenty or reward. “ Thou crownest the year with thy goodness ;” “ he crowneth thee with loving kindness.” Psa. lxxv.12.  
Psa. ciii. 4. In both it signifies an abundance of mercies and blessings. But “ he shall receive a crown,” is the same with James i.12. a high reward. In both senses God crowns man here, with the fulness of heaven and earth ; gives him liberty to feed and clothe himself with what he pleases, keeps nothing of all his plenty from him ; and, which is more, gives him it as it were a reward for his labour, though it be vastly far above all his pains.

6. If this reward be “ glory” now as here it is, he has put a crown of gold indeed upon his head, as the Psalmist speaks. The glory to be made after the very image and likeness of God himself, and to be made so at a consultation with so much solemnity ; that is the glory here. It was a kind of one to be made somewhat near the angels’ likeness ; but to have God’s added to it is glory upon glory. What glory like God’s ? what glory of man like that, to be like God ?

<sup>1</sup> [S. Chrysost. ubi supra.]

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Having "honour" added to this glory, that all the creatures should do homage to him; the fiercest and stubbornest of them submit their necks under his feet, and the very crooked serpent creeps away as afraid of him; none of them dare to lift him up a head, or a horn, a paw, or crest, or hiss against him: for the fowls of the air, and fishes of the sea, all of them to serve to his command and use,—what is man become now? what hast thou made him thus, O God? Much of this glory, I confess, is now departed from him, or blurred or sullied in him, that we can see little of his former purer rays, by reason of his own sin and folly; yet thus God made him, all this he did for him, and the glimmerings of all these glories and mercies are still upon him. And the mercy, peradventure, is the greater, though the glory be the less, in that, notwithstanding all man's demerits, he yet continues, in some degree or other, all these mercies to him. You will see it still the greater, if you now consider who it is all this is done to; who it is that God thus remembers, visits, makes, and crowns with glory and worship.

(i.) A worshipful piece, God wot—a poor thing, called man, styled Adam here—a piece of clay and dirt, *ex limo*, a pure clod, a mere walking pitcher; brittle and dirty too, and the dirtier since his fall.

Miserable (ii.) besides. *Enos* is a second word the Psalmist here expresses man withal; and that signifies a sad, sick, calamitous, miserable, incurable wretch; and which adds to it so by descent too, and by entail never here to be cut off: *filius Enos*, the son of man, the son of misery; he comes crying into the world, as if he foresaw it ere he well could see, and felt it at his first appearance. How innumerable are the troubles, how unavoidable the necessities, how incredible the mischances, how numberless the sicknesses, how insupportable the infirmities, that surround him from his first hour! Infinite need there is that God should be mindful of him, that he should have some eye upon him, and regard him; for he comes in helpless into the world, and continues so if God help him not.

This is that, then, (iii.) makes the prophet come with a *Quid est*: Lord, what a thing is this! what a thing is man!—

a thing so hidden with infirmities, so covered with misfortunes, so clouded with griefs, so compassed with sorrows, so wrapped up in night and darkness, in sins and miseries, that one knows not what it is, or how to christen it.

Such a thing only we may conceive it, (and we cannot conceive half of its poornesses and emptinesses), that we can only gape and wonder at it. In the 144th Psalm, where the Psalmist propounds this question, as it were again, of "What is man?" he answers presently (verse 4). "Man is like a thing of nought, his time passeth away like a shadow." He is not so much as a thing; he is but like it, though that very thing be a thing of nought too; a mere shadow of a thing of nought he is: which we may well wonder at, but cannot well imagine; and wonder again that God should think of such a shadow as he, that he should be mindful of the dust of the earth, that he should regard the dirt, that he should visit a we know not what, that he should raise a piece of clay so near angels and himself, that he should crown such a dunghill of wretchedness and misery; that he should bestow his glory upon such a shadow, and worship upon the dust of his feet, and the dirt under him. O Lord, how wonderful is thy goodness towards the children of men!

It is more wonderful for all that, if we now consider his dealing with his own Son, for the sakes of the sons of men. The second particular of his mercy, that for man and the sons of men he has made this text to be said of him also; made him a thing to be wondered at, by his dealing with him, both by his exinanition and by his exaltation. To him now we come to apply the words, for to him they properly belong. Where, first, (i.) we will find out his exinanition, or his being emptied and abased, to be wondered at.

"What is man?" so only before; but what is now the best of men, "the Son of man" himself? The term of Son of man is very proper unto Christ; called so by Daniel, long before he was so; and it may bear a note, that Christ, he only, is properly *filius hominis*, in the singular, the Son of man single, born of the Virgin without a man. Others are *filiū hominum*, in the plural: every one is so, born by the help of two, father and mother both. But notwithstanding, "man" and "the son of man" are diminutions to the Son of God; for to have been

Psa.cxliv.4.

Dan.vii.13.

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made like angels had been a high derogation ; but lower than they, what shall I call it ?

But, (ii.) so low as man—can you lend me a word for it? for “ what is man,” that God should be made one? I have told you over and over what he is ; but what art thou, O blessed God, that thou shouldst be made such a thing as he ?

Or, (iii.) if “ man” he must be made, what need he be made “ the Son of man” yet? He might have brought a human nature down from heaven, that had been fittest for him,—an incorruptible humanity. To be man and the Son of man, rottenness of rottenness, vanity of vanity (for man in the Psalmist’s phrase is nothing else), there is a debasement below debasement.

And yet (iv.) to be such a Son of man, that has a *Quid est*, a *si quis*, writ over him to inquire who he is ; so obscure and ignoble that neither David nor Esay can discern him ; but  
Isa. lxiii. 1. Esay with a *Quis est*, and David here with a *Quid est*, only  
Isa. liii. can decipher him ; “ without form or comeliness,” form or  
2, 3. fashion, or name, or title, one “ despised and rejected even of men ; a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs,” one that men would “ hide their faces from,” as the prophet speaks of him ; to be made such a one as this, we may all wonder indeed, prophets and people, all of us—nay, be all amazed at it.

I can show you him yet lower ; (v.) “ lower than the angels,” that we have told you ; but they were good ones : but *malis etiam*, so S. Austin,<sup>m</sup> lower than the bad ones ; laid under their cruelty and fury in his death, and not over them, surely, always in his life, when the devil was permitted to carry him from mountain to mountain, to the  
Matt. iv. pinnacle of the temple, or where he pleases. This is stranger still.  
5, 8.

Yet this might be a glory, as a trial : but (vi.) to be visited, that is punished, and not after the visitation of all men neither, but even the basest ; to be a man raised up for punishment, made to be scourged, afflicted, and abused, a *homo quoniam visitas*, made man only to be punished ; the Son of man, only to be under the power and lash of man, the worst of men too, the basest of the people ; scorned and

<sup>m</sup> [The present Editor has been unable to verify this reference.]

spit upon, beaten and buffeted, torn and rent and lashed and pierced by who would of them. What wonder is there not in his thus being made the Son of man?

But lastly, to be as it were out of God's mind the while; so visited by him as if he were no way mindful of him, as if he had clean forgotten him who he was; remembered not at all that he was his Son he used so, that he was forced to cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—[Matt. xxvii. 46.] art no more mindful of me? This is a *Quid est* beyond the very text, a wonder that is above what is explicit there. Yet such a man he was made too; so that we may justly now ask, *Quid est*, in the highest key, "What is man?"—what is this man?—what is the business, what the matter, that all this is done unto him? that God thus makes and un-makes him, and makes him again we know not what?

And we should more wonder yet, but for the following words, that all this is but "to crown him with glory and honour." But that affords us a new wonder still, that God should so crown such a one as this he we speak of. And, to speak truth, his exaltation after all this, the exaltation of our human nature in him, as poor, wretched, and contemptible as it is, a new work of wonder.

Had it been a nature born and framed to glory, it had been none at all; had it been a king, or of the royal lineage, to have been crowned, there had been no strangeness in it: but to crown a "worm," to crown "the very scorn of men," Psa. xxii. 6. as he terms himself, with glory, and "the outcast of the people" with honour and worship—this is a *quis enarrabit*, [Isa. liiii. 8.] "who can declare this generation," how it should come to a crown?

Yet before we come to speak of that, let us go through the lower parts of his exaltation: and, as poor a thing as God made him (and that was poor enough) yet did he not forget him. (1) He was so mindful of him, even in his low estate, that "he gave his angels charge over him," would not let his foot slip, or dash against a stone; would not suffer a bone of him to be broken, or one tittle of his covenant to fail him; sent his angels too to look after, to minister to him; a whole host of them to declare him this day to the world. [Psa. xci. 11.]

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XII.[Matt.  
xvii. 5.]Luke iv.  
30.

Nay, (2) came and visited him himself; he and his Holy Spirit with him at his baptism; he and Moses and Elias with him in the Mount, where he gave testimony he was his Son, his “beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased.”

Nay, (3) that which might seem in one sort a diminution, was in another an exaltation: he made him but a “little lower than the angels,” was an exalting him, when it made even his body little inferior to their spirit; and that it did, when he could pass through a crowd of people as invisible as an immaterial spirit. Nay, before that, when he came into the world without any blemish to his mother’s virginity; as if he had been a spirit, not a body: and after that, when he arose out of his tomb, the stone upon it; when he entered and the doors were shut; when he vanished out of sight, &c. they knew not how he went. *Paulo minus* [*ab*] *angelis* indeed: this is little less than angels, I can tell you. But S. Austin<sup>n</sup> tells you more, *Naturá humaná Christi Deum solum majorem*, “that God only is greater than Christ’s human nature.” The hypostatical union to the Deity has made it so; and those infinite graces of his soul are somewhat more than *paulo minus*, above the angels’ rarest endowments.

Yet this is nothing to the crown that follows; “for we see Jesus,” says the Apostle, “who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.” Παρ’ ἀγγέλους δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφάνωσας, so Euthymius<sup>o</sup> thinks it may be read without a comma; above the angels with glory and honour hast thou crowned him, with a glory beyond theirs. Indeed, four crowns he was crowned with: a crown of flesh; “with that his mother crowned him” in his incarnation: a crown of thorns; with that the soldiers crowned him at his passion: a crown of precious stones, *de lapide pretioso*, at his resurrection; (the four endowments of glorious bodies, Charity, Agility, Impossibility, and Incorruptibility, were the stones of it:) and a crown of pure gold at his ascension, when he shone like the sun *in gloria*, and went up *cum corona*, with a crown or ring of blessed saints, into the highest heavens.

<sup>n</sup> [S. August. Contra Maximin. Episc. Arrianor. lib. iii. cap. 25.]

<sup>o</sup> [In Ps. viii. Παρ’ ἀγγέλους:—intelligit quod gloria et honore cum

Deus supra angelos coronavit.—Euthym. Zigab. Comment. in Psalmos a Gr. in Lat. convers. Veronæ, 1530. fol. 16.]



With these two last God crowned him; these two were his exaltation, and the crown or reward of the two other.

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And, to make this crown the more glistening and glorious, here is "honour" added to it, "a name given him above every name," that at the mention of it, "every knee is now to bow, both of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;" made "better than the angels;" so much better that all things, even the angels themselves, "authorities and powers," all sorts of angels, are made "subject unto him," and are therefore bid "all to worship him," says S. Paul. Such honour has Christ after his humiliation; and we may expect some after ours: if we humble ourselves, we also shall be exalted, and crowned with glory. And so it seems we are entitled to it by the sufferings of the Son of man, and by his visiting us; our glory is much increased by his glory, our honour higher by his redemption than in our first creation; so that we may now well take up the words again, and pronounce them with greater astonishment still, that he should so remember, visit, and crown his redeemed people as he does.

Phil. ii. 9,  
10.

Heb. i. 4.

1 Pet. iii.  
22.

Heb. i. 6.

For what is man, indeed, that God should redeem him at so great a price? What access can it be to God to raise him out of his ruins? Might he not more easily have made a new stock of men of better natures, than have redeemed Adam's?

Or if he would have needs so much magnified his love as to have redeemed him because he had made him, would not a restoring of him to his first estate have been well enough, but that he must raise him to a higher? Without doubt it had, but that God in mercy thinks nothing too much for him.

It appears so by his remembering him. (1.) Man was a true Enos, and that is *obliviscens*, a forgetful piece; yet God remembers him, and comes down in the evening of his fall, a few minutes after, and raises him up with a promise of the seed of the woman, to set all straight again. There he did as well visit as remember him.

And, in the pursuance of this singular mercy, he still

<sup>P</sup> [אָנְשׁ as if from נִשְׁכַּח *oblivisci*. But the true etymology is that indicated in pp. 179 and 184, from אָנְשׁ *angi*, *ægrotare*.]

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(2) visits him every morning, morning and evening too; visits by his angels, by his priests, by his prophets, by his mercies, by his judgments, by his Son, by his Holy Spirit, by daily motions and inspirations. These are the visits he hourly makes us since he visited us by his Son, far more plentifully than before: more abundant grace, more gracious visits; for if his Son be once formed in us, he will never give over visiting till he crown us.

Yet (3) by degrees he raises us up to some angelical purities and perfections before he crown us: our nature is much elevated by the grace of Christ; and what the Jew did only to the outward letter, we are enabled to do to the spirit of it, to inward purity as well as the outward. Thus Matt. v. 21. and thus you heard of old, says Christ; but I say more; not a wanton look, not a murderous thought, not a reproachful word, not the slightest oath. He would refine us fain somewhat near the angels, to be pure as they.

But (4) we shall not do it gratis; he will crown us for it, Eph. ii. 5, 6. "quicken us together with Christ, raise us up together, and make us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus:" honours us with the name of "friends," reveals himself unto us, fills us with the riches of Christ, adopts us to be his sons; makes us members of Christ, partakers of his Spirit; makes himself one with us, and we with him; washes us by one sacrament, feeds us by another; comforts us by his word, compasses with the ministrations of righteousness that exceeds in glory; pardons our sins, heals our infirmities, strengthens our weaknesses, replenishes us with graces, 2 Cor. iii. 18. urges us with favours; makes us with "open face behold them as in a glass," "behold the glory of the Lord," and "changes us at last into the same image from glory to glory." "What is man, O Lord, or the son of man" that thou shouldst do thus unto him? And what are we, O Lord, what are we, that we are so insensible of thy mercies? what base, vile, unworthy things are we, if we do not now pour out ourselves in thanks and wonder, in praise and glory, for this exceeding glory!

Wonder we (1), stand we and wonder, or cast ourselves upon the earth, upon our faces, in amazement at it, that God should do all this for us; thus remember, thus visit,

thus crown such things as we. That (2) he should pass by the angels to crown us, leave them in their sins and misery and lift us out of ours. That (3) he should not take their nature at the least, and honour those that stood among them; but take up ours, and wear it into heaven, and seat it there.

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And there is a visit he is now coming to-day to make us, as much to be wondered at as any,—that he should feed us with his body, and yet that be in heaven; that he should cheer us with his blood, and yet that shed so long ago; that he should set his throne and keep his table and presence upon the earth, and yet heaven his throne and earth his footstool; that he should here pose all our understandings with his mysterious work, and so many ages of Christians, after so many years of study and assistance of the Spirit, not yet be able to understand it. “What is man,” or “the son of man,” O blessed Jesu, that thou shouldest thus also visit and confound him with the wonders of thy mercy and goodness?

Here also is glory and honour too, to be admitted to his table; nowhere so great: to be made one with him, as the meat is with the body; no glory like it. Here is the crown of plenty: fulness of pardon, grace, and heavenly benediction. Here is the crown of glory: nothing but rays and beauties, lustres and glories, to be seen in Christ, and darted from him into pious souls. Come take your crowns, come compass yourselves with those eternal circlings.

Take now the “cup of salvation,” and remember God for so remembering you: call upon the name of the Lord, and give glory to your God. If you cannot speak out fully (as who can speak, in such amazements as these thoughts may seriously work in us?) cast yourselves down in silence, and utter out your souls in these or the like broken speeches:—What is man, Lord what is man? What am I? How poor a thing am I! How good art thou! What hast thou done unto him! How great things! what glory, what honour, what crown hast thou reserved for me! What shall I say? How shall I sufficiently admire? What shall I do again unto thee?

1. What shalt thou do? Why (1) if God is so mindful

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of us men, let us be mindful of him again; remember he is always with us, and do all things as if we remembered that so he were.

(2.) Is he so mindful of us? Let us be mindful of ourselves, and remember what we are, that we may be humbled at it.

(3.) Does he remember us? Let us then again remember him with our prayers and services.

2. Has he visited us? Let us in thankfulness visit him again, visit him in his temple, visit him at his table, visit him in his poor members, the sick, the imprisoned.

3. Has he made us lower than the angels? Let us make ourselves lower and lower still in our own sights. Is it yet but a little lower than the angels? Let us raise up thoughts, and pieties, and devotions to be equal with them.

4. Has he crowned us with glory? Let us crown his altars then with offerings, and his name with praise; let us be often *in corona*, in the congregation of them that praise him, amongst such as keep holiday. Let us crown his courts with beauty, crown ourselves with good works; they should be our glory and our crown: and for the worship that he crowns us with too, let us worship and give him honour, so remember, so visit, so crown him again; so shall he, as he has already, so shall still remember us last, and bring us to his own palace, there to visit him face to face, where he shall make us equal to the angels we are now below, and crown us with an incorruptible crown of glory: through Christ, &c.

## THE NINTH SERMON

ON

### CHRISTMAS-DAY.

S. LUKE ii. 30—32.

*For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*

SALVATION cannot but be a welcome, then, at any time. I know no day amiss; but *in die salutis*, at such a time as this, on Christmas-day especially: then it first came down to bless this lower world.

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But salvation so nigh as to be “seen” is more; much more if we ourselves have any interest in it; if it be for “the Gentiles” too, that we also may come in; far more, if it be such salvation that our friends also may be saved with us—none perish: if it be *omnium populorum*, to them “all,” in whatsoever nation.

Add yet, if it be salvation by “light,” not in the night, no obscure deliverance, we like that better; and if it be to be saved, not by running away, but gloriously—salvation with “glory,” that is better still. Nay, if it be all—salvation on a day of salvation; not afar off, but within ken; not heard of, but seen; to us and ours, an universal salvation; a glad-some, a lightsome, a notable, a glorious salvation; as it is without contradiction, *verbum Evangelii*, good Gospel, joyful tidings, so it must needs be, *verbum dici*, too, the happiest news in the most happy time.

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These make the text near enough the day; and yet it is nearer. What say you if this "salvation" prove to be a Saviour, and that Saviour Christ, and that Christ new-born? the first time that *viderunt oculi* could be said of him; no time so proper as Christmas to speak of Christ the Saviour, born and sent into the world. He it is that is here styled *salutare tuum*. Christ, that blessed sight that restores Simeon's decaying eyes to their youthful lustre, that happy burthen that makes Simeon grasp heaven before he enter it.

Indeed, the good old man begins not his Christmas till Candlemas. It was not Christmas-day with him, he did not see his Saviour till he was presented in the temple. The Feast of Purification was his Christmas: this, the shepherd's, the world's, and ours. This day first he was seen visibly to the world.

Being, then, to speak of "salvation" which is a Saviour, or a Saviour who is salvation:—**I**. First of the "salvation" itself, (I.) τὸ σωτήριον. (II.) Then of its certainty and manifestation, so plain and evident that the eye may see it: salvation (1.) to be "seen;" more (2) "prepared" to be seen. (III.) Of the universality, "before the face of all people." (IV.) Of the benefits: they are two: (1.) "A light;" (2.) A "glory," with the twofold parties: (1.) "The Gentiles;" (2.) The Jews. Of each both severally and jointly.

**II**. When we have done with the salvation, then of the other sense of τὸ σωτήριον, the Saviour himself; that is the prime meaning of *salutare* here. (1.) Of his natures: in φῶς, his "Godhead;" in εἶδον and ἡτοίμασας, his "manhood." (2.) The unity of his person, in τὸ σωτήριον. (3.) His offices, in ἐθνῶν, ἀποκάλυψιν, and δόξαν. His eternal generation in φῶς; his temporal in κατὰ πρόσωπον.

**III**. Lastly, of our way to behold him, and our duty when we see him. How to obtain this glorious sight of τὸ σωτήριον, of salvation, and how to entertain it. Of which that I may speak with reverence, and you hear with profit, let us pray, &c.

**I**. I begin with that which we all desire and hope to end—"salvation;" and, (I.) first, with τὸ σωτήριον (give me leave to do so) in the sense of profane authors. It will fit the day: τὰ σωτήρια were *dies salutaree*, festivals for some famous

deliverances among them. And may not τὸ σωτήριον, then, be this great festival of the nativity of salvation, this happy day which, come about by the circling of the year, expects now the solemnities of our joys and thanksgivings? You see the day itself is in the text; and now we have seen that, let us look into the occasion of it, what it is that makes it holy day.

Something seen or done upon it: what is that? *Salutare tuum*, says the text; a Saviour seen and a salvation wrought; nay, this seen too, for *viderunt oculi* to both, if they be two. There is but one word for both, and it may be they may be but one. However, distinguish them we will for a while, though we unite them in the upshot.

“Salvation.” Simeon might with as much ease have called him Saviour; but that he thought too little. You would have blamed his eyesight had he seen no more. Saviours there have been many—Moses, and Joshua, and Jephthah, and Samson—I cannot tell you how many; and they have brought salvation in their times, and saved their people; but none of all was ever made salvation but this day’s Saviour, who is made unto us righteousness and salvation.

Made to us: Is that all? nay, is it in himself? Other saviours, when they have saved others, themselves they could not save: they themselves did still stand in need of being saved. Christ needs none other but himself. He is “salvation;” no saviour so but he.

And (i.) τὸ σωτήριον it is, not τὸν σωτήρα, nor τὴν σωτηριαν neither. Salvation neither for male only, nor female only, but both of the neuter gender. “Neither male nor female, [Gal. iii. 28.] but all one in Christ Jesus.”

(ii.) Not σωτηριαν in the feminine; not a weak feminine salvation, but a strong firm one, the “mighty strength of [Ps xx. 6.] his right hand.”

(iii.) Not a feminine salvation, not τὴν σωτήριαν, lest we should fondly look for τὴν Μαρίαν, the Virgin Mother. Not she, but the Virgin’s Son: the Holy Ghost, as I may say, afraid of *Salvatrix mea*, *Salve Redemptrix*, before ever Christianity dreamt of that sacrilege.

But τὸ σωτήριον is yet more salvation with an emphasis,

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with an article, *this* salvation. Many saviours, and salvations too, without doubt, had aged Simeon seen in the large circuit of his years, without a *Nunc dimittis*; but no sooner τὸ σωτήριον, no sooner this, but he grows weary of the world; his life grows tedious to him, he would be going. What means this hastening to his grave, when he folds salvation in his arms? Why, this it is that gives it a pre-eminence above all beside. Death now itself is conquered, and now first to die is to be saved. Salvation not only from death, but from the terrors of it.

Salvation is a deliverance; a deliverance is from some evil of sin or punishment. To be delivered from punishment, be it but the loss of goods, of liberty, or health, is a kind of salvation; and if the loss be great we are delivered from, the salvation great: but if the punishment stretch itself beyond the limits of fading time, if it be to be extended through eternity, the deliverance, then great without question, well deserves the article, τὸ σωτήριον.

To be delivered from punishment, and eternal punishment, is no small matter, beyond all human power: yet from sin is far beyond it. If we be not saved from that, it is but an incomplete, a partial salvation from the other.

Σωτήριον comes from σώω, or σώζω, *salvum facere*, to make all whole again; to heal the wounds of sin by the plasters of mercy; to restore a man to his lost health, his lapsed justice, σῶν ποιεῖν, *integrum facere*, to give him health. "Thy saving health, O Lord." Adam lost it; in him we all, and every day we lose it still. We confess as much morning and evening:—"There is no health in us."

[Ps. lxxvii.  
2.]

And what is it we gain, then, by τὸ σωτήριον, if we so soon are at a loss? Yes, σώζειν is *salvum conservare* too, to keep us well when we are so. Good God, in what need stand we of "thy salvation!" We sin, we are punished—we are freed, we rise again—we slip, and fail, and fall again:—to deliver us, to restore us, to preserve us, as it requires, so it makes, τὸ σωτήριον, an emphatical, an exceeding great "salvation."

Nor is this all; τὸ σωτήριόν σου "thy salvation." From sickness, or imprisonment, or poverty, or death, man may sometime save us; yet not so, but that it is σωτήριόν σου, God's too. God by man. But deliver us from the lowest



prisons, from a hell of miseries, sin and its attendants, and keep us upright and entire, it is only God-man can do it. That is God's peculiar, τὸ σωτήριόν σου, his wonderful "salvation."

His by propriety. It had no other power but the strength of his own right arm to bring this mighty thing to pass. It had no other motive than his own immense love and goodness to effect it. We were in no case to deserve it,—professed enemies, we had nothing in us to make it ours, but that it might be wholly his. "Thy salvation."

Yet "thy salvation," why so? What, can God be saved? "Thy salvation!" our salvation rather. Yes, both: Thine actively, ours passively; Thou savest—we saved.

And may it not be his passively too? "Thy salvation." Thou thyself saved. Thy promises, thy truth, which is thyself—thy mercy, which is thyself—thy justice, which is thyself—saved from the censure of unjust man, by preparing him a Saviour. Man had almost thought God had broke his word: now that is saved. Some still will not let his mercy be saved, but destroy it with justice; and in destroying that, turn justice into gall and wormwood; ruin that too by denying πάντων λαῶν, an universal Saviour. It was time, high time, to tell us from heaven, by the mouth of the Holy Spirit, of σωτήριόν σου. God himself now quitted of injustice, and want of bowels of compassion.

You have a witness of it undeniable: εἶδον οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου, "my eyes have seen" it. Salvation clear even to the sense; and to the certainest, the sight. The eye may see it.

(II.) *Viderunt oculi*: he might have added, *et contractaverunt manus meæ*, and his hands handled it; but if the eye see it, we need not sue to the hand for certainty.

(I.) Οἱ ὀφθαλμοί "these eyes." No longer now the eyes of prophecy; those are grown dim, and almost out. Isaiah, [Isa. ix. 6.] indeed, could say, "is born," "is given," so certain was he of it; but never *viderunt oculi*; for all that, he never lived to see it; one degree, this, above the infallibility of prophecy.

Time was when this *salutare tuum* was enveloped in clouds. It was so till this day came, a mystery "kept secret [Rom. xvi. 25.] since the world began;" locked up in heaven so close, that "Mine eyes have wasted away with looking for thy saving [Ps. cxix. 123.]

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1.]

health, O Lord," sighs David; and the Church answers him with *Utinam dirumpereſ caelos*, "Break the heavens, O Lord, and come down." *O utinam*, O would thou wouldst! But now, as we have heard, so have we "seen thy salvation."

Nor need we any extraordinary piercing eye to see it; so plain and manifest is the object, that eyes almost sunk into their holes, eyes over which the curtains of a long night are well nigh drawn, eyes veiled with the mists of age, eyes well near worn out with looking and expectation, the dimmest, agedest sight may see it. "Mine eyes,"—old father Simeon's.

Nor need the Manichee strain his eyesight to discern it. He need not, as is usual when we look on curious pieces, close one eye, that, the visual spirits being contracted, we may see those things which else by reason of their curious subtlety escape the seeing. It is no such airy phantasm, but that we may with open face and eyes behold it; he may see it with *οἱ ὀφθαλμοί*, both his eyes, without straining, without that trouble.

But if our senses should play false with us, yet "my eyes," the eyes of a prophet, a holy man inspired, and detained a prisoner in the flesh on purpose for this spectacle, cannot possibly deceive us.

Especially if you add but *εἶδον* to *ὀφθαλμοί μου*: that he did not perceive it only as afar off—Balaam's sight—or had a glance or glimmering of it only, but *εἶδον*, saw it plain, so plain as *εἰδέειν* [*εἰδέναί*], to *know* it too. Saw it in his arms, and looked near it—nay, into it, by the quick lively eye of a firm faith; for with both eyes he saw it, the eyes of his body and the eyes of his soul; the Saviour with the one, salvation with the other: the child with those, the God with these. And what greater evidence than that of sight? what greater certainty than that of faith?

If all this be yet too little, if *viderunt* be to seek, and *oculi* fail, and *mei* be deceived; yet *parasti* cannot but lift it above the weakness of probability, put all out of question. It was not only seen, but "prepared" to be seen.

(2.) It came not, as the world thinks of other salvations, by chance, but was prepared. *Parasti*, "thou hast prepared" it; prepared by him that prepared the world.

Higher yet; "*parasti*, thou hast prepared;" done it long since: the preparation began not now, had a higher beginning, a beginning "before the face of all people;" before the face of any people, before the face of the waters, before the face of the world appeared. "Chosen us in him," says Eph. i. 4. S. Paul, then chosen and prepared him for us, "before the foundation of the world."

But this *parasti* is not the blessing of this day. *Parasti ab æterno*, so to the patriarchs too; but *in conspectu*, before our faces; made manifest in these last times, manifested in the flesh: that is the blessing we this day commemorate. "A body thou hast prepared me:" that prepared, then [Heb. x 5] "Lo, I come;" he will be born presently,—Christmas out of hand. *Parasti* now complete: this day he was first made ready, and dressed in swaddling-clothes.

And "prepared." So it came not at man's entreaty, or desert; nay, when he thought not of it. When Adam was running away to hide himself, then the promise of the woman's Seed stepped in between; and when religion and devotion lay at the last gasp, ready to bid the world adieu, then comes He himself who had been so long preparing, and fulfilled the promise. This a degree of certainty higher than our imaginations can follow it; that relies wholly on God's own *parasti*, without man's uncertain preparation.

Yet something ado there was to bring this τὸ σωτήριον to εἶδον, this "salvation" to be "seen." A long preparation there was of patriarchs; Moses and the prophets; of promises, types, and figures, and prophecies, for the space of four thousand years. This long train led the triumph; then comes the Saviour, then salvation. Sure and certain it must needs be, to which there are so many agreeing witnesses.

This, then,—so variously typified, so many ways shadowed, so often promised, so clearly prophesied, so constantly, so fully testified, so long expected, so earnestly desired,—this is the salvation prepared for us. Whoever looks for any other may look his eyes out, shall never see it. This name, "the only name by which we shall be saved," the name of [Acts iv. 12.] Jesus.

Yet, notwithstanding all that is said or can be said, it is but *parasti* still. It is not *posuisti*, prepared for all, not put,

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[Luke ii.  
34.]

set up for all, as if all should be saved. No, *posui te in casum*, "set for the fall of many;" those that will not turn their eyes up hither, that care not for *viderunt*; neglect this sight, slight this salvation. But, however this dismal success often comes about, *parasti* it is, that cannot be lost; and *in conspectu omnium populorum*, for all it is prepared, for all in general: none excluded this *parasti*; He that put *parasti* into this good father's mouth, put in *omnium populorum* too. Not only the certainty, but the universality of this salvation; that is the third part of the text. And thither we are come: "Before the face of all people."

(III.) "Prepared," that is a favour; and for the "people," that is an ample one, and one step to an universal. People are men, a great company of men; and for men, and a multitude of men, it is prepared; *nusquam angelos*, not for angels, in no wise for them, not one of them. No, they are still the sons of darkness, no "day-spring from on high" to visit them.

For men; and not for the better or more honourable part of men alone, but for the "people" too; the meanest, sinfullest men in more favour with God than the apostate angels.

And not to some few of those people neither, but to "all" the people, the whole people.

But *in conspectu totius populi* it might be, for all one people, and the rest never a whit the nearer to salvation; the further off rather, when it is so restrained: *uniuscujusque populi* would be better for all the people of the world.

It is somewhat near the height, that, of what we can desire; yet *omnium populorum* it is we need, for all people whatsoever; not only all that then were, but all before, up to Abraham, up to Adam, and all since down to us that live this day, down to all that shall survive us, as long as there shall be people upon earth. *Uniuscujusque populi* had been enough for the whole world then alive. *Omnium populorum* it must be,—or the fathers before, and we since, are men most miserable.

But do not Simeon's old eyes deceive him? *πάντων!* what, *πάντων?* for all? I know some quicker sights, some younger eyes, that can construe *πάντες* into *pauci*, can see no such matter. It may be *δόξαν λαοῦ σου Ἰσραὴλ*, the glory of the elect Israel, at the end of the text, dims their weak eyes; or,

peradventure, like men overwhelmed with the news of some unexpected fortune, they think themselves in a dream, and dare not give credit to their eyes, though they behold it; so great and undeserved a blessing, that it is a labour to persuade them that they see it, though they cannot but see it. Simeon's eyes are old enough to ponder objects; he knows what he sees, and he speaks what he knows; and he speaks no more than the angel before told the shepherds, *gaudium quod erit omni populo*, "tidings of joy which shall be to all people;" *erit*, shall be for ever. [Luke ii. 10.]

And say not the Apostles the same also? "The Saviour of all men," says S. Paul, "especially of them that believe;" of them "especially," not them only. "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." "The Saviour of the world." "A ransom for all." "God not willing that any perish;" not any. 1 Tim. iv. 10.  
1 Tim. ii. 4.  
1 John iv. 14.  
1 Tim. ii. 6.  
2 Pet. iii. 9.

Nay, God himself says more: "I will not the death:" no, not "of the wicked," not of a sinner; much less his death before he be or man or sinner. That is no kin to *salutare tuum*; that is not salvation, but destruction, prepared. And it is not *nolem*, I would fain not have it so, but plain *nolo*, "I will not;" or, more to the word, I not will it, I deny it utterly: thy destruction is from thyself; it is none of my doings. *Salutare meum*, I will the contrary. To put all out of question, take his oath: *Vivo ego*, "As I live," I do not. Ezek. xxxiii 11.

And accordingly does the Saviour himself send out his general proclamation, "Come to me, all that are heavy laden;" —and who is not?—Yet, do but come, come who will, and I will ease. He calls them all; by that grace they may come if they will, except you think he mocks them: when they are come he will refresh them. Matt. xi. 28.

To take away all plea of ignorance or excuse, we proceed further, *In conspectu omnium*; not only prepared for all, but "in the sight of all," before their faces. So prepared that they may see, and know it; know it to be prepared; not that it might be, and is not—as if indeed the salvation were sufficient in itself, but God would not suffer it to be so—so, though universal, yet so hidden under obscure and nice distinctions, that few can see it; but withal so evident that all

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may see it; *in conspectu omnium*, none with good reason deny it.

Had it been *ἐνώπιον πάντων*, they might have had some pretence and colour if they had not seen it, had it been only in sight: many things are so which we oft-times do not see. But *κατὰ πρόσωπον*, that which is just before our faces, we must be blind if we see not that.

If, for all this, they close their eyes and will not see, then *κατὰ* is *contra*, against them, to confute, to confound their vain imaginations. So *κατὰ πρόσωπον* will be against those that cry out, The light of righteousness rose not upon us; to prove the contrary now, *κατὰ πρόσωπον*, to their faces.

There is no idle word in Scripture; every adverb, and preposition, and article, the dictate of the Spirit. There are other words he might have used—*ἐνώπιον*, *ἔμπροσθεν*, many more; but *κατὰ πρόσωπον* methinks on purpose.

(i.) It may be, besides what has been said, to distinguish the Jews and us, since this salvation came. *Κατὰ πρόσωπον*, before our faces. When the light is before, the shadows are behind. So it is with us, ever since the Sun of righteousness arose this day, since this light of salvation left the clouds. When the light is behind, the shadows are before. So to the Jewish synagogue; salvation behind the cloud to them: nothing before their eyes but veils and shadows; nothing else took up their eyesight; but “we with open face behold the glory of the Lord.”

[2 Cor. iii.  
18.]

(ii.) Or may it not be, *κατὰ πρόσωπον*, against the face of the world, clean contrary? That is for nothing but glory and pomp: God works not as man works, but *κατὰ πρόσωπον*, against the hair; will have an humble Saviour, lowly born, of poor parentage, in a stable, wrapped in rags, laid in a manger; no royal cradle, no princely palace, without attendants, without state. The angels themselves, at such a sight as this, could not but *παρακλῖψαι*, bow down, and look, and look again, and mistrust their eyesight, to see God in a cratch, heaven in a stable: and bow down we must our high towering thoughts, and lay them level with that from whence we were taken, if we would bless our eyes with so hidden secrets, or be partakers of so great salvation. They were poor shepherds that first saw this happy sight, as it were

[1 Pet. i.  
12.]

on purpose to inform us that the poor humble spirit has the first rank among those who ever see salvation.

(iii.) Or, lastly, is it not *κατὰ, secundum*, according to, the inclination and capacity of all people? *τῶν λαῶν* of the people; *λαὸς ἂ λᾶας durum genus*, stony-hearted people, those that set their faces against salvation; to soften them, if possible, or else to break them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Or again, *λαῶν* of *λᾶας*, people, so called from the cornerstone, Christ Jesus; such as had already turned their faces towards salvation; to further and encourage them. Or *τῶν λαῶν* and *ἔθνῶν*; not only of the people, to their capacity, but to theirs too who were neither his people, nor people; whose rude barbarisms had exempted them from the number of civil commonwealths; who did not deserve the name of people, not of men. *Ἐθνῶν* without *τῶν*, without either article or adjective, such as nobody could point at with an article, or construe with an adjective: such as seem here to be excluded out of *πάντων*, that yet one would think includes all. Such as, if you were to number up all the world, you would leave out them: to these *εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν*, to uncover and show them to the world, and out of their thick darkness to light them the way unto salvation.

(IV.) Which brings me to the benefits, together with the parties. Light and glory: light to the Gentiles, glory to Israel. "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of the people of Israel."

(1.) I keep God's method, *fiat lux*; begin with light. I need not tell you it is a benefit. (i.) "Truly, light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is," says the Preacher; and Mordecai joins "light and gladness" together. So *salutare lætificans* it is, salvation that brings joy and gladness with it. Gen. i. 3. Eccles. xi. 7. Esth. viii. 16.

(ii.) Light, of all motions, has the most sudden; it even prevents the subtlest sense. And was it not so with this salvation? "When all things were in quiet silence, and that night was in the midst of her swift course, thine almighty word leaped down from heaven out of thy royal throne." Wisd. xviii. 14. *Salutare præveniens vota*; salvation that prevents our dreams, and awakes our slumbering consciences.

(iii.) And when our eyelids are past those slumbers, then "Lighten mine eyes, O Lord, that I sleep not in death." [Ps. xiii. 3.]

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Those dark chambers have no lights. A light to lighten them, a light to show myself to myself; *εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν*, to reveal my inmost thoughts, to show me the ugly deformity of my sins, will be a blessing. *Lumen revelans tenebras*; no dark-lantern light; a light to show us the darkness we are in; our *salutare dispergens tenebras*, salvation that dispels the horrid darkness.

(iv.) And to do that, the enlightening of the medium is not sufficient. *In conspectu, κατὰ πρόσωπον*, just before us it may be, and the windows of our eyes dammed up against it. A light then to pierce the organ—*εἰς*, into it, it must be; *lumen penetrans oculum*, salvation not only presented to the eye but to the sight; the eye fitly disposed to behold it.

(v.) Every enlightening will not do that. It must be *ἀποκάλυψις*, the light of revelation. No other will serve the turn; not the light of nature, not the dictates of reason, not the light of moral virtues or acquired habits; but something from above, something infused, such as comes from *ἀποκάλυψις*, divine inspiration. What light else? No remedy, but buried we must be in everlasting night. Scriptures or revealed truth, the revelation of Jesus Christ, must save who-  
John vi. 44. ever shall be saved. “No man can come to me except the Father draw him;” no man lay hold upon the name of Jesus, or salvation, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. *Lumen divinæ revelationis*, salvation by the glorious light of divine revelation.

(vi.) There is an *ἀποκάλυψις* which yet wants an *ἀποκαλύπτειν*, a revelation that wants a revelation, such as S. John’s, a dark one. This, an *ἀποκάλυψις* with a *φῶς*, a lightsome one, such as revelations are when prophecies are fulfilled, of things past, not things to come. *Lumen revelationis revelatæ*, a light of salvation as clear as day.

It is time now to ask whither it is this light and revelation lead us? I shall answer you out of Zachary’s *Benedictus*.  
Luke i. 79. They “guide our feet into the way of peace.” “Send forth  
Psa. xliii. 3. thy light and thy truth, and they shall guide me,”—so David.  
Psa. lvi. 13. Guide me. Whither? “To walk before God in the light of the living.” One light to another, the light of grace to the light of glory. So *lumen dirigens*, or *salutare pertingens ad cælum*, salvation leading up to heaven.

Sum up all. Salvation to make us glad; a light, a light



to comfort, not a lightning to terrify. "The lightnings shone upon the ground, the earth trembled and was afraid:" no such, no lightning; nor S. Paul's light, a light to blind, but to give light; nor to play about the medium only, but to open and dispose the weak dim eye; not by a weak glimmering of nature, nor by a dusky twilight, but by a clear revelation; not an *ignis fatuus*, to misguide us out of the way, into bogs and quagmires, but to guide us to peace and to salvation. Lastly, not a light to any to see only that they are inexcusable, *ut essent inexcusabiles*, "that seeing they might see, and not understand;" a light to light them down to hell, that they might see the way down through those gloomy shades with more ease, horror, and confusion; (that is the event indeed sometimes, the end never;) but thither upward: from whence it comes to *σωτήριον* at the beginning of the text, to *δόξα* at the end. And can your thoughts prompt to your desires any greater benefits? can you wish more?

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4.][Acts ix.  
8.]

And yet, if we but consider in what plight the parties were upon whom the rays of this light shone, the salvation will seem more beneficial. They were in darkness; and could anything be more welcome to "them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death," than "a light to lighten?" That was the miserable case the Gentiles now were in: neither have the heathen knowledge of his laws. It was so in David's time, and so continued on till this day's rising Sun scattered the clouds. And now the case is altered: *Dedi te in lucem gentium*, fulfilled in his time; the Gentiles now enlightened.

[Ps. cvii.  
10.]

Enlightened, what is that? Those that are baptized are said to be "enlightened." So the Gentiles enlightened, will be in effect the Gentiles baptized. Baptized they may be with water, (and they had need of some such cleansing element, to wash their black, dark, sullied souls,) but there is another baptism—with the Holy Ghost and fire: fire, that is, light; so, to be baptized with light, will be with the Holy Ghost. It was heavy midnight through the world. Judea was the only Goshen, the land of light, till He that was born this day, breaking down the partition that divided Palestine from the nations, gave way for the light which before shone only there, to disperse its saving beams quite through the world. Then did they whose habitations were

Heb. x. 32.  
["illuminated." See  
Heb. vi. 4.]

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pitched in the region of death, whose dwellings in the suburbs of hell, see a marvellous great light spring up, that is *salus personis accommodata*, salvation fitted to the parties.

Fitted, and tempestively too; to them it never could have come so opportunely. The light of nature was almost quite extinguished; "a light to lighten" that again: the light of grace quite vanished; an *ἀποκάλυψις* for that: the understanding darkened by ignorance and error; the will darkened by hatred and malice; the most civilized Gentiles, so much degenerated from the beauty of moral virtues, (if we believe their own histories,) so strongly fettered with the bonds of that uncomfortable night, as if they "there lay exiled from the eternal providence," as the Wise Man phrases it, all in *umbra mortis*, next door to utter darkness;—when, behold, this "light" appears, this Sun rises with healing in his wings. Figured in the time of his birth, born when the days are shortest, most want of light; in the dead of night, when the nights are darkest; all to show *opportunitatem salutis*, the opportunity of this salvation.

[Wisd.  
xvii. 2.]

(2.) And is not *gloria* as fit for *Israelis*, as *lux* for *gentium*? Israel had a long time walked in light, and not a whit the better for it: that which must convert a Jew must be *gloria*, so bright a splendour that must rather command than invite the eye.

*Gloria*, "glory!" And indeed they needed it. So far now were they fallen below their former credit and honour in the world, so much beneath their ancient port and state, under the proud tyranny of a strange power, that nothing but glory could raise up their drooping heads.

I ask, though, why *gloria Israelis*? why so joined? Briefly thus: Of them he came according to the flesh; to them especially was he promised; amongst them he lived, preached, and wrought his miracles; in respect to him had all their glory, and all their prosperity was given them. In a word, "Salvation itself is of the Jew;" therefore their glory.

Yet, that *Israelis populi* should not lift up their crest too high, or despise those whose weaker light comes short of glorious beams, it is *gentium* first, then *Israelis*; "the Gentiles" in the first place here, "Israel" in the last. When

“the fulness of the Gentiles is come in,” then for Israel too, then *gloria in excelsis*. SERMON  
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And as *gentium* has the precedence of *Israelis*, so has “light” of “glory.” God works by degrees: first *lux*, then *gloria*—first grace, then glory. First he excites, then co-operates, then infuses, then assists, then crowns. It is a preposterous course to look for glory, where the light of grace never had operation. [Rom. xi.  
25.]

But is glory so much the Jews’ peculiar, that the Gentile never shall rise thither? It cannot be; yet so it seems at the first blush, *lumen gentium, gloria Israelis*—as if to each their part. Indeed, all have “light,” and light sufficient; but it displays not into “glory” to any but *populi Israelis tui*. When they are become *populi tui*, “thy people Israel,” then the light circles into rays—*sufficiens* into *efficax*, and they are saved. But if you mark it, it is not *Israelis*, but *tui Israelis*, not “Israel after the flesh,” but “the Israel of God;” there we first hear of *δόξα*, there “light” rises into “glory.” [1 Cor. x.  
18.]  
[Gal. vi.  
16.]

And good hope there is the Gentiles may prove *populi tui*, “thy people.” *Vocavi populum meum*; he said so whose *vocavi* is enough to make it so; and if *populi tui*, then *Israelis tui*, then they have prevailed with God; if “thy people,” then “thy Israel,” and so inheritors of this glory.

“Glory:” and glory so near the end of the text, makes me think of something without end; the highest pitch of this salvation, the perpetuity. Glory is a word proper to that life to come; false and adulterate glories they are that are below. “The glory of the people,” that is eternal. *Lumen* and *gloria* both meet in the text, and where they meet is eternity. It was the complaint of old, that their salvations, and saviours too, gave place at length to the necessity of nature, and were seen no more. Here is a Saviour never dies; that for himself;—and “is become the author of eternal salvation;” that for us. Heb. v. 9.

For, indeed, what is salvation—and salvation prepared for all, Jew and Gentile—and the light of salvation, without glory? Many lights there are that go out and set in darkness—that, when the matter, the wick, is worn away, die into dismal shades. If the “light” shines not into “glory,” we are but in a poor case still.

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¶ And so we should be, would not this salvation now prove to be a saviour, *salutare tuum* be *salvatorem nostrum*. We told you, in speaking of τὸ σωτήριόν σου, that it was God's peculiar. Now we tell you more: τὸ σωτήριον must be God. None can be salvation *in abstracto* but he; and none but he crown "light" with "glory." So you have the Divine nature of this Saviour, his Godhead; and yet there is another word in the text besides, for that. (1.) That is φῶς, light: and "God is light."

Ay, but sinned we had, and justice required that we should suffer. God cannot: he that must save us by suffering for us, must be man. He is so: *Viderunt oculi*, "my eyes have seen" it. No man has seen God at any time; therefore man he was. And "prepared,"—God cannot be so;—and prepared with a body, that is plain enough for *factus homo*, his human nature.

(2.) Now put both together, and you have the union of both natures; both united: εἶδον and σωτήριον, salvation seen; σωτήριον and ἡτοίμασας, salvation prepared; or *vidi* and *lucem*, light seen; or if you will, *vidi* and *gloriam*, his glory seen. "We saw the glory thereof, as of the only begotten Son of God." More: united into one person—τὸ σωτήριον, φῶς, δόξα; all singular, one single person in the Deity.

But there are three persons there: as φῶς a contract, the Divinity contracted unto man; so φῶς derived from φάος, light fetched from light; a person proceeding. "God of God, light of light," proceeding by way of generation: *lux lucem generat*, one light begets another. So the Second Person in the Trinity, the Son begotten of the Father.

But begotten a Son may be, and not coequal with his Father; a long time after, rather. Light, that is coequal with the fountain; as soon as a light body, so soon light to an instant. The Son coeternal with the Father, that is Micah v. 2. *egressus ejus ab æterno*, "His goings out from everlasting," his eternal generation.

He has another, his temporal generation, κατὰ πρόσωπον, "before the face of all people." Κατὰ is down; so down he came when he was prepared; that was, when born of the Virgin Mary.

There are three remarkable differences between this generation of his, and that of others, in the word light.

(i.) Light is all diffused at once, not by parts; now this, then another; and Christ's body was framed all at once, not *membratim*, one member after another, as other infants.

(ii.) Light enters through solid bodies, as glass, crystal, or the like, without either penetration of dimensions, or cracking the glass. So Christ from the virgin body of blessed Mary, without the least hurt to her virginity.

(iii.) The light shines in the midst of noisome vapours, yet itself is kept pure and sincere. In like manner, the Deity of Christ joined to the humanity, mixes not with its corruption, nor is defiled by it. Marcion need not fear the truth of his body, lest our corruption should pollute his Godhead, when the light itself confutes him, and convinces him, by the infinite distance between itself and the power of the Creator.

(3.) There wants but one thing more to complete the mystery of this wonderful Saviour, that is his offices: if we can find them too in the text, if we can bring them to *viderunt oculi*, to be seen there, and stray no further, we have lighted upon a happy text, τὸ σωτήριον indeed; a salvation and a Saviour to whom nothing can be added. Let us try.

He is a King: there is one of his offices; that from ἐθνῶν. Thence the prophet David seems to gather it: "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Sion." Psa. ii. 6. How proves he that? Why, within a verse in comes, "I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance."

He is a Priest, next, in *gloria Israelis*: there is another of his offices. The priesthood the glory of the Jew. "The glory is departed from Israel," cries out Phinehas' dying wife. Why? Because the "Ark of God was taken," and because of her father-in-law and her husband, they dead and gone. 1 Sam. iv. 21. What were they? The priests of the Lord. When the ark and priests are gone, the glory of Israel is departed too; they rise and fall together. A Priest, then, but not to Israel after the flesh alone, or after the order of Aaron, but *Israelis tui*, of the true Israel; more properly entitled to this glory, as being "a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck."

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Lastly, he is a Prophet in ἀποκάλυψιν : there is his third office, his prophetical ; the light of prophecy is the light of revelation. A prophet, then, he is, to reveal unto us Divine mysteries, the will of his heavenly Father ; “ to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins.”

Luke i. 77.

A complete Saviour now ; God and man ; God begotten the Son, coeternal with the Father, born into the world of a virgin, pure and immaculate ; took our nature without sin, without imperfection ; a King for the Gentiles, a Priest for Israel, a Prophet for both : a King to defend us, a Priest to purge us, a Prophet to instruct us.

This the Saviour, God the Son. He our salvation too. Yet comes not salvation from him alone : from all three Persons, the whole Trinity, that ; ἡτοιμασας, there is the Father, preparing, sending ; φῶς, from φάος, there is the Son, prepared, coming ; εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν—How is that but by the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit?—there is the Holy Ghost, opening and enlightening our eyes that we may see him. All three plain enough in the text, as in the day : *viderunt oculi*, your own eyes are witnesses.

Here is a sight indeed might well make old Simeon now desire to close up his eyes, to see no more ; *ne vitam hanc posthac aliqua contamineat ægritudine*, all objects henceforth would but defile his eyes.

¶¶¶. But what tell you me of Simeon’s theory—what of salvation, though never so great—what of *in conspectu omnium*, though never so general—what of light and glory, though never so excellent—if I may not back again to *viderunt oculi mei*—if I myself cannot perceive it—if it be so far distant off, that I cannot lay hold of it by mine own eyes of faith and hope—if I cannot see it to be mine, and with Gal. ii. 20. S. Paul apply it, “ Who loved me and gave himself for me ? ” *Omnium populorum* is too large ; all may, but all shall not, be saved. *Viderunt oculi mei* ; that is somewhat, when mine own eyes can fix and dwell upon it.

Nay, that is not full enough, if οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ, these very eyes that so long expected it, the eyes of my body, shall not be partakers of it. If they, when they are fallen into dust, shall lie for ever folded up in eternal darkness,—if eyes that

weep out themselves in devout tears with looking and expectation, shall not rise with these very bodies to that blessed vision,—what reward for all these sufferings? what recompence?

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I will tell you how to see all, and stay no longer, nor go no further. This is the day of salvation, salvation-day; and, if ever, to-day he will be seen. Cast but your eyes up to the holy table thither, your very sense may there almost see salvation, behold your Saviour. There it is, there he is in the blessed sacrament. There it is prepared for you: "A body hast thou prepared;" his body, flesh and blood, [Heb. x. 5.] prepared well nigh to be seen, to be tasted. "Oh taste and see how gracious the Lord is." Go up thither, and with old Simeon take him in your hands, take him yet nearer, into your bowels. "Take, eat:" you shall hear one say so by and by. But stay not there upon your sense, upon the outward element. Look upon him with your other eye, the eye of faith; let it be *viderunt oculi*, let it be both; let it be *viderunt mei*, the applying eye of a special faith. And, that you may be sure not to go away without beholding him, there is *lumen* in the text; and it would do well in your hands to search the dark corners of your hearts, to examine them. While our hearts are darkened with sins and errors we cannot see him; and if after strict examination we be not found in charity, we are yet *in tenebris*. S. John tells us, Do but love your brother: "he that loves his brother abideth in the light." The sum is, faith must be the eye, repentance and charity the light, by which you shall this day see your Saviour, and apprehend salvation: the three requisites, those, to a worthy communicant. So shall you there find light to guide you out of the darkness of sin and misery; glory to instate you in the adoption of the sons of God; salvation with glory—salvation here, glory hereafter.

Psa. xxxiv.  
8.

1 John ii.  
10.

And when you have satisfied your eyes and hearts with this heavenly sight, go, return home to your private closets, shut up your eyes, never set open those windows to the vanities of the world again; but with a holy scorn disdain these painted glories, and let a veil of forgetfulness pass over them.

For our *viderunt* must not end when the Eucharist is past;

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when we depart this sacred place. "I will take the cup of salvation," says the Psalmist: there it is: do that here. But [Psal. cxvi. 12.] "I will rejoice in thy salvation;" do so, both here and at home. *Et exultabo*; and let me see you do so. Let not your joy be stifled in your narrow bosoms, but break out into expression, into your lips, into your hands; not in idle sports, excess of diet, or vain pomp of apparel—not that joy, the joy of the world, but the joy of the Holy Ghost.

It is salvation that you have heard and seen, and are yet to see to-day: what is our duty now? If it be salvation, let us "work it out with fear and trembling." It is salvation to be "seen," some eminent work: let us then confess [Phil. ii. 12.] "We have seen strange things to-day." A most certain sure salvation it is: let not a sacrilegious, doubtful thought cast a mist upon it. It is "prepared;" let us accept it;—prepared for all; let us thank God for so fair a compass, and not uncharitably exclude ourselves or others. God has enlarged the bowels of his mercy; let us not straiten them. It is "a light;" let us arise and walk after it. It is a "glory;" let us admire and adore it.

Was our Saviour "seen?" so should we be every day in the congregation. Was he "prepared" to-day? let us be always [Ephes. vi. 15.] shod with the "preparation of the gospel of peace." Does he "enlighten" us? Oh let us never extinguish or hide that light, till this light be swallowed up by the light of the Lamb; till this "dayspring from on high" prove midday; till *gentium* and *Israelis* be friendly united in τὸ σωτήριον, and no darkness to distinguish them, no difference between light and glory; till the beginning and end of the text meet together in the circle of eternity; till *viderunt oculi* meet with *gloriam*; till our eyes may behold that light which is inaccessible, that light and glory which know no other limits but infinite, nor measure but eternity.

To which He bring us, who this day put off his glory to put on salvation, that by his salvation we might at length lift up our heads in glory, whither he is again ascended, and now sits together with his Father and the Holy Ghost. To which Three Persons and One God be given all praise, and power, and thanks, and honour, and salvation, and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.



## A SERMON

ON

### S. STEPHEN'S DAY.

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ACTS vii. 55, 56.

*But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.*

YESTERDAY'S Child is to-day, you see, become a man. He that yesterday could neither stand nor go, knew not the right hand from the left, lay helpless as it were in the bosom of his mother, is to-day presented to us standing at the right hand of God in the glory of the Father: he whom earth yesterday entertained so poorly and obscurely, heaven here this day openly glories in. Now the horn of our salvation is raised up indeed; the Church thus showing us plainly to-day, what yesterday we could not see for the rags and stable,—that it was not a mere silly creature, a poor child, or man only, that came to visit us, but the Lord of Glory; so making him some recompence, as we may say, to-day, for the poor case she showed him in yesterday.

But that is not the business. Yesterday was Christ's birthday, to-day S. Stephen's; for *natalitia martyrum*, the birthdays of the martyrs, were their death-days called: they then first said to be born, when they were born to execution. A day placed here so near to Christ's, that we

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might see as clear as day, how dear and near the martyrs are to him: they lie even in his bosom; the first visit he makes after his own death was to them, to encourage them to theirs; the first appearance of him in heaven after his return up, was to take one of them thither.

And yet this is not all. Christ's birth and the martyr's death are set so near, to intimate how near death and persecution are to Christ's disciples, how close they often follow the faith of Christ; so thereby to arm us against the fear of any thing that shall betide us, even death itself, seeing it places us so near him, seeing there are so fine visions in it and before it, so fair glories after it, as S. Stephen's here will tell you.

And if I add that death is a good memento at a feast, a good way to keep us within our bounds in the days of mirth and jollity, of what sort soever, it may pass for somewhat like a reason why S. Stephen's death is thus served in so soon at the first course, as the second dish of our Christmas-feast.

Nor is it, for all that, any disturbance to Christmas joys. The glorious prospect of S. Stephen's martyrdom, which gives us here the opening of heaven, and the appearance then of God's glory, and of Christ in glory, may go instead of those costly masques of imagined heavens, and designed gods and goddesses, which have been often presented in former times to solemnize the feast. We may see in that infinitely far more ravishing and pleasing sights than these, which all the rarity of invention and vast charges could ever show us. Here is enough in the text to make us dance and leap for joy, as if we would leap into the arms of Him in heaven, who stands there as it were ready to receive us, as he was to-day presented to S. Stephen.

I may now, I hope, both to season and exalt our Christmas-feast, bring in S. Stephen's story, that part of it especially which I have chosen, so full of Christ, so full of glad and joyful sights and objects, that it must needs add, instead of diminishing, our joy and gladness.

And yet if I season it a little now and then with the mention of death, it will do no hurt. I must do so, that you may not forget S. Stephen's martyrdom in the midst of the

contemplation of the glory that preceded it. That must not be, for the day is appointed to remember it. And though we shall not designedly come so far to decipher it, having no more than the *præludium* of his death before us, we will not so far forget it but that we will take it into the division of the text; in which we shall consider these four particulars.

I. His accommodation to his death. His "being full of the Holy Ghost;" that fitted and disposed him to it.

II. His preparation for it. He "looked up stedfastly into heaven;" so that he prepared himself for it.

III. His confirmation to it. He "saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God;" that encouraged and confirmed him in it.

IV. His profession at it. "Behold," said he, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God:" in those words he professed his faith, and proclaimed his vision of it.

By this manner of considering it, we shall do S. Stephen right, and Christmas no wrong; remember S. Stephen's martyrdom, and yet not forget Christ's being at it; celebrate S. Stephen's memory, and yet no way omit Christ's. He being here to be looked on as encourager of S. Stephen's martyrdom, as much as S. Stephen for his professor and martyr. By all together we shall fully understand the requisites of a martyr—what is required to make one such; to be "full of the Holy Ghost;" to "look up stedfastly into heaven," to look upon Christ as there, and as boldly to profess it; to be full of grace and spirit, full of piety and devotion, full of faith and hope, full of courage and resolution; all proportionably requisite to the spiritual martyrdom of dying to the world, and leaving all for Christ; requisite too, all of them in some measure, to die well at any time—the very sum of the text—to be learned hence and practised by us. If I add, all requisite to keep Christmas, too, as it should be kept, with grace and devotion, with faith and courage also against all that shall oppose it—that our Christmas business be to be filled with the Spirit, and not with meats and drinks—to look up to heaven, to look up to Jesus, and never to be afraid or ashamed to profess it,—there is

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nothing then in the text to make it the least unseasonable. I go on, therefore, to handle it part by part. The first is S. Stephen's accommodation to his martyrdom, how he stands fitted for it.

I. And surely he could not be better; "full of the Holy Ghost." Ghost is spirit; and what more necessary to a martyr than a spirit? The dreaming, sluggish temper is not fit to make a martyr: he must have spirit, that dares look death soberly in the face.

Yet every spirit, neither, will not make a martyr; there are mad spirits in the world (they call them brave ones, though I know not why,) that rush headily upon the points of swords and rapiers: yet, bring these gallant fellows to a scaffold or a gibbet, the common reward of their foolish rashness which they misreckoned valour, and you shall see how sheepishly they die, how distractedly they look, how without spirit. The spirit that will bear out a shameful or painful death without change of countenance or inward horror, must be holy. Where the spirit is holy, the conscience pure, the soul clean, the man dies with life and spirit in his looks, as if he were either going to his bed, or to a better place. It is a holy life that fits men to be martyrs.

But spirit, and a holy spirit, is not enough to make a martyr, neither; though the martyr's spirit must be a holy one, yet, to dispose for martyrdom, the Holy Spirit must come himself with a peculiar power, send an impulse and motion into the soul and spirit that shall even drive it to the stake.

And every degree of power will not do it; it must be a full gale of holy wind that can cool the fiery furnace into a pleasing walk, that can make death and torments seem soft and easy. "Full of the Holy Ghost" it is that Stephen is said to be, ere we hear him promoted to the glory of a martyr. The spirit of holiness will make a man die holily, and the Holy Spirit make him die comfortably; but the fulness of him is required to make him die courageously, without fear of death or torment, cruelty or rage.

By this you may now guess at martyrs, who they are:—

(1) not they that die for their folly and their humour; not they (2) that die without holiness; not every one (3) that dies, as we say, with valour and spirit; not they that die upon the motion of any spirit but the Holy One, that one Holy Spirit; not they that die in schism and faction against the unity of this Holy Spirit, the peace of his holy Church: none of these die martyrs; die soldiers, or valiant heathen, or men of spirit, they may, but men of the Holy Spirit, martyrs, they die not. They only die such that have lived holily; die in a holy cause, in a holy faith, and in the peace of Holy Church, as in the faith of one Holy Spirit, ruling and directing it into unity; upon good ground and warrant, and a strong impulsions so to do, without seeking for, or voluntarily and unnecessarily thrusting themselves into the mouth of death.

And yet there are strange impulses, I must tell you, of the spirit of martyrdom, which ordinary souls or common pieties cannot understand. Only we must know that the spirit of martyrdom is the spirit of love, the very height of love to God; which how that can consist with the spirit of schism, whereby we break the unity of brethren—or how a man can so highly love God as to die for him, and hate His spouse the Church, or his brethren—is inimaginable. Some other engines there may be, as vain-glory, an obstinate humour of seeming constant to a false principle, an ignorant and self-willed zeal, which may sometimes draw a man to die; but if the fulness of peace and charity does not appear, there is no fulness of the Holy Ghost, and they make themselves and their deaths but martyrs, that is, witnesses, of their own folly. He that pretends to be a martyr, must have more than a pretence to the spirit of charity.

II. And not to charity only, but to devotion too. He must prepare himself for it, stedfastly look up to heaven, nay, into heaven too; fill his spirit with divine and heavenly provision for it, with S. Stephen here.

Who (1) looks up to heaven as to his country whither he was a-going. He longs earnestly to be there. His soul, with holy David's, "has a desire and longing to enter" thither. [Psal. lxxxiv. 2.] He that looks but seriously up to heaven, and beholds that glorious building, those starry spangles, those azure curtains,

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those lustrous bodies of the sun and moon, that vast and splendid circumference of these glistening dwellings, cannot but thirst vehemently to be there; soul and flesh thirst for it. Oh, how brave a place is heaven! how brave even but to look on! But if he can look, as here it seems S. Stephen did, into heaven too, and contemplate the happy choirs of blessed saints and angels, the ineffable beauty of those inward courts, the ravishing melody and music they make, the quiet, peace, and happiness, that pleasure, joy, and fullness of satisfaction and contentment there, the majestic presence and blessed sight of God himself, with all the storehouses of blessedness and glory full about him—his very soul will be even ready to start with violence out of his body to fly up thither.

He that looks thus stedfastly, looks into heaven, cannot now but look askew upon the earth: to look up into heaven, is (2) to despise and trample upon all things under it. He is not likely to be a martyr that looks downward, that values anything below. Nay, he dies his natural death but unwillingly and untowardly, whose eyes, or heart, or senses, are taken up with the things about him. Even to die cheerfully, though in a bed of roses, one must not have his mind upon them. He so looks upon all worldly interests as dust and chaff, who looks up stedfastly into heaven; eyes all things by the by, who eyes that well. The covetous worldling, the voluptuous gallant, the gaudy butterflies of fashion, will never make you martyrs; they are wholly fixed in the contemplation of their gold, their mistresses, their pleasures, or their fashions. He scorns to look at these, whose eyes are upon heaven.

Yet to scorn these, but especially to fit us against a tempest or a storm of stones, there is (3) a third looking up to heaven, in prayer and supplication. It is not by our own strength or power that we can wade through streams of blood, or sing in flames; we had need of assistance from above; and he that looks up to heaven seems so to beg it. It was no doubt the spirit of devotion that so fixed his sight; he saw what was like to fall below, he provides against it from above; looks to that great Corner-stone to arm him against those which were now ready to shower upon

his head. It is impossible, without our prayers, and some aid thence, to endure one petty pebble.

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But, to make it a complete martyrdom, we must not look up only for our own interests; for we are (4) to look up for our very enemies, and beg Heaven's pardon for them. He that dies not in charity, dies not a Christian; but he that dies not heart, and hand, and eyes, and all complete in it, cannot die a martyr. Here we find S. Stephen lifting up his eyes to set himself to prayer; it is but two verses or three after, that we hear his prayer, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!" This was one thing, it seems, he looked up so stedfastly to heaven for. A good lesson, and fit for the occasion, so to pass by the injuries of our greatest enemies as if we did not see them, as if we had something else to look after than such petty contrasts, as if we despised all worldly enmities as well as affections, minded nothing but heaven, and Him that S. Stephen saw standing there.

All these ways we are to-day to learn to look up to heaven: as (1) to our hoped-for country; as (2) from things that hinder us too long from coming to it; as (3) for aid and help to bring us thither; as (4) for mercy and pardon thence to ourselves and enemies, that we may all one day meet together there. The posture itself is natural. It is natural for men in misery to look up to heaven; nay, the very insensible creature when it complains—the cow when it lows, the dog when he howls—casts up its head, according to its proportion, after its fashion, as if it naturally craved some comfort thence. It is the general practice of saints and holy persons. "Lift up your eyes," says the Prophet. "I will lift up my eyes," says holy David. And distressed Susanna lifts up her eyes, and looks up towards heaven. Nay, Christ himself, sighing, or praying, or sometimes working miracles, looks up to heaven, who yet carried heaven about him; to teach us in all distresses to look up thither, in all our actions to fetch assistance thence. If we had those thoughts of heaven we should, I know how little of the eye the earth should have. *Ubi amor, ibi oculus*; where the love is, there is the eye. We may easily guess what we love best, by our looks: if heaven be it, our eyes are there; if any thing else, our eyes are there. It is easy then

Isa. xl. 26.

Psa. cxxi. 1.

Hist. Sus.

ver. 35.

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to tell you S. Stephen's longings, where his thoughts are fixed, when we are told he so "stedfastly looked up to heaven."

And indeed it is not so much the looking up to heaven, as the stedfast and attentive doing it, that fits us to die for Christ. It is *ἀρετίστας*, a kind of stretching or straining the eyesight, to look inquisitively into the object. To look carelessly or perfunctorily into heaven itself, to do it in a fit, to be godly and pious now and then, or by starts and girds, will not serve turn; to mind seriously what we are about, that is the only piety will carry it. *Plus valet hora fervens quam mensis tepens*. One hour, one half-hour, spent with a warm attention at our prayers, is worth a month, a year, an age, of our cold devotions. "It is good to be zealous," says S. Paul, somewhat hot and vehement, "in a good matter."

[Gal. iv.  
15.]

And it had need be a stedfast and attentive devotion, that can hold out with this "but." To stand praying or looking up to heaven, when our enemies are gnashing their teeth upon us, and come running headlong on us; to have no regard to their rushing fury, nor interrupt our prayers, nor omit any ceremony of them neither, for all their savage malice, now pressing fiercely on us, but look up stedfastly still, not quich [*i. e.* stir] aside,—this looks, surely, like a martyr. The little boy that held Alexander the candle, whilst he was sacrificing to his gods, so long that the wick burnt into his finger, and yet neither cried nor shrank at it, lest he should disturb his lord's devotions, will find few fellows among Christians to pattern him in the exercise of their strictest pieties. Let but a leaf stir, a wind breathe, a fly buzz, the very light but dwindle, any thing move or shake,—and our poor religion, alas! is put off the hinge; it is well if it be not at an end too. What would it do if danger and death were at our heels, as here it was? Oh, this attentive, stedfast fastening the soul upon the business of heaven, were a rare piety if we could compass it. This glorious martyr has showed us an example: the lesson is, that we should practise it.

But all this is no wonder, seeing he was "full of the Holy Ghost." That Almighty Spirit is able to blow away all diversions, able to turn the shower of stones into the soft-



ness and drift of snow, able to make all the torments of death fall light and easy. If we can get our souls filled once with that, we need fear nothing; nothing will distract our thoughts, or draw our eyes from heaven.

III. Then it will be no wonder neither to see next "the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God."

I called this point S. Stephen's confirmation, or his encouragement to his death. He that once comes to have a sight of God and Christ—of God's glory, and Christ at the right hand of it—of either the one or the other, much more of both—cannot want strength to die, be the death of what kind it will. It was a gallant speech of Luther, when he was dissuaded from appearing before the Council, (of Worms I think it was,) that he would go thither, though all the tiles of the houses were so many devils. Had every stone that was cast at the martyr Stephen been a devil, he would not after this vision have been afraid. "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom then should I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life: of whom then shall I be afraid?" says David, and yet he saw nothing like this sight. God's presence is enough, whether it be seen by the eye of sense or by the eye of faith, to keep us stedfast, to make death hide its head for fear, while we stand triumphing over it.

I conceive it impertinent to make it a business to inquire too solicitously what this glory was, and how S. Stephen saw it. That it was some glorious sight, some high resplendent light or brightness, such as God used to appear in, (as Exod. xxiv. 17, Numb. xiv. 10, 1 Kings viii. 10,) to Moses and his prophets, there called his glory, or some apparition of angels in shining garments winging about a throne of glory, visibly appearing to the eye of the martyr Stephen, is the probablest to conceive; and the shining of "his face, as if it had been the face of an angel," is an evidence it was a visible appearance.

But no doubt his understanding saw further than his eye into heaven; that looked and saw a glory there, of which the sense, though elevated to his height, cannot be capable. *Divinum lumen*,<sup>9</sup> says S. Gregory Nyssen, the inaccessible

<sup>9</sup> [Στέφανος δὲ πλήρης ὦν Πνεύματος ἁγίου εἶδε τὴν δόξαν τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὸν μονογενῆ τοῦ Θεοῦ Υἱόν. οὐ γὰρ ἔστι, καθὼς φησιν ὁ προφήτης, τὸ φῶς ὁφθῆναι, μὴ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ κατοράμενον· ἐν γὰρ τῷ φωτὶ σου, φησιν, ὁψόμεθα φῶς.—

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light. *Spem in re*,<sup>r</sup> says S. Hilary, his hope already. *Deum et Divinitatem*, says S. Austin, God and the Godhead. *Imo Trinitatem*, and that *facie revelata*, says he again, the blessed Trinity unveiled. *Futura vite gaudia*,<sup>s</sup> says Bede, the joys of the other life. These all he saw, say they; and we shall make no scruple to say, in spirit so he did, as far as human nature is capable in this condition.

But, without question, Christ he saw in his body standing amidst that glory: the words are plain for that, and that alone were enough to put courage into the most coward heart.

To see his faith confirmed by sight, and Christ's glory with the Father visibly appear,—to see, whom he had trusted, and for whom he had laboured and disputed, now with his own eyes in glory,—must needs make him kiss the hands that would now send him so soon to him.

To see him (2) “standing at the right hand of God,” as if he were risen from his sitting there, to behold the sufferings and courage of his martyr that stood below, now made a spectacle to Christ and all his angels; that is an honour he may well glory in.

To see him (3) standing amidst his hosts, as if he were coming down to help him; that adds more spirit still.

To see him (4) “standing at the right hand of God,” as if he suffered with him, and was therefore pleading for him, as friends and advocates used to do with the accused party at the bar; this infuses yet a greater confidence, that, notwithstanding all his sins or weaknesses, he shall now easily prevail.

To see him (5) standing as a priest to offer him up a sweet-smelling sacrifice to his Father, that still increases it.

To see him, lastly, standing like a judge of masteries at

S. Greg. Nysseni Encomium in S. Stephan. Opera, tom. iii. pp. 363, 364. ed. Paris. 1633.]

<sup>r</sup> [Non hunc frangit seculi terror, neque conspirantium adversus se odia perturbant. Spes enim quæ in Deo est, terrores humanorum non pertimescet odiorum.—D. Hilarius in Psal. lv. (lvi. 4. Heb.) Opera, p. 715. ed. Paris. 1631. This is the nearest that I can discover to the reference in the text in the works of S. Hilary.—Ed.]

<sup>s</sup> [I cannot verify the reference to S. Augustine: nor yet to Ven. Bede, unless the following from his Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles be the passage meant: “Ad confortandam ergo B. Martyris patientiam, cœlestis regni janua panditur: et ne innoxius homo lapidatus titubet in terra, Deus homo crucifixus apparet coronatus in cœlo.”—Ven. Bedæ Opera, tom. v. p. 641. ed. Col. Agripp. 1612.—Ed.]

the end of the race or goal, to crown him with a crown of glory, cannot but make him think long for the death that shall bring him to it.

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All these ways Christ may be brought in here as standing for us. In the Creed we profess him sitting, thereby acknowledging his place in heaven, and his right to be our Judge: yet when his saints and servants have need of him, he stands up to see what it is they want, how valiantly they behave themselves; he stands up to show them who it is they trust; he stands up to help and aid them; he stands up to plead, and even suffer with them; he stands up to present them to his Father; he stands up to reward them with the garlands of glory.

Sometimes it is (oftener it has been when the beginning of Christianity needed it at first), that by some visible comforts and discoveries he shows himself to the dying saint. Often it is that the soul ready to depart feels some sensible joys and ravishments to uphold its failing spirits. But he is never wanting with inward assistances and refreshments to those who suffer for him. We must not look, all of us, nor confessors nor martyrs now-a-days, to see visions and revelations with S. Stephen; we are set in a fixed way, where reason and religion, so long proved and practised, is able to give us comfort in the saddest distresses. God does not usually confirm our reason by our sense in the revelation of himself, or what he expects from us. It may be because the devil, grown cunning now by so many centuries of years, has taken up of late (as he is God's ape) a way to fetch off souls by some sensible delusions from the faith; for he can transform himself (nay, does so, says the Apostle) "into an angel of light." For this, it may be, God sends us now "to the word and to the testimony," and leaves us to reason, tradition, and example of so many ages, to expound it. However, this is sufficient, that neither God nor Christ will leave us wholly comfortless, but will surely stand by us when we need, and supply us as there is.

[2 Cor. xi.  
14.]  
[Isa. viii.  
20.]

IV. Indeed, he cannot look for such a profession upon it as we find here from S. Stephen; yet to a stedfast profession of our faith, those assistances he still allows us are sufficient. We will look a little upon Stephen's, though.

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And, (1) first, here is a kind of profession of the Blessed Trinity; the Holy Ghost here at the beginning of the first verse of the text, God in the middle, and Jesus at the end.

Here is (2) a profession of Christ's manhood, whilst he calls him the Son of man.

Here is (3) a profession of his faith in all of them, by his so loud proclaiming.

Here is (4) a profession of God's ready help, Christ's ready assistance to his saints in trouble.

Here is (5) a profession of God's owning the Christian's cause, and gloriously standing up to confirm and maintain.

Here is (6) a profession of Christ's opening heaven to all believers; that heaven is always open to us, if we could see it; that God's glory shines upon us to show us the way thither; that Christ stands there to make our way, to guide us thither.

Here, lastly, is a profession of his confidence and resolution; that though his enemies stand pressing now about him, and death before him, he will not eat his words, will not renounce his faith, will not slip the collar, will not deny anything of what he has said or done, disclaim anything that he believed, desert Him whom he had trusted, but preach him to his death, and die upon it.

And now, the heavens being open, it is good to make what haste we can to enter it. Moneta, a famous doctor of Bononia, upon the hearing these words, "Behold, I see the heavens open," preached soberly upon, that they would be quickly shut if men made no more haste to enter, betook himself presently, says his story, to a religious order. I say nothing to that particular, but yet must tell you, the words are strong enough, if we would look as stedfastly into them as S. Stephen did into heaven, to persuade to a religious life. Heaven will not always be open to us. *Patet atri janua ditis*; it is hell that stands continually wide open. We are told by Christ himself, that the Bridegroom comes, and the doors are shut; there will be a time, if we continue in sin and negligence, when heaven itself, nay Christ himself, will not let us in. Take we then our time whilst Christ stands at the door. Heaven has this day been strangely open to us, and Christ stood there in a glorious manner; though our eyes did not,

our faiths, I hope, did see him there. It is good, taking this opportunity to get in ; we know not whether we shall live to the next opening. Prepare we then ourselves with S. Stephen here, by steadfast looking upward into heaven, by disdaining and scorning all things below, by vehement, earnest longings after things above, by setting ourselves attentively and constantly to our devotions and our prayers, by holy charity, and praying for friends and enemies, by constant resolutions to live and die to Christ, by a bold profession of our faith and continuance in it, by making it our Christmas work, our holiday business, our festival delight. And then, though I cannot promise you visions here, while we live below, I dare promise you the blessed vision hereafter above, where we shall see " Jesus standing at the right hand of God," and there stand round about him, with this blessed martyr Stephen, and all his saints and martyrs, in the glory of God for evermore.

## A SERMON

ON

### INNOCENTS' DAY.

S. MATTHEW ii. 16.

*Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.*

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THE text needs no apology. It is for the day. The day is that of the poor martyred innocents, and the text the story of it. Yet, what does day, or story, here to-day? How does the relation of one of the saddest murders that the sun ever saw, suit with the news of the gladdest joy that day ever brought forth? How do the cries and screeches of slaughtered infants keep time or tune with the songs and hymns of angels?—an hellish crew of murderers to-day, agree with the heavenly host we heard of three days since? What does Herod so near Christ, or Childermas in Christmas? Do not both day and story want an apology, though the text does not?

Neither of them; they come well now to season our mirth and jollities, that they run not out too lavishly. For we find too oft there are sad days in Christmas too; days wherein we play the Herods, and kill our children and ourselves by disorders and excesses, for want of some such serious thoughts: story and day stand fitly here to mind us of it.

But besides, they are well placed to teach us that we must not look only for gaudy days by Christ. He says himself, he came "to send a sword;" sent it to-day amongst the little ones: sends sword and fire too, sometimes, amongst the great ones, in the midst of all their pleasure; and we must expect it commonly, the closer we come to him. Nor Christianity nor innocence can excuse us. We therefore not to think it strange when it so falls out; reckon it rather a Christmas business, the matter of our rejoicing, to suffer with these infants for Christ, though we know not why, no more than they; never to think much to lose our children or ourselves for him at any time, and so bring them up that they may learn to think so too. These meditations, I hope, are not unseasonable, no, not in Christmas.

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Matt. x. 34.

Yet, for all that, I ask again, Is it possible that there should be such a thing in truth—such a wantonness in cruelty as to kill so many thousand children so barbarously in a time of peace? is it probable that men should raise up fears and jealousies of their own, and make such innocent lambs pay for it? It is Gospel, you see, so true as that. Such a thing there was in the days of Herod; and we have seen so much like it in our own, that we may the easier believe it: children and innocents slain and undone, for nothing but because some men, with Herod here, thought they were mocked when disappointed of their projects—when *Christus Domini*, the Lord's Christ or Anointed, had escaped them, and the wise men came not in to hinder it: so they grew exceeding wroth upon it, and make poor Bethlehem and Rachel, all of us, still rue sorely for it.

Well then, the text being so true in itself—so pat to the time, and not disagreeable to the times of late—so profitable besides, we will now go on with it, by God's blessing, and see what we can make of it. It is the martyrdom, I told you (and I have the word from S. Cyprian and S. Austin),<sup>t</sup> of a company of little innocent babes. And we have in it these particulars:—

- I. Their persecutor or murderer, Herod.
- II. The occasion of their martyrdom, persecution, or

<sup>t</sup> [S. Cyprian. Epist. lviii. 6. S. August. De libero Arbitrio, lib. iii. cap. 23.]

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murder: his thinking himself mocked. "When he saw he was mocked of the wise men," &c.

III. The cause of it. "Wroth" he was, "exceeding wroth," infinitely angry to be disappointed; that is the reason he fell upon them.

IV. The little martyrs themselves. "All the children that were in Bethlehem, and all that were in the coasts" about.

V. Their martyrdom. Slain they were; men were sent out to kill them. He "sent forth and slew" them.

VI. The extent and exactness of the cruelty observed in it. All the children "from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men."

These are the parts that make up the history. And if in the pursuing it I show you a mystery now and then—show you there are more Herods and more martyred children than we see in the letter of the text—that the story is acted over still every day by ourselves, you will be content, I hope, to take it for an application that brings all home. And it will not do amiss even now at Christmas to mind us of it, that however we may not act it then, of all times else; never pollute our mirth with sinning against ourselves or others in it, or defile our joys with the cries of the oppressed; never bring Herod so near Christ again; never make a Childermas of Christmas.

I. To go on yet in the order of the text, we begin with the persecutor or murderer of the innocents, whose day it is; and that, here we find, was Herod.

Indeed, there were under officers that did the deed, for some such are intimated when it is said he "sent;" and some such there will be always to do the drudgeries of sin for them that will employ them: but the wickedness yet is laid at the contrivers' doors: that is insinuated when the ἀπέκτευε,<sup>u</sup> notwithstanding, is given to Herod by and by; he did but "send," and yet he "slew" them, says the text. Let who will be the executioner, the plotter or commander is the murderer; and God will brand him for it, be he never so cunning, never so great. Herod, with all his men of war, shall not escape it.

<sup>u</sup> [The word used in the text is ἀνεῖλε.]



1. But may we know what this Herod was? An Idumean first, he was; you may know it by his hands, red and rough. No such hands, I hope, in Israel, or in the dwellings of Jacob. They are strangers to that, at least, that can be so cruel; and it had been happy for the sheep, happy for us of late, if we had not known the voice of strangers, men of another country, to help on our ruin, but kept close to our own shepherds, as Christ tells us his own sheep do.

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John x. 3.5.

2. Herod was a man but of an obscure and private family. It is such commonly that build up their greatness upon blood and ruin; the noble and generous soul abhors it.

3. Yet, thirdly, this private and mean condition his subtlety and cunning had now advanced into a throne; the less wonder still that he should be so savage. Tyrants and usurpers are so ever, jealous and suspicious, fierce and bloody. They are they that dye their purples in the gore of innocents, whilst kings even undo themselves with their own mercies. It is the stepmother that would have the child divided; such only that are for *Divide et impera*, that are for divisions to maintain their interest or their plea. The true mother had rather part with her child and all she hath, than see it murdered; but the ambitious design of power and greatness, the driving on an advantageous interest, the keeping an unjust possession, are things that slay all before them; nor the tears of mothers, nor the cries of infants, nor the relations of nature, nor the obligations of friendship, nor the charms of innocence, can do any thing against those furies. Ahab, and Jezebel, and Zimri, and Jehu, and Herod, are sufficient witnesses how cheap the heads of all sorts are, that seem but to stand in the way of their designments; how easily judges and judicatories are packed against them, notwithstanding reason and law stand whole for them.

[1 Kings  
iii. 26.]

4. From such a one as I have hitherto presented Herod, we can perhaps look for no other. But Herod, I must tell you, was a great pretender to religion, a high dissembler of zeal and piety throughout; none more zealous and importunate to know Christ and go and worship him, than he. And is he the persecutor? Yes, he. It is not all religion, my brethren, that is called so; nor are all for Christ that

Matt. ii. 8.

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Matt. xxiii.  
15.

Rev. xii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Tim. iii.  
1—4.

pretend for him. The greatest zealots have proved often the greatest persecutors. And the proselyte, either to a false religion, or to the pretence only of a true, (and one of these was Herod,) is commonly “twofold more the child of hell” than he that made him. We cannot, you see by Herod, trust all pretenders. There are some that varnish over their very murders with that pretext of religion; and whilst they pour out the blood of innocents upon their scaffolds, dare say they sacrifice at the altar of the God of justice. And had we not seen and felt it too from some huge saints and zealots, I should have spared the note. But you see, ere we were aware, we have discovered mysteries from the text, and showed you, as I intimated I should, other Herods there besides this one. I am afraid I shall show you more anon. In the interim, shall I give you Herod’s character out of Chrysologus,<sup>x</sup> to conclude the point? *Magister mali, minister doli, iræ artifex, &c.*, says he. He was a master of mischief, a minister of deceit, an artist in cruelty, an inventor of wickedness, a contriver of villany, a destroyer of religion, an enemy of nature, an oppressor of innocence; bad to all, worse to his own, worst to himself; from whom Jesus fled, not so much that he might escape him, as that he might not see him; a fiery dragon by his name, *Herodes draco ignitus*,<sup>y</sup> (so Arias Montanus etymologizes it from the Syriac,) a dragon that devours all like fires before him, spared not his own if they came but in his way; near a kin, sure, to the dragon in the Revelation, that was “wroth with the woman and her seed,” did all he could to destroy it—even the promised Seed too, could he have found him. The fittest tempered man in the world this, to begin the persecution of the Church, and by whom we may learn what sort of persons they are who are still raising or continuing it; mushrooms of a sudden growth, men newly raised, men “covetous” and ambitious, “proud and disobedient,” “traitorous and heady; men without natural affection,” brethren removed, as I may say, as the Edomites from the Israelites; great pretenders, though, to godliness and the power of it, yet without it. Such make the “perilous times” the Apostle speaks of, or the

<sup>x</sup> [D. Petri Chrysologi Ravennatis Archiepiscopi Serm. clii. p. 566, ed. Bonon. 1643.]

<sup>y</sup> [Ben. Ariæ Montani Interpretatio Nominum Heb. Chald. et Græc. fol. Antverp. 1572. voc. *Herodes*.]

times perilous both to men and children. And now let us see what occasion they take to do it. Herod's here was his conceiting himself "mocked by the wise men." SERMON  
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II. We cannot help men's conceits, though they help on our ruins; nor cure a vain jealousy, though death attend it at the heels. We perish oftentimes by mere mistakes. The wise men mocked not Herod, he only thought so; nor wise nor good men use kings or princes so, though they be Herods, as bad as can be. God calls them another way, and he takes it for an affront, that they paid not him the compliment of a visit ere they returned. A hard case, (1) that the attendance upon a command of God's should prove so prejudicial, that obedience should be a crime; but we can look for no other, where a Herod is the interpreter of the action.

And yet (2) it is harder, a harder case, to be undone for another man's error or omission. It was so here: the wise men offend—at least are thought so—and the children pay for it beyond an imagination. *Delirant reges plectuntur Achivi.* The wise men return another way; Herod fancies himself neglected by it; and the innocent babes, who were concerned in neither of them, are punished for the one's omission and the other's mistake.

Nay, and (3) it seems God's own contrivement too. And does the God of justice so little regard innocent blood, as thus to draw it on by the way of a particular providence we cannot understand the reason of? It is enough God does. We have nought to do but to submit, and think that best that God does, be it never so hard. Our own wisdom will mock the wisest of us, more than Herod was by the wise men, if we pry narrower.

For the only business we can see clearly here, is, how small a thing men make an occasion to commit a villany. "How great a matter does a little fire kindle!" says James iii. 5. S. James. Lord! how easily do men raise themselves into an anger; and in their anger, fall presently upon the next comes near them—dig down a wall, too, to come at them! Need we had, with S. Paul, to "cut off occasion from them 2 Cor. xi. 12. that desire occasion," do what we can to do it; for there are those that will take it, even concerning the law of our God, Dan. vi. 4.

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Daniel's adversaries served him, rather than want an opportunity to do mischief.

Indeed, I know a mock, an affront, a bitter jest, a cutting word, strikes deep, wounds sore; and I could wish men would be wariet in that point than sometimes we see them; kingdoms and churches have been shattered by it. But there are mocks as well as scandals that are taken and not given: these I know not how to cure; and to fence, less.

Men think sometimes they are mocked, when disappointed of a sin, of a project of doing mischief. Potiphar's wife, when Joseph would not comply with her lewd desires, she was mocked, forsooth! The Hebrew servant "came in to mock" her, when he would not come in to sin with her; nay, and her husband must bear the blame—as if he had done it, brought him to that purpose. There, being disappointed of a sin, was being mocked.

Gen.  
xxxix. 14.

Judg. xvi.  
10, 13, 15.

Dalilah, forsooth, she is "mocked" too, she says, because Samson will not discover where his great strength lay, that she might rob him of it, and destroy him by it. There, being disappointed of doing mischief, was being mocked.

Num.  
xxii. 29.

Again, Balaam, he is "mocked" by the poor ass; smites her with his staff, and tells her so, when she falls down and would go no further; hindering thereby the project he was going about, of enriching himself with "the wages of unrighteousness." There, the disappointment of a rich or gainful project, is a being mocked.

[2 Pet. ii.  
15.]

Gen. xix.  
14.  
Acts xvii.  
32.

Nay, sometimes the very denouncing of God's judgments seems to some men a mocking, as it did to Lot's sons-in-law. Sometimes the very preaching a resurrection does so too. I am afraid both do so still to many now-a-days, whose wits are more than their religion, and their parts greater than their graces; not to say their portions too in this life, fairer, I fear, than in the other. Sometimes when God bids one thing, and men another—God sends us this way, and they call that—if we obey God's order and not their ordinance, they are mocked, they think, and slighted; and we must look to answer it with our peril, and the children unborn perhaps may rue it. In a word, men will needs think they are mocked sometimes; say here with Herod they see it too, unless you will betray Christ and his

religion to them, that they may seize and order them how they please. That is the brief of the business here, that Herod so much stomached; that the wise men would not do so, would not tell him where Christ was, that he might murder him.

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If, now, the being disappointed of a sin, of a project of doing mischief—if the obedience to God's command, if the protecting Christ, which were all the cases here—or if the denouncing God's judgment against sinners, or the preaching of the resurrection, or the defence of our religion and not betraying it, (which is almost the parallel case sometimes,)—must pass with some great men, and men of wit, for a mocking of them and a sufficient occasion for tyrannical spirits to bring on ruin and destruction even upon the innocent, and a warrantable ground to justify war or murder, rapine or injustice,—God help us and keep us upon all occasions; we know not when we are safe. The comfort only is, "God is not mocked;" he sees it, and disposes it. Christ [Gal. vi. 7.] is safe by the hand, and how ill soever it falls out, man only is mocked; our enemies are so, and all is well.

III. This for the occasion that brought this day's lambs to the slaughter. But was there not some cause besides? Had Herod no cause to do it? All we find expressed is, that he was "wroth," "exceeding wroth;" that is our third particular.

And truly that is enough, in some men's judgments, to cast down all before them. Enough we have found it; but cause I cannot call it, to call it right. Man's own impetuous anger will not excuse the mischief it commits. Anger itself must have a cause, or it but aggravates the sin; is so near a sin itself, that it is hard to discern and discover when it is not. The Apostle cannot mention being angry, but he adds with the same breath, "and sin not;" dares not leave anger Eph. iv. 26. to breathe itself without that caution.

Yet, supposing the anger not a sin, "exceeding" is. Though we may perhaps be angry, we must not be "exceeding." Moses and Aaron both paid for it: lost the enjoyment of Canaan, fell short of their rest by it; and this same "exceeding" still disturbs our rest and quiet—nothing more. Exod. xxxii. 19.

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what oversee himself, when it made him cast down and break the tables of the Commandments, which God himself had written with his own finger. A shrewd intimation to us, that the violence of that passion, even in a good cause sometimes, is very prone ever and anon to make us do so too—do that in a moral and worse sense—break the Commandments worse far than they were broken then.

But if the cause be bad, and the wrath exceeding, no wonder if it break out into all excesses. Shall we examine what it was here? (for the causes of our angers are not always written upon our foreheads.) Was it that the Magi neglected his commands, came not to him in their return? That was somewhat, but that was not it. Was it that he truly thought himself mocked by their not returning by him? *Then* indeed it was, but it was not *that*; that was the occasion, but not the cause. What was it, think we then? Why, Christ (he saw) was now in a possibility to escape him; and by a misconceit, his kingdom (he imagined) lay now at stake, seeing the King of the Jews, whose birth he had lately heard of and so much dreaded, was now gotten (he feared) out of his reach. This was the business that so tossed him and turmoiled him; and from it we learn these five particulars:—(i.) What strange fears and jealousies our interests and ambitions raise within us. (ii.) What unreasonable mistakes those fears and jealousies bring us to. (iii.) What hideous cruelties those mistakes make us run upon. (iv.) How hardly Christ himself escapes from them. (v.) Or if he does, how exceeding wroth and angry we grow upon it.

(i.) If interest or ambition possess our thoughts, how do we tremble at the very whistlings of the wind, and start at every shadow! Let Adonijah but beg Abishag, and he is interpreted to beg the kingdom. Let Abijah find Jeroboam in the way, and foretel him the kingdom shall be his when Solomon sleeps with his fathers,—and Solomon cannot sleep in quiet till he has driven him out of the land. And

(ii.) When these fears have once seized upon us, what mistakes run we not into! Ahimelech gives David but a few loaves of bread, and a sword to defend him in the way he went, and he is presently mistaken by Saul for a plotter

1 Kings ii.  
22.  
1 Kings xi.  
40.

1 Sam.  
xxii. 13.

against his life, for a traitor and a conspirator. Many such mistakes men have made of late; too late, I fear, to be yet forgotten.

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I Sam.  
xxii. 19.

Yet forgotten they would be easily, came they not (iii.) attended with cruelties at their heels. Ahimelech's being mistaken, unhappily cost him and his family all their lives, except Abiathar's: men and women, children and sucklings, oxen and asses and sheep, all to the sword upon it. There is no stop nor bounds to the rage of that error and mistake, which interest and ambition raise or nourish for their own ends and purposes.

(iv.) It were well Christ himself could escape them. But Christ and religion bear the blame as soon as any. And when I told you Ahimelech and the priests suffered so deep upon mistake, it was ready enough for you to conceive religion cannot always defend itself, or its priests and votaries, from the fury even of an unfortunate politician, Saul or Herod. And if the Messiah himself, and known to be so, must be sought out to be destroyed, even by him who both knew it and seemed to desire it, there are men, it seems, that for their interests can know Christ and yet persecute him. No wonder then if they deal so with his children and servants, and persecute them, though they know them such.

(v.) Or, lastly, if Christ himself, by some peculiar providence, be delivered from their rage; if the grounds of religion escape sound, the lesser parts, the rites and ceremonies and lesser points of religion—the innocents—must be massacred, (for we are exceeding angry;) and though the head escape, the lesser members shall pay dearly for it; which though the great ones do not, the little ones shall. Herod sends out and slays "all the children that were in Bethlehem, and the coasts" about, as many as he can lay hands on. His interests make him fear, his fears make him mistake, his mistake makes him cruel; and though Christ's kingdom be not of this world, nor Christ an enemy either to Herod or Cæsar, yet the politician is bound in honour to justify his own fears; and rather than put up a fancied affront or slighting, or confess a mistake, wreak his anger upon the helpless innocents, and make them both the martyrs of

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Christ and the witnesses of his own cruelty. Those are they I am next to speak of.

IV. And I justly call them martyrs; for if it be the cause that makes the martyr, (and we say it is,) and Christ's cause be that which entitles them more particularly to that name,

Ps. xliv. 22. I am sure they are no less; their cause was Christ's; "for his sake they were killed," as the Psalmist speaks, "all the day long; accounted too, as sheep," or little lambs, Rev. xiv. 1, 4. "appointed to be slain." And you may see them "following the Lamb" too under that notion, with the Father's "name written in their foreheads," the very "first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb," the first that suffered, that died for him. Who, though they could not some of them speak at all, and other of them but jabber at the most, yet they all speak out, and plain, these following lessons.

(i.) That there is no age too young for Christ's business, one way or other. They that cannot speak for Christ can die for him. They that cannot come themselves may be brought to him. They that cannot live with him, being just going out of the world as they are coming in, may die with Mark x. 14. him in holy baptism ere they go. Even "of such also is the kingdom of God," and it matters not whether they go by blood or water thither.

Nor (ii.) is any age too young to speak out Christ's glory Ps. viii. 2. neither. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Matt. xxi. 16. thou ordained strength;" "thou hast perfected praise," says the prophet; and never more eminently fulfilled than this [Matt. xxi. 9.] day; their very cries were songs of praise, "Hosannas to the Son of David, Blessed is he that cometh;" Hallelujahs in the ears of God, in whose name he cometh. None ever cried it louder, or proclaimed it higher.

(iii.) The choir is a full one too; of "all the children of Bethlehem, and the coasts about," to such an age: fourteen thousand is the least that any say, forty-four some. A full chorus indeed, a large first-fruits of martyrdom; to teach us, thirdly, not to doubt of that which is attested by so many witnesses, the coming of Christ; nor think strange of that condition which entered with him, which entered first with Christianity whilst it yet was in the cradle—persecution, and martyrdom; but to bear it patiently ever when it



comes, seeing children themselves have undergone it here by thousands, and trod the way before us.

(iv.) But they not only teach us patience by their martyrdom, but innocency by their innocence: a fourth lesson that they give us. Let Herod and all his hosts, all the Herods and hosts and armies of the world, do what they can, they cannot hurt us if we keep our innocence. Out of the world they may thrust us, but into heaven it is they drive us. Here, if they please, they may truly see themselves mocked indeed, when against their wills they undo us into a kingdom; think they destroy us, but will find at last, to their confusion, that they have been the great instruments to us both of life and glory. *Rapiuntur quidem*, says S. Austin, *a complexibus matrum, sed redduntur gremiis angelorum*:<sup>2</sup> "These infants," says he, "were snatched indeed from their mothers' breasts, but into the laps of angels were they carried, and into the bosom of the Almighty." *Quam feliciter nati*, says he again; "How happily were they born that were thus early born for Christ—how happily are they all born to whom it is given to die for him!" Augustus<sup>a</sup> was deceived, very foully out, when he cried it was better to be Herod's hog than Herod's child: that child, surely, which died among these innocents, whatever his other were, was born to a throne of glory, to the only crown and kingdom. Enough, this, to dry up Rachel's tears, to stop the tenderest mother's moans at any time, when she but thinks she hath brought forth a child to Christ, and placed him so soon in innocence and glory.

After the thoughts of this, it cannot be grievous if I now tell you of their martyrdom or murder; that as young, and innocent, and many as they were, Herod "sent forth and slew" them all.

V. You must not look that I should give you here the several ways and modes of this bloody slaughter, the various arts of this horrid murder, the diverse schemes of barbarous cruelty, the cunning sleights of those inhuman butchers to delude the tender mothers, and train the innocent infants to their deaths. You must not expect I should decipher to

<sup>2</sup> [S. August. Sermon. De Sanctis. De Sanctis Innocentibus, Sermon. ii.]

<sup>a</sup> [Macrobius, Saturnalia, lib. ii. cap. 4.]

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you the horrible fury of that grand massacre, the terrible countenance of the savage murderers, the ghastly faces of the astonished parents, the affrighted postures of the amazed kindred and allies, the frights and flights of the little children into holes and crannies, the sad lamentations of weeping mothers, their dishevelled hair, their wringing hands, their torn breasts and garments, their wild frantic garbs, their fights and strugglings to preserve their babes, the horrible screechings of the dying children, the moans and sighs and groans that filled all the corners of the streets, the cries and roarings and yellings that even rent the heavens. You must not think that I can tell you how those tender sucklings were, some of them, in a wanton cruelty danced upon the tops of pikes and spears, others dashed savagely against the walls, some thrust through with swords, others stabbed with poniards, some trampled to death upon the ground, some strangled in their cradles, some stifled in their mothers' arms, and others torn in pieces to get them thence. You cannot imagine I should express the tears, the blood, the wounds, the barbarousness, the cruelties, the confusions, the consternations, the terrors, the horrors of that day. I am not skilled in the tracts of cruelty, nor so good an orator to express it. Nor were it perhaps a rhetoric for Christmas. Only, I can tell you what the text does me: that slain they were, "all the children that were in Bethlehem, and the coasts about, from two years old and under;" and Herod did it.

Not himself, I confess. There are sins we are ashamed to commit ourselves, as well as sins we cannot commit without company to help us. And such was this: so horrid, he was ashamed to stand by to own it; so great, he could not act it but by involving almost an host of men in the guilt and mischief. A murder, which neither the greatness of the one nor the multitude of the other, neither his jealousies nor their obedience, neither his command nor their trade of life, shall be ever able to excuse, nor any rhetoric ever find a plea for.

VI. But though I cannot be exact in the relation, I must needs say, in the last place, Herod was in the transaction so exact, that (1) Bethlehem he thought too narrow a stage for

this new tragedy ; he takes in "all the coasts" about : though the Prophet had plainly told Christ should be born in Bethlehem, and the Sanhedrim had so resolved it to him, and his main business was to murder him,—yet, to make all sure, he stretches out his fury to the neighbouring towns. By the way, give me leave to observe, great cities are sometimes ill neighbours ; they too often destroy our children by the contagion of their mischiefs, and ruin the young heirs of the towns and manors that are near them, by the company that the infernal Herod sends out thither daily to that purpose. But I retreat, and tell you,

(2.) Herod was so exact in the designs of his cruelty, that he extends the time as well as the place, beyond what he had learned of the wise men. Christ was now but a year old at most, and more probably not so much. Herod stretches out his design for two. What is the reason ? Why, the bloody man and the unjust possessor never think they are safe till they are beyond all reason. For if Christ was now about two years old, why are the children of but two days slain ? If but two months or thereabouts, (as some place this business not long after his being presented in the temple,) why are the children of two years old demanded to the slaughter ?

At least, (3) how comes his own son into the number ? So Macrobius<sup>b</sup> relates the story, and Augustus alluded to it in his witty speech. This, too, to show us how exactly wicked some men are, that spare neither kindred nor children, to fix themselves.

And to give you Herod's cruelty here full : "according to the time he had diligently enquired of the wise men" it was also, says the text. Very inquisitive about it he had been, it seems, and he missed not a point of it : so, whether Christ was born when first the star appeared, or whether he was then only first incarnate and conceived in the womb, he would be sure (he thought) to have him ; a year under or over would be sure to reach him. So nice and punctual is the cruel and ambitious nature to defend its own interest and greatness, that it cannot rest till it have stopped all avenues and crannies of fear, and satisfied them to a nicety ; and it

<sup>b</sup> [See note to p. 237.]

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boggles not at any age, or time, or relation, or diligence, or inquisitiveness, to effect it. But it is time now to look home.

Yet if any now should be so inquisitive to ask a reason why God should thus suffer these innocent infants thus to be cruelly massacred; though we are not his counsellors, yet we may say, (i.) it might be to show the absoluteness of his dominion, that he is Lord of life and death, gives and disposes them as he will. It may be (ii.) to teach us that innocence itself is not always a fence against death or violence. It may be (iii.) to instruct us what they must look for from the first, that have any relation to Christ at all. It may be (iv.) it was, that by this strange accident and occasion, the birth of Christ might be proclaimed through the world. And yet, (v.) fifthly, add but the consideration, that they were the children of Bethlehem, where Christ could get no lodging, where he was fain to make the stable his chamber and the manger his cradle; and it will not seem unreasonable that God should thus punish the fathers in their children for it, and leave some of them scarce a child for their houses, who would not leave him a house for his child. But, lastly, God's thus advancing the deaths of these little infants into a martyrdom, giving them the first honour to die for Christ and, as it were, redeem his life with theirs, so early bringing them to heaven by suffering, there is no reason of complaining; nothing to cloud our Christmas joys, or disturb our rejoicing. Those little ones are singing in the heavens about the Lamb. And it will do well that we here upon earth should sing Blessing, and praise, and glory, that God has so exalted them, and comforts us; make it one of our Christmas carols, our songs of joy.

Rev. xiv. 3.

Yet, somewhat to allay your joy, that your mirth run not too high, I shall, after this long story, tell you a tale in your ears will make them glow. Herod is not dead, nor sleepeth. We are all of us Herods or Herodiascs, men and women, one way or other.

We have been as deep dissemblers of piety, some among us, as ever Herod; many as bloody too, upon it. Many sad errors and mistakes have many of us made, and many a thousand souls have miserably perished by them. Angry men have been exceeding angry that the Magi, many a

wise man and good, would not comply with their interests and projects, or communicate with their sins. Angry some, I am afraid, still, that Christ, that religion, is escaped their fury, that their kingdoms are not established; though it was Christ's that was by them pretended, but just as the worshipping him was by Herod. And I cannot tell but there may be yet some projects of sending out to slay men and children, to begin Herod's work anew, the war afresh.

But I am sure, though we cannot reach that mystery, there is one you will easily understand, shall serve for an application to drive all home. Our own children are daily murdered by us, their very souls destroyed; a sadder cruelty than Herod's.

Not to tell you that the mother kills them often in the womb, by the folly and vanity of a dress, by an unruly humour, by a disordered appetite, by a heedless or giddy motion; nor that the nurse kills them at the breast, by her intemperance and excess—though it be too true: yet it is a less murder, that, than to kill the soul; and yet this done oftener. And I will assure you, first, they venture their children hard that deny them baptism: I will say no more. But after that they are smothered, some in their mother's lap, killed with kindness and indulgence; stabbed through with poniards, others, undone with cruelty and unkindness; trampled to death, others, and perish by their friends' carelessness and neglect. Some are dashed against the walls, their brains beat out at least, wholly corrupted by false principles from their cradles; some we trail along the streets, and destroy them by our ill examples; some we choke with intemperances and excesses, even in Christmas too; some we destroy ourselves: others we send out servants and companions to destroy,—give them such to tend them as teach them pride, and scorn, and anger, and frowardness, and vanity, and wantonness, ere they understand them; such as teach them to bestow a curse ere they can ask a blessing, and to speak ill ere they can well speak. And as if we were resolved to make all sure, we send them abroad to be bred sometimes to places of licentiousness and debauchery, that they may be sure to be gallant sinners,—because, forsooth, it is pedantic and below a gentleman to be a thorough Christian, to suck in the tame and conscientious principles

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of Christianity; and all upon Herod's mistake, that wise men will mock us for them, when it is only that they are wisely wicked and mistaken.

And now shall we cry out of Herod's cruelty, and do worse ourselves? Shall we complain he killed the Innocents to-day, and we make nothing every day to destroy even innocency itself? A less, far lesser cruelty it would be to take these tender blossoms and shake them off the tree, than to suffer them to grow up to fruits which we can but curse ourselves, and others will curse the tree from bearing them.

[Psalm  
cxxxvii. 9.]

Nay, a greater mercy it were to the poor children to "dash them against the stones," to smother them in the cradle, to overlay them in the bed, to dispatch them any way innocent into the other world, than to nurse them up to our own follies, than to pollute them with our debaucheries, than to corrupt them with atheistical and ungodly principles, than to defile them with lusts, than to train them up to be wicked, or merely vain and unprofitable, breed them up to hell, to eternal ruin. Yet "the tender and delicate woman that can scarce endure to set her foot upon the ground for niceness," thus daily murders her beloved darling without scruple.

[Deut.  
xxviii. 56.]

But, indeed, do men and women pray for children as a blessing, that they may only turn them into a curse? only desire them that they may destroy them? Surely one would think they did so, that sees how great a study it is to make them vain, and proud, and envious, and lewd, and wicked. Our Herods and Herodias cut off the baptized infants' heads as they of old did the Baptist's. We even dance them to death, and compromise them to hell as soon almost as the baptismal waters are dried upon them. And must old Herod and Herodias only bear the blame of murdering innocents, and we that do it over and over scape without an accusation? In this, too, worse than Herod: he only slew the children from two years old and under; we, under and above too, from their first day upward, till we have rendered them incorrigible to age, and past recovery. The subtlest policy of the devil, this, thus to kill poor children from their infancy, when they neither know who hurt them, nor how they came in the confines of that spiritual death they dwell in; can only say they were so dealt with "in the house of their friends."

[Zech. xiii.  
6.]

What shall we say, my beloved, when these murdered children shall cry out against us out of their miserable cells at last,—for they will do then at least as these did from under the altar long ago,—“How long, O Lord, how long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood” on them that spilt it, on our fathers and on our mothers, and on our friends, that thus untimely sent us hither, when we might otherwise have come to thee? Whither shall we turn? what shall we answer? Or rather, because we cannot answer, let us take heed we handle the matter so that we come not to it. We pretend to love our children, and thereupon we strive to make them rich, and fine, and great, and honourable: why do we then beggar them from their childhood with bringing them up to those vanities that will undo them? Why do we deform them with sins and vices, lessen them with education, make them dishonourable by training them up in ignoble and dishonest principles? Why do we in all these ruin them from the first? At least why do we not love ourselves, who, for aught I know, must needs perish with them, and perish for them, for thus destroying them?

Were we but kind to our own souls, we would be to theirs: but, to fill up the measure, we play the Herods and act the murderers, lastly, upon ourselves. We daily stifle those heavenly births of good desires and thoughts that are at any time begotten in us by the Holy Spirit, and walk on confidently to death and darkness.

But we have acted Herod's part too long, and I fear I have been too long upon it. To be short, now, let us turn our slaughtering hands upon our sins and vices—kill them, mortify them, and henceforward act the part of the blessed Innocents; set ourselves from this day to better practices; study the two grand lessons of the day, innocence and patience; innocence in our lives, and patience in our deaths, or rather patience in them both. Study them ourselves, teach them our children, and continually preserve them in those happy ways, that when we shall have served our several generations, and go-hence, we may all meet at last, fathers and mothers and children, at the great supper of the Lamb, and, together with these blessed Innocents in the text, follow the Lamb for evermore. Who, &c.

# THE FIRST SERMON

ON THE

## CIRCUMCISION.

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2 COR. v. 17.

*Old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new.*

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AS face in water answers face, so does the face of the text the face of the Church in the times we live in, where “old things are passed away, all things become new.” But as where the faces are like, the minds often are not so, so the sense of the text and the sense of the times are as unlike as may be, however like the words be to them. Old legal ceremonies and old corruptions “passed” in the text ; old corruptions and old heresies and errors renewed in the times. The glorious Gospel of Christ newly appearing, with affections answerable to it, in the text ; a Gospel I know not whose—not of peace, but of war, not of love and unity, but of faction and schism, with affections and courses according—in the times. “New” things, such as belong to the new man,—righteousness and true holiness,—passed over as unnecessary or unprofitable ; all good order antiquated and out of date, cast away as “old things ;” all good things quite ruined and decayed.

It were to be wished—but it is but merely to be wished, scarce hoped, I fear—that the sense as well as the words might fit us ; that the “new” things in the text were the new ones of the times ; that the “old” ones here were the old ones there ; that the new year but lately entered might bring us this news.



But however, I may wish and hope too (I hope) that we in particular will take occasion from it to renew our hearts with the year, and begin it in newness of life and conversation ; to live the new year like new men, better than of old.

And though the new times, as now they are, will not agree with the text—no more than these new men of the times their sermons do in words only, at the most—yet, because I love to speak seasonably as well as soberly, a text in season, if I may have leave to fit the text to the old time of Christmas, there can be nothing more suitable to both the words and meaning of the text than this holy feast and the meaning of it.

From this feast, from Christ's birth, it was that all old legal ceremonies had their pass, to "pass away;" from hence all things both in heaven and earth are reconciled; by him all things made new; by him the old man abolished, and the new man created in us; the old law abrogated, the new law come in place; the old law of works annulled, the new law of faith established; all "old things passed away, all things become new," through his coming into the world.

And the use and moral of the whole feast, and the three solemn great days in it, is no more than that we would let old things pass, old worldly affections die, lay off the old, and become new men all; be (1) regenerate in our spirits, and new-born with him upon Christmas-day; have our old man (2) circumcised, our old fleshly members mortified upon Circumcision-day, and be wholly renewed in all our parts upon the same, as New-year's-day; begin (3) the public profession of our renovation and new service with the wise men, worshipping, adoring, and presenting him our gifts upon the Epiphany, or Twelfth; so changing our old master, and the service of sin, for our new Master and his service; forgetting the old, and pressing on to the new.

Thus you have a perfect Christmas text, and more evidently a New-year's one; yet both, both in words and sense. I have given you the whole sense of it from the feasts of Christmas, and both told you their meaning and the text's; what the several days of the feast teach you, and what all the parts of the text would have you learn: of which this is the sum, That through Christ all "old things,"—the old law,

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[2 Cor. v.  
27.]

the law of Moses, the old corruptions of nature, the law of sin—are “passed away,” done away and abolished, and a new law established, new grace brought to us, new affections created in us; all through him, and by his coming; and that whosoever is “in Christ,” in whom he is come, in him “old things are passed away, all things are become new;” “he is a new creature” quite, in the words that usher in the text. So the parts of it will be two.

I. What, since Christ’s coming, is become of all things? What is the state of the Gospel? And

II. What, upon that, is become of those that are in Him?

For, to understand the text fully, we are to consider it (1) as a general proposition, concerning the state of the Gospel of Christ, that “old things” in general “are passed away,” and “all things” altogether “become new,” through it and him: (2) as a particular application made to “any man” that is “in Christ,” it is truly in that state that in him “old things are passed away, all things become new.”

1. Now in the general, “old things are passed away;” that is become of them, of all old things, since Christ’s coming:—and “all things” else “are become new;” that is become of them, or so are they become.

2. In particular, this is become of them in whom Christ is, or who are in him, true sons of the Gospel; “old things are passed” with them, and “all things” in them “become new.”

3. I shall add a third, as the proper use both of text and time of the old days and the new year; what is most becoming us, for whom also Christ came, to whom still he daily comes,—even to cast away all old corruptions, and in all things to “become new.”

I. I begin with the text as it may be applied to the general state and condition of the Gospel; where we shall consider it first respectively, then absolutely: (1.) In comparison with the estate of things both under the old law and under the Gentile infidelity; that the Gospel is a state where both all those old legalities are abolished, and heathen errors done away: (2.) In itself; that the Gospel is a new state of affairs and things, where “all things are become new.”

“Old things,” those must be first; and they may all be

reduced to these two heads : God's way of dealing with the Jews, and his way of dealing with the Gentiles. With the Jews first, where both the old way of his service and the old way of his providence, those two grand things that include all the rest, are to be examined how they pass.

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His service consisted (i.) in sacrifices ; and they are done : no more blood of bulls, or lambs, or goats ; they could not "make the comers thereunto perfect," so they are gone. Heb. x. 1.

His service (ii.) consisted in outward "washings ;" but they could wash no further than the flesh, cleanse no more than the outward man : "Not the putting away the filth of the flesh," says S. Peter ; that is nothing, for that is but a vanity to stand on ; vain, and to so little purpose, no wonder if that way of serving God be vanished too. Heb. ix. 10.

His service (iii.) was much then "in meats and drinks ;" this they might eat, and that they might not ; but all "to perish with the using." "Why are you any longer subject to those ordinances about them ?" says S. Paul. For "meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them," says he again ; so they pass too. Heb. ix. 10.

His service (iv.) stood much in "holy-days, new moons, and sabbaths ;" but they were but "shadows of things to come ; the body is of Christ." It was time they should be packing, when the reality of things were come. Col. ii. 16, 17.

His service (v.) was especially notified by circumcision ; but "circumcision is nothing ;" that is passed away, indeed, to purpose—the greatest passing—to pass into nothing. 1 Cor. vii. 19.

His service (vi.) was confined to the Temple of Jerusalem, to that only altar there : but it was but "a figure for the time then present," says S. Paul, and you see how the present time is passed ; there was "no way into the holiest," whilst that was standing ; it was but necessary that also should pass away ; *et neque in hoc neque in illo*,—the time was coming that they should neither worship in this nor that, nor that at Gerizim, nor that at Jerusalem. No, there should not be left so much as "one stone upon another," says Christ. That is passing away indeed. Heb. ix. 9. Heb. ix. 8.

His service (vii.) lastly, was in a manner all type and shadow ; not so much as the "image of things" themselves. And the shadows must needs away when the Day-spring begins to John iv. 21. Matt. xxiv. 2.

Heb. x. 1.

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visit us, and the Sun arises. Away, shadows ! get you behind us ! we see our Sun of Righteousness up and risen on us ; and it is fit we should turn our backs upon our shadows, and worship and adore him. The Persians did so superstitiously to the sun in heaven : we must do it devoutly to the spiritual and eternal Sun of Glory.

For how much are we bound to Christ, to God in Christ, that he has freed us from those imperfect yet costly sacrifices ; those troublesome abstinences, those unprofitable washings, those strict severities of new-moons and Sabbaths ; that painful rite of circumcision, those long journeys to Jerusalem to worship those empty shadows ; and given us full perfect liberty of meats and drinks, and all things else, the doing whereof is no real profit ; and brought home his temples and service to our doors, our happiness into our bosoms. Though all those “old things” be “passed away,” let not his goodness in passing them away ever pass out of our memories, nor a day pass without praises to him for it, nor the relation of it pass out of our lips without all thankfulness and humility.

And there will be more reason for it, if we reflect now upon the course of his old providence, altered towards us. In the old way of his providence and dispensations with the Jews, he first led them only with temporal promises, fed them only with such hopes ; no other to be found the whole old Bible over. We must not now look for the same dealing, we ; afflictions are made our glory, and we blessed by them ; our hopes higher, our promises better. So let the other pass ; no matter.

He awed them, secondly, with temporal punishments : they could not sin, but they were presently punished for it ; sometime a plague, another while the sword, then wild beasts and serpents, now dearth and famine, sometimes a fire from heaven, another time a gaping of the earth and swallowing all ; seldom but some exemplary or sudden death, or some strange visitations, were the method God used to bring the rest into order and obedience. Such things are rare among us, whom God terrifies with the threats of future judgments, that we might have the longer time for our repentance and amendment ; his providence is now much

Deut.  
xxviii.

2 Cor. xii.  
9.  
Matt. v. 11.  
Heb. viii.6.

fuller of patience and long-suffering to bring us to it, his anger and fierceness is "passed away." SERMON  
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He comforted them, thirdly, by only obscure and dark prophecies, so dark that he often that spoke them did not perfectly understand them. All those prophecies are now plain to us, and those shadowy expressions lightened and cleared by Christ. He "opened" his disciples' "understandings," that they might understand them, and from them we have all those former predictions clear as the midday sun: those obscure things, or the obscurity of those things, are also "passed away." LUKE XXIV.  
45.

Fourthly, the old way then was, "Do this and live;" a sad covenant of works, which yet we were not able to perform. [Gen. xlii.  
18.] That is done away in Christ, and the covenant of faith come in the room; *justus ex fide*, to live by that an easier way for us.

Fifthly, God's way then with them was by rites and ceremonies, "old things" which "neither we, nor our" old fathers were able to bear," if we believe S. Peter. These, to be sure, a good providence for us, that they were among the things that were "done away." ACTS XV. 10.  
2 Cor. iii.  
7, 11.

Lastly, the very subject, as we may say, of his providence is altered too. In the days of old it was commonly none but the rich and honourable, very few else, that were employed in the great services of the law, insomuch as it was a proverb, *Spiritus Sanctus non requiescit super animam pauperis*: The Holy Spirit never lights upon the poor man's soul. But now the contrary, *πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται*, "the poor are preached to;" and the poor preach too; and, "Blessed are the poor." The way of God's dispensation is strangely changed, that old way "passed" too. [Matt. xi.  
7.]  
[Luke vi.  
20.]

What can we then do less than pass ourselves into his service, under his protection? than pass our souls and spirits out of our lips in praises and thanksgiving, that all those "beggarly elements," as the Apostle calls them—those temporal promises and threats—that heavy slavish servitude—that dealing with us as with untoward children under the rod, or as slaves and servants—is "passed" from us;—that we are now at the liberty of sons, and the honour of being the friends of God, such to whom God is now pleased in Christ Gal. iv. 9.

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Eph. iii. 9.  
I Pet. i. 12.  
Matt. xi.  
25.

to reveal his secrets and mysteries so long hidden—even “from the beginning of the world,” as the Apostle speaks—and into which “the angels desire to look into;”—that he hath now “revealed them unto babes;”—that no condition now, be it never so poor, or mean, or weak, but is made partakers of his grace and glory in the face of Jesus Christ! How great a comfort and glory is it to us, that all “old things” are thus “passed away, and all things become new!” Yet there are worse “old things” behind, the “old things” of the Gentiles; which we are to consider now, both what they are, and how they too are “passed away.” The old errors and the old sins of the Gentiles, they are the “old things” of the Gentiles, and they are “passed.”

1. The old heathen ignorance and error. They were in a shadow indeed, the very “shadow of death,” a thick black [Isa. ix. 2.] darkness; the very region of death, and land of darkness, Rom. i. 21. saith the Prophet; they knew not God, saith the Apostle, Eph. iv. 18. “having their understanding darkened, because of the blindness of their heart.” All these shadows are dispersed, all this darkness “passed away,” when Zachariah’s “Day-spring” rose upon them; they are not now what they were before Christ came, they are much enlightened.

2. Nor appear their sins now of so deep a blackness, since Christ suffered for them also. Before, we read of nothing but the idolatries, the vanities, the abominations of the Eph. iv. 18. heathen; that they were alienated, wholly “alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them,” walking after their own lusts, and in the vanities of their wicked mind, being delivered up to “the prince of the air,” Eph. ii. 2. who wholly ruled and worked in them. But these things were passed over, by the mercy of God in Christ, and even they also received the new covenant of grace and pardon.

And, in the second place, the way of God’s providence towards them also, as well as towards the Jews, passed into another mode. It was in old time but a Job, but an Uriah, but an Ittai, but a Jethro, but a Naaman, in an age; an Uzzite, a Hittite, a Gittite, a Midianite, a Syrian, but now and then; Israel was the only Goshen, the only land where the light shone free. The case is altered now by Christ. Indeed, for a while, till the children were first served, or at

least first offered meat, it was, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles." But when Christ had now completed his work, and was going up to heaven, then, "Go and preach to all nations" was the style; and "Lo, I send thee far unto the Gentiles," was S. Paul's commission, and others' after him. So the partition wall is now passed through, and the distinction of Jew and Gentile, that "old" difference, "passed away."

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Matt. x. 5.  
[Matt.  
xxviii. 19.]  
Acts xxii.  
21.

Nay, secondly, the other branch of God's dealing with them is so too. In those "times of ignorance God winked at" them; tolerated, or at least not punished them, says S. Paul: "but now he commandeth all men every where to repent," says he; the old course is past, God's way of dealing with them now is "become new."

Acts xvii.  
30.

Thus we have another ground of thanks and praise, that God has not only freed us from the servitude of the law, but from the slavery of Satan; not only from the dusky shadows of the Jewish, but from the dismal darkness of the Gentile coasts. Let not this pass further without a song of praise.

But how shall we now worthily praise him for the next, for making "all things new?" *Novus rex et nova lex*, a new king and a new law; *novus grex et novum regnum*, a new Church and a new kingdom; *novum testamentum et novum sacramentum*, new covenants and new sacraments; *novum sacrificium et novus sacerdos*, a new sacrifice and a new priesthood; *novum templum et novum altare*, a new temple and a new altar; *novus spiritus* and *nova vita*, a new spirit, and a new kind of life: all new.

(i.) *Novus rex*, a new king. We have no ordinary one neither: a king with an *Ecce, Ecce venit*, both in Prophet and Evangelist: "Behold, thy king cometh," says Zachary, and S. Matthew says the same. A king worth beholding: the "wise men" came I know not how far to see him.

Zech. ix. 9.  
Matt. xxi. 5.  
Matt. ii. 2.

(ii.) And with a new law he came, "a new commandment;" "a perfect law;" "a law of liberty;" "a royal law;" "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus." The old law was a bondage: this new one "makes us free," as it follows there.

John xiii.  
34.  
James i. 25.  
James ii. 8,  
12.  
Rom. viii.  
2.

(iii.) A new Church he came to gather, much different from the old: a "Church purchased by his blood," a costly one,

Acts xx.  
28.

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Eph. v. 27. "a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish;" much larger than the old; an universal Church—all the Gentiles also new come in  
Psal. ii. 8. —"the utmost parts of the earth," the confines of it.

(iv.) A new kingdom there is come, too; a kingdom above all kingdoms, "the kingdom of heaven;" a kingdom of grace and a kingdom of glory; a kingdom never heard of before Christ's coming with it: no news, no hopes, no mention of the kingdom of heaven, all the old Scripture through; those "exceeding great and precious promises" reserved for us. They under the law were led like children with the nuts and rattles of temporal promises and rewards: Christ first promised a kingdom for the recompence of reward; a kingdom, too, wherein we are all "kings."

This new kingdom (v.) brings a new covenant, *novum testamentum*. Take *testamentum* how you will, for a covenant or a writing—and *novum* either for the covenant of grace, or for a new schedule of Scripture that contains it—we find both "new" now: "I will make a new covenant," says God. And he did so, says the Apostle. But what was it? "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people," &c.; "for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more;"—a covenant of pardon and remission, such as the sacrifices of the law could not give, were not able. And new books we have it written in, as authentic as those old ones in the Jewish canon; where we may find all sealed by the testimony of the Spirit, the author of the New Testament as well as of the Old.

(vi.) The new Church has its new sacraments. *Ite et baptizate* for *Ite et circumcidite*; baptism for circumcision, and the Lord's Supper for the Passover; in both which of ours there is more than was in theirs, in those legal ceremonies; not only "outward signs" as they, but "inward graces."

[Hos. xiv. 2.] (vii.) New sacrifices; "the calves of our lips," instead of calves and goats: the sacrifices of praises and thanksgivings, nay, the sacrifice of a contrite heart and humble spirit; the sacrificing of our lusts, and the offering up of "our souls and bodies, a living, holy, acceptable sacrifice."

Rom. xii. 1.



viii. A new priesthood to offer them; “an unchangeable priesthood” now. Christ our high-priest, and the “ministers of the new testament” as so many under-priests, to offer them up to God. Christ offered himself a sacrifice; offers up also our prayers and praises to his Father; has left his ministers, in his name and merits, to do it too. And this a lasting priesthood, to last for ever.

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Heb. vii.  
24.  
2 Cor. iii. 6.

(ix.) We have a new altar, too—so S. Paul—“an altar that they which served the tabernacle have no power to eat of.” Take it for the cross, on which Christ offered up himself; or take it for the holy table, where that great sacrifice of his is daily commemorated in Christian churches: *habemus*, says the Apostle; such an one we have, and I am sure it is “new.”

Heb. xiii.  
10.

(x.) Temples we have many new: (1) “the temples of our bodies,” those both to offer in, and offer up; and (2) churches many, for that one temple so long since buried in dust and rubbish.

1 Cor. vi.  
19.

(xi.) There is above these “a new spirit;” “not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father;” the spirit of love, and not of fear; the spirit of sons, and not of servants; a spirit that will cause us to “walk in God’s statutes, keep his commandments, and do them;” a “new” thing, indeed, that can make “the beasts of the field to honour him,” as the Prophet speaks of it; “the dragons and the owls” to do so; the most sensual, fierce, cruel, and dullest natures bow unto him, that gives “waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert;” that “blows but with his wind, and these waters flow.” This is a new spirit that is so powerful.

Ezek.  
xxxvi. 26.  
Rom. viii.  
15.

Ezek.  
xxxvi. 27.  
Isa. xliii.  
20.

Isa. xliii.  
19, 20.  
Ps. cxlvii.  
18.

And from this Spirit it is that we (xii.) receive new life and vigour; that we walk not under the Gospel so dully and coldly as they under the Law, where the outward work to the letter served the turn, but according to the Spirit—in the inward purity of the heart, as well as in the outward purity of the body.

To which, (xiii.) lastly, there is a new inheritance annexed, “a new heaven and a new earth,” which we may “look for according to his promise.”

2 Pet. iii.  
13.

And are not these “new things” all good news, worth our

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rejoicings? Can we be ever old, that enjoy such mercies? Are they not enough to revive the dying spirit, nay, to raise the dead one to set forth His praises, who thus “renews us as the eagle,” “renews his mercies to us every morning,” makes us “kings and priests,” gives us easy laws and pleasing covenants, effectual sacrifices and saving sacraments; turns our bodies into his temples, and our hearts into altars; makes us a glorious Church, and builds us churches; inspires us with a new spirit, and gives us a second life, gives us a kingdom, gives us heaven and all? This is the “new” state under Christ, since his coming ended and renewed our years unto us. And therefore, says our Apostle, just before the text, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;” all this “new” work is done upon him. That is the second way we are now to consider the words—that in the Christian, truly such, all “old things are passed away,” and “all things become new.”

Rom. vi. 2. II. He is “dead to sin,” and he is “dead to the law;” or,  
Rom. vii. 4. if you will, sin and the law are both dead to him, they can  
Rom. vi. 11. hold him no longer; he is “alive unto God,” new created in righteousness and true holiness.

Will you have it more particular? Why, (i.) first, then, the heathen ignorance and error, that is “past” with them; they are “enlightened,” they know God and are known of him; they are “light in the Lord,” the very “children of it.” The heathen sins, they are “passed” with them: in them they “walked” once; “such they were, some of them,” but now they “are washed,” but now they “are sanctified,” but now they “are justified.”

Nor are they now (ii.) under so slender a providence as the poor heathen were: God visits them often now, and not only now and then, and suffers them not to go on or fall back again into the old ways of infidelity.

But they are not only out of the heathen condition, but out of the Jewish too; no more in bondage to the law. The sacrificing of rams and goats, of all sensual affections, is done already; the unreasonable part is mortified in them: they have been washed, and need be washed no more; they are obliged to no differences of meats, no Jewish sabbatizing, no circumcision, no one particular place of worship, no legal

rites or ceremonies; Christ having "abolished in his flesh the law of commandments," says S. Paul, "contained in ordinances." We are now at liberty; he "has made us free." SERMON  
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Eph. ii. 15.

And we are now (iii.) under a new course of providence. God leads us now by spiritual and eternal promises; he threatens spiritual and everlasting punishments; guides us by a clearer light than prophecy—the evidence of the Word and Spirit; ties us not up to the covenant of works, nor empty ceremonies—these things "are passed;" makes us not rich that he may accept us, but accepts us as we are. He reckons not of us by our wealth, or honour, or learning, or our parts; we "know no man" so now—not Christ so now, "according to the flesh;" we value not any man now for any thing but holiness and righteousness, for so much as he is in Christ. Nor does the Christian value himself now for any thing but for that of Christ which is in him: riches he contemns, honour he despises, learning he submits; all outward and external privileges and commendations he lays at the foot of Christ, devotes them to his commands: these are all old, worn, tattered things, not worth the taking up; nothing now worth any thing but Christ, nothing but Christ, and those "new" things, those graces, are in him. 2 Cor. v. 16.

Thus, "old things are passed" with the true Christian; but (2) "all things" also "are become new" in him. He has a new heart and a new spirit; he has no more a heart of stone, but a heart of flesh,—a soft, tender, pliable heart, a meek and well-disposed spirit, a loving spirit; he is no more what he was, the old *ego*, he has a new understanding; things look not to him as they did of old, he vilifies the world and worldly things. His affections new, he affects not what he did before; he contemns all things below: he is a king, and rules over his passions; he is a priest, and sanctifies them with his prayers: he lives under a new law, the law of the Spirit and not the flesh; he makes every day new covenants with God; a member of the Church he is, and the kingdom of God is now within him. He is a great adorer of the sacraments of the Church, and daily offers up himself a sacrifice to God—his soul and body, and all he has—and pours out his praises. His body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and the altar of his heart burns with the con-

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tinual fires of devotion and charity. He now lives no more, but Christ lives in him: that is the new life he leads, and it leads him into glory. A new thing of which he has a glimpse, and a kind of antepast here, that makes him relish nothing else, but cast all behind his back as old rags and dirt, "to press forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." This is the new creature, the new man, in whom "old things are passed away," and "all things become new."

III. And shall "all things become new," and not we? Shall all "old things" pass away, and we remain in our old sins still? every thing be clothed with a new lustre; we only appear in our old rags still? Certainly we cannot judge it reasonable. Better use, I hope, we will make of this day's text, of this New-year's lesson. "Put off," says the Apostle, "concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of our minds, and put on that new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. iv. 22—24.

1 Pet. iv. 3. It is his counsel must be our practice. "The time past of our life may suffice us," says S. Peter, "to have wrought the will of the Gentiles." It is sufficient, it is sufficient. It is time now we unlearn our old lesson, unravel our old work, leave off our old course of life, and begin anew to live henceforward to righteousness, and not to sin—to God, and not to men. The new-entered year calls for it; the text calls for it; the blood of Christ spent at his Circumcision lately past, which yet this day and some days still to come commemorate, cries for it, that we would no longer "count the blood of the new covenant an unholy thing," but betake us to it and live by it, after a new fashion, in newness of life. I call you not to legal washings, but the washings of baptism and repentance; not to Jewish feasts, but Christian festivals; not to sacrifice lambs and sheep, but your souls and bodies; not to old ceremonies, but the new substance, the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Let him now begin his new reign in you; let his new commandment of love be obeyed by you; his Church, purchased so dearly, not be cowardly deserted by you; keep his covenant, frequent his temples, adorn his altars, reverence his priests; follow the guidance of his

[Heb. x.  
29.]

Holy Spirit, when he inspires good motions into your hearts; amend your lives, and become all new men in Jesus Christ. SERMON  
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And when all these "old things" shall "pass away," and the new heaven and earth appear, when "He that sits upon the throne" shall "make all things new," then shall we be all made new again, even these old decayed ruins of our bodies too, and both souls and bodies clothed with the new robes of glory that shall never pass away, but be ever new, ever glorious, for evermore. Rev. xxi. 5.

## THE SECOND SERMON

ON THE

### CIRCUMCISION.

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S. LUKE ii. 21.

*His name was called Jesus.*

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AND to-day it was that he "was called" so, "when eight days were accomplished" for his circumcising. And they did well to call him so, for it was the name the angel named him "before he was conceived in the womb." And he could be called by no better: for *nomen super omne nomen*, says S. Paul Phil. ii. 9. of it; "a name" it is "above every name;" "far above all Eph. i. 21. principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." A name that has all things in it; that brings all good things with it; that speaks more in five letters than we can do in five thousand words; speaks more in it than we can speak to-day: and yet we intend to-day to speak of nothing else, nothing but Jesus, nothing but Jesus.

The sooner then we begin, the better. And to begin the sooner, we shall set upon it without either the circumstances before or after in the verse, or the ceremonies, either of preamble, or of division of the words.

Only, for method's sake and memory's, I shall show you the fulness and greatness of this name in these seven particulars:

It is a name of truth and fidelity.

It is a name of might and power.

It is a name of majesty and glory.

It is a name of grace and mercy.

It is a name of sweetness and comfort.

It is a name of wonder and admiration.

It is a name of blessing and adoration.

A faithful, mighty, glorious, gracious, comfortable, admirable, blessed name it is, given him to-day to be called by; but to be called by, and to be called upon by us for ever, that we also may be filled with the truth, and power, and glory, and grace, and sweetness, and wonder, and all the blessings of it. This is the sum of what we have to say of this great name; and now we go on with the particulars.

I. A name it is, first, of veracity and fidelity, of faithfulness and truth. This "Jesus," is but the old "Jeshua," *ישוע*, so much mentioned, so often foretold, so long expected, all the Scripture through. The Greek termination of  $\Sigma$  only added, that we might so understand that all those types, prophecies, and promises, were now terminated, and at an end, in this *Ἰησοῦς*, in this "Jesus," the Greeks and Gentiles taken in too, to fulfil all that had been before named or spoken any way concerning him. "The testimony of Jesus is the very spirit of prophecy." Prophecy had neither life nor spirit without it; and the "name of Jesus" is the very "Amen" to it. "All the promises of God," too "in him are yea, and in him Amen," says the Apostle. His very name is the "Amen," "the faithful and true witness," in the same verse: absolutely "Faithful and True." Nay, this same name "Jesus," from *ישע*, to save, was rightly given him in this sense—first, that it saved the honour of God, and the credit of his prophets; that their words fell not to the ground, but were all accomplished and made good in his blessed name. A good name, the while, for us to hold by, for our souls to rest on, for our hopes to anchor on; that is so faithful and true to us, will not fail us in a word or tittle.

II. And indeed it need not, for it is a name of power. A name (1) at which the devils roar and tremble: "Jesus, thou Son of God, what have we to do with thee?" A name (2) that not only scares the devils, but casts them out, and unhouses them of their safer dwellings. A name so powerful, (3) that, pronounced even by some that followed not Christ with the Apostles, that were not of so confident a faith or so near a relation to him, it yet cast them out. So mighty, (4) that in it many of those also "cast out devils," did "many wonderful works," to whom he will profess he "never knew" them, who must therefore at last "depart" down to those

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devils they cast out. A name, it seems, that though in a wicked mouth has oft done wonders. So powerful (5) that no disease or sickness, no ache or ail, no infirmity or malady could stand against it. "His name," says S. Peter, "hath made this man whole, whom ye see and know." His name made that man, makes all men, whole. So powerful (6) with God himself, that he cannot stand against it, cannot deny us any thing that we ask in it. "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it," says Christ; whatsoever it be; and my Father will do it too. In a word, "Jesus" signifies a Saviour, and a Saviour is a name of power. He that saves either himself or others, must be no weakling; the "stronger" man in the Gospel at least; "mighty to save," as the Prophet speaks. But he that saves us from the powers of darkness, must be the strong and "mighty God" too,—and so is his name,—or the devil will be too strong for him. O thou God, who art "mighty to save," save thy servants from him; save us from all the evils and mischiefs he plots against us, that through thy name we may tread them under that rise up against us!

III. So will this name be glorious too: so it was, and so it is,—we are to show you next; a name of majesty and glory.

Take it from the reason the angel gives of the imposition. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus." Why? Why, "he shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Judah for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." The whole together nothing but the angel's comment upon the name Jesus, nothing but the interpretation of the name: where we consider, first, that it is a royal name, the name of a king; not of any king neither, but a king by succession; not any new upstart king, but of a king from the lineage of ancient kings; not of any hereditary or successive king neither, but of one from the kings of Judah, kings of God's own making; none of Jeroboam's lineage, or any others of the people's setting up; more glorious than so. And yet more, of a king "whose kingdom shall have no end;" that is a glorious king indeed. All other kings die, and leave their kingdoms and their names behind them, half wrapped up at



least in dust and rubbish: this has an everlasting kingdom, and an everlasting name; he lives ever, and that lives so too. But "Of his kingdom there shall be no end," hath another sense too. All the ends of the earth shall come in unto him; there shall be no particular end or bound of his dominion. Upon his "holy hill of Sion," indeed, it is, God sets him: but so there, that he gives him "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession," that he may rule them thence. He is both an everlasting and an universal King. Nay, lastly, "the King of kings;" his "name is written so upon his thigh." So glorious a name has he, such a *superelevavit* there is upon it, so "highly exalted" is this name "Jesus;"—so highly, that some commentators and grammarians would have it the same with the name Jehovah. Then surely it is full of majesty and glory—*W* only, say they, is added either (i.) to make it effable, which was before ineffable; to make it possible and lawful to be uttered, which was before scarce either, so infinite was the majesty of that great name; or (ii.) to intimate to us that God now is become man,—*W* taken out of *W*<sup>h</sup> which signifies a man, and put into his own name of Jehovah; so making it Jehoshua, or Jeshua, which is our Jesus, and the name now given us to be saved by. Whether this criticism will hold or no, the name Emmanuel, which, says S. Matthew, was fulfilled in this of Jesus,—so fulfilled, that the Evangelist quotes the Prophet's words of calling him Emmanuel, fulfilled in the calling of him Jesus, as if both were the same,—that name, I say, has God's name in it to be sure. *El* is one of his, so with us it is there joined—enough to render it glorious: and the angel, telling us in his interpretation and reason of the name, that he was the "Son of the Highest," intimates it was a name of the highest majesty and glory. And what can we say upon it, less than burst out with the Psalmist into a holy exclamation, "O Lord, our Governor," O Lord, our Jesus, "how excellent is thy name in all the world!" It is all "clothed with majesty and honour"—it is "decked with light"—it "spreads out itself in the heavens like a curtain"—it "lays the beams of its chamber in the waters"—it "makes the cloud its chariot"—it comes riding to us "upon the wings of the wind;" the Holy Spirit breathes it full

Ps. ii. 6.

Ps. ii. 8.

Rev. xix.

16.

Phil. ii. 9.

Matt. i. 21

—23.

[Ps. viii. 1.]

[Ps. civ.

1—6.]

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upon us,—it “makes the angels its spirit” to convey it—it makes the “ministers of it a flaming fire”—it “laid the foundation of the earth”—it “covers the deep” with its wings—covers heaven and earth with the majesty of its glory.

IV. Yet so it might, and we never the better, but that, fourthly, it is a name of grace and mercy, as well as majesty and glory. “Jesus” is a word of which I may more justly say, as Tully<sup>c</sup> says of the Greek *σωτήρ*, that it contains so much *ut Latino uno verbo exprimi non possit*—“it cannot be expressed in any one Latin” or English “word,” or any one indeed besides itself. Mercy and grace dwell in it; it engrosses all, and without it there is none any where to be found; no mercy out of Jesus,—no grace but from Jesus,—

- Acts iv. 12. “no name under heaven given by which we can be saved,”  
Acts xix. 5. but the name of Jesus. We are “baptized in the name of Jesus.” We receive remission of our sins in the name of  
1 Cor. vi. 11. Jesus. “Ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus;”  
“ye are sanctified” in the name of the Lord Jesus, in the same verse. We are glorified by the name of Jesus; in that name we live,—in that name we die. To Jesus it is we run for grace and assistance whilst we live; to Jesus we cry for grace and mercy when we die; to Jesus we commit our spirits when we breathe them out. We can neither live nor die without our Jesus.
- Cant. i. 3. “Thy name,” says the spouse, “is ointment poured forth.” Now oil has three special uses: for light, for meat, for  
John i. 9. medicine. We have all in Jesus: (i.) He is “the light that lighteth every one that comes into the world.” (ii.) He  
John vi. 27. is the “meat that never perishes;” and feeds us up “to everlasting life.” (iii.) He is the cure and medicine of all our  
John vi. 54. maladies. He wants nothing that has Jesus, and he has nothing that wants him.

*Omnia Jesus nobis est si volumus*, &c. says S. Ambrose.<sup>d</sup> “Jesus is all things to us if we will.” *Curari desideras, medicus est; si febris æstuas, fons est; si gravaris iniquitate, justitia est; si auxilio indiges, virtus est; si mortem times, vita est; si ire desideras, via est; si tenebras fugis, lux est; si cibum*

<sup>c</sup> [Cicero, in Verrem, 2. 154. (63.)] &c. S. Ambros. De Virginibus, lib. iii.

<sup>d</sup> [“*Omnia Christus est nobis. Si. p. 110. D. ed. Paris. 1549.*”  
vulnus curare desideras, medicus est,

*appetis, alimentum est.* “Dost thou want health?—he is the great Physician. Art thou fried in the flames of a burning fever?—he is the well-spring to cool thy heat. Art thou overladen with thine iniquity?—he is thy righteousness to answer for thee. Dost thou want help?—he is ever ready at hand to succour thee. Art thou afraid of death?—he is thy life. Wouldst thou fain be going any whither?—he is the way. Art thou in darkness and fearest to stumble?—he is a light to thy feet, and a lantern to thy paths. Art thou hungry, or thirsty?—he is nourishment,” and food, and meat, and drink, the truest. What is it that thou desirest, that he is not, that this name will not afford thee? Why, it heals our sicknesses, it supports our infirmities, it supplies our necessities, it instructs our ignorances, it defends us from dangers, it conquers temptations, it inflames our coldnesses, it lightens our understandings, it rectifies our wills, it subdues our passions, it raises our spirits and drives away all wicked spirits from us; it ratifies our petitions, it confirms our blessings, and crowns all our prayers. In this name they end all that end well, “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” In thy name, O blessed Jesus, we obtain all that we obtain; through it we receive all that we receive; so that say we may well with that holy Father, *Jesus meus et omnia, Jesus meus et omnia*; “Jesus is my all,” Jesus he is and all. I have nothing else but him; I will have nothing else but him; and I have all if I have him.

V. And well may we now say, fifthly, it is a name of sweetness and comfort too, a sweet name indeed; ointment we told you it was, and a sweet ointment it is, that fills all the house with its precious odour; insomuch as it makes “the virgins therefore love thee,” says the spouse there, in the forecited place of the Canticles; *Mel in ore, in aure* [Cant. i. 3.] *melos, in corde jubilus*, says S. Bernard;<sup>e</sup> “It is honey in the mouth, it is music in the ear, it is melody in the heart.” The soul and all its powers, the body and all its members, may draw sweetness thence. Oh how sweetly sounds the name of Jesus, or a Saviour, to one in misery, to one in danger, to one in any calamity or distress! how does it rejoice the heart, and quicken the very bones! *Gyra et*

<sup>e</sup> [S. Bernard. super Cantica, Serm. xv.—p. 600. M. ed. Paris. 1640.]

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*regyra, versa et reversa*, says the devout S. Bernard,<sup>f</sup> *et non invenies pacem vel quietem nisi in solo Jesu. Quapropter si quiescere vis, pone Jesum ut signaculum super cor tuum, quia tranquillus ipse tranquillat omnia.* “Turn you, and turn you again, which way you will, which way you can, you can never find such peace and quiet as there is in Jesus; you will find none any where but in him. If you would fain therefore lay you down to rest in peace and comfort, set the seal of Jesus upon your heart, and all will be quiet;” no dreadful visions of the night shall affright you, no noonday’s trouble shall ever shake you. In the midst of that terrible storm of stones about S. Stephen’s ears, he but looking up and seeing Jesus, falls presently into a quiet slumber, and sweetly sleeps his last upon a hard heap of pebbles, more pleasantly than upon a bed of down or roses. For it is remarkable that the holy martyr there calls out upon the name of Jesus, rather than that of Christ, as if that only were the name to hold by in our last and greatest agonies. Nor is it to be forgotten that this name was set upon the cross, over our Saviour’s head, to teach us that it is a name which set upon the head of all our crosses will make them easy: the thought of Jesus, the reference to that holy name, the suffering under that, will give both a sweet odour and a pleasant relish to whatever it is we suffer. This “looking unto Jesus,” as the Apostle advises, will keep us from being weary, or fainting under them; will make us conquerors, “more than conquerors,” sure of our reward to sweeten all. For “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.” This same Jesus at the end fixes and fastens all; the love of God in Jesus will never leave us, never forsake us: keep but that devoutly in our hearts, and piously in our mouths, and we need fear nothing. Come what can, it sweetens all. Methinks S. Paul seems to find a kind of delight and sweetness in the very repeating it,—he so often uses it, begins and ends his epistles with it, garnishes them all through with it, scarce uses the very name of Christ without it; as

Heb. xii.  
2, 3.

Rom. viii.  
37.

Rom. viii.  
38, 39.

<sup>f</sup> [The Editor has been unable to verify this reference.]

if it even sweetened that, at least made it sweeter, and made the oil and chrism, with which Christ himself was anointed, run more merrily and freely to the very "skirts of his clothing." So that now, is there any one sad?—let him take Jesus into his heart, and he will take heart presently, and his joy will return upon him. Is any one fallen into a sin?—let him call heartily upon this name, and it will raise him up. Is any one troubled with hardness of heart, or dulness of spirit, or dejection of mind, or drowsiness in doing well?—in the meditation of this name, Jesus, a Saviour, all vanish and fly away. Who was ever in such fear that it could not strengthen? who in any danger that it could not deliver? who in so great anxiety that it did not quiet? who in any despair that it could not comfort and revive? That we are not sensible of it, is our own dulness and experience. If we would but seriously meditate upon it, we should quickly find it otherwise. Nothing would please us where this name were not; no discourse would please us, where it was not sometimes to be heard; no writings delight us, if this name were left out. All the sweetest rhetoric and neatest eloquence would be dull without it; our very prayers would seem imperfect, which ended not in this very name. Our days would look dark and heavy, which were not lightened with the name of the "Sun of Righteousness;" our nights but sad and dolesome, which we entered not with this sweet name, when we lay down without commending ourselves to God in it. Our very years would have been a thousand times more unhappy than even those which we have seen of late—would be nothing but trouble, discontent, and misery—did they not begin in this name, were they not yearly ushered in under the protection of it. Were not this, "His name was called Jesus," proclaimed to-day, to begin it with, we might call the year what we would, but good we could not call it. This setting forth Jesus, a Saviour, in the front, is that which saves us all the year through from all the unlucky and unfortunate days that men call in it. All the ill aspects of heaven, of all the stars and planets, grow vain and idle upon it, and our days run sweetly and pleasantly under it. The Psalmist seems thus to prophesy and foretell it: "Thou crownest the year with thy

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[Ps.cxxxiii.  
2.]

Ps.lxv.12.

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goodness, and thy clouds drop fatness." This day crowns the year, this name crowns the day; all our dwellings would be but a sad wilderness all the year without it; but they rejoice, and laugh and sing, hills and valleys too, being thus blessed in the entrance of the year with this happy name. I end this point—though so sweet that I part with it unwillingly—with a stave or two of devout Bernard's<sup>g</sup> jubilee or hymn upon it.

“ Nil canitur suavius, auditur nil jucundius,  
Nil cogitatur dulcius, quam Jesus Dei filius, &c.  
Jesu dulcedo cordium, fons vivus, lumen mentium,  
Excedens omne gaudium, et omne desiderium.  
Nec lingua valet dicere, nec litera exprimere,  
Expertus potest credere, quid sit Jesum diligere.”

There is nothing sweeter to be sung of, nothing more delightful to be heard, nothing more pleasant to be thought of, than this Jesus. Jesus, the delight of hearts, the light of minds, above all joy, above all we can desire; the tongue cannot tell, words cannot express, only he that feels it can believe, what sweetness is in Jesus. A long song he makes of it: it would be not amiss that we also made some short ones, some ejaculations and raptures now and then, upon it. Give us but a taste and relish of the sweetness of thy blessed name, O Jesus, and we shall also sing of it all the day long, and praise thy name for ever and ever, and sing with the same Father<sup>h</sup>—

“ Jesu decus angelicum,  
In aure dulce canticum,  
In ore mel mirificum,  
In corde nectar cœlicum.”

“O Jesu, thou joy and glory of men and angels, thy name is music in our ears, honey in our mouths, heavenly nectar to our hearts;” all sweetness, all pleasure to us throughout, wonderful sweet.

VI. Nay, wonderful in all, for it is a name of wonder and admiration. “Wonderful” is one of the names the prophet Isa. ix. 6. calls him by. And, 1, cabalistical wits have picked wonders out of it from every letter in all three languages.

(i.) In the Hebrew there are four letters ו, ש, י, and ע, and from

<sup>g</sup> [S. Bernard. Jubilus in commem. Domin. Passionis, p. 1659, ed. Paris. 1640.]

<sup>h</sup> [Ibid.]

the signification of these letters rise the mystery. *Jod* signifies a "hand," *schin*, a "tooth," *vau*, a "nail" or hook, and *ain*, an "eye:" the hand is the instrument of power, the teeth one of the instruments of voices and words, the nail an instrument in his passion, and the eye an instrument or great discoverer of mercy and pity. By all these he is our Jesus: by his power he overthrew our enemies, which would have slain us; by his word he revives our souls when they were slain and dead; by his passion he redeemed us from our sins; and for his own mercy's sake he did all these.

(ii.) In the Greek there are six letters,  $\text{I } \eta \sigma \omicron \upsilon \varsigma$ , which, according to the old device of veiling names in numbers, amount to the number of 888; the first letter is 10, the second 8, the third 200, the fourth 70, the fifth 400, and the last 200, which put all together, make up that number; and, by reason that eight is the number, they say, of the resurrection, (that falling out the eighth day, the day after the Sabbath, which is the seventh,) include this mystery, that in Jesus is our rest and resurrection to eternal quiet. The name of Antichrist is covered in the Revelation under the number of 666. Now, the six days are days of labour, pain, and trouble; the seventh is but a short day of rest whilst we are here; it is only the eighth day, that follows after all, which must close up all in everlasting glory, free from all labour, pain, and trouble; and this is found in no other name than in the name of Jesus, nor given us in any other. And that it may not pass for a mere fancy, the Cuman Sybil's verses thus foretold his name many years before.<sup>i</sup>

"Tunc ad mortales veniet, mortalibus ipsis  
In terris similis, natus patris omnipotentis,  
Corpore vestitus. Vocales quatuor autem  
Fert, non vocalesque duas, binûm geniorum.  
Sed quæ sit numeri totius summa docebo.  
Namque octo monadas, totidem decadas super ista,  
Atque hecatontadas octo, infidis significabit  
Hominibus [Humanis] nomen. Tu vero mente teneto."

"There shall come," says she, "into the earth the Son of the Almighty Father, clothed with flesh like unto us. Four vowels and two consonants shall his name consist of, and the

<sup>i</sup> [Sibyllina Oracula—opera et studio Servatii Gallæi. Lib. i. p. 178. Amstelodami. 4to. 1689.]

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number of them be eight units, eight tens, and eight hundred, that is, 888." So here is wonder upon wonder, to make it "Wonderful."

(iii.) In the Latin we have five letters, *J E S U S*, and by the old short way of writing among the Romans, of the first letter for the whole word, the subtle fanciers of the Cabala will tell us these five letters in the name of Jesus intimate the fulness of its perfection—that it is *jucundum, efficax, sanctum, verum, salutiferum*, that it is full of joy, efficacy, sanctity, verity, and salvation. Thus, you see, we have so rendered it as to find the mystery in [the] English name—that it is a sweet and *joyful* name—an *efficacious* and powerful name—a *sanctifying* and justifying name—a name *verifying* all types, and prophecies, and promises—and a *salutiferous* and saving name too. Five glories to himself, five benefits to us by it; or, as I may have otherwise as fully expressed them, Justification, Election, Sanctification, Victory, and Salvation.

And now let the Jew come with his *rasche theboth*, with his first letter for a word, and write יֵשׁוּ for Jesus—meaning thereby maliciously יִמַח שְׁמוֹ וְזָכְרוּ, "Let his name be blotted out;"—it will fall upon himself. His name will surely be blotted out of the book of life, who goes about to abuse this, or who has not his portion in the name of Jesus.

I should add one mystery more: *ψ*, which is in the Hebrew name of Jesus, is, say they, a letter with three equal fangs joined all together, and may denote the Trinity, where the three persons are equal and all united. And then we have a mysterious name indeed, the whole Godhead, Trinity in Unity, in it; and yet a *γ* besides, as we told you before, for the humanity. So a perfect Saviour of both natures, expressed perfectly in his name; God and man, and all the whole Trinity employed in the business of our salvation. A wonderful name indeed.

But, 2, it is also wonderful without a cabala; full of plain wonders, as well as of mysterious.

(i.) It is a new name; and yet Joshua the prince, and Joshua the priest, and Joshua or Jesus the son of Syrach, had the same name all; and is it not then a wonder that it should yet be new? But theirs were given them by men, this him by an angel; theirs signified only a temporal deli-



verance, this spiritual and temporal both : theirs a particular, this a general salvation : theirs, lastly, merely *signified*, this very name *effects* also our salvation and deliverance.

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Rev. xix.  
12.

(ii.) A name that no man knew but himself. No man can tell the wonders of it. No man can pronounce it right, neither, without an immediate assistance from above. "No man can say, the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost."

1 Cor. xii.  
3.

(iii.) The wonders that are wrought by it make it truly wonderful, that in it, or by it, or through it, such mighty things both are and have been done, even by men that only outwardly professed it and only sounded the letters of it, as you have heard already.

(iv.) It is "wonderful," lastly, sure, that it should force even the devils to bow down to it ; not only depart their lodgings to give it room, but even be compelled themselves to worship it. Yet so we find it ; those "things under the earth," that is, the devils also, so doing and confessing.

Phil. ii. 10.

VII. And shall we now think much to do as much—to do what all things in heaven and earth, and under it, even in hell too, do to it—bow the knee and worship it ? It is a name, says the Apostle, "given" him to that purpose, for us to pay our duty and homage to. It is a name of blessing and adoration, says our last point, *Venerandum nomen Jesu* ; a name to be blessed and adored.

Phil. ii. 9.

First (i.) then, bless we God for his holy name, for the benefits and comfort we receive by it.

Bless we (ii.)-the name itself, "praise," and "magnify," and "glorify," and "give thanks unto it." They are the expressions of the holy pen, they are not mine : so you have authority enough to do it, if you think the Holy Ghost knows how to speak.

Ps. cxlv. 2 ;  
cxxxviii. 2 ;  
lxxxvi. 9 ;  
cxl. 13.

Bless we (iii.) ourselves in this name, when we lie down and when we rise up ; when we go out and when we come in : for in thy name, O blessed Jesu, shall we "tread them under that rise up against us : " nothing shall be able to hurt or damage us, when we put ourselves under the protection of it. If afflictions and troubles press hard upon thee, and embitter all thy days, this name is the tree whose wood will sweeten the bitterest waters : cut down a branch of it and throw it in. Do thy sins and conscience rend and tear thee ?

[Ps. xlv. 5.]

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this name is the oil to lenify and cure them: pour it out upon them. Art thou to encounter death itself? in this name thou shalt overcome it, deliver up thy soul but in it. It is a name of truth and fidelity: thou canst not distrust it. It is a name of might and power: thou mayest rest upon it. It is a name of majesty and glory: thou must exalt it. It is a name of grace and mercy: thou must praise him for it, and commit thyself unto it. It is a name of sweetness and comfort: thou must "rejoice and be glad in it." It is a name of wonder and admiration: thou must admire and declare it. It is a name of adoration: thou must now adore it too.

2. "Bow the knee," says the Apostle, or bow down at it.
- Ps. cxi. 9. "Holy and reverend is his name," says the Psalmist. And if reverend, it may be revered, it may be worshipped. I speak not of the syllables and letters, but of the sense. When we hear the name of Jesus, I suppose there is none so little Christian but that he will confess I may lift up my heart and praise him for the mercy and benefits that I remember and am put in mind of by it; and where I bow my soul, may I not bow my body? The text is plain enough,
- Phil. ii. 10. that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow:" should, though they do not, or else shall, when they will not, and where they would not,—when they come among those that are "under the earth." And was ever more need to do it than in an age where it is doubted whether he be or God or Saviour—where it is questioned so often whether there were ever such a name to be saved by, and we not rather saved every one in his own? Is it not high time to revive this honour to it, that the world may know "we acknowledge him" to be God, "to be the Lord," and are not ashamed to confess it? But to sift the matter, and speak home, Is this doing any other than only one particular way of praising, glorifying, and magnifying of the name? and are not all the Scriptures expressions so for doing that, and for declaring it? and is this any more? How ordinary are the phrases of exalting, and blessing, and praising, and sanctifying of his
- Ps. xxix. 2. name, and making of it to be glorious—of a "glory due to
- Ps. lxi. 2. his name" of the "honour of his name"—to be sung forth! And sure the Scripture knows how to speak. And though the name of Jesus be not, I confess, directly and immediately

meant in those places, but the name of God ; yet thus much we have certain thence, that (i.) the honour done to his name, be it by words or any expression else,—for all our outward expressions have the same ground and reason,—are duties of the text : and that (ii.) the name of Jesus being now the name of God, it can be no superstition to do the same to that. Now the Jews, I must tell you, never mentioned the name of God without an adoration and a *Benedictus* ; whenever they mentioned it they bowed themselves, and added always, “blessed for ever,” or “blessed for evermore,” as you have S. Paul, Rom. i. 25 ; 2 Cor. i. 3 ; Ephes. i. 3 ; 1 Pet. i. 3 ; 2 Cor. xi. 31 ; 1 Tim. vi. 15 ; nay, doing no less to the name of Christ, Rom. ix. 5, mentioning him there with the same words after it. So that it is but reasonable to suppose the Christians should do as much to the name of Jesus ; thereby to possess themselves that he was God, and to possess others against those rising heresies that were then starting up to rob him of the honour of his Godhead. And I cannot but fear that such as obstinately deny this worship to it, do as inwardly grudge at that article of faith that believes him to be God ; and are little better in their hearts than old Arians or new Socinians, or well looking towards them. But I add no more ; only remember you, that we daily cry out in the *Te Deum*, “We worship thy name ever world without end :” and if we do not, why do we say so ?

But say that or not, say good of it, however, I hope we will ; and, as David’s phrase is, “speak good of his name :” *omnia bona dicere*, say all the good, speak of all the good, we receive by it.

3. Say good of it, and make others say good of it ; not give others occasion to speak ill of it, “to blaspheme that holy name by which we are called ;” not blaspheme it ourselves, neither by our words nor by our actions ; not blaspheme it by oaths and curses ; not blaspheme it by our evil lives ; not use it irreverently, not speak of it slightly, not cause others to say, Lo, these are your Christians, these your professors to worship Jesus—men that cannot so much as speak well of his name, which they pretend to be saved by ! Carry ourselves we will, I hope, as men that have a portion in Jesus, a share in salvation.

[James ii.  
7.]

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4. Praise his name and give thanks to it; that, sure, nobody will deny him, praise and thanks for what he has done by it.

And, 5, love his name we must too; love to think of it, love to be speaking of it. It is reported of the holy Ignatius, that the name of Jesus was so frequently in his mouth, that it was even found written in his heart when he was dead, found written there in golden characters: and it is affirmed by good authors. Oh that this sweet name were written in our hearts too while we are living; that it were daily meditated upon and heartily loved by us as it should!

John xiv.  
13, 14.

Acts vii. 59.

We would then, 6, call upon it oftener than we do, be ever calling on it. We have a promise to be heard for "whatever we ask in it;" and we have an authentic example, Christ's first martyr, so to do. Be we not afraid, then, of the tongues of foolish men, but open we the morning and shut in the evening with it, begin and end our days with it in our mouths.

[Col. iii.  
17.]

7. Nay, lastly, begin and end all our works and actions with it, "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," "whatsoever we do in word or deed," says the Apostle there: we can neither begin nor end better. How sweet is the name of Jesus, or a Saviour, at the onset of our work, to save and keep us from all miscarriage in it! How sweet is it, again, when we have done, if we can say Jesus again; that we have [been] saved by it, been saved in it, and shall one day be saved through it; that Jesus runs through all with us! So then remember we to begin and end all in Jesus; the New Testament, the covenant of our salvation, begins and ends so. "The generation of Jesus," so it begins; and "Come, Lord Jesus!" so it ends. May we all end so too; and when we are going hence, commend our spirits, with S. Stephen, into his hands; and when he comes, may he receive them to sing praises and allelujahs to his blessed name, amidst the saints and angels, in his glorious kingdom for ever.

# THE FIRST SERMON

ON THE

## EPIPHANY.

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S. MATTHEW ii. 11.

*And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him : and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts ; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*

A DAY, this, of the luckiest aspect ; a text, this, of the happiest success that ever travellers met with : never had journey better success, never pains more happily bestowed than in the text, and on the day. Christ, the end of all our travel, the full reward of all our pains, was here this day found by the "wise men," after a twelve days' journey. And what wise man would not think himself well paid for all his labour, were it not so many days, but years—not so many years, but ages—so that after all he might bless his eyes with this happy sight ?

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Well may these fortunate travellers in thankfulness fall down and worship and offer presents. Wise men could do no other ; and we, if we be wise, will do no less. For ordinary and common blessings we bend our knees and present our offerings to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; but for the Lord Jesus Christ himself, it is not bending, but falling down—not offering of all praises only, but praises and offerings of all—ourselves, and all we have—which can any way look like a thankfulness correspondent to so great a benefit.

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This is a mercy not to be forgotten : this day especially so falling out, affordeth us by its double holiness, as our Lord's Day and our Lord's Epiphany, an invincible occasion to remember and praise him in it.

Double holiness, said I? Treble, I may say, and more. Three Epiphanies the Church reckons upon this day—Christ three sundry and divers ways manifested to the world:—(1.) The first to the “wise men,” strangers and Gentiles, by a star; (2.) The second to the Jews, by a voice from heaven, and the Holy Ghost descending thence in form of a dove upon him at his baptism; (3.) The third to his own countrymen of Galilee, at the marriage at Cana, by his first miracle. All three commemorated upon this day; the first in the Gospel, the other two in the two Second Lessons for the day.

Of these we have pitched upon the first as most concerning us, who once were Gentiles as well as they, who this day, by the conduct of a star, were brought into the house, and into the presence of their new-born King and Saviour. We then, as men concerned in these first forerunners of our [Gal. ii.15.] faith, the first-fruits of us “sinners of the Gentiles,” are to take notice of their good behaviour, as well as their good fortune; as well how they carried themselves to Christ when they had found him, as how they found him; as well how they carried themselves towards Christ, as how they were brought to him.

Four points we have of it:—they “came,” they “saw,” they “worshipped,” they “offered.” This is the sum of this day's solemnity, of the “wise men's” religion, and should be of ours. Such service was done then, such service is due still to Christ the Saviour.

So four parts we have of the text:—

I. The wise men's coming: “And when they were come into the house.”

II. Their seeing: “They saw the child with Mary his mother.”

III. Their worship: “They fell down and worshipped.”

IV. Their offering: “When they had opened their treasures they presented to him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.”

I. Their coming, their seeing, their worshipping, their offering, are the parts of the text, and shall be of my comment and discourse. I enter first upon their *intranses*, “and when they were come into the house.” Their coming, that first: where we are to consider: (1.) The parties who; (2.) Their coming, what; (3.) Their place, whither.

(1.) Who they were, the first verse expresses: “wise men from the East.” Wise men, and come so far to see a child in his mother’s arms! Certainly, either the child is some extraordinary great personage, whose birth also much concerns them, or they have lost their wits, to take so long and troublesome a journey to so little purpose. A great personage indeed, and this the wisest act that ever yet they did in all their lives. The “King of the Jews” they style him: the Messiah they meant; one, indeed, that should be “born King of the Jews,” but should be made King of the Gentiles too. “In him shall the Gentiles trust,” saith the Prophet; rule over them as well as those he should; protect and “save them too from their enemies, out of the hands of all that hate them.” And to get interest in him betimes, to get to be among the first of those that submit to him and bring him presents, was the wisest piece of all the wisdom of either East or West.

[Isai. xlii.  
4, as quoted  
Matt. xii.  
21.]  
[Lucei. 71.]

“Wise men” the Scripture calls them; “wise men” this act proves them, had they never done any thing wise before; and “wise men” they shall ever be in holy language—whatsoever the world esteem or style them—who at any time think no pains or cost too much to come to Christ, to come and worship him.

*Máγoi* the Greek names them; a word which latter ages have always, or most commonly, taken in the worsen sense, for men addicted to unlawful arts,—as we sometimes in our own tongue also call such wise men, whom we deem little better than wizards. The word had not that acception from the first; it was time, and some men’s ill practices, that corrupted it; but be it what it will, this we may learn by it, that (i.) God, *qui suaviter disponit omnia*, the sweet Disposer of all things, does often draw a testimony to his truth, even from the mouth of falsehood,—makes even the devils to confess it. That (ii.) he sometimes calls men to himself by the

[Wisdom  
viii. 1.]

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violence of their own principles, be they true or false : makes some star or other sometimes guide those great doaters on astrology beyond what is right—as here to Christ's cradle, so at other times to his chair, to learn of him, and become disciples : makes them sometimes burn their books to study his : makes the heretic sometimes to confute himself by his own wandering principles into the truth again : makes the perverse and obstinate man weary himself at last into Christian meekness and moderation, by the wearisomeness of his own perverseness. Thus the wisest may be caught in his own net ere he is aware,—if God please to do him so much good,—and wound into a truth or a piece of piety, which he so much struggled to avoid. Nay (iii.) by these “wise men's” coming, such kind of “wise men from the East,” you may see there is no sin so enormous, of so orient a dye—no practice or trade of it so strong, though taken up at the east or sunrise of our days—which grace cannot overcome ; no sinner so great, from the east to the west, but the grace of Christ can either draw, or win, or catch, or force to him.

Antiquity delivers these “wise men” for kings, or some great personages, to us. *Magi*, both in Persia and Arabia, was a name of honour, and the men princes at the least. So that, as before we told you, sinners—great sinners—might by their example come to Christ,—God often brought them,—so we now must tell you that persons of honour, the greatest persons, must not think much of a little pains or a few days' journey upon Christ's errand, or to do him service, nay, but to pay their worship to him. He that shall consider our days, and our addresses now to God and his Son Christ, and compare them with what these “wise men” did here, will say we are the heathen, these the Christians ;—we mere

[Ephes. ii.  
12.]

Arabians, “strangers from the covenant of grace,” men born and bred in the wilderness of Arabia, where there is nothing but perpetual drought, no heavenly shower of grace ever comes ; these only believers ;—we the great persons, that Christ himself must wait upon if he will be seen ; these the humble servants, that will undertake any thing to see him.

(2.) And here it seems, if we now, secondly, examine their coming, they thought much of no pains or care to find him out. They came into the house.



Many a weary step had they trod, many a fruitless question had they asked, many an unprofitable search had they made to find him ; and, behold, yet they will not give over. Twelve days it had cost them to come to Jerusalem, through the Arabian deserts, over the Arabian mountains, both Arabia Deserta and Petraea : the difficulty of the way, through sands and rocks—the danger of the passages, being infamous for robbers—the cold and hardness of a deep winter season—the hazard and inconvenience of so long, so hard, so unseasonable, so dangerous, and I may say so uncertain a journey, could no whit deter them from their purpose : to Jerusalem they will, through all these difficulties. But after all this pains, to lose the star that guided them,—to hear nothing at Jerusalem of him they sought,—to be left, after all this, at a loss in that very place they only could expect to find him, and hear nothing there but a piece of an obscure prophecy, without date or time,—to be left now to a mere wild-goose search, or a new knight-errantry, and yet still to continue in their search,—is an extreme high piece both of faith and love, that considers no difficulties, that thinks much of no pains ; that, maugre all, will set afresh upon the pursuit ; that will be overcome with nothing ; is resolved, come what will, to find what they believe and desire ; such a piece of faith and love that we, later Christians, cannot parallel.

How would a winter journey scare us from our faith ! A cold or rainy morning will do it ; a little snow, or wind, or rain, or cold, will easily keep us from coming to the house where Jesus is, from coming out to worship him. How would so long a voyage make us faint to hear of it ! How would the least danger turn us back from the house of God ! Alas ! should it have been our cases, which was theirs here— if we could not presently have found him at Jerusalem, the royal city, or had we lost the star that led us—how had we sat down in sorrow, or returned in despair ! We would have thus reasoned with ourselves:—Alas ! we are come hither and have lost our labour : certainly, had this king been born, it would have been in the royal city, or there certainly the news had been ; but there we hear of no such matter ; there neither any believes, or regards, or thinks of such a birth. What then do we do here enquiring, seeing his own people

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so much neglect it? Surely the star that led us hither was but a false fire of fancy, and we are quite misled; nay, and it appears no more, so that if we would still go on our wanderings, we know not whither: we had best return. Thus should we have reasoned ourselves from Christ, fainted, and given over quite. It is the fashion with us thus to reason ourselves out of our devotion and religion. It is the fashion too, to object anything to save our pains in Christ's business. Others' customs, or others' negligences, or others' ignorance, are sufficient excuses to authorize ours: and if perchance we want a guide (though every man now thinks himself sufficient to guide and direct himself in all points of his religion, yet even this he cares not for, this he refuses and rejects), shall yet serve him for an excuse for his negligence and irreligion; nay, God himself shall sometimes bear the blame: his taking away, or else not giving us, a star and light to guide and lead us, his not giving us sufficient grace, shall be pretended the cause why we come not to him. When did not our own coldness more chill our joints than the cold of winter? Were we not afraid of every puff of wind when we are called to do any good—did not the fear of I know not what, only fancied and imagined dangers, make us cowards in our religion—did we not fondly reason ourselves out of our patient expectance of Christ—did we not guide ourselves more by the fashions, customs, and ignorances of others, than by the constancy of that which is only just and good—did we not forsake our guides, while we prefer our own carnal reasons, interests, and respects; and lose the star, the guide that Heaven had sent us to conduct us, by going to Jerusalem, by addicting ourselves to the vanity and fashion of court and city—by asking counsel of Herod, of Scribes and Pharisees, mere politicians and pretenders of piety and religion—or Jewish priests, men addicted wholly to their own way, to judaizing observations, judaizing, sabbatizing Christians;—were it not for these our doings and compliances with flesh and blood, the star would not fail to guide us; God's grace would shine unto us; "the day-star would arise in" all "our hearts," and conduct us happily and safely too into the house where we should truly find Christ. The truth is, if our coming to Christ, if our religion, may cost us nothing—

[2 Pet. i.  
19.]

nor pains, nor cost, nor cold, nor heat, nor labour, nor time, nor hurt, nor hazard, nor enquiry, nor search,—then it may be we will be content to give Christ a visit, and entertain his faith and worship, but not else; if it may not be had, nor Christ come to, without so much ado, let him go—let all go: so we may sit at ease and quiet in our warm nests, come of Christ's worship and of his house what will.

Yet thither it is, (3.) to his house, that these wise men make with all their eagerness. Many stately buildings and royal palaces, no doubt, they had seen by the way, fitter far for a king to be born in than the inn they found him in; but at these they stay not; they and their star rest not any where but at this house: here indeed they may, both heaven and earth, set up their rest; this house truly the house of God, which now contained the God of heaven and earth.

To teach us that we are not to look to outward appearances, nor judge always according to sight. Christ may lie in the poorest cottage, in the meanest inn, as soon as in the highest palace; nay, in the low, humble soul, in the beggar's soul as well as in the king's—whose “bodily presence,” as [2 Cor. x. 10.] S. Paul speaks, “is weak, and whose speech contemptible”—you shall sooner find him than under the gilded roofs of a vain-glorious virtue, or a self-conceited and boasted religion and piety.

Indeed, wherever the star stands, whatever house the heavenly light encompasses, there must we alight and enter; we must not think much of the meanest dwelling that heaven points out, of the poorest condition that God designs us to. That house is glorious enough, that Christ is in; that habitation and condition happiest, how poorly soever it appear, which the finger of God directs us to, and the light of his countenance shines on and encompasses. O my soul! enter there always, O my soul, where God points out unto thee, where the heavenly light shines over thee, however earth look on thee. Thou shalt find more contentment in a stable, amongst beasts, in the meanest employment, than in the highest offices of state and honour; in an inn, amongst strangers, than with thy brethren and kinsfolk at home; in a thatched hovel, in the poorest, hardest lodging, meanest dwelling, and lowest condition, than in the fairest house, the sweetest seats, the

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softest bed, the most plentiful estate, if God, by his special finger or star of providence, guides thee to it out of his secret wisdom, and Christ be with thee in it.

I do not wonder interpreters make this house the church of God. It is the gate and court of heaven, now Christ is here ; angels sing round about it, all holiness is in it, now Christ is in it: here all the creatures, reasonable and unreasonable, come to pay their homage to their Creator ; hither they come, even from the ends of the earth, to their devotions ;

[Mark xi. 17.] “ a house of prayer ” it is “ for all people,” Gentiles and all ; hither they come to worship, hither they come to pay their offerings and their vows ; here is the shrine and altar, the glorious Virgin’s lap, where the Saviour of the world is laid to be adored and worshipped ; here stands the star for tapers to give it light ; and here the wise men this day become the priests—worship and offer, present prayers and praises, for themselves and the whole world besides ; all people of the world, high and low, learned and ignorant, represented by them.

This house, then, is a place well worth the coming to ; here might the wise men well end all their journeys, sit down and rest where the Eternal Wisdom keeps its residence ; here may the greatest potentates not disdain to stoop and enter, where the “ King of kings and Lord of lords ” vouchsafes to make his lodging. Here only, in this blessed inn where Christ is lodged, can the soul truly rest ; no wisdom but what is here, no greatness but what is his, no house but what is sanctified by his presence, no bed but where his right hand becomes our pillow, and his left our covering, can satisfy the wearied soul, or give so much as one wink of rest, or quiet, or contentment to it. Well may the wise men pass by all other houses to come to this ; slight all the magnificent palaces in the earth, to take up a lodging in this inn ; leave all other sights for this blessed sight, and count nothing worth the seeing till they see him—nothing but him.

Wise men will do so still ; esteem God’s house, how mean soever it appear, above all houses, his sight above all that

[Phil.iii.8.] can be seen ; “ count all things dross and dung, so they may gain Christ,” one glance of him, one beam of his glorious brightness. Any place shall be worth being in,

where he is ; no journey tedious, that at last brings to him ; no way troublesome, that leads to him ; rocks and mountains easier than flowery plains and meadows ; sands and deserts pleasanter than the spicy gardens of the East, and the Hesperian orchards ; ice, and snows, and rain, and hail, and stormy weather,—the greatest hardships that all these lower regions can pour upon us,—more delightful than continual summers and perpetual springs, than uninterrupted sunshines and gaudy days, if by those endurances we may at length arrive at the feet of Christ. All the injuries and inconveniences that can befall us here, are not worth the naming, so they bring us to our Saviour. O my God ! let me lose all, so I may find him ; let me want anything, so I want not him ; let me have nothing, so I may have him. He is the only thing the wise men sought, and he it is that thus seeking they found and saw at last. “ And when they were come into the house, they found the young Child with Mary his mother.”

II. And he was a thing worth finding ; and found he would be, because they sought him ; will be so of us, if we seek him diligently, carefully, and constantly, as they did here. For the words here may as well carry the title of a reward for their pains, as of a posture of their faith. Some ancient copies (which the Latin follows) read *εὑρον*, *invenerunt*, “ they found the Child ;” and thus it seems to speak their success, and the recompense of their labour in the search. Others, they say, as ancient, read *εἶδον*, *viderunt*, “ they saw the Child ;” which our English follows, and, though there be no great difference, or matter of distinction, yet, being authorized by our Church, we are willing to make use of, as being of a larger capacity, as well somewhat expressing the wise men’s carriage as their success ; for we intend to handle both.

(1.) As it presents to us their success—a success sufficient to encourage us all to turn perpetual travellers to find Christ in the flesh. Christ a “ child ;” to find him as soon almost as he can be found—a young child ; not yet full a fortnight old ; to find him “ with his mother” too—Christ and the devout soul together, Christ and the soul united ; to find him and “ Mary” together—Christ exalted in our hearts (for so “ Mary” signifies, exalted), his kingdom and power set up and exalted in our hearts,—to find all this, all this for one poor journey, for the

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pains and labour of so small a number of days and hours, is a success than which no journey, no undertaking, can have better; yet all these are here.

i. They found, first, an Incarnate God—their Saviour in the flesh—a sight that the very “angels desire to look into,” bow down to look into, says S. Peter; a sight which all the patriarchs and prophets still “desired to see,” but could not; a sight which made the very angels leave their heaven to come down and see, and seeing, sing for joy; a sight which made the stars rejoice “in their courses,” and wait upon poor mortals’ steps, that they might be admitted to behold it. For indeed, what wonder ever saw they like it? He that “spans the heavens” become a span breadth himself; the Eternal Word without a word to say; the Infinite Wisdom become childishness; the Incomprehensible Greatness wrapped up in swaddling-bands; He that “fills heaven and earth,” not big enough to fill a virgin’s arms; He that “opens his hand and fills all things living with” his “plenteousness,” sucking himself a little milk out of his mother’s breasts to live by; He poor himself, who makes all rich; God, a man! Eternity, a child! Who would not travel the world over to see this miracle, and think his time and pains never spent so well as then?

[1 Pet. i. 12.]  
[Matt. xiii. 17.]  
[Judges v. 20.]  
[Isa. xlvi. 13.]  
[Jer. xxiii. 24.]  
[Ps. cxlv. 16.]

ii. But, secondly, to have the first sight almost, as it were, of so happy a wonder, adds something to the glory of the success: to be admitted among the first into Christ’s presence, to be so honoured as to be of the number of his first attendants, to be with him whilst he is yet a child, to wait upon this new-born King and have relation to him from his cradle; to meet with him so young, so tender, so pliable, so easy to be approached and dealt with,—is a success of so much honour and obligation, that we may expect anything from his hands, being of his first followers and servants in so tender a condition towards us.

iii. Thus far the journey seems sufficiently successful; yet not only to find a Saviour in the flesh, so nearly allied unto us, and so soon almost as he is so made to us, but also, thirdly, to find him in his mother’s arms, fast clasped within our souls, (for every faithful soul is Christ’s mother, as well as blessed Mary—conceives, and brings him forth, and nou-

rishes him, as well as she,—the soul spiritually, as she naturally,)—to find, I say, Christ thus conceived and brought forth in our own souls,—this Child in our own arms too, “Christ with us,” is that indeed which makes this finding worth the finding, this sight worth seeing. Should we only “know Christ after the flesh,” though amongst the first that knew him—had we no more than an outward sight; did we not see him with his mother in a mysterious sense, in the soul and spirit—born in our souls, they also made his mothers (as all that believe and do God’s will, he himself calls so),—unless we thus see him, our success will be but lame and poor, no better than those Jews that saw and perished.

[2 Cor. v.  
16.]Mark iii.  
34, 35.

iv. Yet the success here is one degree beyond it: “They saw the young Child and Mary his mother.” Mary signifies exalted: to see him with his mother Mary, is to see his exalted mother, the soul exalted by his presence, his power and kingdom exalted in it; to see this king in his kingdom, to see Christ reigning and ruling in us, this new-born king triumphing in our souls, our understandings, wills, affections, and all our faculties subjected to him: and this is a good sight, wherever we see it. This is, then, the sum of the success we shall find of our travel after him. (i.) The perfect sight, and (ii.) the easy knowledge of him; (iii.) our union with him; (iv.) our exaltation by him. He will reveal himself to them that seek him, discover himself betimes to them that carefully search for him, unite himself and be with them that follow after him, and set up his throne and excellency in them that find him.

(2.) Indeed this, now secondly, is worth the seeing, worthy the beholding. They “saw” it; (i.) they saw it and admired it: their seeing him, it was “the Lord’s doing,” and could not but be “admirable in their eyes.” They could not certainly but admire and wonder to see the star had pointed out the Child, so poor a Child; a king in rags; so glorious a Child, so blessed a mother, in so poor a plight. Saw it, and “fell down,” say the next words: fell down in amazement and astonishment, it may be, as well as any way else, to see so great a mercy, so strange a sight.

[Ps. cxviii.  
23.]

(ii.) Yet saw it, secondly, and believed: saw by the eye of faith, as much as by the eye of sense; believed presently

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it was the child they sought, and therefore “fell down and worshipped;” which certainly they would not have done, had they not believed. Indeed, the strange guide that conducted them, the resolution for the place at least (Bethlehem by name) which they met with at Jerusalem, the new return of their lost starry leader as soon as they were got out of Jerusalem, the very standing and fixing of itself (which all the while before was in perpetual motion) over this very place where they found this Child, might sufficiently assure them that it was his star, that he was the Lord whom this star attended; so that they might not only believe out of credulity, or an impatient desire to be at their journey’s end, or at home again, but out of prudence, as it became wise men, who lay all together ere they fix their faith. Saw and believed: that is the second.

(iii.) Saw it and were glad too; that is a third adjunct of seeing such a sight. If the seeing of the star again, in the former verse, made them to “rejoice with exceeding great joy,” which could only confirm their hope to find him, how exceedingly exceeding great joy, *gaudio valde valde magno*, must it needs be they rejoiced with, when they found him!

(iv.) Saw and worshipped, that should be a fourth; but it is the third and next part of the text, which the time and season now forbids me to look into. Only this to recapitulate the rest and apply it home.

1. Behold we, first, and admire this sight, the mercy and goodness of our Saviour, thus for us to become a child; to take upon him the infirmities and inconveniences of our nature, even from its first weaknesses; to make himself so accessible to us, so easy to be approached; to vouchsafe to be daily conceived again and born in our souls and spirits; to take upon him besides the rule and guidance over us; to set up his throne in so poor a place as our unworthy souls, amidst so much frailness and unpreparedness—souls more filthy and stinking, when he first comes to them, than the very stable he was born in, amidst the dung and ordure of the beasts. Behold and see if there were ever goodness like this goodness; see and admire it.

2. See, secondly, and believe it too. The most incredulous



lous among the apostles, S. Thomas, when he once saw, he soon believed. See but how the star moves and fixes, and even points us to him; how readily the wise men entertain the sight, and fall down and worship; see how all the prophecies concur and meet in this young Child; see how the world is overspread with this faith, and has so many hundred years continued it, notwithstanding so many persecutions,—and I shall not need to persuade you to play the wise men too, and upon so many testimonies and evidences believe the same.

3. Yet I exhort you, thirdly, to see it and be glad. Heaven rejoiced at it, and the earth was glad; angels sang proper anthems for it; the shepherds joyfully tell it out; the wise men here scarce know how to carry themselves for joy—open all their treasures, and fling about their gifts, to express their gladness. Only Herod and the Jews, Herodian Jews, Jerusalem Jews, men addicted wholly to the pomps and pride and vanity of the city, are troubled at the birth of so humble a Saviour. It is a day of rejoicing, this. It is the Lord's day, "the day which the Lord hath made: let us rejoice," says the Psalmist, "and be glad in it." It is the day of showing himself to us Gentiles, who "sat in darkness and the shadow of death." It is fit, therefore, we should be glad for so great a blessing. It is the day he was baptized in, and that ever useth to be among us a joyful day: great joy and feasting at it. It is a marriage-day; the day he wrought his first miracle upon, when he turned water into wine, on purpose to make us merry—the water of tears into the wine of joy. So many blessings together, so many good tidings in one day,—so many glorious things, so bright a Star, so glorious a Child, so blessed a mother, so miraculous a baptism, so cheerful a miracle, so triumphant a resurrection, all together on one day,—must not, cannot be found out, cannot be seen of Christians so much concerned in them all, without perpetual songs of gladness and rejoicing.

I should leave you here, but that we must needs yet see a little, one step farther. See and learn: Is Christ our Saviour here a Child?—See then that we "become like little children," in humility and innocence; we shall not see

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heaven, nor him in it, else, he tells us. Is he so little?—  
 Let not us then think much to be accounted so, to be made  
 so. Is he content to lie in his mother's lap?—Let not us  
 grudge, then, if we have no where else to lie than upon our  
 mother earth. Is he content to partake our weaknesses?—  
 Let not us then be impatient when we fall into sicknesses  
 and infirmities. Is he a Child to be adored and worshipped?  
 —Let us then be careful in all places and at all times to  
 adore and worship him. Will he accept our presents?—  
 Let us present our souls and bodies and estates and all to  
 his service; lay all our treasures at his feet, worship him  
 with all that is precious to us, think nothing too precious  
 or good for him. In a word, is he to be found? is he so easy  
 [Isa. lv. 6.] to have access to?—"Call we then upon him whilst he is  
 near, and seek we him while he may be found;" seek we him  
 how he will be found; for always he will not, nor every way  
 he will not.

Follow therefore the wise men's steps: so soon as ever  
 "the day-star arises in our hearts," so soon as ever any  
 heavenly light of holy inspiration shines into us, begin we  
 to set forward, get we out of our own countries, from our  
 sins; arm ourselves against all temptations, against the  
 pleasures, the perfumes, and spices of Arabia Felix—of  
 prosperity and honour; against the sandy deserts of Arabia  
 Deserta—against dryness and dulness, commonly the first  
 temptations that we meet with in our way to Christ, that  
 make us to have little or no relish of it; against the rocky  
 and thievish passages of Arabia Petraea; against the rocks  
 of temptations and afflictions; against the subtleties, and  
 treacheries, and violences of the suggestion of ill companions,  
 wherewith the devil doth waylay us. Get we up to Jeru-  
 salem, the holy city; enquire we there of the word of God,  
 [Mal. ii. 7.] and at "the mouth of the Priest," (which God hath said  
 "shall preserve knowledge" for others' good, whatever for  
 his own;)—ask, I say, and enquire there how we shall find  
 out Christ; rejoice we ever in the light of heaven, walk by  
 it, make much of it, of all holy motions and inspirations;  
 continue in it; and let neither the tediousness of the way,  
 nor the frailty of our own flesh, nor any stormy or tempe-  
 tuous weather, any cross or trouble, nor any winter coldness

of our own dull bosoms, nor sometimes the loss even of our guides, (those heavenly and spiritual comforts, which God sometimes in his secret wisdom withdraws from us,) nor any carnal reason or interest, deter us from our search after this Babe of heaven, after Christ the Saviour; but go on constantly and cheerfully through all these difficulties to the house of God, to the Church of Christ: then shall we be sure to find him, find him "with his mother"—our souls find him, our affections embrace him; then will he be exalted in us, and exalt us from this house, the Church militant below, to that above, the Church triumphant in the heavens; this Child make us grow from grace to grace, till we come to the perfect stature of himself, here of grace, and hereafter of eternal glory:

## THE SECOND SERMON

ON THE

### EPIPHANY.

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S. MATTHEW ii. 10.

*When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.*

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XIX.

“JOY,” and “great joy,” and “exceeding great joy!” What is the matter? Truly, no great matter, one would think—only a star appearing. Who is it then that are so much rejoiced at it? May we not call their wisdom into question—  
Matt. ii. 1. —their joy into dispute? For the men, they were “wise men,” I can tell you—wise men from the East, great wise men; and for their rejoicing, it is the wisest action they ever did, because it was the best sight they ever saw, the luckiest aspect they ever beheld in heaven; the happiest star, that thus led them out of the region of darkness into the land of light, that thus conducted them to Christ’s abode and presence: the greatest reason in the world to be glad at.

Ye hear much talk of a late star or comet, and much ado about it, but no “great joy,” as I can hear. It comes, they tell us, upon a sad errand, is sent to us with heavy tidings: no such but is, that I believe; though I have no confidence of their wisdom, that pretend to tell us its intent and business. But those “they” in the text, I know were truly wise, because the letter tells us so; especially guided and directed into the knowledge and meaning of the star they are so glad at. And the star comes with the best news

that ever came; is but a ray of the Star of Jacob; the morning star to usher in the Sun of Righteousness, or our usher to him. Other stars do commonly but befool their students, delude their observers, and make them sad: this makes us wise, and glad, and glad to salvation too. The other too often tend from Christ, cause men to forget him, take away the faith and trust that is due to him, to put it to a wandering planet, its aspect and position: this brings us to him—brings us to Jesus and his holy habitation. And because it does so, we will look upon it and be glad, follow it and be “exceeding” glad.

For to us still the “star” shines, and we may see it in the Spirit, in the spiritual sense and meaning; and, indeed, that is the best, the only seeing. The eye of sense could not in these Magi, that saw it then in being, cannot in us, that see it now only in the notion, work the joy the text expresses. There was an inward light that made the outward then so comfortable; the mere light of a star, though never so glorious, could never else have done it, cannot now, if it should appear again. It was some internal light and revelation then concerning it made them so glad, will make us as glad as they, if we so look upon it as well as they. And they and we are but the same, of the same stock and kin, Gentiles both, both equally concerned in the “star” and in the joy; they only the first-fruits, we the lump; they saw it in the heavens, we see it in the word; a thing as clear and firm, every *ἰὼτα* of it, as the heavens, and we as much reason as they had to be glad.

So both the sum and division of the text will be comprehended in these two particulars: the ground of their joy and ours, and the extent of it. The ground and occasion of their joy and ours, what they did then, what we are still to rejoice in. “When they saw the star they rejoiced;” when we see it, we must do so too.

The extent and measure of this rejoicing, both theirs and ours; joy in the positive; great it was, if compared with other joy, above other joy, in the comparative; and exceeding great joy, the greatest joy in the superlative, as high as may be: “They rejoiced with exceeding great joy.”

The “star,”—any star or light that leads unto Christ,—is

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a just occasion and ground of joy ; and when such an one we have, when such an one we see, we cannot be too glad, we cannot exceed, though it be exceeding. This the sum, these the particulars of the text. I begin with the ground of our joy and theirs, that we may rejoice the more, that our joy may be the greater when we see how great the ground is—that their joy was not for nothing ; nor will ours be, if it be for nothing but what theirs was.

Yet before we enter upon either, it is requisite we consider the persons, look upon them before we look upon the “star;” that we may see how this “they” may become “we;” how we are interested either to look or rejoice with them.

The first verse tells us who they were: “wise men from the East.” Four points we may have thence, and all so many grounds of joy.

Acts xiv.  
27.  
[Matt. iv.  
16.]

1. Gentiles they were: and that to them “a door is opened” unto life,—that “to them that sat in darkness and the shadow of death, light is here sprung up,” is a good ground of joy: to such the light is comfortable. And to us also upon the same account; for “we were Gentiles,” nay, and “darkness” too. Good reason to rejoice, that now we are not, that we are come into the light.

Eph. v. 8.

2. If Gentiles, then sinners, too. I know not then who can be out; for if Heaven, notwithstanding our sin and wickedness, vouchsafe so to look upon us, nor they nor we, nobody sure, but must needs be glad.

Ps. lxxii.  
10.

3. Great men they were; foretold in the Psalm under the notion of “the kings of Arabia and Saba bringing gifts.” This is more cause of joy than you would think at first.

1 Cor. i. 26.

[Matt. xix.  
23.]

S. Paul’s “Not many noble, not many mighty are called,” were enough to startle and amaze the rich and great men of the world; and, “How hard is it for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven!”—our Saviour’s words—might very well trouble us, spoil all our mirth, all our joys, but for this, that the Magi, great princes, and rich and honourable, have an interest in Christ’s star, for all that, as well as any.

4. They were learned too. Magi, “wise men,” is the name the story gives them. And the Apostle’s “not many wise, not many learned,” again might well amaze us, and

make us more than sad, but for this "they,"—that such as they are not yet such but that they may come one day to see stars under them, and in the mean time have their part and portion in the "star" that leads to Christ. A sound cause of joy,—that however the new lights count of princes and great and learned men, as enemies to Him whose this "star" was, yet this "star" shines to them too, them before any; was lighted up for them above all the rest. Shepherds, and women, and ignorant people are not to be taught or led by stars; they understand not their voice and language; that is for the wise and learned, to guide them. Mean and ordinary capacities must have other ways, other guides and lanterns to lead them to Christ.

Thus, from the persons we have four grounds of the great joy we hear,—that neither heathen ignorance, nor heathen learning, nor honour, nor greatness—neither great temptations nor great sinfulness, no condition or quality, how sad or cumbersome—but this "star" rises for, and is ready to attend into the presence of Christ; all may have a portion in the "star" and in the "joy." And good reason we have to rejoice for ourselves and our relations, that no persons or condition is debarred it.

Proceed we yet deeper into the grounds of this joy. Three there are that they we speak of saw:—(1.) Saw somewhat to speak of; (2.) Saw the star; (3.) Saw it at that time, when they were even at a loss, had but a while before quite lost the sight; that is, "when they saw" it, the time when they saw it in.

(1.) The first point is, that see they did; and a point worth noting, that notwithstanding their great distance from Judæa—the only nation that then sat in light, that had the knowledge of his laws—these yet came seeing; that God hath some particular persons all the world over, to whom he hath given eyes to see him. No nation, indeed, no whole people but the Jews, were seeing; yet Job in Uz, and Jethro in Midian, and Rahab in Jericho, and Ruth in Moab, and Ittai in Gath, and the Queen in Sheba, and the widow in Sarepta, and Naaman in Syria,—some in every nation, that could see the light of heaven and rejoice in it.

Corporal sight, then, of the eye is one of the greatest

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temporal comforts our life is capable of; we lose the chiefest of joy and pleasure of a mortal life, when we are deprived of that. It is worth rejoicing, then, worthy rejoicing in the Lord too, that that we have; that we can see, that we are not blind.

But there is a spiritual and immaterial eye, and seeing with it—the eye of faith, and our believing by it—that is far beyond the bodily sight and seeing; it is that by which  
 Heb. x. 38. “we live;” it is that only by which we truly see heaven, or behold stars; that is a great ground of joy.

Especially if we add hope to it, the other eye of the Spirit, that pierceth within the veil, that sees all the joys and pleasures of beatitude with affection and delight; that does, as it were, bring heaven home into not our eyes only but our bosoms. The hope of heaven, and heaven’s happiness, how glad and jocund will it make the heart! more than when the corn and wine and oil increase; a better sight by it, than all the riches and pleasures of the earth, all the profit and assistance of it, all the beauties and glory of it, can afford us.

This sight of hope, and that of faith, were they the “wise men” had. It was thus they “saw the star;” believed it was the star of the Messias, the only guide to their new-born Saviour, their convoy to him; and that such an one there was, they should come to by and by; this they saw by the eye of faith. Thereupon they proceed to hope, to see their hopes also in him; hope ere long to be admitted to the sight and service of him; hope this star will now bring even them to its Master, and give them a place hereafter with him among the stars, that they may one day shine in glory like them.

Thus you see *videntes* will easily enough be brought home to us. We, even at this day, thus see the “star” by the two eyes of faith and hope; believe what here they saw, that such a thing there was—a star lighted up on purpose to lead the Gentiles to Christ; hope what here they felt within them, some spiritual ray and guidance to him; both believe and hope that as an outward visible star there was to them, so an inward and invisible star still there will be to us, by the light of which we may all come to the knowledge of



Christ. We are next to see it what it is ; what it is to them, what it is to us ; how this “star” looks to them, how it looks to us. SERMON  
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(2.) To them this star was a material star ; to us it is a spiritual ; and both bring their “joy” with them. The Psalmist seems to be ravished with joy upon the sight of the stars of heaven, when he considered the “heavens, the works of God’s fingers, the moon and the stars that he had ordained.” Ps. viii. 3. Then, in a kind of ecstasy, he cries out, “Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him”—that thou thus spanglest the heavens with stars for him—that thou thus visitest him by the stars ? Methinks the very beholding of that golden canopy, now our covering, hereafter to be our footstool—the casting up of our eyes to heaven in a bright starry night, and considering that all those glorious lamps are for the use of us poor men here, and for our glory too hereafter—cannot but raise a sweet delight and pleasure in the devout and pious soul, and force out an ejaculation of thankfulness and joy to God that made them for us. Sure I am, that when “neither sun nor stars appeared,” it follows presently that Acts xxvii.  
20. “all hope of being saved was then taken away.” Oh the joy of a star then!—the appearing of a star would have made them then have leaped for joy. We see them commonly : that makes us so little to regard them. If we behold them seriously, we would “sing together” with them, as Job says Job  
xxxviii. 7.  
[Ps. cxlviii.  
3.] they do together ; and “praise him” together, as the Psalmist speaks, with those “stars of light.”

But yet if we should have a star made on purpose for us, we would be gladder ; that God should descend to so immediate and special a care of us, as to light up one of those bright candles for some particular intent and service to us : and such an one this is ; great reason therefore, sure, to rejoice in it. So much the more, in that commonly the new raised stars portend mischiefs and misfortunes to us ; but this was, as all the astrologers and wise men then observed, a healthsome, gladsome star, that brought health and happiness and saving in its wings ; never any such or like it, before or since. When God thus vouchsafes to make heaven dance attendance on us, make all the stars and lights speak good to us, some of them more than others—those heavenly

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creatures thus wait upon earth and dust—who is now so dull and earthy as not to rejoice and glory in it? Yet, if the star not only portend happiness, but eternal happiness besides—if it foretel not only earthly but heavenly blessings too—if it be a star that leaves us not till it have brought us to the child Jesus, till it hath brought us to God himself, there is matter indeed of great, “exceeding” joy. So a four-fold ground of joy you have in this very “star:”—First, God’s general providence over man; to make even the heavenly creatures serve him. Secondly, God’s special providence in it; now and then sending a “star,” some special token, to forewarn or guide him. Thirdly, God’s comfortable providence in so doing; sometimes to bless and comfort us, to uphold and cheer us. Fourthly, God’s saving providence; thus to make all things, though never so distant from us, signally instrumental to our eternal happiness and salvation; making the stars and heavens thus minister unto us. For

Phil. i. 18. these four we may well take up S. Paul’s resolution, “We therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.”

And yet I must give you a fifth ray of this “star,”—God’s

Eph. ii. 12. particular providence over the Gentiles, “strangers from the covenant of promise,” “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,” men without promise, “without hope;” that had neither promise, nor hope of mercy: that to them this “star” should appear, for them be made and sent, is such a ground of joy to us, that are of the same stock and lineage, that without it we had had no joy at all, whoever had. It is upon this title we have our share in this happy “star;” upon this particular dispensation of thus gathering the Gentiles to him by it, as by a standard or ensign for them to flow in

[Isa. xi. 10.] unto him, as the Prophet phrases it. This is the fifth ray of the material star: and it may go for a sixth, that the Gentiles, not then only but even to this day, still enjoy the benefit of that “star;” have oftentimes material and sensible convoys unto Christ; are often, by the things of sense, by sensible blessings, drawn and persuaded to his service. Thus you have the six rays of the “star,” six comfortable rays to ground our joys upon, in the material star.

We come now to the mystical or spiritual—those stars and lights which yet remain, even to this day, to guide us to the

same Jesus. For more than one there is of this sort, and all sufficient grounds of "joy."

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The first sort of stars are devout and holy men, shining, as Daniel represents them, "like the stars." Stars they are in this world whilst they live; "burning and shining lights," the very light and life and glory of the earth, while they are upon it; and stars they shall be in the heavens when they come thither. Here they go before us with the light of good examples to lead us to Christ and his righteousness, to all holy and heavenly conversation; and for it they shall one day shine "as stars for ever and ever." A ground of joy it is to us, that this "star" we have; that such guides we have, by whose examples to conform ourselves to the obedience of Christ, in whose light to walk to him.

A second sort of stars are the bishops and pastors of the Church. For, however men now reckon them, or however now much darkened in their heaven, in this our Church, in our hemisphere, "stars" they are in the hand of Christ, in his "right hand" too: the vision so interpreted; the "seven stars," the "seven angels of the churches;" the Church itself crowned with "twelve" such "stars," the twelve Apostles. All crowned Churches, all that are complete and perfect, are crowned with such "stars," with bishops, pastors, and teachers. And a solid ground of joy it is, that we have such stars to guide and direct us into the knowledge of Christ, into the ways and means of salvation. Let heretics and schismatics think their pleasure, an exceeding joy it is to all that either understand religion or practise it, that God still allows us the glory of these stars, though "one differing in glory from another;" that he hath not yet totally darkened our heaven upon us, nor removed our true, lawful, and faithful pastors clean away; that we wander not from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; that we run not to and fro to seek the word of God, to see a "star," and cannot find it, but have them yet standing over us and directing us. It will be a thousand to one but we miss of Christ when we lose this star; a thousand to one that we go into the wrong house instead of his, when we lose our bishops and teachers: the days we now see tell us so already. For his house being undoubtedly the Church,—and the Church

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not to be seen or found but by the light and brightness of successive bishops and ministers, who are the Church's glory, and its crown and joy—nothing but sad and giddy errors can be expected where they are not.

A third star is the word of God:—and there, first, “the  
2 Pet. i. 19. sure word of prophecy,” “a light,” as S. Peter styles it, “shining in a dark place,” to which he tells us “we do well if we take heed.” Then, secondly, the sure promises of the gospel of grace and truth and pardon; the comfortable and glorious light by which we are led to the knowledge of Christ: full glad and merry with the hopes of such pardon and forgiveness, of such grace and favour.

A fourth star is inward grace, the light of the Holy Spirit, by which we are not only led to the place of this new-born Child, but this Child itself even new-born in us.  
2 Pet. i. 19. This is a star that rises in the very heart, the “Day-star” rising there; without which we should sit in perpetual shades, the day never dawn upon us. All the former stars, good examples and instructions, and spiritual predictions and promises, pastors and teachers, can teach little without  
[1 Cor. iii. 6.] this star. S. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, and no increase: the preachers speak and preach into the air, nothing stay behind; good example be spilt as water on the ground; divine prophecies and promises only strike the outward ear; to little purpose all of them together, unless the Spirit speak within, and warm and lighten the soul with its fiery tongue, and comfort it with inward light and heat.  
1 Pet. i. 8. Hence is the “joy” that is “unspeakable and full of glory,” which the Apostle speaks of.

A fifth star, which is heavenly glory: a bright morning  
Rev. ii. 28. star it is, that Christ promises to “give” him that continues and holds out “unto the end.” “I will give him the morning star,” that is, eternal life, the star of glory. This is a star will show us Christ as he is; bring us to him, not in his cradle but in his throne, not in his mother's lap but in his Father's bosom; a star that will lead us, both here and hereafter, to his presence. Here the great star that most surely brings us, and most effectually persuades to Christ and Christian piety, is the hope of heaven, the promise of glory. In the strength of this hope we suffer any thing for

him: we hunger and thirst, endure cold and nakedness, poverty and scorn, whips and fetters, halters and hatchets, racks and tortures, ignominy and death, whilst this star seems to open heaven unto us; thus it brings us to him here, and hereafter it fills us with the beatifical vision of him for ever. I need not tell you this is a very sufficient ground of the greatest "joy," itself being almost nothing else.

And yet there is a sixth star, the star that was foretold should "come out of Jacob." "I am the bright morning star." "I" Jesus, says he himself, "am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." He the star that leads us to himself: his own beauty, the great attractive to him; his mercy, the sure convoy to himself; his humility, his being the root, so low and humble, the conduct to his highness; his incarnation and nativity, his becoming the offspring and son of David, being made man, the only way above all to bring us unto himself. Here is the ground, the very ground indeed of all our joy and comfort, that he thus "came into the world to save sinners;" thus clouded his eternal brightness, his starry nature, his glorious Godhead, with the dark rays of flesh and matter; appearing at best but as a sublunary star, the Doctor and Bishop of our souls, that we might so the easier come unto him and be comforted, not confounded, in his brightness.

Thus we have multiplied the star in the text, by the perspective of the Spirit, into six; or showed you the six spiritual rays which issue from it; which reach to us, and even shine (God be thanked) still, though that be gone, or shut up in the treasuries of the Almighty. All of these signal grounds of true Christian joy:—good examples—good teachers—a good word of God—the good Spirit of grace—the good hope of glory—the good of goods, our good and gracious Saviour; so good stars, and so good occasion of rejoicing, that there can be no better.

(3.) And yet a degree may be added, from the third consideration of the time when this star appeared. Indeed, it had long before this day been seen; had led the wise men all the way, comforted and cheered them up all their long journey through; only at Jerusalem, there it left them; there, where one would think the star should shine the

Num. xxiv.

17.

Rev. xxii.

16.

[1 Tim. i.

15.]

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brightest. But, (i.) what need starlight, when the Sun of Righteousness is so near? Or, what (ii.) should need a type, when the substance was so hard by? Or, what necessity (iii.) of a star, when they were now in a surer and brighter light, so says S. Peter; the law and prophets at hand to point out him they sought? Or, how (iv.) should we expect any special favour from the God of heaven, while we stay in Herod's courts, in Satan's territories, in wicked company? Or, why (v.) should we think the star should stay upon us when we leave it?—that God should help us when we, as it were, renounce his direction to enquire for men's—go to the Jews and Herod for it? How should we but lose God's grace, if we neglect it?

(i.) It is the great ground here, then, of their rejoicing, that after they had lost it, they here recover it; that they are now got out of Herod's court, a place of sin and darkness, and are now refreshed again with the heavenly light. No joy in the world like that of recovering heaven when it is almost lost; no joy to the woman's, for finding again the groat that she had lost; no rejoicing like the shepherd's, for the lost sheep when he has found it. The joy reacheth up to heaven, says Christ; the very angels rejoice at it when a sinner is returned from the error of his way, when God lights anew this star to him. Truly, when we have lost any of the afore-mentioned stars, and afterwards recover them—whether they be the examples of the saints, that have unluckily slipped out of our memories; or our bishops and pastors, that have been forced or driven from us; or the truth of the holy word, which false glosses and corrupt interpretations have hidden from us; or the inward comforts of the Spirit, which our sins have for some time robbed us of; or the true relish of heavenly joy and eternal happiness, which hath awhile been lost by reason of our delighting ourselves wholly in sensual pleasures or employments; or, lastly, the beauty of this Holy Child, which has been somewhat clouded from us through our weakness and infirmity in apprehending it;—whichsoever of them it is that we have first lost, and then recovered;—when we either recover our memories, or our ministers, or the truth, or the Holy Spirit, or the sight of heaven, or the beauty of Christ into us,—the

[Luke xv.  
7.]

joy is far greater than it was at the beginning; *carendo magis quam fruendo intelligimus*, because we never thoroughly understand the comfort and benefit of any of them, till we see the distress we are in without them.

And (ii.) their seeing the star again when they were, as it were, in most distress, and when they were more like to be at a greater loss than ever amongst the cottages of Bethlehem,—like utterly to be confounded by the horror of poverty, and the sight of nothing but unkingly furnitures,—this it was that so raised their joy. And it will do ours at any time, to have help and succour come timely to us, to be delivered and raised in the midst of distresses and despair. It is the very nick of time to enhance a joy.

It is not less, neither (iii.), to creatures compounded of flesh and blood, to have even some sensible comforts renewed to stir us up. To see a star, to behold comfort with our eyes, to have the inward comfort augmented by the outward,—to be led to Christ by a star, by prosperities and blessings, rather than a cloud, by crosses and distresses,—this is more welcome, more gladsome to the heart: and so it seems to the wise men themselves, that God, though he had given them inward guidances, and backed them with prophetic instructions out of his own word and prophets, had not yet deserted them of his outward assistance, but even added that also to all the former. Now, then, thus to have star upon star, material and mystical, time after time, when we most desire it, when we greatliest need it,—to want no guide, no opportunity, no occasion at all to advance our happiness and salvation,—how can we but, with them in the text, rejoice now, and that with “exceeding great joy?” Three degrees, you see, are apparent in the words, all to be spent upon the star that leads to Christ. We can never be too glad of him, or of his star—any conduct or occasion to come to him: “joy,” and “great joy,” and “exceeding great joy” is but sufficient.

(1.) Nor is any joy but spiritual, that which is for Christ, really capable of those degrees: that only is truly called joy. The joy in Christ only dilates the heart: all other joys straiten and distress it, fill it up with dirt and rubbish; worldly joys can never fill it otherwise. It is only then

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enlarged when it opens up to heaven; earthly comforts do but fetter and compress it.

That joy (2) is only "great." Earthly ones are petty and inconsiderable, for petty things; heaven only hath great things in it; Christ the only Great One.

That only (3) is "exceeding." That is the joy that passes understanding, that exceeds all other, that exceeds all measure, that exceeds all power—none can take it from us; that exceeds all words and expression too; no tongue whatever can express it. So you see our joy, that a spiritual joy it is, because so "great," so "exceeding."

Yet, being so exceeding, it will exceed also the narrow compass of the inward man, will issue out also into the outward, into the tongue and head. Joy is the dilatation, the opening of the heart, and sending out the spirits into all the parts. And if this joy we have, it will open our hearts to praise him; open our hearts to heaven to receive its influence; open our hearts to our needy brother, to compassionate and relieve him; it will send out life, and heat, and spirit into all our powers—into our lips, to sing unto him, into our fingers, to play to him, into our feet, even to leap for joy; into our eyes, perpetually to gaze upon him; into our hands, to open them for his sake plentifully to the poor; into the whole body, to devote it wholly to his service. This is the wise men's joy, "great" and "exceeding." Give me leave to fit it to the parts, to apply the joy to the several grounds: *gaudium* to *videntes*, *magnum* to *stellam*, *valde* to the *autem* of the text. They saw, and so rejoiced with joy: they saw the star, and so rejoiced with great joy when they saw it: saw it so opportunely, they rejoiced with exceeding joy.

Let us then (1) rejoice with them with a single joy for both the seers and their seeing; make it our joy, that neither our ignorances nor our sins can keep us always from Christ's presence; that our riches and honours, our learning and wisdom, may rather help than hinder us in the search of Jesus Christ. And rejoice we then again, that God hath given us eyes and sight, to see the ways and means of salvation. This will at least deserve our joy in the positive degree.

But the star, or stars, we mentioned, will add this *magnum*



to it. Let us then (2) rejoice greatly, or with "great joy," that God thus vouchsafes to lead us to his Son both by outward and inward means; that he hath given us so many lights of good examples to walk by; that he hath lighted up his stars, pastors and teachers in the Church, to direct and guide us; that he continues to us the light and brightness of his truth; that he enlightens us daily inwardly by his grace; that he fills our hearts with hopes of glory; that he is ready more and more to show us Christ in all his beauty, to give him to us with all his benefits, to bring us to him in all his glory. "Great joy" is but little enough, certainly, for such great things as these.

And (3) "exceeding" it must and will be, if we but consider the time when such great things are done, or doing, for us. It is when we had in a manner diverted from him, gone aside out of our way, left his "star" for Herod. For God then to renew his mercy to us, to shine upon us in his former beauty, to point us even to the very house and place to find Christ in; to do it then, when we had wilfully departed from his conduct, is so "exceeding" a grace and favour, that no joy of ours, be it never so "exceeding," can exceed it.

And if the wise men, for the direction of that single "star," were so extremely affected with joy and gladness, how infinitely should we be for so many! Alas, they saw nothing then in comparison of us. The Child was then but in rags and swaddling clothes; he is now in robes of glory: he was then lying in an earthly cottage; he is now sitting in an heavenly palace. All the ways of salvation were then but mysteries; they are now revealed. Salvation then was but in its clouts; it is now in its perfection. They saw Christ but once; we daily see him: see him and all his stars; see him amidst his stars, walking with some of them in his hands—the stars or angels of the Churches, amongst other of them his saints, with them in glory; creating stars daily in our hearts; shining to us every day in his word and sacraments, there opening his glory unto us, and us a door into it; and all the while the material stars even under his feet.

Seeing all these so much above what they here saw, our joy should be much above what they rejoiced with. But

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theirs being "exceeding," ours can be no more, when we have said all we can. And that it may be so, I shall only tell you, it must exceed the joy we take in earthly things: we must more rejoice in Christ and in his "star," than all the world besides; more in the holiness of a saint, than in the highness of a prince; more in a faithful pastor, than in any worldly counsellor; more in the word of God, than in all the writings of men; much more in the history of Christ, than in all the romances and histories of the earth; more in the promises of the Gospel, than in the promises of all earthly pleasures and felicities; more in the inward work of grace and the inward comforts of the Spirit, than any sensual satisfactions and contentments; more in the meditation of heaven and heavenly glory, than in all the glories of the world; more in Christ, than in all things or hopes together: it must exceed them all.

And when it so exceeds, it will bring us to an exceeding high condition; make us exceed in grace, exceed in glory; do great and wonderful things by the power of grace to express our thankfulness, and bring us by it to the reward of exceeding glory: where we shall need no more stars to guide us, nor sun or moon to give us light; but this Eternal Light now pointed at by the star shall give us light both day and night; shall fill us with joy such as neither heart can imagine nor tongue express, that exceeds all we can speak or think; give us joy for joy, great for great, exceeding for exceeding, in his blessed light and presence for evermore.

## THE THIRD SERMON

ON THE

### EPIPHANY.

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MATTHEW ii. 11.

*And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.*

OUR last year's business from the text was to see what the wise men saw: Philip's counsel to Nathanael, to "come and see." This year's shall be to do what the wise men did, what all wise men will do still; holy David's invitation to "fall down and worship." For having found this blessed "Child," the end of all our journeys, the crown of all our labours, the sum of all our desires and wishes—this Infant-God, this young King of heaven and earth—what can we less than do our obeisance and pay our homage? All wise men will do so—adore the rising Sun, make sure of somewhat; or, in the Psalmist's phrase, "rejoice with reverence, and kiss this Son, lest he be angry, and so we perish;" fall down before him, and even kiss his feet in an humble adoration, that he may lift us up and advance us in his kingdom,—at least remember us when he comes into it.

To "come into the house" else, where Jesus is, and there to see him,—to stand and look upon him only, and no more,—is a journey and sight to little purpose. The ox and the ass "saw" him; and many, no doubt, to as little purpose, upon the

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John i. 46.

[Ps. xciv. 6.]

[Ps. ii. 11,  
12.]

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shepherds' report, and the rumour of these wise men coming from the East, came to see and gaze upon him. It is this worshipping that sanctifies, prospers all our journeys; we begin them but untowardly, and finish them but unluckily, without it. If we fall not down upon our knees before we go out, and bow not ourselves and worship not in thankfulness when we come in, we cannot assure ourselves of any great good, either of our goings out or of our comings in, how successful soever they seem at first—even to have obtained their ends, even found Jesus too. This same worshipping is both the end and blessing of all our journeys, if they be blest; nor see we, or understand we, anything thoroughly or comfortably where that is wanting, where the worship and service of God and our Saviour is not both the aim and endeavour of all our motions.

Acts viii.  
27.

Wise men “they” were here, that now for these twelve days have made it theirs; and the Ethiopian eunuch, a great counsellor, made it the only business of his journey “to Jerusalem to worship” only, and so return. And in the devouter times of Christianity, the devout Christians, when their haste was such they could not stay out a prayer or collect, would yet never pass a church but they would in and bow themselves and worship and be gone. *Tanti est adorare*; so weighty a business it is to worship, though but *in transitu*, to prosper anything we are about.

It was so thought then: it would be so now, did we not more study to make enquiries about Christ than to serve him, to dispute about Christianity than to practise it. Christianity here begins with it. These first Christians, I may call them, thus professed their service to their Saviour, thus addict themselves to the faith and obedience of Christ: and were there no other reason in the world to persuade it, it were certainly enough, that the first faith in Christ was after this fashion, thus acknowledged and performed.

Three acts there are of it in the text:—*πεσόντες, προσεκύνησαν, προσήνεγκαν*, falling down, worshipping, and offering. The first, the worship of the body; the second, of the soul; the third, of our goods: with these three, our bodies, our souls, our goods, we are to worship him: with all these his worship is to be performed: without them all it

is but a lame and maimed sacrifice, neither fit for wise men to give, nor Christ to receive.

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Two points of the text we are gone through: the wise men's journey and success, their coming and their seeing, their labour and their reward. Three now we have to go through—*procidentes, adorarunt, et obtulerunt*; the three acts, or parts, or points of worship we are to perform to Christ—each in its order as it lies. And first, of *procidentes*, their prostration.

Here it is we first hear of any worship done to Christ; and this falling down, this prostration, the first worship; as if no other, no lesser adoration could serve turn after so great a blessing as the sight of a Saviour: as if his taking on a body challenged our whole bodies now; his coming down from heaven, our falling down upon the earth; his so great humiliation, our greatest expression of our humility.

Many sorts of adoration have been observed, greater and lesser,—bowing the head, bowing the body, bending the knee, worshipping upon the knee. God thus worshipped by them all. And falling down before him is no news to hear of, neither in Scripture nor antiquity, whatsoever niceness, or laziness, or profaneness, of late have either said or practised against it.

Exod. iv.  
31.  
Gen. xviii.  
2.  
Isa. xlv. 23.  
Ps. xcv. 6.

They were wise men here that did it; yet it is well that the Scripture calls them so. I know who have been counted fools, superstitious fools, for as little a matter, for the same; though I cannot but wonder to see as much done in a compliment to a thing worse than a reasonable man, whilst God himself is denied it. Indeed, it may be, if we compare the persons, we shall quickly see the reason. These in the text were wise men, of credit and reputation; men of some quality; men that understood themselves, and knew the language of heaven, and can turn the stars to their proper uses; that think not much of much pains to find a Redeemer; that know how to use a King, and serve a God; that run readily at the first call of Heaven to pay this worship. Yourselves can inform you what they are that deny it: I shall not tell you.

Poor ignorant shepherds may, perhaps, through ignorance or astonishment, omit the ceremony and be pardoned, so they go away praising and rejoicing; but great learned clerks cannot be excused if they pretermit it; but neither the

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one nor the other, if they deny it. Ignorance will be no sufficient plea for the one, nor a distinction or a pretence of scandal for the other, in a point so plain, as perpetual custom from the beginning of the world, and plain words of Scripture, make it.

Gen. xvii. Abraham falls "upon his face" in a thankful acceptance  
17. of God's promise. His servant Eleazar "bows down and  
Gen. xxiv. worships." Old Jacob did as much as he could towards it  
26. on his bed. And the people of Israel, and this before the  
Gen. xlvii. law was given—and Moses, before the law was written—  
31. "fell down before the Lord," as he tells the people. So it  
Exod. iv. was no Jewish law or custom then, but even a point of the  
31. law of nature, though practised also by the Jew—by David,  
Deut. ix. by Solomon, by Ezekiel, by Daniel, by all the prophets, by  
18. all the people; all the children of Israel together "bowed  
Ps. v. 7. themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement,  
2 Chron. vi. 13. and worshipped and praised the Lord." Christ himself allows  
Ezek. xi. the people to do as much to him; takes it, and takes it  
13. kindly from them. Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, "falls  
Dan. vi. at his feet." Mary does as much. Others often do the  
10. same, and none forbidden it: nay, he himself does it to his  
2 Chron. vii. 3. Father, "fell down and prayed;" and do we then think much  
Mark v. to do it? The very saints in heaven, where there is nor  
22. shadow, certainly, nor ceremony, fall down before him, even  
John xi. before the Lamb: and are we too good to do it? Is the  
32. practice of all ages—of heaven, of earth, and Christ too—  
Mark xiv. not strong enough to bow our stubborn necks? Is there  
35. Judaism and superstition in heaven, in Christ too? Oh,  
Rev. v. 8. then, let me be superstitious! I am content to be so, to be  
Rev. xi. 16. called so by any generation upon earth.  
Rev. xix. 4.

But to make it yet more evident, if it can be—nature itself, in the midst of its corruptions, keeps yet this impression undefaced, and more plainly professes this reverence due to the Deity, than even the Deity itself. Never did any, the most blind and foolish heathen, yet acknowledge a God, but presently they worshipped him with their bodies. Nay, never did any ever pretend either honour or respect to man, but he expressed it some way by his body, by some gesture or other of it. And must God that made it, and Christ that redeemed it, only go without it? Must man be revered

with the body, and the devil served with it; and God be put off with the worship of the soul, which yet neither can express itself, nor think, nor do anything without the body, whilst it is in it? It was thought a good argument by S. Paul, to “glorify God in our body as well as in our spirits,” (and in old manuscripts, I must tell you, *ἐν πνεύματι* is not found; *ἐν τῷ σώματι*, the body only, is,) because they are God’s. He hath “bought them with a price,” 1 Cor. vi. 20: good reason, then, that he should have them. “The body is for the Lord,” (ver. 13 of that chapter.) Who then should have it but he? It is for nobody else: he only can claim it; others do but borrow it, or usurp it: let him therefore have it; it is his own, and it cannot be bestowed better; he knows best to use it, how to keep it, fear we not. Indeed, it is so unreasonable to deny it him, so unprofitable to the very body to keep it from him, that I know not why we should expect to have it either safe or well when we deny it him. Who can keep it better? Who can easier lift it up when it is down, raise it up when it is fallen, preserve it in health and strength, than he? And are we such fond fools, then; not to present it always to his protection, and lay it at his feet, who if he tread upon it does yet do it good?

Though we were heretics of the highest impudence, and denied his Godhead, yet confessing his humanity we can do no less than give the worship of our bodies to him; we can give him nothing less. I may, without breach of charity, I fear, suspect that this generation, that are so violent against the worship of the body, will ere long neither confess his Godhead nor his manhood; turn Arian and Manichee both together, and prove a kind of mixed heretics unheard of hitherto, beyond all the wickedness and folly of all their former predecessors; come so far at last to think all done in a fancy or a dream, make all the work of our redemption come to nothing; for certainly, did they either seriously think him true God or true man, we should see it by their bodies, especially seeing we cannot see any thing by their spirits to the contrary. Even men used to be thus worshipped, and prophets. So that, did they confess him any thing, they would certainly fall down and worship him, not deny it, to be sure, whether do it or no.

1 Kings  
i. 31.  
2 Kings  
ii. 15.

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For all falling down is not adoration : it is the mind that makes that ; the intention of the soul that turns this outward expression of the body into adoration ; that makes it either *λατρεία* or *δουλεία*, either a religious or a civil worship, as it pleases.

This is the reason, together with the authority of the Fathers, S. Augustine,<sup>k</sup> S. Leo,<sup>l</sup> S. Bernard<sup>m</sup> and others, that I make *adorarunt* here, this word “worship,” to relate to the soul, as *proidentes*, falling down, to the body. Though I am not ignorant that both in the school and grammar sense it is seldom or never found without the interest and posture of the body, yet must it of necessity most refer to the soul ; that being able only to specify the worship, and give it both its nature and its name, by either intending it religiously as to God, or civilly only as to a creature, where it gives it ; the outward posture being oft the same indifferently to God and man.

That these “wise men” intended it as an act of devotion and religion—as to an incarnate God, not a mere carnal man, is the general opinion of the Church, and not without good ground. For, (1) first, “wise men,” who ever propound some end to all their motions, would not have undertaken so long and tedious and troublesome a journey to have seen a child in a cradle or in the mother’s lap ; no, not a royal babe. They were kings themselves ; so the ancients delivered them to us, and the seventy-second Psalm foretels them by that name ; and they had often seen such sights in as much pomp and glory as they could expect it in Judea. At least *cui bono* ? what good should they get by it ?—that is a thing wise men consider—by any king of Judea ? What was such an one, or his child, to them, who had nor dependence nor commerce with him ? or if they had, needed not make such a needless journey themselves, to no more purpose than in a compliment to visit him.

But (2) they tell us they had “seen his star.” Now, we and they knew well enough that the kings of the earth, though they have the spangles of the earth, have not the

[Ps. lxxii.  
10.]

<sup>k</sup> [S. Augustin. De Symbolo ad Catechumen. lib. iv. cap. 3. tom. ix. p. 271. ed. Colon. Agrip. 1616.]

<sup>l</sup> [S. Leo, Serm. xxxiii. cap. 3. tom. i. p. 93. ed. Quesnel. Lugd. 1700.]

<sup>m</sup> [S. Bernard. In Epiphan. Domini. Serm. I. p. 75. M. ed. Paris, 1640.]



spangles of the heaven at their command; though they have courts and courtiers beset with sparks of diamonds and rubies, they have not yet one spark of heaven in their attendance: no king of stars, but the King of heaven; none under whose command or dominion they move or shine, none that can call them his, but God that made them. To worship one, then, who not only can alone "call all the stars by their names," but by his own too, is certainly, in any wise man's language, to worship God. Our very star-gazers, who confess no king, and for aught we can see worship no God, will yet confess that in the Latin they have *regit astra Deus*, that the stars are only God's; and though a wise man may by his wisdom divert their influence, he can in no wise either command or direct their motion.

(3.) They tell us, too, they came to "worship;" their whole business was nothing else: and we would think they had little indeed, if they came so far only to give a compliment to a child that could neither answer them nor understand them. We must certainly take them, not for wise men, but very fools, to do so; and if worship be the end of their coming, we may quickly understand by the phrase of Scripture that it is divine worship that is meant. Of "worship," indeed, and "adoration," we may read in other senses there; but it is never made a business, said to be any one's aim or purpose, but when it is referred to God and his house. The eunuch is said to "come to Jerusalem and worship;" David invites us to "fall down and worship;" S. Paul "comes to Jerusalem to worship," and certain Greeks are said to "come up to worship;" but all this while it is to worship God; never made a work to worship man. To fall down before, or bow or reverence to, any man, how great soever, is but an occasional piece of business, on set purpose never: when we come before kings and princes we do it, but never come before them to this end only, for to do it.

(4.) Had they conceived no other of him than as man, or a child of man, that poor contemptible condition and unworshipful pickle they found him in—the rags of poverty—the place they saw him in, would have made them have forborne their worship quite; they would have been so far from *proidentes adorarunt*, that it would have been *dedignantes*

[Ps. cxlvii.  
4.]Acts viii.  
27.  
Ps. xcv. 6.  
Acts xxiv.  
11.  
John xii.  
20.]

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*abierunt* ; instead of falling down and worshipping, they would have gone their ways disdainingly at him. But so powerful was his "star," and so had the day-star risen in their hearts, so had the eternal light shined to them, that they could see what others could not ; *in carne Deum*, God in the child : He that led them without, taught them within—both whom they worshipped, and how to worship.

Job xxxi.  
26.

And, indeed, he that knows and considers whom he worships, will worship both in spirit and in truth, with his soul and with his body ; in truth, else he does not worship. *Adorare*, adoration, consists of both ; nay, cannot be well conceived if you take away either the one or the other. The word itself, in its primitive signification, is *manum ad os admovere* ; concerns the body, and is no more than to kiss the hand ; and *προσκυνεῖν* (of *κύω*) is just the same. So was the fashion of the Greeks to worship ; and it seems ancient through the East, for it is an expression of holy Job : " If I have beheld the sun when it shined," &c. " or my mouth hath kissed my hand," that is, if he had worshipped any other god. But it falls out with this as with other words, they enlarge their signification by time and custom ; and so adoration is come to be applied to all worship of the body—bowing the head, bending the knee, falling on the face, kneeling at the feet, according as each particular country perform their reverence. Time yet hath enlarged it further ; and our Saviour—that Eternal Word, and therefore the best expositor of any word—hath applied it also to the soul,

John iv. 23.

*προσκυνήσουσι ἐν πνεύματι* ; nay more, calls them the truest worshippers that worship in spirit.

And, indeed, the spirit's, the soul's part is the chiefest : the worship of the body is but the body of worship ; the soul, that is it that enlivens it, the spirit and soul of it that completes it ; the inward intention, direction, submission, and reverence is that which makes all to be accepted. To fall down in humility with the body, and lift up the soul with pride—to give an outward respect to him, and inwardly neglect him—to do the worship cursorily or in a compliment, without attention or good meaning—is to use Christ as the soldiers did, worship him in a mockery ; cry " Hail, king ! " and smite him ; to give a crown of thorns and a sceptre of a

reed; to make a puppet or a May-game of him; or with Herod pretend to worship, and mean nothing less; seem devout, forsooth, in all haste, but nourish profane and murderous—that is, sinful, careless, or atheistical thoughts against him.

They do best joined: God hath joined them, and one word hath joined them; and when joined we best understand them; and soul and body being so nearly joined, why should we go about to separate them? The prophecies foretel them both, as to be solemnly performed to him: “All kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall do him service.” Ps. lxxii. 11, 15. “Prayer shall be made ever unto him, and daily shall he be praised.” The Gospel, that assures it was done; and the Apostle tells us that God had so ordained it should be; given him a “name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, things in earth, and things under the earth.” Phil. ii. 9, 10. If all things in heaven and earth do do it, then spirits and bodies too; for bodies are things, and spirits are things: and in heaven and under the earth there be no bodies; in earth there is both, so there sure to be done by both. And this name had not been long given before these “wise men” come to do it reverence: before it was given, they came not; presently after, they come: not before, that they might know how to call him they were to worship; yet presently after, that we might know it was “in his name only that the Gentiles were to trust,” at which to “bow” and “worship.” [Matt. xii. 21.] To worship him, to worship his name, or at his name, is but the same in Scripture, or little difference. Yet if we owe him worship, we owe also a respect unto his name; we are not to take it vainly, or count it light, but pay a reverence to it as to his, for therein also we worship him. As we worship his humanity as it is united to his divinity, so his name too we may well worship; that is, reverently esteem and speak of it, and so express it; spiritually rejoice, too, at the hearing of it, without fear of superstition or idolatry. We else but poorly and lamely worship him, God knows, if we give no respect at all to his name, or any thing that belongs to him. We may as well be afraid to worship him at all, now since he hath taken on a body, lest we should commit idolatry to it,

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[Ps. xcix. 5.]

being a creature,—as to fear superstition in worshipping at his name “before his footstool,” as the Scripture sometimes speaks, when the adoration on both hands is only directed to and terminated in his Godhead.

Heb. i. 6. If any, then—as, alas! too many be—so little Christians as to give to Jesus, or his holy name, or his holy altars and sacraments, no more reverence than does a Turk or Pagan, let not us, for Christ’s sake, bear them company: we have better examples here before us; nay, we have angels, too, before us at the work. “When he brought his first-begotten into the world, he said, And let all the angels of God worship him:” and certainly they do it; they fulfil his command and do his pleasure. And are we, then, too holy to do it? Is it a command upon them, whom the benefit does no way so much concern; and is it left at our pleasure, who have the most reason in the world to do it, to whom chiefly this Christ was born and given? May we choose whether we will worship him or no, and yet be the greatest gainers by it, and the more holy by not doing it?

Heb. xi. 8. Faith is the business, they tell us; no matter for any thing besides: only believe, and all is done. Well, but is faith the business; and is it not a strong belief indeed, this, that can bring men out of their own country, and that a far one too, through Arabian deserts, in the depth of winter, only to worship? And is it not as high a piece of faith, notwithstanding that poor, outward, contemptible appearance of Christ, yet to fall down and worship him, and believe him to be their God and Saviour, and to trust the guidance of a star, or the word of an obscure prophecy, or an inward motion from heaven, before their own eyes, and all sense and reason? To leave his country, and to believe against hope and reason, was counted to Abraham for faith; was so to these “wise men” of the text; will be to all that follow their example. Our worship is but the expression of a faith: *fides facta* or *fides faciens*; faith done. We worship, therefore we believe: or, we believe, and therefore worship.

And therefore, thirdly, offer too; open our treasures, the treasures of our faith, and present our gifts: “And when they had opened their treasures,” &c.

The ancient Fathers have here observed both letter and

mystery : and I am no wiser ; I shall do so too. The letter is plain enough to tell us that God looks to be worshipped with our goods as well as with our bodies and our souls ; and that those whom he leads by his “ star ” or Spirit, any that will come to Christ—must no more come empty-handed than those that come to God. For God he is, and God he gave us them ; God, therefore—every person in the Godhead—to be served with them : the first-fruits it should be, in all reason, and in justice all it might be ; but some part or offering out of them, howsoever. I shall open the “ wise men’s ” treasures, and show you them : the outside of them, the letter, first.

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Exod. xxiii.  
15.

“ Treasures ” they are called before they are “ opened,” (1), that we may learn God is not only to be served with mean things and ordinary ware. Nothing can be too good for him ; the treasures of our hearts and the treasures of our cabinets and coffers are never better opened than for him. David would not offer what cost him nought ; and Araunah, when he does but understand God’s business toward, gives like a king. The Israelites—hard-hearted Israelites—are yet so tender of God’s service that they pluck off their jewels and golden earrings for the service of the tabernacle. The first Christian emperors give their stately halls to make churches ; and nothing is thought too costly by pious souls for God’s worship. Are the treasures and precious things of the earth for men only, and not for God ? That were strange indeed, and a bondage and usurpation the creature indeed might well groan under.

2 Sam.  
xxiv. 23.

“ Gifts ” they are styled when they are “ presented,” (2), to tell us that God expects gifts as well as dues. Falling down and worshipping are due upon command : the Second Commandment, that forbids it to an idol, must necessarily thence infer it due to God ; and if we do no more than pay our dues, what thank have we ? God loves a free-will offering, and expects it too, unless we can suppose the Jew more bound to him than are we. Ourselves know how we value a voluntary service above any : and think we that God less accepts it ? He accepts of the will when there is nothing else, so much he esteems it ; and will he not accept it when he sees it pour out itself with fulness upon him ?

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(3.) "Gold, frankincense, and myrrh," they prove when they are opened; such best presents as the country affords, and the best of them: that we may know there is no country so barren, no man so poor, but may afford something to God's service. Nor the rocks of the one Arabia, nor the sands of the other so dry and fruitless, but that they yield some fruit for Christ. They have but little indeed, that have not to offer a "turtle," or a "pigeon;" if they have no "gold," they may have "frankincense and myrrh," no such great cost. Even the poor widow hath a mite or two, something at least to bestow on God, to present him with, that none may plead excuse.

Yet, (4,) as they are such as the country yields, proportionable to that, so they are, as it falls out, very proportionable for them that offer them. Gold and perfumes, fit presents for kings and princes, and persons of estate and honour, to present, or be presented with; they are things either costly or delicate: and such is fittest for them to present to Christ; to offer up their golden crowns, and readily part with all their sweetnesses and delicacies, for his honour and service. Great men must not give mean presents; it is unworthy of them.

Not mean ones, said I? (5.) Not few neither: here is three together for one present at a clap; and three is all: it is the perfectest number, and intimates all. Of everything we are to give God somewhat; it is as it were a grace to sanctify the rest. Nor can we, methinks, promise ourselves a blessing upon anything we enjoy, till we have first offered it, or of it, to God. Certain it is, I dare assure him, he loses nothing of anything, that gives any of it to God, but increaseth best by that diminishing.

(6.) Yet proportionable only to our condition are we required to offer; every one cannot offer "gold." These wise men, therefore—the type of all the Gentiles that were to come in to offer—not only offer like kings, but like persons of meaner condition also; "frankincense and myrrh," things of a lower value, that we may know God accepts all, anything, so we offer it willingly—turtles and pigeons, as well as lambs and bulls; mites as well as talents; "frankincense and myrrh" as well as "gold;" the poor man's present as well as the greatest kings' and princes.'

(7.) God, as he loves men should keep proportion to their abilities, not that they should be burdened, yet he loves also that they should keep some proportion to himself. We must have regard to God's honour, as well as our own low estate; not offer lame, or maimed, or refuse things. To Christ here "gold" comes very fitly to relieve his necessity, his poor mother's poverty; "frankincense" does well to perfume the stable; and "myrrh" comes seasonable to strengthen and confirm his infant limbs. He gives twice, that gives in season. No gift so welcome as that which comes in the time of necessity, when we have most need. Cast we about hence ever to proportion our presents to God's convenience and the Church's; to supply it, in want, with our gold and silver; in contempt, and under the ill scent of scorn and ill report, to defend it with the sweet incense of good works; in weakness and declining, to uphold it with the myrrh of our patience and courage.

(8.) Do we it lastly, largely—with open hearts and hands and purses; open all our treasures, spread them all before him; bid him please himself, take what he will, all if he will; reserve nothing, detain nothing, no part nor portion, from him, as did Ananias and Sapphira, who paid dearly indeed for being so close handed; but open we all our treasures to him, keep we nothing from him: knowing this, that "he that soweth plentifully, shall reap plentifully," and he that gives most, shall yet never lack. And where he takes it not himself, let us ourselves pick the choicest out of all, and with these wise and happy souls present them to him;—somewhat out of our "gold,"—our abundance, and superfluities; somewhat out of our "frankincense,"—our competencies and conveniences; somewhat out of our "myrrh,"—our necessaries that are to uphold nature, and, as myrrh does the dead body, keep it from stinking;—somewhat out of all, I say; the more the better, but some at least, some of all three. Our "goods," indeed, as says the Psalmist, "are nothing unto thee, O God," nothing unto thee, in comparison of thee, the chiefest good; our riches nothing to thine; thou needest them not neither: yet for all that, give him them we must; for he needs not our prayers neither, our souls neither—nothing of ours, indeed, at all: yet does he lay his claim

Acts v.

[Ps. xvi. 2.]

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to all, and require some of all. You will understand better what he requires, if we open the treasures a little further, go on to the mystery; what antiquity hath conceived infolded in the treasury of the text; what is the mystery of this threefold present, "gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

For why these rather than any other? or why so specified, being no such rarities in Judæa? Somewhat certainly there is in it; a double mystery, say the Fathers: an allegory and a moral, an allegorical and a moral sense. The allegory is to teach us what to think or believe of Christ. In offering "gold" (i.) they acknowledged him for a King, and so paid him tribute. In offering "frankincense," or incense, (ii.) they confessed him to be a God: it is to the gods only that even the heathen offer incense. Yet (iii.) in offering "myrrh," they yet profess he should die like men; myrrh hath little other use than in sepultures and embalmings. So the sum of the wise men's faith, or the Magi's creed, is thus professed, that this child they thus adored was the King, Messiah, God and man, who should die for them.

I shall take leave to expatiate and enlarge their creed out of the same oblations yet a little further, seeing the Fathers have led the way, and point them out, how they thus doing seem to believe all that is to be believed of Christ. First, (i.) his two natures: his Godhead by the incense, his manhood by the myrrh. (ii.) His offices: his kingly office by the "gold," the very matter of the crown that makes him King; his priestly office by incense, the priest's office being to offer incense; his prophetic office by the myrrh, representing the bitter and mortified life of a prophet. (iii.) Here is his birth, his life, his death, and resurrection, all acknowledged. His birth fitly resembled unto "gold," the purest metal; his birth the purest, without any sin at all, of a virgin pure as the most refined "gold." His life well represented by the incense, being nothing but a continual service of God, and a perpetual doing of his Father's business. His death, the very manner of it evidently pointed at by the myrrh, which in his passion was given him in wine to drink; the usual draught of those that died upon the cross. And his resurrection, easily enough understood

Luke i. 9.  
Levit. xvi.  
13.



by the same myrrh, whose chief use is to preserve the dead body from corruption, out of an hope of a resurrection; and was even literally done unto him by Nicodemus, who "brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes" to embalm him.

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John xix.  
39.

So now we see what it is to present "gold, frankincense, and myrrh," to Christ; even no less than to believe him to be God and man; our King, and Priest, and Prophet; born of a Virgin; without stain of sin; living in all holiness without blame; and dying for us; yet not seeing corruption, but rising again to incorruption. This is the faith we are to offer up, this triple faith. Fear we not any adversaries or calamities, he is our King to protect us; "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Despair we not though we be grievous sinners; he is our Priest, our High Priest, to offer for us, and reconcile us. Let not even death affright us: by his death, death hath lost its sting; the myrrh of his embalming will preserve us; and by his resurrection he will revive and raise us up. Let us thus think of Christ, and trust upon him, and we still offer this same offering of "gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

1 Tim. vi.  
15.

This is the allegory: the moral is behind. And in the moral sense we offer "gold, frankincense, and myrrh," who present God with those virtues that resemble them.

1. First, (i.) he offers "gold," who patiently and constantly suffers for his faith, which is "far more precious," says S. Peter, "than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with the fire." The martyrs' flames are brighter than "gold," and the constant faith will endure the fire better than the "gold" itself.

1 Pet. i. 7.

He (ii.) offers "gold" who sets himself to keep God's commandments, which, in the Psalmist's account, are "more desirable than gold, yea, than the finest gold."

Ps. xix.  
10.

He (iii.) offers "gold," who disperses it abroad and gives it to the poor; he that gives alms properly, offers "gold;" to the poor indeed he gives it, but to God it is he offers it: an offering of a sweet savour to him.

2. He offers "frankincense," (i.) who offers prayers; whose prayers ascend like incense: it is holy David's expression, "prayers set forth as incense;" no incense so sweet, so acceptable to God, as the devout prayers of his servants.

Ps. cxli. 2.

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He (ii.) presents incense, whose hope is only in the "Lord his God," whose desires and hopes are always ascending upward.

He (iii.) presents incense, who presents humility and obedience. The nature of "frankincense" is binding and restraining—well imitated by obedience and humility, the best binders and restrainers of our wills and passions.

[Col. iii. 5.] 3. And lastly, he (i.) offers "myrrh," who "mortifies his affections which are upon the earth." Myrrh is a mortifier. One quality of myrrh is to kill worms: he that kills these worms of our inordinate desires, that come crawling on us—those covetous desires, that lie gnawing us—those wriggling motions of any lusts that are ever tickling, disturbing us—he offers "myrrh."

He (ii.) presents "myrrh," that presents his body chaste and pure. Judith, that chaste matron, is said to wash her body and anoint it with myrrh, as it were a preservative against lust; and the Spouse in the Canticles, so fair, so pure, so undefiled, is much delighted with "bundles of myrrh;" her very hands "drop sweet smelling myrrh;" it is so great an antidote against all impurity and corruption.

[Cant. i. 13. —v. 5.]

He (iii.) presents "myrrh," who, though he hath not perhaps altogether kept his body pure, or his affections in order, yet begins now at last to take his wine a little mingled with myrrh; that takes of the bitter potion of repentance, who in the bitterness of his soul repents him of his sins.

You know now how you may still offer "gold, frankincense, and myrrh," a constant faith, a regular life. Charity and alms is as good as "gold;" devout prayer, a lively hope, an humble obedience, will pass for incense; a chaste body, mortified affections, and true repentance, will be accepted instead of "myrrh." See we to it, then, that we have them always ready to present to Christ.

Yet there is one mystery more to be observed. "When they had opened their treasures," says the text; and it says it that we may know we are to open our treasures as well as offer them. Now to open them before him, is, as it were, to say, Take what he will, we are content. A voluntary resignation of ourselves and all that is ours to his choice, order, and disposing; to deny and renounce ourselves and

all that is ours—our own desires, our goods, our good deeds, our merits—or to leave all to follow him, if he so will have it, is the most perfect of all our offerings, and the perfection of them all. It is both the beginning and end of Christianity: so we begin our Christianity with the same resignedness, we must continue it to the end.

And we may yet observe how to offer, here, as well as what to offer. Open we our treasures, (1.) first; do it freely that we do;—all our treasures. (2.) Do it plentifully and largely, Dorcas-like, “full of good works and alms-deeds:” let our good works and graces glitter like the refined “gold.” (3.) Do them pure and sincerely. (4.) That they may ascend like incense, do them religiously and devoutly. (5.) Let them be wrapped up in myrrh, to keep them from corruption. (6.) Let them all be like sweet-smelling myrrh, of good odour and report. (7.) Let them also be embittered with myrrh—with the bitter tears of repentance, that we have presented God so little good—and the tears of sorrow, that we can present no better. (8.) Let them be done in order: our incense in the middle; our prayers winged on the one hand with the golden wing of faith, on the other with purity, white as is, says Pliny, the purest myrrh; a faithful heart and pure hands, encompassed on the one side with alms, on the other with mortification and fasting. First believe; then pray; then practise. First believe Christ’s word and promises; then pray for his assistance; then practise his obedience. And, lastly, all our doings, all our offerings, must be presented by falling down with humility and prayer. So we began the sermon, and so we end it.

So will He who accepted the wise men and their gifts, accept us and ours; and for our gifts give us better; for our earthly, heavenly treasures; for our “gold,” the crown of glory; for the incense of our prayers that we offer here, the honour to offer there the holy odours of eternal praises; for our bitter “myrrh” we suffer here, the full sweetness of all pleasure there; and for our falling down, shall one day raise us up again to everlasting glory, to worship Him that sits upon the throne, and the Lamb for evermore. Amen.

A SERMON

UPON

S. PAUL'S DAY.

PREACHED AT S. PAUL'S.

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NEHEMIAH xiii. 14.

*Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.*

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AND even to remember ourselves concerning this, of the good deeds done to this house of God, and to the offices thereof, have I chosen the text to-day.

A day, by all probable conjectures, from the ancient great solemnity we find upon it, the feast of the dedication of this reverend and aged pile, either at the first or second building of it, when it was first presented to God to be remembered by him. A day here observed, not only in memory of S. Paul's conversion, but of the conversion also of this place (now S. Paul's),—either at the first, from the temple of Diana to the house of God,—or of this part of it wherein we are, some hundreds of years after, from common use; and the renewing of the rest of it out of ashes, to the vast proportion it now carries.

And it falling out this year to be a day crowned with so honourable an assembly, I hope it may fall out happily to remember you of some kind "offices," some "good deeds" to it; now, after a third conversion of it—from a stable, a magazine, a market, a meeting-place of schism and rebellion, to a church again, and the holy offices in their beauty—to set

to your pious hands to help it out of dust and rubbish, and raise it up to its first lustre and glory.

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But if the day should have no such reflection, no day could be amiss to remember either ourselves or you, of such good works as God here is not only content to be remembered of, but pleased to remember; puts here upon record too, that we also may remember them; remember what good Nehemiah and other pious souls have done in their several times to the house of God, and forget not ourselves to do the like.

We have a command from S. Paul, whose day it is, to "charge them that are rich" to do so, to be "rich in good works;" and such are these. We have a good warrant for it hence; we have a good pattern here; and the works put all, as it were, upon God's score to pay for. Thrice it is so in the chapter, ver. 22 and 31, as well as in the text, as if God were little less than bound to recompense and reward them. And he will, if we carry not ourselves too high upon them; if we do them with sincerity, and reflect upon them with humility. Nehemiah does so. For how good soever the works were, the words are but a modest recommendation of them to God, when they were done with an humble petition to him to accept them. An excellent precedent to us, what to do in the case, and how to do it.

1 Tim. vi.  
18.

Neh. xiii.

That we may the better understand his, and do our own, we make the text into two generals:—

I. Nehemiah's "good deeds" done to the house of God; and,

II. His petition to him to "remember" and accept both him and them, and not blot out either himself or them.

Or, to be more distinct, we shall draw those generals into these particulars; and consider,

I. What it was that Nehemiah did to the house of God and to the offices, that he would have remembered; the "good deeds" that he did.

II. That such things done to the house of God, or to the offices, though but *cæremoniis*, are good deeds: good indeed, and so to be reputed and remembered.

III. That, as good as they are, such yet they are as God may in rigour of justice wipe out, and not remember; such

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as we had need still, with Nehemiah, pray him not to wipe out, but remember.

IV. That yet, notwithstanding, they are such, too, as God may, and will, be easily entreated to remember, and not wipe out; that he, God, does remember them, and sets them here upon record for such.

V. And not only remember them, but the person also for them—him that does them: "Remember me."

VI. But then this must be remembered too, why they stand here; that this scripture, as well as others, was written for our learning, to remember us, that (i.) still such a house there is, a house of God, with many offices belonging to it, and good still to be done to it and them. That (ii.) good it is to do so still. That (iii.) God even now also will remember such good deeds, and such also (iv.) as shall do them; would have us (v.) do so too; would have us (vi.) remember sometimes ourselves to do them. But be sure, lastly, when they are done, to beg of him not to touch too hard upon them, lest he wipe them out: "Remember," &c. You have both the sum and the particulars of the text. I go on with the first of them,—What it was that was here done to the house of God; and there, first, show you the person, then his good deeds.

For the person,—our book tells us it was Nehemiah, but the text has only a plain "me" to decipher him. That is enough too, so God but remember him; for God is not taken with our titles. The less we make of ourselves, the more always he makes of us.

Indeed, there is not much said anywhere of his genealogy, and nowhere so much what he was, as what he did. The best reckoning pedigree is that of Noah's: "These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations; and Noah walked with God." This shall be Nehemiah's. Nehemiah was a good man, pious in his generations, and Nehemiah did good to the house of God. He is of the noblest house, who is thus near allied to the house of God, that thus comes closest to it.

And yet Nehemiah was no mean man neither—cup-bearer to Artaxerxes king of Persia—the Tirshatha, or governor of Judæa; had honour and eminence enough; but stands upon

Neh. i. 11.  
Neh. viii 9.  
Neh. v. 14.

record most for his piety; that outvies all names of honour. The repairer of God's house, a better title to be remembered by in God's catalogue of nobility, and in the court of heaven, than the greatest emperor's Cup-bearer, or the Viceroy of Judæa,—nay, of Emperor of East and West.

This only by the way—that he forgets himself, and God will not remember him, who thinks his honour and greatness exempt him from the service of God's house, or values any beyond it. King David himself “had rather be a doorkeeper” there, than “dwell” anywhere else; “one day” there “better,” says he, “than a thousand.” And one poor “me” is worth as many Worships and Honours; that single syllable, of as few letters as you can make it, with a few good deeds to back it, better than all glorious titles without them. Ps. lxxxiv.  
9, 10.

I. But enough of so small a particle; enough too here of the person, considered in himself, because I shall speak of him all the way in his good deeds; to which now I pass, and inquire (1), What he did to “the house of God;” and then (2), What to “the offices thereof.”

And the several readings give us them under two heads: *misererordias* and *beneficentiam*; his mercy and his bounty to them both—both house and offices.

(1.) His mercy to the house, that I begin with; and that take in these particulars: in his compassion towards it, his petitioning for it, his repairing, his cleansing, his protecting it. Give me leave to trace the story, as it is fit I should; and I shall show you them in some or other of the neighbouring chapters, as they rise.

(i.) His compassion towards it. That we may easily see in his sitting down and weeping over the ruins, in his fasting and sadly praying for it. For it is not Jerusalem only, or principally either, though first mentioned, for which he does so, but Sion, the place that God had chosen to put his name there. For that it is, “because of the house of the Lord his God,” that he thus “seeks, O Jerusalem, to do thee good.” David plainly professes so for himself, and for Sion; “thy servants,” says he, they “think upon her stones, and it pitieth them to see her in the dust.” All good men still it does as much; they more bewail the ruins of God's houses than of their own. Alas! Jerusalem is but a sad dwelling Neh. i. 4.  
Neh. i. 9.  
Ps. cxxii. 9.  
Ps. cii. 14.

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Neh. iv. 3.

without Sion; no more than any other city, any ordinary heathen city; not the city of the great King, or a sure refuge, without that. Even "a fox," as Tobiah the Ammonite jeered it, if he go up "shall break down the wall," if the wall of the house be not joined to it, and built with it. It is for this, principally, Nehemiah mourns, and makes, as it were, a cement for it out of the rubbish by the mixture of his tears. It is a tender mercy; that first.

Neh. ii. 7.

(ii.) But he does not merely and dully sit down and weep—end the business there; up he gets, (ii.) and to the king he goes, and petitions him for a commission to repair it; begs of him some supplies and materials towards it. Good it is to do good to the house ourselves, but it is double when we can work others to it too; when we promote it with our friends, and put ourselves as it were to the blush to beg for it. It is yet a mercy we need not blush at, a holy impudence in doing good; a very serviceable mercy; a mercy not ashamed of any thing, to do good to God's house, or any thing that is his. That is a second.

Neh. iii.

Ezra vi.

(iii.) These yet are but the proems of his mercy. He, thirdly, sets closely to the work: provides necessaries and materials for the house, and begins the repairs, completes the unfinished walls and turrets, not of the city only, but the temple too, wherever they wanted. It had been begun to be re-edified by Zerubbabel; where, by the way, take notice, they began their building with God's house then; yet it seems it was not fully finished. Great works are not the business of a little time, not of days, but years. Above forty years in building was this house wherein we are. Nor are such houses at any time so perfect at the last, but that a religious hand will easily find somewhat or other always to be added to their beauty and glory. And this is a point of Nehemiah's mercy too; a mercy that thinks no pains too much, no time too long, to continue doing good to the house of God; a laborious and continued mercy. That is the third.

(iv.) Nay, sometimes it seems—and we have found it by our own experience—that the house is not fully finished, ere it is afresh polluted. Nehemiah (iv.) is fain to cleanse it. Tobiah the Ammonite, his household stuff was gotten into the house: the high priest, his ally, had brought it thither. When the



priest himself profanes the house, lets the Ammonite come in, or suffers it, God help us! God help us, indeed, to some good Nehemiah to throw out that stuff, as you may see ours does. A cleansing, purifying mercy, the house needs sometimes—needed it, we remember, too long. Such is Nehemiah's too: a clean, pure mercy. That is the fourth.

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Neh. xiii. 9.

(v.) And yet the Ammonite is not so easily cast out. Nehemiah must stand to what he has done, and still protect it, or Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, the Horonite, the Ammonite, and the Arabian—all sects, schism, atheism, and profaneness, will in again. If the prince's authority, and the magistrate's sword, do not protect, as well as recover it from unhallowed hands and offices—1. from corrupt priests, such as Eliashib—  
 2. from false ones, such as cannot prove their succession—  
 3. from such as pollute it with strange marriages, as one of the sons of Joiada; strange mixtures,—suppose the waters of the Tiber, the Frith, or the Leman Lake, with the springs of Sion—  
 4. from strange Levites too, so strange that we know not whence they came, nor what their pedigree;—even in those “mercies of the Most Highest,” which he hath lately showed us, contrary to the Psalm, we shall all “miscarry.” It is the highest commendation of Nehemiah's mercies, that he does not forsake the house, but still protects it, both from open enemies and from treacherous friends; the one by his sword and spear, the other by the restoring good order and discipline. And this is a courageous and constant mercy—  
 the fifth commendation of Nehemiah's.

Neh. xiii. 7.

Neh. vii. 64.

Neh. xiii.  
28.

[Ps. xxi. 7.]

Neh. iv. 16.

Neh. xii. 24.

And thus you have his mercies to the house itself: his compassion on the ruins, his soliciting the repairs, his setting himself upon the work, his delivering the house from profanation, his protecting it from the profaners: 1. a tender, 2. active, 3. laborious, 4. pure, 5. constant goodness to the house of God. These are the first branches of those mercies which God here commends to us, to be shown by his to his “house.”

(2.) The second sort are those to the “offices.” And *miseri-*  
*cordias in custodiis, in observantiis, in cæremoniis*: the several translations of the words again shall serve to head them. Nehemiah's good deeds—first, to the officers; secondly,

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to the offices ; thirdly, to the ceremonies of the house—these three shall be the heads.

(i.) *Misericordias in custodiis*, taking the abstract for the concrete, his mercies to the officers and keepers of the house, those who are set to watch and keep it,—them we take the first. And indeed the officers and ministers, they had need of them first and last ; need all the mercies that Nehemiah, or any of you, can show them. For not only “unless the Lord keep the house,” but unless Nehemiah, the magistrate, do so too,—you, the reverend judges,—you, the renowned governors of the city,—“the watchmen,” the [Ps exxvii. 2.] priests and Levites, will all labour “but in vain.” Tobiah, by his acquaintance and alliance—Sanballat, by his subtlety and pretences—Geshem, by his wealth and power, will down with the walls ere they be well dry, and out with the officers ere they are warm in their work and business. Nehemiah therefore, like a stout governor, sticks to them against those enemies of Sion and Jerusalem, of peace and order, whether open or concealed ones. The first of them, chap. v. ; the other here, ver. 10. Against all that have ill-will at Sion, that envy the prosperity of the house of God, he stands to them and protects them.

He, secondly, disposes and settles them in their proper places, ver. 30 of this chapter ; descends to take care even of the “singers,” and “porters,” or vergers of the house.

Neh. xii. 45.  
Neh. xiii. 11. He calls home, thirdly, the poor Levite, who had been forced to forsake the house for want of maintenance ; delivers him from the oppression of such whose policy it was then, and we know is still, to starve the Levite or minister out of the house, that so they may either have no minister at all, and so scandalize the government, or none but such as will say and do what they would have them, and so preach it down again.

He, fourthly, restores them all to their rights and dues ; establishes them to them too by a law for time to come, (chap. x. 32, and so on.)

Neh. xiii. 9. Lastly, for their better maintenance, and the readier performance of the holy office, he commands the holy things and “vessels,” “meat-offerings” and oblations, to their proper chambers, *in custodias*, to be reserved in their several wards.

And these in brief are Nehemiah's *miseriçordiæ in custodiis*, his good deeds to the officers or ministers of the house of God: he defends them against their enemies; he confirms them in their places; he delivers them from their oppressors; he establishes them in their rights; he orders all things to their best convenience. Mercies never to be forgotten; and I would our age would remember them.

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(ii.) Yet not them only, but these that follow too. And *miseriçordias in observantiis* are the next—his mercies to the “offices” themselves. Trace we him as we did before, and we shall find him (1) restoring the observing of the solemn fasts and feasts in their due seasons;—vindicating (2) the Sabbath from profanation;—making them (3) a solemn form of prayer;—settling (4) solemn music, hymns and anthems of thanksgivings;—setting up (5) the public reading and teaching of the law of God;—re-establishing (6) the whole office of God's public worship and service according to the commandment of David the man of God, according to the ancient form and fashion.

Neh. viii.  
9, 10, 14.  
Neh. xiii.  
19.

Neh. ix. 5.  
Neh. xii.  
27.  
Neh. viii. 1.  
and ix. 3.  
Neh. xii.  
24.

(iii.) Follow we him a little further, and you will see him at *miseriçordias in cæremoniis* too, how he behaved himself in the ceremonies, what good then. And if you consider how reverently his people demean themselves at holy work,—how devoutly they all stand up at the reading of the law; how unanimously they answer Amen at the prayers and blessing; how they “lift up their hands, and bow their heads, and worship the Lord with their faces to the ground;” how content they are to be bound to the statutes and “judgments” as well as the “commandments” of God—that is, to the ceremonials and judicials, (for so the words statutes and judgments do import,) as well as to the moral law, and how he solemnly binds them to it by an oath,—you cannot but say he has wrought a good work indeed upon them, and by this mercy kept them from disorder and confusion. Mercy, I say, for there is none greater than to preserve the sheep within the fold, than to keep all in peace and order, and oblige men by laws and oaths to do their duties, to attend the holy offices diligently in a comely uniformity; who otherwise would some of them never think of it; and others, under pretence of Christian liberty, run every day

Neh. viii. 5.

Neh. viii. 6.

Neh. ix. 29.

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into all unchristian licentiousness and profaneness, and wander up and down in eternal errors, and perish in them. And sure, to save them, though against their wills, is a mercy they need not quarrel with.

These now are the several mercies of Nehemiah to the "house of God," and "to the offices thereof."

You will understand them better by his bounty—*miseri-*  
*cordias* fuller by *beneficentiam*; which is the second sort of his good deeds.

And the first kind of his bounty, is his own and his servants' labour freely bestowed upon the work—(for it is no matter now whether we divide or join the "house" and "offices")—in effect it is no less than the whole revenues of his command and government: whilst refusing the pay of the governor, he suffered it so to run on towards the repairs. It seems he was resolved not to enrich himself, however, by the Church, but, as the phrase is, rather lay out himself upon it.

Neh. v. 15.  
18.

The second expression of it is, the free entertainment of one hundred and fifty of those that laboured in the work at his own table, at his own charges, (ver. 17 of that cited chapter.) He would neither grow rich upon the Church's charge, nor spare his own to enrich, or at least recover that to its former greatness.

Neh. vii.  
70.

The third manifestation of his bounty, is his voluntary gift of "one thousand drachms of gold" to the treasury of the house; a kind of springing stream of supplies unto it.

Exod.  
xxviii. 40.

Add now the "fifty basins," (and gold or silver they must be,) the "five hundred and thirty priests' garments," (and they were no little cost, as the priests' garments then were made—"for beauty," all, "and glory,") the charging himself, besides, and all the people, with a yearly tax, or public revenue, for the repair and service of the house,—and you will confess it a bounty beyond expression.

Especially if you consider, not only that and what, but when and how, as the story will inform you, you will say *miseri-*  
*cordias* and *beneficentiam* are lean and meagre words to tell you what he did.

Neh. i. 2.

For, to undertake this business when all others had given it over, and left it in the rubbish,—when their enemies

without the walls eagerly opposed and as scornfully derided it, and false friends within as subtilely undermined it,—  
 when some of their nobles dishonourably drew back for fear or interest,—then, in a time so difficult, so dangerous, so troublesome—then, so vigilantly, so courageously, so industriously to pursue it, as not so much as shift themselves, from week's end to week's end, till all was finished,—to be so bountiful to it too, in a time of dearth and scarcity, as it seems it was, when they had scarce money to buy bread for themselves and families,—then to draw both great and small, the “chief fathers” and the meanest people, to great contributions to it,—is so many good deeds together, and so good together, that it is nor Greek, nor Hebrew, nor Latin—nor original, nor translation—can express the goodness. I am sure I have all this while but injured it.

SERMON  
XXI.Neh. vi. 17.  
Neh. iii. 5.

Neh. iv. 23.

Neh. v. 3.

Neh. vii.  
70.

And if we sum up all his mercies and bounties, all together,—his tears and prayers over the desolations and ruins of God's house; his petition and diligence for the repairs; his care and labour in the work itself; his zeal and courage in the cleansing and protecting it; his friendship and faithfulness to the officers and ministers; his justice to settle them in their office; his mercy to deliver them from such as would disturb them in it; his establishing them in their rights, and his studying all conveniences for the holy office; his restoring the whole service of the Church for days, for forms, for state, for beauty, for order, for all solemnity,—methinks I might spare you the trouble of the next particular I am to give you, to prove them good. Yet, because there are some that are not willing to believe it, I must do it.

II. If we would yet but believe the very words of the text, we should need go no further.

*Misericordias* (1) the text calls them, mercies; and acts of mercy are good, sure. We say so when we want it, and call it a doing us good.

*Beneficentiam*, (2) bounty, it styles them too, and that is good; *bonum bene*, good well done; so is *benefacere*; makes him so good that does them, that one would even die to do him good again; “for a good man,”—that is for a merciful, bountiful man, “some would even dare to die.”

Rom. v. 7.

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If (3) you examine the object of these actions, that is good, for it is God. That which is done to his house, is done to him: for if the robbing it be robbing him, as he tells us it is, the doing good to it must then be the doing good to him.

If you (4) inquire the intention, that is good too. It is *in observantiis* and *cæremoniis*, for God's service all; that he may neither dwell slovenly, nor be served so.

Will you have (5) a point of faith to sanctify it further? Why, *Deus meus* is the very close of faith; the believing God to be his God, the very reason he is so good to God and his.

To put all out of question, deeds of this nature God himself styles good. David had it but in his heart to build God a house, and God sends the Prophet purposely to tell him "he did well" to think on it. "Forasmuch as it was in thy heart to build a house to my name, thou didst well." Our blessed Saviour himself says as much in the case of Mary's anointing him, (a work which all the Fathers reckon of the same sort with these we speak of,) "she had wrought a good work." Indeed, Judas, and some that he had seduced with a pretence that it might have been bestowed much better, they disdained at it, and thought it "waste;" but remember, I pray, that it was but Judas thought so, and some few that he had abused: Christ says, the doing good to the poor (which was the pretence against it) might stay a while, and must give way to it. Charity must give way to piety; charity to them, veil to piety towards him. Nay, so far is it from a waste that is so spent, that Christ seems to justify the very wasting ourselves upon it, whilst he so highly commends the poor widow, that had "cast into the treasury" of his house "all that she had, even all her living." Indeed, it was but two mites in all, yet that he accepts, the least that is done to him; but it was "all she had," and that it was which made him prefer it above the richest gifts and presents that were cast in by all the rest. After all this I must tell you, he affects these works so well, (and then they must needs be good,) and loves the house so much, that he sets us a pattern of some of them himself; he "will not suffer any vessel to be carried

2 Chron. vi.  
8.

Mark xiv.  
6.

Mark xiv.  
4.

Mark xiv.  
7.

Mark xii.  
44.

Mark xi.  
16.

through it," and in indignation whips the buyers and sellers out of the very out-parts of it. Twice he did so: first, after he came up from Capernaum; and again, when he went up from Bethphage and the Mount of Olives. Nay, and he cast out all their seats, and merchandise, and monies; would not suffer the least marks of profane or common use be left upon it. I wish we would learn to be so scrupulous in the point, for now you see no reason to scruple their being good.

III. Yet, good though they be, they, thirdly, stand in need of God's goodness to remember them: as great mercies as we have shown them, they yet want his mercy to expound them, a *secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum*, and a *magnitudine bonitatis*, (as it is expressly, ver. 22, a verse parallel to this,) to construe and accept them. Our works are not so perfect but they require it. *Verebar omnia opera mea*, says holy Job. He was afraid of the best of them. Nay, though he were "righteous," he would not "answer God," nor pretend to answer for them. No more will holy David: "I have walked innocently, O Lord," he indeed, but yet "be merciful to me" for all that; both in the same verse. That must be the plea when all is done. And he that here cries out, "Wipe them not out, O Lord," or "remember me concerning them," and "Spare me, O Lord," or *connive super me*, wink at me a little; and "Remember them for good," intimates plainly enough, they are not so good but they may do well to be winked at; may want a pardon, or fear cancelling, or be as well forgotten, or be remembered for evil as well as good.

Yet, "good" notwithstanding, we will allow them. But by God's grace it is they are so:—good but by the covenant of the Gospel, not the rigour of the law; good by an evangelical *ἐπιείκεια*, God's favourable interpretation and acceptance, not by the strictness of worth and merit; good, but overpoised with many bad ones. David's *Delicta sua quis*, &c. "Who knows how oft he offends?" enough to remember us: we may offend when we think we are doing good; may do best, therefore, and shall do safest, not too much to remember them ourselves, but leave God in his goodness to remember them.

SERMON  
XXI.Luke xix.  
45.  
John ii. 15.  
Matt. xxi.  
12.Job ix. 28.  
Job ix. 15.Ps. xxvi.  
11.Neh. xiii.  
22.[Ps. xix.  
12.]

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IV. And that we may do, without any presumption—put God in mind of them now and then. It is my fourth particular, plain in the text. And plain too it is, other good men have done so as well as Nehemiah. Hezekiah does so.

2 Kings xx.  
3.

“I beseech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.” Some of it was good

Ps. cxxxii.  
1, 2, &c.

deeds to this house we speak of. Holy David particularizes his: “Lord,” says he, “remember David.” Why? what of him? Why, “How he sware unto thee, O Lord, and vowed a vow unto the Almighty God of Jacob.” Well, what was that? Why, that “he would not come within the tabernacle of his house, nor climb up into his bed, he would not suffer his eyes to sleep, nor his eyelids to slumber, nor the temples of his head to take any rest, till he had found out a place for the temple of the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.” This he prays there, that God would “remember him and all his troubles” for it, how he was troubled till he had found it. Him in all his troubles, too; whensoever he should come in any, to deliver him out of all, because of the good he had vowed and intended to the house.

V. But is it only a prayer that God *would* remember? Is it not a record too that he *does*? He truly does—you see it here upon record he does—in the books of his eternal remembrance. It is here remembered in every chapter. Your memories cannot be so short but they can tell you it.

The Gospel will tell you it, too; tell you God remembers all such deeds as these. “Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached,”—and it shall be as long as there is any preaching,

—“there also that which this woman has done shall be told for a memorial of her;” *λαληθήσεται*;—told, and told again; every body shall speak of it, and it shall never be forgotten. “The beam out of the roof,” and “the timber out of the wall” shall tell it. “The ointment upon Aaron’s head shall run down upon his beard, to wet even the skirt of his clothing,” and the dust itself shall not be able to lick it up.

[Hab. ii.  
11.]  
[Psalm  
cxxxiii. 2.]

If we speak of the house itself, that stands an everlasting monument of the founder’s piety. The very walls of holy buildings, that scarce now raise their heads so high as to be



seen, speak yet plainly forth their founders and benefactors. God raises up some good soul or other, even in the worst of times, to revive their names; and blessed be they for it. If we speak of the good done to the offices of it, those very offices are but so many records therefore from generation to generation. Not a ram's, not a goat's, not a badger's skin offered to the building of the tabernacle, but stands upon God's file. Not a cherub's head, not a lily, a flower, or pomegranate, not a foot or inch in the sacred fabric, not a farthing, not a mite to the treasure of it, falls to the ground unremembered, unnumbered. Nay, even sacrilege and atheism, after so many centuries of thriving wickedness, have not yet had the power to obliterate the memories of the houses of God in the land. So are the good deeds themselves remembered.

SERMON  
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Nor shall they that have ever done them, or shall ever do them, be forgotten. "Remember me," prays Nehemiah; and he was heard in what he prayed. And you not only see it here, but in the catalogue made by the son of Sirach, and long since added near to the very book of God's own remembrances. "Among the elect," says he, "was Nehemias; his renown is great, who raised up for us the walls"—and some of them were to the house of God—"that were fallen, and raised up our ruins." There are others reckoned there upon the same account: "Zorobabel was a signet on the right hand; so was Jesus the son of Josedec; who in their time builded the house, and set us an holy temple to the Lord, which was prepared for everlasting glory." There is a memorial indeed!

Eccelus.  
xlix. 13.

Eccelus.  
xlix. 11, 12.

And if you would know what this "to be remembered" is, the parallel verses will tell you three things of it: *Connive super me*, and *parce mihi*; wink at and pardon me; and *memento in bonum*, "remember me for good." To have our weaknesses winked at, our sins pardoned, and our good with good rewarded,—these three make up God's remembering us. And he shows it particularly to those who do good to "the place where his honour dwelleth."

Neh. xiii.  
22.

Neh. xiii.  
31.

1. Many a default had Jacob made, and done some more than justifiable sleights in his transactions with his brethren, but one vow for Bethel sets all straight again, and makes

Gen xxviii.  
22.

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God go on his journey with him. There are weaknesses winked at; and no reason so probable as Bethel for it.

2. David had some faults, and great ones, yet God says, 1 Kings xv. 5. "he turned not aside save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite;"—save that—save many others that we could tell you of, but that we will not rake up those sins that God passed by. But why is God so tender in the point? Why, David was tender over Zion; could not pray for the very pardon of his sins, in that great Penitential Psalm of his, but he must needs in the same breath, as it were, remember Ps. li. 18. Zion: "Oh be gracious unto Zion:—"as if God else could not be gracious unto him; or as if, otherwise, either the pardon of his sins would do him little good, or else there were no readier or surer way to get them pardoned than by remembering Zion. There is the pardon of sins upon the score!

3. Would you have a remembrance for your good, as well as a forgetting for your evil? would you have God remember you with a blessing, too? Why, your kindness to his house will do it: "God blessed the house of Obed Edom, and all that appertained unto him, because of the ark of God." All that appertained? It is good dwelling nigh such a man as he. Again, David would fain have been building God a house; had gotten many materials and much money ready for it; and God promises him upon it, that 2 Sam. vii. 11—13. "he will build him a house for it, and establish him a throne for ever." God will be behindhand with none that do good to his habitation, or really intend or go about it. Nay, the very "sparrow" is blest, and the "swallow" is blest, that love but his house, that sing their matins and vespers at his altars; Ps. lxxxiv. 3. the devout Prophet even envies them for it. So great are the blessings of the house of God, and so ever are those persons under his eye, so in the eye of blessing, whose good deeds are there continually putting God in mind of them.

If you would but remember how God forgets his mercy; or, which is the same, how he remembers them in judgment, [2 Sam. vi. 7.] who do ill to his house or to the offices,—how he strikes Uzzah dead for an irreverent touch of the holy ark; how he smites Uzziah with a leprosy for an encroachment upon the 2 Chron. xxvi. 19. sacred office, and turns Saul out of his kingdom for the like 1 Sam. xiii. 14. fault; how he thrusts Nebuchadnezzar out of doors, because Dan. iv. 33.

he had burnt up his houses in the land,—(it is just indeed he should have no house, who will let God have none,)—how he despoils Belshazzar of his kingdom because he had spoiled his temple, and was now profaning those holy spoils, carousing in the sacred bowls; how he quite forgets all mercy to the Jews, and casts them out as soon as they profaned his holy temple and abused his messengers, priests, and prophets, and professes he could hold no longer when they had arrived at that height of insolent wickedness; how he makes the heavens forget their dew, and the earth her fruit, because “they let his house lie waste,”—you will readily conclude how he remembers those that raise the walls, and repair the ruins, and reverence the sanctuaries, and love the priests:—if them with curses, then these with blessings; if them with diseases, then these with health; if them with exile, these with quiet dwellings; if them with scarcity, these with plenty—*ubertate domûs*, the plenty of his house; if them with desolate and decaying families, these with happy and full posterities; if them with death, then these with life, even for ever and ever.

SERMON  
XXI.2 Kings  
xxv. 9.  
Dan. v. 30.2 Chron.  
xxxvi. 14.Hag. i. 9,  
10.

VI. But it is time now to remember ourselves; and many things we are here to be remembered of.

That (1) we have a house of God, as well as Nehemiah, to do good to. Many “houses of God in the land” now, as well as in the Psalm. This above the rest, whose decayed towers and ruined pinnacles, and ragged walls, and open windows, and falling roofs, and broken pavements, call loud for a repairer of the breaches. And it is not Nehemiah’s mercy and bounty, nor the Levite’s thin revenue added, that can do it. Blessed indeed be God, that he hath put it into the heart of the King to begin and offer so freely to the work. But I hope we shall ere long have reason to bless him for your offerings too.

Ps. lxxiv. 9.

This house is God’s: all such houses God’s, as well as that of Bethel, or that of Sion, or those synagogues of the Jews, styled several times his houses. That they are so, the solemn dedications always of them to his name with so much glory, say enough. And if *domus orationis* be *domus mea*, the house of prayer be God’s,—and Christ says it is, and sure he knows both what is his own, and how to call it,—the

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1 Cor. xi.  
22.

daily celebration of that public worship there will give a second proof. That some such there were, even in the Apostles' times—some house besides such as we eat and drink in, that must not be so used, must not be so despised—the Apostle tells us: and that it was then called the Church of God in the same verse, is to tell you in plain English our churches are God's houses.

And God has in our days owned them for his own. That signal preserving them (i.) in the heat of war and plunder, rage and fury, when men were so wrathfully displeased at them, and so implacably set against them,—that protecting them (ii.) through all the triumphs of a godly atheism, and a sacrilège out of conscience, both as unsatisfied as the grave, so miserably greedy that they would violate their fathers' sepulchres, and scatter their ashes in the air and wind, for an inconsiderable piece of lead or brass or stone; that miraculous restoring them (iii.) to all the holy offices; this church in particular destined to a sale, and deferred only to see who would give most,—are evidences of it too great to be disputed, that God has vindicated his right, and kept it for himself. And I hope you will all remember it, and now help him in it, court and city, both of you.

And remember (2) these houses have their officers, their offices, their ceremonies, as well as that here in the text; offices to be performed, officers to perform them, and ceremonies to perform them with. Your countenancing, your encouraging, your protecting them, are the good deeds you may do to them.

Remember, therefore (3), I beseech you, that you do so. Three arguments there are in the text to persuade it. (i.) Good it is to do so, good deeds they are. God (ii.) will remember them when they are done. God (iii.) will remember you for doing them.

(i.) Good they are, remember that. And good works are a "good foundation,"—a foundation upon which you may "lay hold on eternal life," says S. Paul there; and can you desire a better?

1 Tim. vi.  
19.  
[John xii.  
5.]

Indeed Judas tells us it would do better upon the poor; but had he had the selling of the ointment then, or when some of his disciples had the selling of it since, were the

poor ever the better for it? Were not thousands sent a-begging by it? Sure, sure, he that can be content to see the church in ruins, will not much pass to see the poor in rags. He that envies the churchman's wealth, will never pity the poor man's want; and he that one time sells the church, will next time sell the poor if he can get by him. But we will not set good deeds together by the ears. It is enough that these are good: but it is more that God remembers them, that he takes a particular notice of them.

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(ii.) I may say, too, a notice of the particulars. The scrolls of them are laid up for an everlasting remembrance. Feasts of dedication have been always kept for a memorial of them, and Christ himself vouchsafed to be present at them. And John x. 22. if the Syriac translator may be allowed to read the last verse of the chapter,—*Et ad oblationes, et ad sacra temporibus et festis statutis: memoriam hujus rei mihi serva*,—we see these good deeds were solemnly remembered in those solemn feasts, and Nehemiah expected his should be so. Their persons have anciently been remembered in the Christian dyptychs; and you see to-day we have revived the custom here.

(iii.) But it is not a mere remembering them for honour, but also a real remembering them, and them that do them, for a blessing—all sorts of blessings; so that, would I commend to my dearest friend a trade to make him rich and happy, it should be doing good to the house of God. It is an old Jewish saying, *Decima ut dives fias*, Pay thy tithes if thou wilt grow rich. Build God a house, say I, and he will build thee one again; Do good to his house, say I, and he will do good to thine, and a wicked son shall not be able to cut off the entail; for it is worth the notice, that when God promised David a house upon this account, he tells him that though his son commit iniquity he would not “utterly take his mercy from him.” [2 Sam. vii. 15.] I know there are that, to be excused, talk much of unsettled times. This is the way to settle them: when God and man shall see we are in earnest “for the house of God and the offices thereof,” all your sects will cease to trouble you, and vanish. Some cry, The state must be settled first. Why, *Fundamenta ejus in montibus sanctis*, [Psalm lxxxvii. 1.] says the Psalm; “The foundations of Jerusalem are upon the

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Ps. xxx. 6.] holy hills." Lay your foundations there, and you shall "never be removed, God of his goodness will make your hill so strong." No better way to fix the house of the kingdom or your own, than to begin with his. Others, to get loose, tell us of the decay of trade. Why, how can it be other? says Hag. i. 9. God; "You looked for much, and it came to little; and when you brought it home,"—and it was scarce worth bringing home,—"I did blow upon it;"—blew it into nothing. And why was it? says the Lord of Hosts; "Because of my house that lieth waste, and ye run every man to his own house." You dwell in cedars, and you lap yourselves in silks and silver, and you have all neat and fine about you; but the house of God, that lies in the dust and rubbish. But "is it time for you,—O ye," says he, for I know not what to call you,—"to dwell in cieled houses, and my house lie no better?" Did God, think you, make gold and silver, silks and purples, marbles and cedars, for us only and our houses, and not for himself also or his own? Or do you think to thrive by being sparing to it, or holding from it? No, says Hag. ii. 18, God, "from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider it, from this (that) day will I bless you." Mal. iii. 10. And "prove" him so, say I, (for he bids so himself,) and see if he will not "pour you out a blessing."

Indeed, he has been before us with it. He has brought us home, and established our estates, and restored our religion; done more to us, and to our houses, than we durst desire or hope; and is it not all the reason in the world we should do good to his again?—hang up our remembrances upon the walls, pay our acknowledgments upon his altars, and bless all the offices of his house for so great blessings? God will remember you again, for whatever it is. If you would yet more engage him to you, know "God loves the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob;" must needs therefore love these most that most love them.

Ps. lxxxvii.  
2.

And I doubt not but we shall find many here that do so, many too that will so express it. Yet, "not according to [2 Cor. viii. 12.] what a man has not," but "to what he has," says our S. Paul, does God "accept" him. We cannot expect that all that love most can express most. Yet according to their abilities [Matt. x. 41.] they will do it. "A cup of cold water," I confess, "to a

prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall not lose the reward;" no more shall a single mite to the house of God, as his. Every one, however, may do somewhat towards it. They that cannot give much, may give a little; they that cannot pay, may yet pray for it. And to wish it well, and to rejoice in the prosperity and welfare of it, the repairing and adorning of it, are two mites that any one can give, and God will accept where there can be no other. Only, where there is most, we must present it with humility, as David did: <sup>1 Chron. xxix.</sup> "What am I, O Lord, that I should be able after this sort to offer," thus to do it? And where there is but little, we must present it with a regret that we can do no more.

Will God remember and accept us; remember and pardon us; remember and bless us with blessings of the right hand and blessings of the left; remember us in all places, both at home and abroad; in all conditions, both in the days of our prosperity and in the time of trouble; in our goings out and in our comings in; in our persons and in our estates; in ourselves and in our posterities, with them shall remain a good inheritance, and their children shall be ever within the covenant. And when all earthly glances shall be forgotten, that which we have done to the house of God shall be still remembered; when our bodies shall lie down in the dust, our names shall live in heaven; when a cold stone shall chill our ashes, our bones shall flourish out of their graves; when time shall have eaten out our epitaphs, our righteousness shall not be forgotten, God will remember it for ever. And though the general conflagration shall at last calcine these glorious structures into ashes, we shall dwell safe in buildings "not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," where the Lord <sup>[2 Cor. v. 1.]</sup> God Almighty and the Lamb shall be the temple, and we sing the offices of heaven with angels and archangels, and all the holy spirits, with joy and gladness for evermore.

To which glorious house and office God of his mercy bring us in our several times and orders, through, &c.

## THE FIRST SERMON

ON THE DAY OF

### THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

S. LUKE ii. 27, 28.

*And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God.*

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Luke ii. 22.

“AND when.” That “when” was as this day. “When the days of” the blessed Virgin’s “purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished,” forty days after Christ’s nativity, this day, just then, “they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord.” Then blessed Mary and Joseph “brought,” then devout Simeon and Anna “blessed;” and if we be either Marys or Annas, Josephs or Simeons, holy men or devout women, we too will this day bless God for the blessing of the day.

For this day also of his presentation, as well as those other days of his birth, circumcision, and manifestation—Candlemas-day as well as Christmas-day, New-year’s day, or Epiphany, is a day of blessing; a day of God’s blessing us, and our blessing of him again; of Christ’s being presented for us, and our presenting to him again; of his presenting in the temple, and our presenting ourselves in the church, to bless God and him for his presentation, his presentation-day, and our Candlemas, our little candles, our petty lights; our souls reflecting back to this great Light, that was this day presented in the temple and then darted down upon us.

The shepherds blessed God in the morn of his nativity; the wise men, upon Epiphany; Simeon and Anna, to-day. All



conditions before, all sexes to-day : ignorant shepherds and learned clerks, poor countrymen and great princes, no condition out before, and both sexes in to-day. Sinners both of Jew and Gentile, men that most stood in need of a Saviour, before ; just and righteous souls to-day ; that we might know there is none so good but stands in need of him one day or other,—that will want a Saviour, if not at Christmas, yet at Candlemas ; if not among sinners, yet among the righteous, either first or last. Mary the blessed, Joseph the just, Simeon the devout, Anna the religious, all in to-day, secular and religious, of all sexes and orders ; all come in to-day, as at the end of Christmas ; like the chorus to the angels' choir, to bear a part in the angels' anthem, to make up a full choir of voices to glorify God for this great present, which brings peace to the earth, and good-will among men.

And this day first is it given into our arms. In all the former festivals he is either in his mother's lap, or in his cradle, or to be sure not out of doors ; there only, or within only, is he to be seen. This day first he comes abroad to be handled by us. Before, indeed, he might be thought to concern us somewhat ; now first are we made sensible of it, when we may take him into our own arms and kiss him, in the prophet David's expression, " kiss " this Son of the Most High, as he lies in our arms. [Ps. ii. 12.]

He " was made man " at his birth, " made under the law " at his circumcision, made manifest to the Gentiles at his Epiphany ; but all this while at a kind of distance from us. This is the day of a nearer application to us, when he is, (1) first, made a present and offering *for* us ; for us, who were none of us, I am sure, in any case to be presented for ourselves : not pure, not clean, not whole, not holy enough, any of us, to be presented before God, till he was first presented to make us accepted. When he is (2) made a present and offering *to* us ; presented and offered to us, to be taken, embraced, and offered up again by us, to make all our offerings and ourselves accepted in this Beloved.

For this it is, in the sum, that we are this day to bless God—as I hope we have done on other days for the other—that this Beloved of his would thus still, again and again, more and more, undergo the condition of men ; make himself (1) of no

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more account than an ordinary man, be valued and redeemed at the ordinary rate of the poorest child, as this day he was. That (2) he would let his mother, too, be reckoned in the rank of the meanest women, that were not able to offer beyond a pair of turtles or young pigeons, and go for one that had need of purification as well as other women—as if she were no better than the rest—after this great childbirth, though without the least spot or impurity, in the whole business both of conception and childbirth; in a word, that he would thus condescend, and descend too, into our very arms, to be offered for us and offered by us.

There are four remarkable passages of the day. 1. The blessed Virgin's purification. 2. Our blessed Saviour's presentation. 3. Good Simeon's exultation. And, 4. Religious Anna's gratulation. There are but two of them in the text, Christ's presentation and Simeon's exultation: the other two are not now within our compass; some other time they may. These two will at this time be enough; especially being not only to consider what was done then, but what must be still—not only what by others, but also what by us; our own duty, as well as Christ's parents' and Simeon's performances; what they did for him then "after the custom of the law," what we for him now, after the law is out of custom and fashion, after the fashion and custom of the Gospel. For does blessing, or blessedness, belong only to the law? do they not more to the Gospel? Certainly much more. Simeon only was the precentor—began the song which is to continue to the end of the world. And though Simeon be departed, according to his wish, yet has the Church throughout it taken up the hymn, and sings it every evening, as a perpetual memorial of this day's benediction. So our blessing to continue, as well as God's; ours to him, as well as his to us: and his is such that it will never fail, but extend the virtue of this day's great present unto all generations.

I have already divided you the text, whilst I told you two of the great remarkables of the day were in it—Christ's presentation, and Simeon's gratulation; Christ's presentation to God, and his acceptance by man; Christ presented in the temple according to the law, Christ received into the arms according unto faith.

The first of these in the 27th verse, which runs thus:—  
 “And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do  
 for him after the custom of the law.” There is his presen-  
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Luke ii. 27.

The second of the points is in the 28th verse:—“Then  
 took he him up in his arms, and blessed God.” There is his  
 reception, or Simeon’s acceptance of him, or gratulation and  
 exultation over him. Luke ii. 28.

Of each of these, first in reference to them, then after-  
 ward to ourselves: first to inform you what was done, then  
 to teach you what to do. I begin with what was done; and  
 first with Christ’s presentation: where we are to pass through  
 these particulars: the presenters, the presented, the time,  
 the place, the manner of presenting this great present.

The presenters were “the parents;” the presented was  
 “the Child Jesus;” the time was “when the days of her  
 purification were accomplished;” the place, “the temple;”  
 and the manner, according to “the custom of the law:”  
 all according to order; and that also keep we now.

The presenters first in that—first in order, and first in fit-  
 ness too. Who fitter to present the Child than its own  
 parents? *Jus liberorum*, the power over the child, is properly  
 theirs. Nature makes it so: they give it being; and there-  
 fore, surely, have most right to it when it is in being, and  
 whilst it is so; till God, by a second law, either take it to  
 himself, or disposes it to another, for which it naturally almost  
 leaves its parents to increase itself.

Upon the first title, of God’s claim to it, they here bring  
 it to him; but so they receive it back again with greater  
 comfort. We lose nothing that we give to God; we do but  
 bring it to him only for a blessing to it, and depart with both.  
 The parents never can be surer of the child, than when they  
 first give it unto God. Fathers and mothers may learn by  
 these good folks thus to sanctify, as it were, their children  
 from the breast.

Both parents agree here; nor the tenderness of the one,  
 nor the austerity of the other, think much of God’s demands,  
 though it seem to entrench much upon their right, their very  
 natural right. Nature itself must veil and submit where God  
 pleads interest; even that eternal and inviolable law of pre-

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servicing ourselves and ours, is circumscribed within the limits of God's prerogative; and we must do neither but with submission to his pleasure to dispose of us and ours.

Yet "parents" here, under the notion of *γονεῖς*, seems very strange, Joseph having no part in his geniture; yet so the law sometimes calls both the stepfather and stepmother. No wonder then to hear Joseph so entitled, who in the eye of the world, and term of law (that reaches not extraordinaries, nor provides words for miraculous conceptions), was counted father in the very proper acception. Only this to be said: common fame may be deceived, and names affixed where not deserved; and titles often to be accepted too, rather than venture a harsh and untimely censure upon ourselves, or them that are very near us, by the discovery of an unseasonable truth.

Truth it was that Joseph was not his father: that both Joseph himself and the Evangelist well knew. Yet would the one speak after the vulgar language, rather than cross received terms at the first in the recital of a story which might lose its credit by so early a discovery of a mysterious truth, but might with little offence be corrected in the progress: nor would the other proclaim himself no father, lest that most pure and immaculate Virgin should run the hazard of lewd tongues, and the great wonders of the Most High be blasphemed, and his Son dishonoured with a name which these late sons of hell only durst belch out.

Call we them both then still, if we think good, the "parents" of this "child:" however a foster-father Joseph was, and by that relation had a title to this presentation; and we by it another lesson to take care of those we undertake for, as for our own, to present and offer them also to God, to consecrate them also betimes to God's service. Seasonable words hence (1) remember we ever to observe. (2) Not upon every hint to cross the road of speech. (3) To conceal awhile unseasonable truths. (4) To take care of the fame and honour of others. (5) To perform our duties with all tenderness to our charges, and, however, dedicate them to the disposal of the Almighty.

Thus much we may learn by the presenters and their title; and our unhappy times make us the readier to make

another note, to take notice of this happy juncture, where both parents agree about the child, both bring him. Our divisions are so increased upon us, that those whom God has nearest joined are so wide separated in this business, that the unfortunate child is kept from being presented unto God; God deprived of his right, and the child of the benefit, by the perverseness of the one or other of the parents; the child neither brought to the church nor God—done for neither according to law nor custom, but debarred Christianity—denied to God at first, and in danger to be denied by him at the last—through the division of the parents in religion and sect. A joyful sight it is, methinks, to see them here united for the child's good; the more, for that our dissensions of parents look so ugly, and are so deeply prejudicial to God's honour, and the child's both benefit and right which it has to be presented to God in holy baptism. It may yet prove worse in the education, if the difference still continue between the parents; and the child which unbaptized cannot be conceived to have any greater assistance of inward grace than the child of a heathen or a Jew, being both by nature,—and it is to be feared, by the parents' irreligion, yet further punished by a leaving it merely in that state, proner far to evil than good, to error than truth,—such a child it cannot be expected in reason but that it should adhere to the worser part; and as it lost its baptism at the first, so at the last miss its religion too. God being denied it when he would have it, and calls for it to have it brought to him, we can have no great confidence that he will at another time accept it, when it is grown out of that number of little ones whom he calls—become greater in its corruption, and the first-fruits of his age dedicated to another master. God send better agreement among parents, say I, be it for the children's sake, that they may be presented to the Lord!

A "child" it is that is presented in the text and in the day; and the "child Jesus." Such a child is both example and authority enough for us to bring ours also to the Lord whilst they are such; unless we think our children are holier than he—want less than he—can be without God better than he—more above the law than he.

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XXII.Matt. xix.  
14.

But he calling for them himself,—“Suffer little children to come unto me,”—it seems to me both ingratitude and impudence to keep them from him; to say nothing of the infidelity in so doing: as if we believed him not that he meant it when he called; or we thought he could do them no good if they came; or that he would not; or that they were as well without him as with him, without his blessing as with it. It may be they will tell us he called them, indeed, but not to baptism; did not baptize them when they came. Poor silly men! would they have him baptize the children before their fathers—before they themselves were fitted for it, by whom only the children have right to it? or baptize them when they were not brought by them to that purpose? Is it not enough that Christ desires and accepts the children that are brought to him, that come to him? And how come they now to him but by baptism? How has the Universal Church, from that day to this, brought children to him? has it not been to baptism, in all catholic doctrine and practice to this day? Have we now at all found any better way to bring them to him? None at all, alas! and is that better?

[1 Cor. vii.  
14.]

Their children, forsooth, are holy because their fathers are—alike, I think, that is, under the bondage of corruption. Their fathers holy! I would we could see it once. But suppose them so, were there no holy fathers among the Jews, that their children must all receive the sacrament of circumcision, to which our baptism succeeds, to hallow them? Ay, but God now has promised to be the father of them and of their seed. And did he not so to Abraham first?—and yet must his children be circumcised. What is it, trow, that these men would have? Must the Jews dedicate their children, and must not the Christian? were the Jewish children God’s right, and are not the Christians’? Do not we owe ours as much to him as they theirs? Or must their births be happy by an early consecration, and ours not? theirs in a better condition under the wing of the Almighty, ours in a mere natural state in our own mere protection? theirs sealed for God’s own; ours without seal, or anything but their fathers’ sin to know them by; challenged wholly to ourselves, as if God had neither part nor portion in them? Certainly, did men but thus consider, children would not be

Gen. xvii.  
7.

so much injured by their parents' frowardness; and could children and sucklings understand it, they would complain of so great an injury done to them—the most imaginable that can be done to that tender age—thus to be deprived of the blessing, and taken out of the protection, as much as lies in their parents' power, of their God and Saviour.

Thus far we have considered only God's right and the child's good in being brought into the temple. See we now the parents' devotion, and God honoured by it.

They "brought in the Child." And what better present can they bring, can any parents bring and offer, than a child? How can they express their devotion more to God, than by offering what is dearest?

Now (1) he brings his child to God, that brings it to be baptized, to be instructed, to be brought up in the fear of God and the practice of true religion.

He (2) brings him more peculiarly, that devotes him to some peculiar service of the church, as Anna did Samuel to the service of the tabernacle.

He (3) brings him to God, that commends him daily in his prayers to God for a blessing, as Abraham did Ishmael in that petition, "Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!" [Gen. xvii. 18.]

He (4) brings him to God, that resigns him wholly at any time to God's disposal, both in health and sickness, both in plenty and want, for any fortune or condition that God thinks fit or convenient for him. Indeed, there was a strange offering of a child prescribed to Abraham, to sacrifice him on an altar: and God sacrificed this Child at last, Gen. xxii. 2. his Son upon the cross for us; but he requires not that we should do so with ours. Yet this he does, that, with Abraham, we should so resign the dearest of them to God, that if at any time for his service he command them from us, and please for the profession of his name or truth to sacrifice them to the flames or to the cross, any way understood, we should not think much to be so bereaved of them to their greater glory.

All these ways the child is brought to God according to the letter; but in the mystery, he (1) also brings his child, even who has none, that brings what is dearest to him, and submits it to God's pleasure; he (2) that blesses all his

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actions at the beginning with his prayers; he (3) that devotes his first morning thoughts to heaven; he (4) that dedicates his first thoughts, motions, and intentions, the first-born of his soul, to God's honour and glory. So we may offer children, that have no children; bring a child, who have no child. Nay more, we may bring the Child—that is, the best of children, above all children, the “child Jesus;” as well the barren maid as the most fruitful mother may do this. It may be better too: they that have no other child, may best tend upon the “child Jesus;” they that have none other to care for, have the more care to bestow on him; they that have no other to nurse or bring up, may the easier and fuller apply themselves to nurse him up in their souls, till he be grown up in them to a perfect stature; and having no other to bring to the temple, may every day bring him. He was brought here by a virgin; and I know not how he can be brought by any better. Yet by a Virgin-mother here, that both virgins and mothers, parents and others, all conditions, might have an interest to present him.

And sure no greater present, none more acceptable—no child to this, to the “child Jesus.” Bring him with us, and come and welcome; welcome at any time with him. It is in him that all our offerings are accepted; his cross, the altar that sanctifies our gifts; he the beloved Child, in whom alone God is well pleased.

His parents brought him in without a figure: brought he was before in the type only and the shadow, prefigured in Isaac, and Solomon, and Josiah, and in the offerings and sacrifices of the law. The great light or candle of this day first dispersed those shadows; all legal purification days turned into so many Candlemas by the bringing in of this Eternal Light, this bright only child of the Father of lights.

But are our candles all put out? ceremony and substance vanished too? Is it not Candlemas still with us? Are we returned to that former darkness, and no light left us to offer up—no “child Jesus” to offer still? Yes, still we have; it is an Eternal Light that this day sprang up, beyond the splendour of the lamps of the temple. We offer Christ even to this day still.



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XXII.[Rom. xiii.  
14.]

1. He offers Jesus, that forms himself to the image of Jesus, by "putting him on," as the Apostle speaks, in righteousness and holiness, by meekness, patience, obedience, charity, and brotherly love; growing up by what degrees he can to the stature of Christ, so presenting himself before God: and he that does it in his youth, at the first spring of his understanding days, brings the "child Jesus,"—the most acceptable, because the most early and timely offering.

2. He brings and offers Jesus, who, when he has done all he can, offered all he is able, given all he had, yet renounces all as unworthy; claims nothing by them, thinks them not worth acceptance, but wraps them all up in Christ's mantle; presents his merits as the only offering, his righteousness and abundant satisfactions to sanctify all his other presents; stands to none, pleads nothing, claims by nothing, but only him.

3. He offers Jesus, that, in a thankful remembrance of his love, offers him up in the holy sacrament as the only sacrifice of thanksgiving, beyond all other possible praises, and for an atonement and reconciliation for his own sins and the sins of all the world. It is time we set aside some time for such an offering; and in the text we find it, though not explicitly, yet necessarily implied. For, "when the parents brought in the child," will easily tell us that—a "when," a time there was; and is a kind of relative conjunction, that by joining the context will quickly be resolved, within a few verses backward, to be "when the days of her purification," the mother's purification, "were accomplished." Luke ii. 22.

The law would not sooner suffer the mother to come near the sanctuary: so scrupulous did God seem to be of the pollution of his temple, that he would not accept his own dues and offerings from a hand of that body which had but on it the least semblance of impurity, though it was no other than a mere natural course which himself had made. Nature itself, it seems, when its motions are but merely natural, must have nothing to do at the altars of holiness. God made all things good; makes many good things, which yet he thinks not good enough to approach his holiness without a previous purification. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their followers, may cry out, "The whole congregation is [Numb. xvi. 3.]

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holy;" all holy enough, anything good and pure enough, for the temples, altars, sacrifices, services, ministrations of the Lord and his Christ;—but it seemed they wanted fire to cleanse them and their censers, and God sent it with a vengeance. They would not keep apart from holy offices, but God parts the earth to sever them from his altars: and when our sins are sufficiently punished, their followers will find some strange purging fires for thus boldly daring, without purifying their hands after the law or custom of the Church, to lay them to Christ's plough before their days be out, either themselves or their days accomplished; not their very apprenticeships out, some of them, so presumptuously intruding into holy offices, functions, offerings, and places;

[2 Pet. ii. 3.] such men's "damnation slumbers not;" though it tarry, it will come sure at last. The holy Virgin, who needed no purification for this childbirth, (as not conceiving, as the text runs, *suscepto semine*,) must be purified before she come, though to bring an offering as pure as purity itself. So is God's method and order, so he requires it "after the custom of the law," it is said here; and were there no reason else, church-law, and custom in church business, in all reason should carry it.

Levit. xiii.  
2.

And it being holy business, purification cannot but be a necessary disposition to it; some kind of separation to prepare for it. There is a legal separation, and it did well when it was in use; there is an evangelical, still in force; an external and an internal both. Holy things not to be meddled with but with holy hands—hands separated from civil and secular employments; none to offer as priests, but those that are so accomplished with that kind of separation; and none to present, neither anything to be offered, but such as have holy hearts accomplished with inward purity: unsanctified hearts, and unhallowed hands are not fit to bring in Jesus, nor touch the offerings of so pure a God. Not the word, not the sacraments, not the services, none of them to be either offered or taken, by any he whoever that hates to be reformed, who is not purified and disposed rightly before he comes.

Forty were the days of this purification. Something there may be in the number. So many days Moses prepared for

the receiving of the law ; so many Elijah, in his advance to the mount of God ; so many Christ himself, before he entered upon his office ; so many the Church designs for a preparation to Easter, as a purification of our souls and bodies, by prayer and fasting, against our Easter offerings. Whether this number tell us, by ten four times multiplied, that the Decalogue of Moses is in the four Evangelists completed, the law perfected by the Gospel ; or that these bodies we bear about us, consisting of four elements, are by the observation of the Ten Commandments accomplished with all virtues, and thereby best purified ; or that the tenth parts of all our years, to which forty days do well near draw (so many being but little more than the tenth portion of a year), are hereby required to be spent in God's service, the purifying of our souls and bodies for his use ;—whether it be for the one reason or the other, or the third,—for this, sure, it is, that we may understand a large and considerable portion of our days is to be always spent in good preparations, purifications, and retirements. Christ can never be too much provided for, nor we too much purified, when we come to take or offer him.

Nor is the place, for that is the next point, where we are to offer, though a great way off, to be complained of for its distance. If it be the place where God has set his name, and appointed for his worship—as far as Mount Moriah from Abraham's tents, or the uttermost borders of Judæa from the temple—go we must thither, and not think much of it. “ They brought him in,” says the text ; that is, into the temple at Jerusalem. From Bethlehem to Jerusalem is a pretty walk to go with a young child to offer ; but where God commands, there is no gainsaying. There is no burden neither to such souls as just Josephs and blessed Marys ; and the child will get no cold by the way it goes to God : our niceness makes the trouble, and betrays us to the fear. The child gets no hurt by being carried to the font ; nor did it in devouter times, when it was wholly dipped, no more than so great a pain as circumcision hurt the infant's health. Our tenderness and fooleries, who have not faith enough to trust God with them, or to submit mildly to God's ordinances, are the only causes of all miscarriages in holy business, where we will be wiser than God, tenderer than God,

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1 Kings xix.  
8.  
Matt. iv. 2.

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and more careful than God would have us. The greatest argument for this generation not turning Jews is, I think, for fear of circumcision—lest they should put themselves to any pain, or fear to lose their children, by that bloody sacrament; else, I fear they are too well disposed towards it. One thing would much persuade, I am sure, if they might so pull down all our churches, and have but one to go to once a year. So godly is the age we live in! so well are we reformed!

Yet the fittest place, sure, for God's offerings, are God's houses; his own altars for his own service; holy places for holy works, for holy offerings; *Templum Domini* for *Dominum templi*, as devout Bernard, "the temple of the Lord the fittest place for the Lord of the temple;" that the fittest, the likeliest to find him in. So the prophecy, so the desire, call it which you please, of holy David fulfilled,—*Suscepimus misericordiam in medio templi*: "We have found," or we wait for, "thy loving-kindness in the midst of thy temple." Mercy itself there this day found. We may pray anywhere and offer, and offer anywhere, either our own children or the child Jesus, if necessity so be: but the best souls love the best places; holy souls, holy places. David professes so. Nay, the very sparrows, he observes, will build as near the altars as they can; and it may be for that kind of sensible and natural piety, they particularly, above other creatures, are said by Christ not to "fall, one of them, to the ground," without God's more peculiar providence.

Ps. xlviii.8.

Ps. lxxxiv.  
3.

[Matt. x.  
29.]

I shall make no further note upon this particular; it is but implicitly implied, though yet so necessarily in the text: they "brought him in." In whither? Into the temple it was; and the very words immediately before, in that very verse, express it. Yet being but so expressed, so briefly and implicitly, I take leave to be brief too, because there is still so much of the text, and so little of the time, behind. And the point next behind is the manner and form of Christ's presentation, or the cause or reason why he was presented, why they brought him in: "to do for him after the custom of the law." And three points of it there were to be observed upon such occasions,—to offer him, to ransom him, to offer for him.

He was (1) the first-born, and therefore to be offered and presented. The first-born was God's: "All the first-born are mine," says he, "both of man and beast." And Christ, he is "the first-born of every creature," says S. Paul. So in him they are offered altogether, man and beast—all sanctified by him: men that live like men, and men that live like beasts; *qui computruerunt sicut jumenta in stercore suo*: who wallow in their own dung, in their own sins, "like the beasts that perish;" for the righteous and for the sinner both is he offered, that both might have access to God through him; that man and beast too, according to the letter, might, as the Psalmist says, be saved, that is, blessed and preserved, through him.

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XXII.Num. viii.  
17.

Col. i. 15.

[Ps. xlix.  
12.][Ps. xxxvi.  
7.]

He was the first-born (2) of his Father, the first and only-begotten Son of God; so to be presented upon that title.

He was (3) the first-born of his mother, the first and only son first born though not begotten there; but first-born was sufficient to entitle him to God.

The Apostle calls him (4) "the first-born among many brethren;" he our elder, and we the younger brethren.

Rom. viii.  
29.

The same Apostle (5) calls him the "first-born of the dead." So that now being the first-born both by Father and mother, both in heaven and earth, of quick and dead, of every creature, no great wonder to hear of his presenting to the Lord.

Col. i. 18.

Yet for himself neither was he offered, but for us; he needed no such sanctifying but for us; to sanctify us, as the first-fruits to sanctify the whole lump; as the true "Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world;" as the first-born in relation to his brethren, to rule over us as a Prince, and offer for us and bless us as a Priest; the two appendices of a primogeniture. Thus is he made to us our "morning sacrifice," as he was after our "evening offering," when he was offered upon the cross. Thus both offered for himself "after the custom of the law," and for us in the interpretation of the Gospel.

But "the custom of the law" was, next, to ransom him. "Five shekels" was his price—the ordinary rate; a goodly price for the First-born of God to be valued at! O blessed Jesu, how little hast thou made thyself for us!—of how little value! How can we sufficiently value thee, for thy thus

Num. xviii.  
16.

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undervaluing thyself! And why should we now, my beloved, so overvalue ourselves as to think no honour sufficient for us, nothing too good for us, no riches enough, no respect answerable to our deserts? If Christ be valued but at "five shekels," the best of us, all of us, the whole world of us—and if there were a world of worlds—were not all worth five farthings. Let us but think of this, and no disrespect, or disesteem, or slighting, from the very meanest and unworthingest hand, will ever trouble us again, certainly.

Well, ransomed he was yet with it, as little as it was; but it seems it was but to pay a greater—the price of his life to ransom us. No ransom would redeem him the second time, because his business was not to redeem himself, but us. He was redeemed now for a little; but he was sold for less than thirty pence, and yet would not be redeemed by any sum.

[Phil. ii. 7.] "He made himself of no estimation," again and again, and dealt with himself as if he were not worth a ransom, only that he might ransom us, and set us high in God's esteem.

The ransom money here was the priest's; and holy Mary, as poor as she was, would pay her dues. And Jesus would she should—his mother should; and then, sure, all his brethren too would be therefore offered and redeemed. It is a good example for church duties when such pay them, and may amount to a kind of precept; for if he who is the great High Priest himself, and from whom it was not due, pay, as he did tribute afterward, that he might not offend, I can see little of Christ where the Church or priest is robbed, or little Christianity where such offences are not heeded.

[Matt. v.  
17.]

Christ would break no law, for he "came to fulfil it;" nor custom, for you see he observes it—did so all his life; kept the feasts, kept the customs. He follows not Christ that does other, whoever he follows.

Nay, Christ himself commutes too; breaks not the custom of commutation. One of the most questionable points of custom is commutation,—to exchange one for another, to pay with the purse instead of the person. Yet such was law and custom, and Christ disputes it not; nor is reason against it, to change one thing for another, when both are good; one

vow into another, one penance into another, where reason, not covetousness—respect to the condition, or inability of persons, not partiality, make the exchange. In such cases we are to submit, not dispute or cry out, as some do, “If for money, why not without it? If God will not accept my person, why my money? If I may have or do it for the payment of a little sum, why is it not lawful to me without it?” It is answerable enough to reasonable men, or devout Christians—So God, so law, so custom will have it, and it is no sin to do it.

There is yet one thing more to be done “after the custom of the law”—an offering to be offered; “a lamb,” and a “turtle-dove,” or a “young pigeon,” for the rich, or “two turtles,” or “two young pigeons,” for the poorer sort. And it was so done here. It is thought by them that dare determine which, that it was the latter, the pigeons, as cheaper and easier to be gotten, where there was so much poverty as this Child was born to.

Be it which it will, it was the poor’s offering, that (1) from henceforth poverty might look cheerful to the Christian, that was so horrid to the Jew; become his happiness, which was the other’s great affliction: the poor woman’s offering, that it might sanctify poverty to the poor, and offer it henceforward as an acceptable service unto God.

That (2) the Christian might hence know what to offer, *gemitus turturum et columbarum*, a sorrowful and contrite heart; bewail themselves like turtles that have lost their mates, and mourn sore like doves; offer up chaste and harmless souls, the chastity of the turtle and the innocence of the dove.

That (3) we might no more hereafter censure poverty, even when it falls to the great man’s share, seeing blessed Mary and Joseph, of the seed royal both, are become so poor that they can offer no more than this; nay, though they should have no more to offer than their own sighs and moanings.

That (4) we might learn now, that God will accept even the least and poorest presents—“two turtles,” “two pigeons,” “two mites”—where there is no more with convenience to be spared. Yet somewhat he will have offered,

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be it never so little, that all might acknowledge his right, none at all excepted.

Thus this offering concerns us: but how it concerns the Child Jesus is to be inquired. The one turtle could not possibly, the sin-offering, to be sure; but the other might: it was a burnt-offering, that, a kind of thanksgiving only for his safe birth, as well as for his mother's safe deliverance. It was to have been a lamb, could the woman's poverty have reached it, though the sin-offering for no woman at her purification had been above a turtle: it may be to tell them that they are to give thanks both for themselves and their Child—great thanks, more than double, though they offer but little and single for their own natural imperfections; a lamb for them both, though but a turtle for themselves; the child's original guilt to be purged with another kind of sacrifice, better sacrifices than those. Yet, besides, he taking on him our persons, the sin-offering might also so far concern him as he concerned us.

And if so, the greater, sure, is our obligation to him, that [Phil ii. 7.] he would not only "take on him the form of a servant," but go also under the fashion of a sinner; that he would be brought into so dishonourable appearance, to be thus done for "after the custom of the law;" not only "offered himself," but himself offered for, as if he needed an offering to cleanse him. But so it was not, for that it was not that he thus submitted to the law of offerings but for these ensuing reasons; and so we consider the reason of the doing:—

1. To avoid scandal, not to offend the Jews; to teach us to be very scrupulous how we offend our brother, that we use neither our own right nor our Christian liberty with offence.

2. To teach obedience; not to dispute commands, nor plead privileges too much against laws and customs.

3. To be a pattern of humility; not to exalt or cry up ourselves, or think much to be accounted like other men.

4. To show his approbation of the law; and that however [Matt. v. 17.] he might seem, yet indeed he did not come "to destroy the law, but to fulfil it."

5. That he might thus receive the testimony of Simeon and Anna, and be made manifest from his very beginning who he was; that he might appear to the world, what before he did only to the wise men and the shepherds, "to be a light



to the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel;" and to be this day so proclaimed by the Spirit of prophecy in both the sexes.

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6. He was done for "according to the law," that he might redeem us from the bondage of the law; offered as the first-born, as a Son of Man, that he might thereby make us the children of God.

7. He that needed no offering for himself was thus offered, that we might with holy Job suspect the best and perfectest of our works; and though we be never so righteous, not answer, nor know, but despise ourselves, and make supplication to our Judge. Job ix. 15, 21, 28.

Lastly, he was thus presented to God, that so he might be embraced by man,—that Simeon, not for himself only but for us, might take seizin of him, and we be thus put in possession of a Saviour. For so it follows, as on purpose, "Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God."

We have done with Christ's offering: come we now to our receiving. His parents presented him to God—Simeon received him for us. And these the particulars of the receiving: *suscipiens, suscipiendi modus, susceptionis tempus, and suscipientis benedictio.* (1.) The receiver: Simeon, "he." (2.) The manner of taking or receiving him: "took him up in his arms." (3.) The time, "then:" "when he was brought into the temple." (4.) The thanksgiving for it: "and blessed God."

But our receiving takes me from Simeon's: I must defer his till anon, till after ours; only I shall glance at it as I speak of ours,—for which I would to God we were all as well prepared as he for his.

"The same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was upon him." Luke ii. 25 I would I could say so of us here this day: *Sed nunquid hos tantum salvabis Domine?* says holy Bernard;<sup>n</sup> "Wilt thou, O Lord, save only such?" and answers it out of the Psalm, *Jumenta et homines salvabis Domine*, "Thou, Lord, shalt save both man and beast;" us poor beasts too, wandering sheep at best, but too often as unreasonable, as sensual, as grovelling downward as any beast,—dirty and filthy as sows, churlish as dogs, fierce as lions, lustful as goats, cruel as

[Ps. xxxvi. 7.]

<sup>n</sup> [S. Bernard. In Purif. B. Mariæ, Serm. I. p. 101. A. ed. Paris. 1640.]

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tigers, ravenous as bears. Accomplish we but the days of our purification,—purify we our hearts by faith and repentance,—bring we this *gemitus columbæ*, sorrow for our sins, though we cannot this *simplicitatem columbæ*, innocence and purity,—the mourning of the turtle, though we cannot the innocence of the dove,—and notwithstanding all shall be well.

It is Candlemas to-day,—so called from the lighting up of candles, offering them, consecrating them, and bearing them in procession; a custom from the time of Justinian the Emperor, at the latest about 1100 years ago; or as others say, Pope Gelasius, anno 496, or thereabouts;—to show that long expected Light of the Gentiles was now come, was now sprung up, and shined brighter than the sun at noon, and might be taken in our hands. Let the ceremony pass, reserve the substance; light up the two candles of faith and good works, light them with the fire of charity; bear we them burning in our hands, as Christ commands us; meet we him “with our lamps burning;” consecrate we also them, all our works and actions, with our prayers; offer we them then upon the altars of the Lord of Hosts, to his honour and glory; and go we to the altars of the God of our salvation, *bini et bini*, as S. Bernard<sup>o</sup> speaks, as in procession, “two and two,” in peace and unity together; and with this solemnity and preparation, we poor oxen and asses may come and approach to our Master’s crib. The crib is the outward elements, wherein he lies wrapped up; they are the swaddling clothes and mantles, with which his body is covered when he is now offered up to God, and taken up by us. Take them, and take him; the candle of faith will there show you him, and the candle of charity will light him down into your arms, that you may embrace him. We embrace where we love, we take into our arms whom we love; so that love Jesus and embrace Jesus—love Jesus and take Jesus—love Jesus and take him into our hands, and into our arms, and into our mouths, and into our hearts.

Take him and offer him again; take him up and offer him up for our sanctification and redemption, to redeem us from

[Luke xii.  
35.]

<sup>o</sup> [Processuri sumus bini et bini  
candelas habentes in manibus.—S Ber-  
nard. In Purif. B. Mariæ, Serm. II.  
p. 102. D. ed. Paris. 1640.]

all our sins, and sanctify all our righteousnesses; for without him nothing is righteous, nothing is holy.

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This day was his offering day—is to be ours. Offer we then him, offer we ourselves; take we him up into our arms, into our hands and hearts; having first lighted a candle and swept our houses to receive and entertain him, and having humbly, and cheerfully, and devoutly, and thankfully received him, bless we God.

God be gracious unto us, and purify our hearts and hands, that we may worthily receive him; strengthen our arms, that we may hold him; open our mouths, that we may bless him for him; accept our offering, and Christ's offering for us,—his perfect sacrifice, for our imperfect offerings; that we may receive all the benefits of this great sacrifice—the remission of our sins, the cleansing of our souls, the refreshing of our bodies—the fulness of all graces, the protection of our souls and bodies in this kingdom of grace, and the saving them in the kingdom of glory; that as we this day bless him here, so we may bless and praise and glorify him hereafter for evermore.

## THE SECOND SERMON

ON THE DAY OF

### THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

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S. LUKE ii. 28.

*Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God.*

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AND we have also this day taken him, and are now returned again to bless God. Taken him we have in our hands, in our mouths; *et dulcedine replentur viscera*, “and our bowels are filled with his sweetness,” filled as the moon at the full, and we cannot hold our peace; we must needs give thanks after this holy supper for so royal a feast.

Indeed, were the business, either of the day, or the taking or receiving, done as soon as we had taken him up in our arms, or down into our bowels, Simeon might have spared his blessing, and both you and I all further labour. But receiving so glorious great things at the hands of God, we cannot for shame but return him somewhat, a thanksgiving sermon, or an anthem; and being in the strength of this meat to walk not only forty days before we thus eat again of this kind of bread, or drink of this rock, but forty years perhaps some of us—and all of us all our lives, in the power and strength of this food, in the virtue of this grace this day afforded us, by the efficacy of the offering this day offered for us,—we cannot after it be such unclean beasts but that we will chew the cud, the meat that this day we have taken, and relish our mouths again with the taste and

savour of this day's food; refresh our souls and selves with a thankful remembrance of this day's mercy, and offer our evening sacrifice of thanksgiving as we have already done our morning.

So that it will not be amiss to take Christ again into our arms, though but to look upon him, and see what we have taken, what we have done; that if we have taken him somewhat untowardly, as people that are not used to handle children seldom but do—as people that are not enough acquainted with the child Jesus, as many do him,—as the best handlers of him amongst us cannot altogether excuse ourselves from much imperfection in the doing,—we may by a review amend what is amiss and what is past in much weakness in the time of receiving; or before it, in the preparation towards it, may be corrected for the future by a continued taking him into our arms in a holy life and conversation.

For many ways there are of taking him; and that is one which above all is not to be forgotten, as without which all other taking him is to no purpose but to play with him or to mock him. But I must first remember where I left, and come to that in order as I go.

Four particulars I pointed at in the words; four parts of this second general of Christ's reception, or Simeon's gratulatory acceptance of him: *suscipiens, suscipiendi modus, susceptionis tempus, and suscipientis benedictio.*

The taker or receiver: Simeon, "he."

The manner of taking or receiving him: "took him up in his arms."

The time of this taking: "then," when he was brought into the temple, and presented there.

The taker's or receiver's gratulation or thanksgiving for it: "and blessed God." "Then took he," &c.

The taker or receiver of Christ, "he" comes first to be taken notice of; and Simeon was "he." The common and most received opinion of him is, that he was a priest; for the priest's office it was (1) to receive the offerings of the Lord: and behold, here, "he" it is that takes him into his arms, and receives him at the hands of his parents, as Eli did <sup>1 Sam. i.</sup> Samuel of Elkanah and Hannah. And (2) their office it was <sup>25.</sup>

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to bless the people—Aaron's and his sons'; and that does Simeon; takes the child, and blesses the parents, "hc."

Numb. vi. 23. But the Christian priest does more, blesses the child too.

Luke ii. 34. No priest of the law could do that: it is the minister of the Gospel only that can do that; that has that authority, to consecrate, and bless, and take, and all. He it is that blesses the dead elements, and quickens them into holy things by the ministration of his office, by the virtue of his function. Till he blesses, they are but common bread and wine; when he has taken and offered them, then they are holy; then they are the means, and pledges, and seals of grace; then they convey Christ unto the faithful receiver's soul. This is the mystery of the Gospel and so I speak it; not literally of Christ's person, but mystically of his body and blood, as offered and taken in the sacrament.

But after the blessing, the taking concerns us all; and though perhaps it concerns us not whether Simeon was a priest or not, yet it both concerns us (1) that he that blesses and offers be a priest, as much as it concerns us that it be the sacrament we would have, which cannot be offered but by the hands to which Christ committed that power and authority; and (2) that we ourselves that take be some way qualified in the same respects as old Simeon here, of whom we may be certain of his sanctity, whatever of his priesthood.

Luke ii. 25. The Holy Spirit bears witness to him (1) that "he was a just man," *δικαιος*, just and upright in his dealing, "in the righteousness which is by the law unblameable," as S. Paul of himself; yet has even such a one need of Christ; is not fully and completely righteous till he take Christ into his arms by faith, till he add the righteousness which is by faith. Yet is that other so good a disposition to this, that, —whatever some men, to excuse their own laziness or looseness, and the devil to encourage it, have ungodly vented to the world, that the moral, righteous, honest man is further off from Christ than the most dissolute and debauched sinner, yet,—we see, the first that takes hold on Christ is said to be a "just," that is, a moral, honest, man, who does all right and justice, no wrong or injury to his neighbour; and, whoever he is that Christ suffers to take

[Phil. iii. 6.]

him into his arms, has already cleansed his hands by some works of repentance and at least stedfast resolution to be what is said of Simeon—*homo justus*, to be righteous and just. Without such purposes, at least, no taking him, to be sure.

He is (2) styled *εὐλαβής*, “devout” and pious: *homo timoratus* the Latin renders it, “a man timorous” to offend God, and reverently respecting holy things. And with such affections, devotion and reverence and fear and trembling, are we to approach the table of the Lord, to receive and take him: we shall else take nothing but the rags he is wrapped in, himself will vanish out of our hands.

He (3) was that “he” that “waited for the consolation of Israel.” And none but such a “he,”—one that waits, and looks, and longs, and thirsts and hungers after Christ, the “consolation of Israel” and all the isles of the Gentiles too,—none but he shall have the honour and happiness of Christ’s embraces; “to them” only “that look for him will he appear” either in grace or glory. [Heb. ix. 23.]

“Upon him (4) was the Holy Ghost:” and he only who is the “temple of the Holy Ghost,” whose soul is so, whose body is so, shall truly and really touch “the Child Jesus.” [1 Cor. vi. 19.] He will not dwell or come into those arms which the Holy Ghost has not made holy. Holy things must not be cast to dogs, to the unclean and impure, nor be laid up in unclean places; nor indeed can any receive him, or so much as call him by his name, “but by the Holy Ghost,” how fain soever [1 Cor. xii. 3.] he would call or come.

This point would have done well to have been considered before your receiving, and I hope you did; but it is seasonable too now, that if you have purified yourselves before—approached in righteousness, with devotion, reverence, with hungering and thirsting, believing and hoping for him, and in the power of the Holy Ghost—you may so continue: if you have been deficient in any, you may reinforce yourselves, ask pardon, and set yourselves the more strictly to righteousness and devotion, good desires and holy practices, hereafter.

As there is none too young to be brought to him, so there is none too old to come and take him. Old Simeon, now ready to depart the world, has yet strength enough to hold this Child in his aged arms; him that by being held, upholds

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him and all the world. None too old for Christ's company. Though he be here a Child, he is the "Ancient of days" elsewhere. There is no pretending age against his service. In the old law the priests at fifty were exempted from the service of the tabernacle, the Mosaical service of the law: but nor fifty, nor sixty, nor a hundred, nor any years, can excuse us from the service of the Gospel,—Christ's service,—nor debar us from it. To that, the outward strength and vigour of the body was necessary: to Christ, the inward vivacity and action of the soul will suffice where the body can do little. And as there is no time too long for Christ's service, not from our first childhood to our second; so there is none too late, if but strength to reach out a hand and take that, which is no burden, but an ease to bear, the greatest ease of the sick or weary or aged soul. This is a point may comfort us when all worldly comforts are past us: when, like old Barzillai, we have neither pleasure nor taste in our meat or drink, we may find sweetness in Christ's body and blood. When "the grasshopper is a burden," this Child is none; when the "keepers of the house tremble," our hands may yet hold Him full fast; when "they that look out of the windows be darkened," we may stedfastly behold him; when "the grinders cease," we may yet eat this bread of life; he that "rises at the voice of the bird," may sleep soundly with this Child in his arms; when "all desire shall fail," this desire of the nations will not leave him; when he is "going to his long home," this Child will both accompany and conduct him to his rest.

[Eccles.  
xii.]

Oh the comfort of this Child in our old age, when we are ready to go out of the world, ready to depart!—no comfort like it; no warmth like that which reflects from the flesh of this young Child—his being flesh, made and offered to us, and taken by us. When no Abishag can warm us, this  
Cant. ii. 5. Shunammite can; when none can cherish us, he can "stay us with flagons, and comfort us with apples;" when no earthly fire in our bosoms can give us heat, with this Child in our arms we grow young again, and renew our years unto eternity. Oh comfortable and happy old age, that has his arms furnished with the Child Jesus! "Forsake me not, O Lord, in mine old age," nor draw thyself out of mine arms

[Ps. lxxi.  
16.]



“when I am grey-headed,” and I shall seek no other love, no other embraces.

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Thus have I showed you Simeon’s silver head and golden hands ; Simeon with Jesus in his arms ; an old man holding of a Child, a priest embracing of his King, a servant entertaining of his Lord, the first Adam laying hold upon the Second, the Law catching at the Gospel, the old world courting of the new ; age and youth, state and religion, humility and greatness, weakness and strength, rigour and mercy, time and eternity, embracing. It is a happy day that makes this union, where the imperfection of the one is helped out and perfected by the perfections of the other. And it is the happier, in that now, in the next place, it directs us how to bear a part in this union, and communicate in this happiness, (*Et ipse accepit eum in ulnas,*) by taking Him into our arms from whom comes all this “peace upon earth, and good will among men.”

Several are the ways of taking Christ. We take him in at our ears when we hear him in his word ; we take him in our mouths when we confess him ; we take him into our hearts when we desire and love him ; we take him upon our necks when we submit to his obedience ; we take him upon our knees when we pray unto him ; we take him into our heads when we meditate and think upon him. It is good taking him any of these ways ; nay, all he must be taken.

But our business at this time is, in our arms or hands to do it ; and so to take him is,

1. First, To believe and hope in him. Faith and hope are the two arms of the soul, whereby we take and entertain whatsoever it is we love. And here Simeon did so : he would not so have “waited for the consolation of Israel,” had he not fully believed and hoped strongly to attain it ; nor would he either so have stretched out his hands to bless the parents, nor his arms to receive the child, nor his voice to sing so loud salvation to the ends of the world, that Jew and Gentile might both hear it.

2. To take him in our hands and arms, is to receive him in the sacraments. Those are the two arms that the Church opens to take him : Baptism, as the left hand, the weaker, for young weaklings ; and the Eucharist, as the right and

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stronger, for those of riper and stronger years ; and in these arms he lies at all times to be found, with them he is taken ; and when at any time we duly and devoutly use them, we take him by them. And by the one of them we have, I hope, all of us this day taken him.

3. But there is yet a way, and arms, every day to take him with. Good works are the hands ; and the two branches of charity—divine charity and brotherly love, that divide the two tables of the law betwixt them—are the two arms that embrace him : the good works that proceed from the first are the hands of the one, and they that issue from the second are the other. And I may have leave to call the Ten Commandments the ten fingers that make the hands that receive him. Only here is one thing to be observed—and worth it too—that these hands and fingers, the duties of the moral law, are to take Christ to them ; his merits to supply their defects, his strength to actuate their weakness, his faith to raise their flagging dulness and earthy heaviness, which till then looks not high enough beyond worldly interests, ere they can reach heaven.

But by these hands, thus ordered, purified, and lifted up, no fear of taking Christ wholly, with his greatest benefits and utmost relations. You need not fear the hands, or doubt the virtue of them that are thus first enabled by Christ, but that they are the truest power we hold him by. Let but our goodness die, our righteousness fail, our good deeds vanish out of sight,—and Christ does too ; he that is the Eternal Wisdom will not dwell in a body that is subject unto sin, that is the vassal of Satan, under the dominion or habit of any iniquity.

By those hands, therefore, you are daily to embrace him. These are the hands that keep him, too, that hold him fast. So long as our good works, so long continues he ; so long as our sanctification, so long our justification ; if the one goes, the other does not stay—no, is not remembered, says God. God himself forgets it as if it had not been, when once the righteous turns from his righteousness and turns wicked. This day, my beloved, you have taken Christ by the hand of the holy sacrament : that was your morning service : take him now henceforward by continuance in well-doing, by

loving God, by loving your neighbour—those two arms of charity—and by all the fingers and joints and nerves of good works, all sorts of good works, that you never more be deprived of him.

And yet *suscipere* is somewhat more—*sub capere, et sursum capere*; or in the English, to take him up. Take up his cross and follow him. Put your neck under even his hardest yoke, if he point it out; that is *capere sub* and *super* too; to take on and up; to deny yourselves, and submit to any affliction—any cross, any persecution, any loss of liberty, or limb, or life, or goods, or friends, or any thing—rather than part with Jesus, than part our arms to let him go; than any way part with our part, any part or portion in him.

And then, lastly, *sursum capere*, take him up and offer him again unto his Father; offer him as our lamb for a burnt-offering; offer him as our turtle for a sin-offering—for he is our turtle, of whom it is said, “The voice of the turtle is heard in our land:” offer him as our dove for a sacrifice of thanksgiving, for he is our “love” and “dove;” offer him for our meat-offering, for he is our meat, the very “bread that came down from heaven,” fittest therefore of all bread to be offered to heaven again.

Cant. ii. 12.

Cant. ii. 13,

14.

[John vi.

33.]

Offer we him as our *turtur* in our solitude and retirement; (*turtur avis solitaria*, the turtle is a solitary bird;) offer him as our dove in company and in our congregations; (*columba avis gregaria*, doves fly by flocks together;) offer him in our contemplation, and offer him in our practical conversation.

And offer we up ourselves together with him—for it is an offering day, and we must not stand out nor come in empty;—offer up, I say, ourselves as turtles and doves; some, their single estate with the turtle; others, their married with the dove;—offer we up the turtle’s sighs instead of wanton songs; the turtle’s chastity and purity and the dove’s simplicity. Let our lives be full of sorrow for our sins, and compassions to our brother—full of purity and innocency. Keep we still this *sursum in suscipere* upon the tops of the mountains with the turtle, as near heaven as can be; set no more our foot upon the green trees or boughs, as the turtle does not when his mate is dead; rest we no more upon the green and flourishing, the light and leafy pleasures of the world,

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but spend the residue of this mournful life in bewailing the widowed Church, our lost both spouse and mother, our deceased Husband and Father too. Thus taking Christ and his offering, and proportioning ours according to it, our heaviness may again be turned into joy, a joyful light spring up again; our Purification become also a Candlemas, an illustrious day of lights and glories.

It is Candlemas-day, I tell you again. Let it be so henceforward with you for ever, perpetual Candlemas, perpetual Christmas; your good works perpetually shine before men, that they also may glorify your Father by that light; and nothing be henceforth heard of but Christ, in your hands and arms and mouths, all your words and works and lives and deaths, nothing but Christ, nothing but Christ; as if you were wholly full this day—as Simeon’s arms with the Child Jesus—with the Lord’s Christ.

This work is never unseasonable. Christ may at all times be taken so with reverence into our mouths, or arms, or hearts, or any part about us. Yet he has a proper time besides, and that is when he is presented in the temple after his circumcision and his mother’s purification.

At such a time as that, when our hearts are purified by repentance and faith,—when the devout soul, which like his mother conceives and brings him forth, has accomplished the days of her purification, and offered the forementioned offerings of the turtle and the dove, and we circumcised with the circumcision of the Spirit, all our excrescent inclinations, exorbitant affections, and superfluous desires cut off,—we may with confidence take him into our arms; but until then it is too much sauciness to come so near him; at least presumption to conceive we have him truly in our arms, that he is truly embraced by us, whilst we have other loves, other affections which cannot abide with him, already in our arms, and too ready in our hands.

Profane we him not, therefore, with unhallowed hands, nor touch this holy ark of the covenant with irreverent fingers, lest we die. Many that have done so, says the Apostle, for so doing “are sick” and “weak” upon it, and “many sleep;” that is, die suddenly in their sins, whilst the hallowed meat is yet in their mouths. It is as dangerous as death and

[1 Cor. xi.  
30.]

damnation too, to take Christ with unpurified and unprepared hearts or hands. Take him not, then, till you are prepared.

Yet (2), if prepared, take him when you can, and as soon as you can—when he is offered to you—whilst you may; to-day, if you will; it is offering day with him yet, any day too, when he is offered, and whilst he is so: for he always will not be so; it will not be always Candlemas; he will not be offered every day. There is a time when he will go and not return, when he will not any longer strive with flesh; when we shall stretch out our hands and he will not come, nor hear, nor see us neither. To-day, if you will do it, do it; you are not sure of yourselves to-morrow, much less of him. To-day, if you will: if not I know not what day to pitch, nor will you find it easy to meet another, if you at any time neglect the present. This day, then, “whilst it is called to-day,” lay hold of him, if you be wise, and would not be put off by him with a *Discedite!* ‘Hands off! I have nothing to do with you, nor you with me: it is too late.’

Many are the times and days, as well as means and ways, wherein Christ is offered to us; but this day he has been thrust into our arms, put into our hands, and we have taken him. Yet say I still, Take him up in your arms; and I say it without either tautology, or impertinence, or impropriety. Into our hands we have taken him, and, I hope, into our arms, into our bosoms, into our hearts besides: take him yet up higher and higher into our affections, the very natural arms of our souls, more and more into them, nearer and nearer to us, closer and closer to our hearts; embrace and hug him close, as we those we most affectionately love; and hold him fast, that he may no more depart from us, but delight to be with us, as with those that so love him that they cannot live without him.

Thus it is no impertinence to wish you to take him still, though you have taken him. Thus you are every day to take him, or this day’s taking him will come to nothing, or to worse. If you go not on, still taking him nearer and nearer, deeper and deeper every day, into your bosoms and hearts, as you have this day into your hands and mouths, you will be questioned in indignation by him: Why have you taken me into your mouths—why have you taken me up in your

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hands, seeing you now seem to hate me; are so soon grown weary of me, and put me from you, and even cast me behind you? Take heed, I beseech you, of doing thus, of drawing back your hands so soon, drawing back at all. For after this favour, whereby you have been made partakers of him, whereby he has so infinitely condescended from himself, as to be received into so unclean, and filthy, and extremely unworthy hands and souls, to be embraced by such vile creatures, what can we render him sufficient for such goodness? It is but this, O man, that he requires—a poor thing, O man, that he requires at thy hand for this vast infinite favour; and thou hast Simeon here doing it before thee, blessing God: “And he took him up in his arms, and blessed God.”

Indeed, we can do little if we cannot bless—bless Him that blesses us; *benedicere*, speak well of him; say, he is good and gracious, loving and merciful unto us; tell and speak forth his praise, tell and declare the great and gracious things that he hath done for us, the wonderful things that he this day did for the children of men;—came and took their place, and was presented and accepted for them, who were but refuse and rejected persons—were fain to send bulls, and lambs, and rams, the very beasts, to plead for them; glad of anything to stand between them and their offended God—

Num. xix.  
2.

even the heifer's dung and ashes to make atonement for them, and as it were her skin to cover them,—till this day, when this holy Child was presented for all, and all those former poor shifts and shelters at an end: no need of those dead offerings more, being fully reconciled by this living One for ever. Bless we him, and praise him, and speak good of him for this.

Bless we him yet more for vouchsafing us the touches of his sacred body, for so kindly coming into our arms. Our own children do not sometimes do so, but come often with much frowardness and crying, reluctance and unwillingness. This Child Jesus comes of his own accord, slips down from heaven into our laps when we are not aware, is in our arms ere we can stir them up. And that this Son of God should so willingly leave his Father's bosom, the true and only seat of joy and pleasure, for ours, the perfect seat of

sorrow and misery; and rest himself in our weak arms, who have nor rest nor shelter but in his; that he should thus really infinitely bless us, and yet require no greater a return than our imperfect blessing him again,—how can we keep our lips shut, our tongues silent of his praise!

But having this day sealed all these favours and blessings to us by the holy sacrament, the pledge and seal of this love wherewith he loved us—having so really, and fully, and manifestly, and fast, given himself into our arms—we cannot, sure, but bless him both with our tongues and hands; with holy Simeon make an hymn of his goodness, an anthem of his love, a psalm of his mercy, and in sweet numbers carol forth his praise; set our heads to do it, our hearts to indite it, our pens to write it, our voices to sing it, and with the Three Children in their song, invite all the creatures in heaven and earth, angels and men, all the sensible and insensible creatures, to bear us company; so to make a full noise of all kinds of music to set forth his praise. Do it with our hands too, do that which will exalt his praise. Then it is *benedixit* complete, when it has *benefecit* next it. We speak best when we do best, when our lives and actions speak it: *benedixit* and *bene vixit*, are not so near of sound for nothing: a holy life is not more truly God's blessing to man, than, again, it is man's chiefest and most acceptable blessing God.

Many ways may this blessing God be performed by us; but as we stand now with some relation to this day's blessing—the blessed Eucharist, the feast of blessing, “the cup of blessing,” as the Apostle styles it—I shall show you, now you have taken it, what blessing is more peculiarly required after it. [1 Cor. x.  
16.]

Three acts of blessing there are to be performed, after this act of so taking Christ into our arms; and for it three points of blessing for this great blessing of the Holy Communion—thanksgiving, oblation, and petition. Bless him and give thanks to him. Bless him and offer up his Son to him again, and ourselves with him; offer his Son in our own arms, him and ourselves. Bless him and present our petitions to him, our prayers as well as praises. Or, in the language of the text, *benedicamus*—speak well of him, do somewhat for him, and bring our requests and petitions to him. You see I need not run out of the text for any kind of blessing.

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1. First, then, bless him with your tongues: "speak good of his name," and let your lips speak forth his "glory" and "wondrous works;" tell the world what he has done for you, what great and mighty things. *Salutem ejus evangelizate*; tell it out for good tidings, the "tidings of great joy;" be always speaking, always telling it.

Call to all the creatures to bear you company—everything to rejoice with you. Tell your happiness to the woods and mountains in your solitary retirements; tell it to the towns and villages. Speak of it in all companies; tell it to the young men and maids, old men and children, all sexes and ages, what God has done for your souls. Tell it to the summer and winter, both in your prosperity and adversity; let nothing make you forget your thanks. Tell it to the frost and fire, in your coldnesses and in your fervencies and zeals; to the earth and to the waters, in your drynesses of soul and in the sorrows of your hearts; praise him in all conditions. Tell it to the angels and heavens, as you are about your heavenly business. Tell it to the fowls of the air, even in the midst of your airy thoughts and projects, that they may be such as may set forth his glory. Tell it to the priests and servants of the Lord, to solemnize your thanksgiving. Tell it to the spirits and souls of the righteous, to bear a part with you in your song; and entreat them all, all estates and orders, all conditions and things, to bring in each their blessing, to make up one great and worthy blessing for this day's blessing, to rejoice and sing, exult and triumph with you for this happy armful of eternal blessings this day bestowed upon you. Begin we the blessing:

[Rev. v. 13,  
and vii.12.]

"Blessing, and honour, and power, and glory, and thanks, and praise, and worship, and great glory, be unto God, for ever and ever; and let all the creatures say, Amen."

Bless we him, secondly, with our offerings. Hold we up, first, our hands, and bless him; hold we up our hands, and vow and resolve to serve him from henceforth with hand and heart and all our members; offer him our vows and resolutions, holy ones; strengthen our hands, and renew our purposes, to serve him now henceforward with a high hand, maugre all the pleasures and profits of the world, say what they will against it—with a strong hand, do they what they



dare or can against us. Bless him, and resolve to bless him for ever; and every day renew we still our resolutions, that our hands may be so strengthened by them, that none may be able to take him out of our hands.

2. Catch we fast hold of him with our hands when we bless him; clasp him fast by a lively hope, as assured that all our hope is in him, all our hope in holding him; clasp we him fast and bless him.

3. Spread your arms and bless him with your faith; open your souls, and every day more and more let him come in; let it be your continual exercise more and more to trust him, to rely upon him.

4. Open your hands and cast down your blessings upon the poor: he that blesses the poor, blesses God. What you have done to them, says Christ, you did to me. Open your hands and bless God. Matt. xxv.  
40.

5. Cross your hands and beat your breasts; bless him with your hands across, as humbly acknowledging your vileness and unworthiness of so great a favour as his presence; as the seeing, and touching, and handling, and tasting him. He truly blesses God on high, that thus makes himself low.

6. Fill your hands and bless him; bless him with a full hand; both your hands full of blessings, blessings of all sorts, all good works and virtues. An universal obedience is the onliest blessing God: "Simeon" being interpreted, is *obedient*; and he it is that here blesses: the obedient soul, that at any time only truly blesses God.

7. Wash we yet our hands, before we either open, or spread, or hold up, or cross, or clasp, or fill them: wash we before we bless; wash away our impurities with our tears; bewail and bemoan our defects, and weaknesses, and imperfections, which in our receiving have been too many; that by this hand our oblation and blessing may be offered with pure and unspotted hands and hearts.

8. Clap we then our hands and bless him; do it with joy and not with grief: we may do it well when we have so washed them first. Let it be our way of blessing to do it cheerfully; to settle ourselves to all the works of piety and obedience, of faith, and hope, and charity, and humility—

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and, in a word, to an universal righteousness, with all the purity we can, with all the strength and resolution we are able. Bless with a cheerful and ready hand; set ourselves ever hereafter merrily to this work.

But remember we all this, while we so use our hands to bless, that we so open and shut, so spread and cross them, that we let not Christ go out the while. Offer we up ourselves and him together. Resolve we, whoever shall take him, shall take us too. We will not part, no not in death; we will live, and die, and sleep, and rise again together; he that will have him shall have us, whether he will or no; he is in our arms, there will we keep him. Yet in lieu of parting with him we will part with ourselves, and offer ourselves for him if that will do it. Yes, and that will do it. *Duo minuta habeo, Domine, corpus et animam*, says the devout Father.<sup>p</sup> "I have two mites, O Lord," I have two mites to offer, to give thee for thy Son, to offer thee for him—"my soul and my body." Them thou shalt have willingly; I am content to part with them, so I may keep him, and they will content him. Offer them up then "a living, reasonable sacrifice," for it will be "an acceptable service" too, an acceptable blessing of him.

Yet, as we offer up ourselves, we must now, lastly, offer up Christ too. He gave him to us to be an offering for us; to sanctify all our offerings for a blessing to us; to bless all our blessings. And for the imperfection of all our righteousness, offerings and sacrifices, prayers and praises, and blessings, to make them accepted, which in themselves and their weak performances no way deserve, he was given us to offer. His perfection will make amends for our imperfections, his purity for our impurities, his strength for our weakness; and for them, when we have done all we can to be accepted, we must offer him, or have all rejected. We must, when we begin to bless, turn ourselves, with old Jacob, to this *caput lectuli*, this "bed's head," whereon only the soul can rest; or "leaning upon the top of this staff," as the Apostle renders it; the only staff wherein old Israel trusts, the only staff whereon we rely for mercy and acceptance. This is the name of the Angel, in whom only we are to bless, in whom

[Gen. xlvii.  
31.]  
[Heb. xi.  
21.]

<sup>p</sup> [S. Bernard. Serm. III. in Purificatione B. Mariæ, p. 104 H. ed. Paris. 1640.]

only we are blest ; in whom either God blesses us, or we him. This is the sum : he the chief of all our oblations, all our blessings by oblation ; and the blessing both of our resolutions and endeavours all ; without whom we can do neither the one nor other, neither resolve good nor practise it. He, therefore, is to be offered with all thankfulness to God by us ; his merits only to be pleaded by us : and the form of all our blessing thus to run, “ Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy holy Son, the Child Jesus, give the praise.” It was not our own arm that helped us to him ; it is not our own arms that can hold him ; it is not our own strength that can keep him ; it is not our own hands that can present any offering worthy of the least acceptance. To God only, therefore, be the praise, to Christ only the merit, of all our blessings.

Thus we are, lastly, to pray too, that God would accept us and our blessing. Bless him with our petitions.

(1.) That he would please to pardon all our sins, or pass by all our weaknesses, in this day’s, in every day’s performance ; our neglects, our coldnesses, our drynesses, our wearinesses, and all the issues of our infirmities any ways.

That (2) he would accept our offerings, and be pleased with us in his Son, accept us in his Beloved.

That (3) he would grant us the benefit of that holy sacrament which we have this day received ; all the benefits of his death and passion, the full remission of all our sins, and the fulness of all his graces signified and conveyed by those dreadful mysteries.

That (4) he would particularly arm us, every one of us, against their particular corruptions, with strength and grace proportionable to every one, and effectual to us all. For proper and particular petitions, rising from the sense of our several necessities, are this day proper to be asked, and as easy to be obtained, whilst it is his own day, in which he invited us to him, and will deny us nothing that we shall earnestly, faithfully, and devoutly ask him. For this also, to pray, to petition, is *benedicere* : and it is a way of blessing God to offer up our prayers ; thereby acknowledging and confessing his power and goodness, which is no less in other words than to praise and bless him. “ He that offers praise, [Ps. l. 23.]

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honours him ;” and he that presents prayers, professes and proclaims him Almighty Father, gracious, and good, and glorious God, at the very first dash—“ God blessed for evermore.”

[Ephes. v.  
8.]

Light up now your candles at this evening service, for the glory of your morning sacrifice: it is Candlemas. Become we all burning and shining lights, to do honour to this day, and the blessed armful of it. Let your souls shine bright with grace, your hands with good works; let God see it, and let man see it; so bless we God. Walk we “as children of the light,” as so many walking lights; and offer we ourselves up like so many holy candles to the Father of Light. But be sure we light all our lights at this Babe’s eyes, that lies so enfolded in our arms; and neither use nor acknowledge any other light for better than darkness, that proceeds from any other but this Eternal Light, upon whom all our best thoughts, and words, and works, must humbly now attend like so many petty sparks, or rays, or glimmerings, darted from and perpetually reflecting thankfully to that glorious Light; from this day beginning our blessing God, the only lightsome kind of life, till we come to the land of light, there to offer up continual praises, sing endless *Benedicites* and *Alleujas*, no longer according to the laws or customs upon earth, but after the manner of heaven, and in the choir of angels, with holy Simeon, and Anna, and Mary, and Joseph, all the saints in light and glory everlasting. Amen, amen.

He of his mercy bring us thither, who is the light to conduct us thither; he lead us by the hand, who this day came to lie in our arms; he make all our offerings accepted, who was at this feast presented for us; he bless all our blessings, who this day so blessed us with his presence that we might bless him again; and he one day, in our several due times, receive our spirits into his hands, our souls into his arms, our bodies into his rest, who this day was taken corporally into Simeon’s arms, has this day vouchsafed to be spiritually taken into ours,—Jesus the Holy Child, the Eternal Son of God the Father. To whom, with the Holy Spirit, be all honour, and praise, and glory, and blessing, from henceforth for evermore. Amen.

A SERMON  
ON THE  
FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

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2 COR. vi. 2.

*Behold, now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation.*

AND truly such a "time" is worth beholding. For the business of it here being of no less concernment than "God's reconciling us to himself"—the "committing the word and office of this reconciliation to his ministers"—the persuading us "not to receive this grace in vain"—the time, certainly, wherein we may thus be reconciled, thus accepted to salvation, is worth the seeing, worth a "behold," and a "behold;" worth laying hold on, too; a "time" to be "accepted," being a "day of salvation."

And "now is the time," says the text we are fallen upon; and "now is the time," say the days we are fallen among: times of reconciliation, both; "days of salvation," both. Indeed, the whole "time" of the Gospel is no other. Yet the Apostle applies it here to the age he wrote in. We may draw it down to ours we live in. But the Church, more particularly yet, applies it to the time we are now in keeping, the holy time of Lent; a time wherein the office of reconciliation is set open to receive sinners in; a "time" when the "ambassadors for Christ," as the Apostle styles us, we that are "workers together with him,"

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2 Cor. v. 18,  
19.

2 Cor. v. 20.

2 Cor. vi. 1.

2 Cor. v. 20.

2 Cor. vi. 1.

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are more earnestly to beseech the people, and the people more especially to bestir themselves by the works of mortification and repentance, to reconcile themselves to God; a time when in the Primitive Church notorious sinners "were put to open penance, and punished in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord," says our Church in the Commination; and she herself, by making these words part of her Epistle for the First Sunday in Lent, she cries out to us, as it were, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation;" this very "time:" make much of it, and lay hold upon it.

I shall give all their right; take in all the time we can, that, seeing an "accepted time" there is, a "day of salvation" to be had, still to be had, we may be sure not to miss it. It is no idle, trivial business, this; we cannot be too careful for it. General and particular days and times all to be taken, and all little enough to obtain salvation; not to be thought much of, though it were much more, so we may but compass that at last.

I shall not therefore spend so precious time to study curiosity in a business so serious, or to torture the text into nice divisions. It shall suffice to show you in it these particulars:—

I. That an "accepted time" there is, some time above others, wherein God is most ready to accept us.

II. That this "accepted time" is a "day of salvation" too; wherein we shall not only merely be "accepted," but "accepted" so far also as to "salvation,"—one or other. "Now is the day of," &c.

III. That "now is the time," this "is the day." It is before us, it is in present: we need look no further.

IV. That God himself here points us to it; bids us "behold" it; sets an *ecce*, a mark upon it—a red letter, as it were, upon the "day," that we might mark and mind it, mind it above all other days besides.

V. That we are therefore to do accordingly. "Behold," and "behold" it; "now" and again "behold" it, again and again; and so "behold" it as to "accept" it and apply us to it; bring all ends of the text together, that we may find

“salvation” in the end. It is an “accepted time:” we therefore to make it so as well as count it so, make it perfectly “accepted” by accepting it.

These shall be the particulars: and of them all, this is the sum:—That God in his goodness allowing us time to repent, to receive his grace, to reconcile ourselves to him, and lay hold upon salvation, giving us daily deliverances and salvations too; nay, showing, and setting, and pointing us out here, a time to accept and save us in; it is certainly our duty to take notice of it; even “now” to do it; even as soon as may be to accept his goodness, and not neglect the “day of salvation.” And,

I. That we may not but both accept and be accepted, we shall show you, first, that such a time there is wherein we may. A time (1) still wherein we may find acceptation; that God has not shut up the day, and shut us out. A time (2) wherein God is readiest to accept us, readier than at other times; that there is a *καιρός*, as well as a *χρόνος*—a season as well as time for it; *καιρός εὐπρόσδεκτος* too—a seasonable opportunity, when it will be the easier done—“the accepted time.” A time (3) yet so confined and limited, that, for aught we know, there may be none beyond it. *Καιρός* it is not always; the season holds not ever. And “now is the time,” says in effect, anon perhaps it will not be; for this “time” in the next words is expounded into a “day;” and we know the day spends, and night will come on apace; so that a time, a ready time, a limited time there is, for our repentance, and God’s accepting us. These three make up our first particular we are now to begin with.

And (1) that God still allows us time, is worth a note. He does not owe it us. He might snatch us away in the height and fulness of our sins, with as much justice, as he does it not in mercy. But he “deals not with us after our sins, nor rewards us according to our wickedness,” says holy David. “Twelve hours of the day” there are; and every one of them God is not only ready to receive us, but “goes out” to seek us. And at what time soever a sinner doth repent, (so it ran of old,) and when he does, (so it runs now,) and both the same,—“he shall save his soul;” God will accept him.

Ps. ciii. 10.

John xi. 9.

Matt. xx. 3,

&amp;c.

Ezek.

xviii. 27.

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(2.) Yet, for all that, (2) all times are not alike : we will not always find admittance at the same rate, with the same ease. As he will not always be chiding, so he will not always be so pleasing, neither. We may knock, and knock again, and yet stand without a while ; sometimes so long till our knees are ready to sink under us, our eyes ready to drop out, as well as drop with expectation, and our hearts ready to break in pieces, while none heareth, or none regardeth. We should have come before, or pitched our coming at a better time. God is in bed, as it were, and at rest with his children, cherishing and making much of them ; he is not at leisure to open to such strangers. We must knock hard and importunately too, to get him to open to us ; we are out of time.

[Luke xi.  
7.]

But is he, who is “no accepter of persons,” become now an accepter of times ? or would he have us turn observers of them ? Is there ever a star in heaven that can bring us into favour with the Father of Lights ? any so lucky an aspect there, that can guide us up into his presence ? Can any, or all the planets, in sextile, trine, or square, or any position else, make us fortunate in our new nativities or second births, or give us audience with the Almighty ? Alas ! these are but as the star of Remphan and Moloch, which only carry us into Babylon, confound all the projects we build upon them. The star we are to look to is the Star of Jacob ; our *sol*, the Sun of Righteousness ; our Venus, the Holy Spirit of love ; our Jupiter, God the Father, the great *Juvans Pater* of the world. These are the only planets the Christian guides his motions by ; that make our business go well, our time accepted, our days lucky. And,

That such a time there is in the great affairs of souls, a time of readier acceptance with God—and what it is that makes it so—is now worth the considering.

That so it is, the Scripture tells us plain. The Prophet from whom our Apostle takes the words immediately before the text, and with which he ushers in his own times and ours, Isa. xlix. 8. says as much ; calls it בעת רצון, *tempus voluntatis* ; a time not only when he will, but when he is willing to hear us. *Tempus eudoklas* we may render it, “the time of his good



pleasure;” the Vulgar gives us it by *tempore placito*, “a time when he is pleased,” well pleased to hear us and be pleasant with us. The same Prophet tells us, too, of “a time” not only “when he may be found,” but “when he is near,” ready and at hand to hear us. The Prophet David expressly speaks of “an acceptable time” to make our prayers in. And “to-day if you will hear his voice,” in the Psalmist, paraphrased by the Apostle, “to-day, while it is called to-day,” shows there is a set day, or days, of audience with God, wherein he sets himself, as it were, with all readiness to hear and help us; an “accepted time.”

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Isa. lv. 6.

Ps. lxxix. 13.

[Ps. xcvi. 7.]

[Heb. iii.

7, 13.]

And will ye, next, know what it is that makes it so? There are but two things that do. Either God’s being in a good or pleasing disposition towards us, or our being in a good and pleasing disposition towards him. Come we but to him in either of these, and we have nicked the time, we are sure to be accepted.

(i.) When he is looking upon Him in whom he is always well pleased, his beloved Son,—when he is propounding him to us in his Word or Sacraments, scattering there, as it were, his gifts unto men,—then, in those solemnities, is one sort of his accepted times, wherein he is ready to do what we will desire him.

(ii.) But when we ourselves are in a good temper and disposition, that is another. *In tempore quo vos facitis voluntatem meam*, so the Chaldee paraphrases the Hebrew,—the *tempus voluntatis*, or *tempus placitum*,—‘That time when you do what I would have you,’ says God, ‘that is the “accepted time” when I will hear you.’ When our souls are in that order and obedience to our God that he would have them, then will he be in that readiness to succour us that we would have him.

Isa. xlix. 8.

The word *καίρὸς* goes for “season.” And of seasons there are some, you know, more acceptable than others; two very acceptable and pleasant in the year, the spring and summer. There are the same in the souls of men: a spring, when our graces and virtues begin to sprout and blossom, bespread and clothe this earth we carry; when the Sun of Righteousness begins to smile and warm us; when the air grows temperate, our passions and affections moderate within us,

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[Ezek. xvi.  
8.]

[Ps. lxxv.  
14.]

[Luke xxiv.  
32.]

[Ps. xlii.1.]

and all our powers breathe nothing but violets and roses ; this, as the Prophet styles it, “ the very time of love ; ” a disposition and time we cannot but be accepted in, wherein God begins to be in love with us. There is a summer, too, when “ the hills ”—the highest pitch and spirit of our souls—“ stand thick with corn,” and “ the valleys ”—our lowest powers, our inferior passions—“ laugh and sing ; ” when the bright rays of heaven shine hot upon us ; when we are hung full with all heavenly fruits ; when our hearts do even “ burn within us,” and the whole desires even of our flesh, this dust that covers us, are on fire for heaven ; when our hearts “ pant after the living brooks,” and our “ souls are athirst for God,” to come unto him, to “ appear before him.” This, indeed, is not only the time, but the fulness of it ; when, coming so replenished with grace and righteousness, we shall be fully accepted, and be sure not to be sent empty away.

Indeed, it is sometimes an autumn and a winter season with us ; a time when our leaves fall off, our graces and virtues decay and wither ; when the fair beauty of a summer goodness, either spent and dried away with too long a sunshine of prosperity, or blasted by the first approach of some cold wind, some touch of winter, some affliction now at hand, makes the day look sad about us, and melancholy too, no way pleasing. A time, too, there is, when it is high winter with us, our faith and charity grown cold and dead ; when the streams of our wonted piety lie, as it were, chained up in icy fetters, and the Sun of Righteousness scarce appears above the horizon to us. These are times not to expect to be accepted in ; and such I told you were intimated here too : “ Now is the accepted,” seems to say plain enough there is a time coming that will not be so. That is the third branch of our first particular.

Gen. vi. 3. The one-and-twentieth year after the hundred-and-twentieth that God gave the old world to repent in, was a year too late. The next day after Nineveh’s forty given her, would not have done her work. Jerusalem, our Saviour tells us, had passed her day. *Nunc autem abscondita*, the things of peace then hidden from her eyes, were too sad a proof her day was set. *Nunc autem* is full opposite to *nunc dies*.

Luke xix.  
42.

“To-day, if you will hear his voice,” shows, If you will not, you must not look for another. They in the first of the Proverbs found no less; they had passed their time, refused God’s when he called upon them: they shall therefore call, and he will not answer; they shall seek him, and that early too, but he will not be found; he will but laugh at them for their pains. A shrewd lesson to us not to neglect our day.

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Heb. iii. 7.  
Prov. i. 24.  
Prov. i. 28.

Prov. i. 26.

Indeed, it is not in the power of astrology to calculate this time, nor of any human judgment to define or point out the day when God has done accepting us; but sure such a one there is, or it were vain to fright us with a *nunc autem*, with a *but*, when there is no such matter—if day after day would come and go, and yet never bring on a night wherein no man could work. Nay, it is requisite there should be so; for were there no such time, his very mercy would undo us: in the mercy of the Most Highest, in his highest mercies, we should infallibly miscarry, and go away without repentance. Nor would his justice have time to show itself, if no time came amiss, or short of mercy. It is mercy enough that he allows us time of repentance, time to come in; and gives us (1) a lesson to be thankful, and to take it. Yet (2) he adds a greater; tells us of an “accepted time,” when he keeps open court, and gives ready audience to all that come; and may teach us to seek and search that out, that it slip not by us. Nay, it is a mercy (3) to stint it too, to bound and limit it; we else likely would never come, put it off so long till we were past coming;—and reads us a lecture against presumption—as, yet, the concealing of those bounds and limits reads us, lastly, another against despair. All these lessons to be learned from this first particular, That an “accepted time” there is, wherein above other times God will accept us.

And yet there are degrees also of acceptation. The accepting us (1) to pardon; not imputing to us our former sins, nor reckoning to us our past unkindnesses, but allowing us the liberty still of new addresses to him: there is a time for that. The accepting us (2) into favour, not only leaving open the way, but affording us the means also to bring us to him; the filling us with mercy and loving-kindness: there is a time for that. The accepting us (3) to salvation too,

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there is a day here, next, for that: and it is our second observation.

II. A day indeed. All time, nor all accepted time neither, is not day: "salvation" it is that makes it day; all time without it is but night and darkness; and in the brightest day that shines, we "sit" but "in the shadow of death," if we want the glances of salvation. Let God so accept us as to hear and prosper us with riches and honour when we desire it,—let him accept us to a pardon when we beg it,—let him admit us to new addresses and some new favours too upon it,—it is but a dawn or twilight still; it is not perfect day till "salvation" itself shine forth upon us.

I confess, *σωτηρία* here may have a temporal meaning, by the saving and delivering Christ's faithful servants out of those distresses they were at that time under, or in fear of; and *σωτηρία* *ἐποίμῃ ἀποκαλυφθῆναι*, in S. Peter, "salvation ready to be revealed," and *σῶσαι ψυχήν*, "the saving the soul," or life, in S. Matthew and S. Mark, may prove the exposition good. Yet the Apostle's discourse that ushers in the text being about God's reconciling himself to us in Christ, and sending his ambassadors to us to that purpose, in the end of the preceding chapter,—and an exhortation not to receive that grace in vain, pursuing in that design, (ver. 1) inclines me rather to apply it to a spiritual sense. Nay, the place of the Prophet, Isaiah xlix. 8, to which S. Paul alludes, seems to point particularly at this eternal salvation; verses 6, 7, 9 extending it there to the very Gentiles, "and the ends of the earth." But be it a temporal or be it an eternal salvation—be it either, or be it both—both have their "time," both have their "day," and "accepted" ones both.

Indeed, nothing can make them such so much as "salvation;" nothing like some great deliverance upon them: but every time is not fit for that. It is necessary there should be times of troubles and times of trial come before it; and it is not necessary we should be delivered presently. Until "the fulness of time was come" God did not send it, nor Him that brought it. Indeed, the Prophets that foretold it Gal. iv. 4. "inquired and searched diligently," says S. Peter, "what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory 1 Pet. i. 11.

that should follow," when it witnessed of salvation; but they could get no more "revealed" than this,—that they did "not minister to themselves, but us." That such a time should come, that they were certain; but when it should, they could not tell us.

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1 Pet. i. 12.

Other salvations and deliverances have their due times too, and as uncertain. Those very *tempora novissima*, those "last times" that the very Apostles speak so oft of in their Epistles, (who were under the dawning of salvation,) have so large a latitude, that the great deliverance from the persecutions then upon them, but one of all of them lived to see, as confidently as all of them spoke of it. Enough to teach us patience as well as confidence; to expect with patience, and quietly wait for the salvation of God in all distresses, as well as to hold up our heads with confidence, and support our dying hopes and hearts, that salvation will surely come in its due time. And yet I may add, we may notwithstanding fear, too, that though it will be sure to come, we may not live to see it, or have the happiness to enjoy it. We may die upon Mount Hor or Nebo ere it come, unless we can now happily lay hold upon this little *vuv*, this "now," set before us in the text—the next particular—and take it "now" it is offered to us.

III. This "now" is but a little word, but there is much time, or rather many several times, that lay claim to it here. The whole time (1) of the Gospel, in general. The times (2) of the Apostles, in special. Our times also (3) among the rest. These days (4) we are now a-keeping more particularly, above any other of ours. This very day, lastly, "whilst it is called to-day," before it is passed over us, before night come on us.

The time of the Gospel, from Christ's coming out of the womb, as the sun out of his chamber, till he shall come again in the clouds in glory, is this "accepted time," this salvation-day at large. The day-spring of it rose with him at his first coming, but the day ends not till his second. There is a double emphasis in this "now." (i.) Now, and not before. (ii.) Now and now, henceforth for ever. (i.) Now, and not before. In him it is first we hear of God "well pleased;" all the times before, he did but "wink at:" in his time first it is that we hear of "saving people from their sins;" he the

Matt. iii.  
17.

Acts xvii.  
30.

Matt. i. 21.

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 Luke i. 71. first of all, since the world began, that "saved us from all our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us:" in whom we have deliverance of all sorts, salvation of all kinds ;  
 2 Cor. v. 19. he in whom God "reconciling the world unto himself." Nay, he the very first that indeed made it day : it was but  
 Luke i. 78, "darkness, and the shadow of death," we sat in before ;  
 79. his is the only "time," the time of the Gospel, the only time of salvation. Here it began, and hence now it goes on (ii.) for  
 Rev. xiv. 6. ever ; for S. John calls it *Evangelium æternum*, "the everlasting Gospel," the salvation not to end even with the world ; to the end of it, sure, to continue. Moses' law had but its time, and vanished ; and whilst it had, could not pretend so far as to make it day ; cloud, and shadows, and darkness, all the while : the times of the Gospel are the only lightsome day, and a long one too, it seems ; for our Sun has promised still to shine upon us, and be with us ever, "to the end of the world."

But some more remarkable points of this "time" there are, we must confess. That of the Apostles was, (2,) the very especial *vñv* intended here, the "now" in the text : when the  
 Acts xvi. time of acceptance was at the fullest, when whole families together, thousands at a clap, whole towns and countries, came thronging in so fast, as if this very "now" were now or never ; when handkerchiefs and aprons, and the very  
 34 ; xviii. 8. shadow of an Apostle, carried a kind of salvation with them ;  
 Acts ii. 41. when there was not only a large way opened for all sinners to come in, but all ways and means made to bring them in ; when there were fiery tongues, both to inflame the hearts of the believers, and to devour the gainsayers ; when there was a divine rhetoric always ready to persuade, miracles to confirm, prophecy to convince, miraculous gifts and benefits to allure, strange punishments to awe sinners into the obedience of Christ and the paths of salvation ; when the time of that great deliverance, too—from the destruction of Jerusalem, and the "enemies of the cross of Christ," so often reflected  
 Acts v. 15 ; shadow of an Apostle, carried a kind of salvation with them ;  
 xix. 12. when there was not only a large way opened for all sinners to come in, but all ways and means made to bring them in ; when there were fiery tongues, both to inflame the hearts of the believers, and to devour the gainsayers ; when there was a divine rhetoric always ready to persuade, miracles to confirm, prophecy to convince, miraculous gifts and benefits to allure, strange punishments to awe sinners into the obedience of Christ and the paths of salvation ; when the time of that great deliverance, too—from the destruction of Jerusalem, and the "enemies of the cross of Christ," so often reflected  
 [Phil. iii. 18.] on through S. Paul's Epistles—was now nigh at hand, and the fast adhering to Christ the only way to be accepted and taken into the number of "such as should be saved" from it.

Yet, (3,) this "now" is not so narrow but it will take in our times too. It is true, those of the Apostles were fur-

nished with greater means and power; yet ours, God be thanked, want not sufficient. We have the word and sacraments, and ministers, and inward motions, daily calls, and ready assistances of the Spirit. It may be, too, somewhat more than they; a long track of experimental truths, and long sifted and banded reasons, and an uninterrupted tradition, and a continued train of holy and devout examples, a vast disseminating the Christian principles, and the perpetual protection of them, we have, to make them more easy to be accepted, and tell us that it is “now,” still, the day of salvation.

And yet, (4,) even both in our times and the Apostles’, there has been a *vñv idov*, some signal and peculiar time culled out of the rest and set apart for this reconciliation, the great affair that sets the *ecce* upon it. If I tell you but of S. Augustine’s *tota Catholica Ecclesia*,<sup>q</sup> or S. Leo’s *Institutio Apostolica*,<sup>r</sup> or S. Jerome’s *secundum traditionem Apostolorum*,<sup>s</sup> or S. Ambrose’s *Quadragesimam nobis Dominus suo jejunio consecravit*,<sup>t</sup> for this holy time we are in, the time of Lent,—that they all call it apostolical at the least; and S. Ambrose fetches it from our Lord, and consecrates it from Christ himself; and that it was always purposely designed for the time of reconciling sinners, and all the offices belonging to it,—I shall need say no more to prove this “now” in the text is not ill applied when applied to this very time.

Most reasonable it is (i.) that some such there should be designed, some time or days determined, for a business of so great weight: we are not like else to have it done; we would be apt enough to put it off from time to time, and so for ever. Were there not some set days, I dare confidently affirm, God would have but little worship paid him; thousands would never so much as think of heaven or God.

And if it be reasonable some time be set us, there is (ii.) no time fitter than where we are: it is the very time of the year when all things begin to turn their course; when

<sup>q</sup> [The reference intended is probably to the Epist. (cxviii.) ad Januarium, tom. ii. p. 190. A. B. ed. Col. Agripp. 1616.]

<sup>r</sup> [S. Leo, Serm. xc. De jejunio septimi mensis, Serm. vii. tom. i.

p. 175. ed. Lugd. 1700.]

<sup>s</sup> [S. Hieron. ad Marcellam adversus Montanum, Epist. 54. tom. i. p. 88. H. ed. Francof. 1684.]

<sup>t</sup> [S. Ambros. De Quadrag. Serm. xxxiv. p. 726. D. ed. Paris. 1549.]

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heaven and earth begin to smoothe their wrinkled brows and withered cheeks, and look as if they were reconciled. It is the spring and first-fruits of the year, which upon that title is due to God, and fittest to be dedicate to his service and the business of our souls. (iii.) It is the time when the blood begins to warm, and the contest is now in rising between the flesh and spirit; which now taken up at first and quelled, may be the easier reconciled to peace, and the body subdued into obedience to the soul, and so God's grace not received in vain. (iv.) The spring in which it is, it is *tempus placitum*, the pleasant time of the year; fittest, then, to fit with the *tempus placitum* in the text; fit to be employed to set ourselves to please God in, to make it perfectly such. And, sure, we cannot be displeased that the Church (v.) has thought so too, chosen it as the fittest. Surely it is, or should be, the more acceptable for that.

Eccles. iii.  
1—8.

And if this time, besides, has all times in it that Solomon himself could think of, it must needs be δεκτός and εὐπρόσδεκτος too— every way acceptable; and all of them it has. (i.) "There is," says he, "a time to be born," &c. and so goes on: this is both "a time to be born" in, and "a time to die" in. Lent, a time to die unto the world, and to be born and live to Christ. (ii.) It is "a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;" to plant virtue, and to pluck up vice. (iii.) It is "a time to kill, and a time to heal;" to kill and mortify our earthly members, and to heal the sores and ulcers that sin hath made, by a diet of fasting and abstinence. (iv.) It is "a time to break down, and a time to build;" to break down the walls of Babylon, the fortresses of sin and Satan, and to build up the walls of the New Jerusalem within us. (v.) It is "a time to weep, and a time to laugh;" to weep and bewail the years we have spent in vanities, and yet rejoice that we have yet time left to escape from them. (vi.) It is "a time to mourn, and a time to dance;" to manifest our repentance by some outward expressions, and thereby dispose ourselves every day more and more for Easter joys. (vii.) It is "a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;" to remove every stone of offence, and, as "lively stones, to be built up," as S. Peter speaks, "into a spiritual house." (viii.) It is "a time to em-

[1 Pet. ii.  
5.]



brace, and a time to refrain from embracing ;” to refrain from all wanton and loose embraces, and pour out ourselves wholly into the arms of our blessed Jesus. (ix.) It is “ a time to get, and a time to lose ;” to get heaven by violence, and lose earth, our worldly goods (so the worldling counts it), upon alms and charities ; to cast away earth to purchase heaven. (x.) It is “ a time to keep, and a time to cast away ;” to keep all good resolutions, and cast away the bad ones. (xi.) It is “ a time to rend, and a time to sew ;” to rent and tear off all ill habits, and to begin good ones. (xii.) It is “ a time to keep silence, and a time to speak ;” to keep silence from bad words, all idle and wanton and scurrilous language, and give ourselves to good discourses. (xiii.) It is “ a time of love, and a time of hate ;” to love God, and hate ourselves ; or love our souls, and hate our sins. (xiv.) It is, in a word, “ a time of war, and a time of peace ;” to make war against all our ghostly enemies, the flesh, the devil, and the world, and reconcile ourselves to God, our neighbour, and the Church. To all these purposes serves the time of Lent ; for them it was instituted at first, and for them it is continued : and can any Christian now think it should not be accepted upon such a score as this ? or are any days liker the day of salvation than those that are spent thus ? Or is it our own fault if it be not ? or is any time more fit to be styled an “ accepted time,” than this that is the very comprehension of all times ?—a time every way fitted up for all the designs of salvation—for calling public offenders to account, for putting notorious sinners to open penance, for reconciling penitents and receiving them again into the Church, for promoting piety and virtue, for admitting proselytes to holy baptism at the end of it, for preparing all of us for the blessed Eucharist all the way—by solemn prayers and preaching more than at other times—by fastings, and watchings, and holy retirements, and strict devotions—and every way conforming us to the image of Christ, the fasting and dying and rising with him, that we may so also be accepted by him ? These were the practices of Lent in the primitive Church of Christ ; wished and called for too in ours, in the Epistles and Collects for it, and the Commination that begins it. And by the “ afflictions,” and “ necessities,” and “ distresses,” and “ labours,”

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[2 Cor. vi.  
4, &c.]

and "watchings," and "fastings," and "pureness," &c. that follow immediately upon the text (things all so answering to this time), I cannot say but the text may stand as an *In diebus illis* : a kind of prophetic designation, at least, of this time of Lent, has caused the words, I am sure, to be so applied by many of the ancients, and made a part by us also of the Lent office.

But this very time (so dilatory are we, and so ready to put off holy duties) is yet perhaps too large, and these forty days too many, to close us to our work. Nay, the day has many [John xi. 9.] hours, "twelve," says Christ, "to walk in;" and if we may guess from our ordinary guise and custom, we are like enough to defer all to the last hour. I must set an accent, therefore, upon this *vôu*, this "now." Now, Lent or not—now, fast we or fast we not—now is the very time we must begin our reconciliation, look to our salvation; that though the name of Lent should be distasteful (as too much it is), yet, however, we may not slip our time. It is the only sure part of time we have, the present—the only "day of salvation;" for, peradventure, ere the next moment we are gone, and clearly cast without the confines of it. Not only then "to-day, whilst it is called to-day," but even "now," whilst it is called "now," is the sure "now" of salvation. To all these *nows*, God here points us by an *Ecce*, "Behold, now is the," &c.

IV. And, indeed, it is no more than needs that he should point and set us out some time, even to accept our own salvation. Time and times pass over us, and we think not of it: "a piece of land," "a wife," "a yoke of oxen," are more thought upon every day than that. We ourselves do but little mind it (I am sure we live as if we did not much); the Church cannot get us to it, with all the fasts and feasts she sets us. Our ministers, the "ambassadors" that are sent about it, persuade little with us; we had need of Prophet and Apostle too, to say it over and over again unto us; and it is so in the verse we have the text in. The Lord's day itself, did it not bear his name upon it, would as easily vanish into a neglect as all other holidays. It is only the opinion that he himself commanded or appointed that, which keeps it up awhile above the rest: whether so or no, we dispute not now; it is not to the text. These things, I shall tell you, are there

[Luke xiv.  
18.]

without dispute : (i.) Set days and times are there ; times set apart for the promoting of our salvation ; particular ones too, *Ecce nunc tempus, nunc dies*. Times (ii.) that are so set are so far from hindering, that they are even the very “ days of salvation.” Times (iii.) may so still be set by the Apostles or their successors ; they have the power to design them, with S. Paul here, to put the *nunc* upon them. Times, lastly, so set have an *ecce* upon them, somewhat more upon them than other days ; are to be observed, to be accepted. Do we therefore now accordingly, says my last particular—“ behold” them and “ accept” them : “ Behold, now is the,” &c.

V. “ Behold,” (1,) and take notice, such a “ time” there is, such a “ day” as we have been speaking of—Christ himself was anointed to preach and publish it—“ the acceptable year of the Lord.” The Apostles were sent with the like “ commission ;” and they “ beseech” us to take notice of it, 2 Cor. v. 19. whilst they “ pray us, in Christ’s stead, to be reconciled” 2 Cor. v. 20. upon it.

“ Behold,” therefore, (2,) and again “ behold” it ; that is, not only take notice of it (that may be perhaps a little by the bye), but consider it. There is a double *ecce* upon it ; take notice of that, and sit down and lay it to your hearts, and chew it over and over ; say thus within thyself :—God has been gracious to me from time to time ; expected me long from day to day, proffering me grace, proffering me salvation, even beseeching and entreating me to accept them ; “ Lord, what is man, Lord, what is man, that thou shouldest be” thus [Ps. viii. 4.] “ mindful of him,” that thou shouldest so regard him ? that thou shouldest thus follow him from one end of the year unto another, from one accepted time to another ; from feast to feast, from fast to fast, from feast to fast, from Christmas to Lent, from Lent to Christmas, from Christmas to Lent again ; from one Lent to another, from one day to another, begging and beseeching him not to refuse his own salvation ? Well may it deserve *ecce* upon *ecce*, consideration upon consideration—admiration too, as well as consideration, and admiration upon admiration (*ecce* may pass for a note of both)—to be beheld so long, till our eyes and thoughts are not able to behold or think any longer.

And, (3,) to-day to set upon it ; this *nunc* to begin it in.

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Heb. iii.

Thou knowest not, O man, thou knowest not how short thy time is ; whether this day may not be thy last ; whether this “ now,” this very moment, may not at least be the last time that this salvation may be offered thee. Many are the times, I confess I told you, that challenged right to be among the “ ones accepted ;” but remember, I told you the present was the only sure one. The Apostle surely thought so, when he was so earnest for it, that within the compass of nine verses he three several times at least puts them in mind to take care “ to-day ” to “ hear God’s voice, while to-day it is :” as if to-morrow would not serve the turn, or “ the day of salvation ” were gone at night ; salvation gone, or we gone and all gone with us. Thousands there be in the world, who now are, who within a few minutes will be no more ; and why mayest not thou be one of them ?—so much the sooner, in that the so long contempt of God’s mercy may justly provoke him thus to fetch thee off and throw thee by. It is not without reason that S. Paul doubles his files, doubles the *nunc* as well as the *ecce* ; calls, as it were, in haste, “ Now !” now, catch hold on it !

Indeed, nor I nor you can time it better. There are three special points of time that meet here now, all extremely fit to persuade and move us to set upon the work and business of salvation, to apply ourselves seriously to our repentance and God’s service—the particular time of Lent ; this special day of Confirmation ; the general and continued day of that latter great salvation and deliverance we still enjoy.

For that particular, (1,) of Lent, you have heard already all the helps it has for the furtherance of salvation—the fastings and watchings, the severities and restraints, the austerities and rigours, it requires, and brings towards it. I only add, it is Palm-Sunday within a day or two ; a day fit to go out to meet your Saviour with hosannas, and bring salvation home with palms and triumphs. The Holy Week is at hand ; a week, formerly, of greater devotion and strictness than any of the rest. Good Friday and Easter are a-coming, the great anniversaries of our salvation ; the fittest days, the properest *νῦν*, to mind it in—for all to do it. But for some,

For some of you, (2,) you who come to be confirmed, this very day is a “ day of salvation ” in particular, wherein I hope you

shall have reason to return and say what our blessed Master said to Zacchæus, "This day is salvation come" unto your houses; a day wherein, by the imposition of holy hands, your Saviour seems sensibly to accept you, to receive you signally now, after your first stragglings into his house and Church again; to receive you into his acquaintance, to receive you into his favour, to receive you into his protection, to receive you to his benediction; and send you away with it, with all the blessings of his Holy Spirit, which are by the outward ceremony of laying-on the Bishop's hands and pouring out his prayers, poured down upon you: only remember you come hither to be reconciled, and beg a blessing; that is your business. Remember that upon your knees you beg it, and with your hearts desire it,—and then upon your heads be it. Be it will, I dare assure you, wisdom, and understanding, and counsel, and ghostly strength, and knowledge, and godliness, and God's holy fear; all these gifts and blessings of the Holy Spirit, as they are prayed for in it, so will be upon you by it, to confirm you in the faith, if you now resolve (as it is required of you in the Preface<sup>u</sup>) to stand to those promises you have already made in holy baptism, and steadfastly determine to be Christians hereafter, as you should be—to live and die in the obedience of Christ, to keep his faith entire, and his commandments to the utmost of your power. Do so to-day, and to-day then will be your "accepted time," will be to you certainly a "day of salvation."

But, (3,) the days of salvation we have now almost three years enjoyed, may justly demand to be remembered too, to spur us on to take a little more care how we spend our time. I am afraid our late days have been as much consumed in vanity, as our former years were spent in trouble. We have forgot our deliverance; we live rather as if we had been "delivered" up (as they in the Prophet excused themselves) "to Jer. vii. 10. do all abominations;" we seem to have quite lost the memory of our temporal salvation; and for our spiritual, we go on daily as if we either cared not whether God would save us or no—or at least we would venture it—or as if we said in plain English, Let him save us if he will, be it else at his

<sup>u</sup> [Of the Order of Confirmation.]

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own peril if he will not ; or, in short, as if we bid him damn us if he durst. Yet never were there such days of salvation as we have seen, never such deliverances as we have found ; never were such cast-aways—never men so rejected, so despised, so trampled on—so again accepted on a sudden. Good God ! was it for our righteousness, was it for our merits, was it by our own strength, or wit, or power, we were delivered ? Alas, Lord ! we had none of these. Was it for our oaths, or perjuries, or blasphemies, or sacrileges, or rebellions, or schisms, or heresies, or thefts, or profaneness, or wickedness, or villanies, that thou didst deliver us, to our kingdom and our Church, to our peace and plenty and prosperity, to all the happy means of piety and religion, to all the beauties of holiness and opportunities of salvation ? Enough indeed, O Lord, of these we could have showed thee ; but these were reasons why thou shouldst not deliver us. It was only, O Lord, because thou wouldest have the day, and wouldest save us because thou wouldest. But for all that, my brethren, take heed we sin not so again. God has set us here a time ; points it out to us with an *ecce* and an *ecce*, that we can no longer plead ignorance to miss it ; we are already encompassed with the “day of salvation,” and we are never like to see such a one again if we should lose this. Let us abuse it then no longer, lest some horrible night ere long overtake us, some terrible judgment come upon us, and hurry us hence before we are aware, into the horrors and miseries of everlasting darkness.

(4.) By this time you understand this *ecce* is not to set us a-gazing up into heaven, or observing days and months and times and years, but to retrieve our “months of vanity,” as [Job vii. 3.] holy Job calls them, and fill the days we live with more acceptable employments. For God having so late accepted our persons, and our complaints, and prayers, and tears—or rather us indeed without them,—and desiring only of us that we would but accept and employ those mercies and all others of his to our own salvation,—we should be, methinks, the most unreasonable of men, to be so unkind to God as either not to receive his grace, or receive it still in vain. Worthy it is of better usage, for δεκτός here is the same [1 Tim. iv. 9. with πάσης αποδοχῆς ἄξιος. “Accepted” here, the same

with that "worthy of all acceptation" there. The very time, says our Apostle, is such: what then is the salvation of it? That, surely, much more. SERMON  
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Accept we it, therefore, and the time of it, with all readiness, with all thankfulness, with all humility. Take we all the opportunities henceforward of salvation; look every way about us, and slip none we can lay hold on. This *ecce, ecce*, reiterated, is to rouse us, and to tell us that our *ecce* should answer God's. *Ecce tempus*, says he; *Ecce me*, or *nos*, say we. "Behold" the time, behold "the day," says God. Behold us, say we, O God, our "hearts are fixed, our hearts are fixed;" our hearts are ready, our hearts are ready to accept it. *Ecce adsum*, says Abraham; "Behold, here I am." *Ecce venio*, says Christ; "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." "Behold, thy servants are ready," says David, "to do whatsoever my Lord shall appoint." And, Behold, we are coming, we are here, we are ready with thee according to thy heart,—these are the returns or echoes we are to make God back again. [Ps. lvii. 8.]  
[Gen. xxii. 1.]  
[Heb. x. 7.]  
[See 2 Sam. xv. 15. The words are said to David.]

Nor is it time to dally now. Time is a fitting post; day runs into night ere we are aware: this "now" is gone as soon as spoken; and no certainty beyond it, and no salvation if not "accepted" ere we go hence. There are, I know, that cry, To-day shall be as yesterday, and to-morrow as to-day; "All things continue as they were since our fathers fell asleep:" and this thing you call religion does but delude us, and our preachers do but fright us; this salvation they talk of, we know not what to make of it: if there be such a thing, indeed, the day is long enough—we may think time enough of it many years hence. Such scoffers, indeed, S. Peter told us we should meet with. But I "hope better things of you, my beloved, and such as accompany salvation;" and I have told you nothing to fright you from it; I have not scared you with the ancient rigour, nor terrified you with primitive austerities; I have only showed you there is such a thing as salvation to be thought of, and it is time to set about it. You cannot fast, you will tell me; you are weak and sickly—it will destroy you; you cannot watch, you say—it will undo you; you cannot give alms—you have no monies; you cannot come so oft to prayers as others—your business hinders [2 Pet. iii. 4.]  
[2 Pet. iii. 3.]  
[Heb. vi. 9.]

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you. But, however, can you do nothing towards it, towards your own salvation? can you not accept it when it is offered? can you not consider and think a little of it? If you do but that, I shall not fear but you will do more. When you have business, you can spare a meal now and then to follow it; and nothing is made on it when you are at your sports or play; you can sit up night after night and catch no hurt, for a new fashion, impertinence, or vanity; you can find money and time enough, at any time, for any of these: I desire you would but do as much, nay half as much (I am afraid I may say, the tenth part so much), to save your souls. Spend but as much time seriously upon that, as you do upon your dressing, your visits, your vanities, (not to require any thing so much of you upon that as upon worldly business,) and I dare promise you salvation; you shall be accepted "at that day," at that day—when our short fasts shall be turned into eternal feasts, our petty Lents consummate into the great Easters, when time itself shall improve into eternity, this day advance into an everlasting sunshine, and salvation appear in all its glories.

Accept us now, O Lord, we pray thee, in this "accepted time;" save us, we beseech thee, in this "day of salvation;" that we may one day come to that eternal one, through Him in whom only we are accepted—thy beloved Son Christ Jesus. To whom, with thee and thy Holy Spirit, be consecrated all our times and days,—all our years, and months, and hours, and minutes, from henceforward: to whom also be all honour and praise, all salvation and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.



# A SERMON

ON THE

## SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

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I COR. ix. 27.

*But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*

DURUS *sermo*, a hard text, you will say—a whipping sermon towards, that begins with *castigo*, and ends with *reprobus*; that is so rough with us at the first, as to tell us of chastening and “keeping under the body,”—and so terrible at the last, as to scare us with being “castaways” unless we do it. And that too *cum aliis prædicaverim*, the greatest preachers; the very Apostles themselves, after all their pains, no surer of their salvation than upon such severe conditions. If the preacher will needs be preaching this—tell us of disciplining our bodies, talk to us of being “castaways,”—*quis eum audire potest?* who can endure him, who can bear it?

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Well, bear it how we can, think of it what we please—be the doctrine never so unpleasing, it must be preached, and bear it we must, unless we know what to preach better than S. Paul, or you what to hear or do better than that great Apostle.

And it is but time for us to preach, for you to hear it. Men daily fool away their souls by their tenderness to their bodies—and their salvation, by the certainties they pretend of it. It is time to warn them of it.

And this time as fit a time as any can be, to do it in, the holy time of Lent; a time set apart by the holy Church

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16.]

to chasten and subdue the body in. And the opportunity is fallen into my hand among the rest; and *Vae mihi si non*—I cannot excuse myself if I do not take it, if I neglect the occasion to do my utmost to keep myself and you from being “castaways.”

2 Cor. xiii.  
5.

I know people do not love to hear of it, and the preacher shall get little by it but hard censures; be *ὡς ἀδόκιμος*, as the Apostle speaks—be half a reprobate, a “castaway,” himself for preaching it. But seem we what you please, be it how it will, I venture on it upon S. Paul’s account; and both you and I, as high as we bear ourselves upon our assurances that we are the elect, if we will be sure indeed not to be reprobates, must be content to hear of it lest we be so.

It is a plain text, the words very plain; need no Philip to expound them. Nothing could be said, nothing can be, plainer. For he that says, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest I should be a castaway,” says nor more nor less than, Unless I do so, so I shall be, for all my great flourish and appearance, for all my other great performances.

1 Cor. ix.  
1, 2.  
1 Cor. ix.  
14, 18.  
1 Cor. ix.  
4, 5.  
1 Cor. ix.  
10.

And it being an Apostle without exception,—one who knew his office, and performed it beyond all that was required of him; knew his power, and how to stand upon it; understood well his Christian liberty, what he might do, or leave undone; who, notwithstanding all his power, and liberty, and privilege, and performances, falls here to discipline his body, “lest” after all “he should prove a castaway,” fall short of his crown, and lose the reward of all his labours,—if he can find no other means to avoid the one but by the doing of the other,—*Τὴν ἀν εἴποιμεν ἡμεῖς?* says S. Chrysostom,<sup>x</sup> “what can we say for ourselves?” Say, I hope, it concerns us, and we will look to it, will set about it. Better authority we need not than the Church’s, as for the time; better example we cannot desire than S. Paul’s, as to the thing; and better motive I know none to persuade either, than *μήπως ἀδόκιμος γένωμαι*, that we may save ourselves from being “castaways.”

<sup>x</sup> [S. Chrysost. In Epist. I. ad Corinth. Homil. xxiii. tom. x. p. 237. C. ed. Paris. 1838.]

I shall not obscure the business by any nice division of the words. Two general parts shall serve the turn :

- I. S. Paul's wholesome discipline for his body ; and,
- II. His godly fear for body and soul. Or,
- I. His disciplining and strict ordering of his body ; and,
- II. The ground and reason why he does so.

The first is in those words : " I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." The second in those : " Lest by any means, when I have preached unto others, I myself should be a castaway."

In the first, we have S. Paul, his body, and the work he makes with it, or the discipline he uses towards it. Three points to be considered.

In the second, we have three more to make up the reason, why he does so use it. Because (1) he would not be a " castaway : " *μήπως ἀδόκιμος*, " lest I be." Because (2) there may be many ways to make us so : " lest by any means " I be so, supposes by many I may be so. Because (3) there is no avoiding being so without it ; all our preaching and doing will not do without it. (1.) " Lest I be a castaway." (2.) " Lest by any means I be a castaway." (3.) " Lest when I have preached to others I should be a castaway " notwithstanding.

I could give you the parts, perhaps, in nearer terms applied to the metaphor couched in the words. But the text is plain, and the parts I would leave plain, and I would be plain, and understood. Yet, under whatever notions I should give you them, this is, and would be still, the sum of all : that the keeping under the body, and the bringing it into subjection, is a business to be mainly looked to,—looked to by the best and greatest, the very S. Pauls among us ; and that under no less penalty and danger than being " castaways " if we neglect it ; our highest privileges, our greatest services, our most Christian liberties, no plea at all to exempt us from it.

I go on now with the parts in order ; and begin with the first general, S. Paul's disciplining and ordering of his body.

I. Where we have these three particulars to treat on—him, his body, and his ordering it. But I begin with him

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first, for so I find him set, set here before his "body." I would we would all set ourselves so too; set ourselves above our bodies, value and prize our souls (for they chiefly are ourselves) before our bodies; at least ourselves, that is, the good of the whole man, before the pleasing of that mortal part: we would not then make ourselves such slaves and drudges to it as we do; face and brave damnation for a petty lust, for a little meat or drink, for the satisfaction of the belly.

Indeed, could we pretend to know how to order ourselves better than S. Paul, I might have spared this note; but all the pretences we have against the strict ordering of the body that S. Paul here takes up, are all answered in his person, his very doing it, if we well consider it. For all the arguments or pretences we have against it, are either (1) our business, we cannot tend it; or (2) our weakness, we cannot bear it; or (3) our holiness, we do not need it; or (4) our Christian liberty, it is against it; or (5) other things will do as well, we may well spare it; or (6) a less matter will serve the turn, we may be saved without it. But all these shall I show you might S. Paul plead; yet, it seems, all would not serve to excuse him from this hard dealing with his body we read of in the text.

(1.) We plead our weakness: we are not able to use this rigour. "But I:" this "I," S. Paul, was as full of weaknesses as any of us, and yet he could. "Who is weak," says he, "and I am not weak?"—so weak sometimes, that it cast him into a trembling, "much trembling." And S. Paul took this way rather to cure it than to increase it. And, indeed, those very weaknesses we complain of, rise from the pampering our bodies, are cured by our strict ordering them. Nay, those impatiences, and peevishnesses, and nicenesses, and sinful infirmities, which grow so strong upon us in our sicknesses, would not do so were the body kept but a little under when we were well.

But, (2,) though we could bear it, you will say we cannot tend it. Not tend it? Why, S. Paul, upon whom "the care of all the churches" lay, who was in continual "journeyings" and "labours" for it, full of "weariness and painfulness" about it, was yet "in watchings often," "in

2 Cor. xi.  
29.

1 Cor. ii. 3.

2 Cor. xi.  
23, 25, 28.

fastings often;" keeping under his body, still, for all his business; notwithstanding all his other business, forgets not this.

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2 Cor. xi.  
27.

Will you say now, (3,) you do not need it, you are holy enough without it; you are God's elect, and do not want it; want no such poor beggarly means to help you out? What! are you holier than S. Paul? What! are you better than he that dares avow he was not inferior to the chiefest Apostles? Have you been in more heavens than he; heard more revelations than he? Have you more assurances of your election, or salvation, than he, that was arrived at that height, to be "persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature," could "separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus?" Are you better than he? If you be not, you had best take the course he did. If you be, you had best yet take his course, to keep you so.

Rom. viii.  
38, 39.

Yea but, (4,) our Christian liberty is intrenched on by it. We must not, by this very same Apostle's advice and counsel, be "subject to those ordinances" of "Touch not, taste not, handle not;" and yet those things seem to make much for the "neglecting of the body," and the not "satisfying of the flesh:" but that we must "not be brought under the power of any." No, but the body must be brought under ours, for all that, says our Apostle. Says he so? He says no more than he does; he does so too. And yet he knew his power and Christian liberty to the full; had "power to eat and drink," he tells us, and to do neither; power to work and not to work, "to forbear working;" was "free:" yet from this it seems he is not free, unless he will fight "as one that beats the air" (in the verse before the text.) He knows no liberty, that can allow the liberty to his "body" not to be kept under and subjected unless it please.

Col. ii. 20,  
21.

Col. ii. 23.

1 Cor. vi.  
12.

1 Cor. ix. 4.

1 Cor. ix. 6,  
19.

Nor (5) does he (whatever we think of it) think he may spare it upon the account of other virtues; as if it were enough to be diligent at our prayers, to be frequent at sermons, to be orderly in our families, to be just in our dealings, to be honest in our callings, to be charitable to the poor, to be friendly to our neighbours, or the like; and let

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this subduing the body go whither it will. S. Paul cannot be suspected to have been wanting in any of these; yet he must needs add this grace also, it seems, to make all sure; keep the body under, that he may so keep those graces safe.

For a less matter, lastly, will not serve the turn: S. Paul's labours, and journeys, and perils, and stripes, and prisons, and deaths, as great and as often as they were, must have this also added to them; the flesh must have some thorn or other to keep it in subjection. If God send it not—if the devil, by his permission, “buffet” not the flesh, we must do it ourselves, lest we be “exalted above measure:” those very performances which we think we have most reason to glory in, will but puff us up and cast us sheer away, if we preserve not our body in that lowliness and subjection that we should.

[2 Cor. xii.  
7.]

So now, if we think good to guide ourselves by S. Paul's authority and example, there is none so weak, none so busily employed, none so holy, that can exempt himself; no Christian liberty, no other graces, though never so many, nor any other performances, that can be pleaded against it. All sorts of persons are included in S. Paul's; and in this “I” all objections against it are sufficiently answered, and we all included and obliged; for if such a one as the glorious S. Paul could find no exemption, I know not what Christian can expect it. You will confess it, perhaps, when you have considered what this body is you are to deal with:—the next particular we are to handle.

And by the “body” here may be understood either the flesh itself, or the fleshliness of it; the body itself, or the sinful passions and affections rising in it. To be sure, take we both.

And, indeed, we can neither be sure nor safe, if (1) the passions and affections be not kept within their bounds; if we suffer our appetites to rule us, our angers to transport us, our desires to harrow us, our fears to distract us, our hopes to abuse us, or any other of that impetuous crew to overbear us. They must all be made underlings, kept within rule and compass, or we are lost.

Nay, and to keep them so, this very bulk of flesh (2) must

be kept so too; for keep this but high, it is impossible to keep them low. Stuff the body with meat and drink, let it lodge soft and lie long, let it have the fill of ease and pleasure,—*et facile despumat*, it froths into lust, it boils into anger, it swells into pride, it rises into rebellion, it leaks into looseness, it mosses into idleness; it fills the brain with fogs, the heart with filth, the liver with wanton heats, the mouth with unsavoury language, and all the members with disorder and confusion. Do but take away the meat, and let it fast awhile,—take it from the bed, and let it watch another while; take it from ease and tenderness, and set it to some hard and unpleasing work; let it feel a little cold, a little labour, a little coarse and rough usage for a time,—and you shall see how humble it will grow, how much under you shall have it, how orderly it will be; it will do anything you would have it.

But, to make all sure, every part must have its share; the eye must be watched, the heart kept under guard, the tongue bridled, the palate curbed, the ears fenced, the hands restrained, the knees bowed down, the feet kept in, and all the members under; for they are all but one body, this body that is to be brought into subjection; make up but that *jumentum animæ*, that beast that carries the soul; and is therefore to be rid like a beast, “with bit and bridle,” with whip and rod, “lest it fall upon us,” or fall with us and cast us. <sup>1 Cor. xii. 14.</sup> [Ps. xxxii. 10.]

Be S. Paul’s body, *σῶμά μου*, never so good, so orderly, so chaste a body, so, it seems, it must be used; nay, such it cannot be unless it be so used. Let no man be so bold to think his body in better order than S. Paul’s; and yet here is a *μήπως* for his, a kind of fear of some miscarriage, a fear some evil may rise from it.

Yea, even that very body of his, *τὸ σῶμά μου*, which had been at so many posts, endured so many lashes already, been in so many prisons, so many perils, so many storms and colds and shipwrecks, so many necessities and infirmities,—this very *τὸ σῶμά μου*, this very body, as much as it has suffered and as much as it has done, I must yet “keep under,” says S. Paul; still more and more keep under, for all that. “My body,” says he, and mine, say I; and mine, must

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every one say, though we were all S. Pauls—as holy as he, had done and suffered as much as he.

Rom. vii.  
19, 22.

But what, yet must it suffer more? Yes, more; for, as near us as it is, it is our adversary, and the worse the nearer. There are nothing but daily contentions and jars between us; this “I” and this “body” are at continual odds; this “I” delights in the law of God, and would do good; this body,

Rom. vii.  
18.

this “flesh,” there is no good dwells in it; this is for one thing, and that is for another; this for good, and that for evil; and the feud oft grows so high, that this poor “I” is

[Rom. vii.  
24.]

fain to cry out miserably sometimes—“Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death,” this body that is like to kill me? And S. Paul brings in here himself and his own body—whosoever it was he brought in there—as two combatants a-wrestling; and the words here applied to them are agonistical, drawn from the measure and fashion of combatants and wrestlers.—And now we are coming next to treat of them. “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection.”

Now the business stands thus:—Our Apostle, being undervalued by the false apostles, has been vindicating his privilege, his power, and his labours, all along the chapter till verse 24. Yet, lest for all his privilege, power and pains, he should yet lose his reward and himself, his soul and his crown, heaven and glory at the last, by some miscarriage of his body, he betakes himself to the course of such as strive for other crowns, orders his body as they do theirs; denies it the full liberties it would take, the fullest liberties he might lawfully give it too; deals with it as his adversary, does what he can to get it under his command; beats and buffets it, and bears hard upon it till he has brought it fully into subjection.

Shall I show you how he does it? I will not stir out of the text to do it. The words, in one sense or other, after one reading or other, will do it for me. Two words there are here, *ὑποπιέζω*, or *ὑποπιέζω*, and *δουλαγωγῶ*, upon which the business hangs; “keeping under” and “bringing into subjection.”

*ὑποπιέζω* comes from *ὑπόπια*, blue marks under the eyes; and signifies primarily to give blue eyes, as those do



one another who go to cuffs. Ὑποπιέζω, as others read it, SERMON  
XXV. (from πιέζω,) or ὑποπιάζω in the Doric dialect, is *stringendo premo, crucio, onero, strictā manu teneo*; is to suppress, or press and straighten, vex, torment, or burden, or carry a straight hand over. Both these go to the keeping under of the body. Some ὑπόπια we must give it, some marks by which we may know it again, by which it may remember us, “the marks of the Lord Jesus:” such S. Paul “bare Gal. vi. 17. about him in his body.” And a straight hand over it we must keep, give it but hard usage, if we intend to keep it under.

From this various writing and rendering of the word, three several ways we have pointed to us to keep the body under—watching, fasting, and hard usage. Nothing (i.) commonly makes us look bluer under the eyes, sets those ὑπόπια upon us, than watching: that does properly ὑποπιάζειν. Nothing (ii.) more afflicts and brings down the body, brings us ὑπὸ, as the combatant strives to do his adversary, more suppresses the heat and insurrection of it, than fasting does. Nothing (iii.) more straightens, vexes, and torments it, does more ὑποπιέζειν, than the holding a strict hand over it, and using it to hardships and severities, crossing and thwarting the rebellious and insolent humours of it. These the means the Apostle uses to keep his body under. Watching first.

(i.) And truly I put it first because I find it so in the Apostle’s practice, “in watchings, in fastings;” nay, and “in watch- 2 Cor. vi. 5. ings often, in fastings often.” And in the first and best 2 Cor. xi. 27. times, when Christianity was in its glory, when men were Christians—for I know not what to call us now—it was much in use;—so much in use, that S. Chrysostom<sup>y</sup> tells us they made their little children rise at midnight, set them up in their beds when they had new left their cradles, there upon their knees to say their prayers. The holy watches were in those times so notable, that the very heathens took notice of their *hymnos antelucanos*, their night offices; and not only their early hymns before the light broke in, but whilst the night itself was in full course. Nor was it a piece of superstition, or a religion of their own inventing. They thought they

<sup>y</sup> [This has not been found.]

SERMON XXV. had Christ's command to settle it, where he commands his disciples themselves to "watch;" and where he complains of them that they did not: "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" There is no evasion left to fancy it only a spiritual watchfulness commanded there, for there it is plainly bodily. And the reason rendered for it being "lest they enter into temptation," must needs suppose it necessary still to be continued so long as the danger of temptation shall continue; which will be as long as the flesh continues, or any of us continue in the flesh. Nor did this watching begin with Christians; we find the law of nature had taught it Jacob ere Law or Gospel came: he "wrestles" all night with the angel "until the breaking of the day;" and off he comes not without some marks, though not under the eye yet under the thigh, and he halts for it, yet a blessing he got by it, a new name of honour, the name of "Israel," and the glory of prevailing with God and men. Go we on and we shall find a course of watchers, "such as by night stand in the house of the Lord." We shall find David himself too at his "night watches," often at them; nay, even in his very bed watching too, it seems, when we find him washing that, and "watering his couch with tears." S. Paul and Silas we hear after that at their prayers and praises, whilst the dull heaviness of the night had lapped the rest of the world in sleep and silence. Yea, Christ himself, whose holy body needed no such correctives, we have many times at his mountain devotion watching in them. And all to give us good example—who so much need it—that we would put a penance upon our wandering eyes, watch this wild beast our body (for it is no other) and make it tame, (so they do wild beasts when they intend to tame them,) and thereby frame it into a posture fit to entertain the Master at his coming; who can never come so much to our joy and comfort as if he come and find us watching, find us thus marked in the eye with his own mark: "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching."

But is there not (ii.) a blessing belongs to fasting too? Sure, they are blessed that are not castaways; and fasting is a way to keep us that we be not such: if it but keep the body under, the soul will surely soar to heaven and dwell

among the blessed. And it is the second means we have here pointed to us to keep that under by. It was one of S. Paul's, in the forecited places; so proper to the purpose, that it is called an humbling of it; an "humbling" of the very soul too; a chastening of ourselves, well answering to the Vulgar Latin *castigo* here. Indeed, "turned" it was, the Prophet says, "to his reproof;" men laughed at him for it,—as they do still commonly at those that do so,—yea, and the "drunkards made songs upon him" for it: yet do it he would for all that; he would not be jeered out of his religion by any of the wits, as they call them, any of the pot-companion or trencher-men of them all. And I know not why Christians, who are to pass through ill report as well as good, should be so sensible of the scoffs of a profane buffoon, as to be jeered out of their devotion by a little scurrilous, frothy language, any more than he. We have (1) our Master's example for our fasting; even for the fast we are in,—if we have leave with the ancients to draw it thence,—for forty days together. We have (2) his precept and prediction for fasting too, when he should be gone; we have (3) his order and direction how to do it—"When you fast," do thus and thus. We have (4) S. Paul telling us of a giving ourselves to it, making a business of it. We have (5) all the ages of our Christianity severely using it. We have (6) here an excellent end of it, the keeping under of the body: and indeed that I need not prove; it is the fault we find with it "that it weakens the knees and dries up the flesh,"—that it agrees not with our bodies. No more it should: that is the virtue of it. And it being of that virtue, and we having so good example, so plain precept, so sober direction, so strict practice, so long custom, to commend us to it, I know not where it sticks that it is performed no better.

Indeed, were it for "the *destruction* of the flesh," though that "the spirit might be saved" by it, as the Apostle speaks, we might peradventure boggle at it; but it being only for the keeping it under rule and order, "that the spirit may be saved," methinks we should not stick at it, at least not stickle against it. There are but two kinds of fasts in Scripture—a total and a partial; a total, from all kind of meat till even, and that was David's; a partial, from some kinds only, and

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XXV.2 Cor. vi. 5;  
xi. 27.1 Kings  
xxi. 29.

Ps. xxxv.

13.

Ps. lxxix. 10.

2 Cor. vi. 8.

Matt. iv. 2.

Mark ii. 20.

Matt. vi. 18.

1 Cor. vii. 5.

Ps. cix. 23.

1 Cor. v. 5.

2 Sam. iii.  
35.

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Dan. x. 3.  
Dan. x. 2.

that was Daniel's—from flesh, and wine, and pleasant meats. For his three weeks' mourning there, was his so long fasting—according to the Hebrew manner of expression, *lugebam* for *jejunabam*: neither of these so grievous, especially if but for a time; the latter of them mild and gentle. And if that will do it, if our abstinence from flesh and wine and delicacies will keep under the body, the Church, it may be, by reason of our weakness, will be content with that. Somewhat, sure, it will do towards it, and somewhat however should be done in the point. We should do all of us as much as we can; will do so too, if we think S. Paul worth following, the soul worth saving, the being castaways worth preventing.

But besides this watching, and this fasting, there is a third way to keep our bodies under—by using them to some hardships and restraints. Will you see S. Paul's way, how he used his? You may in the forementioned places. (2 Cor. vi. 4, 5, 6, 8, and xi. 26, 27.) He brings us up to labour and travail, to “weariness and painfulness,” to “hunger and thirst,” to “cold and nakedness.” And when we feel this beast of ours begin to kick, or lest it do so, we must take his way; keep it down with labour and employment, lash it hard, tire it out, and weary it with some busy work, make it sometimes feel cold and pain, (we will the better understand what the poor man feels, and the easier pity him,) keep it sometimes at least hungry and a-dry; clothe it with coarse gear, break its sleeps, abate its provision, displease it in the diet, debar it sweet odours and perfumes, deprive it of the fine dresses, bring it out now and then in a mean garb and fashion; and let it not continually please itself, but be forced sometimes to sad and displeasing objects, and to dwell upon them—to see or feel or do something or other that will afflict and grieve it, that it may learn to know itself and to submit. This is a third way, or rather many ways together; a part of the business of those ancient *ἀσκηταί*, those severely religious men of old, to bring it under. But when “under” it is, we must have a care also to keep it so, in “subjection;” an eye to *δουλαγωγείν*, as well as to *ὑποπιάζειν*; to lead it away as the conquering combatant does his conquered enemy, for his servant or his captive; for that is the true meaning of the word,—and the second point of S. Paul's discipline.

Now, two ways there are to bring the body into this full subjection, after that by fasting and watching, and some severities, we have first got it down and kept it under for a while: the one is temperance, the other is exercise; both used by those that "strive for masteries," and taken up from them here by S. Paul in his spiritual combat with his body.

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(1.) "They that strive for masteries are temperate in all things." And he that will have the full mastery of his body, must possess it continually in temperance and sobriety; must πάντα ἐγκρατεύεσθαι, get all into his power; and resolve not to be mastered either by a straggling eye, or a liquorish palate, or an unruly tongue, or a fond desire, or a foolish fashion, or an impetuous passion, or any importunate temptation, but make his body to foot and lacquey it after his soul, and think it glory enough that it may be allowed to serve it.

1 Cor. ix.  
25.

But to make it a good servant, we are also (2) to exercise it; exercise it to do, and exercise it to suffer. That can neither δούλον ἄγειν, do like a servant, nor we δουλαγωγεῖν, use it like one, else; that cannot be a servant, or we masters, else.

Exercise it, then (i.) we must, to do what we would have it; accustom it to obey, inure it to our commands; habituate it to God's service; set it to good works, and ply it hard; tie it to order, and bind it to rule; bring it upon the knees, employ it continually in some acts of virtue, piety, or obedience, and let it never be idle.

Exercise it (ii.) to suffer too; use it to bear affronts, to put up indignities, to be crossed in the desires, to be thwarted in the ways, to be contraried in the sayings, to be disobeyed in the commands, to be diverted from the bent, to be mortified in the lusts, to be moderated in the passions, to be straitened in the liberties; to be delayed, put off, contradicted in all the motions of it: a way S. Paul takes pleasure in. This is the way to subject the body thoroughly; another part of the γυμνασία or ἄσκησις of the holy men of the first ages, of the way they took to bring their bodies into order and their souls to salvation; a way for us to lead the body captive to our will, to make an excellent servant of it too, that shall both help us up and accompany us to heaven.

2 Cor. xii.  
10.

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For it is not to destroy it, it is not to trample on it, it is not to tyrannize and triumph over it, but to bring it thither—not to hasten it to its grave, but to conduct it into the seats of rest—that we use it thus; that we preach to you to watch, and fast, and be severe upon yourselves, to be temperate in all things, and keep all this ado; it is only that nor *that* nor *we*, neither soul nor body, prove castaways at last. That is my second general; the ground and reason of keeping under the body, and bringing it into subjection: “Lest when I have preached,” &c.

II. And a good reason too it is. Take the word *ἀδόκιμος*, “castaway,” how you will, it is so.

1. Take it (i.) first, for such in the sight of men; we would do much, rather than be cast in their conceits. A “good report” is worth all the pains we speak of; necessary, too, to those that are to be employed in holy business; they should be men of good report. Certainly our own doctrines should not reprove us, or we think it hard to do ourselves what we require of others; it is a point of honour we may be allowed to stand on, not to be outgone and cast by our own scholars. And, I must confess, watching and fasting are two of the ways by which S. Paul “approves himself to be a minister of God.” But this falls short of the Apostle’s meaning.

Take it (ii.) for a “castaway” in the sight of God; for a reprobate, a wicked, an extremely wicked person: that is a second sense, and nearer his—the sense of *ἀδόκιμος*, Rom. i. 28; Tit. i. 16; 2 Tim. iii. 8, and other places. And it is a thing we must take heed of; for if the body be not kept under, but let have its swing, wicked enough we may be quickly: and lest we grow so by it, a good reason, I think, to deal strictly and severely with it.

To be a “castaway” (iii.) from the sight of God, that is a third acceptance of the word; and his fear, indeed, to fall short of that incorruptible crown he strives for. This best answers to the metaphor he is in, of running, and fighting, and wrestling for the mastery, where it is not only reasonable but necessary to take care that the body be in order, if we look to gain the prize: and we may well fear to lose all if it be not.

But what, can this great saint, after he has been caught

up into the third heaven, fear any thing? Can he be so poor-spirited as to doubt of his salvation, and fear to be a "castaway?" It seems here he was, and that after that time he had been there, as may appear by the time of writing the Epistles. He did not, indeed, much fear the *ὡς ἀδόκιμος*,<sup>2</sup> Cor. xiii. 7. to be reprobated by men; to be cast in their opinion; but for the *ἀδόκιμος* indeed, to be so by God, to be a "castaway" in his—lest his body should cast him into sin, and his sin cast him of his reward, and he be cast so from the face of God—that, fear he does. And if it be possible, after we are "once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and of the [very] powers of the world to come," after that to fall away,—(and we find it is so, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6,)—it is time for all of us to fear, to "pass the whole time of our sojourning here" in it too, as S. Peter counsels us: 1 Pet. i. 17. and good reason we have to do all we can possible to prevent it; not spare our bodies, if we can so save our souls from being "castaways."

2. Especially having *μήπως* next; so much ground to fear it, seeing there are many ways to be so; for, "lest by any," may suppose many, by some or other of which we may miscarry. Shall I name you some, and not wholly out of the text? (i.) The frailties of our nature: it is a "body" here we have to deal with. The multitude (ii.) of temptations: some things there are supposed too, here, may some way or other get the power over it, if we look not to it. The uncertainty (iii.) of the strongest titles that we hold by: this very "I" in the text, it seems, a very Apostle, may be a "castaway," else why does he set this "lest" upon it? The very manner of the working (iv.) of grace itself: that this "I" must give its help; any other way it will not do it: our bodies we may fear, they want keeping under; temptations we may fear, they may *δουλαγωγεῖν*, lead them away; this very "I," as great as he is, may be led away too, and overcome; and the grace of God, it seems, will not hinder it but by the ordinary way of our working with it. All which may tell us, S. Paul fears all upon good ground; fears not being "cast away" for nothing; fears these very grounds we are to speak of. And,

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The frailty of nature, that (i.) may well be feared: so much flesh there is about us, and so little spirit; a weak and yet unruly body; where there are so many natural weaknesses, so many acquired infirmities, so many necessities hang upon us, so much dulness, so much perverseness, so much disorder in all our powers, that I cannot but wonder that any should be so foolhardy as not to fear, where there are so many inlets and outlets, so many windows and posterns, so many gaps and breaches, and easy batterings and easier underminings, to let in the enemy.

But (ii.) bring up now the forces that are laid against it; the strong enticements and allurements, the hopes, the fears, the desires, the joys, the sorrows, that on this or that side do continually assault it; the innumerable occasions, the infinite opportunities that are against it: and who is it that dares think to withstand them all?

Add, thirdly, the strongest titles that we hold by, and we have yet a cause to fear: "saints" and "servants," and "sons" and "heirs," and being "sealed to the day of redemption,"—these and all those happy names and interests besides we read of, cannot put us above fear. Servants may be turned away; saints may turn sinners; sons may be cast off; heirs may be disinherited; seals may be broken  
 Eph. i 4, 5; up; elect we are no further than good works—created,  
 ii. 10. ordained, predestinated no further: and good works, I am  
 [Job ix. 28.] sure, have uncertainty enough; *verebar omnia*, Job feared the best of them: nothing will more assure us than this godly fear.

Nay, add we, lastly, the very way of the working of God's graces in us, and yet we have reason to fear still. We are told, indeed, by some, his grace is irresistible; but God knows  
 Acts vii. we find it otherwise. Why does S. Stephen tell us, else,  
 51. that we "resist the Holy Ghost"—or S. Paul wish us not to  
 1 Thess. v. "quench the Spirit"—if we cannot do it? Do it? alas! we do  
 19. too often. One there was that said, he should "never be  
 [Ps. xxx. 6.] removed; God of his goodness had made his hill so strong:" yet removed he quickly was,—fell, and fell foully too; and had he not wept and chastened himself to purpose, had lain low enough for ever, for all his hill so strong. *Nemo tanta est firmitate suffultus, ut de stabilitate sua debeat esse securus,*



says S. Augustine, Ser. 72.<sup>z</sup> Who can look upon Noah's drunkenness, Lot's drunkenness and incest, David's adultery and murder, Solomon's carnality and idolatry, Adam's fall in Paradise, and the angels' in heaven itself, and not fear his own poor, easy, brittle earth? We may well fear being "castaways" upon such grounds as these, and fear the very grounds that thus sink under us; not only the sad upshot at the last, but the means that bring us to it all the way.

III. But besides, if there be no way of keeping from being "castaways" without this keeping under of the body, if all our preaching and our great doings will not do without it, we have a third reason to fear ourselves, and set seriously about it. For if S. Paul, here, not only fear his being a "castaway," and fear that by some means he may come to it, but fear also that all means besides this harshness towards his body will scarcely hinder it,—if, after all his preaching, from Jerusalem round about unto Ilyricum, his preaching gratis too, after all his labours, all his sufferings, all his persecutions upon the Gospel score, he fears yet that the best he has done else, the best he can do else, will not save him, for all his haste,—where are our great assurers of themselves and others of heaven and glory? Why, it is not our preaching, it is not our praying, it is not our prophesying, it is not our doing wonders neither, even to the casting out of devils, that can save us from being cast out ourselves at last with a *Non novi*, the sad sentence of "I never knew you: depart from me." Indeed, we have so little reason to be confident that we shall not be "castaways" by reason of any of those performances, that our very preaching, or prophesying, as we call it, nay, and praying too, may bring us to it. We may preach rebellion, heresies, and schisms,—nay, and pray them too, (some have done so long,) and so preach away both ourselves and others. Nay, though we preach others into heaven, we may preach out ourselves. We may preach freely, and preach constantly, and preach long, and preach sound doctrine too — preach with the

Matt. vii.  
23.

<sup>z</sup> [This passage occurs in a Sermon falsely attributed to S. Augustine, and generally reckoned as Sermon de Tempore lxxiii. It is found in the Appendix of S. Augustine, tom. x. p. 604. A.

ed. Col. Agripp. 1616. The Sermon is really S. Leo's. De Quadrages. V.—Sermon. xlii. tom. i. p. 107. cap. iii. ed. Lug. 1700.]

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tongues of angels—and yet prove devils at the last, grow proud upon it; light others up to heaven, and yet go down to hell ourselves; shine gloriously for a blaze, and go out in a stench; have our δόκιμος here, and be ἀδόκιμος for ever; have our reward and glory here, and be cast away for ever.

Rom. viii.  
13.

And now, if the strongest cedars shake, what shall the reeds do? If the first preachers of the Gospel, the grand Apostles, those stars and angels of the churches, stand so trembling, and must deal so roughly with their bodies, for fear of being “castaways,” who is it can dream himself exempt? Unless ye “mortify the deeds of the body,” (it is to all of us it is said so,) there is no living. If we keep not our bodies low, they will keep us low; if we bring not them into subjection, they will bring us into slavery; they will cast us away, if we cast away too much upon them. There is no way to cure our fears, to confirm our hopes, to help our weaknesses, to beat back temptations, to establish our titles and rights to heaven, to make God’s grace effectual upon us,—to sanctify our prayers, and preachings, and all our labours, to the glory of a reward,—but to watch, and fast, and deal severely with our bodies; to study temperance, and exercise ourselves to do and suffer hard things. It is no will-worship, surely, (as men brand it,) that is pressed and practised here, under so great danger of being “cast-aways” if we do it not: it is not, sure. Nor is it so hard a business as men would seem to make it: none of all the ways I told you of for the subduing of the body are so at all. We can sit up whole nights to game, to dance, to revel, to see a mask or play; make nothing of it. We can rise up early and go to bed late, for months together, for our gain and profit, and be never the worse. We can fast whole days together, and nor eat nor drink, when we are eager upon our business or sport, and never feel it. We can endure pain and cold and tendance, affronts and injuries and neglects, slightings and reproaches too, to compass a little honour and preferment, and not say a word. We can be temperate too, when we please, for some ends and purposes. Only the soul’s business is not worth the while; whether “castaways” or no, is not considerable; all is too much, on that account: mole-hills are mountains, and there

is a lion always in the way,—watching will kill us, fasting will destroy us, any kind of strictness will impair us; temperance itself will pine us into skeletons; every good exercise takes up too much time; every petty thing that crosses but the way is an unconquerable difficulty, a lion,—when the soul's business is to be gone about. Hear but S. Austin<sup>a</sup> chide you, as once he chid himself: *Tu non poteris quod istæ et istæ et istæ*; “What,” says he, “canst not thou do that, which so many weak and tender women, so many little children, so many of all sexes, ages, and conditions, have so often done before thee, and thought so easy? It is a shame to say so.”

But suppose thou art infirm indeed, and canst not do so much as perhaps thou wouldst do else, canst thou do nothing? If thou canst not watch, canst thou not fast sometimes? If thou canst not fast, canst thou not endure a little hunger, thirst, or cold, or pains, for heaven, neither? If all these seem hard, canst thou not be temperate neither? canst thou not bring thyself to it by degrees, by exercise, and practice, neither? Or if thou canst not watch a night, canst thou not watch an hour—do somewhat towards it? If thou canst not fast from all kind of meat, canst thou not abstain at least from some—from dainties and delicates? If not often, canst thou not at such a time as this, when all Christians ever used to do it? Sure, he that cannot fast a meal, may yet feed upon coarser fare. He that cannot do any of these long, may do all of them some time; may exercise himself in a little time to the hardest of them all. Let us, then, however, set a-doing somewhat; for God's sake let us be Christians a little at the least; let us do somewhat that is akin to the ancient piety—watch, or fast, or somewhat, in some degree or other—that the world may believe that we are Christians. Why should we be castaways from the profession too?

But, indeed, he that will do nothing for fear of being a “castaway” in the text, I despair he should do any thing upon any other concernment. He that values his body above his soul, his ease and pleasure above heaven, his temporal satisfaction above his eternal salvation, there is no more to

<sup>a</sup> [This has not been found.]

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be said of him: if S. Paul say true, he must be a "cast-away."

I am too long, but I must not end with so sad a word. All that has been said or preached, is not that any should be, but that *not* any should be "castaways,"—only "lest" they should. It is in our hands to hinder it: it is but a few hours taken from our sleep and employed on heaven—it is but a little taken from our full dishes and groaning tables and gorged stomachs, taken from our own bodies and bestowed upon the poor's—it is but a little strictness to our bodies, that sets all straight; it is but the keeping the body under, and the soul in awe, and all is safe. The keeping down the body now, shall raise up both soul and body at the last; the holy fear of being castaways, shall keep you safe from ever being so; the bringing the body into subjection here, shall bring it hereafter into a kingdom where all our fears shall be turned into joys, our fasting into feasting, our watching into rest, all our hardships into ease and pleasure; and these very corruptible bodies here kept under, shall be there exalted into incorruption, where we shall meet the full reward of all our pains and labours—we, of our preaching—you, of your hearing—all of us, of all the good works we have done, all the sufferings that we shall suffer—the everlasting crown of righteousness, the incorruptible and eternal crown of glory.

Which He give us at that day, who expects such things from us in these days to approve us at that—God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To whom be all glory, &c.

A SERMON  
ON THE  
THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

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ROM. vi. 21.

*What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.*

“THOSE things” were sins and sinful courses—these words, an argument to dissuade from them; S. Paul’s great argument to dissuade from sin and the service of it;—an argument than which there can be no greater, nothing be said more, or more home, against it. Nothing more against it, than that nothing comes of it but shame and ruin; nothing more home, than that which comes home to our own bosoms, makes ourselves the judges, our own consciences and experiences the umpires, of the business. “What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?” says our Apostle; “ye” yourselves tell me if you can.

“What had he then?” says he to the Romans here. What have ye, now say I to you—ye, whoever you are, still? or what had ye ever, any of you, who have at any time given up your members to uncleanness, or to any iniquity? What have ye gotten by it? Bring in your account; set down the income; reckon up the gains; sum up the expenses and receipts, and tell me truly what it is. Or, if you be ashamed to tell it, give the Apostle leave to do it. “Fruit” ye had none of it, that is certain; “shame” ye have by it, that is too sure; and “death” you shall have, if you go on in it—

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nothing surer — “for the end of those things is death.” What reason, then, to commit or continue in them? That is S. Paul’s meaning by the question; as if he had said: Ye have no reason in the world at all to pursue a course so fruitless, so dishonourable, so desperate, as yourselves have found, and will still find, your sins to be.

Thus the text, you see, is a dissuasive from sin and all unrighteousness, drawn here from these four particulars: (1.) The fruitlessness and unprofitableness; (2.) The shame and dishonour; (3.) The mischief and damage of it; and (4.) Our own experience of them all. The unprofitableness in the enjoyment, the shame in the remembrance, the damage in the conclusion of every sin; and our own experience called in to witness to it.

The unprofitableness, (1,) without fruit: “What fruit had ye?” That is, no “fruit” had ye—none at all. There is the fruitlessness of sin—none for the time past.

None, (2,) for the present; nothing but what “ye are now ashamed” of: there is the shame and dishonour of sin.

None, (3,) for the future neither, unless it be death: there is the damage of sin; no fruit, past, present, or to come, but shame and “death.”

And all this “ye know,” says S. Paul, as well as I. I appeal to yourselves and your own experience: “What fruit had ye?” I dare stand to your own confessions; I dare make yourselves the judges.

Now sum up the argument, and thus it runs:—Were there, (1,) any profit, O ye Romans, in your trade of sin, I might, perhaps, be thought too hard to press so much upon you to persuade you from it. Or though there were no profit, yet, (2,) if there were some credit in it, something perhaps might be said for your continuance in it. Or though there were neither profit, nor credit for the present, yet if, (3,) there were some good might issue from it for the future, or at least the issue not so bad as death, somewhat, peradventure, might be pleaded in the case. Or if this, (4,) were all only in other men’s opinions, and ye found it otherwise yourselves, ye might perchance have some excuse at least to go on in sin; but to sin when there is neither profit, nor credit, nor hope, nothing good at any time in it, neither when it is past,

nor while it is present, nor any yet to come; but all contrary, and we ourselves can witness it by sad experience, (for to our own souls and consciences the Apostle here refers it, that so it is,) when we can show no good of what we have done, "are" but "ashamed" of that which can be shown, and can see nothing but "death" and destruction at our heels; after all this to sin still, to sin again, any sin again, we have as little wit, one would think, in it as "fruit" of it, as much senselessness as shame, and are like to make but a sad "end" when all is done. It would be otherwise, would we sit down and think upon it. Ye are set already; set but your thoughts and hearts to ponder and consider what is here set before you—the fruitlessness, the shame, the damage of sin, and your own experiences of them all, and I shall not doubt but you will make the application S. Paul would have you of the text; no longer yield yourselves servants unto unrighteousness, or commit those things whereof ye cannot but presently be ashamed, and be next door to be confounded. Consider we then, first, the fruitlessness or unprofitableness of sin,—see what that will work upon us. "What fruit had ye then?" &c.

"What fruit?" That is, no fruit; for so such kind of questions commonly are resolved into the strongest negatives. No fruit, then, S. Paul means, can be showed of sin; for all fruit is either profitable for use, or pleasurable to the taste, or at least delightful to the sight. But sin is none of these: nothing so unprofitable, so distasteful, so ugly and unseemly as sin is; so, nothing so fruitless.

For profitable fruit (1) there is none in sin. Let us call those profitable and advantageous sins, as men imagine them, of fraud, covetousness, and sacrilege, to a reckoning, and see what comes in by them. Our common proverb tells us, "Covetousness brings nothing home." "The poor and the deceitful man meet together," says the sacred proverb:—even in this sense true, that the deceiver cheats himself, and grows poor by his own deceit; they meet together thus. The prophet Haggai says, it is but "put into a bag with holes," that is taken, or kept back, or but spared from the house of God. Says Solomon too, "It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy"—things dedicated to God's service. And

Prov. xxix.  
13.

Hag. i. 6.

Prov. xx.  
25.

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is all the fruit of it, all the fruit of sacrilege, come to that, to a snare, or to a halter? Little got by that. But whether to that or no, to a curse it comes: "Ye are cursed with a curse," even no less than a whole nation by it; grown tattered and poor upon it; so far are they from a blessing or enriching by it, because it is "God's blessing" only that truly makes us "rich," and all that is called riches but a curse without it. But suppose this sin, or any other, got what it could desire, even the whole world, as wide, and full, and glorious as it is, yet "what shall it profit a man" though, says Christ. "What fruit" has he of it all? Less far than he that shall sell all he has or hopes, for the point of a pin or the leg of a spider. "He shall not so much as roast that which he has got with all his hunting," is as true of him as of the slothful man. Of all the fruit that he has gathered he has not, it seems, so much as to fill his belly. But if he should eat of it till his guts cracked, he would not thrive upon it; no thriving for body or estate when the soul is lost, for that thriving is worse than nothing.

Well, yet, if there be no profitable fruit of sin, is there (2) no pleasurable neither? Just as little. Examine we the most sensual and delightful sins, and they it must be, if any; yet not they. Drunkenness, that great voluptuous sin, will you behold the goodly fruit it brings? (for profit it brings none); let the "wise man" satisfy you. "Who hath woe—who hath sorrow—who hath contentions—who hath babbling—who hath wounds without cause—who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long," says he, "at the wine, they that go to seek mixed wine." Woe, and sorrow, and contentions, and reproach, and wounds, and sad mourning eyes, at last are the fair fruits and issues of this rare pleasurable wickedness; and sure there is no pleasure in any of these. Nay, even what it pretends to most, it misses. The very wine, as sweet as it relishes at the first, "bites at last," says Solomon, "like a serpent, and stings like an adder,"—little pleasure of all its former sweetnesses; and as little in any other of those sins of sense which claim most to it. The fruit of gluttony: what is it but dulness, and unwieldiness, gripings, vomitings, and colics, surfeits, aches, and diseases? Of lust: what but rottenness in the very bones and marrow? Our

Mal. iii. 9.

Prov. x. 22.

Mark viii. 36.

Prov. xii. 27.

Prov. xxiii. 29.

Prov. xxiii. 32.



very vanities tire and clog us, and make us peevish at every trifle. Spiritual wickednesses have less pleasure; envy and malice are their own tormentors; pride cannot so much as please itself; ambition is racked with fears, distracted with visits, and crucified daily with its own greatness; that little inconsiderable point they entitle pleasure, in any of these, is no sooner named than it is gone, and seldom is where the name is given it. But where at the highest, so intermixed it is with bitterness and sorrow that you cannot discern it, or so quickly followed with them, that it is forgotten in a moment. Nay, that sin which seems now-a-days to have all the profit, pleasure, and beauty in it, schism and division, upon the examination, will find none. "They that make divisions among you," says S. Paul, they do but "serve their own belly." "And God shall destroy both it and them." What is gotten then? Whatever it is, the kingdom of heaven is lost by it. Where is then the profit, pleasure, or beauty of it?

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Rom. xvi.

18.

1 Cor. vi. 13.

Gal. v. 21.

But though there be neither profit nor pleasure, no such fruits, is there (3) no beauty neither, no fair fruits in sin to look upon? Are there not so much as the fruits of Sodom, they tell us of, goodly and fair to see to without, though dust and ashes all within? No; not so much as such. Look again upon the drunkard: see him in his cups and revels, and what see you there but a strange disfigured countenance, staring eyes, disordered gestures, words, and looks, and actions, all disguised, ugly, and deformed? Behold next the lascivious wanton in but the addresses to his great sin, his antic postures, his affected follies, his empty discourses, his religious—I should say irreligious—approaches to his adored idol—to say nothing of the sin itself that darkness covers—and tell me, if you can, what is handsome in any of his applications? View, thirdly, the passionate, fierce, and angry man; and what is there lovely in his flaming eyes, his furrowed brows, his distracted looks, his frantic carriage, in his loud rantings and raving furies? Call ye the pale and meagre look of the envious or malicious, comely? Is the high carriage of the proud or ambitious, pleasing? Is the close and sour visage of the covetous person, lovely? Nay, has not the face of every sinner surprised in his sin, or afterward

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reflecting on it, a kind of guilt and horror that sensibly dis-composes and disorders it? "Then" (and that *then* is in the text), then, to be sure, you will find all things in that disorder; you must be vain to expect anything handsome or lovely there. Sin itself is nothing else but a deordination or swerving from order and beauty. *Bonum* and *pulchrum* are convertible; that only which is truly good is truly fair, and that again only truly fair which is truly good. It is the fault of our eyes if we see otherwise. For if sin were lovely, God would love it; but he hates nothing so much; nothing, indeed, but it. Sin is that only from whence all ugliness and deformity in things or actions. Wheresoever is deformity, or whatsoever is deformed, it is sin that caused it, or sin that is it.

And is not sin now, think you, a lovely piece, that thus disorders the universe, and deforms the whole creation?—that brings neither pleasure, nor profit, nor honour with it, to  
 Jer. ii. 19. its unhappy servants? "It is an evil and bitter thing," says the prophet Jeremy. There is no pleasure in it. "They"  
 Isa. lix. 5. that commit it do but "hatch cockatrices' eggs, and weave the spider's web," says the Prophet Isaiah. There is no profit in it. For "he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and  
 Isa. lix. 6. that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper. Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works;" they, whose "works are works of iniquity." What fruits, I pray, are these? or will you call them fruits? If you will, it may be I may help you to some more such: groping for the wall, as if you had no eyes; stumbling at the noon day, as in the night; roaring sore like bears, and mourning like doves, in the forecited chap-  
 Isa. lix. 10, 11. ter. Blindness, and weakness, and sorrow, and mourning, even to roaring; horrors and stings of conscience in abundance, and inability to do good, or help ourselves; such fruits as these you may have enow. Our Apostle tells us, besides, of a sad slavery it brings us to. The Psalmist, of a "rain of snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest," that falls upon the sinner by it. Crosses and afflictions, punishments and judgments, we everywhere read to be the issues of it. In God's hot displeasure, and man's scorn, and even in the very next words, shame also, are the only fruits—if we will

Rom. vi.  
17.  
Ps. xi. 7.

allow them that name—of those “unfruitful works of darkness,” as S. Paul justly styles them.

Well may we now, with him, ask, “What fruits have ye,” or ever had ye, in such things as those? What at all, or what worth, if any at all, from those kinds of courses? Nay, what “then” had ye? What had you in the very enjoying, in the very transactions of your sins? Did they either satisfy or content you fully even then? Were ye not either first tired with the pursuit, or fell much short of your expectations, or distasted by some circumstances, or unsatisfied presently when you had accomplished your unhappy and wretched work? But what, however, have ye now left of any of them but the shame? Call it what ye will, that ye have gotten by the most advantageous or pleasing wickedness, say as well of it as you can, give us but leave to discover and rifle it to your faces, and your blushing cheeks, and downcast eyes, and disordered answers, and vain subterfuges and excuses, will witness to your teeth that it is nothing but what ye are now next, indeed, ashamed of.

II. And shame now is the next property of sin we are to speak of, the true genuine issue of it. For no sooner had Adam tasted the forbidden fruit and sinned, but both he and his co-partner are both presently ashamed, and run away to hide themselves among the thickets of the garden. Oh, how they blush to look upon one another when they had once but eaten; done what they should not! The dye and colour of the forbidden fruit had got presently into their faces; they are ashamed of themselves, though there were none but themselves in the world to see them. Oh, whither should they run? what should they do to cover their nakedness and their shame? Nakedness was no shame at first, till sin came on it; but then they are ashamed even of their nature, so strange a confusion had one single sin brought with it. Nor could all the fig-leaves of Paradise, nor all the shades of the trees and bushes, nor the shadows of the approaching evening cover their new-risen blushes, nor the cool of it allay the heat that raised them in their faces. Shame and sin are inseparable companions; there is no parting them. Shame (1) to be seen of God; they run from him: the saddest effect that can be, that so parts and hurries us from our Maker as far as possibly

we can go. Shame (2) to be seen of men : we dare not look upon one another when we have sinned and are discovered. Shame (3) to look upon ourselves ; we presently get what fig-leaves we may, make what excuses we can imagine, to cover our own weakness and infirmity. Shame (4) to be seen by any creature ; afraid, as it were, of every whisk of wind, every stirring of a bush, ashamed any creature should come nigh us, for fear it should laugh at our folly, deride our infirmity, trample upon our weakness, scorn our acquaintance, and despise our authority, if it should once behold the deformity of our sin.

Thus shame from the very first pressed close upon the heels of sin. And ask the most impudent sinner still,—him whom custom has made insensible, and whose face continual sinning has brazened and hardened against the tenderness of a blush,—yet ask him, I say, why he yet seeks corners for the accomplishment of his sin, or the contrivance of his wicked plots ? why does he not act it without doors, and before the sun ? why, when he has done it with the highest hand, and needs not fear a contradiction, or a power to control or punish him, why he varnishes over his wickedness with false colours, and glosses all his actions either with the name of piety and religion, reformation and purity, justice and integrity, conscience, and I know not what ? why he sometimes excuses it with necessity, sometimes extenuates it with infirmity, sometimes pleads ignorance, false information or mistake, sometimes makes one pretence, sometimes another. Does he not evidently and plainly tell you by so doing, he is even ashamed of the things that he has done, though he bear it out with all the confidence he can ? He cannot utterly cast off shame, though he has done shamefacedness. We may confidently say to him, Those very things thou even seemest to glory in, thou art really no other than ashamed of.

Now there is a threefold shame, a natural, a virtuous, and a penal shame : a shame (1) that naturally and even against our wills, attends every unhandsome action ;—a godly shame, (2) that should always follow upon it ;—and (3) a shame that will else ere long pursue it.

(1.) The first, or natural, is that which through the modesty of nature, not yet habituated to the impudence of wickedness, rises ere we are aware, from the guilt and foulness of

sin, either discovered or feared to be so. That is the reason that "the eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight," to hide his reproach,—that the drunkard used in former times (though now grown gallant on it) to be "drunk in the night," being ashamed (as civility went then) to be seen so disguised in the day,—that the heretic and schismatic used in the Apostles' times, (though now grown confident,) to come "creeping" into widows' houses, and hide themselves behind curtains and aprons, ashamed of their schisms, and new doctrines at the first,—that still the thief by night, and the sly cheat, and covetous extortioner, by underhand dealing in the day, strive to conceal the designs and practices which only night and darkness are thought fit to cover, or give a tolerable shadow to. Even our vanities, within a while, make us ashamed of them. We are within a few days in a huge confusion, to be seen in our finest clothes and newest fashions we were the other day so proud of, rather naked than in a fashion that has another grown upon it. Indeed, when any of our sins, great or little, take hold upon us, then, as the Prophet David professes, we are "not able to look up," so ashamed they make us. None but Absalom, none but the wickedest sons of rebellion, sin upon the housetop at noon-day, all the people looking on. Yet even for all that, there must be a tent, even for such as he, some thin veil or other,—some silk or linen scarf or curtain, to cover his wickedness in the upshot;—so natural a fruit and companion is shame to any sin or sinner. Sin is more than sin, when shame is gone, when that is lost.

(2.) Yet if so be this kind of modest shame should be laid asleep awhile, through the custom and habit of a sin, there is a second sort of shame that must be thought on,—the shame that accompanies repentance. Sin must have repentance, and repentance will have shame. Yea, what shame? What, or how great, I cannot tell you; but shame it must work, if it be true. Shame of our ingratitude to God,—shame of our unhandsomeness to men,—shame of the disparagement we have done our nature,—shame of the dishonour we have done ourselves in committing things so foul, so brutish, so unreasonable; this, the properest of the three shames, we mentioned to this place, which it seems

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XXVI.Job. xxiv.  
15.1 Thess. v.  
7.2 Tim. iii.  
6.

Ps. xl. 15.

2 Sam. xvi.  
22.

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Ezra. ix. 6. the Romans were here come to; and is a business we are obliged to, to repent us, and be ashamed of our sins, "to be ashamed and blush," with Ezra, "to lift up our faces, because our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespasses grown up into the heavens."

(3.) And if this we be not, there is another gates shame will overtake us: shame (3) and confusion of face. If we be not ashamed of our sins, we shall ere long be ashamed for them—come to shame and dishonour by them; such a kind of shame as the Prophet Isaiah speaks of: "Ye shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired, and ye shall be confounded for the gardens which ye have chosen;" your very enemies shall laugh you to scorn; the very oaks and trees shake their heads at you in derision, your gardens bring you forth no other fruit. All that pass by shall wag their heads, and "hiss" at you. Ye shall be "a curse, and an astonishment, and an hissing, and a reproach to all nations;" and "a shameful spewing shall be on your glory." To this our ill courses will bring us at the last; and yet to worse,—even to death too, "for the end of those things is death." That is the third particular; the third argument against sin, the mischief and damage of it in the end, and comes next to be considered.

III. A sad end truly, and but sorry wages for all the pains and drudgery that sins put us to. S. Paul here thinks it not worth the name of fruit. Yet what fruit sin brings,—if you will call it "fruit,"—it is "unto death." But if there were any other, death so nigh at heels would devour it all. "Sin when it is finished," when it is at the height, complete and perfected, "it bringeth forth death," says S. James; that is the end God knows. And a threefold death it brings—a temporal, a spiritual, and an eternal death.

(1.) For the first, "Thou shalt die" the death, was threatened to it before it came into the world. And no sooner came it, but death came by it, "death by sin." "And it passed" thence "upon all men," too. All men ever since have been subjected to it—all have died, and all must die for that one sin. Ever after that first sinful morsel, all are become "like the beasts that perish." So that the wisest of men had much ado to distinguish between their ends. "As the one dieth," says he, "so dieth the other; yea, they have all one

breath, so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast. All go unto one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." Only, indeed, a little after, he perceives a kind of glimmering as it were of the human spirits "going upward;" yet with this lessening, for all that, of "who knoweth" it?—who can certainly demonstrate, and distinguish, and define the difference? So deeply has sin engaged us unto death, that there is no escaping; and the shadows of it are so great, that there is no discovering of differences in the grave, between the ashes of a man and of a beast.

(2.) But there is (2) a death before this—a death of the soul before the death of the body; and the much worsener of the twain. "The teeth of sin," says the son of Syrach, "are as the teeth of a lion, slaying the souls of men," the very souls. The separation of the body from the soul, which is the temporal death, is but a trifle to the separation of the soul from God, which is the spiritual. This sin brings upon the soul in the very act, if it rather be not it itself: the very act of sin commits the murder, and slays the soul, whilst it is in doing. *Ζῶσα τέθνηκε*, says the Apostle of the voluptuous widow that lives in sin or pleasure, she "is dead whilst she is alive." A mere walking carcase a sinner is, a mere motion and engine without life and spirit, when God's spirit and grace (as by sin it does) is departed from him. The fall of the body into the dust of the grave, is nothing so bad as the fall of the soul into the dirt of sin. When our souls are but once deprived of grace and goodness—God's presence so taken from us—they do but wither, and dwindle, and die away; and we only walk like so many ghosts among the graves, in the shades of night and darkness. Did we but consider or understand how miserably the soul crawls along in this condition, when the Eternal Spirit is departed from it, sealed up, as it were, by her transgressions, in the grave of a customary wickedness—adding still one iniquity to another, wholly insensible of any good, as the dead body—we would say the natural death were nothing like it, the grave but a bed of rest and sleep, whilst sin were the very torments of death itself. Nay, the very pangs and horrors of death that make way to it, but little flea-bitings to the stings and terrors of conscience

Eccles. iii.  
21.Eccclus. xxi.  
2.

1 Tim. v. 6.

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that often follow upon our sins, upon the loss of God's favour and presence.

(3.) And yet there is a third death worse than both these—eternal death. From the two former we may rise again. The dust will one day breathe again, and the soul, after the departure of God's Spirit, may again retrieve it and recover; but once within the regions of eternal death, and there for ever. Body lost, and soul lost, and God lost, for ever. An end, indeed, without an end; an end of good, but no end of evil; where the worm is ever dying, yet ever gnawing; the fire dark as the most dismal night, yet ever burning; the body eternally separated from all the comforts of the soul, yet the soul ever in it; the soul for all eternity cast out of the land of the living, separated irreconcilably from God's presence, the only fountain of joy and life and being, and yet continually and everlastingly feeling the horrors of this intolerable parting from him. "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fires," is the sentence long since passed upon the ungodly and the sinner, by our blessed Saviour. The very Heathen, notwithstanding the ignorance they were in, they were not ignorant of this, that "they that commit such things are worthy of death;" so says the Apostle. And be the sinner who it will, and be his "way" never so "plain" and easy, never so specious, yet "at the end thereof is the pit of hell," says the son of Syrach.

Matt. xxv.  
41.

Rom. i. 32.

Eccles. xxi.  
10.

He that now promises himself any better end of his sins or sinful courses,—he that flatters and feeds himself with any other end of his ambition, or his treason, of his faction, or his sedition, of his covetousness, or his sacrilege, of his uncleanness, or his injustice, or any other sin, (I name no more, for I leave every one to reckon up his own,)—he that flatters himself, I say, with any other end of any of them to make himself forget this, does but deceive himself, and fool away his soul beyond recovery. Here is all the fruit he is like to get,—the only end he will certainly find at last,—everlasting death; an end without an end, without anything in life to sweeten the approaches of death; without anything in death, fruit or leaves, to garnish up the chambers of the grave; or any bud of hope to allay the misery and sadness of it. And we need no other witness of all this,



neither of the little or no fruit, nor of the great and horrid shame, nor of the vast and miserable ruin that comes of sin, but our own selves. "What had ye?" says our Apostle; ye can show no fruit; "ye are now ashamed," and ye cannot be ignorant that death is coming on. I here refer it to you; say what you can in the behalf of it; I desire none other witnesses nor judges than yourselves. "What fruit had ye, then, in those things whereof you are now ashamed?" Tell me if you can.

IV. Indeed, there is none can tell so well as the sinner can himself, what he has gotten by his sin; whether we consider him as one reflecting upon his ways, only as a person of reason should, or else as a Christian will.

For (1) let any of us, as men of reason, lay together the weary steps, the hard adventures, the vexatious troubles, the ordinary disappointments, the impertinent visits, the thoughtful nights, the busy days, the tumultuous uproars of our fears, our jealousies, our hopes, our despairs; the unworthy condescensions, the base disparagements, the dishonourable enterprises; that a lust, that a humour, that a vanity puts us too, or puts upon us: and then compare them with the lightness, the shortness, the unprofitableness, the unsatisfactoriness, the eternal shame and confusion we yet after all purchase with all that toil; and we must both needs confess that we have done brutishly and unreasonably, and cannot but be ashamed we have so unmanned ourselves, and betrayed the very essence and glory of our nature: not done like men.

But (2) let us renew the same reflections, and view them over again by the light of grace; look upon ourselves a Christians thus wretchedly betraying our God for a lust, Christ for an interest, our religion for a fancy, our obedience for a humour, our charity for a ceremony, our peace for a punctilio, our duty to God and man, for a little vain applause of, peradventure, ungodly men; our innocence for dirt and pleasure, our eternal glory and salvation for toys and trifles; and will we not without more ado confess we are ashamed, infinitely ashamed of it? Hear but those brave ranting blades, those gallant sinners, what they say themselves: "What hath pride profited us," say they, "or Wisd. v. 8.

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what good have riches with our vaunting brought us?" as if in sum they had said, What have all our sins procured us? Wisd. v. 9. Why, "all those are passed away like a shadow," and we are Wisd. v. 13. "consumed in our own wickedness." Now indeed, though there too late, they begin to talk like men,—to speak reason.

The Christian penitent, after he has run the course of sin, and is now returning, talks somewhat higher, calls it a prison, the stocks, the dungeon, the very nethermost hell; thinks no words bad enough to style it by. We need not put any such upon the rack for this confession: they go mourning and sighing it all the day long; they tell you sensibly by their tears and blushes,—by their sad countenances, and downcast looks,—by their voluntary confessions, their willing restraints now put upon themselves, their pining, punishing, afflicting of their souls and bodies, their wards and watches now over every step, lest they should fall again—that never were any poor souls so gulled into a course, so vain, so unprofitable, so dishonourable, so full of perplexities, so fruitful of anxieties, so bitter, so unpleasant as sin has been, nor anything whereof they are so much ashamed. No fruit of all you see, even ourselves being judges.

And yet I will not send you away without some fruit or other—somewhat after all this—that may do you good.

For, (1,) methinks, if sin have no better fruits, if wickedness come no better off, we may first learn to be ashamed, and blush to think of it,—be ashamed of sin.

We may, (2,) learn to beat it off thus at its first assaults. What! thou sin, thou lust,—what fruit shall I have in thee?—what good shall I reap of thee? Do I not see shame attend thee, and death behind thee? I am ashamed already to think upon thee; away, away, thou impudent solicitress,—I love no such fruit,—I love no such end.

And if, (3,) we be so unhappy as to be at any time unawares engaged in any sin, let us strike off presently upon the arguments of the text. For why should we be so simple,—to take a course that will not profit,—to take pains to weave a web that will not cover us,—to plant trees that will yield no fruit,—to range after fruit that has no pleasure,—to court that which has no loveliness? If we can expect nothing from our sins, (as you have heard we cannot,) why do we sweat

about them? If they bring home nought by shame, why are we not at first ashamed to commit them? If they end in death, why will ye die, O foolish people and unwise?

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Lastly, you that have led a course of sin, and are yet perhaps still in it, sit down and reckon every one of you with himself, what you have gotten. *Imprimis*, so much cost and charges; item, so much pains and labour, so much care and trouble, so much loss and damage, so much unrest and disquiet, so much hatred and ill-will, so much disparagement and discredit, so many anxieties and perplexities, so many weary walks, so much waiting and attendance, so many disappointments and discouragements, so many griefs and aches, so many infirmities and diseases, so many watches and broken sleeps, so many dangers and distresses, so many bitter throbs, and sharp stings, and fiery scorplings of a wounded conscience; so much, and so much, and so much misery, all for a few minutes of pleasure; for a little white and yellow dirt, for a feather or a fly, a buzz of honour or applause, a fancy or a humour for a place of business, or vexation summed up all in air, and wind, and dust, and nothing. Learn thus to make a daily reflection upon yourselves and sins.

But after all these, remember, lastly, it is death, eternal death, everlasting misery, hell and damnation without end, that is the end of sin; that all this everlasting is for a thing that is never lasting, a thing that vanishes often in its doing; all this death for that only which is the very shame of life, and even turns it into death; and surely you will no longer yield your members, your souls and bodies to iniquity unto iniquity, but unto righteousness unto holiness. So shall ye happily comply with the Apostle's argument in the text, and draw it, as he would have you, to the head; do what he intends and aims at by it, and by so doing attain that which he desires you should; make yourselves the greatest gainers can be imagined; gain good out of evil, glory out of shame, life out of death, all things out of nothing, eternal life, everlasting glory. Which, &c.

A SERMON  
ON THE  
FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

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1 COR. ix. 24.

*So run, that you may obtain.*

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THAT Christianity is a race, and heaven the goal, and we, all of us, they that are to run, is an ordinary allegory in Scripture and sermons, which you have none of you but heard: And that in this race all that run do not obtain, no more than they do that run in other races, every one sees, and every one can tell you. "Not every one," we told you the last day; not they that run only with their tongues, run they "Lord, Lord," never so fast; not many others that run further than so you will hear anon, and too common experience can inform you.

But how so to run as to obtain is not a piece of so common knowledge. *Hic labor, hoc opus est.* This is the Apostle's business,—a business ordinary Christians are not sufficiently skilled in, it is to be feared; or if sufficiently skilled in, not so practised in, but that they want a voice both behind and before them to tell them, "this is the way" they are to walk in. "This is the way, walk in it," so, and "so run that you may obtain."

[Isa. xxx.  
21.]

Were we to run in those Olympic games (which S. Paul here seems to allude to), they who were practised in those sports and exercises were fittest to instruct us how so to run as to be conquerors there. But being now to run the

true Olympic; that is, the heavenly race, the true race to heaven that true Olympus, which that poetical did but shadow—this our Apostle, that great wrestler, “not against flesh and blood” (though in another sense against that too), “but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness,” whose whole life was nothing else but a continual exercise of all the hardships in the Christian course, who so gloriously “fought the good fight,” and “finished his course,” can best teach us how to do so too. With this prerogative too above the cunningest of those Olympic masters, that they cannot so instruct their scholars that they shall be sure of the prize they run for, though they run never so accurately to their rules; many there running and but one obtaining; but here, by S. Paul’s direction, we may all “run” and all “obtain.” For to that purpose only are we invited and directed to “run,” that we “may obtain.”

Yet true it is, as we may all “obtain,” so we may not; and it will be but a spur to us to fear it, one spur to hasten and quicken us in our course. S. Paul had such a one now and then to make him “run.” He had “run” much, “from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum;” yet, lest he had or should “run in vain,” he gathers up his heels and to Jerusalem he goes again, to see whether he had not “run” so, or might not at the last; and notwithstanding all his great pains and care in the Gospel of Christ, in preaching it freely too, “without any charge” to the Corinthians, applying himself to all ways and means to gain them, and becoming anything to make them Christ’s, he yet tells us what ado he kept with his body, lest when he had done all, he “should be a castaway.”

But that such a one he should not be, he had some hope, that he should be a partaker rather of the Gospel in its reward as well as in its work, in the verse before the text. This is the other spur to him in his course—must be to us, that we thus quickened to our race, and by these two, hope to obtain and fear to lose, as by two leaden plummets, in each hand one, to poise us as we “run,” may so “run” as to “obtain.”

We “may obtain,” that is our hope; yet it is but “may,” that is our fear; yet no fear at all, if we “run” but so as

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we should; if we observe but the Apostle's οὕτως, his way and mode. To "obtain" or get to heaven is a work of labour and business, not of pretence and talk. It was we lately told you to do somewhat; now you will find it to do much, to take some pains and "run" about it. It is a business of order and regularity, so and so, not any how to be performed. It is a work of time and forecast, that considers seriously what it is about; that casts which way to go, and whither we are going; what it is we aim at, and how to compass it; what it is we would "obtain," and how to "obtain" it.

Thus, whilst I have given the sum, I have given you also the division of the text, only I shall point out the parts again in order, and tell you I shall observe,

I. That Christianity, or the Christian's course to heaven, is a work of labour and business,—it is to "run" and go.

II. That all pains and labour, every running, will not serve; it must be οὕτως, so and so, after a certain way, rightly ordered so as to "obtain;" such as is fit and proportionable to the end we aim at.

III. That this end we are to set before us, and so order all our course and courses towards it, to propound heaven for the end of all our actions.

IV. And then, lastly, to stir up our souls and bodies to it with this consideration of this "may;" this particle, which may serve both to awe and to encourage us, that from the hope that we "may," and the fear because it is no more than "may," not shall or must, we may be the more diligent in our course, and the more successful in our end; that we may be sure so to "run" as to "obtain."

I. I begin at the Christian's course, to show you (1) what it is; then (2) whither it tends. It tends to a crown, it tends to a reward, it tends to heaven, it tends to "obtain" it, but by pains and labour it is that it achieves it. It is a course of labour and pains that must bring us to heaven whereby only we can "obtain" it.

2 Tim. iv.  
7.

If Christianity be a course or race, as S. Paul styles it, it is a course of labour. *Multa tulit fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit.* Many a hot and cold sweat it has in it; much done, and much suffered in it from our childhood. Thence they begin to inure themselves to hardships and exercise that

intend to bear the garlands at those sports and games. There should we begin, too, to minister before the Lord with Samuel, when we are children. If we have not, our children may serve the Lord as he did, girded with a "linen ephod;" their "loins girt" up for the course, even from their childhood; girt with white linen, pure and harmless innocence; with a "linen ephod" bound to holy exercises, to assist Eli the priest in the service of God, if it be but with short responsals and amens; girt and set betimes to God's service. The word "run" is no idle word; there is pains and labour in it. They much deceive themselves that think there is a *Quis requisivit* upon all hardships in Christianity, that when men tell them of any strictness or rigours there, answer presently, "Who has required it at your hands?" Who? Why, he has done it, who they say has not. Else, certainly, the Apostle would have spared himself as well as they; would not have been so often "beaten with rods" and laid on with stripes, so often "shipwrecked," "in journeyings" so often, "in perils" so often, "perils of waters" and "perils of robbers, in perils by his own countrymen, perils by the heathen, perils in the wilderness, perils in the sea, perils among false brethren;" he would not have been so often "in weariness and painfulness, in watchings" so "often," so much "in hunger and thirst, in fastings" so frequent, "in cold and nakedness" so commonly, "in deaths" so "oft," as he tells us he was, had the way to heaven been so easy as these men,—that would not forego a jot of ease or pleasure, of meat, or drink, or sleep, for heaven,—would have it. Nor would he have proved the course of his ministry to be God's, by his "patience, afflictions, necessities, distresses," by "stripes, imprisonments," tossings to and fro, by "labours," and "watchings," and "fastings," as he does, could he have told how to have proved it better. Nor would he have taken so much pains to keep under his body, to buffet and humble it as he does, ver. 27 of this very chapter; were not this obtaining heaven somewhat a hard and laboursome business. This is the course that brings thither,—the course that, finished, brought him the "crown of righteousness." "It is violence and force that take heaven," says our only Saviour. The way to it is not strewed with roses and violets, nor spread with carpets and

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XXVII.1 Sam. ii.  
18.2 Cor. xi.  
24—27.2 Cor. vi. 4,  
5.

2 Tim. iv. 8.

[Matt. xi.  
12.]

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cushions, *non jacet in molli*, but with thorns, and briers, and craggy rocks.

There are works and duties of Christianity, that cannot be performed without much trouble. He must not fear his skin that puts himself into Christ's service; he must venture far, and hazard much sometimes, unless he will give out by the way and lose his reward. There is nothing so hard in human affairs but may fall into the spiritual and heavenly. The pursuit of worldly projects, those empty, unsatisfying, and troublesome nothings, cost us many a weary step, many a broken sleep, many a tired body; and can we think to obtain the fulness of the joys above, that fill and never fail, with less? Surely, did we consider the practice of those first Christian saints and martyrs, those daily pains and cares their days and nights were spent in, we would think our race to heaven another gates business, Christianity another manner of thing than we make it now-a-days, or are willing to conceive it.

Were there no other word than this *τρέχετε* in the text, this "run" to express it, we might understand it to be a work of labour; and if we take it with that reference it has to the Olympic races, there are many things in the performance that will sufficiently show it. What a deal of pains and care did they take first to fit and prepare themselves! And then, with what might and main did they pursue their course! How often have such racers been taken up at the goal so tired and spent that they have had much ado to recover their life or spirits! Ah! did we but half so much for heaven, there were no doubt of it.

Running, take we it how we will, is a violent exercise, that for the time employs all the parts and powers. It is that the Apostle would have here, that all the faculties and powers of our souls and bodies should be taken up in the business of heaven. Our heads study it, our hearts bend wholly to it, our affections strive violently after it, our hands labour for it, our feet run the ways of God's commandments to come to it, our eyes run down with water for it, and our bodies with sweat about it. It will cost somewhat more to come to heaven than a few good words at the last, than a "Lord forgive me, and have mercy upon me," when we are going out of the world, or than a hot fit or two of piety when



we are in it; or a cold and careless walking and straggling up and down in it throughout even all our lives. Nay, more, it is not running over whole breviaries of prayers; it is not running over good books only neither, reading and studying of good things, but running as we read, "that all that run may read" in our running the characters of heaven. Would men but lay this to heart, that it is no such easy or perfunctory business to get thither, their courses would be better, their lives holier, themselves heavenlier than they are; nor would so many put off the work to the last cast, make a mere death-bed business of it, as if they then were fit enough to run God's ways when they cannot stir a hand or foot, whereby it is more than to be feared they deceive themselves, and being then in no possibility to run, they go they know not whither. [Hab.ii.2.]

II. And yet for all the pains and running we talk of, if now, secondly, it have not an *οὐτως* to rule and steer it, if it be not a "so" running, such a one as is right set to obtain, we had as good sit still. This "so to run," is (1.) to run lawfully. (2.) To run carefully. (3.) To run speedily. (4.) To run willingly. (5.) To run stoutly. (6.) To run patiently. (7.) To run constantly, and to the end. To run (1.) lawfully, according to the laws and rules prescribed to obtain it. (2.) Carefully, the way to obtain it. (3.) Speedily, with the speed requisite to obtain it. (4.) Willingly, with spirit to obtain it. (5.) Stoutly, to endure any thing to obtain it. (6.) Patiently, to expect to obtain it. (7.) Constantly, not giving out till we obtain it.

(1.) Lawfully, according to the laws and rules of the race we are to run; "we are not crowned else," says our Apostle. <sup>2 Tim. ii. 5.</sup> Now, the laws of the Christian race are God's commandments, according to which we are diligently to direct our steps; yet three laws there are more particular and proper to it—the law of faith, the law of hope, and the law of charity. These the three more peculiar rules of it:—We must "run" in a full belief of God's promises in Christ, that "in him they are yea, and in him amen;" that God will not let one tittle of them fall to the ground; "looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith,"—of our course too. <sup>[2 Cor. i. 20.]</sup> <sup>Heb. xii. 2.</sup> We must, secondly, run in hope, that through his grace we

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Heb. vi. 18. “laying hold upon the hope so set before us.” And, thirdly,  
2 Cor. vi. 6. in charity must be our course. Though we strive for the  
Heb. x. 24. mastery, it must not be in strife or envy, but in love and  
 charity, in unity and peace, in “love unfeigned” ourselves,  
 and “provoking one another” to it; no other strifes or  
 provocation, but who shall go before one another in love, so  
 keeping the “bond of peace,” which once broken, our clothes  
 and garments, which were tied up to us with it, as with a  
 girdle, fall all down about us, and hinder us both in our race  
 and of our crown. Those who have broke this bond, and  
 rent the Church’s robes, and their own souls by their  
 unhappy separations, will, after all their labour, with those  
[Ps. lxxvi.  
5.] in the Psalm, sleep their sleep, and find nothing;—nothing  
 but that they have hindered both others and themselves of the  
 crown of glory. Run we lawfully and orderly then—that first.

And (2) run we carefully too, neither to the right hand  
 nor to the left; neither looking after sensual pleasures or  
 worldly profits or sinful lusts; not turning aside after those  
 golden balls, which the devil, the flesh, and world, are always  
 casting in the way to hinder us, but straight on our course,  
 carefully shunning all temptations, stumbling-blocks, and  
 stones of offence, which are likely to trip up our heels and  
 throw us in our race. “What carefulness,” says S. Paul, “has  
2 Cor. vii.  
11. your godly sorrow wrought!”—will earnest desire of a hea-  
 venly crown, say I, work in you, if you would think upon it!

It would make you (3) gather up all your strength, set to  
 all your force, put to all your speed; you would think you  
 could not come soon enough to so glorious a goal. “Let us  
Zech. viii.  
21. go speedily and pray before the Lord,” say they in Zachary.  
Luke xix.  
5. “Make haste and come down,” says our Saviour to Zacchæus;  
 as if he that meant to see Christ here at his own house, or  
 hereafter in his, must make what haste he can. Running  
 is our speediest motion; and the more haste to heaven, the  
 better speed, though to earthly things the proverb says it is  
 not; and the reason may be, indeed, because our swiftest  
 motion is to be towards heaven, to be reserved for that.

Yet willingly (4) must it be; we must do it without whip  
 or spur; they are for unreasonable beasts, and not for men  
 in running. We are not to look that God should force and

drive us to his work; he loves no such workmen: a ready mind is God's sacrifice; he accepts no other: "If I do it willingly," says our Apostle, "I have a reward;" no reward else to be expected. SERMON  
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1 Cor. ix.  
17.

But (5) we must run stoutly too; bear any thing, do any thing, endure any thing for the crown of heaven—afflictions, persecutions, reproaches, any losses, any hardships, for the name of Christ. We must not be frightened out of our course of piety and religion by the threats of men, nor put out of it by the scoffs and flouts of standers-by, nor driven from it by the fear of danger and loss; nor diverted by the hope of earthly honour and preferment, nor flattered out of it by ease and pleasure, nor fooled out of it by seducers and false guides; but bear up stoutly in our course against wind and weather, storm and tempest, men and devils.

And though some of these perhaps may somewhat hinder us in our course and make it the more difficult, and the way seem longer, yet (6) if we "run with patience," as our Apostle again would have us, "the race which is set before us;" if we give not over yet, but go on expecting, content however, though it be long, that we shall come at last, willing to suffer any thing, and stay any time that God would have us, we shall obtain at last; but if we give out we are lost for ever. Heb. xii. 1.

For (7) constantly, also, we are to run; not to run a while and then make a stand; now a spurt and then a spurt—*Ubi non currere ibi deficere incipis*, says devout S. Bernard;<sup>b</sup> "When we begin to slack our running, we begin to fail of our reward." If we give over here, if we did run well, and do not, S. Paul says we are bewitched, and will ask us too, as he did them, "Who has bewitched us, that we should no longer obey the truth," that we run no more? We must run constantly, and not give over; nay, and constantly also, and not give out. "He that continues to the end," is he only that "shall be saved," that shall obtain the crown of life. Christ himself, who is our crown and our joy, he was obedient unto the death; and unless we be so too—unless we hold Gal. [iii. 1.  
and] v. 7.

<sup>b</sup> [The reference may perhaps be to the following passage:—*Quid enim currere prodest et ante metam cursus deficere? Sic currite, ut comprehen-*

*datis, dicit Apostolus. S. Bern. De Virtute Obedientiæ Serm. p. 1715 K. Ed. Paris. 1640.]*

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the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end—we shall not be partakers of him; for they only are that do so. Heb. iii. 14. So now you have this *οὐτως*, the manner of your running, how it must be,—lawfully, according to the rule that God has given, that we swerve not from it; carefully, in the way that God has set us, that we err not from it; speedily, that we come not when the doors are shut; cheerfully, that we may have a reward; stoutly, that we be not baffled in our course; patiently, that we faint not by the way; and constantly, that we fail not of our end—the salvation of our souls: “So run that ye may obtain.”

Ay, but how may we obtain to run so? Why, do as the runners in races do: (1.) Diet our bodies; (2.) Exercise ourselves before; (3.) Consider, and contrive how we had best to run; and (4.) strip ourselves of all incumbrances that may hinder us in our speed; and, indeed, these may well go into the *οὐτως*, belong at least to the “so running” as has annexed to it the obtaining.

(1.) Diet we our bodies by temperance and abstinence. It is in the next verse, that “every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things.” *Abstinuit vino et venere*, says the poet; he abstains from riot and drunkenness, runs 1 Pet. iv. 4. not with the world into the “same excess of riot;” from chambering and wantonness, runs not to his neighbour’s bed; a head full of drink, a belly full of meat, and a body weakened with lust, are fitter to lie down than to run. He that intends himself for a race, for this especially, must keep under his body, “and bring it into subjection;” with S. Paul, ver. 27, keep it empty, and agile, and firm, and sound.

And (2) he must exercise himself for the race, that intends so to run as to obtain; they do so that run races, try and exercise before, keep themselves continually doing; and they that are skilful in the word of righteousness and successful Heb. v. 14. in the work, have “their senses exercised to discern both 1 Tim. iv. 7. good and evil,” must “exercise themselves unto godliness;” Ps. i. 2. exercise themselves day and night “in the law of God,” and Acts xxiv. with S. Paul, again, “exercise” themselves “to have always 16. a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.”

(3.) Consider also and contrive we must, what way we had best to take how we shall avoid this “rock of offence,” that

stone of stumbling, that hill of pride, that ditch of lust, those thorns in the flesh, those dangers by the way, those impediments and hindrances which are likeliest to interrupt or slacken us in our course, so to take all advantages, lay hold of all opportunities, catch all occasions of our advance in goodness, know where to haste, and where to slack, when to bear up, and when to put forward, when to spare, and when to put to all our strength. If we can but hit this *οὕτως*, this *sic*, this “so,” this way, this order, no doubt either of our well running, or our sure obtaining; either so to run, or so obtain, as the text would have us.

And (4) after all this dieting, all this exercising of ourselves, and all this contrivance with ourselves, as the last preparation, or rather setting out to our course, we must divest and strip ourselves of all our cumbersome garments; “lay aside every weight and the sin that does so easily beset us,” as the Apostle speaks; “lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness,” as S. James; put off all the works of darkness, put off the old man and put on the new, the new white robe of righteousness and holiness,—for in thin white vestments only did they use to run races,—having our joints suppled, and our bodies anointed with the sweet oil of holy resolutions, being first washed with the pure waters of repentance. It was an old ceremony,—in some Churches yet observed,—in baptism to anoint the baptized person in the name of the Lord, in token that he was now to address himself to the course, to run the race of Christianity that was then set before him. You have now this *οὕτως τρέχετε* complete; what it is “so to run,” both in its setting out and in its moving on; we will now see what it will come to in the end, to “obtain.”

Yet before I come to that, give me leave a little to sum up the whole manner of our running, by a kind of allegorizing some several runnings in Scripture we may read of.

Leave we, then, first the oxen, and run we with Elisha after Elijah; leave we all secular and worldly business to tend upon the word of the Lord in the mouths of his prophets. Run we next with Laban to the well, to the well-springs of salvation. Rouse we up ourselves, then, out of our beds,—out of our drowsy dulness and earthiness,—

SERMON  
XXVII.Heb. xii. 1.  
James i.  
21.1 Kings  
xix. 20.Gen. xxiv.  
29.

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with young Samuel, and run to Eli the priest, to ask counsel of him, when God begins first to appear to us, that we may be instructed what to do. Run we, then, with little Zacchæus, and climb up into the tree; make our thoughts ascend, that we may see Christ. Run we, then, after him, with the people on foot, out of our cities; refuse no pains, nor think much to leave our houses awhile to overtake him. When we see good thoughts coming to us, run we as Abraham did to meet the angels; make haste to entertain them, and bow down ourselves before them, and entreat them to stay and tarry with us; run, then, presently, to the herd and fetch a calf and haste to slay and dress it for them,—to the unruly herd of our sensual passions and affections, and mortify them and dress them better than heretofore. When any evil motions at any time arise, run we with David, and stand upon that Philistine and cut off his head, kill it in the cradle, nip it in the bud. When we fall into sin, run with Rebecca unto the well again, and draw thence the waters of repentance. If any temptation yet pursue us that we cannot resist, run we away with Jotham, and flee from it. When troubles come upon us, “run we to the hills, from whence cometh our help,” “to the name of the Lord, as a strong tower,” to our prayers. When we are in any good way of devotion and piety, run we “like the sun out of his chamber, and rejoice we like a giant to run our course.” Run we like Joel’s “horsemen,” like Nahum’s “lightning,” in all good ways. If adversity betide us, run we like the rivers that the prophet David speaks of among the hills; hold up our heads still for all the sorrow. If prosperity engirt us, run we with Ahimaaz, “by the way of the plain,” be lowly and humble in it; and when any good befalls us, run we with S. Peter and John unto the sepulchre; think we of our lives’ end, how little a while we may enjoy it; run we to our friends with Rebecca, and tell them of it, make them partakers of God’s goodness too, that they may rejoice and praise God with us. In a word, in all distresses, in all necessities, run we with those Benjamites to the rock Rimmon—the rock, Christ Jesus—and abide there; not for some months or years, but for ever; so “run” and so “obtain.” There will all our running be at an end, and he and his salvation, he in his Father’s

1 Sam. iii.  
5.  
Luke xix.  
4.  
Mark vi. 33.  
Gen. xviii.  
2.  
Gen. xviii.  
7.  
1 Sam.  
xvii. 51.  
Gen. xxiv.  
20.  
Judges ix.  
21.  
[Ps. cxxi.  
1.]  
Prov. xviii.  
10.  
Ps. xix. 5.  
Joel ii. 4.  
Nahum ii.  
4.  
Ps. civ. 10.  
[2 Sam.  
xviii. 23.]  
John xx. 4.  
Judges xx.  
45.

house is the end of all our running,—that which we are to aim at, that which we are to run for.

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III. For run for something we must, and we can run for nothing better. All men and creatures stir not from their place but for some end,—to obtain somewhat. But men and reasonable creatures propound it to themselves. I cannot tell you the several ends they do propound; but I can tell you the end they should propound. Or rather let S. Paul tell you, and you shall go no further for it than the very next verse, “a crown incorruptible.” If you would yet know plainer what that is, look but to 2 Tim. ii. 10, and thus you find it, that ye may “obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.” 2 Tim. ii.  
10.

Indeed methinks the one only word of the text, this *καταλάβητε*, this “obtain,” single, without any super-addition, is sufficient to express it all; for we obtain nothing till we obtain that. All that we get, or gain, or purchase, till we come to that,—to the salvation in Christ, with eternal glory,—is not worth the name of obtaining, of *καταλάβητε*, all crowns and glories of the world but dross and dung, not worth the taking up; not anything worth obtaining in comparison of this “crown of glory.”

*Ut comprehendatis* it is in Latin; and it is a word that the Schoolmen, whose business is to speak most accurately and distinctly, have always appropriated to the other life. There we are, first, only *comprehensores*, comprehensors,—that is, obtainers. Nay, S. Paul himself is so punctual too, that after all his pains in the Gospel of Christ, all his conformity to Christ, and the greatest height of perfection in Christ, that he was arrived at (which is a business and glory worth all the earth besides), says yet, *Οὐ λογίζομαι κατειληφέναι*, “I count not myself to have comprehended,” or obtained (so it should be rendered), professes himself not to have obtained. Attained, perhaps, he will grant you, or apprehended, somewhat towards it; apprehended, peradventure, but not comprehended; *ἔλαβον*, but not *κατέλαβον*—made way to his crown, but not come to it, not obtained it. Phil. iii. 13.

So you see what it is you are to run for. Not a crown of bays or laurel,—not the praise and commendations of men,—not any earthly honour, interest, or profit,—but

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the honour of heaven, the praise of God, the crown of glory.

Not fading and decaying pleasures, such as the leaves of the trees, or the flower of the field, that give a verdant beauty and fragrant smell for a while and vanish, are we to set before us. Not the praise of men are we to run our race, or do our works for; to be seen of men, and commended by them. "They," indeed, that do so, says Christ, "have their reward," but they had better be without it; for it is but ἀπέχετε not κατέλαβετε; they have it away with them, and must look for no more; that is all they are like to have. They have "beaten the air," contrary to the Apostle, and with the air they are past away. Air they sought for, and air they only have—a little foolish and vain breath, for all their pains. They can show nothing that they have obtained; and the very praise they sought proves nothing too; for not he that man commends, "but whom the Lord commends," is only truly praised and commended. Not any earthly ends (3) are we to run for; that is but *currere in incertum*, at the best, to "run as uncertainly," to "run" for uncertainties, things that it is a doubt whether we shall get in God's service (who rewards us better than with temporal rewards), and it is no doubt but they are most uncertain, and cannot *comprehendi*, be so laid hold on, that they will not flee away; things that we ourselves are to deny ourselves in God's service sometimes, such as it is a point of our running to run from, when they will hinder our course; and such as in such times as these are not to be expected by them that faithfully and stoutly run the Christian race, that hold out their course in true religion, and the obedience of Christ, and the communion of his Church. Heaven only it is we are to run to, and "Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith," our infinite and "exceeding great reward," and "the joy which was set before him," it is we are to look to; to no other recompense of reward, no other recompenser and rewarder.

But to him, and to that, lastly, now we are to look. If he himself set the joy of the right hand of the throne of God before his eyes, that he might the better "endure the cross," and "despise the shame," and "so run the race" that his Father set him, as it is, Heb. xii. 2; if he had an eye to the

[Matt. vi.  
2.]

1 Cor. ix.  
26.

2 Cor. x. 18.

[Heb. xii.  
2.]

Heb. xii. 2.



“recompense of reward,” well certainly may we set such a consideration before us, and they talk they know not what that deny it. God allures us by rewards, and Christ himself preaching the Gospel began it with this encouragement to incite us to listen to it, because “the kingdom of heaven” was “at hand.” Set we then those joys before us, and fear not; look we, in all our tribulations and sufferings, upon them, to comfort and uphold us, in all our difficulties to encourage us, in all our devotions to enflame us. Consider we, that all we do, that all we suffer, is nothing to be compared to the “crown of glory” that is “laid up” for us; that all our pains and labour, going, and running, and sweating, and blowing for Christ, is not to be mentioned or thought upon, so that at last we may “obtain.”

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Matt. iv. 17.

IV. Yet to keep our spirits in awe, and keep down our pride, that is likely to arise sometimes upon our well running, and to make us diligent and constant in our course, let us remember, it is but a “may obtain” the while; we may miss as well, shall too, if we run not orderly, or give out. It is no more than “we shall reap if we faint not.” If we fail or faint we shall not; our kingdom is removed, our crown is gone. “Work” we then our “salvation out with fear and trembling,” as the Apostle advises us. That is the way to make us so to “run” as to “obtain.” There is no such certainty to obtain as some imagine and delude themselves with; no peremptory decree for their obtaining, though they run how they will; nor any peremptory order neither that they shall run in their due time, whether they will or no; that God will force them either to the race or to the crown; either to “run” or to “obtain.” It is a common, but the greatest vanity and fallacy in the world, to think to get to heaven without pains, to go thither with all kind of pomp, and ease, and pleasures,—to have our portion here and hereafter too. It is no such matter; the way is “strait” and “narrow that leads thither,” says he that came to show it; and a race here we have to run for it, and all the way but a “may,” a possibility, or a probability, not a necessity to obtain it. Look we carefully to our feet, apply we ourselves diligently to our course, to run the ways of righteousness and peace, of holiness and salvation. Let us often look up

Gal. vi. 9.

Phil. ii. 12.

Matt. vii.  
14.

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to heaven, and the "crown of glory laid up" there, to add wings and spirit to us; and look we also down sometimes to the dangers by the way, and fear ourselves, and mark our steps, lest we chance to stumble, and fall, to grow faint or weary; but that we may run lawfully, carefully, speedily, cheerfully, stoutly, patiently, and constantly to the end; that so running, we may obtain the end of our hopes, the crown of our joy, the salvation of our souls, and the redemption of our bodies, everlasting life, and eternal glory. which, &c.

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON:  
R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD STREET HILL.



# BOOKS

PUBLISHED

BY JAMES PARKER AND CO.  
OXFORD, AND 377, STRAND, LONDON.

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