



THE

GREAT EXEMPLAR:

OR, THE LIFE OF

OUR EVER-BLESSED SAVIOUR

JESUS CHRIST.

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BY

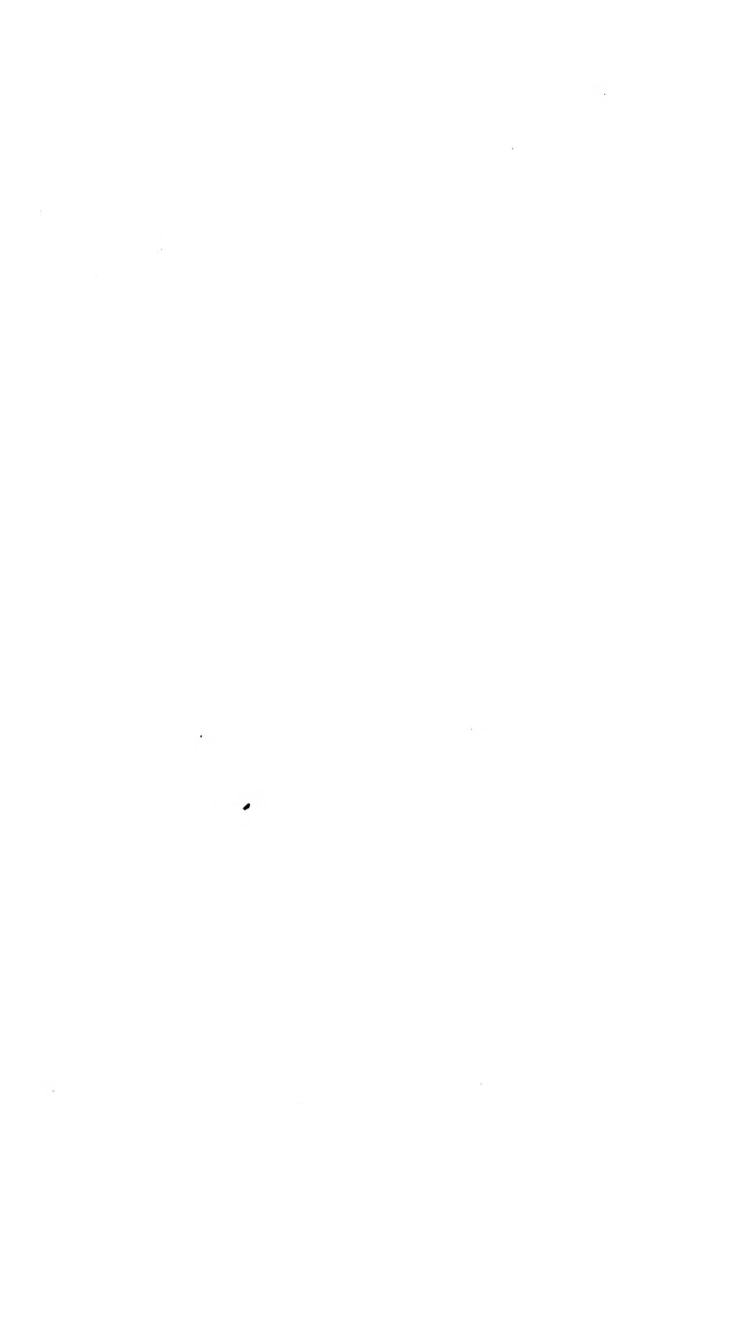
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THE
HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND DEATH
OF THE
HOLY JESUS,
BEGINNING AT THE TIME OF HIS FIRST MIRACLE,
UNTIL THE SECOND YEAR OF HIS PREACHING.

PART II.

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THE LIFE

OF OUR BLESSED

LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

PART II.

SECTION I.

*Of the first Manifestation of Jesus, by the Testimony
of St. John, and a Miracle.*

1. AFTER that the Baptist, by a sign from heaven, was confirmed in spirit and understanding that Jesus was the Messiah, he immediately published to the Jews what God had manifested to him: and first to the priests and Levites sent in legation from the Sanhedrim, he professed indefinitely, in answer to their question, that himself was ‘not the Christ,’¹ nor ‘Elias,’ nor ‘that prophet’ whom they, by a special tradition, did expect to be revealed, they knew not when. And concerning himself definitely he said nothing, but that he was ‘the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord.’² “He it was who was then ‘amongst them,’³ but ‘not known;’ a

¹ John, i. 20, 21.

² Ibid, verse 23.

³ Ibid, verse 26

person of great dignity, to whom the Baptist was 'not worthy' to do the office of the lowest ministry; 'who coming after John was preferred far before him;'² who was to 'increase,' and the Baptist was to 'decrease';³ who did 'baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.'⁴

2. This was the character of his personal prerogatives: but as yet no demonstration was made of his person, till after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Jesus: and then, whenever the Baptist saw Jesus, he points him out with his finger, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world: this is he.'⁵ Then he shows him to Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, with the same designation, and to another disciple with him; who both 'followed Jesus, and abode with him all night.'⁶ Andrew brings his brother Simon with him, and then Christ changes his name from Simon to Peter, or Cephas, which signifies a stone. Then Jesus himself finds out Philip of Bethsaida, and bade him follow him; and Philip finds out Nathanael, and calls him to see. Thus, persons bred in a dark cell, upon their first ascent up to the chambers of light, all run staring upon the beauties of the sun, and call the partners of their darkness to communicate in their new and stranger revelation.

3. When Nathanael was come to Jesus, Christ saw his heart, and gave him a testimony to be truly honest, and full of holy simplicity, 'a true Israelite without guile.' And Nathanael, being overjoyed that he had found the Messias, believing

¹ John, i. 27.

² Ibid, verse 15, 27, 30.

³ Ibid, iii. 30.

⁴ Matt. iii. 11.

⁵ John, i. 29, 36.

⁶ Ibid, verse 37, 39.

out of love, and loving by reason of his joy, and no suspicion, took that for a proof and verification of his person, which was very insufficient to confirm a doubt, or ratify a probability. But so we believe a story which we love, taking probabilities for demonstrations, and casual accidents for probabilities, and any thing that creates vehement presumptions; in which cases our guides are not our knowing faculties, but our affections, and if they be holy, God guides them into the right persuasions; as he does little birds to make rare nests, though they understand not the mystery of operation, nor the design and purpose of the action.

4. But Jesus took his will and forwardness of affections in so good part, that he promised him greater things: and this gave occasion to the first prophecy which was made by Jesus. For 'Jesus said unto him, because I said I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these.' And then he prophesied that he should see 'heaven open, and the angel of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.'¹ But, being a doctor of the law, Christ chose him not at all to the college of apostles.

5. Much about the same time, there happened to be a marriage in Cana of Galilee, in the vicinage of his dwelling, where John the Evangelist is by some supposed to have been the bridegroom: (but of this there is no certainty :) and thither Jesus being with his mother invited, he went to do civility to the persons espoused, and to do honour to the holy rite of marriage. The persons then married, were but of indifferent fortunes, richer in

¹S. Aug. tra. xvii. c. i. in Joan.

love of neighbours than in the fulness of rich possessions; they had more company than wine. For the master of the feast (whom, according to the order and piety of the nation, they chose from the order of priests to be the president of the feast, by the reverence of his person to restrain all inordination, by his discretion to govern and order the circumstances, by his religious knowledge to direct the solemnities of marriage, and to retain all the persons and actions in the bounds of prudence and modesty) complained to the bridegroom, that the guests wanted wine.

6. As soon as the holy virgin-mother had notice of the want, out of charity, that uses to be employed in supplying even the minutest and smallest articles of necessity, as well as the clamorous importunity of extremities and great indigencies, she complained to her son, by an indefinite address; not desiring him to make supply, for she knew not how he should; but either, out of an habitual commiseration, she complained without hoping for remedy; or else she looked on him who was the fountain of holiness and of plenty, as expecting a derivation from him either of discourses or miracles. But Jesus answered her, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.' By this answer, intending no denial to the purpose of his mother's intimation, to whom he always bore a religious and pious reverence; but to signify, that he was not yet entered into his period and years of miracles: and when he did, it must be not for respect of kindred or civil relations, but as it is a derivation of power from above, so it must be in pursuit of that service and design, which he had received in charge together with his power.

7. And so his mother understood him, giving express charge to the ministers to do whatsoever he commanded. Jesus therefore bade them 'fill the water-pots,' which stood there for the use of frequent washings, which the Jews did use in all public meetings, for fear of touching pollutions, or contracting legal impurities; which they did with a curiousness next to superstition, washing the very beds and tables used at their feasts. The ministers 'filled them to the brim,' and, as they were commanded, 'drew out, and bare unto the governor of the feast;' who 'knew not of it,' till the miracle grew public, and, like light, showed itself. For while they wondered at the economy of that feast, in 'keeping the best wine till the last,' it grew apparent that he who was the Lord of the creatures, who in their first seeds have an obediencial capacity to receive the impresses of what forms he pleases to imprint, could give new natures, and produce new qualities in that subject in which he chooses to glorify his Son.

8. 'This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee.' For all those miracles which are reported to be done by Christ in his infancy, and interval of his younger years, are apocryphal and spurious, feigned by trifling understandings, (who think to serve God with a well-meant lie,) and promoted by the credulity of such persons in whose hearts easiness, folly, and credulity are bound up and tied fast with silken thread, and easy softnesses of religious affections, not made severe by the rigours of wisdom and experience. 'This first miracle manifested his glory, and 'his disciples believed in him.'

AD. SECTION X.

Considerations touching the Vocation of five Disciples, and of the first Miracle of Jesus, done at Cana in Galilee.

1. As soon as ever John the Baptist was taught by the descent of the Holy Spirit that this was Jesus, he instantly preaches him to all that came near him. For the Holy Ghost was his commission and instruction: and now he was a minister evangelical, and taught all those that have the honour to be servants in so sacred employment, that they must not go till they be sent, nor speak till they be instructed, nor yet hold their peace when their commission is signed by the consignation of the Spirit in ordinary ministry. For 'all power and all wisdom is from above,' and in spiritual ministrations is a direct emanation from the Holy Spirit; that, as no man is fit to speak the mysteries of godliness, be his person never so holy, unless he derive wisdom in order to such mysteries; so, be he never so instructed by the assistance of art or infused knowledge, yet unless he also have derived power as well as skill, authority as well as knowledge from the same Spirit, he is not enabled to minister in public in ordinary ministrations. The Baptist was sent by a prime designation 'to prepare the way' to Jesus, and was instructed by the same Spirit, which had sanctified or consecrated him in his mother's womb to this holy purpose.

2. When the Baptist had showed Jesus to Andrew and another disciple, they immediately followed him with the distances and fears of the first approach, and the infirmities of new converts: but

Jesus seeing them follow their first light, invited them to see the sun. For God loves to cherish infants in grace; and having sown the immortal seed in their hearts, if it takes root downwards, and springs out into the verdure of a leaf, he still waters it with the gentle rain of the Holy Spirit, in graces and new assistances, till it brings forth the fruits of a holy conversation. And God, who knows that infants have need of pleasant, and gentle, and frequent nutriment, hath given to them this comfort, that himself will take care of their first beginnings, and improve them to the strength of men, and give them the strengths of nature, and the wisdom of the Spirit, which ennoble men to excellencies and perfections. By the preaching of the Baptist they were brought to seek for Christ; and when they did, Christ found them, and brought them home, and made them 'stay all night with him;' which was more favour than they looked for. For God usually dispenses his mercies, that they may outrun our thoughts and expectations; and they are given in no proportion to us, but according to God's measures: he considering not what we are worthy of, but what is fit for him to give; he only requiring of us capacities to receive his favour, and fair reception and entertainment of his graces.

3. When Andrew had found Jesus, he calls his brother Simon to be partaker of his joys, which, as it happens in accidents of greatest pleasure, cannot be contained within the limits of the possessor's thoughts. But this calling of Peter was not to a beholding, but to a participation of his felicities: for he is strangely covetous who would enjoy the sun, or the air, or the sea alone: here was treasure for him and all the world; and by lighting his

brother Simon's taper, he made his own light the greater and more glorious. And this is the nature of grace, to be diffusive of its own excellencies; for here no envy can inhabit: the proper and personal ends of holy persons in the contract and transmissions of grace are increased by the participation and communion of others. For our prayers are more effectual, our aids increased, our encouragement and examples more prevalent, God more honoured, and the rewards of glory have accidental advantages, by the superaddition of every new saint and beatified person; the members of the mystical body, when they have received nutriment from God and his only Son, supplying to each other the same which themselves received, and live on, in the communion of saints. Every new star gilds the firmament, and increases its first glories: and those who are instruments of the conversion of others, shall not only introduce new beauties, but when themselves 'shine like the stars in glory,' they shall have some reflections from the light of others, to whose fixing in the orb of heaven themselves have been instrumental. And this consideration is not only of use in the exaltations of the dignity apostolical and clerical, but for the enkindling even of private charities; who may do well to promote others' interests of piety, in which themselves also have some concernment.

4. These disciples asked of Christ where he dwelt: Jesus answered, 'Come and see.' It was an answer very expressive of our duty in this instance. It is not enough for us to understand where Christ inhabits, or where he is to be found; for our understandings may follow him afar off, and we receive no satisfaction unless it be to curiosity: but we

must go where he is, eat of his meat, wash in his lavatory, rest on his beds, and dwell with him. For the holy Jesus hath no kind influence upon those who stand at distance, save only the affections of a loadstone, apt to draw them nigher, that he may transmit his virtues by union and confederations: but if they persist in a sullen distance, they shall learn his glories as Dives understood the peace of Lazarus, of which he was never to participate. Although 'the Son of man hath not where to lay his head,' yet he hath many houses where to convey his graces; he hath nothing to cover his own, but he hath enough to sanctify ours: and as he dwelt in such houses which the charity of good people then afforded for his entertainment so now he loves to abide in places which the religion of his servants hath vowed to his honour, and the advantages of evangelical ministrations. Thither we must come to him, or any where else where we may enjoy him. He is to be found in a church, in his ordinances, in the communion of saints, in every religious duty, in the heart of every holy person: and if we go to him by the addresses of religion in holy places, by the ministry of holy rites, by charity, by the adherences of faith, and hope, and other combining graces, the graces of union and society, or prepare a lodging for him within us, that he may come to us; then shall we see such glories and interior beauties, which none know but they that dwell with him. The secrets of spiritual benediction are understood only by them to whom they are conveyed, even to the children of his house. 'Come and see.'

5. St. Andrew was first called, and that by Christ immediately; his brother Simon next, and that by

Andrew: but yet Jesus changed Simon's name and not the other's; and by this change designed him to an eminency of office, at least, in signification, principally above his brother, or else separately and distinctly from him; to show that these graces and favours which do not immediately co-operate to eternity, but are gifts and offices, or impresses of authority, are given to men irregularly, and without any order of predisponent causes, or probabilities on our part, but are issues of absolute predestination; and as they have efficacy from those reasons which God conceals, so they have some purposes as concealed as their causes: only if God pleases to make us vessels of fair employment and of great capacity, we shall bear a greater burden, and are bound to glorify God with special offices. But as these exterior and ineffective graces are given upon the same good will of God which made this matter to be a human body, when, if God had so pleased, it was capable of being made a fungus or a sponge; so they are given to us with the same intentions as are our souls, that we might glorify God in the distinct capacity of grace, as before of a reasonable nature. And besides that it teaches us to magnify God's free mercy, so it removes every such exalted person from being an object of envy to others, or from pleasing himself in vainer opinions: for God hath made him of such an employment as freely and voluntary as he hath made him a man, and he no more co-operated to this grace than to his own creation; and may as well admire himself for being born in Italy, or from rich parents, or for having two hands or two feet, as for having received such a designation extraordinary. But these things are never instruments of reputation among severe

understandings, and never but in the sottish and unmanly apprehensions of the vulgar. Only this, when God hath imprinted an authority upon a person, although the man hath nothing to please himself withal but God's grace, yet others are to pay the duty which that impression demands : which duty, because it rappsorts to God, and touches not the man, but as it passes through him to the fountain of authority and grace, it extinguishes all pretences of opinion and pride.

6. When Jesus espied Nathanael (who also had been called by the first disciples) coming towards him, he gave him an excellent character, calling him ' a true Israelite, in whom was no guile,' and admitted him amongst the first disciples of the institution : by this character in one of the first of his scholars hallowing simplicity of spirit, and receiving it into his discipline, that it might now become a virtue and duty evangelical. For although it concerns us as a Christian duty to be prudent, yet the prudence of Christianity is a duty of spiritual effect, and in instances of religion with no other purposes than to avoid giving offence to those that are without and within ; that we cause no disreputation to Christianity ; that we do nothing that may encourage enemies to religion ; and that those that are within the communion and obedience of the church, may not suffer as great inconveniences by the indiscreet conduct of religious actions, as by direct temptations to a sin. These are the purposes of private prudence, to which in a greater measure, and upon more variety of rules the governors of churches are obliged. But that which Christian simplicity prohibits is, the mixing arts and unhandsome means for the purchase of our

ends ; witty counsels that are underminings of our neighbour, destroying his just interest to serve our own, stratagems to deceive, infinite and insignificant answers with fraudulent design, unjust and unlawful concealment of our purposes, fallacious promises and false pretences, flattery, and unjust and unreasonable praise, saying one thing and meaning the contrary, pretending religion to secular designs, breaking faith, taking false oaths, and such other instruments of human purposes framed by the devil, and sent into the world to be perfected by man. Christian simplicity speaks nothing but its thoughts ; and when it concerns prudence that a thought or purpose should be concealed, it concerns simplicity that silence be its cover, and not a false vizard ; it rather suffers inconvenience than a lie : it destroys no man's right, though it be inconsistent with my advantages ; it reproves freely, palliates no man's wickedness ; it intends what it ought, and does what is bidden, and uses courses regular and just, sneaks not in corners, and walks always in the eye of God, and the face of the world.

7. Jesus told Nathanael that he knew him, when he saw him under the fig-tree : and Nathanael took that to be probation sufficient that he was the Messiah ; and believed rightly upon an insufficient motive. Which because Jesus did accept, it gives testimony to us, that however faith be produced, by means regular or by arguments incompetent, whether it be proved or not proved, whether by chance or deliberation, whether wisely or by occasion, so that faith be produced by the instrument, and love by faith, God's work is done, and so is ours. For if St. Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, though by the envy of peevish persons,

certainly God will not reject an excellent product because it came from a weak and sickly parent. And he that brings good out of evil, and rejoices in that good, having first triumphed upon the evil, will certainly take delight in the faith of the most ignorant persons, which his own grace hath produced out of innocent, though insufficient, beginnings. It was folly in Naaman to refuse to be cured, because he was to recover only by washing in Jordan. The more incompetent the means is, the greater is the glory of God, who hath produced waters from a rock, and fire from the collision of a sponge and wool: and it is certain the end, unless it be in products merely natural, does not take its estimate and degrees from the external means. Grace does miracles, and the productions of the Spirit, in respect of its instruments, are equivocal, extraordinary, and supernatural; and ignorant persons believe as strongly, though they know not why, and love God as heartily as greater spirits and more excellent understandings: and when God pleases, or if he sees it expedient, he will do to others as to Nathanael, give them greater arguments and better instruments for the confirmation and heightening of their faith, than they had for the first production.

8. When Jesus had chosen these few disciples to be witnesses of succeeding accidents, every one of which was to be a probation of his mission and divinity, he entered into the theatre of the world at a marriage-feast, which he now first hallowed to a sacramental signification, and made to become mysterious. He now began to choose his spouse out from the communities of the world, and did mean to endear her by unions ineffable and glori-

ous, and consign the sacrament by his blood, which he first gave in a secret representment, and afterwards in letter and apparent effusion. And although the holy Jesus did in his own person consecrate celibacy, and abstinence and chastity in his mother's; yet by his presence he also hallowed marriage, and made it honourable, not only in civil accounts and rites of heraldry, but in a spiritual sense, he having new sublimed it, by making it a sacramental representment of the union of Christ and his spouse, the church. And all married persons should do well to remember what the conjugal society does represent, and not break the matrimonial bond, which is a mysterious ligament of Christ and his church: for whoever dissolves the sacredness of the mystery, and unhallows the vow by violence and impurity, he dissolves his relation to Christ. To break faith with a wife or husband is a divorce from Jesus, and that is a separation from all possibilities of felicity. In the time of the Mosaical statutes, to violate marriage was to do injustice and dishonour, and a breach to the sanctions of nature, or the first constitutions: but two bands more are added in the gospel, to make marriage more sacred. For now our bodies are made 'temples of the Holy Ghost,' and the rite of marriage is made significant and sacramental, and every act of adultery is profanation and irreligion; it desecrates a temple, and deflours a mystery.

9. The married pair were holy, but poor, and they wanted wine; and the blessed virgin-mother, pitying the affront of the young man, complained to Jesus of the want; and Jesus gave her an answer which promised no satisfaction to her purposes. For now that Jesus had lived thirty years,

and done in person nothing answerable to his glorious birth, and the miraculous accidents of his person, she longed till the time came in which he was to manifest himself by actions as miraculous as the star of his birth. She knew, by the rejecting of his trade, and his going abroad, and probably by his own discourse to her, that the time was near; and the forwardness of her love and holy desires possibly might go some minutes before his own precise limit. However, Jesus answered to this purpose, to show that the work he was to do was done not to satisfy her importunity, which is not occasion enough for a miracle, but to prosecute the great work of divine designation: for in works spiritual and religious all exterior relation ceases. The world's order, and the manner of our nature, and the infirmities of our person, have produced societies, and they have been the parents of relation; and God hath tied them fast by the knots of duty, and made the duty the occasion and opportunities of reward: but in actions spiritual, in which we relate to God, our relations are founded upon the spirit; and therefore we must do our duties upon considerations separate and spiritual, but never suffer temporal relations to impede our religious duties. Christian charity is a higher thing than to be confined within the terms of dependence and correlation; and those endearments which leagues, or nature, or society have made, pass into spiritual, and, like stars in the presence of the sun, appear not when the heights of the spirit are in place.¹ Where duty hath prepared special instances, there we must, for religion's sake, promote them; but

¹ Συγγένεια γὰρ οἰκιοτέρα ἢ πρὸς δικαιοσύνην ἐς πᾶσαν ἄλλην ἀρετὴν ὁμιλία. Philo. in exposit. general.

even to our parents or our children the charities of religion ought to be greater than the affections of society. And though we are bound in all offices exterior to prefer our relatives before others, because that is made a duty; yet to purposes spiritual, all persons eminently holy put on the efficacy of the same relations, and pass a duty upon us of religious affections.

10. At the command of Jesus the water-pots were filled with water, and the water was by his divine power turned into wine; where the different economy of God and the world is highly observable: 'Every man sets forth good wine at first, and then the worse;' but God not only turns the water into wine, but into such wine that the last draught is most pleasant. The world presents us with fair language, promising hopes, convenient fortunes, pompous honours; and these are the outsides of the bole: but when it is swallowed, these dissolve in the instant, and there remains bitterness, and the malignity of *colocintida*. Every sin smiles in the first address, and carries light in the face, and honey in the lip; but 'when we have well drunk, then comes that which is worse;' a whip with six strings, fears and terrors of conscience, and shame and displeasure, and a captive disposition, and diffidence in the day of death. But when, after the manner of the purifying of the Christians, we fill our water-pots with water, watering our couch with our tears, and moistening our cheeks with the perpetual distillations of repentance, then Christ turns our water into wine: first penitents, and then communicants; first waters of sorrow, and then the wine of the chalice; first the justification of correction and then the

sanctifications of the sacrament, and the effects of the divine power, joy, and peace, and serenity, hopes full of confidence, and confidence without shame, and boldness without presumption. For Jesus 'keeps the best wine till the last;' not only because of the direct reservations of the highest joys till the nearer approaches of glory; but also because our relishes are higher after a long fruition than at the first essays: such being the nature of grace, that it increases in relish as it does in fruition, every part of grace being new duty and new reward.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal and ever-blessed Jesu, who didst choose disciples to be witnesses of thy life and miracles, so adopting man into a participation of thy great employment of bringing us to heaven by the means of a holy doctrine, be pleased to give me thy grace, that I may love and revere their persons whom thou hast set over me, and follow their faith, and imitate their lives, while they imitate thee; and that I also, in my capacity and proportion, may do some of the meaner offices of spiritual building, by prayers, and by holy discourses, and fraternal correction, and friendly exhortations, doing advantages to such souls with whom I shall converse. And since thou wert pleased to enter upon the stage of the world with the commencement of mercy and a miracle, be pleased to visit my soul with thy miraculous grace, turn my water into wine, my natural desires into supernatural perfections, and let my sorrows be turned into joys, my sins into virtuous habits, the weaknesses of humanity into communications of the divine nature; that since thou keepest the best unto the last, I may, by thy assistance, grow from grace to grace, till thy gifts be turned to reward, and thy graces to participation of thy glory, O eternal and ever-blessed Jesu. Amen.

DISCOURSE VII.

Of Faith.

I. NATHANAEL'S faith was produced by an argument not demonstrative, not certainly concluding: Christ knew him when he saw him first, and he believed him to be the Messias. His faith was excellent, whatever the argument was. And I believe a God, because the sun is a glorious body; or because of the variety of plants, or the fabric and rare contexture of a man's eye: I may as fully assent to the conclusion, as if my belief dwelt upon the demonstrations made by the prince of philosophers in the eight of his physics and twelve of his metaphysics. This I premise as an inlet into the consideration concerning the faith of ignorant persons: for if we consider upon what easy terms most of us now are Christians, we may possibly suspect that either faith hath but little excellence in it, or we but little faith, or that we are mistaken generally in its definition. For we are born of Christian parents, made Christians at ten days old, interrogated concerning the articles of our faith by way of anticipation, even then when we understand not the difference between the sun and a tallow-candle: from thence we are taught to say our catechism, as we are taught to speak, when we have no reason to judge, no discourse to discern, no arguments to contest against a proposition, in case we be catechized into false doctrine; and all that is put to us we believe infinitely, and without choice, as children use not to choose their language. And as our children are made Christians, just so are thousand others made Mahometans, with

the same necessity, the same facility. So that thus far there is little thanks due to us for believing the Christian creed: it was indifferent to us at first, and at last our education had so possessed us, and our interest, and our no temptation to the contrary, that as we were disposed into this condition by Providence, so we remain in it without praise or excellency. For as our beginnings are inevitable, so our progress is imperfect and insufficient; and what we begun by education, we retain only by custom. And if we be instructed in some slighter arguments to maintain the sect or faction of our country religion, as it disturbs the unity of Christendom; yet if we examine and consider the account upon what slight arguments we have taken up Christianity itself, (as that it is the religion of our country, or that our fathers before us were of the same faith, or because the priest bids us, and he is a good man, or for something else, but we know not what,) we must needs conclude it the good providence of God, not our choice, that made us Christians.

2. But if the question be, whether such a faith be in itself good and acceptable, that relies upon insufficient and unconvincing grounds; I suppose this case of Nathanael will determine us: and when we consider that faith is an infused grace, if God pleases to behold his own glory in our weakness of understanding, it is but the same thing he does in the instances of his other graces. For as God enkindles charity upon variety of means and instruments, by a thought, by a chance, by a text of Scripture, by a natural tenderness, by the sight of a dying or a tormented beast; so also he may

produce faith by arguments of a different quality, and by issues of his providence he may engage us in such conditions, in which as our understanding is not great enough to choose the best, so neither is it furnished with powers to reject any proposition; and to believe well is an effect of a singular predestination, and is a gift in order to a grace, as that grace is in order to salvation. But the insufficiency of an argument or disability to prove our religion is so far from disabling the goodness of an ignorant man's faith, that as it may be as strong as the faith of the greatest scholar, so it hath full as much excellency, not of nature, but in order to divine acceptance. For as he who believes only upon the stock of education made no election of his faith; so he who believes what is demonstrably proved, is forced by the demonstration to his choice. Neither of them did choose, and both of them may equally love the article.

3. So that, since a small argument in a weak understanding does the same work that a strong argument in a more sober and learned, that is, it convinces and makes faith, and yet neither of them is matter of choice; if the thing believed be good, and matter of duty or necessity, the faith is not rejected by God upon the weakness of the first, nor accepted upon the strength of the latter principles. When we are once in, it will not be enquired by what entrance we passed thither: whether God leads us or drives us in, whether we come by discourse or by inspiration, by the guide of an angel or the conduct of Moses, whether we be born or made Christians, it is indifferent, so we be there where we should be; for this is but the gate of

duty, and the entrance to felicity. For thus far faith is but an act of the understanding, which is a natural faculty, serving indeed as an instrument to godliness, but of itself no part of it; and it is just like fire, producing its act inevitably, and burning as long as it can, without power to interrupt or suspend its action; and therefore we cannot be more pleasing to God for understanding rightly, than the fire is for burning clearly: which puts us evidently upon this consideration, that Christian faith, that glorious duty which gives to Christians a great degree of approximation to God by Jesus Christ, must have a great proportion of that ingredient which makes actions good or bad; that is, of choice and effect.

4. For the faith of a Christian hath more in it of the will than of the understanding. Faith is that great mark of distinction which separates and gives formality to the covenant of the gospel, which is a law of faith. The faith of a Christian is his religion; that is, it is that whole conformity to the institution or discipline of Jesus Christ which distinguishes him from the believers of false religions. And to be one of the faithful signifies the same with being a disciple; and that contains obedience as well as believing: for to the same sense are all those appellatives in Scripture; 'the faithful, brethren, believers, the saints, disciples;' all representing the duty of a Christian. A believer and a saint, or a holy person, is the same thing: brethren signifies charity, and believers, faith in the intellectual sense: the faithful and disciples signify both; for besides the consent to the proposition, the first of them is also used for perseverance and sanctity, and the greatest of charity

mixed with a confident faith, up to the height of martyrdom. 'Be faithful unto the death,' said the Holy Spirit, 'and I will give thee the crown of life.'¹ And when the apostles, by way of abbreviation, express all the body of Christian religion, they call it 'faith working by love ;'² which also St. Paul, in a parallel place, calls 'a new creature :'³ it is 'a keeping the commandments of God.'⁴ That is the faith of a Christian, into whose definition charity is ingredient, whose sense is the same with keeping of God's commandments : so that if we define faith, we must first distinguish it. The faith of a natural person, or the faith of devils, is a mere believing a certain number of propositions upon a conviction of the understanding ; but the faith of a Christian, the faith that justifies and saves him, is 'faith working by charity,' or 'faith keeping the commandments of God.'⁵ They are distinct faiths in order to different ends, and therefore of different constitution ; and the instrument of distinction is charity or obedience.

5. And this great truth is clear in the perpetual testimony of holy Scripture. For Abraham is called the 'father of the faithful ;' and yet our blessed Saviour told the Jews, that if they had been 'the sons of Abraham, they would have done the work of Abraham ;'⁶ and therefore good works are by the apostle called the 'footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham.'⁷ For faith in every of its stages, at its first beginning, at its increment, at its greatest perfections, is a duty made up of the concurrence of the will and the understanding,

¹ Rev. ii. 10.

⁴ 1 Cor. vii. 19.

² Gal. v. 6.

⁵ Gal. v. 6.

⁷ Rom. iv. 12.

³ Ib. vi. 15.

⁶ John, viii. 39.

when it pretends to the divine acceptance:—faith and repentance begin the Christian course. ‘Repent and believe the gospel’ was the sum of the apostles’ sermons; and all the way after it is, ‘faith working by love.’ Repentance puts the first spirit and life into faith, and charity preserves it, and gives it nourishment and increase; itself also growing by a mutual supply of spirits and nutriment from faith. Whoever does heartily believe a resurrection and life eternal upon certain conditions, will certainly endeavour to acquire the promises by the purchase of obedience and observation of the conditions: for it is not in the nature or power of man directly to despise and reject so infinite a good. So that faith supplies charity with argument and maintenance, and charity supplies faith with life and motion: faith makes charity reasonable, and charity makes faith living and effectual. And therefore the old Greeks called faith and charity “a miraculous chariot,”¹ or yoke; they bear the burden of the Lord with an equal confederation: these are like Hippocrates’ twins, they live and die together. Indeed faith is the first-born of the twins; but they must come both at a birth, or else they die, being strangled at the gates of the womb. But if charity, like Jacob, lays hold upon his elder brother’s heel, it makes a timely and a prosperous birth, and gives certain title to the eternal promises. For let us give the right of primogeniture to faith, yet the blessing, yea, and the inheritance too, will at last fall to charity. Not that faith is di-inherited, but that charity only enters into the possession. The na-

¹ *Θαυμαστὴν ζυγοπέδα.*

ture of faith passes into the excellency of charity before they can be rewarded: and that both may have their estimate, that which justifies and saves us, keeps the name of faith, but doth not do the deed till it hath the nature of charity. For to think well, or to have a good opinion, or an excellent or a fortunate understanding, entitles us not to the love of God, and the consequent inheritance;¹ but to choose the ways of the Spirit, and to relinquish the paths of darkness, this is the way of the kingdom, and the purpose of the gospel, and the proper work of faith.

6. And if we consider upon what stock faith itself is instrumental and operative of salvation, we shall find it is in itself acceptable, because it is a duty and commanded: and therefore it is an act of obedience, a work of the gospel, a submitting the understanding, a denying the affections, a laying aside all interests, and a bringing our thoughts under the obedience of Christ. This the apostle calls 'the obedience of faith:'² and it is of the same condition and constitution with other graces, all which equally relate to Christ, and are as firm instruments of union, and are washed by the blood of Christ, and are sanctified by his death, and apprehend him in their capacity and degrees, some higher and some not so high. But hope and charity apprehend Christ in a measure and proportion greater than faith, when it distinguishes from

¹ Τὸ ἀγαθὸς μὲν εἶναι ἡμᾶς ἢ κακὸς, ὁ Θεὸς ἔκ ἐν τῇ γνώσει ἔθηκε γνωσκομένων, ἀλλὰ ἐν τῇ αἰρέσει τῶν ἀρεσμένων. Just. M. Resp. ad orthod.—“God does not regard us as good or evil by our knowledge of things to be known; but by our choice of things which ought to be chosen” Ἐὖ ἐν κέρδις ἡγιᾶς πίστεως, πῆς ποδιτείας ἀεφθαρμένης. Chry. l. 1 de Sacrd.

² Rom. xvi. 26.

them. So that if faith does the work of justification, as it is a mere relation to Christ, then so also does hope and charity : or if these are duties and good works, so also is faith. And they all being alike commanded in order to the same end, and encouraged by the same reward, are also accepted upon the same stock ; which is, that they are acts of obedience and relation too : they obey Christ, and lay hold upon Christ's merits, and are but several instances of the great duty of a Christian, but the actions of several faculties of the new creature. But because faith is the beginning grace, and hath influence and causality in the production of the other, therefore all the other, as they are united in duty, are also united in their title and appellative : they are all called by the name of faith, because they are parts of faith, as faith is taken in the larger sense : and when it is taken in the strictest and distinguishing sense, they are effects and proper products by way of natural emanation.

7. That a good life is the genuine and true-born issue of faith, no man questions that knows himself the disciple of the holy Jesus ; but that obedience is the same thing with faith,¹ and that all Christian graces are parts of its bulk and constitution, is also the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, and the grammar of Scripture, making faith and obedience to be terms coincident and expressive of

¹ Fides (authore Cicrone) est firma opinio, et est fida mandatorum executio. Dicta est autem fides (ut ait idem Cicero de Officiis) à fio, quòd id fieri debeat quod dictum et promissum est. —“ ‘ Faith,’ says Cicero, ‘ is a firm opinion, and it is the faithful execution of commands. The word,’ he says, in his Offices, ‘ is derived from *fio*, to become, because that ought to be done which has been said and promised.’ ”

each other: for faith is not a single star, but a constellation, a chain of graces, called by St. Paul ‘the power of God unto salvation to every believer;’¹ that is, faith is all that great instrument by which God intends to bring us to heaven; and he give this reason: ‘In the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith,’ for ‘it is written, the just shall live by faith.’ Which discourse makes faith to be a course of sanctity and holy habits, a continuation of a Christian’s duty, such a duty as not only gives the first breach, but by which a man lives the life of grace. ‘The just shall live by faith;’ that is, such a faith as grows from step to step, till the whole righteousness of God be fulfilled in it. ‘From faith to faith,’ saith the apostle; which St. Austin expounds, from faith believing, to faith obeying; from imperfect faith, to faith made perfect by the animation of charity; ‘that he who is justified may be justified still.’² For as there are several degrees and parts of justification, so there are several degrees of faith answerable to it; that in all senses it may be true, that ‘by faith we are justified,’ and ‘by faith we live,’ and ‘by faith we are saved.’ For if we proceed ‘from faith to faith,’ from believing to obeying, from faith in the understanding to faith in the will, from faith barely assenting to the revelations of God to faith obeying the commandments of God, from the body of faith to the soul of faith; that is, to faith formed and made alive by charity; then we shall proceed from justification to justifica-

¹ Rom. i. 16, 17.

² Ex fide annunciantium evangelium in fidem obedientium evangelio. S. Aug.—“From the faith of those announcing the gospel to the faith of those obeying the gospel.”

tion; that is, from remission of sins to become the sons of God; and at last to an actual possession of those glories to which we were here consigned by the fruits of the Holy Ghost.

8. And in this sense the holy Jesus is called by the apostle ‘the author and finisher of our faith.’¹ He is the principle, and he is the promoter; he begins our faith in revelations, and perfects it in commandments; he leads us by the assent of our understanding, and finishes the work of his grace by a holy life: which St. Paul there expresses by its several constituent parts; as, ‘laying aside every weight and the sin that so easily besets us,’² and ‘running with patience the race that is set before us, resisting unto blood, striving against sin:’³ for in these things Jesus is therefore made our example, because he is the author and finisher of our faith: without these faith is imperfect. But the thing is something plainer yet, for St. James saith, that faith lives not but by charity;⁴ and the life or essence of a thing is certainly the better part of its constitution, as the soul is to a man. And if we mark the manner of his probation, it will come home to the main point; for he proves that Abraham’s faith was therefore imputed to him for righteousness, because ‘he was justified by works:’⁵ ‘Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up his son?’⁶ and ‘the Scripture was fulfilled, saying, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness;’⁷ for ‘faith wrought with his works, and made his faith perfect.’ It was a dead and imperfect faith, unless

¹ Hebrews, xii. 2.

² Ibid, verse 1.

³ Ibid, verse 4.

⁴ Jam. ii. 20, 26.

⁵ Ibid, verse 22.

⁶ Ibid, verse 23.

⁷ Ibid, verse 22.

obedience gave it being, and all its integral or essential parts. So that faith and charity, in the sense of a Christian, are but one duty, as the understanding and the will are but one reasonable soul; only they produce several actions in order to one another, which are but divers operations, and the same spirit.

9. Thus St. Paul, describing the faith of the Thessalonians, calls it that whereby they turned from idols, and whereby they served the living God:¹ and the faith of the patriarchs believed the world's creation, received the promises, did miracles, wrought righteousness, and did and suffered so many things as make up the integrity of a holy life.² And therefore disobedience and unrighteousness is called want of faith;³ and heresy, which is opposed to faith, is a work of the flesh,⁴ because faith itself is a work of righteousness. And that I may enumerate no more particulars, the thing is so known, that the word *ἀπειθεία*,⁵ which in propriety of language signifies mispersuasion or infidelity, is rendered disobedience; and the not providing for our families is an act of infidelity; by the same reason and analogy that obedience or charity and a holy life are the duties of a Christian, of a justifying faith. And although, in the natural or philosophical sense, faith and charity are distinct habits; yet in the sense of a Christian and the signification of duty they are the same: for we cannot believe aright, as believing is in the commandment, unless we live aright; for our faith is put upon the account just as it is made precious

¹ 1 Thess. i. 8, 9.

² Heb. xi. per totum.

³ Col. iii. 6; 2 Thess. iii. 2.

⁴ Gal. v. 20.

⁵ Eph. ii. 2, and v. 6; 1 Tim. v. 8.

by charity; according to that rare saying of St. Bartholomew, recorded by the supposed St. Denys, 'Charity is the greatest and the least theology.'¹ All our faith, that is, all our religion, is completed in the duties of universal charity: as our charity or our manner of living is, so is our faith. If our life be unholy, it may be the faith of devils, but not the faith of Christians; for this is the difference:—

10. The faith of the devils hath more of the understanding in it, the faith of Christians more of the will: the devils in their faith have better discourse, the Christians better affections; they in their faith have better arguments, we more charity. So that charity or a good life is so necessary an ingredient in the definition of a Christian's faith, that we have nothing else to distinguish it from the faith of devils; and we need no trial of our faith but the examination of our lives. If you 'keep the commandments of God,'² then have you the faith of Jesus; (they are immediate in St. John's expression;) but if you be 'importune and ungodly,' you are in St. Paul's list, amongst them that have no faith.³ Every vice that rules amongst us, and sullies the fair beauty of our souls, is a conviction of infidelity.

11. For it was the faith of Moses that made him despise the riches of Egypt; the faith of Joshua, that made him valiant; the faith of Joseph, that made him chaste; Abraham's faith made him obedient; St. Mary Magdalen's faith made her penitent; and the faith of St. Paul made him travel so

¹ Ἡ ἀγάπη θεολογία πολλή ἐς ἐλαχίστην, f. 1 de Myst. Theol.

² Apoc. xiv. 12.

³ 2 Thess. iii. 2.

far, and suffer so much, till he became a prodigy both of zeal and patience. Faith is a catholicon, and cures all the distemperatures of the soul: it 'overcomes the world,'¹ saith St. John; 'it works righteousness,'² saith St. Paul; it 'purifies the heart,'³ saith St. Peter; 'it works miracles,' saith our blessed Saviour: miracles in grace always, as it did miracles in nature at its first publication. And whatsoever is good, if it be a grace, it is an act of faith; if it be a reward, it is the fruit of faith. So that as all the actions of men are but the productions of the soul, so are all the actions of the new man the effects of faith: for faith is the life of Christianity, and a good life is the life of faith.

12. Upon the grounds of this discourse we may understand the sense of that question of our blessed Saviour, 'When the Son of man comes, shall he find faith on earth?'⁴ Truly just so much as he finds charity and holy living, and no more. For then only we can be confident that 'faith is not failed from among the children of men,' when we feel the heats of the primitive charity return, and the calentures of the first old devotion are renewed; when it shall be accounted honourable to be a servant of Christ, and a shame to commit a sin: then, and then only, our churches shall be assemblies of the faithful, and the kingdoms of the world Christian countries. But so long as it is notorious that we have made Christian religion another thing than what the holy Jesus designed it to be; when it does not make us live good lives, but itself is made a pretence to all manner of impiety, a stratagem to serve ends, the ends of covetousness, of

¹ 1 John, v. 4.

² Heb. xi. 33.

³ Acts, xv. 9.

⁴ Luke, xviii. 8.

ambition and revenge; when the Christian charity ends in killing one another for conscience-sake, so that faith is made to cut the throat of charity, and our faith kills more than our charity preserves; when the humility of a Christian hath indeed a name amongst us, but it is like a mute person, talked of only, while ambition and rebellion, pride and scorn, self-seeking and proud undertakings, transact most of the great affairs of Christendom; when the custody of our senses is to no other purposes but that no opportunity of pleasing them pass away; when our oaths are like the fringes of our discourses, going round about them, as if they were ornaments and trimmings; when our blasphemies, profanation, sacrilege, and irreligion are become scandalous to the very Turks and Jews; while our lusts are always habitual, sometimes unnatural,¹ will any wise man think, that we believe these doctrines of humility and obedience, of chastity and charity, of temperance and justice, which the Saviour of the world made sacred by his sermon and example, or indeed any thing he either said or did, promised or threatened? For is it possible, a man with his wits about him, and believing that he should certainly be damned (that is, be eternally tormented in body and soul, with torments greater than can be in this world) if he be a swearer, or liar, or drunkard, or cheats his neighbour, that this man should dare to do these things, to which the temptations are so small, in

¹ Τὸ ἀπειθεῖν ταῖς ἐντολαῖς ἐκ τῆ πρὸς τὴν ἐκπλήρωσιν ἐκλίψασθαι τῶν ἐντολῶν γίνεται. St. Chrysost. ad Demetr.—“Disbelief in the commandments is generally the consequence of a resistance to the commandments.”

which the delight is inconsiderable, and the satisfaction so none at all.

13. We see by the experience of the whole world that the belief of an honest man in a matter of a temporal advantage makes us do actions of such danger and difficulty, that half so much industry and sufferance would ascertain us into a possession of all the promises evangelical. Now let any man be asked, whether he had rather be rich or be saved, he will tell you, without all doubt, heaven is the better option by infinite degrees; for it cannot be that riches, or revenge, or lust should be directly preferred, that is, be thought more eligible than the glories of immortality. That therefore men neglect so great salvation, and so greedily run after the satisfaction of their baser appetites, can be attributed to nothing but want of faith: they do not heartily believe that Heaven is worth so much; there is upon them a stupidity of spirit, and their faith is dull, and its actions suspended, most commonly, and often interrupted, and it never enters into the will; so that the propositions are considered nakedly and precisely in themselves, but not as referring to us or our interests: there is nothing of faith in it, but so much as is the first and direct act of understanding; there is no consideration nor reflection upon the act, or upon the person, or upon the subject. So that even as it is seated in the understanding, our faith is commonly lame, mutilous, and imperfect; and therefore much more is it culpable, because it is destitute of all cooperation of the rational appetite.

14. But let us consider the power and efficacy of worldly belief. If a man believes that there is gold to be had in Peru for fetching, or pearls or rich

jewels in India for the exchange of trifles, he instantly, if he be in capacity, leaves the wife of his bosom, and the pretty delights of children, and his own security, and ventures into the dangers of waters and unknown seas, and freezings and calen- tures, thirst and hunger, pirates and shipwrecks, and hath within him a principle strong enough to answer all objections, because he believes that riches are desirable, and by such means likely to be had. Our blessed Saviour, comparing the gospel to 'a merchant-man that found a pearl of great price, and sold all to buy it,' hath brought this instance home to the present discourse: for if we did as verily believe that in heaven those great felicities which transcend all our apprehensions are certainly to be obtained by leaving our vices and lower desires, what can hinder us but we should at least do as much for obtaining those great felicities as for the lesser, if the belief were equal? For if any man thinks he may have them without holiness and justice and charity, then he wants faith; for he believes not the saying of St. Paul: 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall ever see God.'¹ If a man believes learning to be the only or chiefest ornament and beauty of souls, that which will ennoble him to a fair employment in his own time, and an honourable memory to succeeding ages; this if he believes heartily, it hath power to make him endure catarrhs, gouts, hypochondriacal passions, to read till his eyes almost fix in their orbs, to despise the pleasures of idleness or tedious sports, and to undervalue whatsoever does not co-operate to the end of his faith, the desire of learning. Why is the Italian

¹ Heb. xii. 14.

so abstemious in his drinkings, or the Helvetian so valiant in his fight, or so true to the prince that employs him, but that they believe it to be noble so to be? If they believed the same, and had the same honourable thoughts of other virtues, they also would be as national as these; for faith will do its proper work. And when the understanding is peremptorily and fully determined upon the persuasion of a proposition, if the will should then dissent and choose the contrary, it were unnatural and monstrous, and possibly no man ever does so: for that men do things without reason and against their conscience, is, because they have put out their light, and discourse their wills into the election of a sensible good, and want faith to believe truly all circumstances which are necessary by way of predisposition for choice of the intellectual.

15. But when men's faith is confident, their resolution and actions are in proportion. For thus the faith of Mahometans makes them to abstain from wine for ever: and therefore, if we had the Christian faith, we should much rather abstain from drunkenness for ever; it being an express rule apostolical, 'Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.'¹ The faith of the Circumcellians made them to run greedily to violent and horrid deaths as willingly as to a crown; for they thought it was the King's highway to martyrdom. And there was never any man zealous for his religion, and of an imperious bold faith, but he was also willing to die for it; and therefore also, by as much reason, to live in it, and to be a strict observer of its prescriptions. And the stories of the strict sanctity, and prodigious sufferings, and severe disciplines, and expensive religion,

¹ Ephes. v. 18.

and compliant and laborious charity of the primitive Christians, is abundant argument to convince us, that the faith of Christians is infinitely more fruitful and productive of its univocal and proper issues than the faith of heretics, or the false religions of misbelievers, or the persuasions of secular persons, or the spirit of antichrist. And therefore, when we see men serving their prince with such difficult and ambitious services, because they believe him able to reward them, though of his will they are not so certain, and yet so supinely negligent and incurious of their services to God, of whose power and will to reward us infinitely there is certainty absolute and irrelative, it is certain probation that we believe it not; for if we believe there is such a thing as heaven, and that every single man's portion of heaven is far better than all the wealth in the world, it is morally impossible we should prefer so little before so great profit.

16. Instance but once more. The faith of Abraham was instanced in the matter of confidence or trust in the divine promises; and he being the 'father of the faithful,' we must imitate his faith by a clear dereliction of ourselves and our own interests, and an entire confident relying upon the divine goodness in all cases of our needs or danger. Now this also is a trial of the verity of our faith, the excellency of our condition, and what title we have to the glorious names of *Christians*, and *faithful*, and *believers*. If our fathers, when we were in pupilage and minority, or a true and an able friend when we were in need, had made promises to supply our necessities, our confidence was so great that our care determined. It were also well that we were as confident of God, and as secure of the

event, when we had disposed ourselves to reception of the blessing, as we were of our friend or parents. We all profess that God is almighty, that all his promises are certain; and yet, when it comes to a pinch, we find that man to be more confident that hath ten thousand pounds in his purse, than he that reads God's promises over ten thousand times. "Men of a common spirit, (saith St. Chrysostom.) of an ordinary sanctity, will not steal, or kill, or lie, or commit adultery; but it requires a rare faith, and a sublimity of pious affections, to believe that God will work a deliverance which to me seems impossible." And indeed St. Chrysostom hit upon the right. He had need be a good man, and love God well, that puts his trust in him: for those we love we are most apt to trust. And although trust and confidence is sometimes founded upon experience, yet it is also begotten and increased by love, as often as by reason and discourse. And to this purpose it was excellently said by St. Basil, "that the knowledge which one man learneth of another is made perfect by continual use and exercise; but that which through the grace of God is ingrafted in the mind of man, is made absolute by justice, gentleness, and charity." So that if you are willing even in death not only to confess the articles, but in affliction and death to trust the promises; if in the lowest nakedness of poverty you can cherish yourselves with the expectation of God's promises and dispensation, being as confident of food and raiment, and deliverance or support, when all is in God's hand, as you are when it is in your own; if you can be cheerful in a storm, smile when the world frowns, be content in the midst of spiritual deserts and anguish of spirit, expecting all

should work together for the best, according to the promise; if you can strengthen yourselves in God when you are weakest, believe when you see no hope, and entertain no jealousies or suspicions of God, though you see nothing to make you confident; then, and then only you have faith, which in conjunction with its other parts is able to save your souls. For in this precise duty of trusting God there are the rays of hope, and great proportions of charity and resignation.

17. The sum is that pious and most Christian sentence of the author of the Ordinary Gloss: "To believe in God through Jesus Christ is, by believing to love him, to adhere to him, to be united to him by charity and obedience, and to be incorporated into Christ's mystical body in the communion of saints."¹ I conclude this with a collection of certain excellent words of St. Paul, highly to the present purpose: 'Examine yourselves, brethren, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.' Well, but how? 'Know you not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?'² There is the touchstone of faith. If Jesus Christ dwells in us, then we are true believers; if he does not, we are reprobates, we have no faith. But how shall we know whether Christ be in us or not? St. Paul tells us that too: 'If Christ be in you, the body is dead, by reason of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness.'³ That is the Christian's mark, and the cha-

¹ *Credere in Deum est, credendo amare, credendo diligere, credendo in eum ire, et membris ejus incorporari.* Gloss. Ord. in Rom. iv.—"To believe in God is by believing to love him, by believing to choose him, by believing to go to him, and to be incorporated in his members."

² 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Rom. viii. 19.

racteristic of a true believer; a 'death unto sin,' and 'a living unto righteousness;' 'a mortified body,' and 'a quickened spirit.' This is plain enough, and by this we see what we must trust to. A man of a wicked life does in vain hope to be saved by his faith; for indeed his faith is but equivocal and dead, which as to his purpose is just none at all: and therefore let him no more deceive himself; for (that I may still use the words of St. Paul) 'this is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works:'¹ for such, and such only, in the great scrutiny for faith in the day of doom, shall have their portion in the bosom of 'faithful Abraham.'

THE PRAYER.

I.

O eternal God, fountain of all truth and holiness, in whom to believe is life eternal, let thy grace descend with a mighty power into my soul, beating down every strong hold and vainer imagination, and bringing every proud thought and my confident and ignorant understanding into the obedience of Jesus. Take from me all disobedience and refractoriness of spirit, all ambition, and private and baser interests: remove from me all prejudice and weakness of persuasion; that I may wholly resign my understanding to the persuasions of Christianity, acknowledging thee to be the principle of truth, and thy word the measure of knowledge, and thy laws the rule of my life, and thy promises the satisfaction of my hopes, and an union with thee to be the consummation of charity in the fruition of glory. Amen.

¹ Titus, iii.

II.

Holy Jesus, make me to acknowledge thee to be my Lord and Master, and myself a servant and disciple of thy holy discipline and institution: let me love to sit at thy feet, and suck in with my ears and heart the sweetness of thy holy sermons. Let my soul be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, with a peaceable and docile disposition. Give me great boldness in the public confession of thy name and the truth of thy gospel, in despite of all hostilities and temptations. And grant I may always remember that thy name is called upon me, and I may so behave myself, that I neither give scandal to others, nor cause disreputation to the honour of religion; but that thou mayest be glorified in me, and I by thy mercies, after a strict observance of all thy holy laws of Christianity. Amen.

III.

O holy and ever-blessed Spirit, let thy gracious influences be the perpetual guide of my rational faculties. Inspire me with wisdom and knowledge, spiritual understanding, and a holy faith; and sanctify my faith, that it may rise up to the confidence of hope, and the adherences of charity, and be fruitful in a holy conversation. Mortify in me all peevishness and pride of spirit, all heretical dispositions, and whatsoever is contrary to sound doctrine; that when the eternal Son of God, the author and finisher of our faith, shall come to make scrutiny and an inquest for faith, I may receive the promises laid up for them that believe in the Lord Jesus, and wait for his coming in holiness and purity: to whom with the Father and Thee, O blessed Spirit, be all honour and eternal adoration paid, with all sanctity and joy and eucharist, now and for ever. Amen.

SECTION XI.

Of Christ's going to Jerusalem to the Passover: the first time after his Manifestation, and what followed till the expiration of the office of John the Baptist.

1. IMMEDIATELY after this miracle, Jesus abode a few days in Capernaum, but because of the approach of the great feast of passover he ascended to Jerusalem. And the first public act of record that he did was, an act of holy zeal and religion in behalf of the honour of the temple. For divers merchants and exchangers of money made the temple to be the market and the bank, and brought beasts thither to be sold for sacrifice against the great paschal solemnity. At the sight of which, Jesus, being moved with zeal and indignation, 'made a whip of cords, and drave the beasts out of the temple, overthrew the accounting tables, and commanded them that sold the doves to take them from thence.' For his anger was holy, and he would mingle no injury with it; and therefore the doves, which if let loose would be detrimental to the owners, he caused to be fairly removed: and published the religion of holy places, establishing their sacredness for ever by his first gospel-sermon that he made at Jerusalem. 'Take these things hence: make not my Father's house a house of merchandise;' for 'it shall be called a house of prayer to all nations.' And being required to give a 'sign' of his vocation, (for this, being an action like the religion of the zealots among the Jews, if it were not attested by something extraordinary, might be abused into an excess of liberty, he only

foretold the resurrection of his body, after three days' death, but he expressed it in the metaphor of the temple: 'Destroy this temple, and I will build it again in three days. He spake of the temple of his body,' and they understood him of the temple of Jerusalem: and it was never rightly construed, till it was accomplished

2. At this public convention of the Jewish nation Jesus did many miracles, published himself to be the Messias, and persuaded many disciples, amongst whom was Nicodemus, a doctor of the law, and a ruler of the nation. He 'came by night to Jesus,' and affirmed himself to be convinced by the miracles which he had seen; for 'no man could do those miracles, except God be with him.' When Jesus perceived his understanding to be so far disposed, he began to instruct him in the great secret and mysteriousness of regeneration, telling him, "that every production is of the same nature and condition with its parent, 'from flesh comes flesh' and corruption, 'from the Spirit comes spirit' and life and immortality; and nothing from a principle of nature could arrive to a supernatural end; and therefore the only door to enter into the kingdom of God was 'water,' by the manuduction of 'the Spirit;' and by this regeneration we are put into a new capacity, of living a spiritual life in order to a spiritual and supernatural end."

3. This was strange philosophy to Nicodemus; but Jesus bade him 'not to wonder;' "for this is not a work of humanity, but a fruit of God's Spirit, and an issue of predestination. For 'the Spirit bloweth where it listeth,' and is as the wind, certain and notorious in the effects, but secret in the principle and in the manner of production. And therefore

this doctrine was not to be estimated by any proportions to natural principles or experiments of sense, but to the secrets of a new metaphysic, and abstracted, separate speculations. Then Christ proceeds in his sermon, telling him there are yet higher things for him to apprehend and believe; for this, in respect of some other mysteriousness of his gospel, was but as earth in comparison of heaven. Then he tells of his own descent from heaven, foretells his death and ascension, and the blessing of redemption which he came to work for mankind: he preaches of the love of the Father, the mission of the Son, the rewards of faith, and the glories of eternity: he upbraids the unbelieving and impenitent, and declares the differences of a holy and corrupt conscience, the shame and fears of the one, the confidence and serenity of the other." And this is the sum of his sermon to Nicodemus, which was the fullest of mystery and speculation and abstracted senses of any that he ever made, except that which he made immediately before his passion; all his other sermons being more practical.

4. From Jerusalem Jesus goeth into the country of Judea, attended by divers disciples, whose understandings were brought into subjection and obedience to Christ upon confidence of the divinity of his miracles. There his disciples did receive all comers, and baptized them, (as John at the same time did,) and by that ceremony admitted them to the discipline and institution; according to the custom of the doctors and great prophets among the Jews, whose baptizing their scholars was the ceremony of their admission. As soon as John heard it, he acquitted himself in public by

renewing his former testimony concerning Jesus, affirming him to be the Messiah; and now the time was come that Christ must increase, and the Baptist suffer diminution: 'for Christ came from above, was above all;' and the sum of his doctrine was, 'that which he had heard and seen' from the Father; 'whom God sent,' to that purpose; to whom God 'had set his seal, that he was true;' who 'spake the words of God;' whom the 'Father loved, to whom he gave the Spirit without measure, and into whose hands God had delivered all things:' this was he, whose 'testimony the world received not.' And that they might know not only what person they slighted, but how great salvation also they neglected, he sums up all his sermons and finishes his mission with this saying, 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.'¹

5. For now that the Baptist had fulfilled his office of bearing witness unto Jesus, God was pleased to give him his writ of ease, and bring him to his reward upon this occasion. John, who had so learned to despise the world and all its exterior vanities and impertinent relations, did his duty justly, and so without respect of persons, that as he reprov'd the people for their prevarications, so he spared not Herod for his, but abstaining from all expresses of the spirit of scorn and asperity, mingling no discontents, interests, nor mutinous intimations with his sermons, he told Herod 'it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife:' for which sermon he felt the furies and malice of

¹ John, iii. 36.

a woman's spleen, was cast into prison, and about a year after was sacrificed to the scorn and pride of a lustful woman and her immodest daughter, being, at the end of the second year of Christ's preaching, beheaded by Herod's command; who would not retract his promise, because of his honour, and a rash vow he made in the gaiety of his lust and complacencies of his riotous dancings. His head was brought up in a dish, and made a festival-present to the young girl, (who gave it to her mother). A cruelty that was not known among the barbarisms of the worst of people, to mingle banquettings with blood and sights of death. An insolency and inhumanity for which the Roman orators accused Q. Flaminius of treason, because, to satisfy the wanton cruelty of Placentia, he caused a condemned slave to be killed at supper: and which had no precedent but in the furies of Marius, who caused the head of the consul Antonius to be brought up to him in his feasts, which he handled with much pleasure and insolency.¹

6. But God's judgments, which sleep not long, found out Herod, and marked him for a curse. For the wife of Herod, who was the daughter of Aretas, a king of Arabia Petraea, being repudiated by paction with Herodias, provoked her father to commence a war with Herod; who prevailed against Herod in a great battle, defeating his whole army, and forcing him to an inglorious flight. Which the Jews generally expounded to be a judgment on him for the unworthy and barbarous execution and murder of John the Baptist. God in his wisdom and severity making one sin to be the punishment of

¹ Senec. cont. lib. v. Livius, lib xxxix. Plut. in Marcio.

another, and neither of them both to pass without the signature of a curse. And Nicephorus reports, that the dancing daughter of Herodias passing over a frozen lake, the ice broke, and she fell up to the neck in water, and her head was parted from her body by the violence of the fragments shook by the water, and its own fall, and so perished, God having fitted a judgment to the analogy and representment of her sin. Herodias herself, with her adulterous paramour, Herod, were banished to Lyons, in France, by decree of the Roman senate, where they lived ingloriously, and died miserably; so paying dearly for her triumphal scorn superadded to her crime of murder; for when she saw the head of the Baptist, which her daughter Salome had presented to her in a charger, she thrust the tongue through with a needle, as Fulvia had formerly done to Cicero. But herself paid the charges of her triumph.

AD. SECT. XI.

Considerations upon the first Journey of the holy Jesus to Jerusalem, when he whipped the merchants out of the Temple.

1. WHEN the feast came, and Jesus was ascended up to Jerusalem, the first place we find him in is the temple, where not only was the area and court of religion, but, by occasion of public conventions, the most opportune scene for transaction of his commission and his Father's business. And those Christians who have been religious and affectionate

even in the circumstances of piety, have taken this for a precedent, and accounted it a good express of the regularity of their devotion and order of piety, at their first arrival to a city to pay their first visits to God, the next to his servant, the president of religious rites: first they went into the church and worshipped; then to the angel of the church, to the bishop, and begged his blessing. And having thus commenced with the auspiciousness of religion, they had better hopes their just affairs would succeed prosperously, which after the rites of Christian countries had thus been begun with devotion and religious order.

2. When the holy Jesus entered the temple, and espied a mart kept in the holy sept, a fair upon holy ground, he, who suffered no transportations of anger in matters and accidents temporal, was borne high with an ecstasy of zeal; and, according to the custom of the zealots of the nation, took upon him the office of a private infliction of punishment in the cause of God, which ought to be dearer to every single person than their own interest and reputation. What the exterminating angel did to Heliodorus, who came into the temple upon design of sacrilege, that the meekest Jesus did to them who came with acts of profanation; he whipped them forth. And as usually good laws spring from ill manners, and excellent sermons are occasioned by men's iniquities, now also our great Master upon this accident asserted the sacredness of holy places in the words of a prophet, which now he made a lesson evangelical: 'My house shall be called a house of prayer to all nations.'

3. The beasts and birds there sold were brought for sacrifice, and the banks of money were for the advantage of the people that came from far, that

their returns might be safe and easy, when they came to Jerusalem upon the employments of religion. But they were not yet fit for the temple. They who brought them thither purposed their own gain, and meant to pass them through an unholy usage, before they could be made *anathemata*, vows to God; and when religion is but the purpose at the second hand, it cannot hallow a lay design, and make it fit to become a religious ministry, much less sanctify an unlawful action. When Rachel stole her father's gods, though possibly she might do it in zeal against her father's superstition, yet it was occasion of a sad accident to herself; for the Jews say that Rachel died in childbirth of her second son, because of that imprecation of Jacob, 'With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live.'¹ Saul pretended sacrifice, when he spared the fat cattle of Amalek; and Micah was zealous, when he made him an ephod and a teraphim, and meant to make himself an image for religion, when he stole his mother's money; but these are colours of religion, in which not only the world, but ourselves also are deceived by a latent purpose, which we are willing to cover with a remote design of religion, lest it should appear unhandsome in its own dressing. Thus some believe a covetousness allowable, if they greedily heap treasure with a purpose to build hospitals or colleges; and sinister acts of acquiring church-livings are not so soon condemned, if the design be to prefer an able person; and actions of revenge come near to piety, if it be to the ruin of an ungodly man; and indirect proceedings are made sacred, if they be

¹ Gen. xxxi. 32.

for the good of the holy cause. This is profaning the temple with beasts brought for sacrifices, and dishonours God, by making himself accessory to his own dishonour, as far as lies in them; for it disserves him with a pretence of religion. And but that our hearts are deceitful, we should easily perceive that the greatest business of the letter is written in postscript: the great pretence is the least purpose; and the latent covetousness or revenge, or the secular appendix, is the main engine, to which the end of religion is made but instrumental and pretended. But men when they sell a mule use to speak of the horse that begat him, not of the ass that bore him.

4. The holy Jesus made a whip of cords, to represent and to chastise the implications and enfoldings of sin and the cords of vanity. 1. There are some sins that of themselves are a whip of cords: those are the crying sins, that by their degree and malignity speak loud for vengeance; or such as have great disreputation, and are accounted the basest issues of a captive disposition; or such which are unnatural and unusual; or which, by public observation, are marked with the signature of divine judgments. Such are murder, oppression of widows and orphans, detaining the labourer's hire, lusts against nature, parricide, treason, betraying a just trust in great instances and base manners, lying to a king, perjury in a priest. These carry Cain's mark upon them, or Judas's sting, or Manasses' sorrow, unless they be made impudent by the spirit of obdardation. 2. But there are some sins that bear shame upon them, and are used as correctives of pride and vanity; and if they do their cure, they are converted into instruments of

good by the great power of the divine grace: but if the spirit of the man grows impudent and hardened against the shame, that which commonly follows is the worst string of the whip, a direct consignation to a reprobate spirit. 3. Other sins there are for the chastising of which Christ takes the whip into his own hand; and there is much need, when sins are the customs of a nation, and marked with no exterior disadvantage, or have such circumstances of encouragement, that they are unapt to disquiet a conscience, or make our beds uneasy, till the pillows be softened with penitential showers. In both these cases the condition of a sinner is sad and miserable: for 'it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God:' his hand is heavy, and his sword is sharp, and 'pierces to the dividing the marrow and the bones.' And he that considers the infinite distance between God and us, must tremble, when he remembers that he is to feel the issues of that anger, which he is not certain whether or no it will destroy him infinitely and eternally. 4. But if the whip be given into our hands, that we become executioners of the divine wrath, it is sometimes worse; for we seldom strike ourselves for emendation, but add sin to sin, till we perish miserably and inevitably. God scourges us often into repentance; but when a sin is the whip of another sin, the rod is put into our hands, who like blind men strike with a rude and undiscerning hand, and, because we love the punishment, do it without intermission or choice, and have no end but ruin.

5. When the holy Jesus had whipped the merchants in the temple, they took away all the instruments of their sin. For a judgment is usually

the commencement of repentance: love is the **last** of graces, and seldom at the beginning of a new life, but is reserved to the perfections and ripeness of a Christian. We begin in fear: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: when he smote them, then they turned, and enquired early after God:'¹ and afterwards the impresses of fear continue like a hedge of thorns about us, to restrain our dissolutions within the awfulness of the divine majesty, that it may preserve what was from the same principle begun. This principle of their emendation was from God, and therefore innocent and holy: and the very purpose of divine threatenings is, that upon them, as upon one of the great hinges, the piety of the greatest part of men should turn; and the effect was answerable, but so are not the actions of all those who follow this precedent in the tract of the letter. For indeed there have been some reformations which have been so like this, that the greatest alteration which hath been made was, that they carried all things out of the temple, the money, and the tables, and the sacrifice; and the temple itself went at last. But these men's scourge is to follow after; and Christ, the prince of the catholic church, will provide one of his own contexture, more severe than the stripes which Heliodorus felt from the infliction of the exterminating angel. But the holy Spirit of God, by making provision against such a reformation, hath prophetically declared the aptnesses which are in pretences of religious alterations to degenerate into sacrilegious desires: 'Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?'² In this

¹ Psalm lxxviii. 33.

² Rom. ii. 22.

case there is no amendment, only one sin resigns to another, and the person still remains under its power and the same dominion.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal Jesu, thou bright image of thy Father's glories, whose light did shine to all the world, when thy heart was inflamed with zeal and love of God and of religion, let a coal from thine altar, fanned with the wings of the holy dove, kindle in my soul such holy flames, that I may be zealous of thy honour and glory, forward in religious duties, earnest in their pursuit, prudent in their managing, ingenuous in my purposes, making my religion to serve no end but of thy glories, and the obtaining of thy promises: and so sanctify my soul and my body, that I may be a holy temple, fit and prepared for the inhabitation of thy ever-blessed Spirit; whom grant that I may never grieve by admitting any impure thing to desecrate the place, and unhallow the courts of his abode; but give me a pure soul in a chaste and healthful body, a spirit full of holy simplicity, and designs of great ingenuity, and perfect religion, that I may intend what thou commandest, and may with proper instruments prosecute what I so intend, and by thy aids may obtain the end of my labours, the rewards of obedience and holy living, even the society and inheritance of Jesus in the participation of the joys of thy temple, where thou dwellest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, O eternal Jesu. Amen.

DISCOURSE VIII.

Of the Religion of Holy Places.

I. THE holy Jesus brought a divine warrant for his zeal. The selling sacrifices, and the exchange of

money, and every lay employment, did violence and dishonour to the temple, which was hallowed to ecclesiastical ministeries, and set apart for offices of religion, for the use of holy things; for it was God's house: and so is every house by public designation separate for prayer or other uses of religion, it is God's house. ['My house:'] God had a propriety in it, and had set his mark on it, even his own name. And therefore it was, in the Jews idiom of speech, called 'the mountain of the Lord's house,' and 'the house of the Lord,' by David frequently. God had put his name into all places appointed for solemn worship. 'In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and bless thee.'¹ For God, who was never visible to mortal eye, was pleased to make himself presential by substitution of his name; that is, in certain places he hath appointed that his name shall be called upon, and by promising and imparting such blessings which he hath made consequent to the invocation of his name, hath made such places to be a certain determination of some special manner of his presence. For God's name is not a distinct thing from himself, not an idea, and it cannot be put into a place in literal signification; the expression is to be resolved into some other sense. God's name is that whereby he is known, by which he is invoked, that which is the most immediate publication of his essence, nearer than which we cannot go unto him: and because God is essentially present in all places, when he makes himself present in one place more than another, it cannot be understood to any other purpose, but that in such places he

¹ Exod. xx. 24.

gives special blessings and graces, or that in these places he appoints his name, that is, himself, specially to be invocated.

2. So that when God puts his name in any place by a special manner, it signifies that there himself is in that manner; but in separate and hallowed places God hath expressed that he puts his name with a purpose it should be called upon: therefore, in plain signification it is thus; in consecrate places God himself is present to be invocated; that is, there he is most delighted to hear the prayers we make to him. For all the expressions of Scripture, of 'God's house,' 'the tabernacle of God,' 'God's dwelling, putting his name there,' 'his sanctuary,' are resolved into that saying of God to Solomon, who prayed that he would hear the prayers of necessitous people in that place; God granting the request expressed it thus, 'I have sanctified the house which thou hast built;' that is, the house which thou hast designed for my worship, I have designed for your blessing; what you have dedicated, I have accepted; what you have consecrated, I have hallowed; I have taken it to the same purpose to which your desires and designation pretended it in your first purposes and expense. So that since the purpose of man in separating places of worship is, that thither, by order and with convenience and in communities of men, God may be worshipped and prayed unto. God having declared that he accepts of such separate places to the same purpose, says, that there he will be called upon, that such places shall be places of

¹ 1 Kings, ix. 3.

advantage to our devotions, in respect of human order, and divine acceptance and benediction.

3. Now, these are therefore God's houses, because they were given by men, and accepted by God, for the service of God and the offices of religion. And this is not the effect or result of any distinct covenant God hath made with man in any period of the world, but it is merely a favour of God, either hearing the prayer of dedication, or complying with human order or necessities. For there is nothing in the covenant of Moses's law that, by virtue of special stipulation, makes the assignment of a house for the service of God to be proper to Moses's rite. Not only because God had memorials and determinations of this manner of his presence before Moses's law, as at Bethel, where Jacob laid the first stone of the church, (nothing but a stone was God's memorial,) and the beginning and first rudiments of a temple; but also because, after Moses's law was given, as long as the nation was ambulatory, so were their places and instruments of religion. And although the ark was not confined to a place till Solomon's time, yet God was pleased in this manner to confine himself to the ark; and in all places wherever his name was put, even in synagogues, and oratories, and threshing-floors, when they were hallowed with an altar and religion, thither God came; that is, there he heard them pray, and answered and blessed accordingly, still in proportion to that degree of religion which was put upon them. And those places, when they had once entertained religion, grew separate and sacred for ever. For therefore David bought the threshing-floor of Araunah, that it might never re-

turn to common use any more : for it had been no trouble or inconvenience to Araunah to have used his floor for one solemnity ; but he offered to give it, and David resolved to buy it, because it must of necessity be aliened from common uses, to which it could never return any more when once it had been the instrument of a religious solemnity. And yet this was no part of Moses's law, that every place of a temporary sacrifice should be ' holy for ever.' David had no guide in this but right reason and the religion of all the world. For such things which were great instruments of public ends, and things of highest use, were also in all societies of men of greatest honour, and immured by reverence and the security of laws. For honour and reputation is not a thing inherent in any creature, but depends upon the estimate of God or men, who either in diffusion or representation become fountains of a derivative honour. Thus some men are honourable ; that is, those who are fountains of honour in civil account have commanded that they should be honoured. And so places and things are made honourable ; that as honourable persons are to be distinguished from others by honourable usages and circumstances proper to them, so also should places and things (upon special reason separate) have a usage proper to them, when by a public instrument or minister they are so separated. No common usage then ; something proper to tell what they are, and to what purposes they are designed, and to signify their separation and extraordinariness. Such are the person of the prince, the archives and records of a kingdom, the walls and great defences of the imperial city, the eagles and

ensigns of war amongst the Romans, and above all things, though not above all persons, the temples and altars, and all the instruments of religion. And there is much reason in it; for thus a servant of a king, though his employment be naturally mean, yet is more honourable, because he relates to the most excellent person; and therefore much more those things which relate to God. And though this be the reason why it should be so, yet for this and other reasons they that have power, that is, they who are acknowledged to be the fountains and the channels of honour, I mean the supreme power and public fame, have made it actually to be so; for whatsoever all wise men, and all good men, and all public societies, and all supreme authority hath commanded to be honoured or revered, that is honourable and reverend; and this honour and reverence is to be expressed according to the customs of the nation, and instruments of honour proper to the nature of the thing or person respectively. Whatsoever is esteemed so, is so; because honour and noble separations are relative actions and terms, creatures and productions of fame, and the voice of princes, and the sense of people: and they who will not honour those things or those persons which are thus decreed to be honourable, have no communications with the civilities of humanity, or the guises of wise nations; they do not 'give honour to whom honour belongs.' Now that which in civil account we call *honourable* the same in religious account we call *sacred*: for by both these words we mean things or persons made separate and retired from common opinion and vulgar usages, by reason of some excellency really inherent in them; (such

as are excellent men;) or for their relation to excellent persons, or great ends, public or religious; (and so servants of princes, and ministers of religion, and its instruments and utensils, are made honourable or sacred;) and the expressions of their honour are all those actions and usages which are contrary to despise, and above the usage of vulgar things or places. Whatsoever is sacred, that is honourable, for its religious relation; and whatsoever is honourable, that also is sacred, (that is, separate from the vulgar usages and account,) for its civil excellency or relation.² The result is this, that when public authority, or the consent of a nation, hath made any place sacred for the uses of religion, we must esteem it sacred, just as we esteem persons honourable who are so honoured.³ And thus are judges, and the very places of judicature, the king's presence-chamber, the chair of state, the senate-house, the royal ensigns of a prince; whose gold and purple in its natural capacity hath in it no more dignity than the money of the bank, or the cloth of the mart; but it hath much more for its signification and relative use. And it is certain, these things, whose excellency depends upon their relation, must

¹ Religiosum est quod propter sanctitatem aliquam remotum ac sepositum à nobis est, verbum à reliquendo dictum, tanquam ceremonia à carendo. Gel. lib. iv. c. 9.—“That is religion which on account of a certain sanctity has been removed and separated, and the word is derived from *reliquendo*, as ceremony from *carendo*.”

² Ceremoniæ deorum, sanctitas regum. Jul. Cæsar apud Sueton.—“The ceremonies of the gods is the sanctity of kings.”

³ Ex lege cujusque civitatis jubentur dii coli. Dictum 5 Sapientum apud Zenophon. Σπένδειν ἐὲς ἢ θύειν κατὰ τὰ πάτρια ἰκάτοισι προσήκει. Epict. c. 38.—“The law of every state commands the worship of the gods. It behoves every one to offer oblations and sacrifices according to his paternal religion.”

receive the degree of their honour in that proportion they have to their term and foundation; and therefore what belongs to God (as holy places of religion) must rise highest in this account; I mean higher than any other places. And this is besides the honour which God hath put upon them by his presence and his title to them, which in all religions he hath signified to us.

4. Indeed among the Jews, as God had confined his church and the rites of religion to be used only in communion and participation with that nation, so also he had limited his presence, and was more sparing of it than in the time of the gospel his Son declared he would be. 'It was said of old that at Jerusalem men ought to worship;' that is, by a solemn, public, and great address in the capital expresses of religion, in the distinguishing rites of liturgy; for else it had been no new thing; for in ordinary prayers God was then, and long before, pleased to hear Jeremy in the dungeon, Manasses in prison, Daniel in the lions' den, Jonas in the belly of the deep, others in the offices yet more solemn in the *prosenchæ*, in the houses of prayer, which the Jews had, not only in their dispersion, but even in Palestine, for their diurnal and nocturnal offices. But when the holy Jesus had 'broken down the partition wall,' then the most solemn offices of religion were as unlimited as their private devotions were before; for wherever a temple should be built, thither God would come, if he were 'worshipped spiritually and in truth;' that is, according to the rites of Christ, (who is 'grace and truth,') and the dictate of the Spirit, and analogy of the gospel. All places were now alike to build churches in, or memorials

for God, God's houses. And that our blessed Saviour discourses of places of public worship to the woman of Samaria is notorious, because the whole question was concerning the great addresses of Moses's rites, whether at Jerusalem or mount Gerizim, which were the places of the right and the schismatical temple, the confinements of the whole religion: and in antithesis Jesus said, not here nor there shall be the solemnities of address to God, but in all places you may build a temple, and God will dwell in it.

5. And this hath descended from the first beginning of religion down to the consummation of it in the perfections of the gospel: for the apostles of our Lord carried the offices of the gospel into the temple of Jerusalem; there they preached and prayed, and paid vows, but never, that we read of, offered sacrifice: which shows that the offices purely evangelical were proper to be done in any of God's proper places, and that thither they went not in compliance with Moses's rites, but merely for gospel duties, or for such offices which were common to Moses and Christ, such as were prayers and vows. While the temple was yet standing, they had peculiar places for the assemblies of the faithful, where either by accident, or observation, or religion, or choice, they met regularly. And I instance in the house of John, surnamed Mark, which, as Alexander reports in the life of St. Barnabas, was consecrated by many actions of religion—by our blessed Saviour's eating the passover, his institution of the holy eucharist, his farewell sermon; and the apostles met there in the octaves of Easter, whither Christ came, and hallowed it with his presence; and there, to make up the relative sanctification

complete, the Holy Ghost descended upon their heads in the feast of pentecost. And this was erected into a fair fabric, and is mentioned as a famous church by St. Jerome, and Venerable Bede;¹ in which, as Adricomius adds, St. Peter preached that sermon which was miraculously prosperous in the conversion of three thousand: there St. James, brother of our Lord, was consecrated first bishop of Jerusalem; St. Stephen and the other six were there ordained deacons; there the apostles kept their first council, and compiled their creed: by these actions and their frequent conventions showing the same reason, order, and prudence of religion in assignation of special places of divine service, which were ever observed by all the nations, and religions, and wise men of the world. And it were a strange imagination to fancy, that in Christian religion there is any principle contrary to that wisdom of God and all the world, which for order, for necessity, for convenience, for the solemnity of worship, hath set apart places for God and for religion. Private prayer had always an unlimited residence and relation, even under Moses's law; but the public solemn prayer of sacrifice in the law of Moses was restrained to one temple. In the law of nature it was not confined to one, but yet determined to public and solemn places. And when the holy Jesus disparked the inclosures of Moses, we all returned to the permissions and liberty of the natural law, in which, although the public and solemn prayers were confined to a temple, yet the temple was not confined to a place; but they might be any where, so they were at all, instruments of or-

¹ Epist. xxvii. De locis sanctis, cap. iiii. In descrip. Hierosa. n. 6.

der, conveniences of assembling, residences of religion. And God, who always loved order, and was apt to hear all holy and prudent prayers, (and therefore also the prayers of consecration,) hath often declared that he loves such places, that he will dwell in them: not that they are advantages to him, but that he is pleased to make them so to us. And therefore all nations of the world built public houses for religion: and since all ages of the church did so too, it had need be a strong and a convincing argument that must show they were deceived. And 'if any man list to be contentious,' he must be answered with St. Paul's reproof, 'We have no such custom, nor the churches of God.'

6. Thus St. Paul reprov'd the Corinthians for 'despising the church of God'¹ by such uses, which were therefore unfit for God's, because they were proper for their own, that is for common houses. And although they were at first, and in the descending ages so afflicted by the tyranny of enemies, that they could not build many churches; yet some they did, and the churches themselves suffered part of the persecution. For so Eusebius reports, that when, under Severus and Gordianus, Philip and Galienus, the Christian affairs were in a tolerable condition, they built churches in great number and expense. But when the persecution waxed hot under Diocletian, down went the churches, upon a design to extinguish, or disadvantage the religion. Maximinus gave leave to rebuild them. Upon which rescript (saith the story) the Christians were overjoyed, and raised them up to an incredible height and incomparable beauty. This was Chris-

¹ 1 Cor. xi. 22.

tian religion then, and so it hath continued ever since; and unless we should have new reason and new revelation, it must continue so till our churches are exchanged for thrones, and our chapels for seats placed before the Lamb, in the eternal temple of the celestial Jerusalem.

7. And to this purpose it is observed, that the holy Jesus first ejected the beasts of sacrifice out of the temple, and then proclaimed the place holy, and the scene of representing prayers; which in type intimates the same thing which is involved in the expression of the next words, ' My house shall be called the house of prayer to all nations : ' now and for ever to the Jews and to the Gentiles, in all circumstances and variety of time and nation. God's houses are holy in order to holy uses; the time as unlimited as the nations were indefinite and universal. Which is the more observable, because it was of the outward courts, not whither Moses's rites alone were admitted, but the natural devotion of Jews and Gentile proselytes that Christ affirmed it to be holy, to be the house of God, and the place of prayer. So that the religion of public places of prayer is not a rite of Levi, but a natural and prudent circumstance and advantage of religion, in which all wise men agree; who therefore must have some common principle with influence upon all the world, which must be the univocal cause of the consent of all men; which common principle must either be a dictate of natural or prime reason, or else some tradition from the first parents of mankind; which because it had order in it, beauty, religion, and confirmation from Heaven, and no reason to contest against it, it hath surprised the understanding and practices of all nations. And in-

deed we find that even in paradise God had that which is analogical to a church, a distinct place where he manifested himself present in proper manner. For Adam and Eve, when they had sinned, 'hid themselves from the presence of the Lord:' and this was the word in all descents of the church, for the being of God in holy places, 'the presence of the Lord was there.' And probably when Adam, from this intimation, or a greater direction, had taught Cain and Abel to offer sacrifices to God in a certain place, where they were observed of each in their several offerings, it became one of the rules of religion which was derived to their posterity by tradition, the only way they had to communicate the dictates of divine commandment.

8. There is no more necessary to be added in behalf of holy places, and to assert them into the family and relatives of religion: our estimate and deportment towards them is matter of practice, and therefore of proper consideration. To which purpose I consider, that holy places being the residence of God's name upon earth, there where he hath put it, that by fiction of law it may be the sanctuary and the last resort in all calamities and need,¹ God hath sent his agents to possess them in person for him. Churches and oratories are regions and courts of angels, and they are there not only to minister to the saints, but also they possess them in the right of God. There they are; so the greatest and Prince of spirits tells us, the Holy Ghost: 'I saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, and his train filled the temple; above it stood the seraphim:'² that was God's train. And therefore

¹ Psalm xxvii. 4, 5, 6.

² Isa. vi. 1, 2.

holy David knew that his addresses to God were in the presence of angels: ‘I will praise thee with my whole heart, before the gods will I sing praise unto thee:’¹ ‘before the *angels*,’ so it is in the Septuagint.² And that we might know where or how the kingly worshipper would pay this adoration, he adds, ‘I will worship towards thy holy temple.’ And this was so known by him, that it became expressive of God’s manner of presence in heaven: ‘the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; and the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place.’³ God in the midst of angels, and the angels in the midst of the holy place; and God in heaven in the midst of that holy circle, as sure as he is amongst angels in the recesses of his sanctuary. Were the rudiments of the law worthy of an attendance of angels? and are the memorials of the gospel destitute of so brave a retinue? Did the beatified spirits wait upon the types? and do they decline the office at the ministration of the substance? Is the nature of man made worse since the incarnation of the Son of God? and have the angels purchased an exemption from their ministry since Christ became our brother? We have little reason to think so. And therefore St. Paul still makes use of the argument to press women to modesty and humility in churches, ‘because of the angels.’ And upon the same stock St. Chrysostom chides the people of his diocess for walking, and laughing, and prating in churches: “The church is not a shop of manufactures or merchandise, but

¹ Psalm cxxxviii. 1, 2.

² *Εναντίον ἀγγέλων*, LXX. Orat Agrip. apud Joseph. lib. ii. c. 16, de Bello Judaic.

³ Psalm lxiii. 17.

the place of angels and of archangels, the court of God, and the image or representment of heaven itself.”¹

9. For if we consider that Christianity is something more than ordinary, that there are mysteries in our religion, and in none else; that God’s angels are ministering spirits for our good, and especially about the conveyances of our prayers, either we must think very low of Christianity, or that greater things are in it than the presence of angels in our churches: and yet, if there were no more, we should do well to behave ourselves there with the thoughts and apprehensions of heaven about us; always remembering that our business there is an errand of religion, and God is the object of our worshippings. And therefore, although by our weakness we are fixed in the lowness of men, yet because God’s infinity is our object, it were very happy if our actions did bear some few degrees of a proportionable and commensurate address.

10. Now that the angels are there in the right of God, and are a manner and an exhibition of the Divine presence is therefore certain, because whenever it is said in the Old Testament that God appeared, it was by an angel: and the law itself, in the midst of all the glorious terrors of its manifestation, ‘was ordained by angels,’ and ‘a word spoken by angels,’ and yet God is said to have descended upon the mount. And in the greatest glory that ever shall be revealed till the consummation of all things, the instrument of the Divine splendour is the apparition of angels: for when the

¹ Homil. xvi. in 1 Cor. et de Sacerd. Τότε δὲ ἄγγελοι παρεστήκασιν πρὸς ἱερεῖς, &c. St. Ambros. in c. 1 Lucae.

holy 'Jesus shall come in the glory of his Father, it is added by way of explication, that is, 'with an host of angels.'

11. The result is those words of God to his people 'Reverence my sanctuary :'¹ for what God loves in an especial manner, it is most fit we should esteem accordingly. 'God loves the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.'² The least turf of hallowed glebe is with God himself of more value than all the champaign of common possession ; it is better in all senses. 'The temple is better than gold,'³ said our blessed Saviour ; and therefore it were well we should do that which is expressed in the command of giving reverence to it ; for we are too apt to pay undue devotions to gold. Which precept the holiest of that nation expressed by worshipping towards the sanctuary, by pulling off their shoes when they went into it, by making it the determination of their religious addresses, by falling down low upon the earth in their accesses, by opening their windows towards it in their private devotions, by calling it the glory of their nation ; as is certain in the instances of David, Daniel, and the wife of Phinehas. I shall not need to say, that the devouter Christians in the first ages did worship God with solemnities of address whenever they entered into their oratories. It was a civility Jesus commanded his disciples to use to common houses : 'When ye enter into a house salute it :' I suppose he means the dwellers in it. And it is certain, whatever those devouter people did in their religious approaches, they designed it to God, who was the *major domo*, the master of those assemblies.

¹ Lev. xix. 30.

² Psalm lxxxvii. 2.

³ Matt. xxiii. 17.

And thus did the convinced Christian in St. Paul's discourse, when he came into the church where they were prophesying in a known language: 'The secrets of his heart are made manifest, and so falling down on his face he will worship God.'¹

12. It was no unhandsome expression of reverencing God's sanctuary, that pious people ever used, in bestowing costly and fair ornaments upon it; for so all the Christians did. As soon as themselves came from contempt and scorn, they raised Christian oratories to an equal portion of their honour; and by this way they thought they did honour to God, who was the *numen* of the place. Not that a rich house or costly offertory is better in respect of God, for to him all is alike, save that in equal abilities our devotion is distinguished by them; and be the offering never so contemptible, it is a rich devotion that gives the best we have: because (although if all the wealth of the Levant were united into a present, it were short of God's infinity; yet) such an offertory, or any best we have, makes demonstration, that if we had an offering infinitely better, we should give it, to express our love and our belief of God's infinite merit and perfection. And therefore let not 'the widow's two mites' become a precedent to the instance and value of our donation; and because she, who gave no more, was accepted, think that two farthings is as fit to be cast into the corban as two thousand pounds. For the reason why our blessed Saviour commended the widow's oblation was for the greatness of it, not the smallness: 'she gave all she had, even all her living,' therefore she was accepted. And indeed,

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

since God gives to us more than enough, beyond our necessities, much for our conveniency, much for ease, much for repute, much for public compliances, for variety, for content, for pleasure, for ornament, we should deal unworthily with God Almighty, if we limit and restrain our returns to him, by confining them within the narrow bounds of mere necessity. Certainly beggarly services and cheapness is not more pleasing to God than a rich and magnificent address. To the best of essences the best of presents is most proportionable. And although the service of the soul and spirit is most delectable and esteemed by God ; yet because our souls are served by things perishing and material, and we are of that constitution, that by the body we serve the spirit, and by both we serve God ; as the spirit is chiefly to be offered to God, because it is better than the body, so the richest oblation is the best in an equal power and the same person, because it is the best of things material : and although it hath not the excellency of the spirit, it hath an excellency that a cheap oblation hath not ; and besides the advantage of the natural value, it can no otherwise be spoiled than a meaner offering may, it is always capable of the same commendation from the piety of the presenter's spirit, and may be as much purified and made holy as the cheaper or more contemptible. God hath not any where expressed, that he accepts of a cheaper offering, but when we are not able to give him a better. When the people brought offerings more than enough for the tabernacle, Moses restrained their forwardness, by saying 'it was enough ;' but yet commended the disposition highly, and wished it might be perpetual. But God chid the people

when they let his house lie waste without reparation of its decaying beauty; and therefore sent famines upon the land, and a curse into their estate, because they would not, by giving a portion to religion, sanctify and secure all the rest. For the way for a man to be a saver by his religion is, to deposit one part of his estate in the temple, and one in the hands of the poor; for these are God's treasury and stewards respectively. And this is 'laying up treasures in heaven;' and besides that it will procure blessing to other parts, it will help to save our souls; and that is good husbandry, that is worth the saving.

13. For I consider that those riches and beauties in churches and religious solemnities, which add nothing to God, add much devotion to us, and much honour and efficacy to devotion. For since impression is made upon the soul by the intervening of corporal things, our religion and devotion of the soul receives the addition of many degrees by such instruments; insomuch that we see persons of the greatest fancy, and such who are most pleased with outward fairnesses, are most religious. Great understandings make religion lasting and reasonable; but great fancies make it more scrupulous, strict, operative, and effectual: and therefore it is strange, that we shall bestow such great expenses to make our own houses convenient and delectable, that we may entertain ourselves with complacency and appetite, and yet think that religion is not worth the ornament, nor our fancies fit to be carried into the choice and prosecution of religious actions with sweetness, entertainments, and fair propositions. If we say that God is not the better for a rich house or a costly service, we may

also remember that neither are we the better for rich clothes; and the sheep will keep us as modest, as warm, and as clean as the silkworm; and a gold chain or a carcanet of pearl does no more contribute to our happiness than it does to the service of religion: for if we reply, that they help to the esteem and reputation of our persons, and the distinction of them from the vulgar, from the servants of the lot of Issachar, and add reverence and veneration to us; how great a shame is it, if we study by great expenses to get reputation and accidental advantages to ourselves, and not by the same means to purchase reverence and esteem to religion; since we see that religion, amongst persons of ordinary understandings, receives as much external and accidental advantages by the accession of exterior ornaments and accommodation, as we ourselves can by rich clothes and garments of wealth, ceremony, and distinction! and as in princes' courts the reverence to princes is quickened and increased by an outward state and glory, so also it is in the service of God. Although the understandings of men are no more satisfied by a pompous magnificence than by a cheap plainness, yet the eye is, and the fancy, and the affections, and the senses: that is, many of our faculties are more pleased with religion, when religion by such instruments and conveyances pleases them. And it was noted by Sozomen concerning Valens the Arian emperor, that when he came to Cæsarea in Cappadocia, he praised St. Basil their bishop, and upon more easy terms revoked his banishment, because he was a grave person, and did his holy offices with reverent and decent addresses, and kept his church assemblies with much ornament and solemnity.

14. But when I consider that saying of St. Gregory, “that the church is heaven within the tabernacle, heaven dwelling among the sons of men,” and remember that God hath studded all the firmament and paved it with stars, because he loves to have his house beauteous, and highly representative of his glory, I see no reason we should not do, as Apollinaris says God does, “in earth do the works of heaven ;” for he is the God of beauties and perfections, and every excellency in the creature is a portion of influence from the divinity, and therefore is the best instrument of conveying honour to him, who made them for no other end but for his own honour, as the last resort of all other ends for which they were created.

15. But the best manner to reverence the sanctuary is, by the continuation of such actions which gave it the first title of holiness. ‘Holiness becometh thine house for ever,’ said David. *Sancta sanctis*, holy persons and holy rites in holy places. That as it had the first relation of sanctity by the consecration of a holy and reverend minister and president of religion, so it may be perpetuated in holy offices, and receive the daily consecration by the assistance of sanctified and religious persons. *Foris canes*, dogs and criminal persons are unfit for churches: the best ornament and beauty of a church is a holy priest and a sanctified people. For since angels dwell in churches, and God hath made his name to dwell there too, if there also be a holy people, that there be saints as well as angels, it is a holy fellowship and a blessed communion: but to see a devil there, would scare the most confident and bold fancy, and disturb the good meeting; and such is every wicked and graceless per-

son. 'Have not I chosen twelve of you? and one of you is a devil.' An evil soul is an evil spirit; and such are no good ornaments for temples. And it is a shame that a goodly Christian church should be like an Egyptian temple; without, goodly buildings—within, a dog or a cat for the deity they adore. It is worse, if in our addresses to holy places and offices, we bear our lusts under our garments; for dogs and cats are of God's making, but our lusts are not, but are God's enemies; and therefore, besides the unholiness, it is an affront to God to bring them along, and it defiles the place in a great degree.

16. For there is a defiling of a temple by insinuation of impurities, and another by direct and positive profanation, and a third by express sacrilege: this defiles a temple to the ground. Every small sin is an unwelcome guest, and is a spot in those feasts of charity which entertain us often in God's houses: but there are some (and all great crimes are such) which desecrate the place, unhallow the ground, as to our particulars, stop the ascent of our prayers, obstruct the current of God's blessings, turn religion into bitterness, and devotion into gall; such as are marked in Scripture with a distinguishing character, as enemies to the peculiar dispositions of religion: and such are unchastity, which defiles the temples of our bodies; covetousness, which sets up an idol instead of God; and unmercifulness, which is a direct enemy to the mercies of God, and the fair return of our prayers. He that shows not the mercies of alms, of forgiveness, and comfort, is forbid to hope for comfort, relief, or forgiveness from the hands of God. A pure mind is the best manner of worship, and the

impurity of a crime is the greatest contradiction to the honour and religion of holy places. And therefore, let us imitate the precedent of the most religious of kings: 'I will wash my hands in innocency, O Lord, and so will I go to thine altar:'¹ always remembering those decretory and final words of St. Paul, 'He that defiles a temple, him will God destroy.'²

THE PRAYER.

O eternal God, who dwellest not in temples made with hands, the heaven of heavens is not able to contain thee, and yet thou art pleased to manifest thy presence amongst the sons of men by special issues of thy favour and benediction. Make my body and soul to be a temple pure and holy, apt for the entertainments of the Holy Jesus, and for the habitation of the Holy Spirit. Lord, be pleased, with thy rod of paternal discipline, to cast out all impure lusts, all worldly affections, all covetous desires, from this thy temple; that it may be a place of prayer and meditation, of holy appetites and chaste thoughts, of pure intentions and zealous desires of pleasing thee; that I may become also a sacrifice as well as a temple, eaten up with the zeal of thy glory, and consumed with the fire of love; that not one thought may be entertained by me but such as may be like perfume breathing from the altar of incense, and not a word may pass from me but may have the accent of heaven upon it, and sound pleasantly in thy ears. O dearest God, fill every faculty of my soul with impresses, dispositions, capacities, and aptnesses of religion: and do thou hallow my soul, that I may be possessed with zeal and religious affections, loving thee above all things in the world, worshipping thee with the humblest adorations and frequent addresses, continually feeding upon the apprehensions of the divine sweetness, and considerations of thy infinite excellencies, and observations of thy righteous commandments, and the feast of a holy conscience, as an antepast of eternity, and consignation to the joys of heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

¹ Psalm xxvi. 6.

² 1 Cor. iii. 17.

SECTION XII.

Of Jesus's departure into Galilee; his manner of Life, Miracles, and Preaching; his calling of Disciples; and what happened until the Second Passover.

1. WHEN 'Jesus understood that John was cast into prison,'¹ and that the Pharisees were envious at him for the great multitudes of people that resorted to his baptism, which he ministered, not in his own person, but by the deputation of his disciples, they finishing the ministration which himself began, (who, as Euodius bishop of Antioch reports, baptized the blessed virgin, his mother, and Peter only, and Peter baptized Andrew, James, and John, and they others,²) he left Judea, and came into Galilee: and in his passage he must touch Sychar, a city of Samaria, where, in the heat of the day and the weariness of his journey, he sat himself down upon the margin of Jacob's well; whither, when 'his disciples were gone to buy meat, a Samaritan woman cometh to draw water,' of whom Jesus asked some to cool his thirst, and refresh his weariness.

2. Little knew the woman the excellency of the person that asked so small a charity; neither had she been taught, that 'a cup of cold water given to a disciple should be rewarded,' and much rather such a present to the Lord himself. But she prosecuted the spite of her nation, and the interest and quarrel of the schism; and instead of washing

¹ Matt. iv. 12.

² Euthym. c. 3. in Joan. apud Niceph. lib. ii. c. 3. Hist.

Jesus's feet, and giving him drink, demanded, ' why he, being a Jew, should ask water of a Samaritan : for the Jews have no intercourse with the Samaritans.'

3. The ground of the quarrel was this :—In the sixth year of Hezekiah, Salmanasar, king of Assyria, sacked Samaria, transported the Israelites to Assyria, and planted an Assyrian colony in the town and country, who, by divine vengeance, were destroyed by lions, which no power of man could restrain or lessen. The king thought the cause was, their not serving the God of Israel according to the rites of Moses ; and therefore sent a Jewish captive priest to instruct the remanent inhabitants in the Jewish religion ; who so learned and practised it, that they still retained the superstition of the Gentile rites ; till Manasses, the brother of Jaddi, the high-priest at Jerusalem, married the daughter of Sanballat, who was the governor under king Darius. Manasses being reprov'd for marrying a stranger, the daughter of an uncircumcised Gentile, and admonished to dismiss her, flies to Samaria, persuades his father-in-law to build a temple in mount Gerizim, introduces the rites of daily sacrifice, and makes himself high-priest, and began to pretend to be the true successor of Aaron, and commences a schism in the time of Alexander the Great : from whence the question of religion grew so high, that it begat disaffections, anger, animosities, quarrels, bloodshed, and murders, not only in Palestine, but wherever a Jew and Samaritan had the ill fortune to meet. Such being the na-

¹ Non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti :

Quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere verpos.— *Juv. Sat. xiv.*

ture of men, that they think it the greatest injury in the world when other men are not of their minds; and that they please God most when they are most furiously zealous; and no zeal better to be expressed than by hating all those whom they are pleased to think God hates. This schism was prosecuted with the greatest spite that ever any was, because both the people were much given to superstition: and this was helped forward by the constitution of their religion, consisting much in externals and ceremonials, and which they cared not much to hallow and make moral by the intertexture of spiritual senses and charity. And therefore the Jews called the Samaritans accursed: the Samaritans, at the paschal solemnity, would at midnight, when the Jews' temple was open, scatter dead men's bones, to profane and desecrate the place; and both would fight, and eternally dispute the question; sometimes referring it to arbitrators, and then the conquered party would decline the arbitration after sentence; which they did at Alexandria before Ptolemæus Philometor, when Andronicus had, by a rare and exquisite oration, procured sentence against Theodosius and Sabbæus, the Samaritan advocates.¹ The sentence was given for Jerusalem, and the schism increased, and lasted till the time of our Saviour's conference with this woman.

4. And it was so implanted and woven in with every understanding, that when the woman perceived 'Jesus to be a prophet,' she undertook this question with him: 'Our Fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that Jerusalem is the

¹ Joseph. Ant. lib. xviii. cap. 3.

place where men ought to worship.' Jesus knew the schism was great enough already, and was not willing to make the rent wider. And though he gave testimony to the truth, by saying, 'Salvation is of the Jews;' and 'We know what we worship, ye do not;' yet because the subject of this question was shortly to be taken away, Jesus takes occasion to preach the gospel, to hasten an expedient, and by way of anticipation to reconcile the disagreeing interests, and settle a revelation to be verified for ever; neither here nor there by way of confinement, not in one country more than another, but wherever any man shall call upon God in spirit and truth, there he shall be heard.

5. But all this while the holy Jesus was a-thirst, and therefore hastens at least to discourse of water, though as yet he got none. He tells her of living water, of eternal satisfactions, of never thirsting again, of her own personal condition, of matrimonial relation, and professes himself to be the Messiah: and then was interrupted by the coming of his disciples, who wondered to see him alone talking with a woman, beside his custom and usual reservation. But the woman, full of joy and wonder, left her water-pot, and ran to the city, to publish the Messiah; and immediately all the city came out to see; and many believed on him upon the testimony of the woman, and more when they heard his own discourses. They invited him to the town, and received him with hospitable civilities for two days, after which he departed to his own Galilee.

6. Jesus therefore came into the country, where he was received with respect and fair entertainment, because of the miracles which the Galileans

saw done by him at the feast. And being at Cana, where he wrought the first miracle, a noble personage, a little king say some, a palatinate says St. Jerome, a kingly person certainly, came to Jesus with much reverence and desire that he would be pleased to come to his house, and cure his son, now ready to die; which he seconds with much importunity, fearing lest his son be dead before he get thither. Jesus, who did not do his miracles by natural operations, cured the child at distance, and dismissed the prince, telling him his son lived; which by narration of his servants he found to be true, and that he recovered at the same time when Jesus spake these salutary and healing words. Upon which accident he and all his house became disciples.

7. And now Jesus left Nazareth, and came to Capernaum, a maritime town, and of great resort, choosing that for his scene of preaching, and his place of dwelling: for now the time was fulfilled, the office of the Baptist was expired, and the kingdom of God was at hand. He therefore preached the sum of the gospel, faith and repentance: 'Repent ye, and believe the gospel.' And what that gospel was, the sum and series of all his sermons afterwards did declare.

8. The work was now grown high and pregnant, and Jesus saw it convenient to choose disciples to his ministry and service in the work of preaching, and to be witnesses of all that he should say, do, or teach, for ends which were afterwards made public and excellent. Jesus, therefore, 'as he walked by the sea of Galilee,' called Simon and Andrew; who knew him before by the preaching of John, and now left all, their ship and their net,

and followed him. And when he was gone a little further, he calls the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, and they went after him. And with this family he goes up and down the whole Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom, healing all manner of diseases, curing demoniacs, cleansing lepers, and giving strength to paralytics and lame people.

9. But when 'the people pressed on him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,' and presently 'entered into Simon's ship,' commanded him 'to launch into the deep;' and from thence he taught the people, and there wrought a miracle: for, being Lord of the creatures, he commanded the fishes of the sea, and they obeyed. For when Simon, who had fished all night in vain, let down his net at the command of Jesus, he inclosed so great a multitude of fishes that the net brake, and the fishermen were amazed, and fearful at so prodigious a draught. But beyond the miracle, it was intended that a representation should be made of the plenitude of the catholic church, and multitudes of believers who should be taken by Simon and the rest of the disciples, whom by that miracle he consigned to become fishers of men, who by their artifices of prudence and holy doctrine might gain souls to God; that when the net should be drawn to shore, and separation made by the angels, they and their disciples might be differenced from the reprobate portion.

10. But the light of the sun uses not to be confined to a province or a kingdom; so great a prophet, and so divine a physician, and so great miracles, created a fame loud as thunder, but not so

full of sadness and presage. Immediately the fame of Jesus went into all Syria, and there came to him multitudes from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, and Judæa. And all that had any sick with divers diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. And when he cured the lunatics and persons possessed with evil spirits, the devils cried out, and confessed him to be Christ, the Son of God. But he suffered them not; choosing rather to work faith in the persuasions of his disciples by moral arguments and the placid demonstrations of the Spirit, that there might in faith be an excellency in proportion to the choice, and that it might not be made violent by the conviction and forced testimonies of accursed and unwilling spirits.

11. But when Jesus saw his assembly was grown full, and his audience numerous, he went up into a mountain; and when his disciples came unto him, he made that admirable sermon, called 'the sermon upon the mount;' (which is a divine repository of most excellent truths and mysterious dictates of secret theology, and contains a breviary of all those precepts which integrate the morality of Christian religion;) pressing the moral precepts given by Moses, and enlarging their obligation by a stricter sense and more severe exposition, that their righteousness might exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. "He preaches perfection, and the doctrines of meekness, poverty of spirit, Christian mourning, desire of holy things, mercy and purity, peace and toleration of injuries; affixing a special promise of blessing to be the guerdon and inheritance of those graces and spiritual excellencies. He explicates some parts of

the decalogue, and adds appendices and precepts of his own. He teaches his disciples to pray, how to fast, how to give alms, contempt of the world, not to judge others, forgiving injuries, an indifference and incuriousness of temporal provisions, and a seeking of the kingdom of God and its appendant righteousness."

12. When Jesus had finished his sermon, and descended from the mountain, a poor leprous person came and worshipped, and begged to be cleansed : which Jesus soon granted, engaging him not to publish it where he should go abroad, but sending him to the priest, to offer an oblation according to the rites of Moses's law ; and then came directly to Capernaum, and taught in the synagogues upon the sabbath-days ; where in his sermons he expressed the dignity of a prophet, and the authority of a person sent from God ; not inviting the people by the soft arguments and insinuations of Scribes and Pharisees, but by demonstrations and issues of divinity. There he cures a demoniac in one of their synagogues, and by and by, after going abroad, he heals Peter's wife's mother of a fever ; insomuch that he grew the talk of all men and their wonder, till they flocked so to him to see him, to hear him, to satisfy their curiosity and their needs, that after he had healed those multitudes which beset the house of Simon, where he cured his mother of the fever, he retired himself into a desert place very early in the morning, that he might have an opportunity to pray, free from the oppressions and noises of the multitude.

13. But neither so could he be hid ; but, like a light shining by the fringes of a curtain, he was soon discovered in his solitude : for the multitude

found him out, imprisoning him in their circuits and undeniable attendances. But Jesus told them plainly, he must preach the gospel to other cities also; and therefore resolved to pass to the other side of the lake of Gennesaret, so to quit the throng. Whither as he was going, a scribe offered himself a disciple to his institution; till Jesus told him his condition to be worse than foxes and birds, for whom an habitation is provided, but none for him, no, not a place where to bow his head and find rest. And what became of this forward professor afterward we find not. Others that were probationers of this fellowship Jesus bound to a speedy profession, not suffering one to go home to bid his friends farewell, nor another so much as to bury his dead.

14. By the time Jesus got to the ship it was late; and he, heavy to sleep, rested on a pillow, and slept soundly as weariness, meekness, and innocence could make him; insomuch that a violent storm, the chiding of the winds and waters, which then happened, could not awake him; till the ship being almost covered with broken billows and the impetuous dashings of the waters, the men already sunk in their spirits, and the ship like enough to sink too, the disciples awaked him, and called for help: 'Master, carest thou not that we perish?' Jesus arising reproved their infidelity, commanded the wind to be still and the seas peaceable, and immediately there was a great calm; and they presently arrived in the land of the Gergesenes or Gerasenes.

15. In the land of Gergesites, or Gergesenes, which was the remaining name of an extinct people, being one of the nations whom the sons of

Jacob drave from their inheritance, there were two cities; Gadara, from the tribe of Gad, to whom it fell by lot in the division of the land; (which, having been destroyed by the Jews, was rebuilt by Pompey at the request of Demetrius Gadarensis, Pompey's freed man;) and near to it was Gerasa, as Josephus reports.¹ Which diversity of towns and names is the cause of the various recitation of this story by the evangelists. Near the city of Gadara there were many sepulchres in the hollownesses of rocks, where the dead were buried, and where many superstitious persons used Memphitic and Thessalic rites, invocating evil spirits; insomuch that at the instant of our Saviour's arrival in the country, there met him two possessed with devils from these tombs, exceeding fierce, and so had been long, insomuch that no man durst pass that way.

16. Jesus commanded the devils out of the possessed person. But there were certain men feeding swine, which, though extremely abominated by the Jewish religion, yet for the use of the Roman armies and quarterings of soldiers they were permitted, and divers privileges granted to the masters of such herds;² and because Gadara was a Greek city, and the company mingled of Greeks, Syrians, and Jews; these last in all likelihood not making the greatest number. The devils therefore besought Jesus, he would not send them into the abyss, but 'permit them to enter into the swine.' He gave them leave: 'and the swine ran violently down a steep place' into the hot baths,

¹ Joseph. de Bel. Jud. lib. i. c. 5, and lib. iii. c. 2, and lib. v. c. 3; Epiph. contra Eb. Hares. 30.

² Col. Theod. de Suariis, Joseph. lib. ii. de Bel. Jud. c. 33.

which were at the foot of the hill on which Gadara was built, which smaller congregation of waters the Jews used to call 'sea,' or else, as others think, into the lake of Gennesaret, and perished in the waters. But this accident so troubled the inhabitants, that they came and entreated Jesus to depart out of their coasts: and he did so. Leaving Galilee of the Gentiles, he came to the Lesser Galilee, and so again to the city of Capernaum.

17. But when he was come thither, he was met by divers Scribes and Pharisees, who came from Jerusalem, and doctors of the law from Galilee: and while they were sitting in a house, which was compassed with multitudes, that no business or necessity could be admitted to the door, a poor paralytic was brought to be cured, and they were fain to uncover the tiles of the house, and let him down in his bed with cords in the midst, before Jesus sitting in conference with the doctors. When Jesus saw their faith, he said, 'Man, thy sins be forgiven thee.' At which saying the Pharisees being troubled, thinking it to be blasphemy, and that none but God could forgive sins, Jesus was put to verify his absolution; which he did in a just satisfaction and proportion to their understandings: for the Jews did believe that all afflictions were punishments for sin; ('Who sinned', this man or his father, that he was born blind?') and that removing of the punishment was forgiving of the sin: and therefore Jesus, to prove that his sins were forgiven, removed that which they supposed to be the effect of his sin, and by curing the palsy prevented their further murmur about the pardon: 'that ye might know the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to

re sick of the palsy,) arise, take up thy bed and walk: and the man arose, was healed, and glorified God.'

18. Awhile after, Jesus went again towards the sea; and on his way, seeing Matthew the publican sitting at the receipt of custom, he bade him follow him. Matthew first feasted Jesus, and then became his disciple. But the Pharisees that were with him began to be troubled that he ate with publicans and sinners: for the office of publican, though among the Romans it was honest and of great account, and "the flower of the Roman knights, the ornament of the city, the security of the commonwealth, was accounted to consist in the society of publicans;"¹ yet amongst both the Jews and Greeks the name was odious, and the persons were accursed;² not only because they were strangers that were the chief of them, who took in to them some of the nation where they were employed; but because the Jews especially stood upon the charter of their nation, and the privilege of their religion, that none of them should pay tribute; and also because they exercised great injustices and oppressions,³ having a power un-

¹ Cicero Ep. Famil. lib. xiii. et in Orat. pro Plancio.

² Idem ad Quint. Fratrem de regimine præfecturæ Asian.

³ Vita publicanorum aperta est violentia, impunita rapina, negotiatio nulla ratione constans, inverecunda mercatura. Suidas. V. Publicanus, πάντες τελῶναι πάντες εἰσὶν ἄρπαγες.— "The life of the publican is open violence; unpunished rapine; business without rules; traffic without shame. The publicans are, without exception, plunderers."

Apud Hebræum textum D. Matthæi, Publicani dicti Parisim, nomine proprio latronibus qui sepes et maceriam dirimunt, licet propriè dicti Gabaim; unde fortasse Gabella.—"In the Hebrew text of D. Matthæus, publicans are called *Parisim*, the proper name of robbers, who tear down fences; although properly called *Gabaim*, from which, perhaps, *Gabella*."

limited, and a covetousness wide as hell, and greedy as the fire or the grave. But Jesus gave so fair an account concerning his converse with these persons, that the objection turned to be his apology; for therefore he conversed with them, because they were sinners: and it was as if a physician should be reprov'd for having so much to do with sick persons: for therefore was he sent, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, to advance the reputation of mercy above the rites of sacrifice.

19. But as the little bubbling, and gentle murmurs of the water, are presages of a storm, and are more troublesome in their prediction than their violence; so were the arguings of the Pharisees symptoms of a secret displeasure, and an ensuing war: though at first represented in the civilities of questions and scholastical discourses, yet they did but forerun vigorous objections and bold calumnies, which were the fruits of the next summer. But as yet they discours'd fairly, asking him 'why John's disciples fasted often, but the disciples of Jesus did not fast.' Jesus told them, it was because these were the days in which the bridegroom was come in person to espouse the church into himself; and therefore for 'the children of the bride-chamber to fast' then, was like the bringing of a dead corpse to the joys of a bride, or the pomp of coronation: 'the days should come that the bridegroom should retire' into his chamber, and draw the curtains; 'and then they should fast in those days.'

20. While Jesus was discoursing with the Pharisees, 'Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came to him,' desiring he would help his daughter, who lay in the confines of death, ready to depart. Whither as he was going, 'a woman met him who had

been diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, without hope of remedy from art or nature; and therefore she runs to Jesus, thinking, without precedent, upon the confident persuasions of a holy faith, 'that if she did but touch the hem of his garment, she should be whole.' She came trembling, and full of hope and reverence, and 'touched his garment; and immediately the fountain of her unnatural emanation was stopped,' and reverted to its natural course and offices. St. Ambrose says that this woman was Martha. But it is not likely that she was a Jewess, but a Gentile, because of that return which she made in memory of her cure and honour of Jesus according to the Gentile rites. For Eusebius reports that himself saw, at Cæsarea Philippi, a statue of brass, representing a woman kneeling at the feet of a goodly personage, who held his hand out to her in a posture of granting her request, and doing favour to her; and the inhabitants said it was erected by the care and cost of this woman; adding, (whether out of truth or easiness is not certain,) that at the pedestal of this statue an usual plant did grow, which when it was come up to that maturity and height as to arrive at the fringes of the brass monument, it was medicinal in many dangerous diseases.¹ So far Eusebius. Concerning which story I shall make no censure but this, that since St. Mark and St. Luke

¹ Lib. vii. Hist. c. 14. 'Επίσημον Χρυσῆ ἀγάλμα, et τῆ Χρυσῆ ἀντιόχια apud Sozomen. lib. v. c. 20. Johan. Damas. de Imagin. Orat. iii. ex Chronico Johan. Melaxe Antioch. Episc. ait, supplicem libellum oblatum Philippo, tetrarchæ Trachonitidis regionis, ut liceret statuas erigere in memoriam accepti beneficii.—"Johan. Damas. says, that a petition was presented to Philip, tetrarch of Trachonitis, for permission to raise a statue in memory of the Mercy."

affirm that this woman, before her cure, 'had spent all her substance upon physicians,'¹ it is not easily imaginable how she should become able to dispend so great a sum of money as would purchase two so great statues of brass. And if she could, yet it is still more unlikely that the Gentile princes and proconsuls, who searched all places, public and private, and were curiously diligent to destroy all honorary monuments of Christianity, should let this alone; and that this should escape not only the diligence of the persecutors, but the fury of such wars and changes as happened in Palestine; and that for three hundred years together it should stand up in defiance of all violences and changeable fate of all things. However it be, it is certain that the book against images, published by the command of Charles the Great, eight hundred and fifty years ago, gave no credit to the story.² And if it had been true, it is more than probable that Justin Martyr, who was born and bred in Palestine, and Origen, who lived many years in Tyre, in the neighbourhood of the place where the statue is said to stand, and were highly diligent to heap together all things of advantage and reputation to the Christian cause, would not have omitted so notable an instance. It is therefore likely that the statues which Eusebius saw, and concerning which he heard such stories, were first placed there upon the stock of a heathen story or ceremony; and in process of time, for the likeness of the figures, and its capacity to be translated to the Christian story, were by the Christians

¹ Mark, v. 6; Luke, viii. 43.

² Lib. iv. de Imagin. c. 15.

in after ages attributed, by a fiction of fancy, and afterwards by credulity confidently applied, to the present narrative.

21. 'When Jesus was come to the ruler's house,' he found the minstrels making their funeral noises for the death of Jairus's daughter; and his servants had met him, and acquainted him of 'the death of the child. Yet Jesus turned out the minstrels, and 'entered with the parents of the child into her chamber, and taking her by the hand called her,' and awakened her from the sleep of death, and 'commanded them to give her to eat,' and enjoined them not to publish the miracle. But as flames suppressed by violent detensions break out and rage with a more impetuous and rapid motion, so it happened to Jesus, who endeavouring to make the noises and reports of him less popular, made them to be oecumenical. For not only we do that most greedily from which we are most restrained, but a great merit enamelled with humility, and restrained with modesty, grows more beauteous and florid, up to the heights of wonder and glories.

22. As he came from Jairus's house, he cured two blind men, upon their petition and confession that they did believe in him, and cast out a dumb devil, so much to the wonder and amazement of the people, that the Pharisees could hold no longer, being ready to burst with envy, but said 'he cast out devils by help of the devils:' their malice being, as usually it is, contradictory to its own design, by its being unreasonable; nothing being more sottish than for the devil to divide his kingdom upon a plot, to ruin his certainties upon hopes future and contingent. But this was but the first eruption of their malice: all the year last

past, which was the first year of Jesus's preaching, all was quiet; neither the Jews, nor the Samaritans, nor the Galileans did malign his doctrine or person, but he preached with much peace on all hands;¹ for this was the year which the prophet Isaiah called in his prediction, 'the acceptable year of the Lord.'

AD. SECTION XII.

Considerations upon the intercourse happening between the Holy Jesus and the Woman of Samaria.

1. WHEN the holy Jesus, perceiving it unsafe to be at Jerusalem, returned to Galilee, where the largest scene of his prophetic office was to be represented, he journeyed on foot through Samaria; and being weary and faint, hungry and thirsty, he sat down by a well, and begged water of a Samaritan woman that was a sinner, who at first refused him, with some incivility of language. But he, instead of returning anger and passion to her rudeness, which was commenced upon the interest of a mistaken religion, preached the coming of the Messiah to her, unlocked the secrets of her heart, and let in his grace, and made 'a fountain of living water to spring up' in her soul, to extinguish the impure flames of lust which had set her on fire, burning like hell ever since the death of her fifth husband, she then becoming a concubine to the sixth. Thus Jesus transplanted nature into grace, his hunger and thirst into religious appetites,

¹ Epiphan. in Pan. lib. ii. tom. i. Hæres. 51.

the darkness of the Samaritan into a clear revelation, her sin into repentance and charity, and so quenched his own thirst by relieving her needs: and as 'it was meat to do his Father's will,' so it was drink to him to bring us to drink of 'the fountain of living water.' For thus God declared it to be a delight to him to see us live, as if he were refreshed by those felicities which he gives to us as communications of his grace, and instances of mercy, and consignations to heaven. Upon which we can look with no eye but such as sees and admires the excellency of the divine charity; which, being an emanation from the mercies and essential compassion of eternity, God cannot choose but rejoice in it, and love the works of his mercy, who was so well pleased in the works of his power. He that was delighted in the creation, was highly pleased in the nearer conveyance of himself, when he sent the holy Jesus to bear his image, and his mercies, and his glories, and offer them to the use and benefit of man. For this was the chief of the works of God; and therefore the blessed Master could not but be highest pleased with it, in imitation of his heavenly Father.

2. The woman observing our Saviour to have come with his face from Jerusalem, was angry with him upon the quarrel of the old schism. The Jews and the Samaritans had differing rites, and the zealous persons upon each side did commonly dispute themselves into uncharitableness; and so have Christians upon the same confidence and zeal, and mistake. For although 'righteousness hath no fellowship with unrighteousness,' nor Christ with Belial; yet the consideration of the crime of heresy, which is a spiritual wickedness, is to be separate from

the person, who is material. That is, no spiritual communion is to be endured with heretical persons, when it is certain they are such, when they are convinced by competent authority and sufficient argument. But the persons of the men are to be pitied, to be reproved, to be redargued and convinced, to be wrought upon by fair compliances and the offices of civility, and invited to the family of faith by the best arguments of charity, and the instances of a holy life. 'Having your conversation honest among men, that they may, beholding your good works, glorify God in the day when he shall visit them.'³ Indeed if there be danger, that is, a weak understanding may not safely converse in civil society with a subtle heretic; in such cases they are to be avoided, not saluted.² But as this is only when the danger is, by reason of the unequal capacities and strengths of the person; so it must be only when the article is certainly heresy, and the person criminal, and interest is the ingredient in the persuasion, and a certain and a necessary truth destroyed by the opinion. We read that St. John espying Cerinthus in a bath, refused to wash there where the enemy of God and his Holy Son had been.³ This is a good precedent for us, when the case is equal. St. John could discern the spirit of Cerinthus, and his heresy was notorious, fundamental, and highly criminal, and the apostle a person assisted up to infallibility. And possibly it was done by the whisper of a prophetic spirit, and upon a miraculous design; for immediately upon his retreat the bath fell down, and crushed

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 12.

² Tit. iii. 10. 2 Epist. John, 10.

³ Irenæ. lib. iii. c. 3. Euseb lib. iii. c. 13.

Cerinthus in the ruins. But such acts of aversion as these are not easily by us to be drawn into example, unless in the same or the parallel course of equally concluding accidents. We must not quickly, nor upon slight grounds, nor unworthy instances, call heretic: there had need be a long process, and a high conviction, and a competent judge, and a necessary article, that must be ingredients into so sad and decretory definitions, and condemnation of a person or opinion. But if such instances occur, come not near the danger nor the scandal. And this advice St. Cyprian gave to the lay people of his diocess: "Let them decline their discourses, whose sermons creep and corrode like a cancer; let there be no colloquies, no banquets, no commerce with such who are excommunicate and justly driven from the communion of the church."¹ "For such persons (as St. Leo descants upon the apostle's expression of heretical discourses) creep in humbly, and with small and modest beginnings; they catch with flattery, they bind gently, and kill privily."² Let, therefore, all persons who are in danger, secure their persons and persuasions by removing far from the infection. And for the scandal, St. Herminigilda gave an heroic example, which in her persuasion, and the circumstances of the age and action, deserved the highest testimony of zeal, religious passion, and confident persuasion. For she rather chose to die by the mandate of her tyrant father, Leonigildus the Goth, than she would, at the paschal solemnity receive the blessed sacrament at the hand of an Arian bishop.³

¹ Lib. i. Ep. 3.

² Serm. v. de Jejun. decimi mensis.

³ Gregor. lib. iii. Dial. iii. 13.

3. But excepting these cases, which are not to be judged with forwardness, nor rashly taken measure of, we find that conversing charitably with persons of differing persuasions hath been instrumental to their conversion and God's glory. 'The believing wife *may* sanctify the unbelieving husband;' and we find it verified in church story. St. Cecily converted her husband, Valerianus; St. Theodora converted Sisinius; St. Monica converted Patricius, and Theodelinda, Agilulphus; St. Clotilda persuaded king Clodoveus to be a Christian; and St. Natolia persuaded Adrianus to be a martyr. For they, having their conversation honest and holy amongst the unbelievers, shined like virgintapers in the midst of an impure prison, and amused the eyes of the sons of darkness with the brightness of the flame; for the excellency of a holy life is the best argument of the inhabitation of God within the soul: and who will not offer up his understanding upon that altar, where a deity is placed as the president and author of religion? And this very intercourse of the holy Jesus with the woman, is abundant argument that it were well we were not so forward to refuse communion with dissenting persons upon the easy and confident mistakes of a too forward zeal. They that call heretic may themselves be the mistaken persons; and by refusing to communicate the civilities of hospitable entertainment, may shut their doors upon truth, and their windows against light, and refuse to let salvation in. For sometimes ignorance is the only parent of our persuasions; and many times interest hath made an impure commixture with it, and so produced the issue.

4. The holy Jesus gently insinuates his dis-

courses. 'If thou hadst known who it is that asks thee water, thou wouldst have asked water of him.' Oftentimes we know not the person that speaks, and we usually choose our doctrine by our affections to the man; but then, if we are uncivil upon the stock of prejudice, we do not know that it is Christ that calls our understandings to obedience, and our affections to duty and compliances. The woman little thought of the glories which stood right against her. He that sat upon the well, had a throne placed above the heads of cherubims. In his arms who there rested himself was the sanctuary of rest and peace, where wearied souls were to lay their heads, and dispose their cares, and there to turn them into joys, and to gild their thorns with glory. That holy tongue which was parched with heat, streamed forth rivulets of holy doctrine, which were to water all the world, to turn our deserts into paradise. And though he begged water at Jacob's well, yet Jacob drank at his: for at his charge all Jacob's flocks and family were sustained, and by him Jacob's posterity were made honourable and redeemed. But because this 'well was deep,' and the woman 'had nothing to draw water with,' and of herself could not fathom so great a depth, therefore she refused him; just as we do, when we refuse to give drink to a thirsty disciple. Christ comes in that humble manner of address, under the veil of poverty or contempt; and we cannot see Christ from under that robe, and we send him away without an alms: little considering, that when he begs an alms of us, in the instance of any of his poor relatives, he asks of us but to give him occasion to give a blessing for an alms. Thus do the ministers of religion ask support; but when the

laws are not more just than many of the people are charitable, they shall fare as their Master did : they shall preach, but unless they can draw water themselves, they shall not drink. But, *si scirent*, if men did but know who it is that asks them, that it is Christ, either in his ministers, or Christ in his poor servants, certainly they could not be so obstructed in the issues of their justice and charity ; but would remember, that no honour could be greater, no love more fortunate, than to meet with an opportunity to be expressed in so noble a manner, that God himself is pleased to call his own relief.

5. When the disciples had returned from the town, whither they went to buy provision, they wondered to see the Master talking alone with the woman. They knew he never did so before ; they had observed him to be of a reserved deportment, and not only innocent, but secure from the dangers of malice and suspicion, in the matter of incontinence. The Jews were a jealous and forward people ; and as nothing will more blast the reputation of a prophet than effeminacy and wanton affections, so he knew no crime was sooner objected or harder cleared than that : of which, because commonly it is acted in privacy, men look for no probation, but pregnant circumstances and arguments of suspect ; so nothing can wash it off, until a man can prove a negative : and if he could, yet he is guilty enough in the estimate of the vulgar for having been accused. But then, because nothing is so destructive of the reputation of a governor, so contradictory to the authority and dignity of his person, as the low and baser appetites of uncleanness, and the consequent shame and scorn ; (insomuch that David, having fallen into it, prayed

God to confirm or establish him *spiritu principali*, with the spirit of a prince, the spirit of lust being uningenuous and slavish;) the holy Jesus, who was to establish a new law in the authority of his person, was highly curious so to demean himself, that he might be a person incapable of any such suspicions, and of a temper apt not only to answer the calumny, but also to prevent the jealousy. But yet, now he had a great design in hand, he meant to reveal to the Samaritans the coming of the Messias; and to this his discourse with the woman was instrumental. And in imitation of our great Master, spiritual persons, and the guides of others have been very prudent and reserved in their societies and intercourse with women. Heretics have served their ends upon the impotency of the sex, and having 'led captive silly women,' led them about as triumphs of lust; and knew no scandal greater than the scandal of heresy, and therefore sought not to decline any, but were infamous in their unwary and lustful mixtures. Simon Magus had his Helena partner of his lust and heresy; the author of the sect of the Nicolaitans (if St. Jerome was not misinformed) had troops of women; Marcion sent a woman as his emissary to Rome; Apelles had his Philomene; Montanus, Prisca and Maximilla; Donatus was served by Lucilla; Elpidius by Agape, Priscillian by Galla; and Arius spreads his nets by opportunity of his conversation with the prince's sister, and first he corrupted her, then he seduced the world.

6. But holy persons, preachers of true religion and holy doctrines, although they were careful by public homilies to instruct the female disciples that they who are heirs together with us of the same

hope, may be servants in the same discipline and institution; yet they remitted them to their husbands and guardians, to be taught at home.¹ And when any personal transactions concerning the needs of their spirit were of necessity to intervene between the priest and a woman, the action was done most commonly under public test, or if in private, yet with much caution and observation of circumstance, which might as well prevent suspicion, as preserve their innocence. Conversation and frequent and familiar address does too much rattle the ligaments and reverence of spiritual authority, and amongst the best persons is matter of danger. When the cedars of Libanus have been observed to fall, when David and Solomon have been dishonoured, he is a bold man that will venture further than he is sent in an errand by necessity, or invited by charity, or warranted by prudence. I deny not but some persons have made holy friendships with women: St. Athanasius with a devout and religious virgin, St. Chrysostom with Olympia, St. Jerome with Paula Romana, St. John with the elect lady, St. Peter and St. Paul with Petronilla and Thecla. And therefore it were a jealousy beyond the suspicion of monks and eunuchs, to think it impossible to have a chaste conversation with a distinct sex. 1, A pure and right intention; 2, an intercourse not extended beyond necessity or holy ends; 3, a short stay; 4, great modesty; 5, and the business of religion, will by God's grace hallow the visit, and preserve the friendship in its being spiritual, that it may not degenerate into carnal affection. And yet these are only advices useful when there is

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 35.

danger in either of the persons, or some scandal incident to the profession, that to some persons and in the conjunction of many circumstances are oftentimes not considerable.

7. When Jesus had resolved to reveal himself to the woman, he first gives her occasion to reveal herself to him, fairly insinuating an opportunity to confess her sins, that having purged herself from her impurity, she might be apt to entertain the article of the revelation of the *Messias*. And indeed a crime in our manners is the greatest indisposition of our understanding to entertain the truth and doctrine of the gospel; especially when the revelation contests against the sin, and professes open hostility to the lust: for faith being the gift of God and an illumination, the Spirit of God will not give this light to them that prefer their darkness before it; either the will must open the windows, or the light of faith will not shine into the chamber of the soul. ‘How can ye believe, (said our blessed Saviour) that receive honour one of another?’¹ Ambition and faith, believing God and seeking of ourselves, are incompetent and totally impossible. And therefore Serapion, bishop of Thmuis, spake like an angel, (saith Socrates,) saying, “That the mind which feedeth upon spiritual knowledge must thoroughly be cleansed. The irascible faculty must first be cured with brotherly love and charity, and the concupiscible must be suppressed with continency and mortification.”² Then may the understanding apprehend the mysteriousness of Christianity: for since Christianity is a holy doctrine, if there be any remanent affec-

¹ John, v. 44.

1. 1. . Hist. c. xxiii.

tions to a sin, there is in the soul a party disaffected 'to the entertainment of the institution, and we usually believe what we have a mind to. Our understandings, if a crime be lodged in the will, being like icterical eyes, transmitting the species to the soul with prejudice, disaffection, and colours of their own framing. If a preacher should discourse that there ought to be a parity amongst Christians, and that their goods ought to be in common, all men will apprehend that not princes and rich persons, but the poor and the servants, would soonest become the disciples, and believe the doctrines, because they are the only persons likely to get by them : and it concerns the other not to believe him, the doctrine being destructive of their interests. Just such a persuasion is every persevering love to a vicious habit ; it having possessed the understanding with fair opinions of it, and surprised the will with passion and desires, whatsoever doctrine is its enemy will with infinite difficulty be entertained. And we know a great experience of it in the article of the Messiah dying on the cross, which though infinitely true, yet, because ' to the Jews it was a scandal, and to the Greeks foolishness,' it could not be believed, they remaining in that indisposition ; that is, unless the will were first set right, and they willing to believe any truth, though for it they must disclaim their interest. Their understanding was blind, because the heart was hardened, and could not receive the impression of the greatest moral demonstration in the world.

8. The holy Jesus asked water of the woman, unsatisfying water ; but promised that himself, to them that ask him, would give waters of life, and satisfaction infinite : so distinguishing the pleasures

and appetites of this world from the desires and complacencies spiritual. Here we labour, but receive no benefit; we sow many times, and reap not; or reap, and do not gather in; or gather in, and do not possess; or possess, but do not enjoy; or if we enjoy we are still unsatisfied, it is with anguish of spirit and circumstances of vexation. A great heap of riches makes neither our clothes warm, nor our meat more nutritive, nor our beverage more pleasant; and it feeds the eye, but never fills it, but, like drink to an hydropic person, increases the thirst, and promotes the torment. But the grace of God, though but like a grain of mustard-seed, fills the furrows of the heart; and as the capacity increases, itself grows up in equal degrees, and never suffers any emptiness or dissatisfaction, but carries content and fulness all the way: and the degrees of augmentation are not steps and near approaches to satisfaction, but increasings of the capacity: the soul is satisfied all the way, and receives more, not because it wanted any, but that it can now hold more, is more receptive of felicities. And in every minute of sanctification there is so excellent a condition of joy and high satisfaction, that the very calamities, the afflictions and persecutions of the world are turned into felicities by the activity of the prevailing ingredient; like a drop of water falling into a tun of wine, it is ascribed into a new family, losing its own nature by a conversion into the more noble: for now that all passionate desires are dead, and there is nothing remanent that is vexatious, the peace, the serenity, the quiet sleeps, the evenness of spirit, and contempt of things below, remove the soul from all neighbourhood of displeasure, and place it at the foot of the

throne, whither when it is ascended, it is possessed of felicities eternal. These were the waters which were given us to drink, when with the rod of God the rock Christ Jesus was smitten. The Spirit of God moves for ever upon these waters : and when the angel of the covenant hath stirred the pool, whoever descends hither shall find health and peace, joys spiritual, and the satisfactions of eternity.

THE PRAYER.

O holy Jesus, fountain of eternal life, thou spring of joy and spiritual satisfactions, let the holy stream of blood and water issuing from thy sacred side cool the thirst, soften the hardness, and refresh the barrenness of my desert soul ; that I, thirsting after thee, as the wearied hart after the cool stream, may despise all the vainer complacencies of this world, refuse all societies but such as are safe, pious, and charitable, mortify all sottish appetites, and may desire nothing but thee, seek none but thee, and rest in thee with entire dereliction of my own captive inclinations ; that the desires of nature may pass into desires of grace, and my thirst and my hunger may be spiritual, and my hopes placed in thee, and the expresses of my charity upon thy relatives, and all the parts of my life may speak my love and obedience to thy commandments : that thou possessing my soul and all its faculties during my whole life, I may possess thy glories in the fruition of a blessed eternity ; by the light of thy gospel here and the streams of thy grace being guided to thee, the fountain of life and glory, there to be inebriated with the waters of Paradise, with joy, and love, and contemplation, adoring and admiring the beauties of the Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

*Considerations upon Christ's first Preaching, and the
Accidents happening about that time.*

1. WHEN John was cast into prison, then began Jesus to preach; not only because the ministry of John, by order of divine designation, was to precede the publication of Jesus, but also upon prudent considerations and designs of Providence, lest two great personages at once upon the theatre of Palestine might have been occasion of divided thoughts, and these have determined upon a schism, some professing themselves to be of Christ, some of John; for once an offer was made of a dividing question, by the spite of the Pharisees: 'Why do the disciples of John fast often, and thy disciples fast not?' But when John went off from the scene, then Jesus appeared like the sun in succession to the morning star; and there were no divided interests upon mistake, or the fond adherences of the followers. And although the holy Jesus would certainly have cured all accidental inconveniences which might have happened in such accidents, yet this may become a precedent to all prelates, to be prudent in avoiding all occasions of a schism, and rather than divide a people, submit and relinquish an opportunity of preaching to their inferiors, as knowing that God is better served by charity than a homily; and if my modesty made me resign to my inferior, the advantages of honour to God by the cessions of humility are of greater consideration than the smaller and accidental advantages of better-penned and more accurate discourses. But our blessed Lord, designing to gather disciples, did it in the manner of the more extraordinary persons

and doctors of the Jews, and particularly of the Baptist: he initiated them into the institution by the solemnity of a baptism; but yet he was pleased not to minister it in his own person. His apostles were baptized in John's baptism, said Tertulian; ¹ or else St. Peter only was baptized by his Lord, and he baptized the rest. However, the Lord was pleased to depute the ministry of his servants, that so he might constitute a ministry; that he might reserve it to himself as a speciality to baptize with the Spirit, as his servants did with water; that he might declare that the efficacy of the rite did not depend upon the dignity of the minister, but his own institution and the holy covenant; and lastly, lest they who were baptized by him in person might please themselves above their brethren, whose needs were served by a lower ministry.

2. The holy Jesus, the great physician of our souls, now entering upon his cure and the diocess of Palestine, which was afterwards enlarged to the pale of the catholic church, was curious to observe all advantages of prudence for the benefit of souls, by the choice of place; by quitting the place of his education, which, because it had been poor and humble, was apt to procure contempt to his doctrine, and despite to his person; by fixing in Capernaum, which had the advantage of popularity, and the opportunity of extending the benefit, yet had not the honour and ambition of Jerusalem; that the ministers of religion might be taught to seek and desire employment in such circumstances which may serve the end of God, but not of ambition; to promote the interest of souls, but not the

¹ Lib. de Baptism.

Inordination of lower appetites. Jesus quitted his natural and civil interests, when they were less consistent with the end of God and his prophetic office; and considered not his mother's house and the vicinage in the accounts of religion, beyond those other places in which he might better do his Father's work. In which a forward piety might behold the insinuation of a duty to such persons, who by rights of law and custom were so far instrumental to the cure of souls, as to design the persons; they might do but duty if they first considered the interests of souls before the advantages of their kindred and relatives. And although, if all things else be alike, they may in equal dispositions prefer their own before strangers, yet it were but reason that they should first consider sadly if the men be equal, before they remember that they are of their kindred, and not let this consideration be an ingredient into the former judgment. And another degree of liberty yet there is: if our kindred be persons apt and holy, and without exceptions either of law, or prudence, or religion, we may do them advantages before others who have some degrees of learning and improvement beyond the other: or else no man might lawfully prefer his kindred, unless they were absolutely the ablest in a diocese or kingdom; which doctrine were a snare; apt to produce scruples to the consciences rather than advantages to the cure. But then also patrons should be careful that they do not account their clerks by an estimate taken from comparison with unworthy candidates, set up on purpose, that when we choose our kindred, we may abuse our consciences, by saying, we have fulfilled our trust, and made election of the more worthy. In these

and the like cases, let every man who is concerned deal with justice, nobleness, and sincerity, with the simplicity of a Christian, and the wisdom of a man; without tricks and stratagems, to disadvantage the church by doing temporal advantages to his friend or family.

3. The blessed Master began his office with a sermon of repentance, as his decessor, John the Baptist, did in his ministrations; to tell the world that the new covenant, which was to be established by the mediation and office of the holy Jesus, was a covenant of grace and favour, not established upon works, but upon promises, and remission of right on God's part, and remission of sins on our part. The law was a covenant of works; and whoever prevaricated any of its sanctions in a considerable degree, he stood sentenced by it without any hopes of restitution supplied by the law. And therefore it was the covenant of works, not because good works were then required more than now, or because they had more efficacy than now; but because all our hopes did rely upon the perfection of works and innocence, without the suppletories of grace, pardon, and repentance. But the gospel is therefore a covenant of grace, not that works are excluded from our duty, or from co-operating to heaven, but that, because there is in it so much mercy, the imperfections of the works are made up by the grace of Jesus, and the defects of innocence are supplied by the substitution of repentance. Abatements are made for the infirmities and miseries of humanity; and if we do our endeavour now, after the manner of men, the faith of Jesus Christ, that is, conformity to his laws, and submission to his doctrine, entitles us to the grace he hath pur-

chased for us ; that is, our sins for his sake shall be pardoned. So that the law and the gospel are not opposed barely upon the title of faith and works, but as the covenant of faith and the covenant of works. In the faith of a Christian works are the great ingredient and the chief of the constitution ; but the gospel is not a covenant of works ; that is, it is not an agreement upon the stock of innocence without allowances of repentance, requiring obedience in rigour and strictest estimate. But the gospel requires the holiness of a Christian, and yet after the manner of a man : for, always provided that we do not allow to ourselves a liberty, but endeavour with all our strength, and love with all our soul, that which, if it were upon our allowance, would be required at our hands, now that it is against our will, and highly contested against, is put upon the stock of Christ, and allowed to us by God in the accounts of pardon by the merits of Jesus, by the covenant of the gospel. And this is the repentance and remission of sins which John first preached upon the approximation of the kingdom, and Christ at the first manifestation of it, and the apostles afterward in the name of Jesus.

4. Jesus now having begun his preaching, began also to gather his family ; and first called Simon and Andrew, then James and John ; at whose vocation he wrought a miracle, which was a signification of their office, and the success of it ; a draught of fishes so great and prodigious, that it convinced them that he was a person very extraordinary, whose voice the fishes heard, and came at his call : and since he designed them to become fishers of men, although themselves were as unlikely instruments to persuade men as the voice of

the Son of man to command fishes, yet they should prevail in so great numbers, that the whole world should run after them, and upon their summons come into the net of the gospel, becoming disciples of the glorious Nazarene. St. Peter, the first time that he threw his net, at the descent of the Holy Ghost in Pentecost, caught three thousand men; and at one sermon sometimes the princes of a nation have been converted, and the whole land presently baptized; and the multitudes so great, that the apostles were forced to design some men to the ministration of baptism, by way of peculiar office; and it grew to be work enough, the easiness of the ministry being made busy and full of employment where a whole nation became disciples. And indeed the doctrine is so holy, the principle so divine, the instruments so supernatural, the promises so glorious, the revelation so admirable, the rites so mysterious, the whole fabric of the discipline so full of wisdom, persuasion, and energy, that the infinite numbers of the first conversions were not so great a wonder, as that there are so few now: every man calling himself Christian, but few having that power of godliness which distinguishes Christian from a word and an empty name. And the word is now the same, and the arguments greater, (for some have been growing ever since, as the prophecies have been fulfilled,) and the sermons more, and the spirit the same; and yet such diversity of operations, that we hear and read the sermons and dictates evangelical, as we do a romance, but that it is with less passion, but altogether as much unconcerned as with a story of Salmanasar or Ibrahim Bassa. For we do not leave one vice, nor reject one lust, nor deny

one impetuous temptation the more for the four gospels' sake, and all St. Paul's epistles mingled in the argument. And yet all think themselves fishes within Christ's net, and the prey of the gospel. And it is true they are so; for 'the kingdom is like unto a net, which inclosed fishes good and bad:' but this shall be of small advantage, when the net shall be drawn to the shore, and the separation made.

5. When Jesus called those disciples, they had been 'fishing all night and caught nothing;' but when Christ bade them 'let down the net,' they took multitudes: to show to us that the success of our endeavours is not in proportion to our labours, but the divine assistance and benediction. It is not the excellency of the instrument, but the capacity of the subject, nor yet this alone, but the aptness of the application, nor that without an influence from heaven, can produce the fruits of a holy persuasion and conversion. 'Paul may plant, and Apollos may water; but God gives the increase.' Indeed, when we let down the nets at the divine appointment, the success is the more probable, and certainly God will bring benefit to the place, or honour to himself, or salvation to them that will obey, or conviction to them that will not: but whatever the fruit be in respect of others, the reward shall be great to themselves. And therefore St. Paul did not say he had profited, but, 'he had laboured more than they all,' as knowing the divine acceptance would take its account in proportion to our endeavours and intendments; not by commensuration to the effect, which being without us, depending upon God's blessing and the co-operation of the recipients, can be no ingredient into

our account. But this also may help to support the weariness of our hopes, and the protraction and deferring of our expectation, if a laborious prelate and an assiduous preacher have but few returns to his many cares and greater labours. A whole night a man may labour, (the longest life is no other,) and yet catch nothing; and then the Lord may visit us with his special presence, and more forward assistance, and the harvest may grow up with the swiftness of a gourd, and the fruitfulness of olives, and the plaisance of the vine, and the strength of wheat; and whole troops of penitents may arise from the darkness of their graves at the call of one sermon, even when he pleases: and till then we must be content that we do our duty, and lay the consideration of the effect at the feet of Jesus.

6. In the days of the patriarchs, the governors of the Lord's people were called shepherds; so was Moses, and so was David. In the days of the gospel they are shepherds still, but with the addition of a new appellative, for now they are called fishers. Both the callings were honest, humble and laborious, watchful and full of trouble; but now that both the titles are conjunct, we may observe the symbol of an implicit and folded duty. There is much simplicity and care in the shepherd's trade; there is much craft and labour in the fisher's: and a prelate is to be both full of piety to his flock, and careful of their welfare; and, because in the political and spiritual sense too, feeding and governing are the same duty, it concerns them that have cure of souls to be discreet and wary, observant of advantages, laying such baits for the people as may entice them into the

nets of Jesus's discipline. 'But being crafty I caught you,' saith St. Paul, for he was a fisher too. And so must spiritual persons be fishers to all spiritual senses of watchfulness, and care, and prudence: only they must not fish for preferment and ambitious purposes, but must say with the king of Sodom, *Date nobis animus, cætera vos tollite*; which St. Paul renders, 'We seek not yours, but you.' And in order to such acquist, the purchase of souls, let them have the diligence and the craft of the fishers, the watchfulness and care of shepherds, the prudence of politics, the tenderness of parents, the spirit of government, the wariness of observation, great knowledge of the dispositions of their people, and experience of such advantages by means of which they may serve the ends of God and of salvation upon their souls.

7. When Peter had received the fruits of a rich miracle, in the prodigious and prosperous draught of fishes, he instantly 'falls down at the feet of Jesus,' and confesses himself a sinner, and unworthy the presence of Christ. In which confession I not only consider the conviction of his understanding by the testimony of the miracle, but the modesty of his spirit, who in his exaltation, and the joy of a sudden and happy success, retired into humility and consideration of his own unworthiness; lest, as it happens in sudden joys, the lavishness of his spirit should transport him to intemperance, to looser affections, to vanity and rashness, less becoming the severity and government of a disciple of so great a master. For in such great and sudden accidents, men usually are dissolved and melted into joy and inconsideration, and let fly all their severe principles and discipline

of manners, till, as Peter here did, though to another purpose, they say to Christ, 'Depart from me, O Lord:' as if such excellencies of joys, like the lesser stars, did disappear at the presence of him, who is the fountain of all joys regular and just. When the spirits of the body have been bound up by the cold winter air, the warmth of the spring makes so great an aperture of the passages, and by consequence such dissolution of spirits, in the presence of the sun, that it becomes the occasion of fevers and violent diseases: just such a thing is a sudden joy, in which the spirits leap out from their cells of austerity and sobriety, and are warmed into fevers and wildnesses, and forfeiture of all judgment and vigorous understanding. In these accidents the best advice is, to temper and allay our joys with some instant consideration of the vilest of our sins,¹ the shamefulness of our disgraces, the most dolorous accidents of our lives, the worst of our fears, with meditation of death, or the terrors of doomsday, or the unimaginable misery of damned and accursed spirits. For such considerations as these are good instruments of sobriety, and are correctives to the malignity of excessive joys or temporal prosperities, which, like minerals, unless allayed by art, prey upon the spirits, and become the union of a contradiction, being turned into mortal medicines.

8. At this time 'Jesus preached to the people from the ship,' which, in the fancies and tropical discourses of the old doctors, signifies the church, and declares that the homilies of order and authority must be delivered from the oracle: they that

¹ *Simul et quod gaudes et quod times contrahe. Seneca.*

preach must be sent, and God hath appointed tutors and instructors of our consciences by special designation and peculiar appointment. If they that preach do not make their sermons from the ship, their discourses either are the false murmurs of heretics and false shepherds, or else of thieves and invaders of authority, or corrupters of discipline and order. For God, that loves to hear us in special places, will also be heard himself by special persons: and since he sent his angels ministers to convey his purposes of old, then when 'the law was ordained by angels, as by the hands of a mediator;' now also he will send his servants the sons of men, since the new law was ordained by the Son of man, who is the Mediator between God and man in the new covenant. And therefore in the ship Jesus preached; but he had first caused it to put off from the land, to represent to us, that the ship in which we preach must be put off from the vulgar communities of men, separate from the people, by the designation of special appointment and of special holiness: that is, they neither must be common men, nor of common lives, but consecrated by order, and hallowed by holy living; lest the person want authority in destitution of a divine character, and his doctrine lose its energy and power when the life is vulgar, and hath nothing in it holy and extraordinary.

9. The holy Jesus in the choice of his apostles was resolute and determined to make election of persons bold and confident; (for so the Galileans were observed naturally to be, and Peter was the boldest of the twelve, and a good sword-man, till

¹ Gal. iii. 19.

the spirit of his Master had fastened his sword within the scabbard, and charmed his spirit into quietness;) but he never chose any of the Scribes and Pharisees, none of the doctors of the law, but persons ignorant and unlearned. Which, in designs and institutions whose divinity is not demonstrated from other arguments, would seem an art of concealment and distrust. But in this, which derives its rays from the fountain of wisdom most openly and infallibly, it is a contestation against the powers of the world upon the interests of God, that he who does all the work might have all the glory, and in the productions in which he is fain to make the instruments themselves, and give them capacity and activity, every part of the operation and causality and effect may give to God the same honour he had from the creation, for his being the only workman; with the addition of those degrees of excellency, which, in the work of redemption of man, are beyond that of his creation and first being.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal Jesu, Lord of the creatures, and Prince of the catholic church, to whom all creatures obey, in acknowledgment of thy supreme dominion, and all according to thy disposition co-operate to the advancement of thy kingdom, be pleased to order the affairs and accidents of the world, that all things in their capacity may do the work of the gospel, and co-operate to the good of the elect, and retrench the growth of vice, and advance the interests of virtue. Make all the states and orders of men disciples of thy holy institution: let princes worship thee and defend religion; let thy clergy do thee honour **by** personal zeal, and vigilancy over their flocks; let all the

world submit to the scepter, and praise thy righteousness, and adore thy judgments, and revere thy laws. And in the multitudes of thy people within the enclosure of thy nets, let me also communicate in the offices of a strict and religious duty, that I may know thy voice, and obey thy call, and entertain thy holy Spirit, and improve my talents; that I may also communicate in the blessings of the church; and when the nets shall be drawn to the shore, and the angels shall make separation of the good fishes from the bad, I may not be rejected, or thrown into those seas of fire which shall afflict the enemies of thy kingdom, but be admitted into the societies of saints, and the everlasting communion of thy blessings and glories, O blessed and eternal JESU. Amen.

DISCOURSE IX.

Of Repentance.

I. THE whole doctrine of the gospel is comprehended by the Holy Ghost in these two summaries, faith and repentance;¹ that those two potent and imperious faculties which command our lower powers, which are the fountain of actions, the occasion and capacity of laws, and the title to reward or punishment, the will and the understanding; that is, the whole man considered in his superior faculties, may become subjects of the kingdom, servants of Jesus, and heirs of glory. Faith supplies our imperfect conceptions, and corrects our ignorance, making us to distinguish good from evil, not only by the proportions of reason, and custom, and old laws, but by the new standard of the gospel; it teaches us all those duties which

¹ Acts, xx. 21.

were enjoined us in order to a participations of mighty glories; it brings our understanding into subjection, making us apt to receive the Spirit for our guide, Christ for our Master, the gospel for our rule, the laws of Christianity for our measure of good and evil; and it supposes us naturally ignorant, and comes to supply those defects which in our understandings were left after the spoils of innocence and wisdom made in Paradise upon Adam's prevarication, and continued and increased by our neglect, evil customs, voluntary deceptions, and infinite prejudices. And as faith presupposes our ignorance, so repentance presupposes our malice and iniquity. The whole design of Christ's coming and the doctrines of the gospel being to recover us from a miserable condition, from ignorance to spiritual wisdom, by the conduct of faith; and from a vicious, habitually-depraved life and ungodly manners to the purity of the sons of God, by the instrument of repentance.

2. And this is a loud publication of the excellency and glories of the gospel, and the felicities of man over all the other instances of creation. The angels, who were more excellent spirits than human souls, were not comprehended and made safe within a covenant and provisions of repentance. Their first act of volition was their whole capacity of a blissful or miserable eternity: they made their own sentence when they made their first election; and having such excellent knowledge, and no weaknesses to prejudice and trouble their choice, what they first did was not capable of repentance; because they had at first, in their intuition and sight, all which could afterwards bring them to repentance: but weak man, who knows

first by elements, and after long study learns a syllable, and in good time gets a word, could not at first know all those things which were sufficient or apt to determine his choice; but as he grew to understand more, saw more reasons to rescind his first elections. The angels had a full peremptory will and a satisfied understanding at first, and therefore were not to mend their first act by a second contradictory. But poor man hath a will always strongest when his understanding is weakest, and chooseth most when he is least able to determine; and therefore is most passionate in his desires, and follows his object with greatest earnestness, when he is blindest, and hath the least reason so to do: and therefore God, pitying man, begins to reckon his choices to be criminal, just in the same degree as he gives him understanding. The violences and unreasonable actions of childhood are no more remembered by God, than they are understood by the child. The levities and passions of youth are not aggravated by the imputation of malice, but are sins of a lighter dye, because reason is not yet impressed and marked upon them with characters and tincture in grain: but he who (when he may choose, because he understands) shall choose the evil and reject the good, stands marked with a deep guilt, and hath no excuse left to him, but as his degrees of ignorance left his choice the more imperfect: and because every sinner, in the style of Scripture, is a fool, and hath an election as imperfect as is the action; that is, as great a declension from prudence as it is from piety, and the man understands as imperfectly as he practices; therefore God sent his Son

to 'take upon him (not the nature of angels, but) the seed of Abraham,'¹ and to propound salvation upon such terms as were possible; that is, upon such a piety which relies upon experience, and trial of good and evil; and hath given us leave, if we choose amiss at first, to choose again, and choose better; Christ having undertaken to pay for the issues of our first follies, to make up the breach made by our first weaknesses and abused understandings.

3. But as God gave us this mercy by Christ, so he also revealed it by him. He first used the authority of a lord, and a creator, and a lawgiver; he required obedience indeed upon reasonable terms, upon the instance of but a few commandments at first, which, when he afterwards multiplied, he also appointed ways to expiate the smaller irregularities; but left them eternally bound without remedy who should do any great violence or crime. But then he bound them but to a temporal death. Only this, as an eternal death was also tacitly implied, so also a remedy was secretly ministered, and repentance particularly preached by homilies distinct from the covenant of Moses's law. 'The law allowed no repentance for greater crimes; 'he that was convicted of adultery was to die without mercy:'² but God pitied the miseries of man, and the inconveniences of the law, and sent Christ to suffer for the one, and remedy the other. 'For so it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.'³

¹ Heb. ii. 16.

² Lev. xx. 10.

³ Luke, xxiv. 46, 47

And now this is the last and only hope of man, who in his natural condition is imperfect, in his customs vicious, in his habits impotent and criminal. Because man did not remain innocent, it became necessary he should be penitent, and that this penitence should by some means be made acceptable; that is, become the instrument of his pardon, and restitution of his hope. Which, because it is an act of favour, and depends wholly upon the divine dignation, and was revealed to us by Jesus Christ, who was made not only the prophet and preacher, but the Mediator of this new covenant and mercy; it was necessary we should become disciples of the holy Jesus, and servants of his institution; that is, run to him, to be made partakers of the mercies of this new covenant, and accept of him such conditions as he should require of us.

4. This covenant is then consigned to us when we first come to Christ; that is, when we first profess ourselves his disciples and his servants, disciples of his doctrine, and servants of his institution; that is, in baptism, in which Christ who died for our sins makes us partakers of his death. For 'we are buried by baptism into his death,' saith St. Paul. Which was also represented in ceremony, by the immersion appointed to be the rite of that sacrament: and then it is that God pours forth, together with the sacramental waters, a salutary and holy fountain of grace, to wash the soul from all its stain, and impure adherences: and therefore this first access to Christ is in the style of Scripture called 'regeneration,' the 'new birth,' 'redemption,' 'renovation,' 'expiation,' or 'atonement with God,'

¹ Rom. vi. 4

and 'justification.'¹ And these words in the New Testament relate principally and properly to the abolition of sins committed before baptism: for we are 'justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past: to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness:'² and this is that which St. Paul calls 'justification by faith,'³ that 'boasting might be excluded,'⁴ and the grace of God by Jesus made exceeding glorious: for this being the proper work of Christ, the first entertainment of a disciple, and manifestation of that state which is first given him as a favour, and next intended as a duty, is a total abolition of the precedent guilt of sin, and leaves nothing remaining that can condemn: we then freely receive the entire and perfect effect of that atonement which Christ made for us, we are put into a condition of innocence and favour. And this, I say, is done regularly in baptism; and St. Paul expresses it to this sense: after he had enumerated a series of vices subjected in many, he adds, 'and such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified.'⁵ There is nothing of the old guilt remanent: when 'ye were washed, ye were sanctified;' or, as the Scripture calls it in another place, 'ye were redeemed from your vain conversation.'⁶

5. For this grace was the formality of the covenant: 'Repent, and believe the gospel.'⁷ 'Repent, and be converted,' (so it is in St. Peter's sermon,) 'and your sins shall be done away';⁸ that

¹ 1 Pet. iii. 21; Rom. v. 1; Tit. iii. 5, 7; Rom. iii. 26; Gal. ii. 16.

² Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26.

³ Ibid. verse 28.

⁴ Ibid. verse 27.

⁵ 1 Cor. vi. 11.

⁶ 1 Pet. i. 18.

⁷ Mar. i. 15.

⁸ Acts, iii. 19.

was the covenant. But that Christ chose baptism for its signature appears in the parallel, 'Repent, and be baptized, and wash away your sins.'¹ 'For Christ loved his church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish.'² The sanctification is integral, the pardon is universal and immediate.

6. But here the process is short, no more at first but this, 'Repent, and be baptized, and wash away your sins.' Which baptism, because it was speedily administered, and yet not without the preparatives of faith and repentance, it is certain those predispositions were but instruments of reception, actions of great facility, of small employment, and such as, supposing the person not unapt, did confess the infiniteness of the divine mercy, and fulness of the redemption,³ and is called by the apostle, 'a being justified freely.'⁴

7. Upon this ground it is, that by the doctrine of the church heathen persons, 'strangers from the covenant of grace,' were invited to a confession of faith, and dereliction of false religions, with a promise that at the very first resignation of their persons to the service of Jesus, they should obtain full pardon. It was St. Cyprian's counsel to old Demetrianus, "Now, in the evening of thy days, when thy soul is almost expiring, repent of thy sins, believe in Jesus, and turn Christian; and although

¹ Acts, ii. 38; Mar. xvi. 16. ² Eph. v. 25, 26, 27.

³ Justin Mart. Dial. cum. Tryph. Act. vii. 37; x. 47; xvi. 15, 33.

⁴ Rom. iii. 24.

thou art almost in the embraces of death, yet thou shalt be comprehended of immortality." *Baptizatus ad horam securus hinc exit*, saith Austin, " a baptized person dying immediately shall live eternally and gloriously." And this was the case of the thief upon the cross: he confessed Christ, and repented of his sins, and begged pardon, and did acts enough to facilitate his first access to Christ, and but to remove the hinderances of God's favour: then he was redeemed and reconciled to God by the death of Jesus; that is, he was pardoned with a full, instantaneous, integral and clear pardon; with such pardon which declared the glory of God's mercies, and the infiniteness of Christ's merits, and such as required a mere reception and entertainment on man's part.

8. But then we, having received so great a favour, enter into a covenant to correspond with a proportionable endeavour; the benefit of absolute pardon, that is, salvation of our souls, being not to be received till ' the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord ;' all the interval we have promised to live a holy life, in obedience to the whole discipline of Jesus. That is the condition on our part; and if we prevaricate that the mercy shown to the blessed thief is no argument of hope to us, because he was saved by the mercies of the first access, which corresponds to the remission of sins we receive in baptism; and we shall perish by breaking our own promises and obligations which Christ passed upon us, when he made with us the covenant of an entire and gracious pardon.

9. For in the precise covenant there is nothing else described but pardon so given and ascertained

¹ Acts, iii. 19.

upon an obedience persevering to the end. And this is clear in all those places of Scripture which express a holy and innocent life to have been the purpose and design of Christ's death for us, and redemption of us from the former estate. 'Christ bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead unto sin, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye are healed.'¹ [*Exinde*] from our being 'healed,' from our 'dying unto sin,' from our being 'buried with Christ,' from our being 'baptized into his death;' the end of Christ's dying for us is, 'that we should live unto righteousness.' Which was also highly and prophetically expressed by St. Zachary in his divine ecstasy:— 'This was the oath which he sware to our forefather Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.'² And St. Paul discourses to this purpose pertinently and largely: 'For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,' [*Hi sunt angeli quibus in lavacro renunciarimus*, saith Tertullian, "Those are the evil angels, the devil and his works, which we deny or renounce in baptism,"] 'we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;'³—that is, lead a whole life in the pursuit of universal 'holiness.' (Sobriety, justice, and godliness being the proper language to signify our religion and respects to God, to our neighbours, and to ourselves.) And that this was

¹ Vide part iii. Consid. of Crucifix. of Jesus, 1 Pet. ii. 4.

² Luke, i. 73, &c. ³ Tit. ii. 11, 12.

the very end of our dying in baptism, and the design of Christ's manifestation of our redemption, he adds, 'Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus, who gave himself for us to this very purpose, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.'¹ Purifying a people peculiar to himself is cleansing it in the laver of regeneration, and appropriating it to himself in the rites of admission and profession. Which plainly designs the first consignation of our redemption to be in baptism; and that Christ there 'cleansing' his church 'from every spot or wrinkle,' made a covenant with us, that we should renounce all our sins, and he should cleanse them all, and then that we should abide in that state. Which is also very explicitly set down by the same apostle in that divine and mysterious epistle to the Romans: 'How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?'² Well, what then? 'Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into his death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.' That is the end and mysteriousness of baptism, it is a consignation into the death of Christ, and we die with him that once; that is, die to sin, that we may for ever after live the life of righteousness. 'Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin;'³ that is,

¹ Tit. ii. 13, 14.² Rom. vi. 2, 3, 4.³ Ib. vi. 6.

from the day of our baptism to the day of our death. And, therefore, God, who knows the weaknesses on our part, and yet the strictness and necessity of conserving baptismal grace by the covenant evangelical, hath appointed the auxiliaries of the Holy Spirit to be ministered to all baptized people in the holy rite of confirmation, that it might be made possible to be done by divine aids, which is necessary to be done by the divine commandments.

10. And this might not be improperly said to be the meaning of those words of our blessed Saviour, 'He that speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but he that speaks a word against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him:' that is, those sins which were committed in infidelity, before we became disciples of the Holy Jesus, are to be remitted in baptism and our first profession of the religion; but the sins committed after baptism and confirmation, in which we receive the Holy Ghost, and by which the Holy Spirit is grieved, are to be accounted for with more severity. And, therefore, the primitive church, understanding our obligations according to this discourse, admitted not any to holy orders who had lapsed and fallen into any sin of which she could take cognizance, that is, such who had not kept the integrity of their baptism; but sins committed before baptism, were no impediments to the susception of orders, because they were absolutely extinguished in baptism. This is the nature of the covenant we made in baptism, that is, the grace of the gospel, and the effect of faith and repentance; and it is expected we should so remain. For it is nowhere expressed to

be the mercy and intention of the covenant evangelical, that this redemption should be any more than once ; or that repentance, which is in order to it, can be renewed to the same or so great purposes and present effects.

11. But after we are once reconciled in baptism, and put entirely into God's favour, when we have once been redeemed, if we then fall away into sin, we must expect God's dealing with us in another manner and to other purposes. Never must we expect to be so again justified, and upon such terms as formerly ; the best days of our repentance are interrupted. Not that God will never forgive them that sin after baptism, and recover by repentance ; but that restitution by repentance after baptism is another thing than the first redemption. No such entire, clear, and integral, determinate, and presential effects of repentance ; but an imperfect, little, growing, uncertain, and hazardous reconciliation ; a repentance that is always in production, a renovation by parts, a pardon that is revocable, a salvation to be wrought by fear and trembling : all our remanent life must be in bitterness, our hopes alloyed with fears, our meat attempered with coliquintida, and death is in the pot. As our best actions are imperfect, so our greatest graces are but possibilities and aptnesses to a reconciliation, and all our life we are working ourselves into that condition we had in baptism, and lost by our relapse. As the habit lessens, so does the guilt ; as our virtues are imperfect, so is the pardon : and because our piety may be interrupted, our state is uncertain, till our possibilities of sin are ceased, till our fight is finished, and the victory therefore made

are, because there is no more fight. And it is remarkable, that St. Peter gives counsel to live holily in pursuance of our redemption, of our calling, and of our escaping from that corruption that is in the world through lust, lest we lose the benefit of our purgation,¹ to which, by way of antithesis, he opposes this: 'Wherefore the rather give diligence to make your calling and election sure;² and, 'if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.'³ Meaning, by the perpetuating our state of baptism and first repentance we shall never fall, but be in a sure estate; our calling and election shall be sure. But not if we fall; 'if we forget we were purged from our old sins:'⁴ if we forfeit our calling, we have also made our election unsure, movable, and disputable.

12. So that now the hopes of lapsed sinners rely upon another bottom. And as in Moses's law there was no revelation of repentance, but yet the Jews had hopes in God, and were taught the succours of repentance, by the homilies of the prophets and other accessory notices: so in the gospel the covenant was established upon faith and repentance, but it was consigned in baptism, and was verifiable only in the integrity of a following holy life, according to the measures of a man; not perfect, but sincere; not faultless, but heartily endeavoured: but yet the mercy of God in pardoning sinners lapsed after baptism was declared to us by collateral and indirect occasions; by the sermons of the apostles, and the commentaries of apostolical persons, who understood the meaning of the spirit, and the purposes of the

¹ 2 Pet. i. 4.² Ibid. i. 10.³ Vide etiam Col. i. 21, 22, 23.⁴ 2 Pet. i. 9.

divine mercy, and those other significations of his will, which the blessed Jesus left upon record in other parts of his Testament, as in codicils annexed, besides the precise Testament itself. And it is certain, if in the covenant of grace there be the same involution of an after repentance as there is of present pardon upon past repentance and future sanctity, it is impossible to justify that a holy life and a persevering sanctity is enjoined by the covenant of the gospel: if, I say, in its first intention it be declared that we may as well, and upon the same terms, hope for pardon upon a recovery hereafter, as upon the perseverance in the present condition.

13. From these premises, we may soon understand what is the duty of a Christian in all his life, even to pursue his own undertaking made in baptism, or his first access to Christ, and redemption of his person from the guilt and punishment of sins. The state of a Christian is called in Scripture 'regeneration, spiritual life, walking after the spirit, walking in newness of life,' that is, 'a bringing forth fruits meet for repentance.' That repentance which, tied up in the same ligament with faith, was the disposition of a Christian to his regeneration and atonement, must have holy life in perpetual succession; for that is the apt and proper fruit of the first repentance, which John the Baptist preached as an introduction to Christianity, and as an entertaining the redemption by the blood of the covenant. And all that is spoken in the New Testament is nothing but a calling upon us to do what we promised in our regeneration, to perform that which was the design of Christ, who therefore redeemed us, and 'bare our sins in his

own body, that we might die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.'

14. This is that saying of St. Paul, 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord : looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you.'¹ Plainly saying, that unless we pursue the state of holiness and Christian communion into which we were baptized when we received the 'grace of God,'² we shall fail of the state of grace, and never come to see the glories of the Lord. And a little before: 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' That is the first state of our redemption, that is 'the covenant God made with us, to remember our sins no more, and to put his laws in our hearts and minds.'³ And this was done, 'when our bodies were washed with water, and our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience;' that is, in baptism. It remains then that we persist in the condition, that we may continue our title to the covenant; for so it follows: 'Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for if we sin wilfully after the profession, there remains no more sacrifice:'⁴ that is, if we hold not fast the profession of our faith, and continue not the condition of the covenant, but fall into a contrary state, we have forfeited the mercies of the covenant. So that all our hopes of blessedness, relying upon the covenant made with God in Christ Jesus, are ascertained

¹ Heb. xii. 14, 15.

² Ibid. x. 16, 17.

³ Ibid. x. 22.

⁴ Ibid. x. 23, 26.

upon us, by holding fast that profession, by retaining our hearts still sprinkled from an evil conscience, by following peace with all men and holiness: for by not failing of the grace of God, we shall not fail of our hopes, the mighty price of our high calling; but without all this we shall never see the face of God.

15. To the same purpose are all those places of Scripture, which entitle us to Christ and the Spirit upon no other condition but a holy life, and a prevailing, habitual, victorious grace. ‘Know you not your own selves, brethren, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?’¹ There are but two states of being in order to eternity, either a state of the inhabitation of Christ, or the state of reprobation: either Christ is in us, or we are reprobates. But what does that signify, to have ‘Christ dwelling in us?’ That also we learn at the feet of the same doctor: ‘If Christ be in you, the body is dead by reason of sin, but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness.’² The body of sin is mortified, and the life of grace is active, busy, and spiritual, in all them who are not in the state of reprobation. The parallel with that other expression of his, ‘They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.’³ If sin be vigorous, if it be habitual, if it be beloved, if it be not dead or dying in us, we are not of Christ’s portion, we belong not to him, nor he to us: ‘For whoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God:’⁴ that is,

¹ 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

² Gal. v. 24.

³ Rom. viii. 10.

⁴ 1 John, iii. 9.

every regenerate person is in a condition whose **very** being is a contradiction and an opposite design to sin. When he was regenerate and born anew of water and the Spirit, the seed of God, the original of piety, was put into him, and bidden to increase and multiply. The seed of God (in St. John) is the same with the word of God (in St. James) 'by which he begat us;'¹ and as long as this remains, a regenerate person cannot be given up to sin; for when he is, he quits his baptism, he renounces the covenant, he alters his relation to God in the same degree as he enters into a state of sin.

16. And yet this discourse is no otherwise to be understood than according to the design of the thing itself, and the purpose of God; that is, that it be a deep engagement and an effectual consideration for the necessity of a holy life: but at no hand let it be made an instrument of despair, nor an argument to lessen the influences of the divine mercy. For although the nicety and limits of the covenant being consigned in baptism, are fixed upon the condition of a holy and persevering uninterrupted sanctity; and our redemption is wrought but once, completed but once, we are but once absolutely, entirely, and presentially forgiven, and reconciled to God, this reconciliation being in virtue of the sacrifice, and this sacrifice applied in baptism is one, as baptism is one, and as the sacrifice is one; yet the mercy of God, besides this great feast, hath fragments, which the apostles and ministers spiritual are to gather up in baskets, and minister to the after-needs of indigent and necessitous disciples.

¹ James, i. 18.

17. And this we gather, as fragments are gathered, by respersed sayings, instances and examples of the Divine mercy recorded in holy Scripture. The holy Jesus commands us to 'forgive our brother seventy times seven times,' when he asks our pardon and implores our mercy. And since the Divine mercy is the pattern of ours, and is also procured by ours, the one being made the measure of the other, by way of precedent and by way of reward, God will certainly forgive us, as we forgive our brother. And it cannot be imagined God should oblige us to give pardon oftener than he will give it himself, especially since he hath expressed ours to be a title of a proportionable reception of his; and hath also commanded us to ask pardon all days of our life, even in our daily offices, and to beg it in the measure and rule of our own charity and forgiveness to our brother. And therefore God, in his infinite wisdom foreseeing our frequent relapses, and considering our infinite infirmities, appointed in his church an ordinary ministry of pardon, designing the minister to pray for sinners, and promising to accept him in that his advocacy, or that he would open or shut heaven respectively to his act on earth; that is, he would hear his prayers, and verify his ministry, to whom he hath 'committed the word of reconciliation.' This became a duty to Christian ministers, spiritual persons, that they should 'restore a person overtaken in a fault,'¹ that is, reduce him to the condition he begins to lose: that they should 'pray over sick persons,'² who are also commanded to confess their sins; and God hath promised that

¹ Gal. vi. 1.

² James, v. 14.

the sins they have committed shall be forgiven them. Thus St. Paul absolved the incestuous excommunicate Corinthian; in the person of Christ he forgave him.¹ And this also is the confidence St. John taught the Christian church upon the stock of the excellent mercy of God and propitiation of Jesus: ‘ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.’² Which discourse he directs to them who were Christians, already initiated into the institution of Jesus. And the epistles which the Spirit sent to the seven Asian churches, and were particularly addressed to the bishops, the angels of those churches, are exhortations, some to perseverance, some to repentance, that ‘ they may return from whence they are fallen.’³ And the case is so with us, that it is impossible we should be actually and perpetually free from sin in the long succession of a busy, and impotent, and a tempted conversation. And without these reserves of the Divine grace and after-emanations from the mercy-seat, no man could be saved; and the death of Christ would become inconsiderable to most of his greatest purposes; for none should have received advantages but newly-baptized persons, whose albs of baptism served them also for a winding-sheet. And therefore our baptism, although it does consign the work of God presently to the baptized

¹ *Εἴ τις ἐπίσκοπος ἢ πρεσβύτερος τὸν ἐπιστρέφοντα ἀπὸ ἁμαρτίας ἢ προσέχειται, ἀλλὰ ἀποβάλλεται, καθαιρέσθω, ὅτι λυπεῖ Χριστὸν τὸν εἰπόντα, Χαρὰ γίνεται ἐν τῷ ἕρανῳ ἐπὶ ἐνὶ ἁμαρτωλῶ μετανοῶντι.* Can. Apost. li.—“ If any bishop or presbyter receives not, but puts away a penitent sinner, let him be deposed; for he thereby grieves Christ, who says, ‘ there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.’ ”

² 1 John, i. 9.

³ Apocal. ii. 5.

person in great, certain, and entire effect, in order to the remission of what is past, in case the catechumen be rightly disposed or hinders not; yet it hath also influence upon the following periods of our life, and hath admitted us into a lasting state of pardon, to be renewed and actually applied by the sacrament of the Lord's-supper, and all other ministries evangelical, and so long as our repentance is timely, active, and effective.¹

18. But now, although it is infinitely certain that the gates of mercy stand open to sinners after baptism; yet it is some variety, and greater difficulty. He that renounces Christianity, and becomes apostate from his religion, not by a seeming abjuration under a storm, but by a voluntary and hearty dereliction, he seems to have quitted all that grace which he had received when he was illuminated, and to have lost the benefits of his redemption and former expiation. And I conceive this is the full meaning of those words of St. Paul, which are of highest difficulty and latent sense: 'For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, &c. if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.'² The reason is there subjoined, and more clearly explicated a little after: 'For if we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins;' for 'he hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of grace. The meaning is divers, according to the degrees of apostacy or relapse. They who fall away after they were once enlightened in baptism, and fel

¹ See Discourse vi. of Baptism.

² Heb. vi 4 6.

³ Heb. x. 26, 29.

all those blessed effects of the sanctification and the emanations of the Spirit, if it be into a contradictory state of sin and mancipation, and obstinate purposes to serve Christ's enemies; then 'there remains nothing but a fearful expectation of judgment:' but if the backsliding be but the interruption of the first sanctity by a single act, or an un-conformed, unresolved, unmalicious habit; then also 'it is impossible to renew them unto repentance,' viz. as formerly; that is, they can never be reconciled as before, integrally, fully, and at once, during this life: for that redemption and expiation was by baptism into Christ's death, and there are no more deaths of Christ, nor any more such sacramental consignations of the benefit of it; 'there is no more sacrifice for sins,' but the redemption is one, as the sacrifice is one in whose virtue the redemption does operate. And therefore the Novatians, who were zealous men, denied to the first sort of persons the peace of the church, and remitted them to the Divine judgment. The church herself was sometimes almost as zealous against the second sort of persons lapsed into capital crimes, granting to them repentance but once: but such disciplines consigning this truth, that every recession from the state of grace, in which by baptism we were established and consigned, is a further step from the possibilities of heaven, and so near a ruin, that the church thought them persons fit to be transmitted to a judicature immediately divine; as supposing either her power to be too little, or the other's malice too great, or else the danger too violent, or the scandal insupportable: for concerning such persons, who once were pious, holy, and forgiven,

(for so is every man and woman worthily and aptly baptized,) and afterwards fell into dissolution of manners, 'extinguishing the Holy Ghost, doing despite to the Spirit of grace, crucifying again the Lord of life;' that is, returning to such a condition from which they were once recovered, and could not otherwise be so but by the death of our dearest Lord; I say, concerning such persons the Scripture speaks very suspiciously, and to the sense and signification of an infinite danger: for if the speaking a word against the Holy Ghost be not to be pardoned here nor hereafter, what can we imagine to be the end of such impiety which 'crucifies the Lord of life, and puts him to an open shame,' which 'quenches the Spirit, doing despite to the Spirit of grace?' Certainly that is worse than speaking against him. And such is every person who falls into wilful apostacy from the faith, or does that violence to holiness which the other does to faith; that is, extinguishes the sparks of illumination, quenches the Spirit, and is habitually and obstinately criminal in any kind. For the same thing that atheism was in the first period of the world, and idolatry in the second, the same is apostacy in the last; it is a state wholly contradictory to all our religious relation to God, according to the nature and manner of the present communication. Only this last, because it is more malicious, and a declension from a greater grace, is something like the fall of angels. And of this the emperor Julian was a sad example.

19. But as these are degrees immediately next, and a little less, so the hopes of pardon are the more visible. Simon Magus spake a word, or at

least thought, against the Holy Ghost : he thought he was to be bought for money. Concerning him St. Peter pronounced, ‘ Thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity : yet repent, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.’¹ Here the matter was of great difficulty ; but yet there was a possibility left, at least no impossibility of recovery declared. And therefore St. Jude bids us, ‘ of some to have compassion, making a difference ; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire :’² meaning that their condition is only not desperate. And still in descent, retaining the same proportion, every lesser sin is easier pardoned, as better consisting with the state of grace : the whole Spirit is not destroyed, and the body of sin is not introduced ; Christ is not quite ejected out of possession, but like an oppressed prince, still continues his claim ; and such is his mercy that he will still do so, till all be lost, or that he is provoked by too much violence, or that antichrist is put in substitution, and ‘ sin reigns in our mortal body.’ So that I may use the words of St. John, ‘ These things I write unto you, that you sin not. But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is a propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.’³ That is plainly, although the design of the gospel be, that we should erect a throne for Christ to reign in our spirits, and this doctrine of innocence be therefore preached that we sin not yet if once be overtaken in a fault, despair not Christ is our advocate, and he is the propitiation

¹ Acts, viii. 20, 22, 23.

² Verse 22, 23.

³ 1 John, i. 1, 2.

he did propitiate the Father by his death, and the benefit of that we receive at our first access to him; but then he is our advocate too, and prays perpetually for our perseverance or restitution respectively. But this purpose is, and he is able so to do, 'to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory.'

20. This consideration I intend should relate to all Christians of the world. And although, by the present custom of the church, we are baptized in our infancy, and do not actually reap that fruit of present pardon which persons of a mature age in the primitive church did; (for we yet need it not, as we shall when we have passed the calentures of youth, which was the time which the wisest of our fathers in Christ chose for their baptism, as appears in the instance of St. Ambrose, St. Austin, and divers others;) yet we must remember, that there is baptism of the Spirit as well as of water. And whenever this happens, whether it be together with the baptism of water, as usually it was when only men and women of years of discretion were baptized; or whether it be ministered in the rite of confirmation, which is an admirable suppletory of an early baptism, and intended by the Holy Ghost for a corroborative of baptismal grace, and a defensative against danger; or that, lastly, it be performed by an internal and merely spiritual ministry, when we, by acts of our own election, verify the promise made in baptism, and so bring back the rite, by receiving the effect of baptism; that is, whenever the 'filth of our flesh is washed away,' and that we have 'the answer of a pure conscience towards God,' which St. Peter affirms to be the true baptism and which, by the purpose and design of God, it

expected we should not defer longer than a great reason or a great necessity enforces ; when our sins are first expiated, and the sacrifice and death of Christ is made ours, and we made God's by a more immediate title ; (which at some time or other happens to all Christians, that pretend to any hopes of heaven ;) then let us look to our standing, and 'take heed lest we fall.' When we once have tasted of the heavenly gift, and are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come ; that is, when we are redeemed by an actual mercy and presential application, which every Christian that belongs to God is at some time or other of his life ; then a fall into a deadly crime is highly dangerous, but a relapse into a contrary estate is next to desperate.

21. I represent this sad, but most true doctrine, in the words of St. Peter : ' If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome ; the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.'¹ So that a relapse, after a state of grace into a state of sin, into confirmed habits, is to us a great sign, and possibly in itself it is more than a sign, even a state of reprobation and final abscission.

22. The sum of all is this :—There are two states of like opposite terms. First, ' Christ redeems us

¹ 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21.

from our vain conversation,' and reconciles us to God, putting us into an entire condition of pardon, favour, innocence, and acceptance, and becomes our Lord and King, his Spirit dwelling and reigning in us. The opposite state to this, is that which in Scripture is called a 'crucifying the Lord of life,' a 'doing despite to the spirit of grace,' a 'being entangled in the pollutions of the world, the 'apostacy,' or 'falling away,' an impotency or disability to do good, viz. of such 'who cannot cease from sin' who are slaves of sin, and of whom 'sin reigns in their bodies.'¹ This condition is a full and integral deletery of the first: it is such a condition, which as it hath no holiness or remanent affections to virtue, so it hath no hope or revelation of a mercy, because all that benefit is lost which they received by the death of Christ, and the first being lost 'there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment.' But between these two states stand all those imperfections and single delinquencies, those slips and falls, those parts of recession and apostacy, those grievings of the Spirit: and so long as any thing of the first state is left, so long we are within the covenant of grace, so long we are within the ordinary limits of mercy and the divine compassion: we are in possibilities of recovery, and the same sacrifice of Christ hath its power over us: Christ is in his possession, though he be disturbed. But then our restitution consists upon the only condition of a renovation of our integrity: as are the degrees of our innocence, so are our degrees of confidence.

23. Now because the intermedial state is divi-

¹ 2 Pct. ii. 14.

sible, various, successive, and alterable; so also is our condition of pardon. Our flesh shall no more return as that of a little child, our wounds shall never be perfectly cured; but a scar, and pain, and danger of a relapse shall for ever afflict us. Our sins shall be pardoned by parts and degrees, to uncertain purposes, but with certain danger of being recalled again: and the pardon shall never be consummate till that day in which all things have their consummation.

24. And this is evident to have been God's usual dealing with all those upon whom his name is called. God pardoned David's sins of adultery and murder; but the pardon was but to a certain degree, and in a limited expression: 'God hath taken away thy sin, thou shalt not die.'¹ But this pardon was as imperfect as his condition was: 'nevertheless the child that is born unto thee, that shall die.' Thus God pardoned the Israelites at the importunity of Moses, and yet threatened to visit that sin upon them in the day of visitation. And so it is in Christianity: when once we have broke and discomposed the golden chain of vocation, election, and justification, which are entire links and methodical periods of our happiness when we first give up our names to Christ, for ever after our condition is imperfect; we have broken our covenant, and we must be saved by the exorcences and overflowings of mercy. Our whole endeavour must be to be reduced to the state of our baptismal innocence and integrity, because in that the covenant was established. And since our life is full of defaultances, and all our endeavours can never make us such as Christ made us, and yet upon that con-

¹ 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14.

dition our hopes of happiness were established, I mean, of remaining such as he had made us; as are the degrees of our restitution and access to the first federal condition, so also are the degrees of our pardon: but as it is always in imperfection during this life, and subject to change and defailance; so also are the hopes of our felicity, never certain till we are taken from all danger, never perfect till all that is imperfect in us is done away.

25. And therefore in the present condition of things our pardon was properly expressed by David and St. Paul, by 'a covering,' and 'a not imputing.'¹ For because the body of sin dies divisibly, and fights perpetually, and disputes with hopes of victory, and may also prevail, all this life is a continuation of suspense; our sin is rather covered, than properly pardoned; God's wrath is suspended, not satisfied; the sin is not to all purposes of anger imputed, but yet is in some sense remanent, or at least lies ready at the door. Our condition is a state of imperfection; and every degree of imperfection brings a degree of recession from the state Christ puts us in; and every recession from our innocence is also an abatement of our confidence. the anger of God hovers over our head, and breaks out into temporal judgments; and he retracts them again, and threatens worse, according as we approach to, or retire from that first innocence, which was the first entertainment of a Christian, and the crown of the evangelical covenant. Upon that we entertained the mercies of redemption; and God established it upon such an obedience which is a constant, perpetual, and universal sincerity and endeavour. And as we perform our part, so God ve-

¹ Psalm, xxxii. 1, 2; Rom. iv. 7.

rifies his ; and not only gives a great assistance, by the perpetual influences of his Holy Spirit, by which we are consigned to the day of redemption, but also takes an account of obedience, not according to the standard of the law and an exact scrutiny, but by an evangelical proportion, in which we are on one side looked upon as persons already redeemed and assisted, and therefore highly engaged ; and on the other side, as compassed about with infirmities and enemies, and therefore much pitied. So that, as at first, our calling and election is presently good, and shall remain so, if we make it sure : so if we once prevaricate it, we are rendered then full of hazard, difficulty, and uncertainty, and we must with pains and sedulity ‘ work out our salvation with fear and trembling ;’ first by preventing a fall, or afterwards by returning to that excellent condition from whence we have departed.

26. But although the pardon of sins after baptism be, during this life, difficult, imperfect, and revokable ; yet because it is to great effects for the present, and in order to a complete pardon in the day of judgment, we are next to enquire, what are the parts of duty to which we are obliged after such prevarications, which usually interrupt the state of baptismal innocence and the life of the Spirit. St. John gives this account : ‘ If we say we have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have communion one with another, and the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin.’¹ This state of duty St. Paul calls ‘ a casting off the works of darkness, a putting on the ar-

¹ 1 John, i 6,

mour of light, a walking honestly, a putting on the Lord Jesus Christ.'¹ And to it he confronts, 'making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' St. Peter, describing the duty of a Christian, relates the proportion of it as high as the first precedent, even God himself: 'As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts.'² And again, 'Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?'³ And St. John, with the same severity and perfection: 'Every one that hath this hope (that is, every one who either does not, or hath no reason to despair,) purifieth himself, even as God is pure;'⁴ meaning, that he is pure by a divine purity, which God hath prescribed as an imitation of his holiness, according to our capacities and probabilities. That purity must needs be a 'laying aside all malice and guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speakings;'⁵ so St. Peter expresses it: a 'laying aside every weight and the sin that does so easily beset us;'⁶ so St. Paul: this is to 'walk in the light, as he is in the light, for in him is no darkness at all:'⁷ which we have then imitated, when we have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lusts; that is, so as we are not held by them, that we take them for our enemies, for the object and party of our contestation and spiritual fight; when we contend earnestly against them, and resist them unto blood, if need be; that is being pure as he is pure. But

¹ Rom. xiii. 11, 13, 14.

² 1 Pet. i. 14, 15.

³ 2 Pet. iii. 11.

⁴ 1 John, iii. 3.

⁵ 1 Pet. ii. 1.

⁶ Heb. xii 1.

⁷ 1 John, i. 7, 8; 2 Pet. i. 4.

besides this positive rejection of all evil, and perpetually contesting against sin, we must pursue the interests of virtue and an active religion.

27. And 'besides this,' saith St. Peter, 'giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to your virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.'¹ All this is an evident prosecution of the first design; the holiness and righteousness of a whole life, the being clear from all spots and blemishes, a being pure, and so presented unto Christ: for upon this the covenant being founded, to this all industries must endeavour, and arrive in their proportions. 'For if these things be in you and abound, they shall make that you be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and hath forgotten he was purged from his old sins;'² that is, he hath lost his baptismal grace, and is put from the first state of his redemption towards that state which is contradictory and destructive of it.

28. Now because all these things are in latitude, distance, and divisibility, and only enjoin a sedulity and great endeavour, all that we can dwell upon is this, that he who endeavours most is most secure,

¹ 2 Pet. i. 5—7. Veri boni aviditas tuta est. Quid sit istud, interrogas? aut unde subeat? dicam: ex bona conscientia, ex honestis consiliis, ex rectis actionibus, ex contemptu fortuitorum, ex placido vitæ et continuo tenore unam prementis viam. Sen. ep. 23.—"There is safety in the desire of true good. Do you ask whence it comes? I will tell you: from a good conscience; from right principles, from good actions, from a contempt for fortune, and from a tranquil and even tenour of life."

² 2 Pet. i. 8, 9.

and every degree of negligence is a degree of danger; and although, in the intermedial condition between the two states of Christianity and a full impiety, there is a state of recovery and possibility, yet there is danger in every part of it, and it increases according as the deflexion and irregularity comes to its height, position, state, and finality. So that we must give all diligence to work out our salvation, and it would ever be with fear and trembling: with fear that we do not lose our innocence; and with trembling, if we have lost it, for fear we never recover, or never be accepted. But holiness of life and uninterrupted sanctity being the condition of our salvation, the ingredient of the covenant, we must proportion our degrees of hope and confidence of heaven according as we have obtained degrees of innocence, or perseverance, or restitution. Only this: as it is certain he is in a state of reprobation who lives unto sin; that is, whose actions are habitually criminal, who gives more of his consent to wickedness than to virtue; so it is also certain he is not in the state of God's favour and sanctification, unless he lives unto righteousness; that is, unless his desires, and purposes, and endeavours, and actions, and customs are spiritual, holy, sanctified, and obedient. When sin is dead, and the Spirit is life; when the lusts of the flesh are mortified, and the heart is purged from an evil conscience, and we abound in a whole system of Christian virtues; when our hearts are right to God, and with our affections and our wills we love God and keep his commandments; when we do not only cry, Lord, Lord, but also do his will, then Christ dwells in us, and we in Christ. Now let all this be taken in the lowest sense that

can be imagined ; all, I say, which out of Scripture I have transcribed ;—‘ casting away every weight, laying aside all malice, mortifying the deeds of the flesh, crucifying the old man with all his affections and lusts ;’ and then, ‘ having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust,’ besides this, ‘ adding virtue to virtue,’ till ‘ all righteousness be fulfilled in us, walking in the light, putting on the Lord Jesus, purifying ourselves as God is pure, following peace with all men, and holiness, resisting unto blood, living in the Spirit, being holy in all manner of conversation as he is holy, being careful and excellent in all conversation and godliness ;’—all this, being a pursuit of the first design of Christ’s death and our reconcilment, can mean no less but that, 1, We should have in us no affection to a sin ; of which we can best judge when we never choose it, and never fall under it but by surprise, and never lie under it at all, but instantly recover, judging ourselves severely : and, 2, That we should choose virtue with great freedom of spirit and alacrity, and pursue it earnestly, integrally, and make it the business of our lives : and, 3, That the effect of this be, that sin be crucified in us, and the desires to it dead, flat, and useless ; and that our desires of serving Christ be quick-spirited, active, and effective, inquisitive for opportunities, apprehensive of the offer, cheerful in the action, and persevering in the employment.

29. Now let a prudent person imagine what infirmities and oversights can consist with a state thus described, and all that does no violence to the covenant : God pities us, and calls us not to an account for what morally cannot, or certainly will not with great industry be prevented. But whatsoever

is inconsistent with this condition, is an abatement from our hopes, as it is a retiring from our duty; and is with greater or less difficulty cured, as are the degrees of its distance from that condition which Christ stipulated with us when we became his disciples: for we are just so restored to our state of grace and favour, as we are restored to our state of purity and holiness. Now this redintegration, or renewing of us into the first condition, is also called repentance, and is permitted to all persons who still remain within the powers and possibilities of the covenant; that is, who are not in a state contradictory to the state and portion of grace; but with a difficulty increased by all circumstances and incidences of the crime and person. And this I shall best represent in repeating these considerations: 1. Some sins are past hopes of pardon in this life. 2. All that are pardoned are pardoned by parts, revocably and imperfectly during this life, not quickly nor yet manifestly. 3. Repentance contains in it many operations, parts, and employments; its terms and purpose being to redintegrate our lost condition; that is, in a second and less perfect sense; but as much as in such circumstances we can, to verify our first obligations of innocence and holiness in all manner of conversation and godliness.

30. Concerning the first, it is too sad a consideration to be too dogmatical and conclusive in it; and therefore I shall only recal those expresses of Scripture which may, without envy, decree the article: such as those of St. Paul, that there is a certain sort of men, whom he twice describes, whom 'it is impossible to renew again unto repentance;' or those of St. Peter, such whose 'latter end is

worse than the beginning, because after they once had escaped the pollutions of the world, they are entangled therein; such who, as our blessed Saviour threatens, 'shall never be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come:' for there is an unpardonable estate, by reason of its malice and opposition to the covenant of grace; and there is a state unpardonable, because the time of repentance is past. There are days and periods of grace: 'If thou hadst known, at least in this thy day,' said the weeping Saviour of the world, to fore-known and determined Jerusalem. When God's decrees are gone out, they are not always revocable; and therefore it was a great caution of the apostle, that we should 'follow peace and holiness,' and 'look diligently that we fall not from the grace of God;' lest any of us become like Esau, to whose repentance there was no place left, 'though he sought it carefully with tears:'¹ meaning, that we also may put ourselves into a condition when it shall be impossible we should be renewed unto repentance. And those are they who 'sin a sin unto death,'² for whom we have from the apostle no encouragement to pray. And these are in so general and conclusive terms described in Scripture, that every persevering sinner hath great reason to suspect himself to be in the number. If he endeavours, as soon as he thinks of it, to recover, it is the best sign he was not arrived so far: but he that liveth long in a violent and habitual course of sin, is at the margin and brim of that state of final reprobation; and some men are in it before they be aware; and to some God reckons their days swifter, and their periods shorter.

¹ Heb. xii. 14, 15, 16, 17.

² 1 John, v. 16.

The use I make of this consideration is, that if any man hath reason to suspect, or to be certain, that his time of repentance is past, it is most likely to be a death-bed penitent, after a vicious life, a life contrary to the mercies and grace of the evangelical covenant: for he hath provoked God as long as he could, and rejected the offers of grace as long as he lived, and refused virtue till he could not entertain her, and hath done all those things which a person rejected from hopes of repentance can easily be imagined to have done. And if there be any time of rejection, although it may be earlier, yet it is also certainly the last.

31. Concerning the second, I shall add this to the former discourse of it, that perfect pardon of sins is not in this world at all, after the first emission and great efflux of it in our first regeneration. During this life we are in imperfection, minority, and under conditions which we have prevaricated, and our recovery is in perpetual flux, in heightenings and declensions; and we are highly uncertain of our acceptance, because we are not certain of our restitution and innocence; we know not whether we have done all that is sufficient to repair the breach made in the first state of favour and baptismal grace. But 'he that is dead,' saith St. Paul, 'is justified from sin;'¹ not till then. And therefore, in the doctrine of the most learned Jews it is affirmed: "He that is guilty of the profanation of the name of God, he shall not interrupt the apparent malignity of it by his present repentance, nor make atonement in the day of expiation, nor wash the stains away by chastising of himself; but during

¹ Rom. vi. 7

his life it remains wholly in suspense, and before death is not extinguished; according to the saying of the prophet Isaiah: 'This iniquity shall not be blotted out till ye die, saith the Lord of Hosts.'¹ And some wise persons have affirmed, that Jacob related to this in his expression and appellatives of God, whom he called 'the God of Abraham, and the fear of his father Isaac.'² because (as the doctors of the Jews tell us) Abraham being dead, was ascribed into the final condition of God's family; but Isaac, being living, had apprehensions of God not only of a pious, but also of a tremulous fear: he was not sure of his own condition, much less of the degrees of his reconciliation, how far God had forgiven his sins, and how far he had retained them. And it is certain, that if every degree of the divine favour be not assured by a holy life, those sins of whose pardon we were most hopeful, return in as full vigour and clamorous importunity as ever, and are made more vocal by the appendant ingratitude, and other accidental degrees. And this Christ taught us by a parable: for as the Lord made his uncharitable servant pay all that debt which he had formerly forgiven him, even 'so will God do to us, if we from our hearts forgive not one another their trespasses.'³ 'Behold the goodness and severity of God,'⁴ saith St. Paul, 'on them which fell severity; but on thee goodness, if thou continue in that goodness; otherwise thou shalt be cut off: for this is my covenant, which I shall make with them, when I shall take away their sins.'⁵ And if this be true in those sins

¹ Isaiah, xxii. 14.² Gen. xxxi. 42.³ Matth. xviii. 35.⁴ Rom. xi. 22.⁵ Ibid. verse 27.

which God certainly hath forgotten, such as were all those which were committed before our illumination, much rather is it true in those which we committed after, concerning whose actual and full pardon we cannot be certain without a revelation. So that our pardon of sins, when it is granted after the breach of our covenant, is just so secure as our perseverance is: concerning which, because we must ascertain it as well as we can, but ever with fear and trembling, so also is the estate of our pardon, hazardous, conditional, revocable, and uncertain. And therefore, the best of men do all their lives ask pardon even of those sins for which they have wept bitterly, and done the sharpest and severest penance. And if it be necessary, we pray that we may not enter into temptation, because temptation is full of danger, and the danger may bring a sin, and the sin may ruin us; it is also necessary that we understand the condition of our pardon to be, as is the condition of our person, variable as will, sudden as affections, alterable as our purposes, revocable as our own good intentions, and then made as ineffective as our inclinations to good actions. And there is no way to secure our confidence and our hope but by being perfect, and holy, and pure, as our heavenly Father is; that is, in the sense of human capacity, free from the habits, of all sin, and active and industrious, and continuing in the ways of godliness: for upon this only the promise is built, and by our proportion to this state we must proportion our confidence; we have no other revelation. Christ reconciled us to his Father upon no other conditions, and made the covenant upon no other articles but of a holy life, in obedience universal and perpetual: and the abate-

ments of the rigorous sense of the words, as they are such as may infinitely testify and prove his mercy, so they are such as must secure our duty and habitual graces ; an industry, manly, constant, and Christian. And because these have so great latitude, (and to what degrees God will accept our returns he hath nowhere punctually described,) he that is most severe in his determination does best secure himself, and by exacting the strictest account of himself, shall obtain the easier scrutiny at the hands of God. The use I make of this consideration is to the same purpose with the former. For if every day of sin, and every criminal act is a degree of recess from the possibilities of heaven, it would be considered at how great distance a death-bed penitent, after a vicious life, may apprehend himself to stand for mercy and pardon : and since the terms of restitution must, in labour and in extension of time, or intension of degrees, be of value great enough to restore him to some proportion or equivalence with that state of grace from whence he is fallen, and upon which the covenant was made with him ; how impossible, or how near to impossible, it will appear to him to go so far, and do so much in that state, and in those circumstances of disability!

32. Concerning the third particular, I consider that repentance, as it is described in Scripture, is a system of holy duties, not of one kind, not properly consisting of parts, as if it were a single grace ; but it is the reparation of that estate into which Christ first put us ; ‘ a renewing us in the spirit of our mind,’ so the apostle calls it : and the Holy Ghost hath taught this truth to us by the implication of many appellatives, and also by express

discourses: for there is in Scripture, ‘a repentance to be repented of;’¹ and ‘a repentance never to be repented of.’² The first is mere sorrow for what is past, an ineffective trouble producing nothing good: such as was the repentance of Judas; he repented, and hanged himself; and such was that of Esau, when it was too late; and so was the repentance of the five foolish virgins: which examples tell us also when ours is an impertinent and ineffectual repentance. To this repentance pardon is nowhere promised in Scripture. But there is a repentance which is called conversion, or amendment of life; a repentance productive of holy fruits, such as the Baptist and our blessed Saviour preached, such as himself also propounded in the example of the Ninevites; they ‘repented at the preaching of Jonah;’³ that is, ‘they fasted, they covered them in sackcloth, they cried mightily unto God; yea, they turned every one from his evil way, and from the violence that was in their hands.’ And this was it that appeased God in that instance. ‘God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, and did it not.’⁴

33. The same character of repentance we find in the prophet Ezekiel: ‘When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right;’⁵ ‘If the wicked restore the pledge, give

¹ Μεταμέλεια.

² Μετάνοια. Μεταμεληθεῖς ἐπέστρεψε, cui in Act. Apost. opponitur μετανοήσατε ἔν ᾧ ἐπιστρέψατε, Act. iii. 19. Huic enim promittitur peccatorum remissio in seq. εἰς τὸ ἐξαλειφθῆναι ὑμῶν τὰς ἁμαρτίας.

³ Mat. xii. 4.

⁴ Jonah, iii. 7, 8, 10.

⁵ Ezek. xviii. 27.

again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live, he shall not die.¹ And in the gospel repentance is described with as full and entire comprehensions as in the old prophets: for faith and repentance are the whole duty of the gospel. Faith, when it is in conjunction with a practical grace, signifies an intellectual. Faith signifies the submission of the understanding to the institution; and repentance includes all that whole practice which is the entire duty of a Christian, after he hath been overtaken in a fault. And therefore repentance first includes a renunciation and abolition of all evil, and then also enjoins a pursuit of every virtue; and that till they arrive at an habitual confirmation.²

34. Of the first sense are all those expressions of Scripture which imply repentance to be the delectory of sins. ‘Repentance from dead works,’³ St. Paul affirms to be the prime fundamental of religion; that is, conversion or returning from dead works: for, unless repentance be so construed, it is not good sense. And this is therefore highly verified, because repentance is intended to set us into the condition of our first undertaking, and articles covenanted with God. And therefore it is ‘a redemption of the time;’ that is, a recovering what we lost, and making it up by our doubled industry. ‘Remember whence thou art fallen, repent;’⁴ that is, return, ‘and do thy first works,’ said the Spirit

¹ Ezek. xxxiii. 15.

² Vide Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. ii. ubi ad eundem sensum definit *pœnitentiam*.

³ Μετάνοια ἀπὸ τῶν νεκρῶν ἔργων. Heb. vi. 1.

⁴ Apocal. ii. 5.

to the angel of the church of Ephesus; or else ‘I will remove thy candlestick, except thou repent.’ It is a restitution: ‘If a man be overtaken in a fault, restore such a one;’¹ that is, put him where he was. And then, that repentance also implies a doing all good, is certain by the sermon of the Baptist: ‘Bring forth fruits meet for repentance.’² ‘Do thy first works,’ was the sermon of the Spirit. ‘Laying aside every weight, and the sin that easily encircles us, let us run with patience the race that is set before us;’ so St. Paul taught. And St. Peter gives charge, that when we ‘have escaped the corruptions of the world and of lust;’³ besides this, we give all diligence to acquire the rosary and conjugation of Christian virtues: and they are proper effects, or rather constituent parts, of a holy repentance: ‘for godly sorrow worketh repentance,’ saith St. Paul, ‘not to be repented of:’⁴ and that ye may know what is signified by repentance, behold, the product was carefulness, clearing themselves, indignation, fear, vehement desires, zeal, and revenge; to which, if we add the epithet of holy, (for these were the results of a godly sorrow, and the members of a repentance not to be repented of,) we are taught that repentance, besides the purging out the malice of iniquity, is also a sanctification of the whole man, a turning nature into grace, passions into reason, and the flesh into spirit.

35. To this purpose I reckon those phrases of Scripture, calling it a ‘renewing of our minds;’⁵ a ‘renewing of the Holy Ghost;’⁶ a ‘cleansing of

¹ Gal. vi. 1.

² Matth. iii. 8.

³ 2 Pet. i. 4, 5.

⁴ 2 Cor. vii. 10.

⁵ Rom. xii. 2.

⁶ Tit. iii. 5.

our hands and purifying our hearts;¹ that is, a becoming holy in our affections, and righteous in our actions; a transformation or utter change; ‘a crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts;’² a ‘mortified state;’³ a ‘purging out the old leaven, and becoming a new conspersion;’⁴ a ‘waking out of sleep,’⁵ and ‘walking honestly as in the day;’⁶ a ‘being born again,’⁷ and ‘being born from above;’ a ‘new life.’ And I consider that these preparative actions of repentance, such as are sorrow, and confession of sins, and fasting, and exterior mortifications and severities, are but forerunners of repentance, some of the retinue, and they are of the family; but they no more complete the duty of repentance than the harbingers are the whole court, or than the fingers are all the body. There ‘is more joy in heaven,’ said our blessed Saviour, ‘over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.’ There is no man but needs a tear and a sorrow even for his daily weaknesses, and possibly they are the instrumental expiations of our sudden, and frequent, and lesser surprises of imperfection: but the ‘just persons need no repentance; that is, need no inversion of state, no transformation from condition to condition, but from the less to the more perfect the best man hath. And therefore those are vain persons who, when they owe God a hundred, will write four-score; or a thousand, will write fifty. It was the saying of an excellent person, that “Repentance is the beginning of philosophy, a flight and renounci-

¹ James, iv. 8. ² Gal. v. 24. ³ Col. iii. 5. ⁴ 1 Cor. v. 7.

⁵ Eph. v. 14; Rom. xiii. 11.

⁶ Rom. xiii. 13.

⁷ John, iii. 3.

ation of evil works and words, and the first preparation and entrance into a life which is never to be repented of. And therefore a penitent is not taken with umbrages and appearances, nor quits a real good for an imaginary, nor chooses evil for fear of enemies and adverse accidents; but peremptorily conforms his sentence to the divine laws, and submits his whole life in a conformity with them." ¹ He that said those excellent words, had not been taught the Christian institution; but it was admirable reason and deep philosophy, and most consonant to the reasonableness of virtue, and the proportions and designs of repentance, and no other than the doctrine of Christian philosophy.

36. And it is considerable, since in Scripture there is a repentance mentioned which is impertinent and ineffectual as to the obtaining pardon, a repentance implied which is to be repented of, and another expressed which is 'never to be repented of,' and this is described to be new state of life, a whole conversion and transformation of the man; it follows, that whatsoever in any sense can be called repentance, and yet is less than this new life, must be that ineffective repentance. A sorrow is a repentance, and all the acts of dolorous expression are but the same sorrow in other characters; and they are good when they are parts or instruments of the true repentance: but when they are the whole repentance, that repentance is no better than

¹ Ἡ ἐξ μετάνοια αὕτη φιλοσοφίας ἀρχὴ γίνεται, ἐκ τῶν ἀνοήτων ἔργων τε ἐκ λόγων φυγῆς, ἐκ τῆς ἀμεταμελήτου ζωῆς ἢ πρώτη παρασκευῆ. Hierocl. in Pythag.—“ This repentance is the beginning of philosophy, the avoiding of evil words and works, and the first preparation of a life not to be repented of.”

that of Judas, nor more prosperous than that of Esau. Every sorrow is not a godly sorrow; and that which is, is but instrumental and in order to repentance: 'Godly sorrow worketh repentance, saith St. Paul; that is, it does its share towards it, as every grace does towards the pardon, as every degree of pardon does toward heaven. By 'godly sorrow' it is probable St. Paul means the same thing which the school hath since called contrition; a grief proceeding from a holy principle, from our love of God, and anger that we have offended him: and yet this is a great way off from that repentance, without the performance of which we shall certainly perish. But no contrition alone is remissive of sins, but as it co-operates towards the integrity of our duty. *Cum conversus ingemuerit*, in the prophet's expression; when a man 'mourns and turns from all his evil way,'¹ that is a godly sorrow, and that is repentance too. But the tears of a dolorous person, though running over with great effusions, and shed in great bitterness, and expressed in actions of punitive justice, all being but the same sense in louder language, being nothing but the expressions of sorrow, are good only as they tend further; and if they do, they may by degrees bring us to repentance, and that repentance will bring us to heaven: but of themselves they may as well make the sea swell beyond its margin, or water and refresh the sun-burnt earth, as move God to mercy and pierce the heavens. But then to this consideration we may

¹ Μετανοήσατε ἐν ἐπιτροπέσαστε, Acts, iii. 19. οἱ γ' ὁ ἔχοντες εἰκην τὸ λυπεῖσθαι ἐπὶ τοῖς πεπονημένοις, πάνονται τῆς ὁδοῦς, Arist. ii. Rhetor. — Ἀγαθοὶ ἀριδύκρονες ἄνθρωποι, Ηοω. Ὁ μετανοῶν ἢ φάρμακόν τῶν ἐναντίων τῆν τῆ κακῆ πρᾶξιν ἀφίησεται. Hierocl.

add, that a sorrow upon a death-bed, after a vicious life, is such as cannot easily be understood to be ordinarily so much as the beginning of virtue, or the first instance towards a holy life. For he that till then retained his sins, and now, when he is certain and believes he shall die, or is fearful lest he should, is sorrowful that he hath sinned, is only sorrowful because he is like to perish: and such a sorrow may perfectly consist with as great an affection to sin as ever the man had in the highest caresses and invitation of his lust. For even then, in certain circumstances, he would have refused to have acted his greatest temptation. The boldest and most pungent lust would refuse to be satisfied in the market-place, or with a dagger at his heart; and the greatest intemperance would refuse a pleasant meal, if he believed the meat to be mixed with poison: and yet this restraint of appetite is no abatement of the affection, any more than the violent fears which, by being incumbent upon the death-bed penitent, make him grieve for the evil consequents more than to hate the malice and irregularity. He that does not grieve till his greatest fear presses him hard, and damnation treads upon his heels, feels indeed the effects of fear, but can have no present benefit of his sorrow; because it had no natural principle, but a violent, unnatural, and intolerable cause, inconsistent with a free, placid, and moral election. But this I speak only by way of caution; for God's mercy is infinite, and can, if he please, make it otherwise. But it is not good to venture, unless you have a promise.

37. The same also I consider concerning the purpose of a new life; which that any man should judge to be repentance, that duty which restores

us, is more unreasonable than to think sorrow will do it. For as man may sorrow, and yet never be restored; (and he may sorrow so much the more, because he shall never be restored, as Esau did, as the five foolish virgins did, and as many more do;) so he that purposes to lead a new life, hath convinced himself that the duty is undone, and therefore his pardon not granted, nor his condition restored. As a letter is not a word, nor a word an action; as an embryo is not a man, nor the seed the fruit; so is a purpose of obedience but the element of repentance, the first imaginations of it differing from the grace itself, as a disposition from a habit, or (because itself will best express itself) as the purpose does from the act. For either a holy life is necessary, or it is not necessary. If it be not, why does any man hope to 'escape the wrath to come,' by resolving to do an unnecessary thing? or if he does not purpose it, when he pretends he does, that is a mocking of God, and that is a great way from being an instrument of his restitution. But if a holy life be necessary, as it is certain by infinite testimonies of Scriptures, it is the *unum necessarium*, the one great necessary; it cannot reasonably be thought that any thing less than doing it shall serve our turns. That which is only in purpose is not yet done; and yet it is necessary it should be done, because it is necessary we should purpose it. And in this we are sufficiently concluded by that ingeminate expression used by St. Paul: 'In Jesus Christ nothing can avail but a new creature;'¹ nothing but 'faith working by charity;' nothing but 'a keeping the commandments of God. ' And as

¹ Gal. vi. 15, and v. 6. 1 Cor. vii. 19.

many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy; they are the Israel of God.'¹

38. This consideration I intended to oppose against the carnal security of death-bed penitents, who have (it is to be feared) spent a vicious life; who have therefore mocked themselves, because they meant to mock God; they would reap what they sowed not. But 'be not deceived,' saith the apostle; 'he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.'² Only this, 'Let us not be weary of well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.'³ Meaning that by a persevering industry, and a long work, and a succession of religious times, we must sow to the Spirit: a work of such length, that the greatest danger is of fainting and intercision; but he that sows to the Spirit, not being weary of well-doing, not fainting in the long process, he, and he only, shall reap life everlasting. But a purpose is none of all this. If it comes to act, and be productive of a holy life, then it is useful; and it was like the eve of a holiday, festival in the midst of its abstinence and vigils—it was the beginnings of repentance: but if it never come to act, it was to no purpose, a mocking of God, an act of direct hypocrisy, a provocation of God and a deceiving our ourselves. You are unhappy you began not early, or that your earlier days return not together with your good purposes.

39. And neither can this have any other sentence, though the purpose be made upon our death-bed. For God hath made no covenant with us on

¹ Gal. vi. 16. ² Ibid. verse 7, 8 ³ Ibid. verse 9.

our death-bed distinct from that he made with us in our life and health. And since in our life and present abilities, good purposes, and resolutions, and vows (for they are but the same thing in differing degrees) did signify nothing till they came to act, and no man was reconciled to God by good intentions, but by doing the will of God; can we imagine that such purposes can more prevail at the end of a wicked life than at the beginning? that less piety will serve our turns after fifty or sixty years of impiety, than after but five or ten? that a wicked and sinful life should by less pains be expiated than an unhappy year? For it is not in the state of grace, as in other exterior actions of religion or charity, where God will accept the will for the deed, when the external act is incurably out of our powers, and may also be supplied by the internal: as bendings of the body, by the prostration of the soul; alms, by charity; preaching, by praying for conversion. These things are necessary, because they are precepts, and obligatory only in certain circumstances, which may fail, and we be innocent and disobliged. But it is otherwise in the essential parts of our duty, which God hath made the immediate and next condition of our salvation; such which are never out of our power but by our own fault. Such are charity, forgiveness, repentance, and faith; such to which we are assisted by God, such which are always put by God's grace into our power, therefore because God indispensably demands them. In these cases, as there is no revelation, God will accept the will for the deed, the purpose for the act, so it is unreasonable to expect it; because God did once put it into our powers: and if we put it out, we must not

complain of want of fire which ourselves have quenched, nor complain we cannot see when we have put our own lights out; and hope God will accept the will for the deed, since we had no will to it when God put it into our powers. These are but fig-leaves to cover our nakedness, which our sin hath introduced.

40. For either the reducing such vows and purposes to act is the duty, without which the purpose is ineffectual; or else that practice is but the sign and testimony of a sincere intention, and that very sincere intention was of itself accepted by God in the first spring. If it was nothing but a sign, then the covenant which God made with man in Jesus Christ was faith and good meaning, not faith and repentance; and a man is justified as soon as ever he purposes well, before any endeavours are commenced, or any act produced, or habit ratified; and the duties of a holy life are but shadows and significations of a grace, no part of the covenant, not so much as smoke is of fire, but a mere sign of a person justified as soon as he made his vow. But then also a man may be justified five hundred times in a year, as often as he makes a new vow and confident resolution; which is then done most heartily, when the lust is newly satisfied, and the pleasure disappears for the instant, though the purpose disbands upon the next temptation. Yea, but unless it be a sincere purpose, it will do no good; and although we cannot discern it, nor the man himself, yet God knows the heart; and if he sees it would have been reduced to act, then he accepts it. And this is the hopes of a dying man; but faint they are and dying, as the man himself.

41. For it is impossible for us to know but that

what a man intends (as himself thinks) heartily, is sincerely meant ; and if that may be insincere, and is to be judged only by a never-following event, (in case the man dies,) it cannot become to any man the ground of hope : nay, even to those persons who do mean sincerely, it is still an instrument of distrust and fears infinite, since his own sincere meaning hath nothing in the nature of the thing, no distinct formality, no principle, no sign to distinguish it from the insincere vows of sorrowful, but not truly penitent persons. 2. A purpose acted and not acted differ not in the principle, but in the effect, which is extrinsical and accidental to the purpose, and each might be without the other : a man might live holily, though he had not made that vow, and when he hath made the vow, he may fail of living holily. And as we should think it hard measure to have a damnation increased upon us for those sins which we would have committed if we had lived ; so it cannot be reasonable to build our hopes of heaven upon an imaginary piety, which we never did, and, if we had lived, God knows whether we would or not. 3. God takes away the godly, lest malice should corrupt their understandings ; and ‘ for the elect’s sake those days are shortened, which if they should continue, no flesh should escape.’ But now shall all that be laid upon their score which, if God had not so prevented by their death, God knows they would have done ? And God deals with the wicked in a proportionable manner, to the contrary purpose ; he shortens their days, and takes away their possibilities and opportunities, when the time of repentance is past, because he will not do violence to their wills ; and this ‘ lest they

should return, and be converted, and I should heal them.'¹ So that it is evident, some persons are, by some acts of God, after a vicious life and the frequent rejection of the divine grace, at last prevented from mercy, who, without such courses, and in contrary circumstances, might possibly do acts of repentance, and return, and then God would heal them. 4. Let their purposes and vows be never so sincere in the principle, yet since a man who is in the state of grace, may again fail of it, and forget he was purged from his old sins, (and every dying sinner did so, if ever he was washed in the laver of regeneration and sanctified in his Spirit,) then much more may such a sincere purpose fail: and then it would be known to what distance of time or state from his purpose God will give his final sentence. Whether will he quit him, because in the first stage he will correspond with his intention, and act his purposes, or condemn him, because in his second stage he would prevaricate? And when a man does fail, it is not because his first principle was not good; for the Holy Spirit, which is certainly the best principle of spiritual actions, may be extinguished in a man, and a sincere or hearty purpose may be lost, or it may again be recovered, and be lost again. So that it is as unreasonable as it is unrevealed that a sincere purpose on a death-bed shall obtain pardon, or pass for a new state of life. Few men are at those instants and in such pressures hypocritical and vain: and yet to perform such purposes is a new work and a new labour; it comes in upon a new stock differing from that principle,

¹ Matt. xiii. 15; ex Is. vi. 9, 10; Mark, iv. 12; Luke, viii. 10; John, xii. 40; Acts, xxviii. 27; Rom. xi. 8.

and will meet with temptations, difficulties, and impediments; and an honest heart is not sure to remain so, but may split upon a rock of a violent invitation. A promise is made to be faithful *ex post facto* by the event; but it was sincere or insincere in the principle, only if the person promising did or did not respectively at that time mean what he said. A sincere promise many times is not truly performed.

42. Concerning all the other acts which it is to be supposed a dying person can do, I have only this consideration: If they can make up a new creature, become a new state, be in any sense a holy life, a keeping the commandments of God, a following of peace and holiness, a becoming holy in all conversation; if they can arrive to the lowest sense of that excellent condition Christ intended to all his disciples, when he made keeping the commandments to be the condition of entering into life, and not crying, Lord, Lord, but doing the will of God; if he that hath served the lusts of the flesh, and taken pay under all God's enemies during a long and malicious life, can, for any thing a dying person can do, be said in any sense to have lived holily, then his hopes are fairly built. If not, they rely upon a sand, and the storm of death and the divine displeasure will beat too violently upon them. There are no suppletories of the evangelical covenant. If we walk according to the rule, then shall peace and righteousness kiss each other: if we have sinned and prevaricated the rule, repentance must bring us into the ways of righteousness, and then we must go on upon the old stock: but the deeds of the flesh must be mortified, and Christ must dwell in us, and the Spirit must reign in us, and virtue must be habitual, and the

habits must be confirmed. And this as we do by the Spirit of Christ, so it is hallowed and accepted by the grace of God, and we put into a condition of favour, and redeemed from sin, and reconciled to God. But this will not be put off with single acts, nor divided parts, nor newly commenced purposes, nor fruitless sorrow. It is a great folly to venture eternity upon dreams. So that now let me represent the condition of a dying person after a vicious life.

43. First, He that considers the frailty of human bodies, their incidences and aptness to sickness, casualties, death sudden or expected, the condition of several diseases, that some are of too quick a sense and are intolerable, some are dull, stupid, and lethargical; then adds the prodigious judgments which fall upon many sinners in the act of sin, and are marks of our dangers and God's essential justice and severity; and that security which possesses such persons whose lives are vicious, and that habitual carelessness and groundless confidence, or an absolute inconsideration, which is generally the condition and constitution of such minds, every one whereof is likely enough to confound a persevering sinner in miseries eternal, will soon apprehend the danger of a delayed repentance to be infinite and unmeasurable.

44. Secondly, But suppose such a person, having escaped the antecedent circumstances of the danger, is set fairly upon his death-bed, with the just apprehension of his sins about him and his addresses to repentance; consider then the strength of his lusts, that the sins he is to mortify are inveterate, habitual, and confirmed, having had the growth and stability of a whole life; that the liberty of his will is impaired; (the Scripture

saying of such persons, ‘ whose eyes are full of lust, and that cannot cease from sin; and that his servants they are whom they obey;’¹ that they are slaves to sin, and so not *sui juris*, not at their own dispose;) that his understanding is blinded, his appetite is mutinous, and of a long time used to rebel and prevail; that all the inferior faculties are in disorder; that he wants the helps of grace proportionable to his necessities; (for the longer he hath continued in sin, the weaker the grace of God is in him; so that in effect, at that time, the more need he hath, the less he shall receive, it being God’s rule to ‘ give to him that hath, and from him that hath not, to take even what he hath;’) then add the innumerable parts and great burdens of repentance, that it is not a sorrow, nor a purpose, because both these suppose that to be undone which is the only necessary support of all our hopes in Christ when it is done; the innumerable difficult cases of conscience that may occur, particularly in the point of restitution; (which, among many other necessary parts of repentance, is indispensably required of all persons that are able, and in every degree in which they are able;) the many temptations of the devil, the strength of passions, the impotency of the flesh, the illusions of the spirits of darkness,² the tremblings of the heart, the incogitancy of the mind, the implication and entanglings of ten thousand thoughts, and the impertinencies

¹ 2 Pet. ii. 14.

² Ἐπειδὴν τις ἐγγύς ᾖ τῆ οἴσθαι τελευτήσσειν, εἰσέρχεται αὐτῷ φόβος καὶ φροντίς περὶ ὧν ἐν τῷ πρόσθεν ἔκ εἰσῆμι. Plato de Repub.—“ When a man believes himself near death, he begins to fear, and to think of things concerning which he had before no care.”

of a disturbed fancy, and the great hinderances of a sick body and a sad and weary spirit; all these represent a death-bed to be but an ill station for a penitent. If the person be suddenly snatched away, he is not left so much as to dispute: if he be permitted to languish in his sickness, he is either stupid, and apprehends nothing, or else miserable, and hath reason to apprehend too much. However, all these difficulties are to be passed and overcome before the man be put into a savable condition. From this consideration (though perhaps it may infer more, yet) we cannot but conclude this difficulty to be as great as the former danger; that is, vast and ponderous, and insupportable.

45. Thirdly, Suppose the clinic or death-bed penitent to be as forward in these employments, and as successful in the mastering many of the objections as reasonably can be thought; yet it is considerable, that there is a repentance which is to be repented of, and that is a repentance which is not productive of fruits of amendment of life; that there is a period set down by God in his judgment; and that many, who have been profane as Esau was, are reduced into the condition of Esau, and there is no place left for their repentance, though they seek it carefully with tears; that they who have long refused to hear God calling them to repentance, God will refuse to hear them calling for grace and mercy;¹ that he will laugh at some men when their calamity comes; that the five foolish virgins addressed themselves at the noise of the

¹ Mart. l. i. ep. xvi. Vide S. Ambros. lib. ii. de Pœnit. c. i. et xi. S. Aug. in l. Homil. hom. xli. S. Basil. orat. iv. S. Bernard. in parvis Serm. ser. xxxviii.

bridegroom's coming, and begged oil, and went out to buy oil, and yet for want of some more time and an early diligence, came too late, and were shut out for ever; that it is nowhere revealed that such late endeavours and imperfect practices shall be accepted; that God hath made but one covenant with us in Jesus Christ, which is faith and repentance consigned in baptism; and the signification of them and the purpose of Christ is, 'that we should henceforth no more serve sin,' but mortify and kill him perpetually, and destroy his kingdom, and extinguish, as much as in us lies, his very title; that we should 'live holily, justly, and soberly in this present world, in all holy conversation and godliness;' and that either we must be continued in, or reduced to this state of holy living and habitual sanctity, or we have no title to the promises; that every degree of recession from the state Christ first put us in, is a recession from our hopes, and an insecurity of our condition, and we add to our confidence only as our obedience is restored. All this is but a sad story to a dying person, who sold himself to work wickedness in an habitual iniquity, and aversion from the conditions of the holy covenant in which he was sanctified.

46. And certainly it is unreasonable to plant all our hopes of heaven upon a doctrine that is destructive of all piety; which supposes us in such a condition that God hath been offended at us all our life long, and yet that we can never return our duties to him, unless he will unravel the purposes of his predestination, or call back time again and begin a new computation of years for us; and if he did, it would be still as uncertain. For what

hope is there to that man who hath fulfilled all iniquity, and hath not fulfilled righteousness? Can a man live to the devil, and die to God? 'sow to the flesh and reap to the Spirit?' hope God will in mercy reward him who hath served his enemy? Sure it is, the doctrine of the avail of a death-bed repentance cannot easily be reconciled with God's purposes and intentions to have us live a good life; for it would reconcile us to the hopes of heaven for a few thoughts, or words, or single actions, when our life is done: it takes away the benefit of many graces, and the use of more, and the necessity of all.

47. For let it be seriously weighed, to what purpose is the variety of God's grace? what use is there of preventing, restraining, concomitant, subsequent, and persevering grace, unless it be in order to a religious conversation? And by deferring repentance to the last we despoil our souls, and rob the Holy Ghost of the glory of many rays and holy influences with which the church is watered and refreshed, that it may 'grow from grace to grace,' till it be consummate in glory. It takes away the very being of chastity and temperance; no such virtues, according to this doctrine, need to be named among Christians. For the dying person is not in capacity to exercise these: and then either they are troublesome, without which we may do well enough; or else the condition of the unchaste and intemperate clinic is sad and deplorable. For how can he eject those devils of lusts and drunkenness and gluttony, from whom the disease hath taken all powers of election and variety of choice; unless it be possible to root out long-contracted habits in a moment, or acquire the

habits of chastity, sobriety and temperance, those self-denying and laborious graces, without doing a single act of the respective virtues in order to obtaining of habits; unless it be so that God will infuse habits into us more immediately than he creates our reasonable souls, in an instant, and without the co-operation of the suscipient, without 'the working out our salvation with fear,' and without 'giving all diligence, and running with patience, and resisting unto blood, and striving to the last, and enduring unto the end in a long fight and a long race?' If God infuses such habits, why have we laws given, and are commanded to work, and to do our duty with such a succession and lasting diligence, as if the habits were to be acquired, to which indeed God promises and ministers his aids, still leaving us the persons obliged to the law and the labour, as we are capable of the reward? I need not instance any more. But this doctrine of a death-bed repentance is inconsistent with the duties of mortification, with all the vindictive and punitive parts of repentance in exterior instances, with the precepts of waiting and watchfulness and preparation, and standing in a readiness against 'the coming of the bridegroom,' with 'the patience of well-doing,' with exemplary living, with the imitation of the life of Christ, and conformities to his passion, with the kingdom, and dominion, and growth of grace. And lastly, it goes about to defeat one of God's great purposes: for God, therefore, concealed the time of our death, that we might always stand upon our guard; the Holy Jesus told us so: 'Watch, for ye know not what hour the Lord will come:' but this makes men seem more crafty in their late-begun piety,

than God was provident and mysterious in concealing the time of our dissolution.

48. And now, if it be demanded how long time must our repentance and holy living take up? what is the last period of commencement of our piety, after which it will be unaccepted or effectual? will a month, or a year, or three years, or seven suffice? (for since every man fails of his first condition, and makes violent recessions from the state of his redemption and his baptismal grace,) how long may he lie in that state of recession with hopes of salvation? To this I answer, he cannot lie in sin a moment without hazarding his eternity: every instant is a danger, and all the parts of its duration do increase it; and there is no answer to be given antecedently, and by way of rule, but all the hopes of our restitution depend upon the event. It is just as if we should ask, how long will it be before an infant comes to the perfect use of reason, or before a fool will become wise, or an ignorant person become excellently learned? The answer to such questions must be given according to the capacity of the man, to the industry of his person, to his opportunities or hinderances, to his life and health, and to God's blessing upon him. Only this; every day of deferring it lessens our hopes, and increases the difficulty: and when this increasing, divisible difficulty comes to the last period of impossibility, God only knows, because he measures the thoughts of man, and comprehends his powers in a span, and himself only can tell how he will correspond in those assistances without which we can never be restored. 'Agree with thy adversary quickly, while thou art in the way: quickly.' And therefore the Scripture sets down no other

time than to-day; 'while it is yet called to-day.' But because it will every day be called to-day, we must remember that our duty is such as requires a time, a duration; it is a course, a race that is set before us, a duty requiring patience, and longanimity, and perseverance, and great care and diligence, that we faint not. And supposing we could gather probability by circumstances, when the last period of our hopes begins; yet he that stands out as long as he can, gives probation that he came not in of good-will or choice, that he loves not the present service, that his body is present, but his heart is estranged from the yoke of his present employment; and then all that he can do is odious to God, being a sacrifice without a heart, an offertory of shells and husks, while the devil and the man's lusts have devoured the kernels.

49. So that this question is not to be asked beforehand; but after a man hath done much of the work, and in some sense lived holily, then he may inquire into his condition, whether, if he persevere in that, he may hope for the mercies of Jesus. But he that inquires beforehand, as commonly he means ill, so he can be answered by none but God; because the satisfaction of such a vain question depends upon future contingencies, and accidents depending upon God's secret pleasure and predestination. He that repents but to-day, repents late enough, that he put it off from yesterday. It may be that some may begin to-day, and find mercy; and to another person it may be too late: but no man is safe or wise that puts it off till to-morrow. And that it may appear how necessary it is to begin early, and that the work is of difficulty and continuance, and that time still increases the objections,

it is certain that all the time that is lost must be redeemed by something in the sequel equivalent, or fit to make up the breach, and to cure the wounds long since made, and long festering. And this must be done by doing the first works, by something that God hath declared he will accept instead of them : the intention of the following actions and the frequent repetition must make up the defect in the extension and co-existence with a longer time. It was an act of an heroic repentance and great detestation of the crime, which Thomas Cantipratanus relates of a young gentleman condemned to die for robberies ; who, endeavouring to testify his repentance, and as far as was then permitted him to expiate the crime, begged of the judge that tormentors might be appointed him, that he might be long a-dying, and be cut in small pieces ; that the severity of the execution might be proportionable to the immensity of his sorrow and greatness of the iniquity. Such great acts do facilitate our pardon, and hasten the restitution, and a few days comprise the elapsed duty of many months. But to rely upon such acts is the last remedy, and like unlikely physic to a despairing person ; if it does well, it is well ; if it happen otherwise, he must thank himself, it is but what in reason he could expect. The Romans sacrificed a dog to Mana Geneta, and prayed, *Nè quis domi natorum bonus fiat*, that none of their domestics might be good ;¹ that is, that they might not die, (saith Plutarch,) because dead people are called good. But if they be so only when they die, they will hardly find the reward of goodness

¹ Τελευτῶντες χρηστοί. Ῥωμαϊκ. κεφ. γς'. Μηδένα χρῆζόν, ποιῆν, i. e. ἀποκτινύναι. Plutarch. *ibid.* ex Aristotele.

In the reckonings of eternity, when to kill and to make good is all one : (as Aristotle observed it to be in the Spartan covenant with the Tegeatæ, and as it is in the case of penitents never mending their lives till their lives be done :) that goodness is fatal, and the prologue of an eternal death.

50. I conclude this point with the words of St. Paul : God 'will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality,' (to them) 'eternal life. But to them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness,' (to them) 'indignation and wrath: tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.'

51. Having now discoursed of repentance upon distinct principles, I shall not need to consider upon those particulars which are usually reckoned parts or instances of repentance; such as are contrition, confession, and satisfaction. Repentance is the fulfilling all righteousness, and includes in it whatsoever is matter of Christian duty and expressly commanded; such as is contrition or godly sorrow, and confession to God, both which are declared in Scripture to be in order to pardon and purgation of our sins. 'A contrite and a broken heart, O God, thou wilt not despise;' and, 'If we confess our sins, God is just and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity.' To which add concerning satisfaction, that it is a judging and punishing of ourselves; that it also is an instrument of repentance, and a fruit of godly sorrow, and of good advantage for obtaining mercy

¹ Rom. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

of God : for indignation and revenge are reckoned by St. Paul effects of a godly sorrow ; and the blessing which encourages its practice is instanced by the same saint : ‘ When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord ;’ but ‘ if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged :’ where he expounds judged by chastened ; if we were severer to ourselves, God would be gentle and remiss. And there are only these two cautions to be annexed, and then the direction is sufficient : 1. That when promise of pardon is annexed to any of these or another grace, or any good action, it is not to be understood as if alone it were effectual either to the abolition or pardon of sins, but the promise is made to it as to a member of the whole body of piety. In the coadunation and conjunction of parts the title is firm, but not at all in distinction and separation : for it is certain, if we fail in one, we are guilty of all ; and therefore cannot be repaired by any one grace, or one action, or one habit. And therefore ‘ charity hides a multitude of sins,’ with men and with God too ; ‘ alms deliver from death ; humility pierceth the clouds,’ and will not depart before its answer be gracious ; and ‘ hope purifieth, and makes not ashamed ;’ and patience, and faith, and piety to parents, and prayer, and the eight beatitudes ‘ have promises of this life, and of that which is to come’ respectively ;¹ and yet nothing will obtain these promises but the harmony and uniting of these graces in a holy and habitual confederation. And when we consider the promise as singularly relating to that one grace, it is to be understood comparatively ; that is, such persons are

¹ James, v. 20 ; Tob. iv. 10 ; 1 John, iii. 3 ; Rom. v. 5 ; 1 Tim. iv. 8.

happy if compared with those who have contrary dispositions : for such a capacity does its portion of the work towards complete felicity, from which the contrary quality does estrange and disentitle us.

2. The special and minute actions and instances of these three preparatives of repentance are not under any command in the particulars, but are to be disposed of by Christian prudence, in order to those ends to which they are most aptly instrumental and designed. Such as are fasting and corporeal severities in satisfaction, or the punitive parts of repentance : they are either vindictive of what is past, and so are proper acts or effects of contrition and godly sorrow ; or else they relate to the present and future state, and are intended for correction or emendation, and so are of good use as they are medicinal, and in that proportion not to be omitted. And so is confession to a spiritual person an excellent instrument of discipline, a bridle of intemperate passions, an opportunity of restitution. ‘Ye which are spiritual, restore such a person overtaken in a fault,’ (saith the apostle). It is the application of a remedy, the consulting with the guide, and the best security to a weak, or lapsed, or an ignorant person ; in all which cases he is unfit to judge his own questions, and in these he is also committed to the care and conduct of another. But these special instances of repentance are capable of suppletories, and are like the corporeal works of mercy, necessary only in time and place, and in accidental obligations. He that relieves the poor, or visits the sick, choosing it for the instance of his charity, though he do not redeem captives, is charitable

¹ Gal. vi. 1.

and hath done his alms. And he that cures his sin by any instruments, by external, or interior and spiritual remedies, is penitent, though his diet be not ascetic and afflictive, or his lodging hard, or his sorrow bursting out into tears, or his expressions passionate and dolorous.¹ I only add this, that acts of public repentance must be by using the instruments of the church, such as she hath appointed; of private, such as by experience, or by reason, or by the counsel we can get, we shall learn to be most effective of our penitential purposes. And yet it is a great argument that the exterior expressions of corporeal severities are of good benefit, because in all ages wise men and severe penitents have chosen them for their instruments.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal God, who wert pleased in mercy to look upon us when we were in our blood, to reconcile us when we were enemies, to forgive us in the midst of our provocations of thy infinite and eternal Majesty, finding out a remedy for us which mankind could never ask, even making an atonement for us by the death of thy Son, sanctifying us by the blood of the everlasting covenant, and thy all-hallowing and divine Spirit; let thy graces so perpetually assist and encourage my endeavours, conduct my will, and fortify my intentions, that I may persevere in that holy condition which thou hast put me in by the grace of the covenant, and the mercies of the Holy Jesus. O let me never fall into those sins, and retire to that vain conversation, from which the eternal and merciful Saviour of the world hath redeemed me: but let me grow in grace, adding virtue to virtue,

¹ Vide Disc. of Mortification, Part. I; and Disc. of Fasting, Part II.

reducing my purposes to acts, and increasing my acts till they grow into habits, and my habits till they be confirmed, and still confirming them till they be consummate in a blessed and holy perseverance. Let thy preventing grace dash all temptations in their approach; let thy concomitant grace enable me to resist them in the assault, and overcome them in the fight: that my hopes be never discomposed, nor my faith weakened, nor my confidence made remiss, nor my title and portion in the covenant be lessened. Or if thou permittest me at any time to fall, (which, holy Jesu, avert for thy mercy and compassion sake,) yet let me not sleep in sin, but recall me instantly by the clamours of a nice and tender conscience, and the quickening sermons of the Spirit, that I may never pass from sin to sin, from one degree to another; lest sin should get the dominion over me, lest thou be angry with me, and reject me from the covenant, and I perish. Purify me from all uncleanness, sanctify my spirit, that I may be holy as thou art: and let me never provoke thy jealousy, nor presume upon thy goodness, nor distrust thy mercies, nor defer my repentance, nor rely upon vain confidence; but let me, by a constant, sedulous, and timely endeavour, make my calling and election sure, living to thee and dying to thee; that having sowed to the Spirit, I may, from thy mercies, reap in the Spirit bliss, and eternal sanctity, and everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, our hope, and our mighty and ever-glorious Redcemer. Amen.

*Considerations upon Christ's Sermon on the Mount
and of the Eight Beatitudes.*

1. THE holy Jesus being entered upon his prophetic office, in the first solemn sermon gave testimony that he was not only an interpreter of laws then in being, but also a lawgiver, and an angel of the new and everlasting covenant: which because God meant to establish with mankind by the mediation of his Son, by his Son also he now began to publish the conditions of it. And that the publi-

cation of the Christian law might retain some proportion at least and analogy of circumstance with the promulgation of the law of Moses, Christ went up into a mountain, and from thence gave the oracle. And here he taught all the disciples; for what he was now to speak was to become a law, a part of the condition on which he established the covenant, and founded our hopes of heaven. Our excellent and gracious Lawgiver, knowing that the great argument in all practical disciplines is the proposal of the end, which is their crown and their reward, begins his sermon, as David began his most divine collection of hymns, with blessedness. And having enumerated eight duties, which are the rule of the spirits of Christians, he begins every duty with a beatitude, and concludes it with a reward; to manifest the reasonableness, and to invite and determine our choice to such graces which are circumscribed with felicities, which have blessedness in present possession, and glory in the consequence; which, in the midst of the most passive and afflictive of them, tells us that we are blessed: which is indeed a felicity, as a hope is good, or as a rich heir is rich, who, in the midst of his discipline and the severity of tutors and governors, knows he is designed to, and certain of a great inheritance.

2. The eight beatitudes, which are the duty of a Christian, and the rule of our spirit, and the special discipline of Christ, seem like so many paradoxes and impossibilities reduced to reason; and are indeed virtues made excellent by rewards, by the sublimity of grace, and the mercies of God, hallowing and crowning those habits which are despised by the world, and are esteemed the conditions of lower and less considerable people. But God 'sees not

as man sees,' and his rules of estimate and judgment are not borrowed from the exterior splendour, which is apt to seduce children, and cozen fools, and please the appetites of sense and abused fancy; but they are such as he makes himself, excellencies which, by abstractions and separations from things below, land us upon celestial appetites. And they are states of suffering rather than states of life: for the great employment of a Christian being to bear the cross, Christ laid the pedestal so low, that the rewards were like rich mines interred in the deeps and inaccessible retirements, and did choose to build our felicities upon the torrents and violences of affliction and sorrow. Without these graces we cannot get heaven; and without sorrow and sad accidents we cannot exercise these graces. Such are,

3. First, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'¹ Poverty of spirit is in respect of secular affluence and abundance, or in respect of great opinion and high thoughts; either of which have divers acts and offices. That the first is one of the meanings of this text is certain, because St. Luke, repeating this beatitude, delivers it plainly, 'Blessed are the poor,'² and to it he opposes riches. And our blessed Saviour speaks so suspiciously of riches and rich men, that he represents the condition to be full of danger and temptation: and St. James calls it full of sin, describing rich men to be oppressors, litigious, proud, spiteful, and contentious.³ Which sayings, like all others of that nature, are to be understood in common and

¹ Προκοπή ψυχῆς, προκοπή ταπεινώσεως.

² Luke, vi. 20, 24. ³ James, ii. 6; v. 1, &c.

most frequent accidents; not regularly, but very improbable to be otherwise. For if we consider our vocation, St. Paul informs us, that ‘not many mighty, not many noble, are called;’ but ‘God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith.’ And how ‘hard it is for a rich man to enter into heaven,’ our great Master hath taught us, by saying, ‘it is more easy for a camel to pass through a needle’s eye.’¹ And the reason is, because of the infinite temptation which riches minister to our spirits; it being such an opportunity of vices, that nothing remains to countermand the act but a strong, resolute, unaltered, and habitual purpose, and pure love of virtue: riches in the meantime offering to us occasions of lust, fuel for revenge, instruments of pride, entertainment of our desires, engaging them in low, worldly, and sottish appetites; inviting us to show our power in oppression, our greatness in vanities, our wealth in prodigal expenses, and to answer the importunity of our lusts, not by a denial, but by a correspondence and satisfaction, till they

¹ Nulli fortunæ minùs bene quàm optimæ creditur. Aliâ felicitate ad tuendam felicitatem est opus. Sen.—“There is no kind of fortune so dangerous to be trusted as the best fortune. A second felicity is required to defend felicity.”

Ὠφελεις, ὦ τυφλὲ πλῆστε, μήτ’ ἐν γῆ, μήτ’ ἐν θαλάττῃ, μήτ’ ἐν ἡπείρῳ φανῆναι, ἀλλὰ τάρταρόν τε νάειν ἐ, Ἀχέροντα· οὐδὲ σὲ γὰρ πάντα ἐν ἀνθρώποις κακά. Timocr. Lyr.—“Thou oughtst, blind Pluto, neither in the land, nor in the sea, nor in any part of the universe to dwell, but in Tartarus and Acheron, for thou art the author of all ill to man.”

Ὁ εἰς πλετος ἡμᾶς, καθάπερ ἰατρὸς κακὸς τυφλὸς, (βλέποντας παραλαβὼν) πάντα ποιεῖ. Antiphanes.—“Riches, like a bad physician, finds us in possession of our sight and sends us away blind.”

Γαλακτοφάγων ἀκίων τε, εἰκαιστῶν ἀνθρώπων, dixit Homerus de Mysis et Hippomolgis, lib. xiii. Il. Justissimos et longævos dixit qui vescébantur lacte et cibo modesto.

become our mistresses, imperious, arrogant, tyrannical, and vain. But poverty is the sister of a good mind ; it ministers aid to wisdom, industry to our spirit, severity to our thoughts, soberness to our counsels, modesty to our desires ; it restrains extravagancy and dissolution of appetites ; the next thing above our present condition, which is commonly the object of our wishes, being temperate and little, proportionable enough to nature, not wandering beyond the limits of necessity or a moderate conveniency, or at farthest but to a free refreshment and recreation. And the cares of poverty are single and mean ; rather a fit employment to correct our levities, than a business to impede our better thoughts : since a little thing supplies the needs of nature, and the earth and the fountain, with little trouble, minister food to us, and God's common providence and daily dispensation eases the cares, and makes them portable. But the cares and business of rich men are violences to our whole man ; they are loads of memory, business for the understanding, work for two or three arts and sciences, employment for many servants to assist in, increase the appetite, and heighten the thirst ; and, by making their dropsy bigger, and their capacities large, they destroy all those opportunities and possibilities of charity in which only riches can be useful.

4. But it is not a mere poverty of possession which entitles us to the blessing, but a poverty of spirit ; that is, a contentedness in every state, an aptness to renounce all, when we are obliged in duty ; a refusing to continue a possession, when we for it must quit a virtue or a noble action ; a divorce of our affections from those gilded vanities ; a gene-

rous contempt of the world; and at no hand heaping riches, either with injustice or with avarice, either with wrong or impotency of action or affection. Not like Iabarius, described by the poet, who thought nothing so criminal as poverty, and every spending of a sesterce was the loss of a moral virtue, and every gaining of a talent was an action glorious and heroical. But poverty of spirit accounts riches to be the servants of God first, and then of ourselves; being sent by God, and to return when he pleases, and all the while they are with us, to do his business. It is a looking upon riches and things of the earth, as they do look upon it from heaven, to whom it appears little and unprofitable. And because the residence of this blessed poverty is in the mind, and follows that it be here understood, that all that exinanition and renunciation, abjection and humility of mind, which depauperates the spirit, making it less worldly and more spiritual, is the duty here enjoined. For if a man throws away his gold, as did Crates the Theban, or the proud philosopher Diogenes, and yet leaves a spirit, high, airy, fantastical, and vain, pleasing himself, and with complacency reflecting upon his own act; his poverty is but a circumstance of pride, and the opportunity of an imaginary and secular greatness. Ananias and Sapphira renounced the world by selling their possessions; but because they were not 'poor in spirit,' but still retained the affections to the world, therefore they 'kept back part of the price,' and lost their hopes. The church of Laodicea was possessed with a spirit of pride, and flattered themselves in imaginary riches: they were not poor in spirit, but they were poor in possession and condi-

tion. These wanted humility, the other wanted a generous contempt of worldly things; and both were destitute of this grace.

5. The acts of this grace are, 1, to cast off all inordinate affection to riches. 2, In heart and spirit, that is, preparation of mind, to quit the possession of all riches; and actually so to do when God requires it: that is, when the retaining riches loses a virtue. 3, To be well pleased with the whole economy of God, his providence and dispensation of all things, being contented in all estates. 4, To employ that wealth God hath given us in actions of justice and religion. 5, To be thankful to God in all temporal losses. 6, Not to distrust God, or to be solicitous and fearful of want in the future. 7, To put off the spirit of vanity, pride, and fantastic complacency in ourselves, thinking lowly or meanly of whatsoever we are to do. 8, To prefer others before ourselves, doing honour and prelation to them; and either contentedly receiving affronts done to us, or modestly undervaluing ourselves. 9, Not to praise ourselves but when God's glory and the edification of our neighbour is concerned in it; nor willingly to hear others praise us. 10, To despoil ourselves of all interior propriety, denying our will in all instances of subordination to our superiors, and our own judgment in matters of difficulty and questions; permitting ourselves and our affairs to the advice of wiser men, and the decision of those who are trusted with the cure of souls. 11, Emptying ourselves of ourselves, and throwing ourselves wholly upon God, relying upon his providence, trusting his promises, craving his grace, and depending upon his

strength for all our actions, and deliverances, and duties.

6. The reward promised is the kingdom of heaven. 'Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom.' To be little in our own eyes is to be great in God's: the poverty of the spirit shall be rewarded with the riches of the kingdoms, of both kingdoms—that of heaven is expressed. Poverty is the highway of eternity. But, therefore, the kingdom of grace is taken in the way, the way to our country; and it being the forerunner of glory, and nothing else but an antedated eternity, is part of the reward as well as of our duty. And, therefore, whatsoever is signified by kingdom in the appropriate evangelical sense, is there intended as a recompence. For the kingdom of the gospel is a congregation and society of Christ's poor, of his little ones; they are the communion of saints, and their present entertainment is knowledge of the truth, remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and what else in Scripture is signified to be a part or grace or condition of the kingdom. For 'to the poor the gospel is preached;'¹ that is, to the poor the kingdom is promised and ministered.

7. Secondly, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.' This duty of Christian mourning is commanded, not for itself, but in order to many good ends. 1, It is in order to patience: tribulation worketh patience;² and, therefore, 'we glory in them,' saith St. Paul. And St. James: 'My brethren, count it all joy when ye enter into divers temptations, knowing that the trial of your faith (viz. by afflictions) worketh patience.'³

¹ Matt. xi. 5.

² Rom. v. 3. *Gaudet patientia duria.*

³ James, i. 2, 3.

2, It is in order to repentance: 'Godly sorrow worketh repentance.' 3, By consequence it is in order to pardon: for 'a contrite heart God will not reject.' 4, And after all this it leads to joy. And, therefore, St. James preached a homily of sorrow: 'Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep,'¹ that is, in penitential mourning; for he adds, 'Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.'² The acts of this duty are: 1, To bewail our own sins. 2, To lament our infirmities, as they are principles of sin, and recessions from our first state. 3, To weep for our own evils and sad accidents, as they are issues of the divine anger. 4, To be sad for the miseries and calamities of the church, or of any member of it, and indeed, to 'weep with every one that weeps;' that is, not to rejoice in his evil, but to be compassionate, and pitiful, and apt to bear another's burthen. 5, To avoid all loose and immoderate laughter, all dissolution of spirit and manners, uncomely jestings, free revellings, carnivals, and balls, which are the perdition of precious hours, (allowed us for repentance and possibilities of heaven,) which are the instruments of infinite vanity, idle talking, impertinency, and lust, and very much below the severity and retiredness of a Christian spirit. Of this Christ became to us the great example; for St. Basil reports a tradition of him, that he never laughed, but wept often. And if we mourn with him, we shall also rejoice in the joys of eternity.

8. Thirdly, 'Blessed are the meek; for they shall possess the earth:' that is, the gentle and softer spirits, persons not turbulent or unquiet, not

¹ 2 Cor. vii. 10.

² James, iv. 9. 10

clamorous or impatient, not over bold or impudent, not querulous or discontented ; not nice or curious ; but men who submit to God, and know no choice of fortune, or employment, or success, but what God chooses for them ; having peace at home, because nothing from without does discompose their spirit. In sum, meekness is an indifferency to any exterior accident, a being reconciled to all conditions and instances of providence, a reducing ourselves to such an evenness and interior satisfaction, that there is the same conformity of spirit and fortune by complying with my fortune, as if my fortune did comply with my spirit. And therefore in the order of beatitudes, meekness is set between mourning and desire, that it might balance and attemper those actions by indifferency, which by reason of their abode are apt to the transportation of passion. The reward expressed is a possession of the earth, that is, a possession of all which is excellent here below, to consign him to a future glory, as Canaan was a type of heaven.¹ For meekness is the best cement and combining of friendships, it is a great endearment of us to our company. It is an ornament to have a meek and quiet spirit, a prevention of quarrels, and pacifier of wrath ; it purchaseth peace, and is itself a quietness of spirit. It is the greatest affront to all injuries in the world ; for it returns them upon the injurious, and makes them useless, ineffective, and innocent ; and is an antidote againt all the evil consequents of anger and adversity, and tramples upon the usurping passions of the irascible faculty.

9. But the greatest part of this passage and

¹ *Mansuetus et æquus secundum Aristot. est εὐτυχῶν μέτριος, et ἀτυχῶν μεγαλόψυχος.*

landscape is sky: and as a man in all countries can see more of heaven than of the earth he dwells on, so also he may in this promise. For although the Christian hears the promise of the inheritance of the earth, yet he must place his eye and fix his heart upon heaven, which by looking downward also upon this promise, as in a vessel of limpid water, he may see by reflection, without looking upwards by a direct intuition. It is heaven that is designed by this promise as well as by any of the rest; though this grace takes in also the refreshments of the earth, by equivalence and a suppletory design. But here we have no abiding city, and therefore no inheritance; this is not our country, and therefore here cannot be our portion; unless we choose, as did the prodigal, to go into a strange country, and spend our portion with riotous and beastly living, and forfeit our Father's blessing. The devil, carrying our blessed Saviour to a high mountain, showed him all the kingdoms of the world: but, besides that they were offered upon ill conditions, they were not eligible by him upon any. And neither are they to be chosen by us for our inheritance and portion evangelical; for the gospel is founded upon better promises, and therefore the hopes of a Christian ought not to determine upon any thing less than heaven. Indeed our blessed Saviour chose to describe this beatitude in the words of the Psalmist, so inviting his disciples to an excellent precept, by the insinuation of those Scriptures which themselves admitted. But as the earth which was promised to the meek man in David's psalm, was no other earth but the *terra promissionis*, the land of Canaan; if we shall remember that this

land of promise was but a transition and an allegory to a greater and more noble, that it was but a type of heaven, we shall not see cause to wonder why the holy Jesus, intending heaven for the reward of this grace also, together with the rest, did call it 'the inheritance of the earth.' For now is revealed to us 'a new heaven and a new earth; an habitation made without hands, eternal in the heavens.' And he understands nothing of the excellency of Christian religion, whose affections dwell below, and are satisfied with a portion of dirt and corruption. 'If we be risen with Christ, let us seek those things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.' But if a Christian desires to take possession of this earth in his way, as his inheritance or portion, he hath reason to fear it will be his all. We have but one inheritance, one country, and here we are strangers and pilgrims. Abraham told Dives that he had enjoyed his good things here; he had the inheritance of the earth, in the crass material sense; and therefore he had no other portion but what the devils have. And when we remember that persecution is the lot of the church, and that poverty is her portion, and her *quantum* is but food and raiment at the best; and that patience is her support, and hope her refreshment, and self-denial her security, and meekness is all her possession and title to a subsistence, it will appear certain, that as 'Christ's kingdom was not of this world,' so neither shall his saints have their portion in that which is not his kingdom. They are miserable if they do not reign with him, and he never reigned here; but 'if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him hereafter.' True it is,

Christ promised to him that should lose any interest for his sake, the restitution of an hundred-fold in this world. But as the sense of that cannot be literal—for he cannot receive a hundred mothers or a hundred wives—so whatsoever that be, it is to be enjoyed with persecution. And then such a portion of the earth as Christ hath expressed in figure, and shall by way of recompense restore us, and such a recompense as we can enjoy with persecution, and such an enjoyment as is consistent with our having lost all our temporals, and such an acquit and purchase of it as is not destructive of the grace of meekness; all that we may enter into our account as part of our lot, and the emanation from the holy promise. But in the foot of this account we shall not find any great affluence of temporal accruments. However it be, although, when a meek man hath earthly possessions, by his grace he is taught how to use them and how to part with them; yet if he hath them not by the virtue here commanded, he is not suffered to use any thing violent towards the acquiring them, not so much as a violent passion or a stormy imagination: for then he loses his meekness, and whatever he gets can be none of the reward of this grace. He that fights for temporals, (unless by some other appendant duty he be obliged,) loses his title, by striving incompetently for the reward; he cuts off that hand by which alone he can receive it. For unless he be indeed meek, he hath no right to what he calls ‘the inheritance of the earth:’ and he that is not content to want the inheritance of the earth, when God requires him, is not meek. So that if this beatitude be understood in a temporal sense, it is an offer of a reward upon a condition

we shall be without it, and be content too. For, in every sense of the word, meekness implies a just satisfaction of the Spirit, and acquiescence in every estate or contingency whatsoever, though we have no possessions but of a good conscience, no bread but that of carefulness, no support but that of the Holy Spirit, and a providence ministering to our natural necessities by an extemporary provision. And certain it is, the meekest of Christ's servants, the apostles and the primitive Christians, had no other verification of his promise but this, that, 'rejoicing in tribulation,' and 'knowing how to want as well as how to abound, through many tribulations they entered into the kingdom of heaven:' for that is the country in which they are co-heirs with Jesus. But if we will certainly understand what this reward is, we may best know it by understanding the duty; and this we may best learn from him that gave it in commandment. 'Learn of me, for I am meek,' said the holy Jesus: and to him was promised that 'the uttermost ends of the earth should be his inheritance;' and yet he died first, and went to heaven before it was verified to him in any sense, but only of content, and desire, and joy in suffering, and in all variety of accident. And thus also, if we be meek, we may receive the inheritance of the earth.

10. The acts of this grace are, 1. To submit to all the instances of divine providence, not repining at any accident which God hath chosen for us, and given us as part of our lot, or a punishment of our deserving, or an instrument of virtue; not envying the gifts, graces, or prosperities of our neighbours. 2. To pursue the interest and employment of our calling in which we are placed, not despising the

meanness of any work, though never so disproportionate to our abilities. 3. To correct all malice, wrath, evil-speaking, and inordination of anger, whether in respect of the object or the degree. 4. At no hand to entertain any thoughts of revenge or retaliation of evil. 5. To be affable and courteous in our deportment towards all persons of our society and intercourse. 6. Not to censure or reproach the weakness of our neighbour, but support his burden, cover and cure his infirmities. 7. To excuse what may be excused, lessening severity, and being gentle in reprehension. 8. To be patient in afflictions, and thankful under the cross. 9. To endure reproof, with shame at ourselves for deserving it, and thankfulness to the charitable physician that offers the remedy. 10. To be modest and fairly-mannered towards our superiors; obeying, reverencing, speaking honourably of and doing honour to aged persons, and all whom God hath set over us, according to their several capacities. 11. To be ashamed and very apprehensive of the unworthiness of a crime; at no hand losing our fear of the invisible God, and our reverence to visible societies, or single persons. 12. To be humble in our exterior addresses and behaviour in churches and all holy places. 13. To be temperate in government, not imperious, unreasonable, insolent, or oppressive, lest we provoke to wrath those whose interest of person and of religion we are to defend or promote. 14. To do our endeavour to expiate any injury we did, by confessing the fact, and offering satisfaction, and asking forgiveness.

11. Fourthly, ‘ Blessed are they that hunger and

thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. This grace is the greatest indication of spiritual health, when our appetite is right, strong, and regular; when we are desirous of spiritual nourishment, when we long for manna, and 'follow Christ for loaves,' not of a low and terrestrial gust, but of that 'bread which came down from heaven.' Now there are two sorts of holy repast which are the proper objects of our desires:—the bread of heaven, which is proportioned to our hunger; that is, all those immediate emanations from Christ's pardon of our sins, and redemption from our former conversation, holy laws and commandments. To this food there is also a spiritual beverage to quench our thirst; and this is the effects of the Holy Spirit, who first 'moved upon the waters of baptism,' and afterwards became to us 'the breath of life,' giving us holy inspirations and assistances, refreshing our wearinesses, cooling our fevers, and allaying all our intemperate passions; making us holy, humble, resigned, and pure, according to the pattern in the mount, 'even as our Father is pure. So that the first redemption and pardon of us by Christ's merits is the bread of life, for which we must hunger; and the refreshments and daily emanations of the Spirit, who is the spring of comforts and purity, is that drink which we must thirst after. A being first reconciled to God by Jesus, and a being sanctified and preserved in purity by the Holy Spirit, is the adequate object of our desires. Some to hunger and thirst best fancy the analogy and proportion of the two sacraments, the waters of baptism, and the food of the eucharist; some the bread of the patin, and the wine of the

chalice. But it is certain they signify one desire expressed by the most impatient and necessary of our appetites, hungering and thirsting. And the object is whatsoever is the principle or the effect, the beginning, or the way, or the end of righteousness; that is, the mercies of God, the pardon of Jesus, the graces of the Spirit, a holy life, a holy death, and a blessed eternity.

12. The blessing and reward of this grace is fulness or satisfaction; which relates immediately to heaven, because nothing here below can satisfy us. The grace of God is our *viaticum*, and entertains us by the way; its nature is to increase, not to satisfy the appetites: not because the grace is empty and unprofitable, as are the things of the world; but because it is excellent, but yet in order to a greater perfection, it invites the appetite by its present goodness, but it leaves it unsatisfied, because it is not yet arrived at glory: and yet the present imperfection, in respect of all the good of this world's possession, is rest and satisfaction, and is imperfect only in respect of its own future complement and perfection; and our hunger continues, and our needs return, because all we have is but an antepast. But the glories of eternity are also the proper object of our desires: that is the reward of God's grace, that is 'the crown of righteousness.' 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; and when I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.' The acts of this virtue are multiplied according to its object; for they are only, 1, to desire; and, 2, pray for; and, 3, labour for all

that which is righteousness in any sense. 1. For the pardon of our sins; 2, for the graces and sanctification of the Spirit; 3, for the advancement of Christ's kingdom; 4, for the reception of the holy sacrament, and all the instruments, ordinances, and ministries of grace; 5, for the grace of perseverance; 6, and finally, for the crown of righteousness.

13. Fifthly, 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.' Mercy is the greatest mark and token of the holy, elect, and predestinate persons in the world. 'Put ye on, (my beloved,) as the elect of God, the bowels of mercy, holy and precious.'¹ For mercy is an attribute, in the manifestation of which as all our happiness consists, so God takes greatest complacency, and delights in it above all his other works. He 'punishes to the third and fourth generation,' but 'shows mercy unto thousands.' Therefore the Jews say that Michael flies with one wing, and Gabriel with two; meaning, that the pacifying angel, the minister of mercy, flies swift; but the exterminating angel, the messenger of wrath, is slow. And we are called to our approximation to God by the practice of this grace; for we are made 'partakers of the divine nature,' by being 'merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful.' This mercy consists in the affections, and in the effects and actions: in both which the excellency of this Christian precept is eminent, above the goodness of the moral precept of the old philosophers, and the piety and charity of the Jews, by virtue of the Mosaic law. The stoic philoso-

¹ Col. iii. 12.

phers affirm it to be the duty of a wise man to succour and help the necessities of indigent and miserable persons; but at no hand to pity them, or suffer any trouble or compassion in our affections: for they intended that a wise person should be dispassionate, unmoved, and without disturbance in every accident and object and concernment. But the blessed Jesus, who came to reconcile us to his Father, and purchase us an entire possession, did intend to redeem us from sin, and make our passions obedient and apt to be commanded; even and moderate in temporal affairs, but high and active in some instances of spiritual concernment; and in all instances, that the affection go along with the grace; that we must be as merciful in our compassion, as compassionate in our exterior expressions and actions. The Jews, by the prescript of their law, were to be merciful to all their nation and confederates in religion; and this their mercy was called justice: 'He hath dispersed abroad and given to the poor: his righteousness [or justice] remaineth for ever.' But the mercies of a Christian are to extend to all: 'Do good to all men, especially to the household of faith.'¹ And this diffusion of a mercy, not only to brethren, but to aliens and enemies, is that which St. Paul calls goodness, still retaining the old appellative for Judaical mercy, [righteousness:] 'For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some will even dare to die.'² So that the Christian mercy must be a mercy of the whole man; the heart must

¹ Gal. vi. 10.

² Rom. v. 7. Syrus interpres non legit ὑπὲρ δικαίου, sed ἀδίκου, injusto.

be merciful, and the hand operating in the labour of love: and it must be extended to all persons of all capacities, according as their necessity requires, and our ability permits, and our endearments and other obligations dispose of and determine the order.

14. The acts of this grace are, 1. To pity the miseries of all persons, and all calamities spiritual or temporal, having a fellow-feeling in their afflictions. 2. To be afflicted and sad in the public judgments imminent or incumbent upon a church, or state, or family. 3. To pray to God for remedy for all afflicted persons. 4. To do all acts of bodily assistance to all miserable and distressed people; to relieve the poor, to redeem captives, to forgive debts to disabled persons, to pay debts for them, to lend them money, to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, to rescue persons from dangers, to defend and relieve the oppressed, to comfort widows and fatherless children, to help them to right that suffer wrong; and, in brief, to do any thing of relief, support, succour, and comfort. 5. To do all acts of spiritual mercy; to counsel the doubtful, to admonish the erring, to strengthen the weak, to resolve the scrupulous, to teach the ignorant, and do any thing else which may be instrumental to his conversion, perseverance, restitution, and salvation, or may rescue him from spiritual dangers, or supply him in any ghostly necessity. The reward of this virtue is symbolical to the virtue itself: the grace and glory differing in nothing but degrees, and every virtue being a reward to itself. 'The merciful shall receive mercy:' mercy to help them in time of need; mercy from God, who will

not only give them the great mercies of pardon and eternity, but also dispose the hearts of others to pity and supply their needs, as they have done to others. For the present, there is nothing more noble than to be beneficial to others, and to 'lift up the poor out of the mire,' and rescue them from misery; it is to do the work of God: and for the future, nothing is a greater title to a mercy at the day of judgment, than to have showed mercy to our necessitous brother; it being expressed to be the only rule and instance in which Christ means to judge the world, in their mercy and charity or their unmercifulness respectively: 'I was hungry, and ye fed me,' or, 'ye fed me not:' and so we stand or fall in the great and eternal scrutiny. And it was the prayer of St. Paul, (Onesiphorus showed kindness to the great apostle,) 'the Lord show him a mercy in that day.' For a cup of charity, though but full of cold water, shall not lose its reward.

15. Sixthly, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' This purity of heart includes purity of hands. 'Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle? even he that is of clean hands and a pure heart;' that is, 'he that hath not given his mind unto vanity, nor sworn to deceive his neighbour.'¹ It signifies justice of action and candour of spirit, innocence of manners, and sincerity of purpose: it is one of those great circumstances that consummates charity; for 'the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.'² 'A pure heart;' that is, a heart free from all carnal affec-

¹ Psalm xxiv. 3, 4.

² 1 Tim. 1, 5.

tions, not only in the matter of natural impurity, but also spiritual and immaterial; such as are heresies, (which are therefore impurities, because they mingle secular interest or prejudice with persuasions in religion,) seditious, hurtful and impious stratagems, and all those which St. Paul enumerates to be works or fruits of the flesh. A 'good conscience;' that is, a conscience either innocent or penitent, a state of grace, either a not having prevaricated, or a being restored to our baptismal purity. 'Faith unfeigned;' that also is the purity of sincerity, and excludes hypocrisy, timorous and half persuasions, neutrality and indifferency in matters of salvation. And all these do integrate the whole duty of charity. But 'purity,' as it is a special grace, signifies only honesty and uprightness of soul, without hypocrisy to God and dissimulation towards men; and then a freedom from all carnal desires, so as not to be governed or led by them. Chastity is the purity of the body, simplicity is the purity of the spirit, both are the sanctification of the whole man, for the entertainment of the spirit of purity and the spirit of truth.

16. The acts of this virtue are, 1. To quit all lustful thoughts, not to take delight in them, not to retain them or invite them; but as objects of displeasure to avert them from us. 2. To resist all lustful desires, and extinguish them by their proper correctories and remedies. 3. To refuse all occasions, opportunities, and temptations to impurity; denying to please a wanton eye, or to use a lascivious gesture, or to go into a danger, or to converse with an improper, unsafe object: 'hating the gar-

ment spotted with the flesh,' so St. Jude calls it; and 'not to look upon a maid,' so Job; 'not to sit with a woman that is a singer,' so the son of Sirach. 4. To be of a liberal soul, not mingling with affections of money and inclinations of covetousness; not doing any act of violence, rapine, or injustice. 5. To be ingenuous in our thoughts, purposes, and professions, speaking nothing contrary to our intentions, but being really what we seem. 6. To give all our faculties and affections to God, without dividing interests between God and his enemies, without entertaining of any one crime in society with our pretences for God.¹ 7. Not to lie in sin, but instantly to repent of it and return, 'purifying our conscience from dead works.' 8. Not to dissemble our faith or belief, when we are required to its confession, pretending a persuasion complying with those from whom secretly we differ. Lust, covetousness, and hypocrisy are the three great enemies of this grace: they are the motes of our eyes, and the spots of our souls. The reward of purity is the vision beatifical. If we are 'pure as God is pure, we shall' also 'see him as he is: when we awake up after his likeness, we shall behold his presence.' To which in this world we are consigned by freedom from the cares of covetousness, the shame of lust, the fear of discovery, and the stings of an evil conscience; which are the portion of the several impurities here forbidden.

17. Seventhly, 'Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.' 'The wisdom of God is first pure, and then peaceable;'² that is the order of the beatitudes. As soon as

¹ Plato vocat puritatem ἀπόκρισιν χειρόνων ἀπὸ βελτιόνων.

² James iii. 17.

Jesus was born, the angels sang a hymn: 'Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men:' signifying the two great errands upon which Christ was dispatched in his legation from heaven to earth. He is 'the Prince of Peace.' 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall ever see God.' The acts of this grace are, 1. To mortify our anger, peevishness, and fiery dispositions, apt to enkindle upon every slight accident, inadvertency, or misfortune of a friend or servant. 2. Not to be hasty, rash, provocative, or upbraiding in our language. 3. To live quietly and serenely in our families and neighbourhoods. 4. Not to backbite, slander, misreport, or undervalue any man, carrying tales, or sowing dissension between brethren. 5. Not to interest ourselves in the quarrels of others, by abetting either part, except where charity calls us to rescue the oppressed; and then also to do a work of charity without mixtures of uncharitableness. 6. To avoid all suits of law as much as is possible, without entrenching upon any other collateral obligation towards a third interest, or a necessary support for ourselves, or great conveniency for our families; or if we be engaged in law, to pursue our just interests with just means and charitable maintenance. 7. To endeavour by all means to reconcile disagreeing persons. 8. To endeavour by affability and fair deportment, to win the love of our neighbours. 9. To offer satisfaction to all whom we have wronged or slandered, and to remit the offences of others; and in trials of right to find out the most charitable expedient to determine it, as by indifferent arbitration, or something like it. 10. To be open, free, and ingenuous in reprehensions and fair expostulations with persons whom we conceive to have wronged

us, that no seed of malice or rancour may be latent in us, and upon the breath of a new displeasure break out into a flame. 11. To be modest in our arguings, disputings, and demands, not laying great interest upon trifles. 12. To moderate, balance, and temper our zeal by the rules of prudence and the allay of charity, that we quarrel not for opinions, nor entitle God in our impotent and mistaken fancies, nor lose charity for a pretence of an article of faith. 13. To pray heartily for our enemies, real or imaginary, always loving and being apt to benefit their persons, and to cure their faults by charitable remedies. 14. To abstain from doing all affronts, disgraces, slightings, and uncomely jeerings and mockings of our neighbour, not giving him appellatives of scorn or irrision. 15. To submit to all our superiors in all things, either doing what they command, or suffering what they impose; at no hand lifting our heel against those upon whom the characters of God and the marks of Jesus are imprinted in signal and eminent authority: such as are, principally, the king and then the bishops, whom God hath set to ‘watch over our souls.’ 16. Not to invade the possessions of our neighbours, or commence war, but when we are bound by justice and legal trust to defend the rights of others, or our own, in order to our duty. 17. Not to speak evil of dignities, or undervalue their persons, or publish their faults, or upbraid the levities of our governors; knowing that they also are designed by God, to be converted to us for castigation and amendment of us. 18. Not to be busy in other men’s affairs; and then ‘the peace of God will rest upon us.’¹ The reward

¹ Phil. iv. 9; 1 Thes. v. 23; 2 Thes. iii. 16.; Heb. xiii. 20.

is no less than the adoption and inheritance of sons; for 'he hath given unto us power to be called the sons of God:' for he is the father of peace, and the sons of peace are the sons of God, and therefore have a title to the inheritance of sons, to be heirs with God, and co-heirs with Christ¹ in the kingdom of peace, and essential and never-failing charity.

18. Eighthly, 'Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' This being the hardest command in the whole discipline of Jesus, is fortified with a double blessedness; for it follows immediately, 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you:' meaning, that all persecution for a cause of righteousness, though the affliction be instanced only in reproachful language, shall be a title to the blessedness. Any suffering for any good or harmless action is a degree of martyrdom. It being the greatest testimony in the world of the greatest love, to quit that for God which hath possessed our most natural, regular, and orderly affections. It is a preferring God's cause before our own interest; it is a loving of virtue without secular ends. It is the noble, the most resigned, ingenuous, valiant act in the world, to die for God, whom we never have seen; it is the crown of faith, the confidence of hope, and our greatest charity. The primitive churches, living under persecution, commented many pretty opinions concerning the state and special dignity of martyrs, apportioning to them one of the three coronets which themselves did knit, and supposed as pen-

¹ Rom. viii. 17.

dants to the great crown of righteousness. They made it suppletory of baptism, expiatory of sin, satisfactory of public penances: they placed them in bliss immediately, declared them to need no after-prayer, such as the devotion of those times used to pour upon the graves of the faithful. With great prudence they did endeavour to alleviate this burden, and sweeten the bitter chalice; and they did it by such doctrines which did only remonstrate this great truth, that since no love was greater than to lay down our lives, nothing could be so great but God would indulge to them. And indeed, whatsoever they said in this, had no inconvenience; nor would it now, unless men should think mere suffering to be sufficient to excuse a wicked life, or that they be invited to dishonour an excellent patience with the mixture of an impure action. There are many who would die for Christ if they were put to it, and yet will not quit a lust for him. Those are hardly to be esteemed Christ's martyrs: unless they be dead unto sin, their dying for an article or a good action will not pass the great scrutiny. And it may be boldness of spirit, or sullenness, or an honourable gallantry of mind, or something that is excellent in civil and political estimate, moves the person, and endears the suffering; but that love only which keeps the commandments will teach us to die for love, and from love to pass to blessedness through the red sea of blood. And, indeed, it is more easy to die for chastity than to live with it; and many women have been found, who suffered death under the violence of tyrants, for defence of their holy vows and purity, who, had they long continued amongst pleasures, courtships, curiosities, and importunities of men, might

perchance have yielded that to a lover which they denied to an executioner. St. Cyprian observes, that our blessed Lord, in admitting the innocent babes of Bethlehem first to die for him, did to all generations of Christendom consign this lesson, that only persons holy and innocent were fit to be Christ's martyrs. And I remember, that the prince of the Latin poets, over against the region and seats of infants, places in the shades below persons that suffered death wrongfully; but adds, that this their death was not enough to place them in such blessed mansions, but the Judge first made inquiry into their lives, and accordingly designed their station. It is certain that such dyings or great sufferings are heroical actions, and of power to make great compensations, and redemptions of time, and of omissions and imperfections; but if the man be unholy, so also are his sufferings: for heretics have died, and vicious persons have suffered in a good cause, and a dog's neck may be cut off in sacrifice, and swine's blood may fill the trench about the altar; but God only accepts the sacrifice which is pure and spotless, first seasoned with salt, then seasoned with fire. The true martyr must have all the preceding graces, and then he shall receive all the beatitudes.

19. The acts of this duty are, 1. Boldly to confess the faith, nobly to exercise public virtues, not to be ashamed of any thing that is honest; and rather to quit our goods, our liberty, our health, and life itself, than to deny what we are bound to affirm, or to omit what we are bound to do, or to pretend contrary to our present persuasion. 2. To rejoice in afflictions; counting it honourable to be conformable to Christ, and to wear the cognizance

of Christianity, whose certain lot it is to suffer the hostility and violence of enemies visible and invisible. 3. Not to revile our persecutors, but to bear the cross with evenness, tranquillity, patience, and charity. 4. To offer our sufferings to the glory of God, and to join them with the passions of Christ, by doing it in love to God, and obedience to his sanctions, and testimony of some part of his religion, and designing it as a part of duty. The reward is the kingdom of heaven; which can be no other but eternal salvation, in case the martyrdom be consummate: and 'they also shall be made perfect;' so the words of the reward were read in Clement's time. If it be less, it keeps its proportion: all suffering persons are the combination of saints; they make the church, they are the people of the kingdom, and heirs of the covenant: for if they be but confessors, and confess Christ in prison, though they never preach upon the rack or under the axe, yet Christ will confess them before his heavenly Father; and they shall have a portion where they shall never be persecuted any more.

THE PRAYER.

I.

O blessed Jesus, who art become to us the fountain of peace and sanctity, of righteousness and charity, of life and perpetual benediction, imprint in our spirits these glorious characteristics of Christianity, that we by such excellent dispositions may be consigned to the infinity of blessedness which thou camest to reveal,

¹ Οτι αυτοί εσονται τέλειοι. Sic etiam olim legebatur hæc **periodus**; ὅτι ἕξῃσι τόπον ὑπ' ἡ διωχθήσονται.

and minister, and exhibit to mankind. Give us great humility of spirit; and deny us not, when we beg sorrow of thee, the mourning and sadness of true penitents, that we may imitate thy excellencies, and conform to thy sufferings. Make us meek, patient, indifferent, and resigned in all accidents, changes, and issues of divine Providence. Mortify all inordinate anger in us; all wrath, strife, contention, murmurings, malice, and envy; and interrupt, and then blot out all peevish dispositions and morosities, all disturbances and unevenness of spirit or of habit, that may hinder us in our duty. Oh! teach me so to hunger and thirst after the ways of righteousness, that it may be meat and drink to me to do thy Father's will. Raise my affections to heaven and heavenly things, fix my heart there, and prepare a treasure for me, which I may receive in the great diffusions and communications of thy glory. And in this sad interval of infirmity and temptations strengthen my hopes, and fortify my faith, by such emissions of light and grace from thy Spirit, that I may relish those blessings which thou preparest for thy saints with so great appetite, that I may despise the world and all its gilded vanities, and may desire nothing but the crown of righteousness and the paths that lead thither, the graces of thy kingdom, and the glories of it; that when I have served thee in holiness and strict obedience, I may reign with thee in the glories of eternity: for thou, O holy Jesus, art our hope, and our life, and glory, our exceeding great reward. Amen.

II.

Merciful Jesu, who art infinitely pleased in demonstrations of thy mercy, and didst descend into a state of misery, suffering persecution and affronts, that thou mightest give us thy mercy and reconcile us to thy Father, and make us partakers of thy purities, give unto us tender bowels, that we may suffer together with our calamitous and necessitous brethren; that we, having a fellow-feeling of their miseries, may use all our powers to help them, and ease ourselves of our common sufferings. But do thou, O holy Jesu, take from us also all our great calamities, the carnality of our affections, our sensualities and impurities, that we may first be pure, then peaceable, living in peace with all men, and preserving the peace which thou hast made for us with our God, that we may never commit a sin

which may interrupt so blessed an atonement. Let neither hope nor fear, tribulation nor anguish, pleasure nor pain, make us to relinquish our interest in thee, and our portion of the everlasting covenant. But give us hearts constant, bold, and valiant, to confess thee before all the world in the midst of all disadvantages and contradictory circumstances, choosing rather to beg, or to be disgraced, or afflicted, or to die, than quit a holy conscience, or renounce an article of Christianity: that we, either in act, when thou shalt call us, or always in preparation of mind, suffering with thee, may also reign with thee in the church triumphant, O holy and most merciful Saviour Jesu. Amen.

DISCOURSE X.

A Discourse upon that part of the Decalogue which the Holy Jesus adopted into the institution and obligation of Christianity.

1. WHEN the holy Jesus had described the characteristics of Christianity in these eight graces and beatitudes, he adds his injunctions, that in these virtues they should be eminent and exemplary, that they might adorn the doctrine of God: for he intended that the gospel should be as leaven in a lump of dough, to season the whole mass; and that Christians should be the instruments of communicating the excellency and reputation of this holy institution to all the world. Therefore, Christ calls them salt and light, and the societies of Christians a city set upon a hill, and a light set in a candlestick, whose office and energy is to illuminate all the vicinage; which is also expressed in these preceptive words: 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works,

and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Which I consider not only as a circumstance of other parts, but as a precise duty itself, and one of the sanctions of Christianity, which hath so confederated the souls of the disciples of the institution, that it hath in some proportion obliged every man to take care of his brother's soul: and since reverence to God and charity to our brother are the two greatest ends which the best laws can have, this precept of exemplary living is enjoined in order to them both. We must shine as lights in the world, that God may be glorified, and our brother edified; that the excellency of the act may endear the reputation of the religion, and invite men to confess God, according to the sanctions of so holy an institution. And if we be curious that vanity do not mingle in the intention, and that the intention do not spoil the action, and that we suffer not our lights to shine that men may magnify us, and not glorify God; this duty is soon performed by way of adherence to our other actions, and hath no other difficulty in it, but that it will require our prudence and care to preserve the simplicity of our purposes and humility of our spirit, in the midst of that excellent reputation, which will certainly be consequent to a holy and exemplary life.

2. But since the holy Jesus hath set us up to be lights in the world, he took care we should not be stars of the least magnitude, but eminent, and such as might, by their great emissions of light, give evi-

¹ "Ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἐν σώματι ψυχῇ, τῶτ' εἰσὶν ἐν κόσμῳ Χριστιανοί. Just. Mar.—"As the soul is in the body, so are Christians in the world." Sic S. Paulus, ἐν οἷς φαίνεσθε ὡς φωστῆρες ἐν κόσμῳ. Phil. ii. 15.

dence of their being immediately derivative from the Sun of righteousness. He was now giving his law, and meant to retain so much of Moses, as Moses had of natural and essential justice and charity, and superadd many degrees of his own; that as far as Moses was exceeded by Christ in the capacity of a lawgiver, so far Christianity might be more excellent and holy than the Mosaical sanctions. And therefore, as a preface to the Christian law, the holy Jesus declares, that ‘unless our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees,’ that is, of the stricter sects of the Mosaical institution, ‘we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ Which not only relates to the prevaricating practices of the Pharisees, but even to their doctrines and commentaries upon the law of Moses; as appears evidently in the following instances. For if all the excellency of Christianity had consisted in the mere command of sincerity, and prohibition of hypocrisy, it had nothing in it proportionable to those excellent promises and clearest revelations of eternity there expressed, nor of a fit employment for the designation of a special and a new lawgiver, whose laws were to last for ever, and were established upon foundations stronger than the pillars of heaven and earth.

3. But St. Paul, calling the law of Moses ‘a law of works,’¹ did well insinuate what the doctrine of the Jews was concerning the degrees and obligations of justice. For besides that it was a law of works in opposition to the law of faith, (and so the sense of it is formerly explicated,²) it is also a law

¹ Rom. iii. 27.

² Vide Considerat. of Christ’s first preaching. n. 3.

of works, in opposition to the law of the spirit: and it is understood to be such a law which required the exterior obedience; such a law according to which St. Paul so lived, that no man could reprove him; that is, the judges could not tax him with prevarication; such a law which, being in very many degrees carnal and material, did not with much severity exact the intention and purposes spiritual. But the gospel is 'the law of the spirit.' If they failed in the exterior work, it was accounted to them for sin; but to Christians nothing becomes a sin, but a failing and prevaricating spirit. For the outward act is such an emanation of the interior, that it enters into the account for the relation sake, and for its parent. When God hath put a duty into our hands, if our spirits be right, the work will certainly follow: but the following work receives its acceptance, not from the value the Christian law hath precisely put upon it, but because the spirit from whence it came hath observed its rule. The law of charity is acted and expressed in works, but hath its estimate from the spirit. Which discourse is to be understood in a limited and qualified signification. For then also God required the heart, and interdicted the very concupiscences of our irregular passions, at least in some instances: but because much of their law consisted in the exterior, and the law appointed not, nor yet intimated any penalty to evil thoughts, and because the expiation of such interior irregularities was easy, implicit, and involved in their daily sacrifices without special trouble, therefore the old law was 'a law of works;' that is, especially and in its first intention. But this being less perfect, the holy Jesus inverted

the order. 1. For very little of Christianity stands upon the outward action : (Christ having appointed but two sacraments immediately :) and, 2, a greater restraint is laid upon the passions, desires, and first motions of the spirit, than under the severity of Moses : and, 3, they are threatened with the same curses of a sad eternity, with the acts proceeding from them : and, 4, because the obedience of the spirit does in many things excuse the want of the outward act, God always requiring at our hands what he hath put in our power, and no more : and, 5, lastly, because the spirit is the principle of all actions moral and spiritual, and certainly productive of them when they are not impeded from without ; therefore the holy Jesus hath secured the fountain, as knowing that the current must needs be healthful and pure, if it proceeds through pure channels, from a limpid and unpolluted principle.

4. And certainly it is much for the glory of God, to worship him with a religion whose very design looks upon God as 'the searcher of our hearts,' and lord of our spirits ; who judges the purposes as a God, and does not only take his estimate from the outward action, as a man. And it is also a great reputation to the institution itself, that it purifies the soul, and secures the secret cogitations of the mind. It punishes covetousness as it judges rapine ; it condemns a sacrilegious heart as soon as an irreligious hand ; it detests hating of our brother by the same aversion which it expresses against doing him affronts. He that curses in his heart shall die the death of an explicit and bold blasphemer : murmur and repining is against the laws of Christianity. But either by the remissness of Moses's law, or the gentler execution of it, or the

innovating or lessening glosses of the Pharisees, he was esteemed innocent whose actions were according to the letter, not whose spirit was conformed to the intention and more secret sanctity of the law. So that our righteousness must therefore exceed the Pharisaical standard, because our spirits must be pure as our hands, and the heart as regular as the action; our purposes must be sanctified, and our thoughts holy: we must love our neighbour, as well as relieve him, and choose justice with adhesion of the mind, as well as carry her upon the palms of our hands. And therefore the prophets, foretelling the kingdom of the gospel and the state of this religion, call it 'a writing the laws of God in our hearts.' And St. Paul distinguishes the gospel from the law by this only measure: 'We are all Israelites, of the seed of Abraham, heirs of the same inheritance; only now we are not to be accounted Jews for the outward conformity to the law, but for the inward consent and obedience to those purities which were secretly signified by the types of Moses.' They of the law were Jews outwardly; their 'circumcision was outward in the flesh, their praise was of men: we are Jews inwardly; our circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, and our praise is of God:' that is, we are not judged by the outward act, but by the mind and the intention: and though the acts must follow in all instances where we can and where they are required; yet it is the less principal, and rather significative, than by its own strength and energy operative and accepted.

5 St. Clement of Alexandria saith, the Phari-

† Rom. ii. 23, 29

ees righteousness consisted in the not doing evil, and that Christ superadded this also, that we must do the contrary, good, and so exceed the Phari-saical measure. They would not wrong a Jew, nor many times relieve him : they reckoned their inno-cence by not giving offence, by walking blameless, by not being accused before the judges sitting in the gates of their cities. But the balance in which the Judge of quick and dead weighs Chris-tians is, not only the avoiding evil, but doing good ; the ‘ following peace with all men and holiness ;’ the proceeding from faith to faith ; the adding virtue to virtue ; the persevering in all holy con-versation and godliness. And therefore St. Paul, commending the grace of universal charity, says, that ‘ love worketh no ill to his neighbour, there-fore love is the fulfilling of the law ;’¹ implying, that the prime intention of the law was, that every man’s right be secured, that no man receive wrong. And indeed all the Decalogue consisting of prohi-bitions rather than precepts, saying that each table hath one positive commandment, does not obscurely verify the doctrine of St. Clement’s interpretation. Now because the Christian charity abstains from doing all injury, therefore it is the fulfilling of the law ; and because it is also patient and liberal, that it suffers long and is kind, therefore the charity commanded in Christ’s law exceeds that charity which the Scribes and Pharisees reckoned as part of their righteousness. But Jesus himself does, with great care in the particulars, instance in what he would have the disciples to be eminent above the most strict sect of the Jewish religion : 1, in practising the moral precepts of the Decalogue

¹ Rom. xiii. 10.

with a stricter interpretation ; 2, and in quitting the permissions and licenses, which for the hardness of their heart Moses gave them, as indulgencies to their persons, and securities against the contempt of too severe laws.

6. The severity of exposition was added but to three commandments, and in three indulgences the permission was taken away. But because our great Lawgiver repeated also other parts of the Decalogue in his after-sermons, I will represent in this one view all that he made to be Christian by adoption.¹

7. The first commandment Christ often repeated and enforced, as being the basis of all religion, and the first endearment of all that relation whereby we are capable of being the sons of God ; as being the great commandment of the law, and comprehensive of all that duty we owe to God in the relations of the virtue of religion. ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord ;’ and ‘thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.’² This is the first commandment ;² that is, this comprehends all that which is moral and eternal in the first table of the Decalogue.

8. The duties of this commandment are, 1, To worship God alone with actions proper to him ; and, 2, to love, and, 3, obey him with all our faculties. 1. Concerning worship. The actions proper to the honour of God, are to offer sacrifice, incense, and oblations, making vows to him, swearing by his name as the instrument of secret testimony, confessing his incommunicable attributes, and praying to him for those graces which are es-

¹ Luke, xviii. 20 ; Mark, x. 19 ; Matt. xix. 18 ; Rom. xiii. 9.

² Matt. xxii. 37 ; Mark, xii. 30 ; Luke, x. 27.

essentially annexed to his dispensation ; as remission of sins, gifts of the Spirit, and the grace of sanctification, and life eternal. Other acts of religion, such as are uncovering the head, bowing the knee, falling upon our face, stooping to the ground, reciting praises, are by the consent of nations used as testimonies of civil or religious veneration, and do not always pass for confessions of a divinity ; and therefore may be without sin used to angels, or kings, or governors, or to persons in any sense more excellent than ourselves, provided they be intended to express an excellency no greater than is proper to their dignities and persons ; not in any sense given to an idol or false gods. But the first sort are such which all the world hath consented to be actions of divine and incommunicable adoration, and such which God also, in several religions, hath reserved as his own appropriate regalities, and are idolatry if given to any angel or man.

9. The next duties are, 2, love, 3, and obedience ; but they are united in the gospel : 'This is love, that we keep his commandments.' And since we are, for God's sake, bound also to love others, this love is appropriate to God by the extension of parts, and the intention of degrees. The extension signifies that we must serve God with all our faculties ; for all division of parts is hypocrisy, and a direct prevarication ; our heart must think what our tongue speaks, our hands act what we promise or purpose ; and God's enemies must have no share so much as in appearance or dissimulation. Now no creature can challenge this : and if we do justice to our neighbour, though unwillingly, we have done him no injury ; for in that case he only who sees the irregularity of our

thoughts is the person injured. And when we swear to him, our heart must swear as well as our tongue, and our hands must pay what our lips have promised; or else we provoke him with an imperfect sacrifice: we love him not with all our mind, with all our strength, and all our faculties.

10. But the difficulty and question of this commandment lies in the intention. For it is not enough to serve God with every capacity, passion, and faculty; but it must be every degree of every faculty, all the latitude of our will, all the whole intention of our passions, all the possibility and energy of our senses and our understanding. Which, because it is to be understood according to that moderate sentence and account which God requires of us, set in the midst of such a condition, so attended, and depressed, and prejudiced, the full sense of it I shall express in several propositions.

11. First, the intention of the love to which we are obliged requires not the degree which is absolutely the greatest, and simply the most perfect. For there are degrees of grace, every one of which is pleasing to God, and is a state of reconciliation and atonement. And he that 'breaks not the bruised reed,' nor 'quenches the smoking flax,' loves to cherish those endeavours, which, beginning from small principles, pass through the variety of degrees, and give demonstration, that though it be our duty to contend for the best, yet this contention is with an enemy, and that enemy makes an abatement, and that abatement, being an imperfection rather than a sin, is actually consistent with the state of grace, the endeavour being in our power, and not the success: the perfection is that which shall be our reward, and therefore is not our pre-

sent duty. And, indeed, if to do the best action, and to love God as we shall do in heaven, were a present obligation, it would have been clearly taught us what is simply the best action; whereas now that which is of itself better, in certain circumstances, is less perfect, and sometimes not lawful: and concerning those circumstances we have no rules, nor any guide but prudence and probable inducements. So that it is certain, in our best endeavours we should only increase our scruples, instead of doing actions of the highest perfections; we should erect a tyranny over our consciences, and no augmentation of any thing but the trouble. And therefore, in the law of Moses, when this commandment was given in the same words, yet that the sense of it might be clear, the analogy of the law declared that their duty had a latitude; and that God was not so strict a taskmaster, but that he left many instances of piety to the voluntary devotion of his servants, that they might receive the reward of free-will offerings. But if these words had obliged them to the greatest degree, that is, to all the degrees of our capacities in every instance, every act of religion had been duty and necessity.

12. And thus also it was in the gospel. Ananias and Sapphira were killed by sentence from heaven for not performing what was in their power at first not to have promised; but because they brought an obligation upon themselves which God brought not, and then prevaricated, they paid the forfeiture of their lives. St. Paul took no wages of the Corinthian churches,¹ but wrought night and day with his own hand; but himself says he had

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 7, 8.

power to do otherwise. There 'was laid upon him a necessity to preach,' but no necessity to preach without wages and support. There is a good and a better in virginity and marriage; and yet there is no command in either, but that we abstain from sin; we are left to our own election for the particular, having 'no necessity, but power in our will.'¹ David prayed seven times a day, and Daniel prayed three times; and both were beloved of God. The Christian masters were not bound to manumit their slaves, and yet were commended if they did so. Sometimes the Christians fled in persecution; St. Paul did so, and St. Peter did so, and St. Cyprian did so, and St. Athanasius, and many more: but time was, when some of these also chose to suffer death rather than to fly. And if to fly be a permission, and no duty, there is certainly a difference of degrees in the choice: to fly is not so great a suffering as to die, and yet a man may innocently choose the easier. And our blessed Lord himself, who never failed of any degree of his obligations, yet at some time prayed with more zeal and fervour than at other times, as a little before his passion. Since then at all times he did not do actions of that degree which is absolutely the greatest; it is evident that God's goodness is so great, as to be content with such a love which parts no share between him and sin; and leaves all the rest under such a liberty, as is only encouraged by those extraordinary rewards and crowns proportioned to heroic endeavours. It was a pretty question which was moved in the solitudes of Nitria, concerning two religious brothers: the one gave all his goods to the

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 37.

poor at once; the other kept the inheritance, and gave all the revenue.¹ None of all the fathers knew which was absolutely the better—at once to renounce all, or by repetition of charitable acts to divide it into portions; one act of charity in an heroic degree, or an habitual charity in the degree of virtue. This instance is probation enough, that the opinion of such a necessity of doing the best action simply and indefinitely is impossible to be safely acted, because it is impossible to be understood. Two talents shall be rewarded, and so shall five; both in their proportions: ‘He that sows sparingly shall reap sparingly,’ but he shall reap: ‘Every man as he purposes in his heart, so let him give.’ The best action shall have the best reward: and though he is the happiest who rises highest, yet he is not safest that enters into the state of disproportion to his person. I find in the lives of the later reputed saints that St. Teresa a Jesu made a vow to do every thing which she should judge to be the best. I will not judge the person, nor censure the action, because possibly her intention and desires were of greatest sanctity; but whosoever considers the story of her life, and the strange repugnancies in the life of man to such undertakings, must needs fear to imitate an action of such danger and singularity. The advice which in this case is safest to be followed, is, that we employ our greatest industry that we fall not into sin and actions of forbidden nature; and then strive, by parts and steps, and with much wariness in attempering our zeal, to superadd degrees of eminency, and observation of the more perfect instances of sanctity: that doing some excellencies which God hath not commanded,

¹ Hist. r. Lausia.

he may be the rather moved to pardon our prevaricating so many parts of our necessary duty. If love transport us, and carry us to actions sublime and heroical, let us follow so good a guide, and pass on with diligence, and zeal, and prudence, as far as love will carry us: but let us not be carried to actions of great eminence and strictness and unequal severities by scruple and pretence of duty; lest we charge our miscarriages upon God, and call the yoke of the gospel insupportable, and Christ a hard task-master. But we shall pass from virtue to virtue with more safety, if a spiritual guide take us by the hand; only remembering, that if the angels themselves and the beatified souls do now, and shall hereafter, differ in degrees of love and glory, it is impossible the state of perfection should be confined to the highest love, and the greatest degree, and such as admits no variety, no increment, or difference of parts and stations.

13. Secondly, Our love to God consists not in any one determinate degree, but hath such a latitude as best agrees with the condition of men, who are of variable natures, different affections and capacities, changeable abilities, and which receive their heightenings and declensions according to a thousand accidents of mortality. For when a law is regularly prescribed to persons whose varieties and different constitutions cannot be regular or uniform, it is certain God gives a great latitude of performance, and binds not to just atoms and points. The laws of God are like universal objects received into the faculty, partly by choice, partly by nature; but the variety of perfection is by the variety of the instruments, and disposition to the recipient; and they are excelled by each other in several senses, and by themselves at several times.

And so is the practice of our obedience, and the entertainments of the divine commandments. For some are of malleable natures, others are morose; some are of healthful and temperate constitutions, others are lustful, full of fancy, full of appetite; some have excellent leisure and opportunities of retirement, others are busy in an active life, and cannot with advantage attend to the choice of the better part; some are peaceable and timorous, and some are in all instances serene, others are of tumultuous and unquiet spirits: and these become opportunities of temptation on one side, and on the other occasions of virtue. But every change of faculty and variety of circumstance hath influence upon morality: and therefore their duties are personally altered, and increase in obligation, or are slackened by necessities, according to the infinite alteration of exterior accidents and interior possibilities.

14. Thirdly, Our love to God must be totally exclusive of any affection to sin, and engage us upon a great, assiduous and laborious care to resist all temptations, to subdue sin, to acquire the habits of virtues, and live holily; as it is already expressed in the discourse of repentance. We must prefer God as the object of our hopes, we must choose to obey him rather than man, to please him rather than satisfy ourselves; and we must do violence to our strongest passions when they once contest against a divine commandment. If our passions are thus regulated, let them be fixed upon any lawful object whatsoever; if at the same time we prefer heaven and heavenly things, that is, would rather choose to lose our temporal love than our eternal hopes, (which we can best discern by our

refusing to sin upon the solicitation or engagement of the temporal object,) then, although we feel the transportation of a sensual love towards a wife, or child, or friend, actually more pungent and sensible than passions of religion are, they are less perfect, but they are not criminal. Our love to God requires that we do his commandments, and that we do not sin: but in other things we are permitted, in the condition of our nature, to be more sensitively moved by visible than by invisible and spiritual objects. Only this, we must ever have a disposition and a mind prepared to quit our sensitive and pleasant objects, rather than quit a grace or commit a sin. Every act of sin is against the love of God, and every man does many single actions of hostility and provocation against him: but the state of the love of God is that which we actually call the state of grace. When Christ reigns in us, and sin does not reign, but the spirit is quickened, and the lusts are mortified; when we are habitually virtuous, and do acts of piety, temperance, and justice, frequently, easily, cheerfully, and with a successive, constant, moral and human industry, according to the talent which God hath entrusted to us in the banks of nature and grace; then we are in the love of God, then we ‘love him with all our heart.’ But if sin grows upon us, and is committed more frequently, or gets a victory with less difficulty, or is obeyed more readily, or entertained with a freer complacency, then we love not God as he requires, we divide between him and sin, and God is not the Lord of all our faculties. But the instances of Scripture are the best exposition of this commandment: ‘for David followed God with all his heart, to do that which was right in his

eyes;’ and ‘ Josiah turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might.’ Both these kings did it: and yet there was some imperfection in David, and more violent recessions: for so saith the Scripture of Josiah, ‘ Like unto him was there no king before him;’ David was not so exact as he, and yet he followed God ‘ with all his heart,’ From which these two corollaries are certainly deducible: That to love God with all our heart admits variety of degrees, and the lower degree is yet a love with all our heart; and yet to love God requires a holy life, a diligent walking in the commandments, either according to the sense of innocence or of penitents, either by first or second counsels, by the spirit of regeneration or the spirit of renovation and restitution. The sum is this, the sense of this precept is such as may be reconciled with the infirmities of our nature, but not with a vice in our manners; with the recession of single acts seldom done, and always disputed against, and long fought with, but not with an habitual aversation, or a ready obedience to sin, or an easy victory.

15. This commandment, being the sum of the first table, had in Moses’s law particular instances which Christ did not insert into his institution; and he added no other particular, but that which we call the third commandment concerning veneration and reverence to the name of God. The other two, viz., concerning images and the sabbath, have some special considerations.

16 The Jews receive daily offence against the catechisms of some churches, who, in the recitation

¹ 1 Kings, xiv. 8; 2 Kings, xxiii. 25.

of the Decalogue, omit the second commandment, as supposing it to be a part of the first, according as we account them;¹ and their offence rises higher, because they observe that in the New Testament, where the Decalogue is six times repeated in special recitation and in summaries, there is no word prohibiting the making, retaining, or respect of images. Concerning which things Christians consider, that God forbade the Jews the very having and making images and representments, not only of the true God, or of false and imaginary deities, but of visible creatures:² which, because it was but of temporary reason, and relative consideration of their aptness to superstition, and their conversing with idolatrous nations, was a command proper to the nation, part of their covenant; not of essential, indispensable, and eternal reason, not of that which we usually call the law of nature. Of which also God gave testimony, because himself commanded the signs and representment of seraphim to be set upon the mercy-seat, towards which the priest and the people made their addresses in their religious adorations; and of the brazen serpent, to which they looked when they called to God for help against the sting of the venomous snakes. These instances tell us, that to make pictures or statues of creatures is not

¹ Vide Exod. xxxiv. 13; Deut. iv. 16; vii. 5; Numbers, xxxiii. 52.

² Imò et ecclesia 8 Novemb. celebrat Martyrium Claudii Nicostrati et sociorum, qui, cum peritissimi fuerant statuarii, mortem potiùs ferre, quàm Gentilibus simulachra facere, maluerunt. *Ἀγαλμα ἢ κατεσκεύασε, διὰ τὸ μὴ νομίζειν ἀνθρώπομορφον εἶναι τὸν Θεόν*, dixit Diodor. Sic de Moyse.—“The church celebrates, on the 8th of November, the martyrdom of Claudius Nicostratus and his companions, who, being most excellent sculptors, preferred death to making images for the Gentiles. Diod. Sicul. says, that Moses would allow no images for fear it might be supposed that God was in the form of man.”

against a natural reason, and that they may have uses which are profitable, as well as be abused to danger and superstition. Now although the nature of that people was apt to the abuse, and their intercourse with the nations in their confines was too great an invitation to entertain the danger; yet Christianity hath so far removed that danger by the analogy and design of the religion, by clear doctrines, revelations, and infinite treasures of wisdom, and demonstrations of the Spirit, that our blessed Lawgiver thought it not necessary to remove us from superstition by a prohibition of the use of images and pictures; and therefore left us to the sense of the great commandment, and the dictates of right reason, to take care that we do not dishonour the invisible God with visible representations of what we never saw nor can understand, nor yet convey any of God's incommunicable worship in the fore-named instances to any thing but himself. And for the matter of images we have no other rule left us in the New Testament: the rules of reason and nature, and the other parts of the institution, are abundantly sufficient for our security. And possibly St. Paul might relate to this, when he affirmed concerning the fifth, that it was 'the first commandment with promise.' For in the second commandment to the Jews, as there was a great threatening, so also a greater promise, of 'showing mercy to a thousand generations.' But because the body of this commandment was not transcribed into the Christian law, the first of the Decalogue which we retain, and in which a promise is inserted, is the fifth commandment. And therefore the wisdom of the church was remarkable in the variety of sentences concerning the

permission of images. At first, when they were blended in the danger and impure mixtures of Gentilism, and men were newly recovered from the snare, and had the relics of a long custom to superstitious and false worshippings, they endured no images, but merely civil. But as the danger ceased, and Christianity prevailed, they found that pictures had a natural use of good concernment, to move less knowing people, by the representment and declaration of a story: and then they, knowing themselves permitted to the liberties of Christianity, and the restraints of nature and reason, and not being still weak, under prejudice and childish dangers, but fortified by the excellency of a wise religion, took them into lawful uses, doing honour to saints as unto the absent emperors, according to the custom of the empire; they erected statues to their honour, and transcribed a history, and sometimes a precept, into a table, by figures, making more lasting impressions than words and sentences. While the church stood within these limits, she had natural reason for her warrant, and the custom of the several countries, and no precept of Christ to countermand it: they who went further were unreasonable, and according to the degree of that excess were superstitious.

17. The duties of this commandment are learned by the intents of it. For it was directed against the false religion of the nations, who believed the images of their gods to be filled with the deity: and it was also a caution to prevent our low imaginations of God, lest we should come to think God to be like man. And thus far there was indispensable and eternal reason in the precept: and this was never lessened in any thing by the holy

Jesus, and obliges us Christians to make our addresses and worshippings to no god but the God of the Christians; that is, of all the world; and not to do this in or before an image of him, because he cannot be represented: for the images of Christ and his saints, they come not into either of the two considerations; and we are to understand our duty by the proportions of our reverence to God, expressed in the great commandment. Our fathers in Christianity, as I observed now, made no scruple of using the images and pictures of their princes and learned men; which the Jews understood to be forbidden to them in the commandment. Then they admitted even in the utensils of the church some cœlatures and engravings: such was that Tertullian speaks of, "the good shepherd in the chalice." Afterwards they admitted pictures, but not before the time of Constantine; for in the council of Eliberis they were forbidden. And in succession of time the scruples lessened with the danger, and all the way they signified their belief to be, that this commandment was only so far retained by Christ, as it relied upon natural reason, or was a particular instance of the great commandment: that is, images were forbidden where they did dishonour God, or lessen his reputation, or estrange our duties, or become idols, or the direct matter of superstitious observances, charms, or senseless confidences; but they were permitted to represent the humanity of Christ, to remember saints and martyrs, to recount a story, to imprint a memory, to do honour and reputation to absent persons, and to be the instruments of a relative civility and esteem. But in this particular, infinite care is to be taken of scandal and danger, of a forward and zealous ignorance, or

of a mistaking and peevish confidence: and where a society hath such persons in it, the little good of images must not be violently retained with the greater danger and certain offence of such persons, of whom consideration is to be had in the cure of souls. I only add this, that the first Christians made no scruple of saluting the statues of their princes, and were confident it made no intrenchment upon the natural prohibition contained in this commandment; because they had observed, that exterior inclinations and addresses of the body, though in the lowest manner, were not proper to God, but in Scripture found also to be communicated to creatures, to kings, to prophets, to parents, to religious persons;¹ and because they found it to be death to do affront to the pictures and statues of their emperors, they concluded in reason, (which they also saw verified by the practice and opinion of all the world,) that the respect they did at the emperor's statue was accepted as a veneration to his person. But these things are but sparingly to be drawn into religion, because the customs of this world are altered, and their opinions new; and many, who have not weak understandings, have weak consciences: and the necessity for the entertainment of them is not so great as the offence is or may be.

18. III. Com. 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.' This our blessed Saviour repeating expresses it thus: 'It hath been said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself;' to which Christ adds, out of Numb. xxx. 2, 'But thou shalt perform thy oaths unto the

¹ Gen. xlviii. 12; xxiii. 12; xxvii. 29; xlii. 6; 1 Sam. xx. 41; 1 Kings, i. 46.

Lord.' The meaning of the one we are taught by the other. We must not invoke the name of God in any promise in vain; that is, with a lie: which happens either out of levity, that we change our purpose, which at first we really intended; or when our intention at that instant was fallacious, and contradictory to the undertaking. 'This is to take the name of God,—that is, to use it, to take it into our mouths,—for vanity; that is, according to the perpetual style of Scripture, for a lie. 'Every one hath spoken vanity to his neighbour;' that is, hath lied unto him; for so it follows, 'with flattering lips, and with a double heart.'¹ And 'swearing deceitfully,' is, by the Psalmist, called 'a lifting up his soul unto vanity.'² And Philo the Jew, who well understood the law and the language of his nation, renders the sense of this commandment to be, "to call God to witness to a lie." And this is to be understood only in promises; for so Christ explains it by the appendix out of the law, 'thou shalt perform thy oaths.' For lying in judgment, which is also with an oath, or taking God's name for witness, is forbidden in the ninth commandment. To this Christ added a further restraint: for whereas, by the natural law, it was not unlawful to swear by any oath that implied not idolatry, or the belief of a false god; I say, any grave and prudent oath, when they spake a grave truth; and whereas, it was lawful for the Jews in ordinary intercourse to swear by God, so they did not swear to a lie, (to which, also, swearing to an impertinency might be reduced, by a proportion of reason, and was so accounted of in

¹ Psalm xii. 2.

² Psalm xxiv. 4.

the practice of the Jews;) but else, and in other cases, they used to swear by God, or by a creature respectively: (for, 'they that swear by him shall be commended,' saith the Psalmist: and swearing to the Lord of Hosts, is called 'speaking the language of Canaan:')

most of this was rescinded; Christ forbade all swearing; not only swearing to a lie, but also swearing to a truth in common affairs, not only swearing commonly by the name of God, but swearing commonly by heaven and by the earth, by our head, or by any other oath: only let our speech be yea, or nay; that is, plainly affirming or denying. In these, I say, Christ corrected the licence and vanities of the Jews and Gentiles. For the Jews accounted it religion to name God, and therefore would not swear by him but in the more solemn occasions of their life; but in trifles they would swear by their fathers, or the light of heaven, or the ground they trod on: so the Greeks were also careful not to swear by the gods lightly, much less fallaciously; but they would swear by any thing about them or near them, upon an occasion as vain as their oath. But, because these oaths are either indirectly to be referred to God, (and Christ instances in divers,) or else they are but a vain testimony, or else they gave a divine honour to a creature, by making it a judge of truth and discerner of spirits; therefore Christ seems to forbid all forms of swearing whatsoever. In pursuance of which law, Basilides, being converted at the prayers of Potamiæna, a virgin-martyr, and required by his fellow-soldiers to swear upon some occasion then happening, an

¹ Psalm lxi. 11; 1 Sam. xx. 17; Isaiah, xix. 18

swered, it was not lawful for him to swear, for he was a Christian. And many of the fathers have followed the words of Christ in so severe a sense, that their words seem to admit no exception.

19. But here a grain of salt must be taken, lest the letter destroy the spirit. 1. It is certain the holy Jesus forbade a custom of swearing; it being great irreligion to despise and lessen the name of God, which is the instrument and conveyance of our adorations to him, by making it common and applicable to trifles and ordinary accidents of our life.¹ He that swears often, many times swears false; and, however, lays by that reverence which, being due to God, the Scripture determines to be due to his name: his name is to be loved and feared. And therefore Christ commands that our communication be yea, yea, or nay, nay; that is, our ordinary discourses should be simply affirmative or negative. In order to this, Plutarch affirms, out of Phavorinus, that the reason why the Greeks forbade children who were about to swear by Hercules, to swear within doors, was, that by this delay and preparation they might be taught not to be hasty or quick in swearing; but all such invocations should be restrained and retarded by ceremony: and Hercules himself was observed never to have sworn in all his life-time but once. 2. Not only customary swearing is forbidden, but all swearing upon a slight cause. St. Basil upbraids some Christians,

¹ Vide Ecclus. xxiii. 9, 11, 13. Dominus et Jacobus ideo prohibuerunt jusjurandum, non ut illud prorsus è rebus humanis tollerent, sed quia caveremus à perjurio, non facile jurando. S. August. ser. 28. de verbis Apost.—“Our Lord and James so prohibited swearing, not that it might be altogether disused in human affairs, but that we might be prevented from committing perjury, by swearing too readily.”

his contemporaries, with the example of Clineas the Pythagorean, who, rather than he would swear, suffered a mulct of three talents. And all the followers of Pythagoras admitted no oath, unless the matter were grave, necessary, and charitable: and the wisest and gravest persons among the heathens were very severe in their counsels concerning oaths.

3. But there are some cases in which the interests of kingdoms and bodies politic, peace, and confederacies, require the sanction of promissory oaths: and they whom we are bound to obey, and who may kill us if we do not, require that their interests be secured by an oath. And that, in this case, and all that are equal, our blessed Saviour did not forbid oaths, is certain, not only by the example of Christians, but of all the world before and since this prohibition, understanding it to be of the nature of such natural bands and securities, without which commonwealths in some cases are not easily combined, and therefore to be a thing necessary, and therefore not to be forbidden. Now, what is by Christians to be esteemed a slight cause, we may determine by the account we take of other things. The glory of God is certainly no light matter; and therefore, when that is evidently and certainly concerned, not phantastically and by vain and imaginary consequences, but by prudent and true estimation, then we may lawfully swear. We have St. Paul's example, who well understood the precept of his Master, and is not to be supposed easily to have done any violence to it; but yet we find religious affirmations, and God invoked for witness as a record upon his soul, in his epistles to the Romans, Galatians, and Corinthians.¹ But

¹ Rom. i. 9; 2 Cor. xi. 31; Gal. i. 20.

these oaths were only assertory. Tertullian affirmeth, that Christians refused to swear by the genius of their prince, because it was a dæmon; but they swore by his health, and their solemn oath was by God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and the majesty of the emperor. The fathers of the Ephesine council made Nestorius and Victor swear; and the bishops at Chalcedon swore by the health of their princes. But as St. Paul did it extrajudicially, when the glory of God was concerned in it and the interests of souls; so the Christians used to swear in a cause of piety and religion, in obedience, and upon public command, or for the ends of charity and justice, both with oaths promissory and assertory, as the matter required: with this only difference, that they never did swear in the causes of justice or charity, but when they were before a magistrate; but if it were in a cause of religion, and in matters of promise, they did indeed swear among themselves, but always to or in communities and societies, obliging themselves by oath not to commit wickedness, robberies, sacrilege, not to deceive their trust, not to detain the pledge; which rather was an act of direct intercourse with God, than a solemn or religious obligation to man. Which very thing Pliny also reports of the Christians.

20. The sum is this: since the whole subject matter of this precept is oaths promissory, or vows; all promises with oaths are regularly forbidden to Christians, unless they be made to God or God's vicegerent, in a matter not trifling:¹ for, in the first

¹ Τὸ Ναι ἐν τῷ Οὐ συναλλαβεῖν ὄνομα ἀλλ' ἤμωσ το κράτινον τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἢ ἀλήθεια, ἐν ὅ ἔσχατος ὄρος τῆς πορνείας, τὸ ψεῦδος, τοῖς μικροῖς τῶν τοῖς ῥήματι πολλάκις ἐμπεριέχεται. S. Basil. lib. de Spir. Sanct.

case, a promise made to God, and a swearing by God to perform the promise, to him is all one: for the name of God being the instrument and determination of all our addresses, we cannot be supposed to speak to God without using of his name explicitly or by implication: and therefore he that promises to God makes a promise, and uses God's name in the promise; the promise itself being in the nature of a prayer of solemn invocation of God. In the second case, when the public necessity requires it, of which we are not judges, but are under authority, we find the lawfulness by being bound to believe, or not to contradict the pretence of its necessity.¹ Only care is to be taken that the matter be grave or religious. That is, it is to be esteemed and presumed so by us, if the oath be imposed by our lawful superiors, and to be cared for by them: or else it is so to be provided for by ourselves, when our intercourse is with God, as in vows and promises passed to God; being careful that we do not offer to God goats'-hair, or the fumes of mushrooms, or the blood of swine; that is, things either impious or vain. But in our communication, that is, in our ordinary intercourse with men, we must promise by simple testimony, not by religious adjurations, though a creature be the instrument of the oath.

21. But this forbids not assertory oaths at all, or deposing in judgment: for of this Christ speaks not here, it being the proper matter of another commandment. And since (as St. Paul affirms) 'an oath is the end of all controversy,'² and that

¹ *Necessitas, magnum humanæ imbecillitatis præsidium, quicquid cogit, excusat. Sen.*—“Necessity, the great defence of human imbecility, whatsoever it compels it excuses.”

² *Heb. vi. 16*

the necessity of commonwealths requires that a period should be fixed to questions, and a rule for the nearest certainty for judgment; whatsoever is necessary is not unlawful: and Christ, who came to knit the bonds of government faster, by the stricture of more religious ties, cannot be understood to have given precepts to dissolve the instruments of judicature and prudent government. But concerning assertory oaths, although they are not forbidden, but supposed in the ninth commandment to be done before our judges in the cause of our neighbour; yet because they are only so supposed, and no way else mentioned by permission or intimation, therefore they are to be estimated by the proportions of this precept concerning promissory oaths. They may be taken in judgment and righteousness, but never lightly, never extrajudicially: only a less cause, so it be judicial, may rather authorize an assertory than a promissory oath; because many cases occur in which peace and justice may be concerned, which without an oath are indeterminable; but there are but few necessities to confirm a promise by an oath. And therefore the reverence of the name of God ought not to be entrenched upon in accidents of little or no necessity. God not having made many necessities in this case, would not, in the matter of promise, give leave to use his name, but when an extraordinary case happens. An oath in promises is of no use for ending questions and giving judicial sentences; and the faith of a Christian and the word of a just person will do most of the work of promises; and it is very much to the disreputation of our religion or ourselves, if we fall into hypocrisy or deceit, or if a Christian asseveration were not of value equal with

an oath. And therefore Christ, forbidding promissory oaths, and commanding so great simplicity of spirit and honesty, did consonantly to the design and perfection of his institution, intending to make us so just and sincere, that our religion being infinite obligation to us, our own promises should pass for bond enough to others, and the religion receive great honour by being esteemed a sufficient security and instrument of public intercourse. And this was intimated by our Lord himself, in that reason he is pleased to give of the prohibition of swearing: ‘ Let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay; for whatsoever is more cometh of evil.’¹ That is, as good laws come from ill manners, the modesty of clothing from the shame of sin, antidotes and physic by occasions of poisons and diseases; so is swearing an effect of distrust, and want of faith or honesty, on one or both sides. Men dare not trust the word of a Christian, or a Christian is not just or punctual to his promises, and this calls for confirmation by an oath: so that oaths suppose a fault, though they are not faults always themselves: whatsoever is more than yea or nay is not always evil; but it always cometh of evil. And therefore the Essenes esteemed every man that was put to his oath no better than an infamous person, a perjurer, or at least suspected—not esteemed a just man. And the heathens would not suffer the priest of Jupiter to swear, because all men had great opinion of his sanctity and authority: and the Scythians derided Alexander’s caution and timorous provision, when he required an oath; of them: *Nos religionem in ipsa fide novimus*; our faith

¹ Matt. v. 37.

is our bond : and they who are willing to deceive men, will not stick to deceive God, when they have called God to witness.¹ But I have a caution to insert for each, which I propound as an humble advice to persons eminent and publicly interested.

22. First, That princes, and such as have power of decreeing the injunction of promissory oaths, be very curious and reserved, not lightly enjoining such promises, neither in respect of the matter trivial, nor yet frequently, nor without great reason enforcing.² The matter of such promises must be only what is already matter of duty or religion ; for else the matter is not grave enough for the calling of God to testimony : but when it is a matter of duty, then the oath is no other than a vow or promise made to God in the presence of men. And because Christians are otherwise very much obliged to do all which is their duty in matters both civil and religious, of obedience and piety ; therefore it must be an instant necessity, and a great cause to superinduce such a confirmation as derives from the so sacredly invoking the name of God : it must be when there is great necessity that the duty be actually performed, and when the supreme power either hath not power sufficient to punish the delinquent, or may miss to have notice of the delict : for in these cases it is reasonable to bind the faith of the obliged persons by the fear of God after a more special manner ; but else there is no reason sufficient to demand of the subject any fur-

¹ Qui non reverentur homines, fallent Deos. Cicero pro Roscio.—“ They who reverence not men will deceive the gods.”

² Οὐ γὰρ πίστεως τεκμήριον πολυορκία, ἀλλὰ ἀπειτίας ἐστὶ παρὰ τοῖς ἐυφρονοῦσι. Philo. in Decal.—“ Much swearing is not a proof of truth but of falsehood, among evil men.”

ther security than their own faith and contract. The reason of this advice relies upon the strictness of the words of this precept against promissory oaths, and the reverence we owe to the name of God. Oaths of allegiance are fit to be imposed in a troubled state, or to a mutinous people. But it is not so fit to tie the people by oath to abstain from transportations of metal, or grain, or leather, from which by penalties they are, with as much security, and less suspicion of iniquity, restrained.

23. Secondly, Concerning assertory oaths and depositions in judgment, although a greater liberty may be taken in the subject-matter of the oath, and we may, being required to it, swear in judgment, though the cause be a question of money, or our interest, or the rights of a society; and St. Athanasius purged himself by oath before the emperor Constantius; yet it were a great pursuance and security of this part of Christian religion, if in no case contrary oaths might be admitted, in which it is certain one part is perjured to the ruin of their souls, to the intricating of the judgment, to the dishonour of religion; but that such rules of prudence and reasonable presumption be established, that upon the oath of that party which the law shall choose, and upon probable grounds shall presume for, the sentence may be established. For by a small probability there may a surer judgment be given, than upon the confidence of contradictory oaths: and after the sin the judge is left to the uncertainty of conjectures, as much as if but one part had sworn; and to much more, because such an oath is, by the consent of all men, accepted as a rule to determine in judgment. By these discourses we understand the intention of our blessed

Master in this precept : and I wish, by this or any thing else, men would be restrained from that low, cheap, unreasonable and inexcusable vice of customary swearing, to which we have nothing to invite us that may lessen the iniquity, for which we cannot pretend temptation nor allege infirmity, but it begins by recklessness and a malicious carelessness, and is continued by the strength of habit and the greatest immensity of folly. And I consider that Christian religion, being so holy an institution, to which we are invited by so great promises, in which we are instructed by so clear revelations, and to the performance of our duties compelled by the threatenings of a sad and unprofitable eternity, should more than sufficiently endear the performance of this duty to us. The name of a Christian is a high and potent antidote against all sin, if we consider aright the honour of the name, the undertaking of our covenant, and the reward of our duty. The Jews eat no swine's flesh, because they are of Moses; and the Turks drink no wine, because they are Mahometans; and yet we swear, for all we are Christians; than which there is not in the world a greater conviction of our baseness and irreligion. Is the authority of the holy Jesus so despicable? Are his laws so unreasonable, his rewards so little, his threatenings so small, that we must needs, in contempt of all this, profane the great name of God, and trample under foot the laws of Jesus, and cast away the hopes of heaven, and enter into security to be possessed by hell torments for swearing; that is, for speaking like a fool, without reason, without pleasure, without reputation, much to our disesteem, much to the

trouble of civil and wise persons with whom we join in society and intercourse? Certainly hell will be heated seven times hotter for a customary swearer; and every degree of his unreasonableness will give him a new degree of torment, when he shall find himself in flames for being a stupid, an atheistical, an irreligious fool. This only I desire should be observed, that our blessed Master forbids not only swearing by God, but by any creature; for every oath by a creature does involve and tacitly relate to God. And therefore saith Christ, 'Swear not by heaven, for it is the throne of God;' and he that sweareth by the throne of God, 'sweareth by it, and by him that sitteth thereon.' So that it is not a less matter to swear by a creature than to swear by God; for a creature cannot be the instrument of testimony, but as it is a relative to God; and it, by implication, calls the God of that creature to witness. So that although, in such cases in which it is permitted to swear by God, we may in those cases express our oath in the form of advocating and calling the creature; (as did the primitive Christians, swearing by the health of their emperor, and as Joseph, swearing by the life of Pharaoh, and as Elisha, swearing by the life of Elias, and as did St. Paul, protesting 'by the rejoicing he had in Jesus Christ,'¹ and as we, in our forms of swearing in courts of judicature, touch the gospels, saying, 'So help me God and the contents of this book;' and in a few ages lately past bishops and priests sometimes swore upon the cross, sometimes upon the altar, sometimes by their holy order;) yet we must remember that this, in

¹ 2 Kings, ii. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 31.

other words and ceremonies, is but a calling God for witness; and he that swears by the cross, swears by the holy crucifix; that is, Jesus crucified thereon. And therefore these and the like forms are therefore not to be used in ordinary communication, because they relate to God; they are as obligatory as the immediate invocation of his holiness and majesty: and it was a Judaical vanity to think swearing by creatures was less obliging. They are just with the same restraints made to be religious as the most solemn invocation of the holy and reverend name of God, lawful or unlawful as the other: unless the swearing by a creature come to be spoiled by some other intervening circumstance; that is, with a denying it to relate to God; for then it becomes superstition as well as profanation, and it gives to a creature what is proper to God: or when the creature is contemptible, or less than the gravity of the matter; as if a man should swear by a fly or the shadow of a tree: or when there is an indecorum in the thing, of something that does at too great distance relate to God. For that which with greatest vicinity refers to God in several religions is the best instrument of an oath, and nearest to God's honour; as in Christianity are the holy sacrament, the cross, the altar, and the gospels: and therefore too great a distance may be an indecency next to a disparagement. This only may be added to this consideration, that although an oath, which is properly calling God or God's relative into testimony, is to be understood according to the former discourse; yet there may be great affirmations or negations re-

† Deut. xxx. 19; Isa. i. 2; Micah, i. 2.

spectively, and confirmed by forms of vehement asseveration, such as the customs of a nation or consent shall agree upon: and those do in some cases promote our belief or confirm our pretensions better than a plain yea or no; because by such consent the person renders himself infamous if he breaks his word or trust. And although this will not come under the restraint of Christ's words, because they are not properly oaths, but circumstances of earnest affirmation or negation; yet these are human attestations, introduced by custom or consent; and as they come not under the notion of swearing, so they are forms of testimony and collateral engagement of a more strict truth.

24. The Holy Jesus having specified the great commandment of 'loving God with all our heart,' in this one instance of hallowing and keeping his name sacred; that is, from profane and common talk, and less prudent and unnecessary intercourses; instanced in no other commandment of Moses: but having frequent occasion to speak of the sabbath, for ever expresses his own dominion over the day, and that he had dissolved the bands of Moses in this instance; that now we were no more obliged to that rest which the Jews religiously observed by prescript of the law; and by divers acts against securities of the then received practices did desecrate the day, making it a broken yoke, and the first great instance of Christian liberty. And when the apostle gave instructions that 'no man should judge his brother in a holiday, or new moons, or the sabbath-days,' he declared all the Judaical feasts to be obliterated by the sponge which Jesus tasted on the cross; it was within the manuscript of ordinances, and there it was cancelled.

And there was nothing moral in it, but that we do honour to God for the creation, and to that and all other purposes of religion separate and hallow some portion of our time. The primitive church kept both the sabbath and the Lord's-day till the time of the Laodicean council, about three hundred years after Christ's nativity, and almost in every thing made them equal; and therefore did not esteem the Lord's-day to be substituted in the place of the obliterated sabbath, but a feast celebrated by great reason and perpetual consent, without precept or necessary divine injunction. But the liberty of the church was great; they found themselves disobliged from that strict and necessary rest which was one great part of the sabbatic rites, only they were glad of the occasion to meet often for offices of religion, and the day served well for the gaining and facilitating the conversion of the Jews, and for the honourable sepulture of the synagogue, it being kept so long, like the forty days' mourning of Israel for the death of their father Jacob: but their liberty they improved not to license, but as an occasion of more frequent assemblies. And there is something in it for us to imitate, even to sanctify the name of God in the great work of the creation, reading his praises in the book of his creatures, and taking all occasions of religious acts and offices, though in none of the Jewish circumstances.

25. Concerning the observation of the Lord's-day, which now the church observes, and ever did, in remembrance of the resurrection, because it is a day of positive and ecclesiastical institution, it is fit that the church, who instituted the day, should determine the manner of its observation. It was

set apart in honour of the resurrection ; and it were not ill if all churches would, into the weekly offices, put some memorial of that mystery, that the reason of the festival might be remembered with the day, and God thanked with the renewing of the offices. But because religion was the design of the feast, and leisure was necessary for religion, therefore to abstain from suits of law and servile works, but such works as are of necessity and charity, (which to observe are of themselves a very good religion,) is a necessary duty of the day ; and to do acts of public religion is the other part of it. So much is made matter of duty by the intervention of authority. And though the church hath made no more prescriptions in this, and God hath made none at all ; yet he who keeps the day most strictly, most religiously, he keeps it best, and most consonant to the design of the church, and the ends of religion, and the opportunity of the present leisure, and the interests of his soul. The acts of religion proper for the day are prayers and public liturgies, preaching, catechising, acts of charity, visiting sick persons, acts of eucharist to God, of hospitality to our poor neighbours, of friendliness and civility to all, reconciling differences ; and after the public assemblies are dissolved, any act of direct religion to God, or of ease and remission to servants, or whatsoever else is good in manners, or in piety, or in mercy. What is said of this great feast of the Christians, is to be understood to have a greater severity and obligation in the anniversary of the resurrection, of the ascension, of the nativity of our blessed Saviour, and of the descent of the Holy Spirit in Pentecost. And all days festival to the honour of God, in remembrance of the holy apostles, and martyrs, and de-

parted saints, as they are with prudence to be chosen and retained by the church, so as not to be unnecessary, or burdensome, or useless; so they are to be observed by us as instances of our love of the communion of saints, and our thankfulness for the blessing and the example.

26. 'Honour thy father and thy mother.' This commandment Christ made also to be Christian by his frequent repetition and mention of it in his sermons and laws; and so ordered it, that it should be the band of civil government and society. In the Decalogue God sets this precept immediately after the duties that concern himself, our duty to parents being in the confines with our duty to God; the parents being in order of nature, next to God, the cause of our being and production, and the great almoners of eternity, conveying to us the essences of reasonable creatures, and the charities of heaven. And when our blessed Saviour, in a sermon to the Pharisees, spake of duty to parents, he rescued it from the impediments of a vain tradition, and secured this duty, though against a pretence of religion towards God, telling us that God would not himself accept a gift which we took from our parents' needs. This duty to parents is the very firmament and band of commonwealths. He that honours his parents will also love his brethren derived from the same loins; he will dearly account of all his relatives and persons of the same cognation; and so families are united, and of them cities and societies are framed. And because parents and patriarchs of families and of nations had regal power, they, who by any change succeeded in the care and government of cities and kingdoms, succeeded in the power and authority of fathers, and

became so, in estimate of law and true divinity, to all their people. So that the duty here commanded is due to all our fathers in the sense of Scripture and laws; not only to our natural, but to our civil fathers; that is, tokings and governors. And the Scripture adds 'mothers;' for they also being instruments of the blessing are the objects of the duty. The duty is, 'honour;' that is, reverence and support, if they shall need it. And that which our blessed Saviour calls, 'not honouring our parents,' in St. Matthew,¹ is called, in St. Mark, 'doing nothing for them;'² and honour is expounded by St. Paul to be maintenance as well as reverence.³ Then we honour our parents, if with great readiness we minister to their necessities, and communicate our estate, and attend them in sicknesses, and supply their wants, and as much as lies in us, give them support, who gave us being.

27. 'Thou shalt do no murder.'⁴ So it was said to them of old time: 'He that kills shall be guilty of judgment;' that is, he is to die by the sentence of the judge. To this Christ makes an appendix: 'But I say unto you, he that is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment.' This addition of our blessed Saviour, as all the other which are severer explications of the law than the Jews admitted, was directed against the vain and imperfect opinion of the lawyers, who thought to be justified by their external works, supposing, if they were innocent in matter of fact, God would require no more of them than man did; and what by custom or silence of the laws was not punishable by the judge, was harmless

¹ Matt. xv. 6. ² Mark, vii. 12. ³ 1 Tim. v. 17.

⁴ Lev. xxiv. 21; Numb. xxxv. 16, 17.

before God. And this made them to trust in the letter, to neglect the duties of repentance, to omit asking pardon for their secret irregularities, and the obliquities and aversations of their spirits. And this St. Paul also complains of, that neglecting 'the righteousness of God, they sought to establish their own;' that is, according to man's judgment. But our blessed Saviour tells them that such an innocence is not enough; God requires more than conformity, and observation of the fact, and exterior piety; placing justice, not in legal innocency, or not being condemned in judgment of the law and human judicature, but in the righteousness of the spirit also; for the first acquits us before man, but by this we shall be held upright in judgment before the Judge of all the world. And, therefore, besides abstinence from murder or actual wounds, Christ forbids 'all anger without cause against our brother;' that is, against any man.

28. By which not the first motions are forbidden, the twinklings of the eye, as the philosophers call them; the pro-passions and sudden and irresistible alterations; for it is impossible to prevent them, unless we could give ourselves a new nature, any more than we can refuse to wink with our eye when a sudden blow is offered at it, or refuse to yawn when we see a yawning sleepy person: but by frequent and habitual mortification, and by continual watchfulness, and standing in readiness against all inadvertences, we shall lessen the inclination, and account fewer sudden irreptions. A wise and meek person should not kindle at all, but after

¹ Rom. x. 3.

violent and great collision; and then, if like a flint he sends a spark out, it must as soon be extinguished as it shows, and cool as soon as sparkle. But, however, the sin is not in the natural disposition; but when we entertain it, though it be, as Seneca expresses it, *cum voluntate non contumaci*, without a determination of revenge, then it begins to be a sin. Every indignation against the person of the man, in us is pride and self-love, and towards others ungentleness, and an immorigerous spirit. Which is to be understood, when the cause is not sufficient, or when the anger continues longer, or is excessive in the degrees of its proportion.

29. The causes of allowable anger are, when we see God dishonoured, or a sin committed, or any irregularity or fault in matter of government; a fault against the laws of a family or good manners, disobedience or stubbornness; which in all instances where they may be prudently judged such by the governor, yet possibly they are not all direct sins against **God** and religion. In such cases we may be angry. But then we may also sin, if we exceed in time, or measure of degree.

30. The proportion of time St. Paul expresses, by 'not letting the sun set upon our anger.' Leon- tius Patricius was one day extremely and unreasonably angry with John, the patriarch of Alexandria; at evening the patriarch sent a servant to him with this message, "Sir, the sun is set:" upon which Patricius reflecting, and the grace of God making the impression deep, visible, and permanent, he threw away his anger, and became wholly subject to the counsel and ghostly aids of the patriarch. This limit St. Paul borrowed from the Psalmist:

for that which in the fourth Psalm, verse 4, we read, 'Stand in awe, and sin not,' the Septuagint reads, 'Be angry, but sin not.' And this measure is taken from the analogy of the law of the Jews, that a malefactor should not hang upon the accursed tree after the sun was set. And if the laws laid down their just anger against malefactors as soon as the sun descended, and took off his beams from beholding the example; much more is it reasonable that a private anger which is not warranted by authority, not measured by laws, not examined by solemnities of justice, not made reasonable by considering the degree of the causes, not made charitable by intending the public good, not secured from injuriousness by being disinterested, and such an anger in which the party is judge, and witness, and executioner; it is (I say) but reason such an anger should unyoke and go to bed with the sun, since justice and authority laid by the rods and axes as soon as the sun unteamed his chariot, Plutarch reports, that the Pythagoreans were strict observers of the very letter of this caution: for if anger had boiled up to the height of injury or reproach, before sun-set they would shake hands, salute each other, and depart friends: for they were ashamed that the same anger which had disturbed the counsels of the day, should also trouble the quiet and dreams of the night, lest anger, by mingling with their rest and nightly fancies, should grow natural and habitual. Well, anger must last no longer; but neither may a Christian's anger last so long: for if his anger last a whole day, it will certainly before night sour into a crime. A man's anger is like the spleen; at the first it is natural, but in its excess and distemper it swells into a dis-

ease: and therefore, although to be angry at the presence of certain objects is natural, and therefore is indifferent, because he that is an essential enemy to sin, never made sin essential to a man; yet unless it be also transient, and pass off at the command of reason and religion, it quickly becomes criminal. The meaning is, that it be no more but a transient passion, not permanent at all; but that the anger against the man pass into indignation against the crime, and pity of the person, till the pity grows up into endeavours to help him: for an angry, violent, and disturbed man is like that white bramble of Judæa, of which Josephus reports, that it is set on fire by impetuous winds, and consumes itself, and burns the neighbour-plants. And the evil effects of a violent and passionate anger are so great, so dangerous, so known to all the world, that the very consideration of them is the best argument in the world to dispute against it. Families and kingdoms have suffered horrid calamities; and whatsoever is violent in art or nature hath been made the instrument of sadness in the hands of anger.

31. The measure of the degree is to be estimated by human prudence, that it exceed not the value of the cause, nor the proportion of other circumstances, and that it cause no eruption into indiscretions or indecencies: for therefore Moses's anger, though for God and religion, was reprov'd, because it went forth into a violent and troubled expression, and showed the degree to be inordinate: for it is in this passion as in lightning, which, if it only breaks the cloud, and makes a noise, shows a tempest and disturbance in nature, but the hurt is none; but if it seizes upon a man, or dwells upon a house, or breaks a tree, it becomes a judgment and

a curse. And as the one is a mischief in chance and accident, so the other is in morality and choice: if it passes from passion into action, from a transient violence to a permanent injury, if it abides, it scorches the garment, or burns the body, and there is no way to make it innocent but to remove and extinguish it, and, while it remains, to tie the hands, and pare the nails, and muzzle it, that it may neither scratch, nor bite, nor talk. An anger in God's cause may become unhallowed if it sees the sun rise and set: and an anger in the cause of a man is innocent according to the degrees of its suddenness and discontinuance; for by its quickness and volatile motion it shows that it was, 1, unavoidable in its production; or, 2, that it was harmless in the event; or, 3, quickly suppressed: according to which several cases, anger is either, 1, natural; or, 2, excusable; or, 3, the matter of a virtue.

32. The vulgar Latin Bible, in this precept of our blessed Saviour, reads not the appendix, 'without a cause,' but indefinitely, 'he that is angry with his brother;' and St. Jerome affirms that the clause, 'without a cause,' is not to be found in the true Greek copies. Upon supposition of which, because it is not to be imagined that all anger in all causes, and in all degrees, is simply unlawful, and St. Paul distinguishes being angry from committing a sin, 'be angry, but sin not;' these words are left to signify such an anger as is the crime of homicide in the heart, like the secret lusting called by Christ 'adultery in the heart:' and so here is forbidden, not only the outward act, but the inward inclinations to murder; that is, an anger with deliberation and purpose of revenge; this being explicative and additional to the precept

forbidding murder; which also our blessed Saviour seems to have intended, by threatening the same penalty to this anger or spiritual homicide which the law inflicted upon the actual and external; that is, judgment or condemnation. And because this prohibition of anger is an explication and more severe commentary upon the sixth commandment, it is more than probable that this anger, to which condemnation is threatened, is such an anger as hath entertained something of mischief in the spirit. And this agrees well enough with the former interpretation, save that it affirms no degree of anger to be criminal as to the height of condemnation, unless it be with a thought of violence or desires of revenge; the other degrees receiving their heightenings and declensions as they keep their distance or approach to this. And besides, by not limiting or giving caution concerning the cause, it restrains the malice only, or the degree; but it permits other causes of anger to be innocent besides those spiritual and moral, of the interests of God's glory and religion. But this is also true, whichsoever of the readings be retained; for the irascible faculty having in nature an object proper to its constitution and natural design, if our anger be commenced upon an object naturally troublesome, the anger is very natural, and nowhere said to be irregular. And he who is angry with a servant's unwariness or inadvertency, or the remissness of a child's spirit and application to his studies, or on any sudden displeasure, is not in any sense guilty of prevaricating the sixth commandment, unless besides the object he adds an inequality of degree, or unhandsome circumstance, or adjunct. And possibly it is not in the nature of

man to be strict in discipline, if the prohibitions of anger be confined only to causes of religion: and it were hard that such an anger, which is innocent in all effects, and a good instrument of government, should become criminal and damnable because some instances of displeasure are in actions not certainly and apparently sinful. So that our blessed Saviour forbidding us to be 'angry without a cause,' means such causes which are not only irregularities in religion, but defections in manners; and an anger may be religious, and political, and economical, according as it meets with objects proper to it in several kinds. It is sometimes necessary that a man carry a tempest in his face, and a rod in his hand; but for ever let him have a smooth mind, or at least under command, and within the limits of reason and religion, that he may steer securely, and avoid the rocks of sin; for then he may reprove a friend that did amiss, or chastise an offending son, or correct a vicious servant. The sum is this: there are no other bounds to hallow or to allow and legitimate anger, but that, 1. The cause be religion, or matter of government. 2. That the degree of the anger in prudent accounts be no bigger than the cause. 3. That if it goes forth, it be not expressed in any action of uncharitableness, or unseasonable violence. 4. Whether it goes forth or abides at home, it must not dwell long any where; nor abide in the form of a burning coal, but, at the most, of a thin flame, thence passing into air salutary and gentle, fit to breathe, but not to blast. There is this only nicety to be observed; that although an anger arising for religion, or in the matter of government, cannot innocently abide long, yet it may abide till it hath

passed forth into its proper and temperate expression, whether of reprehension or chastisement, and then it must sit down. But if the anger arises from another cause, (provided it be of itself innocent, not sinful in the object or cause,) the passion in its first spring is also innocent, because it is natural, and on the sudden unavoidable: but this must be suppressed within, and is not permitted to express itself at all. For in that degree in which it goes out of the mouth, or through the eyes, or from the hand, in that degree it is violent, ought to be corrected and restrained: for so that passion was intended to be turned into virtue. For this passion is like its natural parent or instrument. And if choler keeps in its proper seat, it is an instrument of digestion; but if it goes forth into the stranger regions of the body, it makes a fever. And this anger which commences upon natural causes, though so far as it is natural it must needs be innocent; yet when any consent of the will comes to it, or that it goes forth in any action or voluntary signification, it also becomes criminal. Such an anger is only permitted to be born and die; but it must never take nourishment, or exercise any act of life.

33. But if that prohibition be indefinite, then it is certain the analogy of the commandment, of which this is an explication, refers it to revenge or malice: it is an anger that is wrath, an anger of revenge or injury, which is here prohibited. And I add this consideration, that since it is certain that Christ intended this for an explication of the prohibition of homicide, the clause of 'without cause' seems less natural and proper. For it would intimate, that though anger of revenge is

forbidden when it is rash and unreasonable; yet that there might be a case of being angry with a purpose of revenge and recompense, and that in such a case it is permitted to them to whom in all other it is denied; that is, to private persons: which is against the meekness and charity of the gospel. More reasonable it is, that as no man might kill his brother in Moses's law by his own private authority; so an anger is here forbidden, such an anger which no qualification can permit to private persons; that is, an anger with purposes of revenge.

34. But Christ adds, that a further degree of this sin is, when our anger breaks out in contumelies and ill language, and receives its increment according to the degree and injury of the reproach. There is a homicide in the tongue as well as in the heart; and he that kills a man's reputation by calumnies, or slander, or open reviling, hath broken this commandment. But this is not to be understood so, but that persons in authority or friends may reprehend a vicious person in language proper to his crime, or expressive of his malice or iniquity. Christ called Herod 'fox:' and although St. Michael brought not a railing accusation against Satan, yet the Scripture calls him an accuser, and Christ calls him the father of lies, and St. Peter, a devourer and a roaring lion; and St. John calls Diotrephes a lover of pre-eminence, or ambitious. But that which is here forbidden, is not a representing the crimes of the man for his emendation, or any other charitable or religious end; but a reviling him to do him mischief, to murder his reputation. Which also shows, that whatever is here forbidden, is in

some sense or other accounted homicide ; the anger in order to reproach, and both in order to murder, subject to the same punishment, because forbidden in the same period of the law : save only that, according to the degrees of the sin, Christ proportions several degrees of punishment in the other world, which he apportions to the degrees of death which had ever been among the Jews ; viz. the sword, and stoning to death, which were punishments legal and judicial ; and the burning infants in the valley of Hinnom, which was a barbarous and superstitious custom **used** formerly by their fathers, in imitation of the **Phœnician** accursed rites.

35. The remedies against anger, which are prescribed by masters of spiritual life, are partly taken from rules of prudence, partly from piety and more precise rules of religion. In prudence, 1. Do not easily entertain, or at all encourage, or willingly hear, or promptly believe tale-bearers and reporters of other men's faults : for oftentimes we are set on fire by an *ignis fatuus*, a false flame, and an empty story. 2. Live with peaceable people, if thou canst. 3. Be not inquisitive into the misdemeanours of others, or the reports which are made of you. 4. Find out reasons of excuse to alleviate and lessen the ignorances of a friend, or carelessnesses of a servant. 5. Observe what object is aptest to inflame thee, and by special arts of fortification stop up the avenues to that part : if losses, if contempt, if incivilities, if slander, still make it the greatest part of your employment to subdue the impotency of that passion that is more apt to raise tempests. 6. Extirpate petty curiosities of apparel, lodging, diet, and learn to be indif-

ferent in circumstances ; and if you be apt to be transported with such little things, do some great thing that shall cut off their frequent intervening.

7. Do not multiply secular cares, and troublesome negotiations, which have variety of conversation with several humours of men and accidents of things ; but frame to thyself a life simple as thou canst, and free from all affectations.

8. Sweeten thy temper and allay the violence of thy spirit with some convenient, natural, temperate, and medicinal solaces ; for some dispositions we have seen inflamed into anger, and often assaulted by peevishness, through immoderate fasting and inconvenient austerities.

9. A gentle answer is an excellent remora to the progresses of anger, whether in thyself or others : for anger is like the waves of a troubled sea ; when it is corrected with a soft reply, as with a little strand, it retires, and leaves nothing behind it but froth and shells, no permanent mischief.

10. Silence is an excellent art : and that was the advice which St. Isaac, an old religious person in the primitive church, is reported to have followed, to suppress his anger within his breast, and use what means he could there to strangle it ; but never permitting it to go forth in language : anger and lust being like fire, which if you enclose, suffering it to have no emission, it perishes and dies ; but give it the smallest vent, and it rages to a consumption of all it reaches. And this advice is coincident with the general rule which is prescribed in all temptations, that anger be suppressed in its cradle and first assaults.

11. Lastly, let every man be careful that in his repentance or in his zeal, or his religion, he be as dispassionate and free from anger as is possible ; lest anger pass

upon him in a reflex act, which was rejected in the direct. Some mortifiers, in their contestation against anger, or any evil or troublesome principle, are like criers of assizes, who calling for silence make the greatest noise; they are extremely angry when they are fighting against the habit or violent inclinations to anger.

36. But in the way of more strict religion it is advised, 1. That he who would cure his anger should pray often. It is St. Austin's counsel to the bishop Auxilius, that, like the apostles in a storm, we should awake Christ, and call to him for aid, lest we shipwreck in so violent passions and impetuous disturbances. 2. Propound to thyself the example of meek and patient persons: remembering always that there is a family of meek saints, of which Moses is the precedent, a family of patient saints, under the conduct of Job. Every one in the mountain of the Lord shall be gathered to his own tribe, to his own family, in the great day of jubilee: and the angry shall perish with the effects of anger; and peevish persons shall be vexed with the disquietness of an eternal worm and sting of a vexatious conscience, if they suffer here the transportations and saddest effects of an unmortified, habitual, and prevailing anger. 3. Above all things endeavour to be humble, to think of thyself as thou deservest; that is, meanly and unworthily: and in reason it is to be presumed thou wilt be more patient of wrong, quiet under affronts and injuries, susceptible of inconveniences, and apt to entertain all adversities, as instruments of humiliation, deleteries of vice, corrections of indecent passions, and instruments of virtue. 4. All the reason, and all the relations, and all the necessities of

mankind are daily arguments against the violences and inordinations of anger. For he that would not have his reason confounded, or his discourse useless, or his family be a den of lions; he that would not have his marriage a daily duel, or his society troublesome, or his friendship formidable, or his feasts bitter; he that delights not to have his discipline cruel, or his government tyrannical, or his disputations violent, or his civilities unmannerly, or his charity be a rudeness, or himself brutish as a bear, or peevish as a fly, or miserable upon every accident, and in all the changes of his life, must mortify his anger. For it concerns us as much as peace, and wisdom, and nobleness, and charity, and felicity are worth, to be at peace in our breasts, and to be pleased with all God's providence, and to be in charity with every thing, and with every man.

37. 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' These two commandments are immediate to each other, and of the greatest cognation: for anger and lust work upon one subject; and the same fervours of blood which make men revengeful, will also make men unchaste. But the prohibition is repeated in the words of the old commandment; so 'it was said to them of old:' which was not only a prohibition of the violation of the rites of marriage, but was, even among the Jews, extended to signify all mixture of sexes not matrimonial. For adultery in Scripture is sometimes used to signify fornication, and fornication for adultery; as it is expressed in the permissions of divorce in the case of fornication: and by Moses's law fornication also was forbidden, and it was hated also and reprov'd in the natural. But it is very probable that this precept

was restrained only to the instance of adultery in the proper sense; that is, violation of marriage; for Moses did, in other annexes of the law, forbid fornication. And as a blow or wound was not esteemed in Moses's law a breach of the sixth commandment, so neither was any thing but adultery esteemed a violation of the seventh by very many of their own doctors; of which I reckon this a sufficient probation, because they permitted stranger virgins and captives to fornicate; only they believed it sinful in the Hebrew maidens. And when two harlots pleaded before Solomon, for the bastard child, he gave sentence of their question, but nothing of their crime. Strangers with the Hebrews signified many times harlots, because they were permitted to be such, and were entertained to such purposes. But these were the licences of a looser interpretation; God having to all nations given sufficient testimony of his detestation of all concubinate not hallowed by marriage: of which among the nations there was abundant testimony, in that the harlots were not permitted to abide in the cities, and wore veils in testimony of their shame and habitual indecencies; which we observe in the story of *Thamar*,¹ and also in *Chrysippus*. And although it passed without punishment, yet never without shame, and a note of turpitude. And the abstinence from fornication was one of the precepts of *Noah*, to which the Jews obliged the stranger-proselytes, who were only proselytes of the house: and the apostles enforced it upon the Gentiles in their first decree at *Jerusalem*, as re-

¹ Gen. xxviii. 14.

newing an old stock of precepts and obligations, in which all the converted and religious Gentiles did communicate with the Jews.

38. To this Christ added, that the eyes must not be adulterous: his disciples must not only abstain from the act of unlawful concubinate, but from the impurer intuition of a wife of another man; so, according to the design of his whole sermon, opposing the righteousness of the spirit to that of the law, or of works, in which the Jews confided. Christians must have chaste desires, not indulging to themselves a liberty of looser thoughts; keeping the threshold of their temples pure, that the Holy Ghost may observe nothing unclean in the entry of his habitation. For he that lusts after a woman, wants nothing to the consummation of the act but some convenient circumstances; which, because they are not in our power, the act is impeded, but nothing of the malice abated. But so severe in this was our blessed Master, that he commanded us rather to put our eyes out, than to suffer them to become an offence to us; that is, an inlet of sin, or an invitation or transmission of impurity: by putting our eyes out, meaning the extinction of all incentives of lust, the rejection of all opportunities and occasions, the quitting all conditions of advantage which ministers fuel to this hell-fire. And by this severity we must understand all beginnings, temptations, likenesses, and insinuations and minutes of lust and impurity to be forbidden to Christians; such as are all morose delectations in vanity, wanton words, gestures, balls, revellings, wanton diet, garish and lascivious dressings and trimmings of the body, looser banquetings; all

‘making provisions for the flesh to fulfil the lust of it,’ all lust of concupiscence, and all ‘lust of the eye,’ and all lust of the hand, unclean contacts, are to be rescinded; all lust of the tongue and palate, all surfeiting and drunkenness. For it is impossible to keep the spirit pure, if it be exposed to all the entertainment of enemies. And if Christ forbade the wanton eye, and placed it under the prohibition of adultery, it is certain, whatsoever ministers to that vice, and invites to it, is within the same restraint; it is the eye, or the hand, or the foot that is to be cut off. To this commandment fastings and severe abstinences are apt to be reduced, as being the proper abscission of the instruments and temptations of lust, to which Christ invites by the mixed proposition of threatening and reward; for better it is to go to heaven with but one eye or one foot, that is, with a body half nourished, than with full meals and an active lust to enter into hell. And in this our blessed Lord is a physician rather than a lawgiver; for abstinence from all impure, concubinate, and morose delectations, so much as in thought, being the commandment of God, that Christ bids us retrench the occasions and insinuations of lust; it is a facilitating the duty, not a new severity, but a security and caution of prudence.

39. ‘Thou shalt not steal.’ To this precept Christ added nothing, because God had already in the Decalogue fortified this precept with a restraint upon the desires; for the tenth commandment forbids all coveting of our neighbour’s goods. For the wife there reckoned, and forbidden to be desired from another man, is not a restraint of libidi-

nous appetite, but of the covetous ; it being accounted part of wealth to have a numerous family, many wives, and many servants. And this also God, by the prophet Nathan, upbraided to David, as an instance of David's wealth, and God's liberality. But yet this commandment Christ adopted into his law, it being prohibited by the natural law, or the law of right reason ; commonwealths not being able to subsist without distinction of dominion, nor industry to be encouraged but by propriety, nor families to be maintained but by defence of just rights and truly purchased possessions. And this prohibition extends to all injustice, whether done by force or fraud ; whether it be by ablation, or prevention, or detaining of rights ; any thing in which injury is done directly or obliquely to our neighbour's fortune.

40. 'Thou shalt not bear false witness.' That is, thou shalt not answer in judgment against thy neighbour falsely ; which testimony in the law was given solemnly and by oath, invoking the name of God. 'I adjure thee by God that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ,' said the high-priest to the blessed Jesus ; that is, speak upon thy oath : and then he told them fully, though they made it the pretence of murdering him, and he knew they would do so. Confessing and witnessing truth is giving glory to God ; but false witness is high injustice, it is inhumanity and treason against the quietness, or life, or possession of a just person ; it is in itself irregular and unreasonable, and therefore is so forbidden to Christians, not only as it is unjust, but as it is false. For a lie in communication and private converse is also forbidden, as well as unjust testimony. 'Let every man speak

truth with his neighbour ;¹ that is, in private society. And whether a lie be in jest or earnest, when the purpose is to deceive and abuse, though in the smallest instance, it is in that degree criminal as it is injurious. I find not the same affirmed in every deception of our neighbours, wherein no man is injured, and some are benefited ; the error of the affirmation being nothing but a natural irregularity, nothing malicious, but very charitable. I find no severity superadded by Christ to this commandment, prohibiting such discourse, which, without injury to any man, deceives a man into piety or safety. But this is to be extended no further : in all things else we must be severe in our discourses, ‘ neither lie in a great matter nor a small, for the custom thereof is not good,’ saith the son of Sirach. I could add, concerning this precept, that Christ having left it in that condition he found it in the Decalogue, without any change or alteration of circumstance, we are commanded to give true testimony in judgment ; which because it was under an oath, there lies upon us no prohibition, but a severity of injunction, to swear truth in judgment when we are required. The securing of testimonies was by the sanctity of an oath, and this remains unaltered in Christianity.

41. ‘ Thou shalt not covet.’ This commandment we find nowhere repeated in the gospel by our blessed Saviour ; but it is inserted in the repetition of the second table, which St. Paul mentioned to the Romans. For it was so abundantly expressed in the inclosure of other precepts, and the whole design of Christ’s doctrines, that it was less needful specially to express that which is every

¹ Ephes. iv. 25.

where affixed to many precepts evangelical. Particularly it is inherent in the first beatitude, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit:' and it means, that we should not wish our neighbour's goods with a deliberate entertained desire, but that upon the commencement of the motion it be disbanded instantly; for he that does not at the first address and incitement of the passion suppress it, he hath given it that entertainment which, in every period of staying, is a degree of morose delectation in the appetite: and to this I find not Christ added any thing; for the law itself, forbidding to entertain the desire, hath commanded the instant and present suppression: they are the same thing, and cannot reasonably be distinguished. Now that Christ, in the instance of adultery, hath commanded to abstain also from occasions and accesses towards the lust, in this is not the same severity; because the vice of covetousness is not such a wild-fire as lust is, not inflamed by contact and neighbourhood of all things in the world. Every thing may be instrumental to libidinous desires, but to covetous appetites there are not temptations of so different natures.

42. Concerning the order of these commandments, it is not unusefully observed, that, if we account from the first to the last, they are of greatest perfection which are last described; and he who is arrived to that severity and dominion of himself as not to desire his neighbour's goods, is very far from actual injury, and so in proportion; it being the least degree of religion to confess but One God. But, therefore, vices are to take their estimate in the contrary order: he that prevaricates the first commandment is the greatest sinner in the world;

and the least is he that only covets without an actual injustice. And there is no variety or objection in this, unless it be altered by the accidental difference of degrees; but in the kinds of sin the rule is true. This only; the sixth and seventh are otherwise in the Hebrew Bibles than ours, and in the Greek otherwise in Exodus than in Deuteronomy: and by this rule it is a greater sin to commit adultery than to kill; concerning which we have no certainty, save that St. Paul, in one respect, makes the sin of uncleanness the greatest of any sin, whose scene lies in the body; 'every sin is without the body; but he that commits fornication, sins against his own body.'

THE PRAYER.

O eternal Jesus, wisdom of thy Father, thou light of Jews and Gentiles, and the great Master of the world, who, by thy holy sermons and clearest revelations of the mysteries of thy Father's kingdom, didst invite all the world to great degrees of justice, purity, and sanctity, instruct us all in a holy institution, give us understanding of thy laws; that the light of thy celestial doctrine illuminating our darkneses, and making bright all the recesses of our spirits and understandings, we may direct our feet, all the lower man, the affections of the inferior appetite, to walk in the paths of thy commandments. Dearest God, make us to live a life of religion and justice, of love and duty; that we may adore thy majesty, and reverence thy name, and love thy mercy, and admire thy infinite glories and perfections, and obey thy precepts. Make us to love thee for thyself, and our neighbours for thee: make us to be all love and all duty; that we may adorn the gospel of thee our Lord, walking worthy of our vocation; that, as thou hast called us to be thy disciples, so we may walk therein, doing the work of faithful servants, and may receive the adoption of sons, and the gift of eternal glory, which thou hast reserved for all the disciples of thy holy institution. Make all the

would obey thee as a prophet; that, being redeemed and purified by thee, our High-priest, all may reign with thee, our King, in thy eternal kingdom, O eternal Jesus, wisdom of thy Father. Amen.

DISCOURSE XI.

*Of the three additional Precepts which Christ superinduced and made Parts of the Christian Law:—
Of Charity, with its Parts, forgiving, giving, not judging.*

PART I.

Of Forgiveness.

1. THE holy Jesus coming to reconcile all the world to God, would reconcile all the parts of the world one with another, that they may rejoice in their common band and their common salvation. The first instance of charity forbade to Christians all revenge of injuries: which was a perfection and endearment of duty beyond what either most of the old philosophers, or the laws of the nations, or of Moses ever practised or enjoined.¹

¹ Plutarchus tamen multa præclara dicit de charitate erga inimicos. Simplicitati et magnanimitati atque bonitati plus loci hic est quam in amicitiiis — Oblata occasione ulciscendi inimicum, cum missum facere æquanimitatis est. Qui verò miseratur inimicum afflictum, et opem fert indigenti, et filiis ejus ac familiæ adverso ipsorum tempore operam suam studiúmque defert, hunc qui non amat, huic pectus atrum est atque adamantinum, &c. De cap. ex inim. utilit.

Et Cicero dixit Cæsari; Pompeii statuas restituendo, tuas defixisti.

Justitiæ primum munus est, ut nè cui noceas, nisi lacessitus injuriâ. Cic. de Offic.

For revenge was esteemed, to unhallowed, unchristian natures, as sweet as life, a satisfaction of injuries, and the only cure of maladies and affronts. Only, laws of the wisest commonwealths commanded that revenge should be taken by the judge: a few cases being excepted, in which, by sentence of the law, the injured person or his nearest relative might be the executioner of the vengeance: as among the Jews, in the case of murder; among the Romans, in the case of an adulteress, or a ravished daughter, the father might kill the adulteress or the ravisher. In other things, the judge only was to be the avenger. But Christ commanded his disciples, rather than take revenge, to expose themselves to a second injury; rather offer the other cheek, than be avenged for a blow on this: 'for vengeance belongs to God,' and he will retaliate. And 'to that wrath we must give place,' saith St. Paul; that is, in well-doing and evil-suffering, commit ourselves to his righteous judgment, leaving room for his execution, who will certainly do it, if we snatch not the sword from his arm.

2. But some observe, that our blessed Saviour instanced but in smaller injuries. He that bade us suffer a blow on the cheek, did not oblige us tamely to be sacrificed: he that enjoined us to put up the loss of our coat and cloak, did not signify his pleasure to be, that we should offer our family to be turned out of doors, and our whole estate aliened and cancelled; especially we being other-

Exod. xxi. 23; Levit. xxiv. 20; Deut. xix. 21.

Idcirco judiciorum vigor, jurisque publici tutela videtur in medio constituta, nè quisquam sibi ipsi permittere valeat ultionem. Honor. et Theod. in Cod. Theodos.

¹ Rom. xii. 19.

wise obliged to provide for them, under the pain of the curse of infidelity. And indeed there is much reason our defences may be extended, when the injuries are too great for our sufferance; or that our defence bring no greater damage to the other than we divert from ourselves. But our blessed Saviour's prohibition is instanced in such small particulars, which are no limitations of the general precept, but particulars of common consideration. 'But I say unto you, resist not evil;' so our English Testament reads it: but the word signifies, 'avenge not evil;'¹ and it binds us to this only, that we be not avengers of the wrong, but rather suffer twice, than once to be avenged. He that is struck on the face may run away, or may divert the blow, or bind the hand of his enemy; and he whose coat is snatched away may take it again, if without injury to the other he may do it. We are sometimes bound to resist evil: every clearing of our innocence, refuting of calumnies, quitting ourselves of reproach, is a resisting evil; but such which is hallowed to us by the example of our Lord himself and his apostles. But this precept is clearly expounded by St. Paul, 'Render not evil for evil;'² that is, be not revenged. You may either secure or restore yourselves to the condition of your own possessions or fame, or preserve your life, provided that no evil be returned to him that offers the injury. For so sacred are the laws of Christ, so holy and great is his example, so much hath he endeared us who were his enemies, and so frequently and

¹ Μη ἀντισηναι τῷ πονηρῷ sumitur sensu generali pro omni retaliationione.

² Rom. xii. 17.

severely hath he preached and enjoined forgiveness, that he who knows not to forgive, knows not to be like a Christian, and a disciple of so gentle a master.

3. So that the smallness or greatness of the instance alters not the case in this duty: in the greatest matters we are permitted only to an innocent defence; in the smallest we may do so too. I may as well hold my coat fast as my gold, and I may as well hide my goods as run away; and that is a defence. And if my life be in danger, I must do no more but defend myself. Save only that defence in case of life is of a larger signification than in case of goods. I may wound my enemy, if I cannot else be safe; I may disarm him, or in any sense disable him; and this is extended even to a liberty to kill him, if my defence necessarily stands upon so hard conditions. For although I must not give him a wound for a wound, because that cannot cure me, but is certainly revenge; yet when my life cannot be otherwise safe than by killing him, I have used that liberty which nature hath permitted me, and Christ hath not forbidden, who only interdicted revenge, and forbade no defence which is charitable and necessary, and not blended with malice and anger. And it is as much charity to preserve myself as him, when I fear to die.

4. But although we find this nowhere forbidden, yet it is very consonant to the excellent mercy of the gospel, and greatly laudable, if we choose rather to lose our life, in imitation of Christ, than save it by the loss of another's, in pursuance of the permissions of nature. When nature only gives leave, and no lawgiver gives command to defend

our lives, and the excellence of Christianity highly commends dying for our enemies, and propounds to our imitation the greatest example that ever could be in the world; it is a very great imperfection, if we choose not rather to obey an insinuation of the holy Jesus, than with greediness and appetite pursue the bare permissions of nature. But in this we have no necessity. Only this is to be read with two cautions: 1. So long as the assaulted person is in actual danger, he must use all arts and subterfuges which his wit or danger can supply him with; as passive defence, flight, arts of diversion, entreaties, soft and gentle answers, or whatsoever is in its kind innocent, to prevent his sin and my danger; that when he is forced to his last defence, it may be certain he had nothing of revenge mingled in so sad a remedy. 2. That this be not understood to be a permission to defend our lives against an angry and unjust prince. For if my lawful prince should attempt my life with rage, or with the abused solemnities of law; in the first case the sacredness of his person; in the second, the reverence and religion of authority, are his defensatives, and immure him, and bind my hands, that I must not lift them up, but to heaven, for my own defence and his pardon.

5. But the vain pretences of vainer persons have here made a question where there is no scruple: and if I may defend my life with the sword, or with any thing which nature and the laws forbid not, why not also mine honour, which is as dear as life, which makes my life without contempt, useful to my friend, and comfortable to myself? For to be reputed a coward, a baffled person, and one that will take affronts, is to be miserable and scorned,

and to invite all insolent persons to do me injuries. May I not be permitted to fight for mine honour, and to wipe off the stains of my reputation? Honour is as dear as life, and sometimes dearer. To this I have many things to say. For that which men in this question call honour, is nothing but a reputation amongst persons vain, unchristian in their deportment, empty and ignorant souls, who count that the standard of honour which is the instrument of reprobation; as if to be a gentleman were to be no Christian. They that have built their reputation upon such societies, must take new estimates of it, according as the wine, or fancy, or custom, or some great fighting person shall determine it; and whatsoever invites a quarrel, is a rule of honour. But then it is a sad consideration to remember, that it is accounted honour not to recede from any thing we have said or done. It is honour not to take the lie; in the meantime it is not dishonourable to lie indeed, but to be told so: and not to kill him that says it, and venture my life and his too, that is a forfeiture of reputation. A mistress's favour, an idle discourse, a jest, a jealousy, a health, a gaiety, any thing must engage two lives in hazard, and two souls in ruin; or else they are dishonoured. As if a life, which is so dear to a man's self, which ought to be dear to others, which all laws and wise princes and states have secured by the circumvallation of laws and penalties, which nothing but heaven can recompense for the loss of, which is the breath of God, which to preserve Christ died, the Son of God died, as if this were so contemptible a thing, that it must be ventured for satisfaction of a vicious person, or a vain custom, or such a folly which a

wise and a severe person had rather die than be guilty of. Honour is from him that honours. Now certainly God and the king are the fountains of honour: right reason and religion, the Scripture and the laws, are the best rules of estimating honour. And if we offer to account our honours by the senseless and illiterate discourses of vain and vicious persons, our honour can be no greater than the fountain from whence it is derivative: and at this rate Harpaste, Seneca's wife's fool, might have declared Thersites an honourable person; and every bold gladiator in a Roman theatre, or a fighting rebel among the slaves of Sparta, or a trooper of Spartacus's guard, might have stood upon their honour upon equal and as fair a challenge. Certainly there is no greater honour than to be like the holy Jesus, and he is delectable in the eyes of God, and so are all his relatives and followers, by participation of his honour; and nothing can be more honourable than to do wise and excellent actions, according to the account of divine and human laws; and if either God or the king can derive honour upon their subjects, then whatsoever is contrary to that which they honour, must needs be base, dishonourable, and inglorious.

6. But if we be troubled for fear of new and succeeding injuries, and will needs fight, and as much as lies in us kill our brother to prevent an injury; nothing can be more unworthy of a Christian, nothing can be more inhuman. Cato, pleading in the Roman senate in the behalf of the Rhodian ambassadors, who came to beg peace of the commonwealth, which had entertained an anger and some thoughts of war against them, upon pretence that the Rhodians would war with them

when they durst, discoursed severely and prudently against such unreasonable purposes. And the life of men and the interest of states is not like the trade of fencers, whose lot is to conquer if they strike first, to die if they be prevented. Man's life is not established upon so unequal and unreasonable necessities, that either we must first do an injury, or else it is certain we must receive a mischief. God's providence and care in his government of the world is more vigilant and merciful, and he protects persons innocent and just in all cases: except when he means to make an injury the instrument of a grace, or a violent death to be the gate of glory. It was not ill answered of Merope to king Polyphontes, who therefore killed his brother, because he had entertained a purpose to have killed him: "You should only have done the same injury to him which he did to you; you should still have had a purpose to kill him:" for his injustice went no further; and it is hard to requite ill and uncertain purposes with actual murder, especially when we are as much secured by the power of laws, as the whole commonwealth is in all its greatest interests. And therefore for Christians to kill a man to prevent being baffled or despised, is to use an extreme desperate remedy, infinitely painful and deadly; to prevent a little griping in the belly, foreseen as possible to happen, it may be, three years after. But besides, this objection supposes a disease almost as earnestly to be cured as this of the main question; for it represents a man keeping company with lewd and debauched persons, spending his time in vanity, drunken societies, or engaged in lust, or placing his scene amongst persons apt to do affronts and unworthy

misdemeanors: and indeed an affront, an injury, a blow, or a loud disgrace is not the consequence of not fighting, but a punishment for engaging in loose, baser, and vicious company. If the gallants of the age would find an honest and a noble employment, or would be delicate in the choice of their friends and company, or would be severe in taking accounts of themselves and of their time, would live as becomes persons wise and innocent, that is like Christians, they would soon perceive themselves removed far from injuries, and yet further from trouble, when such levities of mischance or folly should intervene. But suppose a man affronted or disgraced, it is considerable whether the man deserve it or no; if he did, let him entertain it for his punishment, and use it for an instrument of correction and humility: if he did not, as an instance of fortitude, and despite of lower things. But to venture lives to abolish a past act, is madness, unless in both those lives there was not good enough to be esteemed greater and of better value, than the light affront had in it of misery and trouble. Certainly those persons are very unfortunate, in whose lives much more pleasure is not, than there is mischief in a light blow or a lighter affront, from a vain or an angry person. But suppose there were not, yet how can fighting or killing my adversary wipe off my aspersion, or take off my blow, or prove that I did not lie? For it is but an ill argument to say, If I dare kill him, then I did not lie; or, If I dare fight, then he struck me not; or, If I dare venture damnation, then I am an honourable person. And yet further, who gave me power over my own life, or over the life of another, that I shall venture my own, and offer to take his?

God and God's vicegerent only are the lords of lives: who made us judges, and princes, or gods? And if we be not such, we are murderers and villains. When Moses would have parted the duellists that fought in Egypt, the injurious person asked him, 'Who made thee a judge or ruler over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?' meaning, he had no power to kill, none to judge of life and death, unless he had been made a ruler. Yea, but flesh and blood cannot endure a blow or a disgrace. Grant that too; but take this into the account, 'flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God.' And yet besides this, those persons have but a tender stock of reason, and wisdom, and patience, who have not discourse enough to make them bear an injury, which the philosophy of the Gentiles, without the light of Christianity, taught them to tolerate with so much equanimity and dispassionate entertainment. That person is not a man, who knows not how to suffer the inconvenience of an accident, and indiscretion of light persons: or if he could not, yet certainly that is a mad impatience, when a man, to remedy the pain of a drop of scalding water, shall drench himself in the liquid flames of pitch and a bituminous bath.

7. Truth is, to fight a duel is a thing that all kingdoms are bound to restrain with highest severity: it is a consociation of many the worst acts that a person ordinarily can be guilty of: it is want of charity, of justice, of humility, of trust in God's providence; it is therefore pride, and murder, and injustice, and infinite unreasonableness; and nothing of a Christian, nothing of excuse, nothing of honour is in it, if God and wise men be admitted judges of the lists. And it would be con-

sidered, that every one who fights a duel, must reckon himself as dead or dying : (for however any man flatters himself, by saying he will not kill if he could avoid it ; yet rather than be killed he will, and to the danger of being killed his own act exposes him.) Now, is it a good posture for a man to die with a sword in his hand, thrust at his brother's breast, with a purpose either explicit or implicit to have killed him ? Can a man die twice, that in case he miscarries, and is damned for the first ill dying, he may mend his fault, and die better the next time ? Can his vain, imaginary, and fantastic shadow of reputation, make him recompence for the disgrace and confusion of face, and pains and horrors of eternity ? Is there no such thing as forgiving injuries, nothing of the discipline of Jesus in our spirits ? Are we called by the name of Christ, and have nothing in us but the spirit of Cain, and Nimrod, and Joab ? If neither reason nor religion can rule us, neither interest nor safety can determine us, neither life nor eternity can move us, neither God nor wise men be sufficient judges of honour to us ; then our damnation is just, but it is heavy ; our fall is certain, but it is cheap, base, and inglorious. And let not the vanities, or the gallants of the world slight this friendly monition, rejecting it with a scorn, because it talketh like a divine : it were no disparagement if they would do so too, and believe accordingly ; and they would find a better return of honour in the crowns of eternity, by talking like a divine, than by dying like a fool ; by living in imitation and obedience to the laws of the holy Jesus, than by perishing, or committing murder, or by attempting it, or by venturing it, like a weak, impotent, passionate,

and brutish person. Upon this chapter it is sometimes asked, whether a virgin may not kill a ravisher to defend her chastity. Concerning which, as we have no special and distinct warrant, so there is, in reason and analogy of the gospel, much for the negative: for since his act alone cannot make her criminal, and is no more than a wound in my body, or a civil or a natural inconvenience; it is unequal to take a life in exchange for a lesser injury, and it is worse that I take it myself. Some great examples we find in story, and their names are remembered in honour: but we can make no judgment of them, but that their zeal was reprobable for its intemperance, though it had excellency in the matter of the passion.

8. But if we may not secure our honour, or be revenged for injuries by the sword, may we not crave the justice of the law, and implore the vengeance of the judge, who is appointed 'for vengeance against evil-doers?' And the judge being the king's officer, and the king God's vicegerent, it is no more than imploring God's hand; and that is 'giving place to wrath,' which St. Paul speaks of; that is, permitting all to the divine justice. To this I answer, that it is not lawful to go to law for every occasion or slighter injury, because it is very distant from the mercies, forgiveness, and gentleness of a Christian, to contest for trifles: and it is certain, that the injuries, or evil, or charges of trouble and expense will be more vexatious and afflictive to the person contested, than a small instance of wrong is to the person injured. And it is a great intemperance of anger and impotence of spirit, a covetousness and impatience, to appeal to the judge for determination concerning a lock of camel's-hair

or a goat's beard; I mean, any thing that is less than the gravity of laws, or the solemnity of a court, and that does not outweigh the inconveniences of a suit. But this we are to consider in the expression of our blessed Saviour: 'If a man will sue thee at the law, and take thy cloak, let him have thy coat also.'¹ Which words are a particular instance in pursuit of t' e general precept, 'resist not,' or 'avenge not evil.' The primitive Christians (as it happens in the first fervours of a discipline) were sometimes severe in observation of the letter, not subtly distinguishing counsels from precepts, but swallowing all the words of Christ without chewing or discrimination. They abstained from tribunals, unless they were forced thither by persecutors; but went not thither to repeat their goods. And if we consider suits of law, as they are wrapped in circumstances of action and practice, with how many subtleties and arts they are managed, how pleadings are made mercenary, and that it will be hard to find right counsel that shall advise you to desist if your cause be wrong, (and therefore there is great reason to distrust every question, since, if it be never so wrong, we shall meet advocates to encourage us and plead for it,) what danger of miscarriages, of uncharitableness, anger, and animosities, what desires to prevail, what care and fearfulness of the event, what innumerable temptations do intervene, how many sins are secretly insinuated in our hearts and actions! If a suit were of itself never so lawful, it would concern the duty of a Christian to avoid it, as he prays against temptations, and cuts off the opportunities

¹ Matt. v. 40.

of a sin. It is not lawful for a Christian to sue his brother at the law, unless he can be patient if he loses, and charitable if he be wronged, and can prosecute his end without any mixture of covetousness, or desires to prevail, without envy, or can believe himself wrong when his judge says he is, or can submit to peace when his just cause is oppressed, and rejected, and condemned, and without pain or regret can sit down by the loss of his right, and of his pains, and his money. And if he can do all this, what need he go to law? He may with less trouble and less danger take the loss singly, and expect God's providence for reparation, than disentitle himself to that by his own frowardness, and take the loss when it comes laden with many circumstances of trouble.

9. But however by accident it may become unlawful to go to law in a just cause, or in any, yet by this precept we are not forbidden. To go to law for revenge we are simply forbidden; that is, to return evil for evil; and therefore all those suits which are for vindictive sentences, not for reparative, are directly criminal. To follow a thief to death for spoiling my goods, is extremely unreasonable and uncharitable: for as there is no proportion between my goods and his life, (and therefore I demand it to his evil and injury,) so the putting him to death repairs not my estate: the first makes it in me to be unjust, the latter declares me malicious and revengeful. If I demand an eye for an eye, his eye extinguished will not enlighten mine; and therefore to prosecute him to such purposes, is to resist or render evil with evil, directly against Christ's sermon. But if the postulation of sentence be in order only to restore myself, we find

it permitted by St. Paul, who, when for the scandal's sake, he forbade 'going to law before unbelievers,' and for the danger and temptation's sake, and the latent irregularity which is certainly appendant to ordinary litigations, he is angry indefinitely with them that go to law; yet he adviseth that Christian arbitrators be appointed for decision of emergent questions. And therefore, when the supreme authority hath appointed and regularly established an arbitrator, the permission is the same. St. Paul is angry that among Christians there should be suits, but it is therefore he is chiefly angry because Christians do wrong: they who should rather suffer wrong, yet that they should do it, and defraud their brother, which in some sense enforces suits; that is it he highly blames. But when injustice is done, and a man is in a considerable degree defrauded, then it is permitted to him to repeat his own before Christian arbitrators, whether chosen by private consent or public authority; for that circumstance makes no essential alteration in the question. But then this must be done with as much simplicity and unmingled design as is possible; without any desire of rendering evil to the person of the offender, without arts of heightening the charge, without prolongation, devices, and arts of vexation, without anger and animosities; and then, although accidentally there is some appendant charge to the offending person, that is not accounted upon the stock of revenge, because it was not designed, and is not desired, and is cared for to prevent it as much as may be, and therefore offer was made of private and unchargeable arbitrators: and this being refused, the charge and accidental evil, if it be less than the loss of my sufferance and injury,

must be reckoned to the necessity of affairs, and put upon the stock of his injustice, and will not affix a guilt upon the actor. I say, this is true, when the actor hath used all means to accord it without charge, and when he is refused, manages it with as little as he can, and when it is nothing of his desire, but something of his trouble, that he cannot have his own without the lesser accidental evil to the offender, and that the question is great and weighty in its proportion, then a suit of law is of itself lawful. But then let it be remembered how many ways afterwards it may become unlawful, and I have no more to add in this article, but the saying of the son of Sirach: 'He that loves danger shall perish in it.' And certainly he had need be an angel that manages a suit innocently: and he that hath so excellent a spirit as with innocence to run through the infinite temptations of a lawsuit, in all probability hath so much holiness as to suffer the injury, and so much prudence as to avoid the danger. And therefore nothing but a very great defalcation or ruin of a man's estate will, from the beginning to the end, justify such a controversy. When the man is put to it so that he cannot do some other duty without venturing in this, then the grace of God is sufficient for him: but he that enters lightly shall walk dangerously, and a thousand to one but he will fall foully. 'It is utterly a fault among you,' said St. Paul, 'because ye go to law one with another.'¹ It is not always a crime, but even a fault and an irregularity, a recession from Christian perfection, and an entertaining of a danger; which though we escape through, yet it was a fault to have entered into it,

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 7. Ὅλως ἡτήρησα, not παράτομα.

when we might have avoided it. And even then, when it is lawful for us, it is not expedient:¹ for so the apostle sums up his reprehension concerning Christians going to law. We must ‘rather take wrong, rather suffer ourselves to be defrauded;’² and when we cannot bear the burden of the loss, then indeed we are permitted to appeal to Christian judges: but then there are so many cautions to be observed, that it may be the remedy is worse than the disease. I only observe this one thing, that St. Paul permits it only in the instance of defraudation, or matter of interest; such as are defending of widows, and orphans, and churches; which, in estimation of law, are, by way of fiction, reckoned to be in pupilage and minority; add also repeating our own interests, when our necessities, or the support of our family and relatives, requires it: for all these are cases of charity or duty respectively. But besides the matter of defraudation, we find no instance expressed, nor any equality and parallel of reason to permit Christians in any case to go to law: because in other things the sentence is but vindictive, and cannot repair us; and therefore demanding justice is a rendering evil in the proper matter of revenge; concerning which I know no scruple but in an action of scandal and ill report. But because an innocent and an holy life will force light out of darkness, and humility and patience and waiting upon God will bring glory out of shame, I suppose he who goes to law to regain his credit, attempts the cure by incompetent remedies. If the accusation be public, the law will call him to an account; and then he is upon his defence, and must

¹ 1 Cor. vi. 12.² Ib. verse 7.

acquit himself with meekness and sincerity: but this allows not him to be the actor, for then it is rather a design of revenge, than a proper delectory of his disgrace, and the purgative of the calumny. For if the accusation can be proved, it was no calumny; if it be not proved, the person is not always innocent; and to have been accused, leaves something foul in his reputation: and therefore he that by law makes it more public, propagates his own disgrace, and sends his shame further than his innocence, and the crime will go whither his absolution shall not arrive.

10. If it be yet further questioned, whether it be lawful to pray for a revenge, or a punishment upon the offender; (I reckon them all one: he that prays for punishment of him that did him personal injury, cannot easily be supposed to separate the punishment from his own revenge;) I answer, that although God be the avenger of all our wrongs, yet it were fit for us to have the affections of brethren, not the designs and purposes of a judge, but leave them to him to whom they are proper. When in the bitterness of soul an oppressed person curses sadly, and prays for vengeance, the calamity of the man, and the violence of his enemy hasten a curse, and ascertain it. But whatever excuses the greatness of the oppression may make I know not; but the bitterness of the spirit, besides that it is pitiable as it is a passion, yet it is violent and less Christian, as it is active and sends forth prayers. 'Woe' is pronounced 'to them by whom the offence cometh;' yet we must 'beware of offences,' because by them we are engaged in a sin: and he that prays for a revenge, hath a revengeful spirit, however it be re-

strained by laws and exterior tendernesses from acting such dire purposes. And he that prays for revenge, may indeed procure a justice to be done upon the injurious person; but oftentimes it happens then to fall on him when we least wish it, when we also have a conjunct interest in the other's preservation and escape: God so punishing the first wrong, that we also may smart for our uncharitable wishes. For the ground of all this discourse is, that it is part of Christian charity to forgive injuries: which forgiveness of the injury, although it may reasonably enough stand with my fair and innocent requiring of my own, which goes no further than a fair repetition; yet in no case can it stand with the acting and desiring revenge, which also, in the formality of revenge, can have no pretence of charity, because it is ineffective to my restitution. This discourse concerns private persons; whether it concern the question of war, and how far, is not proper for this consideration.

PART II.

Of Alms.

I BUT Christian charity hath its effect also in benefits as well as gentleness and innocence. 'Give to him that asketh, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away. But when thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.'¹ These are the precepts of the Lord, for the substance and the manner of

¹ Matt. v. 42; vi. 3.

alms, for the quantity and freeness of the donative, and the simplicity of him that gives; to which add those other words of his, 'Sell your possessions, and give alms.'¹ This precept, with its circumstances, was intended as a defensative against covetousness and prodigality, and a suppletory to make up the wants, and to make even the breaches of mankind: in which we shall best understand our obligation, if we consider in what proportion we must give alms, and to what persons, and in what manner.

2. First, For the quantity, we shall best take an estimate of it, if we remember the portion which God allows to Christians: 'Having food and raiment, let us be content with it:'² and our blessed Saviour, at the latter end of this sermon, stirs us up to confidence in God, and not to doubt our provisions, by telling that God 'feeds the ravens, and clothes the lilies, and he will much rather do it to us:' he will clothe us and feed us. No more is in the promise, no more is in our need: and therefore whatsoever is beside our needs natural and personal, that is, proportioning our needs to the condition of our life, and exigence of our calling, and quality of our person, all that can be spared from what we modestly and temperately spend in our support, and the supply of our families, and other necessary incidents, all that is to be spent in charity or religion. "He defrauds the poor of their right who detains from them beyond his own necessary, prudent, and convenient supplies,"³ saith St. Jerome. And this is intended to be a retrenchment of all vain expenses, costly feasts,

¹ Luke, xii. 33.

² Tim. vi. 8.

³ James, v. 2, 3, 4.

rich clothes, pompous retinue, and such excrescences of expense, which, of themselves, serve no end of piety or just policy, but by wise and temperate persons are esteemed unnecessary, and without which the dignity and just value of the person may still be retained. Whatsoever is vainly spent is the portion of the poor; whatsoever we lose in idle gaming, revelling, and wantonness or prodigality, was designed by Christ to refresh his own bowels, to fill the bellies of the poor; whatsoever lies in our repository useless and superfluous, all that is the poor man's inheritance: and certainly there is not any greater baseness than to suffer a man to perish, or be in extreme want of that which God gave me for him, and beyond my own needs. It is unthankfulness to God, it is unmercifulness to the poor, it is improvidence to ourselves, it is unfaithfulness in the dispensation of the money, of which God made him but the steward, and his chest the bank for the exchange and issuing it to the indigent. And he that is unmerciful and unjust, is extremely unlike God. But in taking this estimate concerning our excrescences, we are to proceed according to the rules of prudence, not making determinations in grains and scruples, but in the greater actions and accountable proportions of our estates. And if any man, seeing great necessities of indigent and calamitous persons, shall give beyond his ability, he hath the Philipians for his precedent, and he hath God engaged for his payment, and a greater share in heaven for his reward. Only this; as we are to provide for ourselves, so also for our family, and the relatives of our charge and nearer endearments; not only with a provision of the present day's entertainment,

but also for all nearer, probable, foreseen, and expected events ; such as are portions for our children, doweries for daughters. But this must not be extended to care and reservations for all possible and far-distant events ; but so much is to be permitted to the divine providence as our present duty gives leave. In which, although a prudent guide and a sober reason are to make application to practice ; yet the rule in general is, that by so much we are to relieve the poor, as we can deduct from such a portion of good things as God permits us to use for our own support, and reasonable and temporal conveniences of our person and condition : ever remembering, that if we increase in our estate, we also should increase in charity ; that in this also may be verified what is written : ‘ He that had much, had nothing over ; and he that had little, had no lack.’ There is in the quantity of these donatives some latitude : but if we sow sparingly, or if we scatter plentifully, so we shall reap. Only we must be careful, that no extreme necessity or biting want lies upon any poor man, whom we can relieve without bringing such a want upon ourselves, which is less than the permissions of fortune which the mercies of God have permitted to us ; that is, food and raiment proper for us. Under food and raiment all the necessaries of our life are to be understood. Whatsoever is more than this, is counsel and perfection ; for which a proportionable reward is deposited in the treasures of eternity.

3. Secondly, If question be made concerning the persons who are to be the object of our alms, our rule is plain and easy ; for nothing is required in the person suscipient and capable of alms, but

that he be in misery and want, and unable to relieve himself. This last clause I insert in pursuance of that caution given to the church of Thessalonica by St. Paul: 'If any one will not work, neither let him eat.'¹ For we must be careful that our charity, which is intended to minister to poor men's needs, do not minister to idleness and the love of beggary, and a wandering, useless, unprofitable life. But, abating this, there is no other consideration that can exempt any needy person from participation of your charity: not though he be your enemy; (for that is it which our blessed Saviour means in the appendix of this precept, 'Love your enemies;') that is, according to the exposition of the apostle, 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink;') not though he be an unbeliever; not though he be a vicious person. Provided only that the vice be such to which your relief ministers no fuel, and adds no flame: and if the mere necessities of his nature be supplied, it will be a fair security against the danger. But if the vice be in the scene of the body, all free comforts are to be denied him, because they are but incentives of sin, and angels of darkness. This I the rather insert, that the pride and supercilious austerities of some persons become not to them an instrument of excuse, from ministering to needy persons, upon pretence their own sins brought them into that condition. For though the causes of our calamities are many times great secrets of providence; yet suppose the poverty of the man was the effect of his prodigality, or other baseness, it matters not as to our duty how he came into it, but where he is;

¹ 2 Thes. iii. 10.

lest we also be denied a visit in our sicknesses, and a comfort in our sorrow, or a counsel in our doubts, or aid in any distress, upon pretence that such sadness was procured by our sins: and ten to one but it was so. 'Do good to all,' saith the apostle, 'but especially to the family of faith;' for to them our charity is most proper and proportioned. To all, viz. who are in need, and cannot relieve themselves; in which number persons that can work are not to be accounted. So that if it be necessary to observe an order in our charity, this is, when we cannot supply and suffice for all our opportunities of mercy, then 'let not the brethren of our Lord go away ashamed.' And in other things observe the order and propriety of our own relations: and where there is otherwise no difference, the degree of the necessity is first to be considered. Thus also, if the necessity be final and extreme, whatever the man be, he is first to be relieved before the lesser necessities of the best persons or most holy poor. But the proper objects of our charity are old persons, sick or impotent, laborious and poor housekeepers, widows and orphans, people oppressed or persecuted for the cause of righteousness, distressed strangers, captives and abused slaves, prisoners for debt. To these we must be liberal, whether they be holy or unholy; remembering that we are sons of that Father who makes the dew of heaven to drop upon the dwellings of the righteous and the fields of sinners.

4. Thirdly, The manner of giving alms is an office of Christian prudence; for in what instances we are to exemplify our charity, we must be determined by our own powers, and other's needs. The Scripture reckons entertaining strangers, vi-

siting the sick, going to prisons, feeding and clothing the hungry and naked: to which, by the exigence of the poor and the analogy of charity, many other are to be added. The holy Jesus in the very precept instanced in lending money to them that need to borrow; and he adds, looking for nothing again; that is, if they be unable to pay it. For-giving debts is a great instance of mercy, and a particular of excellent relief: but to imprison men for debt, when it is certain they are not able to pay it, and by that prison will be far more disabled, is an uncharitableness next to the cruelties of savages, and at infinite distance from the mercies of the holy Jesus.

PART III.

Of not Judging.

ANOTHER instance of charity our great Master inserted in this sermon, ‘not to judge our brother. And this is a charity so cheap and so reasonable, that it requires nothing of us but silence in our spirits. We may perform this duty at the charge of a negative: if we meddle not with other men’s affairs, we shall do them no wrong, and purchase to ourselves a peace, and be secured the rather from the unerring sentence of a severe judge. But this interdict forbids only such judging as is ungentle and uncharitable. In criminal causes let us find all the ways to alleviate the burden of the man by just excuses, by extenuating or lessening accidents, by abatement of incident circumstances, by gentle sentences, and whatsoever can do relief

to the person, that his spirit be not exasperated, that the crime be not the parent of impudence, that he be not insulted on, that he be invited to repentance, and by such sweetnesses he be led to his restitution. This also, in questions of doubts, obliges us to determine to the more favourable sense: and we also do need the same mercies, and therefore should do well, by our own rigour, not to disentitle ourselves to such possibilities and reserves of charity. But it is foul and base, by detraction and iniquity, to blast the reputation of an honourable action, and the fair name of virtue with a calumny. But this duty is also a part of the grace of justice and of humility, and by its relation and kindred to so many virtues, is furnished with so many arguments of amity and endearment.

THE PRAYER.

Holy and merciful Jesus, who art the great principle and the instrument of conveying to us the charity and mercies of eternity, who didst love us when we were enemies, forgive us when we were debtors, recover us when we were dead, ransom us when we were slaves, relieve us when we were poor, and naked, and wandering, and full of sadness and necessities; give us the grace of charity, that we may be pitiful and compassionate of the needs of our necessitous brethren, that we may be apt to relieve them, and that according to our duty and possibilities we may rescue them from their calamities. Give us courteous, affable, and liberal souls. Let us, by thy example, forgive our debtors, and love our enemies, and do to them offices of civility, and tenderness and relief; always propounding thee for our pattern, and thy mercies for our precedent, and thy precepts for our rule, and thy Spirit for our guide: that we, showing mercy here, may receive the mercies of eternity by thy merits, and by thy charities, and dispensation, O holy and merciful Jesus. Amen.

DISCOURSE XII.

Of the second additional Precept of Christ, viz.

Of Prayer.

1. THE soul of a Christian is the house of God ; 'Ye are God's building,' saith St. Paul ; but the house of God is the house of prayer ; and therefore prayer is the work of the soul, whose organs are intended for instruments of the divine praises ; and when every stop and pause of those instruments is but the conclusion of a collect, and every breathing is a prayer, then the body becomes a temple, and the soul is the sanctuary, and more private recess, and place of intercourse. Prayer is the great duty, and the greatest privilege of a Christian : it is his intercourse with God, his sanctuary in troubles, his remedy for sins, his cure of griefs ; and, as St. Gregory calls it, "It is the principal instrument whereby we minister to God, in execution of the decrees of eternal predestination :"¹ and those things which God intends for us, we bring to ourselves by the mediation of holy prayers. Prayer is the "ascent of the mind to God, and a petitioning for such things as we need for our support and duty."² It is an abstract and summary of Christian religion. Prayer is an act of religion and divine worship, confessing his power and his mercy : it celebrates his attributes, and confesses his glories, and reveres his person,

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 4.

² Ἀνάβασις ἡ εἰς τὸν Θεόν, ἐκ αἰτησις τῶν προσηκόντων παρὰ Θεοῦ. Damasc. lib. iii. Orthodox. fid.

and implores his aid, and gives thanks for his blessings. It is an act of humility, condescension, and dependence, expressed in the prostration of our bodies, and humiliation of our spirits. It is an act of charity, when we pray for others: it is an act of repentance, when it confesses and begs pardon for our sins; and exercises every grace, according to the design of the man and the matter of the prayer. So that there will be less need to amass arguments to invite us to this duty; every part is an excellence, and every end of it is a blessing, and every design is a motive, and every need is an impulsive to this holy office. Let us but remember how many needs we have, at how cheap a rate we may obtain their remedies, and yet how honourable the employment is to go to God with confidence, and to fetch our supplies with easiness and joy; and then, without further preface, we may address ourselves to the understanding of that duty by which we imitate the employment of angels and beatified spirits, by which we ascend to God in spirit while we remain on earth, and God descends on earth while he yet resides in heaven, sitting there on the throne of his kingdom.

2. Our first inquiry must be concerning the matter of prayers: for our desires are not to be the rule of our prayers, unless reason and religion be the rule of our desires. The old heathens prayed to their gods for such things which they were ashamed to name publicly before men; and these were their private prayers which they durst not, for their indecency or iniquity, make public. And, indeed, sometimes the best men ask of God things not unlawful in themselves, yet very hurtful to

them. And therefore, as by the Spirit of God and right reason we are taught in general what is lawful to be asked, so it is still to be submitted to God, when we have asked lawful things, to grant to us in kindness, or to deny us in mercy: after all the rules that can be given us, we not being able, in many instances, to judge for ourselves, unless also we could certainly pronounce concerning future contingencies. But the Holy Ghost being now sent upon the church, and the rule of Christ being left to his church, together with his form of prayer taught and prescribed to his disciples, we have sufficient instruction for the matter of our prayers, so far as concerns their lawfulness or unlawfulness: and the rule is easy, and of no variety. 1. For we are bound to pray for all things that concern our duty, all that we are bound to labour for; such as are glory and grace, necessary assistances of the Spirit, and rewards spiritual, heaven and heavenly things. 2. Concerning those things which we may with safety hope for, but are not matter of duty to us, we may lawfully testify our hope and express our desires by petition: but if in their particulars they are under no express promise, but only conveniences of our life and person, it is only lawful to pray for them under condition, that they may conform to God's will and our duty, as they are good, and placed in the best order of eternity. Therefore, 1. For spiritual blessings let our prayers be particularly importunate, perpetual, and persevering. 2. For temporal blessings let them be generally short, conditional, and modest. 3. And whatsoever things are of mixed nature, more spiritual than riches, and less necessary than graces, such as are gifts and exterior aids, we may

pray for them, as we may desire them and as we may expect them; that is, with more confidence and less restraint than in the matter of temporal requests, but with more reservedness and less boldness of petition than when we pray for the graces of sanctification. In the first case we are bound to pray: in the second, it is only lawful under certain conditions: in the third, it becomes to us an act of zeal, nobleness, and Christian prudence. But the matter of our prayers is best taught us in the form our Lord taught his disciples; which because it is short, mysterious, and, like the treasures of the Spirit, full of wisdom and latent senses, it is not improper to draw forth those excellencies which are intended and signified by every petition, that by so excellent an authority we may know what it is lawful to beg of God.

3. 'Our Father which art in heaven.' The address reminds us of many parts of our duty. 'If God be our Father, where is his fear' and reverence and obedience? 'If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham;' and 'ye are of your father the devil, for his works ye do.' Let us not dare to call him Father, if we be rebels and enemies: but if we be obedient, then we know he is our Father, and will give us a child's portion, and the inheritance of sons. But it is observable that Christ here speaking concerning private prayer, does describe it in a form of plural signification, to tell us, that we are to draw into the communication of our prayers all those who are confederated in the common relation of sons of the same father.¹ 'Which art in heaven,' tells us where our hopes

¹ Matt. xxiii. 9; Eph. iv. 6.

and hearts must be fixed, whither our desires and our prayers must tend.¹ *Sursum corda*; 'where our treasure is, there must our hearts be also.'

4. 'Hallowed be thy name;' that is, let thy name, thy essence, and glorious attributes be honoured and adored in all the world, believed by faith, loved by charity, celebrated with praises, thanked with eucharist: and let thy name be hallowed in us, as it is in itself. Thy name being called upon us, let us walk worthy of that calling; that 'our light may shine before men, that they, seeing our good works, may glorify thee our Father which art in heaven.' In order also to the sanctification of thy name, grant that all our praises, hymns, eucharistical remembrances and representments of thy glories may be useful, blessed, and effectual for the dispersing thy fame, and advancing thy honour over all the world. This is a direct and formal act of worshipping and adoration. The name of God is representative of God himself, and it signifies, Be thou worshipped and adored, be thou thanked and celebrated with honour and eucharist.

5. 'Thy kingdom come.' That is, as thou hast caused to be preached and published the coming of thy kingdom, the peace and truth, the revelation and glories of the gospel; so let it come verily and effectually to us and all the world; that thou mayest truly reign in our spirits, exercising absolute dominion, subduing all thine enemies, ruling in our faculties, in the understanding by faith, in the will by charity, in the passions by mortification, in the members by a chaste and

¹ *Nihil nos delectet in infimis, qui Patrem habemus in cœlis.*
Leo. Ser. de Ascen.--"Nothing should delight us below, who have a Father in heaven."

right use of the parts. And as it was more particularly and in the letter proper at the beginning of Christ's preaching, when he also taught the prayer, that God would hasten the coming of the gospel to all the world, so now also and ever it will be in its proportion necessary and pious to pray that it may come till, making greater progress in the world, extending itself where yet it is not, and intending it where it is already; that the kingdom of Christ may not only be in us in name, and form, and honourable appellatives, but in effect and power. This petition, in the first ages of Christianity, was not expounded to signify a prayer for Christ's second coming; because the gospel not being preached to all the world, they prayed for the delay of the day of judgment, that Christ's kingdom upon earth might have its proper increment: but since then every age, as it is more forward in time, so it is more earnest in desire to accomplish the intermedial prophecies, that the kingdom of God the Father might come in glories infinite. And, indeed, the kingdom of grace being in order to the kingdom of glory; this, as it is principally to be desired, so may possibly be intended chiefly. Which also is the more probable, because the address of this prayer being to God the Father, it is proper to observe, that the kingdom of grace, or of the gospel, is called the kingdom of the Son; and that of glory in the style of the Scripture, is the kingdom of the Father.¹ St. German, patriarch of Constantinople, expounds it with some little difference, but not ill: 'Thy kingdom come;' that is, let thy Holy Spirit come into us: for

¹ Colos. i. 13; Rev. i. 9; Matt. xiii. 41; Luke, vi. 20; Matt. xvi. 28.

'the kingdom of heaven is within us,' saith the holy Scripture. And so it intimates our desires that the promise of the Father, and the prophecies of old, and the Holy Ghost, the comforter, may come upon us. Let that 'anointing from above' descend upon us, whereby we may be anointed kings and priests, in a spiritual kingdom and priesthood, by a holy chrism.

6. 'Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.' That is, the whole economy and dispensation of thy providence be the guide of the world, and the measure of our desire; that we be patient in all accidents, conformable to God's will both in doing and in suffering, submitting to changes, and even to persecutions, and doing all God's will: which because without God's aid we cannot do, therefore we beg it of him by prayer; but by his aid we are confident we may do it in the manner of angelical obedience; that is, promptly, readily, cheerfully, and with all our faculties. Or thus: as the angels in heaven serve thee with harmony, concord, and peace, so let us all join in the service of thy Majesty with peace and purity, and love unfeigned; that as all the angels are in peace, and among them there is no persecutor and none persecuted, there is none afflicted, none assaulting or afflicting or assaulted, but all in sweetness and peaceable serenity glorifying thee; so let thy will be done on earth, by all the world, in peace and unity, in charity and tranquillity, that with one heart and one voice we may glorify thee, our universal Father, having in us nothing that may displease thee, having quitted all our own desires and pretensions, living in angelic conformity, our souls subject to thee, and our passions to our souls; that in earth

also thy will may be done as in the spirit and soul, which is a portion of the heavenly substance. These three petitions are addressed to God by way of adoration. In the first, the soul puts on the affections of a child, and divests itself of its own interest, offering itself up wholly to the designs and glorifications of God. In the second, it puts on the relation and duty of a subject to her legitimate prince, seeking the promotion of his regal interest. In the third, she puts on the affection of a spouse, loving the same love, and choosing the same object, and delighting in unions and conformities. The next part descends lower, and makes addresses to God in relation to our own necessities.

7. 'Give us this day our daily bread.'¹ That is, give unto us all that is necessary for the support of our lives, the bread of our necessity; so the Syriac interpreter reads it: 'This day give us the portion of bread, which is day by day necessary.' Give us the bread, or support, which we shall need all our lives; only this day minister our present part: for we pray for the necessary bread or maintenance, which God knows we shall need all our days: but that we 'be not careful for to-morrow,' we are taught to pray, not that it be all at once represented or deposited, but that God would minister it as we need it, how he pleases; but our needs are to be the measure of our desires, our desires must not make our needs; that we may be confident of the divine providence, and not at all covetous. For therefore God feeds his people with ex-

¹ ἡπίσσιος ἀβ ἐπιῶσα, quod diem posterum significat. Nazarenorum evangelium (referente S. Hieronymo) legit [panem crastinum;] S. Lucas [panem diurnum,] sive indies necessarium, τὸ καθ' ἡμέραν· πλὴν τὸς ἐτι κτησις σύμμετρος πρὸς ἐνδαιμονίαν.

temporary provisions, that by needing always they may learn to pray to him ; and by being still supplied they may learn to trust him for the future, and thank him for that is past, and rejoice in the present. So God rained down manna, giving them their daily portion ; and so all fathers and masters minister to their children and servants, giving them their proportion as they eat it, not the meat of a year at once ; and yet no child or servant fears want, if his parent or lord be good, and wise, and rich. And it is necessary for all to pray this prayer. The poor, because they want the bread, and have it not deposited but in the hands of God ; ‘ mercy ploughing the fields of heaven,’ (as Job’s expression is,) brings them corn ; and the cattle upon a thousand hills are God’s, and they find the poor man meat. The rich also need this prayer, because although they have the bread, yet they need the blessing ; and what they have now may perish, or be taken from them : and as preservation is a perpetual creation, so the continuing to rich men what God hath already bestowed is a continual giving it. Young men must pray, because their needs are like to be the longer ; and old men, because they are present. But all these are to pray but for the present ; that which in estimation of law is to be reckoned as imminent upon the present, and part of this state and condition. But it is great providence, and an unchristian spirit, for old men to heap up provisions, and load their sumpters still the more by how much their way is shorter. But there is also a bread which came down from heaven, a diviner nutriment of our souls, the food and wine of angels ; Christ himself, as he communicates himself in the expresses of his word and sacra-

ments : and if we be destitute of this bread, we are miserable and perishing people. We must pray that our souls also may feed upon those celestial viands prepared for us in the antepasts of the gospel, till the great and fuller meal of the supper of the Lamb shall answer all our prayers, and satisfy every desire.

8. ' Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.' Not only those sins of infirmity, invasion, and sudden surprise, which, like excrescences of luxuriant trees, adhere to many actions by inadvertency, and either natural weakness or accidental prejudice; but also all those great sins which were washed off from our souls, and the stain taken away in baptism; or when by choice and after the use of reason we gave up our names to Christ, when we first received the adoption of sons. For even those things were so pardoned, that we must for ever confess and glory in the divine mercy, and still ascertain it by performing what we then promised, and which were the conditions of our covenant. For although Christ hath taken off the guilt, yet still there remains the disreputation. And St. Paul calls himself ' the chiefest of sinners,' not referring to his present condition, but to his former persecuting the church of God, which is one of the greatest crimes in the world, and for ever he asked pardon for it; and so must we, knowing that they may return: if we shake off the yoke of Christ, and break his cords from us, the bands of the covenant evangelical, the sins will return so as to undo us. And this we pray with a tacit obligation to forgive: for so only, and upon that condition we beg pardon to be given or continued respectively; that is, as we from our

hearts forgive them that did us injury in any kind, never entertaining so much as a thought of revenge; but contrariwise, loving them that did us wrong; for so we beg that God should do to us. And, therefore, it is but a lesser revenge to say, I will forgive, but I will never have to do with him: for if he become an object of charity, we must have to do with him to relieve him; because he needs prayers, we must have to do with him, and pray for him; and to refuse his society when it is reasonably and innocently offered, is to deny that to him which Christians have been taught to deny only to persons excommunicate, to persons under punishment; i. e. to persons not yet forgiven. And we shall have but an evil portion, if God should forgive our sins, and should not also love us, and do us grace, and bestow benefits upon us. So we must forgive others; so God forgives us.

9. 'And lead us not into temptation.' St. Cyprian, out of an old Latin copy, reads it, 'Suffer us not to be led into temptation;' that is, suffer us not to be overcome by temptation. And therefore we are bound to prevent our access to such temptation whose very approximation is dangerous, and the contact is irregular and evil; such as are temptations of the flesh. Yet in other temptations the assault sometimes makes confident, and hardens a resolution. For some spirits, who are softened by fair usages, are steeled and emboldened by a persecution. But of what nature soever the temptations be, whether they be such whose approach a Christian is bound to fear, or such which are the certain lot of Christians, (such are troubles and persecutions, into which when we enter we must count it joy,) yet we are to pray that we enter not into the

possession of the temptation, that we be not overcome by it.

10. 'But deliver us from evil.' From the assaults or violence of evil; from the wicked one, who not only presents us with objects, but heightens our concupiscence, and makes us imaginative, fantastical, and passionate; setting on the temptation, making the lust active, and the man full of appetite, and the appetite full of energy and power: therefore deliver us from the evil one, who is interested as an enemy in every hostility and in every danger. Let not Satan have any power or advantage over us; and let not evil men prevail upon us in our danger, much less to our ruin. Make us 'safe under the covering of thy wings' against all fraud and every violence, that no temptation destroy our hopes, or break our strength, or alter our state, or overthrow our glories. In these last petitions, which concern ourselves, the soul hath affections proper to her own needs; as in the former proportion, to God's glory. In the first of these, the affection of a poor, indigent, and necessitous beggar; in the second, of a delinquent and penitent servant; in the last, of a person in affliction or danger. And after all this the reason of our confidence is derived from God.

11. 'For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever.' That is, these things which we beg are for the honour of thy kingdom, for the manifestation of thy power, and the glory of thy name and mercies. And it is an express doxology or adoration, which is apt and fit to conclude all our prayers and addresses to God.

12. These are the generals and great treasures of matter to which all our present or sudden needs

are reducible. And when we make our prayers more minute and particular, if the instance be in matter of duty and merely spiritual, there is no danger: but when our needs are temporal, or we are transported with secular desires, all descending to particulars is a confining the divine providence, a judging for ourselves, a begging a temptation oftentimes, sometimes a mischief; and to beg beyond the necessities of our life, is a mutiny against that providence which assigns to Christians no more but food and raiment for their own use; all other excrescences of possessions being entrusted to the rich man's dispensation only as to a steward, and he shall be accountable for the coat that lies by him as the portion of moths, and for the shoes which are the spoils of mouldiness, and the contumely of plenty. 'Grant me, O Lord, not what I desire, but what is profitable for me.' For sometimes we desire that which in the succeeding event of things will undo us. This rule is in all things that concern ourselves. There is some little difference in the affairs and necessities of other men: for, provided we submit to the divine providence, and pray for good things for others only with a tacit condition, so far as they are good and profitable in order to the best ends, though we be particular, there is no covetousness in it; there maybe indiscretion in the particular, but in the general, no fault, because it is a prayer and a design of charity. For kings, and all that are in authority, we may yet enlarge, and pray for a peaceable reign, true lieges, strong armies, victories and fair success in their just wars, health, long life, and riches; because they have a capacity which private persons have not. And

whatsoever is good for single persons, and whatsoever is apt for their uses as public persons, all that we may and must pray for ; either particularly, for so we may, or in general significations, for so we must at least : ‘ That we may lead a godly, peaceable, and quiet life, in all godliness and honesty ;’ that is St. Paul’s rule, and the prescribed measure and purpose of such prayers. And in this instance of kings, we may pray for defeating all the king’s enemies, such as are truly such. And we have no other restraint upon us in this, but that we keep our desires confined within the limits of the end we are commanded ; that is, so far to confound the king’s enemies, that he may do his duty, and we do ours, and receive the blessing ; ever as much as we can to distinguish the malice from the person. But if the enemies themselves will not also separate what our intentions distinguish, that is, if they will not return to their duty, then let the prayers operate as God pleases, we must be zealous for the end of the king’s authority and peaceable government. By enemies I mean rebels or invaders, tyrants and usurpers ; for in other ways there are many other considerations not proper for this place.

13. The next consideration will be concerning the manner ; I mean both the manner of our persons, and the manner of our prayers ; that is, with what conditions we ought to approach to God, and with what circumstances the prayers may or ought to be performed. The conditions to make our prayers holy and certain to prevail are, first, That we live good lives, endeavouring to conform by holy obedience to all the divine commandments

This condition is expressly recorded by St. John : ‘ Beloved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God ; and whatsoever we ask of him, we shall obtain.’¹ And St. James affirms, that ‘ the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.’² And our blessed Saviour, limiting the confidence of our prayers for forgiveness to our charity and forgiving others, plainly tells us, that the uncharitable and unrighteous person shall not be heard. And the blind man in the gospel understood well what he said : ‘ Now we know that God heareth not sinners : but if any man be a worshipper, and doth his will, him he heareth.’³ And it was so decreed and resolved a point in the doctrine of their religion, that it was a proverbial saying. And although this discourse of the blind man was of a restrained occasion, and signified, if Christ had been a false prophet, God would not have attested his sermons with the power of miracles ; yet in general also he had been taught by David, ‘ If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer.’ And, therefore, when men ‘ pray in every place, (for so they are commanded,) let them lift up pure hands without anger and contention.’⁴ And, indeed, although every sin entertained with a free choice and a full understanding is an obstruction to our prayers, yet the special sin of uncharitableness makes the biggest cloud, and is, in the proper matter of it, an indisposition for us to receive mercy. For he who is softened with apprehension of his own needs of mercy, will be tender-hearted towards his brother ;

¹ 1 John, iii. 21, 22. ² James, v. 16. ³ John, ix. 31.

⁴ Psal. lxxvi. 18 ; 1 Tim. ii. 8.

and therefore he that hath no bowels here, can have no aptness there to receive or heartily to hope for mercy. But this rule is to be understood of persons who persevere in the habit and remanent affections of sin: so long as they entertain sin with love, complacency, and joy, they are in a state of enmity with God, and therefore in no fit disposition to receive pardon and the entertainment of friends. But penitent sinners and returning souls, laden and grieved with their heavy pressures, are, next to holy innocents, the aptest persons in the world to be heard in their prayers for pardon; but they are in no further disposition to large favours, and more eminent charities. A sinner in the beginning of his penance will be heard for himself, and yet also he needs the prayers of holy persons more signally than others; for he hath but some very few degrees of dispositions to reconciliation; but in prayers of intercession or mediation for others, only holy and very pious persons are fit to be interested. All men, as matter of duty, must pray for all men: but in the great necessities of a prince, of a church, or kingdom, or of a family, or in a great danger and calamity to a single person, only a Noah, a David, a Daniel, a Jeremiab, an Enoch, or Job are fit and proportioned advocates. God so requires holiness in us that our prayers may be accepted, that he entertains them in several degrees according to the degrees of our sanctity; to fewer or more purposes, according as we are little or great in the kingdom of heaven. As for those irregular donations of good things which wicked persons ask for and have, they are either no mercies, but instruments of cursing and crime; or else they are designs of grace, intended to convince

them of their unworthiness; and so, if they become not instruments of their conversion, they are aggravations of their ruin.

14. Secondly, The second condition I have already explained in the description of the matter of our prayers. For although we may lawfully ask for whatsoever we need, and this leave is consigned to us in those words of our blessed Saviour, 'Your heavenly Father knoweth what you have need of;' yet because God's providence walks in the great deep, that is, his footsteps are in the water, and leave no impression, no former act of grace becomes a precedent that he will give us that in kind, which then he saw convenient, and therefore gave us; and now he sees to be inconvenient, and therefore does deny. Therefore in all things, but what are matter of necessary and mingled duty, we must send up our prayers; but humility mortification, and conformity to the divine will must attend for an answer, and bring back, not what the public embassy pretends, but what they have in private instructions to desire; accounting that for the best satisfaction which God pleases, not what I have either unnecessarily, or vainly, or sinfully desired.

15. Thirdly, When our persons are disposed by sanctity, and the matter of our prayers is hallowed by prudence and religious intendments then we are bound to entertain a full persuasion and confident hope that God will hear us. 'What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall obtain them,' said our blessed Saviour. And St. James taught from that oracle,

‘ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask it of God: but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed to and fro.’¹ Meaning, that when there is no fault in the matter of our prayers, but that we ask things pleasing to God, and there is no indisposition and hostility in our persons and manners between God and us, then to doubt were to distrust God: for all being right on our parts, if we doubt the issue, the defailance must be on that part, which to suspect were infinite impiety. But after we have done all we can, if, out of humility and fear that we are not truly disposed, we doubt of the issue, it is a modesty which will not at all discommend our persons, nor impede the event; provided we at no hand suspect either God’s power or veracity. Putting trust in God is an excellent advantage to our prayers: ‘ I will deliver him, saith God, ‘ because he hath put his trust in me. And yet distrusting ourselves, and suspecting our own dispositions, as it pulls us back in our actual confidence of the event, so, because it abates nothing of our confidence in God, it prepares us to receive the reward of humility, and not to lose the praise of a holy trusting in the Almighty.

16. These conditions are essential: some other there are which are incidents and accessories, but at no hand to be neglected. And the first is actual or habitual attention to our prayers, which we are to procure with moral and severe endeavours, that we desire not God to hear us when we do not hear ourselves.² To which purpose we must avoid, as much as our duty will permit us, multiplicity of

¹ James, i. 5, 6.

² Eccus. xxxv. 17; Psalm cii. 17.

cares and exterior employments. For a river cut into many rivulets, divides also its strength, and grows contemptible and apt to be forded by a lamb, and drunk up by a summer-sun: so is the spirit of man, busied in variety and divided in itself; it abates its fervour, cools into indifferency, and becomes trifling by its dispersion and inadvertency. Aquinas was once asked, with what compendium a man might best become learned. He answered, "By reading of one book:" meaning, that an understanding entertained with several objects is intent upon neither, and profits not. And so it is when we pray to God; if the cares of the world intervene, they choke our desires into an indifferency, and suppress the flame into a smoke, and strangle the spirit. But this being an habitual carelessness, an intemperance of spirit, is an enemy to an habitual attention, and therefore is highly criminal, and makes our prayers to be but the labour of the lips, because our desires are lessened by the remanent affections of the world. But besides an habitual attention in our prayers that is, a desire in general of all that our prayers pretend to in particular, there is also for the accommodation, and to facilitate the access of our prayers, required, that we attend actually to the words, or sense of every collect or petition. To this we must contend with prayer, with actual dereliction and seposition of all our other affairs, though innocent and good in other kinds, by a present spirit. And the use of it is, that such attention is an actual conversing with God; it occasions the exercise of many acts of virtue, it increases zeal and fervency, and by reflection enkindles love and holy desires. And although there is no rule to determine the

degree of our actual attention, and it is ordinarily impossible never to wander with a thought, or to be interrupted with a sudden emission into our spirit in the midst of prayers; yet our duty is, by mortification of our secular desires, by suppression of all our irregular passions, by reducing them to indifferency, by severity of spirit, by enkindling our holy appetites and desires of holy things, by silence and meditation and repose, to get as forward in this excellency as we can. To which also we may be very much helped by ejaculatory prayers and short breathings: in which as, by reason of their short abode upon the spirit, there is less fear of diversion, so also they may so often be renewed, that nothing of the devotion may be unspent or expire for want of oil to feed and entertain the flame. But the determination of the case of conscience is this: 1. Habitual attention is absolutely necessary in our prayers; that is, it is altogether our duty to desire of God all that we pray for, though our mind be not actually attending to the form of words; and therefore all worldly desires, that are inordinate, must be rescinded, that we may more earnestly attend on God than on the world. He that prays to God to give him the gift of chastity, and yet secretly wishes rather for an opportunity of lust, and desires God would not hear him, (as St. Austin confesses himself in his youth,) that man sins for want of holy and habitual desires; he prays only with his lips, what he in no sense attests in his heart. 2. Actual attention to our prayers is also necessary, not ever to avoid sin, but that the present prayer become effectual. He that means to feast, and to get thanks of God, must invite the poor: and yet he that invites the rich, in that he

sins not, though he hath no reward of God for that. So that prayer perishes to which the man gives no degree of actual attention: for the prayer is as if it were not; it is no more than a dream, or an act of custom and order, nothing of devotion; and so accidentally becomes a sin, (I mean there where and in what degrees it is avoidable,) by taking God's name in vain. 3. It is not necessary to the prevalency of the prayer, that the spirit actually accompany every clause or word; if it says a hearty Amen, or in any part of it attests the whole, it is such an attention which the present condition of most men will sometimes permit. 4. A wandering of the spirit through carelessness, or any vice, or inordinate passion, is in that degree criminal as is the cause, and it is heightened by the greatness of the interruption. 5. It is only excused by our endeavours to cure it, and by our after acts, either of sorrow or repetition of the prayer, and reinforcing the intention. And certainly, if we repeat our prayer, in which we have observed our spirits too much to wander, and resolve still to repeat it, (as our opportunities permit,) it may in a good degree defeat the purpose of the enemy, when his own arts shall return upon his head, and the wandering of our spirits be made the occasion of a prayer, and the parent of a new devotion. 6. Lastly, according to the degrees of our actual attention, so our prayers are more or less perfect: a present spirit being a great instrument and testimony of wisdom, and apt to many great purposes; and our continual abode with God being a great endearment of our persons by increasing the affections.

17. Secondly, The second accessory is intention

of spirit, or fervency; such as was that of our blessed Saviour, who prayed to his Father with strong cries and loud petitions, not clamorous in language, but strong in spirit. St. Paul also, when he was pressed with a strong temptation, prayed thrice; that is, earnestly; and St. James affirms this to be of great value and efficacy to the obtaining blessings: 'The effectual fervent prayer of a just person avails much;' and Elias, though a man of like passions, yet by earnest prayer he obtained rain or drought, according as he desired. Now this is properly produced by the greatness of our desire of heavenly things, our true value and estimate of religion, our sense of present pressures, our fears; and it hath some accidental increases by the disposition of our body, the strength of fancy, and the tenderness of spirit, and assiduity of the dropping of religious discourses; and in all men is necessary to be so great, as that we prefer heaven and religion before the world, and desire them rather, with the choice of our wills and understanding. Though there cannot always be that degree of sensual, pungent, or delectable affections towards religion, as towards the desires of nature and sense; yet ever we must prefer celestial objects, restraining the appetites of the world, lest they be immoderate, and heightening the desires of grace and glory, lest they become indifferent, and the fire upon the altar of incense be extinct. But the greater zeal and fervour of desire we have in our prayers, the sooner and the greater will the return of the prayer be, if the prayer be for spiritual objects. For other things, our desires must be according to our needs, not by a value derived from the nature of the thing, but the usefulness it

is of to us in order to our greater and better purposes.

18. Thirdly, Of the same consideration it is that we 'persevere and be importunate'¹ in our prayers, by repetition of our desires, and not remitting either our affections or our offices, till God, overcome by our importunity, give a gracious answer. Jacob wrestled with the angel all night, and would not dismiss him till he had given him a blessing. 'Let me alone,' saith God; as if he felt a pressure and burden lying upon him by our prayers, or could not quit himself, nor depart, unless we give him leave. And since God is detained by our prayers, and we may keep him as long as we please, and that he will not go away till we leave speaking to him; he that will dismiss him till he hath his blessing knows not the value of his benediction, or understands not the energy and power of a persevering prayer. And to this purpose Christ 'spake a parable, that men ought always to pray, and not faint.'² 'Praying without ceasing,' St. Paul calls it; that is, with continual addresses, frequent interpolations, never ceasing the renewing the request till I obtain my desire. For it is not enough to recommend our desires to God with one hearty prayer, and then forget to ask him any more; but so long as our needs continue, so long in all times, and upon all occasions, to renew and repeat our desires: and this is praying continually. Just as the widow did to the unjust judge; she never left going to him, she troubled him every day with her clamorous suit; so must we pray always; that is, every day, and many times every

¹ Τῷ προσευχῷ προσκαρτεροῦντες, Rom. xii. 12.

² Luke, xviii. 1

day, according to our occasions and necessities, or our devotion and zeal, or as we are determined by the customs and laws of a church; never giving over through weariness or distrust, often renewing our desires by a continual succession of devotions, returning at certain and determinate periods. For God's blessings, though they come infallibly, yet not always speedily. Saving only that it is a blessing to be delayed, that we may increase our desire, and renew our prayers, and do acts of confidence and patience, and ascertain and increase the blessing when it comes. For we do not more desire to be blessed, than God does to hear us importunate for blessing; and he weighs every sigh, and bottles up every tear, and records every prayer, and looks through the cloud with delight to see us upon our knees; and when he sees his time, his light breaks through it, and shines upon us. Only we must not make our accounts for God according to the course of the sun, but the measures of eternity. He measures us by our needs, and we must not measure him by our impatience. 'God is not slack, as some men count slackness,' saith the apostle; and we find it so, when we have waited long. All the elapsed time is no part of the tediousness; the trouble of it is passed with itself: and for the future, we know not how little it may be; for aught we know we are already entered into the cloud that brings the blessing. However, pray till it comes; for we shall never miss to receive our desire, if it be holy, or innocent, and safe, or else we are sure of a great reward of our prayers.

19. And in this so determined, there is no danger of blasphemy or vain repetitions. For those repetitions are vain which repeat the words, not

the devotion; which renew the expression, and not the desire: and he that may pray the same prayer to-morrow which he said to-day, may pray the same at night which he said in the morning, and the same at noon which he said at night; and so in all the hours of prayer, and in all the opportunities of devotion. Christ, in his agony, 'went thrice, and said the same words,' but he had intervals for repetition; and his need and his devotion pressed him forward. And whenever our needs do so, it is all one if we say the same words or others, so we express our desire, and tell our needs, and beg the remedy. In the same office and the same hour of prayer to repeat the same things often hath but few excuses to make it reasonable, and fewer to make it pious. But to think that the prayer is better for such repetition, is the fault which the holy Jesus condemned in the Gentiles, who in their hymns would say a name over an hundred times. But in this we have no rule to determine us in numbers and proportion, but right reason. God loves not any words the more for being said often; and those repetitions which are unreasonable in prudent estimation, cannot in any account be esteemed pious. But where a reasonable cause allows the repetition, the same cause that makes it reasonable, makes it also proper for devotion. He that speaks his needs, and expresses nothing but his fervour and greatness of desire, cannot be vain or long in his prayers. He that speaks impertinently, that is, unreasonably and without desires, is long, though he speak but two syllables. He that thinks for speaking much to be heard the sooner, thinks God is delighted in the labour of the lips. But when

reason is the guide, and piety is the rule, and necessity is the measure, and desire gives the proportion, let the prayer be very long: he that shall blame it for its length, must proclaim his disrelish both of reason and religion, his despite of necessity, and contempt of zeal.

20. As a part and instance of our importunity in prayer, it is usually reckoned and advised, that in cases of great, sudden, and violent need, we corroborate our prayers with a vow of doing something holy and religious in an uncommanded instance, something to which God had not formerly bound our duty, though fairly invited our will: or else, if we choose a duty in which we were obliged, then to vow the doing of it in a more excellent manner, with a greater inclination of the will, with a more fervent repetition of the acts, with some more noble circumstance, with a fuller assent of the understanding; or else adding a new promise to our old duty, to make it become more necessary to us, and to secure our duty. In this case, as it requires great prudence and caution in the susception, lest what we piously intend obtain a present blessing, and lay a lasting snare; so if it be prudent in the manner, holy in the matter, useful in the consequence, and safe in all the circumstances of the person, it is an endearing us and our prayer to God by the increase of duty and charity, and therefore a more probable way of making our prayers gracious and acceptable. And the religion of vows was not only hallowed by the example of Jacob at Bethel, of Hannah praying for a child and God hearing her, of David vowing a temple to God, and made regular and safe by the rules and cautions in Moses's law, but left by our blessed

Saviour in the same constitution he found it, he having innovated nothing in the matter of vows. And it was practised accordingly in the instance of St. Paul at Cenchrea; of Ananias and Sapphira, who vowed their possessions to the use of the church; and of the widows in the apostolical age, who therefore vowed to remain in the state of widowhood, because concerning them who married after the entry into religion St. Paul says, 'they have broken their first faith.' And such were they of whom our blessed Saviour affirms, 'that some make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven;' that is, such who promise to God a life of chastity. And concerning the success of prayer so seconded with a prudent and religious vow, besides the instances of Scripture,¹ we have the perpetual experience and witness of all Christendom: and in particular our Saxon kings have been remarked for this part of importunity in their own chronicles. Oswy got a great victory with unlikely forces against Penda the Dane, after his earnest prayer, and an appendant vow: and Ceadwalla obtained of God power to recover the Isle of Wight from the hands of infidels, after he had prayed, and promised to return the fourth part of it to be employed in the proper services of God and of religion. This can have no objection or suspicion in it among wise and disabused persons; for it can be nothing but an increasing and a renewed act of duty, or devotion, or zeal, or charity, and the importunity of prayer acted in a more vital and real expression.

21. All else that is to be considered concerning prayer is extrinsical and accidental to it. First,

¹ Eccles. v. 4, 5; Psal. cxxxii. 1, 2; Deut. xxiii. 21; Acts, xviii. 18.

prayer is public or private; in the communion or society of saints, or in our closets: these prayers have less temptation to vanity; the other have more advantages of charity, example, fervour, and energy. In public offices we avoid singularity, in the private we avoid hypocrisy. Those are of more edification, these of great retiredness and silence of spirit: those serve the needs of all the world in the first intention, and our own by consequence; these serve our own needs first, and the public only by a secondary intention: these have more pleasure, they more duty: these are the best instruments of repentance, where our confessions may be more particular, and our shame less scandalous; the other are better for eucharist and instruction, for edification of the church and glorification of God.

22. Secondly, The posture of bodies in prayer had as great variety as the ceremonies and civilities of several nations came to. The Jews most commonly prayed standing: so did the Pharisee and the Publican in the temple;¹ so did the primitive Christians in all their greater festivals and intervals of jubilee: in their penances they kneeled. The monks in Cassian sat when they sang the Psalter. And in every country, whatsoever by the

¹ Nehem. ix. 5; Mark. xi. 25; Luke, xviii. 11.

Adoraturi sedeant, dixit Numa Pompilius apud Plutarch. id est, sint sedato animo. Et καθῆσθαι προσκυνήσοντας dictum proverbialiter ad eundem sensum. Vide S. Aug. lib. iii. c. 5, de Cura pro mortuis.

Depositisque suis ornamentis pretiosis,
Simplicis et tenuis fruitur velamine vestis,
Inter sacros noctis venerabilis hymnos
Intrans nudatis templi sacra limina plantis
Et prolo sacram vultu prostratus ad aram;
Corpus frigoreæ sociavit nobile terræ.

S. Rosweid de Hen. Imper. et de Othon.

custom of the nation was a symbol of reverence and humility, of silence and attention, of gravity and modesty, that posture they translated to their prayers. But in all nations bowing the head, that is, a laying down our glory at the feet of God, was the manner of worshippers. And this was always the more humble and the lower, as their devotion was higher; and was very often expressed by prostration, or lying flat upon the ground: and this all nations did and all religions. Our deportment ought to be grave, decent, humble, apt for adoration, apt to edify: and when we address ourselves to prayer, not instantly to leap into the office, as the judges of the Areopage into their sentence, without preface or preparatory affections; but, considering in what presence we speak, and to what purposes, let us balance our fervour with reverential fear: and when we have done, not rise from the ground as if we vaulted, or were glad we had done; but, as we begin with desires of assistance, so end with desires of pardon and acceptance, concluding our longer offices with a shorter mental prayer of more private reflection and reverence, designing to mend what we have done amiss, or to give thanks and proceed if we did well, and according to our powers.

23. Thirdly, In private prayers it is permitted to every man to speak his prayers, or only to think them, which is a speaking to God. Vocal or mental prayer is ad one to God, but in order to us they have their several advantages. The sacrifice of the heart and the calves of the lips make up a holocaust to God. But words are the arrest of the desires, and keep the spirit fixed, and in less permissions to wander from fancy to fancy: and

mental prayer is apt to make the greater fervour, if it wander not. Our office is more determined by words; but we then actually think of God when our spirits only speak. Mental prayer, when our spirits wander, is like a watch standing still because the spring is down; wind it up again, and it goes on regularly: but in vocal prayer, if the words run on and the spirit wanders, the clock strikes false, the hand points not to the right hour, because something is in disorder, and the striking is nothing but noise. In mental prayer we confess God's omniscience; in vocal prayer we call the angels to witness. In the first, our spirits rejoice in God; in the second, the angels rejoice in us. Mental prayer is the best remedy against lightness and indifferency of affections; but vocal prayer is the aptest instrument of communion. That is more angelical, but yet fittest for the state of separation and glory; this is but human, but it is apter for our present constitution. They have their distinct properties, and may be used according to several accidents, occasions, or dispositions.

THE PRAYER.

I.

O holy and eternal God, who hast commanded us to pray unto thee in all our necessities, and to give thanks unto thee for all our instances of joy and blessing, and to adore thee in all thy attributes and communications, thy own glories, and thy eternal mercies; give unto me, thy servant, the spirit of prayer and supplication, that I may understand what is good for me, that I may desire regularly, and choose the best things, that I may conform to thy will, and submit to thy disposing, relinquishing my own

affections and imperfect choice. Sanctify my heart and spirit, that I may sanctify thy name, and that I may be gracious and accepted in thine eyes. Give me the humility and obedience of a servant, that I may also have the hope and confidence of a Son, making humble and confident addresses to the throne of grace; that in all my necessities I may come to thee for aids, and may trust in thee for a gracious answer, and may receive satisfaction and supply.

II.

Give me a sober, diligent, and recollected spirit in my prayers, neither choked with cares, nor scattered by levity, nor discomposed by passion, nor estranged from thee by inadvertency, but fixed fast to thee by the indissoluble bands of a great love and a pregnant devotion. And let the beams of thy Holy Spirit descending from above enlighten and enkindle it with great fervours, and holy importunity, and unwearied industry; that I may serve thee, and obtain thy blessing by the assiduity and zeal of perpetual religious offices. Let my prayers come before thy presence, and the lifting up of my hands be a daily sacrifice, and let the fires of zeal not go out by night or day; but unite my prayers to the intercession of thy holy Jesus, and to a communion of those offices which angels and beatified souls do pay before the throne of the Lamb, and at the celestial altar: that my prayers, being hallowed by the merits of Christ, and being presented in the phial of the saints, may ascend thither where thy glory dwells, and from whence mercy and eternal benediction descends upon the church.

III.

Lord, change my sins into penitential sorrow, my sorrow to petition, my petition to eucharist; that my prayers may be consummate in the adorations of eternity, and the glorious participation of the end of our hopes and prayers, the fulness of never-failing charity and fruition of thee, O holy and eternal God, blessed Trinity, and mysterious Unity, to whom all honour, and worship, and thanks, and confession, and glory, be ascribed for ever and ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE XIII.

Of the third additional Precept of Christ, viz.

Of the Manner of Fasting.

1. FASTING being directed in order to other ends, as for mortifying the body, taking away that fuel which ministers to the flame of lust, or else relating to what is past, when it becomes an instrument of repentance, and a part of that revenge which St. Paul affirms to be the effect of godly sorrow, is to take its estimate for value, and its rules for practice, by analogy and proportion to those ends to which it does co-operate. Fasting before the holy sacrament is a custom of the Christian church, and derived to us from great antiquity; and the use of it is, that we might express honour to the mystery, by suffering nothing to enter into our mouths before the symbols. Fasting to this purpose is not an act of mortification, but of reverence and venerable esteem of the instruments of religion, and so is to be understood. And thus also, not to eat or drink before we have said our morning devotions, is esteemed to be a religious decency, and preference of prayer and God's honour before our temporal satisfaction, a symbolical attestation that we esteem the words of God's mouth more than our necessary food. It is like the zeal of Abraham's servant, who would not eat nor drink till he had done his errand: and in pursuance of this act of religion, by the tradition of their father it grew to be a custom of the Jewish nation, that they should not eat bread upon their solemn festi-

vals before the sixth hour; that they might first celebrate the rites of their religious solemnities, before they gave satisfaction to the lesser desires of nature. And therefore it was a reasonable satisfaction of the objection made by the assembly against the inspired apostles in pentecost, 'These are not drunk, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day:' meaning, that the day being festival, they knew it was not lawful for any of the nation to break their fast before the sixth hour; for else they might easily have been drunk by the third hour, if they had taken their morning's drink in a freer proportion. And true it is that religion snatches even at little things; and as it teaches us to observe all the great commandments and significations of duty, so it is not willing to pretermit any thing which, although by its greatness it cannot of itself be considerable, yet by its smallness may become a testimony of the greatness of the affection, which would not omit the least minutes of love and duty. And therefore, when the Jews were scandalized at the disciples of our Lord for rubbing the ears of corn on the sabbath-day, as they walked through the fields early in the morning, they intended their reproof, not for breaking the rest of the day, but the solemnity; for eating before the public devotions were finished. Christ excused it by the necessity and charity of the act; they were hungry, and therefore, having so great need, they might lawfully do it; meaning, that such particles and circumstances of religion are not to be neglected, unless where greater cause of charity or necessities does supervene.

2. But when fasting is in order to greater and more concerning purposes, it puts on more reli-

gion, and becomes a duty, according as it is necessary or highly conducing to such ends, to the promoting of which we are bound to contribute all our skill and faculties. Fasting is principally operative to mortification of carnal appetites, to which feasting and full tables do minister aptness and power and inclinations. 'When I fed them to the full, then they committed adultery, and assembled by troops in the harlots' houses.' And if we observe all our own vanities, we shall find that upon every sudden joy, or a prosperous accident, or an opulent fortune, or a pampered body, and highly spirited and inflamed, we are apt to rashness, levities, inconsiderate expressions, scorn, and pride, idleness, wantonness, curiosity, niceness, and impatience. But fasting is one of those afflictions which reduces our body to want, our spirits to soberness, our condition to sufferance, our desires to abstinence and customs of denial; and so, by taking off the inundations of sensuality, leaves the enemies within in a condition of being easilier subdued. Fasting directly advances towards chastity; and by consequence and indirect powers to patience, and humility, and indifferency. But then it is not the fast of a day that can do this; it is not an act, but a state of fasting, that operates to mortification. A perpetual temperance and frequent abstinence may abate such proportions of strength and nutriment, as to procure a body mortified and lessened in desires. And thus St. Paul kept his body under, using severities to it for the taming its rebellions and distemperatures. And St. Jerome reports of St. Hilarion,¹ that when he had

¹ Hieron. in Vita S. Hilarion.

fasted much, and used coarse diet, and found his lust too strong for such austerities, he resolved to increase it to the degree of mastery, lessening his diet and increasing his hardship, till he should rather think of food than wantonness. And many times the fastings of some men are ineffectual, because they promise themselves cure too soon, or make too gentle applications, or put less proportions into their antidotes. I have read of a maiden, that, seeing a young man much transported with her love, and that he ceased not to importune her with all the violent pursuits that passion could suggest, told him, she had made a vow to fast forty days with bread and water, of which she must discharge herself, before she could think of corresponding to any other desire; and desired of him, as a testimony of his love, that he also would be a party in the same vow. The young man undertook it, that he might give probation of his love; but because he had been used to a delicate and nice kind of life, in twenty days he was so weakened that he thought more of death than love; and so got a cure for his intemperance, and was wittily cozened into remedy. But St. Jerome's counsel in this question is most reasonable, not allowing violent and long fasts, and then returns to an ordinary course; for these are too great changes of diet to consist with health, and too sudden and transient to obtain a permanent and natural effect: but "a belly always hungry,"¹ a table never full, a meal little and necessary, no extravagance, no freer repast, this is a state of fasting which will be found to be of best avail to suppress pungent lusts and rebellious de-

¹ *Parcus cibus, et venter semper euriens triduana jejunia superant.* S. Hieron. ep. 6. ad Demetriad.

sires. And it were well to help this exercise with the assistances of such austerities which teach patience, and ingenerate a passive fortitude, and accustom us to a despite of pleasures, and which are consistent with our health: for if fasting be left to do the work alone, it may chance either to spoil the body or not to spoil the lust. Hard lodging, uneasy garments, laborious postures of prayer, journeys on foot, sufferance of cold, paring away the use of ordinary solaces, denying every pleasant appetite, rejecting the most pleasant morsels; these are in the rank of bodily exercises, which though (as St. Paul says) of themselves 'they profit little,' yet they accustom us to acts of self-denial in exterior instances, and are not useless to the designs of mortifying carnal and sensual lusts. They have 'a proportion of wisdom'¹ with these cautions; viz. in will-worship; that is, in voluntary susception, when they are not imposed as necessary religion:² in humility; that is, without contempt of others that use them not: 'in neglecting of the body;' that is, when they are done for discipline and mortification, that the flesh by such handlings and rough usages become less satisfied and more despised.

3. As fasting hath respect to the future, so also to the present; and so it operates in giving assistance to prayer. There is a kind of devil that is not to be ejected but by prayer and fasting; that is, prayer elevated and made intense by a defecate and pure spirit, not laden with the burden of meat and vapours. St. Basil affirms, that there are certain

¹ Colos. ii. 23. Λόγον σοφίας.

² Εἴ τις ἐπίσκοπος, &c. γάμος, κὶ κρεῶν, κὶ οἶνε ἐν τῇ ἀσκησιν, ἀλλὰ ἰὰ βέλδυριαν ἀπέχεται, ἢ διορθῶσθω, ἢ καθαιρείσθω. Can. Apost. 50.

angels deputed by God to minister, and to describe all such in every church who mortify themselves by fasting;¹ as if paleness and a meagre visage were that mark in the forehead which the angel observed, when he signed the saints in Jerusalem to escape the judgment. Prayer is the wings of the soul, and fasting is the wings of prayer.² Tertullian calls it, the nourishment of prayer.³ But this is a discourse of Christian philosophy; and he that chooses to do any act of spirit, or understanding, or attention after a full meal, will then perceive that abstinence had been the better disposition to any intellectual and spiritual action. And therefore the church of God ever joined fasting to their more solemn offices of prayer. The apostles fasted and prayed 'when they laid hands,' and invoked the Holy Ghost upon Saul and Barnabas.⁴ And these also, 'when they had prayed with fasting, ordained elders in the churches of Lystra and Iconium.'⁵ And the vigils of every holiday tell us, that the devotion of the festival is promoted by the fast of the vigils.

4. But when fasting relates to what is past, it becomes an instrument of repentance, it is a punitive and an afflictive action, an effect of godly sorrow, a testimony of contrition, 'a judging of ourselves,' and chastening our bodies, 'that we be not

¹ Serm. v. de Jejun.

² Jejunium animæ nostræ alimentum, leves ei pennas produens. S. Bern. Serm. in Vigil. S. Andreae.

³ Ἀκριδᾶς ἐσθίοντα Ἰωάννην, καὶ πτεροφύσαντα τὴν ψυχὴν. dixit S. Chrysost.

⁴ Jejunium preces alere, lacrymari, et mugire noctes diēs ne ad Dominum. Tertull.

⁵ Acts, xiii. 3.

⁶ Ibid. xiv. 23.

judged of the Lord.'¹ The fast of the Ninevites, and the fast the prophet Joel calls for, and the discipline of the Jews in the rites of expiation, proclaim this usefulness of fasting in order to repentance. And indeed it were a strange repentance that had no sorrow in it, and a stranger sorrow that had no affliction; but it were the strangest scene of affliction in the world, when the sad and afflicted person shall eat freely, and delight himself, and to the banquets of a full table serve up the chalice of tears and sorrow, and no bread of affliction. Certainly he that makes much of himself, hath no great indignation against the sinner, when himself is the man. And it is but a gentle revenge and an easy judgment, when the sad sinner shall do penance in good meals, and expiate his sin with sensual satisfaction. So that fasting relates to religion in all variety and difference of time: it is an antidote against the poison of sensual temptations, an advantage to prayer, and an instrument of extinguishing the guilt and the affections of sin, by judging ourselves, and representing in a judicatory of our own, even ourselves being judges, that sin deserves condemnation, and the sinner merits a high calamity. Which excellencies I repeat in the words of Baruch the scribe, he that was amanuensis to the prophet Jeremiah: 'The soul that is greatly vexed, which goeth stooping and feeble, and the eyes that fail, and the hungry soul, will give thee praise and righteousness, O Lord.'

5. But now as fasting hath divers ends, so also it hath divers laws. If fasting be intended as an instrument of prayer, it is sufficient that it be of that

¹ Μεράνοια χωρίς νηστείας ἀργή. S. Basil. Joel, ii. 15; Levit. xxiii. 27, &c.; Isai. xxii. 12.

quality and degree that the spirit be clear, and the head undisturbed; an ordinary act of fast, an abstinence from a meal, or a deferring it, or a lessening it when it comes, and the same abstinence repeated according to the solemnity and intendment of the offices. And this is evident in reason, and the former instances, and the practice of the church, dissolving some of her fasts, which were in order only to prayer, by noon, and as soon as the great and first solemnity of the day is over. But if fasting be intended as a punitive act, and an instrument of repentance, it must be greater. St. Paul, at his conversion, continued three days without eating or drinking. It must have in it so much affliction as to express the indignation, and to condemn the sin, and to judge the person. And although the measure of this cannot be exactly determined, yet the general proportion is certain: for a greater sin there must be a greater sorrow, and a greater sorrow must be attested with a greater penalty. And Ezra declares his purpose thus: 'I proclaimed a fast, that we might afflict ourselves before God.'¹ Now this is no further required, nor is it in this sense further useful, but that it be a trouble to the body, an act of judging and severity; and this is to be judged by proportion to the sorrow and indignation, as the sorrow is to the crime. But this affliction needs not to leave any remanent effect upon the body; but such transient sorrow which is consequent to the abstinence of certain times designed for the solemnity, is sufficient as to this purpose. Only it is to be renewed often, as our repentance must be habitual and lasting: but it may be com-

¹ Ezra, viii. 21. Vid. Dan. x. 12; Psal. xxxv. 13; Levit. xvi. 29, 30, 31; Isai. lviii. 3.

muted with other actions of severity and discipline, according to the customs of a church, or the capacity of the persons, or the opportunity of circumstances. But if the fasting be intended for mortification, then it is fit to be more severe, and medicinal by continuance, and quantity, and quality. To repentance, total abstinences without interruption, that is, during the solemnity, short and sharp, are most apt: but towards the mortifying a lust, those short and sharp fasts are not reasonable; but a diet of fasting, an habitual subtraction of nutriment from the body, a long and lasting austerity, increasing in degrees, but not violent in any. And in this sort of fasting we must be highly careful we do not violate a duty by fondness of an instrument, and because we intend fasting as a help to mortify the lust, let it not destroy the body, or retard the spirit, or violate our health, or impede us in any part of our necessary duty. As we must be careful that our fast be reasonable, serious, and apt to the end of our designs, so we must be curious that by helping one duty uncertainly, it do not certainly destroy another. Let us do it like honest persons and just, without artifices and hypocrisy: but let us also do it like wise persons, that it be neither in itself unreasonable, nor by accident become criminal.

6. In the pursuance of this discipline of fasting, the doctors of the church and guides of souls have not unusefully prescribed other annexes and circumstances; as that all the other acts of deportment be symbolical to our fasting. If we fast for mortification, let us entertain nothing of temptation or semblance to invite a lust; no sensual delight, no freer entertainments of our body, to countenance or

corroborate a passion. If we fast that we may pray the better, let us remove all secular thoughts for that time; for it is vain to alleviate our spirits of the burden of meat and drink, and to depress them with the loads of care. If for repentance we fast, let us be most curious that we do nothing contrary to the design of repentance; knowing that a sin is more contrary to repentance than fasting is to sin: and it is the greatest stupidity in the world, to do that thing which I am now mourning for, and for which I do judgment upon myself. And let all our actions also pursue the same design, helping one instrument with another, and being so zealous for the grace, that we take in all the aids we can to secure the duty. For to fast from flesh, and to eat delicate fish; not eat meat, but to drink rich wines freely; to be sensual in the objects of our other appetites, and restrained only in one; to have no dinner, and that day to run on hunting, or to play at cards, are not handsome instances of sorrow, or devotion, or self-denial. It is best to accompany our fasting with the retirements of religion and the enlargements of charity, giving to others what we deny to ourselves. These are proper actions; and although not in every instance necessary to be done at the same time, (for a man may give his alms in other circumstances, and not amiss,) yet as they are very convenient and proper to be joined in that society, so to do any thing contrary to religion or to charity, to justice or to piety, to the design of the person or the design of the solemnity, is to make that become a sin which of itself was no virtue, but was capable of being hallowed by the end and the manner of its execution.

7. This discourse hath hitherto related to private

fasts, or else to fasts indefinitely. For what rules soever every man is bound to observe in private for fasting piously, the same rules the governors of a church are to intend in their public prescription. And when once authority hath intervened, and proclaimed a fast, there is no new duty incumbent upon the private, but that we obey the circumstances, letting them choose the time and the end for us. And though we must prevaricate neither, yet we may improve both; we must not do less, but we may enlarge: and when fasting is commanded only for repentance, we may also use it to prayers and to mortification. And we must be curious that we do not obey the letter of the prescription, and violate the intention, but observe all that care in public fasts which we do in private; knowing that our private ends are included in the public, as our persons are in the communion of saints, and our hopes in the common inheritance of sons; and see that we do not fast in order to a purpose, and yet use it so that it shall be to no purpose. Whosoever so fasts as that it be not effectual in some degree towards the end, or so fasts that it be accounted of itself a duty and an act of religion, without order to its proper end, makes his act vain, because it is unreasonable; or vain, because it is superstitious.

THE PRAYER.

O holy and eternal **Jesu**, who didst for our sake fast forty days and forty nights, and hast left to us thy example, and thy prediction, that in the days of thy absence from us, we, thy **servants** and children of thy bride-chamber, should fast; teach us to

do this act of discipline so that it may become an act of religion. Let us never be like Esau, valuing a dish of meat above a blessing; but let us deny our appetites of meat and drink, and accustom ourselves to the yoke, and substract the fuel of our lusts, and the incentives of all our unworthy desires: that our bodies being free from the intemperances of nutriment, and our spirits from the load and pressure of appetite, we may have no desires but of thee: that our outward man daily decaying by the violence of time, and mortified by the abatements of its too free and unnecessary support, it may by degrees resign to the entire dominion of the soul, and may pass from vanity to piety, from weakness to ghostly strength, from darkness and mixtures of impurity to great transparence and clarity in the society of a beatified soul, reigning with thee in the glories of eternity, O holy and eternal Jesu. Amen.

DISCOURSE XIV.

Of the Miracles which Jesus wrought for confirmation of his Doctrine, during the whole time of his Preaching.

1. WHEN Jesus had ended his sermon on the Mount, he descended into the valleys, to consign his doctrine by the power of miracles and the excellency of a rare example; that he might not lay a yoke upon us which himself also would not bear: but as he became the author, so also 'the finisher of our faith;' what he designed in proposition, he represented in his own practice; and by these acts

¹ Nec monstravit tantum, sed etiam præcessit, nè quis difficultatis gratiâ iter virtutis horreret. Lactant.—“He not only pointed out the path, but traversed it himself, that no one might fear the ways of virtue on account of their difficulty.”

“Ἀπαντίς ἔσμεν τὸ νουθετεῖν σοφοί,

Ἀλλοὶ δὲ ἁμαρτάνωντες ἢ γινώσκομεν.—Menand.

“We are all ready to admonish, but know not when we err ourselves.”

made a new sermon, teaching all prelates and spiritual persons to descend from their eminency of contemplation, and the authority and business of their discourses, to apply themselves to do more material and corporal mercies to afflicted persons, and to preach by example as well as by their homilies. For he that teaches others well, and practises contrary, is like a fair candlestick bearing a goodly and bright taper, which sends forth light to all the house, but round about itself there is a shadow and circumstant darkness. The prelate should be the light consuming and spending itself to enlighten others, scattering his rays round about from the angles of contemplation and from the corners of practice, but himself always tending upwards, till at last he expires into the element of love and celestial fruition.

2. But the miracles which Jesus did were next to infinite; and every circumstance of action that passed from him, as it was intended for mercy, so also for doctrine; and the impotent or diseased persons were not more cured than we instructed. But because there was nothing in the actions but what was a pursuance of the doctrines delivered in his sermons, in the sermon we must look after our duty, and look upon his practice as a verification of his doctrine, and instrumental also to other purposes. Therefore, in general, if we consider his miracles, we shall see that he did design them to be a compendium of faith and charity. For he chose to instance his miracles in actions of mercy, that all his powers might especially determine upon bounty and charity;¹ and yet his acts of charity

¹ Acts, x. 38.

were so miraculous that they became an argument of the divinity of his person and doctrine. Once he turned water into wine, which was a mutation by a supernatural power, in a natural suscipient, where a person was not the subject, but an element: and yet this was done to rescue the poor bridegroom from affront and trouble, and to do honour to the holy rite of marriage. All the rest, (unless we except his walking upon the waters,) during his natural life, were actions of relief and mercy, according to the design of God, manifesting his power most chiefly in showing mercy.

3. The great design of miracles was to prove his mission from God, to convince the world of sin, to demonstrate his power of forgiving sins, to endear his precepts, and that his disciples might believe in him, and that believing they might have life through his name.¹ For he to whom God, by doing miracles, gave testimony from heaven, must needs be sent from God; and he who had received power to restore nature, and to create new organs, and to extract from incapacities, and from privations to reduce habits, was Lord of nature, and therefore of all the world; and thus could not but create great confidences in his disciples, that himself would verify those great promises upon which he established his law. But that the argument of miracles might be infallible, and not apt to be reprov'd, we may observe its eminency by divers circumstances of probability heightened up to the degree of moral demonstration.

4. First, The holy Jesus 'did miracles which no man (before him, or at that time) ever did.'² Moses

¹ John, xx. 31; x. 38; v. 36.

² John, xv. 24.

smote the rock and water gushed out ; but he could not turn that water into wine. Moses cured no diseases by the empire of his will, or the word of his mouth ; but Jesus ‘healed all infirmities. Elisha raised a dead child to life ; but Jesus raised one who had been dead four days, and buried, and corrupted. Elias and Samuel, and all the prophets, and the succession of the high-priests, in both the temples, put all together, never did so many or so great miracles as Jesus did. He cured leperous persons by his touch. He restored sight to the blind, who were such, not by any intervening accident hindering the act of the organ, but by nature ; who were born blind, and whose eyes had not any natural possibility to receive sight ; who could never see without creating of new eyes for them, or some integral part co-operating to vision ; and therefore the miracle was wholly an effect of a divine power, for nature did not at all co-operate ; or, that I may use the elegant expression of Dante, it was such

“ ——— à cui natura

“ Non scaldo ferro mai, ne batte ancude,”

for which nature never did heat the iron, nor beat the anvil. He made crooked limbs become straight, and the lame to walk ; and habitual diseases and inveterate, of eighteen years’ continuance, (and one of thirty-eight,) did disappear at his speaking, like darkness at the presence of the sun. He cast out devils, who by the majesty of his person were forced to confess and worship him ; and yet by his humility and restraints were commanded silence, or to go whither he pleased : and without his leave all the powers of hell were as infirm and impotent

as a withered member, and were not able to stir. He raised three dead persons to life : he fed thousands of people with two small fishes and five little barley-cakes : and as a consummation of all power and all miracles, he foretold, and verified it, that himself would rise from the dead after three days' sepulture. But when himself had told them he did miracles which no man else ever did, they were not able to reprove his saying with one single instance ; but the poor blind man found him out one instance to verify his assertion : 'It was yet never heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.'

5. Secondly, The scene of his preaching and miracles was Judea, which was the pale of the church, and God's inclosed portion, 'of whom were the oracles and the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ was to come,' and to whom he was promised. Now, since these miracles were for verification of his being the Christ, the promised Messiah, they were then to be esteemed a convincing argument, when all things else concurring, as the predictions of the prophets, the synchronisms, and the capacity of his person, he brought miracles to attest himself to be the person so declared and signified. God would not suffer his people to be abused by miracles, nor from heaven would speak so loud in testimony of any thing contrary to his own will and purposes. They to whom he gave the oracles, and the law, and the predictions of the Messiah, and declared beforehand, that at the 'coming of the Messiah the blind should see, the lame should walk, and the deaf should hear, the lepers should be cleansed, and to

the poor the gospel should be preached,'¹ could not expect a greater conviction for acceptance of a person, than when that happened which God himself by his prophets had consigned as his future testimony ; and if there could have been deception in this, it must needs have been culpable in the deceived person, to whose error a divine prophecy had been both nurse and parent. So that taking the miracles Jesus did in that conjunction of circumstances, done to that people to whom all their oracles were transmitted by miraculous verifications, miracles so many, so great, so accidentally, and yet so regularly, to all comers and necessitous persons that prayed for it, after such predictions and clearest prophecies, and these prophecies owned by himself, and sent by way of symbol and mysterious answer to John the Baptist, to whom he described his office by recounting his miracles in the words of the prediction ; there cannot be any fallibility or weakness pretended to this instrument of probation, applied in such circumstances to such a people, who, being dear to God, would be preserved from invincible deceptions ; and being commanded by him to expect the Messiah in such an equipage of power and demonstration of miracles, were therefore not deceived, nor could they, because they were bound to accept it.

6. Thirdly, So that now we must not look upon these miracles as an argument primarily intended to convince the Gentiles, but the Jews. It was a high probability to them also, and so it was designed also in a secondary intention : but it could

¹ Isaiah, xxxv. 4, 5, 6 ; Matth. xi. 5.

not be an argument to them so certain, because it was destitute of two great supporters: for they neither believed the prophets foretelling the Messias to be such, nor yet saw the miracles done. So that they had no testimony of God beforehand, and were to rely upon human testimony for the matter of fact; which, because it was fallible, could not infer a necessary conclusion alone and of itself, but it put on degrees of persuasion, as the testimony had degrees of certainty or universality; that they also which see not, and yet have believed, might be blessed. And therefore Christ sent his apostles to convert the Gentiles, and supplied in their case what in his own could not be applicable, or so concerning them; for he sent them to do miracles in the sight of the nations, that they might not doubt the matter of fact; and prepared them also with a prophecy, foretelling that they should do the same and greater miracles than he did. They had greater prejudices to contest against, and a more unequal distance from belief and aptnesses to credit such things; therefore it was necessary that the apostles should do greater miracles to remove the greater mountains of objection. And they did so; and by doing it in pursuance and testimony of the ends of Christ and Christianity, verified the fame and celebrity of their master's miracles, and represented to all the world his power, and his veracity, and his divinity.

7. Fourthly, For when the Holy Jesus appeared upon the stage of Palestine, all things were quiet and at rest from prodigy and wonder: nay, John the Baptist, who, by his excellent sanctity and austerities had got great reputation to his person and doctrines, yet did no miracle: and no man

else did any, save some few exorcists among the Jews cured some demoniacs and distracted people. So that in this silence a prophet appearing with signs and wonders had nothing to lessen the arguments, no opposite of like power, or appearances of a contradictory design. And therefore it persuaded infinitely, and was certainly operative upon all persons, whose interest and love of the world did not destroy the piety of their wills, and put their understanding into fetters. And Nicodemus, a doctor of the law, being convinced, said, 'We know that thou art a doctor sent from God: for no man can do those things which thou doest, unless God be with him.'¹ But when the devil saw what great affections and confidences these miracles of Christ had produced in all persons, he too late strives to lessen the argument by playing an after-game; and weakly endeavours to abuse vicious persons (whose love to their sensual pleasures was of power to make them take any thing for argument to retain them) by such low, few, inconsiderable, uncertain, and suspicious instances, that it grew to be the greatest confirmation and extrinsical argument in behalf of religion, that either friend or foe upon his own industry could have represented. Such as were the making an image speak, or fetching fire from the clouds; and that the images of Diana, Cyndias, and Vesta, among the Jasiæans, would admit no rain to wet them, or cloud to darken them; and that the bodies of them who entered into the temple of Jupiter in Arcadia would cast no shadow. Which things Polybius himself, one of their own superstition, laughs at as impostures, and says they were no way to be excused,

¹ John, iii. 2.

unless the pious purpose of the inventors did take off from the malice of the lie.¹ But the miracles of Jesus were confessed, and wondered at by Josephus; were published to all the world by his own disciples, who never were accused, much less convicted of forgery; they were acknowledged by Celsus² and Julian,³ the greatest enemies of Christ.

8. But further yet, themselves gave it out, that one Caius was cured of his blindness by Æsculapius, and so was Valerius Aper; and at Alexandria, Vespasian cured a man of the gout by treading upon his toes, and a blind man with spittle. And when Adrian the emperor was sick of a fever, and would have killed himself, it is said, two blind persons were cured by touching him, where one of them told him that he also should recover.⁴ But, although Vespasian, by the help of Apollonius Tyaneus, who was his familiar, who also had the devil to be his, might do any thing within the power of nature, or by permission might do much more; yet besides that this was of an uncertain and less credible report, if it had been true, it was also infinitely short of what Christ did, and was a weak, silly imitation, and usurping of the argument which had already prevailed upon the persuasions of men, beyond all possibility of confutation. And for that of Adrian, to have reported it is enough to

¹ Lib. xvi. Hist.

² Ἐνομίσατε αὐτὸν εἶναι υἱὸν Θεοῦ, ἐπεὶ χολῆς ἢ τυφλῆς ἐθεράπευσεν, dixit Celsus apud Origen.

³ Εἰ μὴ τις οἶεται τὰς κελλῆς καὶ τυφλῆς ἰάσασθαι, καὶ λαοοποιῶντας ἐφορκίζουσιν, τῶν μεγίστων ἔργων εἶναι, &c. verbi Juliani apud Cyril. lib. vi.

⁴ Spartianus in Adriano; qui addit Marium Maximum dixisse, hæc facta fuisse per simulationem.

make it ridiculous. And it had been a strange power to have cured two blind persons, and yet be so unable to help himself as to attempt to kill himself by reason of anguish, impatience, and despair.

9. Fifthly, When the Jews and Pharisees believed not Christ for his miracles, and yet perpetually called for a sign, he refused to give them a sign which might be less than their prejudice, or the persuasions of their interest; but gave them one which alone is greater than all the miracles which ever were done, or said to be done, by any antichrist, or the enemies of the religion put all together; a miracle which could have no suspicion of imposture, a miracle without instance, or precedent, or imitation. And that is, Jesus's lying in the grave three days and three nights, and then rising again, and appearing to many, and conversing for forty days together; giving probation of his rising, of the verity of his body, making a glorious promise, which at pentecost was verified, and speaking such things which became precepts and parts of the law for ever after.

10. Sixthly, I add two things more to this consideration. First, that the apostles did such miracles, which were infinitely greater than the pretensions of any adversary, and inimitable by all the powers of man or darkness. They raised the dead; they cured all diseases by their very shadow passing by, and by the touch of garments; they converted nations; they foretold future events; they themselves spake with tongues, and they gave the Holy Ghost by imposition of hands, which enabled others to speak languages which immediately before they understood not, and to cure diseases, and

to eject devils. Now supposing miracles to be done by Gentile philosophers and magicians after; yet when they fall short of these in power, and yet teach a contrary doctrine, it is a demonstration that it is a lesser power, and therefore the doctrine not of divine authority and sanction. And it is remarkable, that among all the Gentiles none ever reasonably pretended to a power of casting out devils: for the devils could not get so much by it, as things then stood: and, besides, in whose name should they do it who worshipped none but devils and false gods? which is too violent presumption, that the devil was the architect in all such buildings. And when the seven sons of Sceva, who was a Jew, (amongst whom it was sometimes granted to cure demoniacs,) offered to exorcise a possessed person, the devil would by no means endure it, but beat them for their pains.¹ And although it might have been for his purpose to have enervated the reputation of St. Paul, and by a voluntary cession equalled St. Paul's enemies to him; yet either the devil could not go out but at the command of a Christian, or else to have gone out would have been a disservice and ruin to his kingdom: either of which declares that the power of casting out devils is a testimony of God, and a probation of the divinity of a doctrine, and a proper argument of Christianity.

11. Seventhly, But, besides this, I consider that the Holy Jesus, having first possessed upon just title all the reasonableness of human understanding by his demonstration of a miraculous power, in his infinite wisdom knew that the devil would attempt

¹ Acts, xix.

to gain a party by the same instrument, and therefore so ordered it, that the miracles which should be done, or pretended to, by the devil, or any of the enemies of the cross of Christ, should be a confirmation of Christianity, not do it disservice: for he foretold that antichrist and other enemies 'should come in prodigies and lying wonders and signs.' Concerning which, although it may be disputed whether they were truly miracles, or mere deceptions and magical pretences; yet because they were such which the people could not discern from miracles really such, therefore it is all one, and in this consideration they are to be supposed such. But, certainly, he that could foretell such a future contingency, or such a secret of predestination, was able also to know from what principle it came. And we have the same reason to believe that antichrist shall do miracles to evil purposes, as that he shall do any at all: he that foretold us of the man, foretold us also of the imposture, and commanded us not to trust him. And it had been more likely for antichrist to prevail upon Christians by doing no miracles, than by doing any: for if he had done none, he might have escaped without discovery; but by doing miracles, as he verified the wisdom and prescience of Jesus, so he declared to all the church, that he was the enemy of their Lord, and therefore less likely to deceive. For which reason it is said, that 'he shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect:' that is therefore not possible, because that by which he insinuates himself to others, is by the elect, the church and chosen of God, understood to be his sign and mark of discovery, and a warning. And therefore, as the prophecies of Jesus were an infinite verification of his

miracles; so also this prophecy of Christ concerning antichrist disgraces the reputation and faith of the miracles he shall act. The old prophets foretold of the Messias, and of his miracles of power and mercy, to prepare for his reception and entertainment: Christ alone, and his apostles from him, foretold of antichrist, and that he should come in all miracles of deception and lying; that is, with true or false miracles to persuade a lie: and this was to prejudice his being accepted, according to the law of Moses.¹ So that as all that spake of Christ bade us believe him for his miracles, so all that foretold of antichrist bade us disbelieve him the rather for his. And the reason of both is the same, because the mighty and 'surer word of prophecy' (as St. Peter calls it) being the greatest testimony in the world of a divine principle, gives authority, or reprobates with the same power. They who are the *præsciti*, the foreknown and marked people, must needs stand or fall to the divine sentence; and such must this be acknowledged; for no 'enemy of the cross,' not the devil himself, ever foretold such a contingency, or so rare, so personal, so voluntary, so unnatural an event, as this of the great antichrist.

12. And thus the holy Jesus, having 'showed forth the treasures of his Father's wisdom,' in revelations and holy precepts, and upon the stock of his Father's greatness having dispensed and demonstrated great power in miracles, and these being instanced in acts of mercy, he mingled the glories of heaven to transmit them to earth, to raise us up

¹ Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3.

to the participations of heaven. He was pleased, by healing the bodies of infirm persons, to invite their spirits to his discipline, and by his power to convey healing, and by that mercy to lead us into the treasures of revelation; that both bodies and souls, our wills and understandings, by divine instruments, might be brought to divine perfections in the participations of a divine nature. It was a miraculous mercy that God should look upon us in our blood, and a miraculous condescension that his Son should take our nature; and even this favour we could not believe without many miracles: and so contrary was our condition to all possibilities of happiness, that if salvation had not marched to us all the way in miracle, we had perished in the ruins of a sad eternity. And now it would be but reasonable, that, since God for our sakes hath rescinded so many laws of natural establishment, we also, for his and for our own, would be content to do violence to those natural inclinations, which are also criminal when they derive into action. Every man living in the state of grace is a perpetual miracle; and his passions are made reasonable, as his reason is turned into faith, and his soul to spirit, and his body to a temple, and earth to heaven; and less than this will not dispose us to such glories, which being the portion of saints and angels, and the nearest communications with God, are infinitely above what we see, or hear, or understand.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal Jesu, who didst receive great power, that by it thou mightest convey thy Father's mercies to us impotent and wretched people, give me grace to believe that heavenly doctrine which thou didst ratify with arguments from above, that I may fully assent to all those mysterious truths which integrate that doctrine and discipline, in which the obligations of my duty and the hopes of my felicity are deposited : and to all those glorious verifications of thy goodness and thy power add also this miracle, that I, who am stained with leprosy of sin, may be cleansed, and my eyes may be opened, that I may see the wonderful things of thy law : and raise thou me up from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that I may for ever walk in the land of the living, abhorring the works of death and darkness. That as I am, by thy miraculous mercy, partaker of the first, so also I may be accounted worthy of the second resurrection ; and as by faith, hope, charity, and obedience, I receive the fruit of thy miracles in this life ; so in the other I may partake of thy glories, which is a mercy above all miracles. Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. Lord, I believe ; help mine unbelief ; and grant that no indisposition or incapacity of mine may hinder the wonderful operations of thy grace ; but let it be thy first miracle to turn my water into wine, my barrenness into fruitfulness, my aversations from thee into unions and intimate adhesions to thy infinity, which is the fountain of mercy and power. Grant this for thy mercy's sake, and for the honour of those glorious attributes in which thou hast revealed thyself and thy Father's excellencies to the world, O holy and eternal Jesu. Amen.

THE LIFE

OF OUR BLESSED

LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST

PART III.

SECTION XIII.

Of the Second Year of the Preaching of Jesus.

1. WHEN the first year of Jesus, the year of peace and undisturbed preaching, was expired, 'there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem:' (this feast was the second pass-over he kept after he began to preach; not the feast of pentecost or tabernacles, both which were passed before Jesus came last from Judea: (whither when he was now come, he finds an impotent person lying at the pool of Bethesda, waiting till the angel should move the waters, after which, whosoever first stepped in was cured of his infirmity. The poor man had waited thirty-eight years, and still was prevented by some other of the hospital that needed a physician. But Jesus seeing him, had pity on him, cured him, and bade him 'take up his

bed and walk.' This cure happened to be wrought upon the sabbath-day; for which the Jews were so moved with indignation that they sought to slay him. And their anger was enraged by his calling himself the Son of God, and making himself equal with God.

2. Upon occasion of this offence, which they snatched at before it was ministered, Jesus discourses upon "his mission, and derivation of his authority from the Father; of the union between them, and the excellent communications of power, participation of dignity, delegation of judicature, reciprocations and reflections of honour from the Father to the Son, and back again to the Father. He preaches of life and salvation to them that believe in him; prophecies of the resurrection of the dead by the efficacy of the voice of the Son of God; speaks of the day of judgment, the differing conditions after, of salvation and damnation respectively; confirms his words and mission by the testimony of John the Baptist, of Moses, and the other Scriptures, and of God himself." And still the scandal rises higher; 'for in the second sabbath after the first,'² that is, in the first day of unleavened bread, which happened the next day after the weekly sabbath, the disciples of Jesus pull ripe ears of corn, rub them in their hands, and eat them to satisfy their hunger. For which he offered satisfaction to their scruples, convincing them, that works of necessity are to be permitted even to the breach of a positive temporary constitution; and that works of mercy are best serving of God upon any day whatsoever, or any part of the

¹ John, v. 19, &c.

² Suidas, Voc. Σάββατον.

day that is vacant to other offices, and proper for a religious festival.

3. But when neither reason nor religion would give them satisfaction ; but that they went about to kill him, he withdrew himself from Jerusalem, and returned to Galilee : whither the Scribes and Pharisees followed him, observing his actions, and whether or no he would prosecute that which they called profanation of their sabbath, by doing acts of mercy upon that day. He still did so : for entering into one of the synagogues of Galilee upon the sabbath, Jesus saw a man (whom St. Jerome reports to have been a mason¹) coming to Tyre, and complaining that his hand was withered, and desiring help of him, that he might again be restored to the use of his hand, lest he should be compelled, with misery and shame, to beg his bread. Jesus restored his hand as whole as the other in the midst of all those spies and enemies. Upon which act, being confirmed in their malice, the Pharisees went forth, and joined with the Herodians, (a sect of people who said Herod was the Messias, because by the decree of the Roman senate, when the sceptre departed from Judah, he was declared king,²) and both together took counsel how they might kill him.

4. Jesus therefore departed again to the sea-coast, and his companies increased as his fame : for he was now followed by new multitudes from

¹ Evangel. Naz. quod S. Hieron. ex Hebr. in Græcum translulit. Ἡμισύ μὲ τέξνηκε, τὸ δ' ἥμισυ λιμὸς ἐλέγχει· Σῶσόν με βασιλεῖν, μισικὸν ἡμίτονον.

² Sic Tertullianus, Epiphanius, Chrysostomus, et Theophylactus, et Hieron. Dialog. advers. Lucif. uno ore affirmant.

Galilee, from Judea, from Jerusalem, from Idumæa, from beyond Jordan, from about Tyre and Sidon ; who hearing the report of his miraculous power to cure all diseases by the word of his mouth, or the touch of his hand, or the handling his garment, came with their ambulatory hospital of their sick and possessed ; and they pressed on him, but to touch him, and were all immediately cured. The devils confessing publicly, that he was the Son of God, till they were, upon all such occasions, restrained and compelled to silence.

5. But now Jesus having commanded a ship to be in readiness against any inconvenience or troublesome pressures of the multitude, went up into a mountain to pray, and continued in prayer all night, intending to make the first ordination of apostles : which the next day he did, choosing out of the number of his disciples these twelve to be apostles ; Simon Peter and Andrew, James and John, the sons of thunder, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James, the son of Alphæus, and Simon the zealot, Judas, the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot. With these descending from the mountain to the plain, he repeated the same sermon, or much of it, which he had before preached in the first beginning of his prophesyings ; that he might publish his gospel to these new auditors, and also more particularly inform his apostles in the doctrine of the kingdom : for now, because he saw Israel scattered like sheep having no shepherd, he did purpose to send these twelve abroad to preach repentance and the approximation of the kingdom ; and therefore first instructed them in the mysterious parts of his holy

doctrine, and gave them also particular instructions, together with their temporary commission for that journey.

6. "For Jesus sent them out by two and two giving them power over unclean spirits, and to heal all manner of sickness and diseases; telling them they were the light, and the eyes, and the salt of the world, so intimating their duties of diligence, holiness, and incorruption; giving them in charge to preach the gospel; to dispense their power and miracles freely, as they had received it; to anoint sick persons with oil; not to enter into any Samaritan town, but to go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; to provide no viaticum for their journeys, but to put themselves upon the religion and piety of their proselytes. He arms them against persecutions; gives them leave to fly the storm from city to city; promises them the assistances of his Spirit; encourages them, by his own example of long-sufferance, and by instances of divine Providence, expressed even to creatures of smallest value, and by promise of great rewards, to the confident confession of his name; and furnishes them with some propositions, which are like so many bills of exchange, upon the trust of which they might take up necessaries; promising great retributions, not only to them who quit any thing of value for the sake of Jesus, but to them that offer a cup of water to a thirsty disciple: and with these instructions they departed to preach in the cities."

7. And Jesus returning to Capernaum, received the address of a faithful centurion of the legion called "the iron legion,"¹ (which usually quartered

¹ Dio. Hist. Rom. lib. lv.

in Judea,) in behalf of his servant, whom he loved, and who was grievously afflicted with the palsy; and healed him, as a reward and honour to his faith: and from thence going to the city Nain, he raised to life the only son of a widow, whom the mourners followed in the street, bearing the corpse sadly to his funeral. Upon the fame of these and divers other miracles, John the Baptist, who was still in prison, (for he was not put to death till the latter end of this year,) sent two of his disciples to him by divine providence, or else by John's designation, to minister occasions of his greater publication, inquiring if he was the Messiah. To whom Jesus returned no answer, but a demonstration taken from the nature of the thing, and the glory of the miracles; saying, Return to John, and tell him what you see; 'for the deaf hear, the blind see, the lame walk, the dead are raised, and the lepers are cleansed, and to the poor the gospel is preached:'¹ which were the characteristic notes of the Messiah, according to the predictions of the holy prophets.

8. When John's disciples were gone with this answer, Jesus began to speak concerning John, "of the austerity and holiness of his person, the greatness of his function, the divinity of his commission; saying, that he was greater than a prophet, a burning and shining light, the Elias that was to come, and the consummation or ending of the old prophets. Adding withal, that the perverseness of that age was most notorious in the entertainment of himself and the Baptist: for neither could the Baptist, who came neither eating nor

¹ Isaiah, xxxv. 4, 5, 6.

drinking, (that by his austerity and mortified deportment he might invade the judgment and affections of the people,) nor Jesus, who came both eating and drinking, (that by a moderate and an affable life, framed to the compliance and common use of men, he might sweetly insinuate into the affections of the multitude,) obtain belief amongst them. They could object against every thing, but nothing could please them. But wisdom and righteousness had a theatre in its own family, and is justified of all her children. Then he proceeds to a more applied reprehension of Capernaum and Chorazin and Bethsaida, for being pertinacious in their sins and infidelity, in defiance and reproof of all the mighty works which had been wrought in them. But these things were not revealed to all dispositions; the wise and the mighty of the world were not subjects prepared for the simplicity and softer impresses of the gospel, and the downright severity of its sanctions. And therefore Jesus glorified God for the magnifying of his mercy, in that these things, which were hid from the great ones, were revealed to babes; and concludes this sermon with an invitation of all wearied and disconsolate persons, laden with sin and misery, to come to him, promising ease to their burdens, and refreshment to their weariness, and to exchange their heavy pressures into an easy yoke, and a light burden."

9. When Jesus had ended this sermon, one of the Pharisees named Simon, invited him to eat with him:† into whose house when he was entered, a certain woman that was a sinner, abiding there

† Luke, vii.

in the city, heard of it: her name was Mary. She had been married to a noble personage, a native of the town and castle of Magdal, from whence she had her name of Magdalen, though she herself was born in Bethany. A widow she was, and prompted by her wealth, liberty, and youth to an intemperate life and too free entertainments. She came to Jesus into the Pharisee's house; not (as did the staring multitude) to glut her eyes with the sight of a miraculous and glorious person; nor (as did the centurion, or the Syro-phœnician, or the ruler of the synagogue) for cure of her sickness, or in behalf of her friend, or child, or servant; but (the only example of so coming) she came in remorse and regret for her sins. She came to Jesus to lay her burden at his feet, and to present him with a broken heart, and a weeping eye, and great affection, and a box of nard pistic, salutary and precious. For she came trembling, and fell down before him, weeping bitterly for her sins, pouring out a flood great enough to wash the feet of the blessed Jesus, and wiping them with the hairs of her head: after which she brake the box, and anointed his feet with ointment. Which expression was so great an ecstasy of love, sorrow, and adoration, that to anoint the feet even of the greatest monarch was long unknown, and in all the pomps and greatnesses of the Roman prodigality, it was not used till Otho taught it to Nero, in whose instance it was by Pliny reckoned for a prodigy of unnecessary profusion:¹ and in itself, without the circumstance of so free a dispensation, it was a present for a prince, and an alabaster box

¹ Plin. Natur. Hist. lib. xiii. c. 3. Vide Athen. Deipnosoph. lib. xii. c. 30. Herodotus in 'Thalia.

of nard pistie was sent as a present from Cambyzes to the king of Æthiopia.

10. When Simon observed this sinner so busy in the expresses of her religion and veneration to Jesus, he thought with himself that this was no prophet, that did not know her to be a sinner, or no just person, that would suffer her to touch him. For although the Jews' religion did permit harlots of their own nation to live, and enjoy the privileges of their nation, save that their oblations were refused; yet the Pharisees, who pretended to a greater degree of sanctity than others, would not admit them to civil usages, or the benefits of ordinary society; and thought religion itself, and the honour of a prophet, was concerned in the interests of the same superciliousness. And therefore Simon made an objection within himself; which Jesus knowing (for he understood his thoughts as well as his words) made her apology and his own in a civil question, expressed in a parable of two debtors, to whom a greater and less debt respectively was forgiven; both of them concluding, that they would love their merciful creditor in proportion to his mercy and donative. And this was the case of Mary Magdalen, to whom, because much was forgiven, she loved much, and expressed it in characters so large, that the Pharisee might read his own incivilities and inhospitable entertainment of the Master, when it stood confronted with the magnificency of Mary Magdalen's penance and charity.

11. When Jesus had dined he was presented with the sad sight of a poor demoniac, possessed with a blind and dumb devil; in whose behalf his friends entreated Jesus that he would cast the devil out:

which he did immediately; and the blind man saw, and the dumb spake, so much to the amazement of the people, that they ran in so prodigious companies after him, and so scandalized the Pharisees, who thought that by means of this prophet their reputation would be lessened, and their schools empty, that first a rumour was scattered up and down, from an uncertain principle, but communicated with tumult and apparent noises, that Jesus was beside himself. Upon which rumour his friends and kindred came together to see, and to make provisions accordingly; and the holy virgin-mother came herself, but without any apprehensions of any such horrid accident. The words and things she had from the beginning laid up in her heart, would furnish her with principles exclusive of all apparitions of such fancies: but she came to see what that persecution was, which, under that colour, it was likely the Pharisees might commence.

12. When the mother of Jesus and his kindred came, they found him in a house encircled with people full of wonder and admiration. And there the holy virgin-mother might hear part of her own prophecy verified, That the generations of the earth should call her blessed: for a woman worshipping Jesus cried out, 'Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck.' To this Jesus replied, not denying her to be highly blessed who had received the honour of being the mother of the Messias, but advancing the dignities of spiritual excellencies far above this greatest temporal honour in the world; 'Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and do it.' For in respect of the issues of spiritual perfections

and their proportionable benedictions, all immunities and temporal honours are empty and hollow blessings; and all relations of kindred disbanded and empty themselves into the great channels and floods of divinity.

13. For when Jesus being in the house, they told him, 'his mother and his brethren staid for him without,' he told them those relations were less than the ties of duty and religion. For those dear names of mother and brethren, which are hallowed by the laws of God and the endearments of nature, are made far more sacred when a spiritual cognation does supervene, when the relations are subjected in persons religious and holy: but if they be abstract and separate, the conjunction of persons in spiritual bands, in the same faith, and the same hope, and the union of them in the same mystical head, is an adunation nearer to identity than those distanees between parents and children, which are only cemented by the actions of nature, as it is of distinct consideration from the spirit. For Jesus, pointing to his disciples, said, 'Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.'

14. But the Pharisees, upon the occasion of the miracles, renewed the old quarrel: 'He casteth out devils by Beelzebub. Which senseless and illiterate objection Christ having confuted, charged them highly upon the guilt of an unpardonable crime; telling them that the so charging those actions of his, done in the virtue of the divine Spirit, is a sin against the Holy Ghost: and however they might be bold with the Son of Man, and prevarications against his words, or injuries to his

person might, upon repentance and baptism, find a pardon; yet it was a matter of greater consideration to sin against the Holy Ghost; that would find no pardon here nor hereafter. But taking occasion upon this discourse, he, by an ingenious and mysterious parable, gives the world great caution of recidivation and backsliding after repentance. For if the 'devil returns into an house once swept and garnished, he bringeth seven spirits more impure than himself; and the last estate of that man is worse than the first.'

15. After this, Jesus went from the house of the Pharisee, and coming to the sea of Tiberias or Genesaret, (for it was called the sea of Tiberias from a town on the banks of the lake,) taught the people upon the shore, himself sitting in the ship. But he taught them by parables, under which were hid mysterious senses, which shined through their veil, like a bright sun through an eye closed with a thin eyelid; it being light enough to show their infidelity, but not to dispel those thick Egyptian darknesses which they had contracted by their habitual indispositions and pertinacious aversations. By the parable 'of the sower scattering his seed by the way-side,' and 'some on stony, some on thorny, some on good ground,' he intimated the several capacities or indispositions of men's hearts; the carelessness of some, the frowardness and levity of others, the easiness and softness of a third, and how they are spoiled with worldliness and cares, and how many ways there are to miscarry; and that but one sort of men receive the word, and bring forth the fruits of a holy life. By the parable of tares permitted to grow amongst the wheat, he intimated the toleration of dissenting opinions

not destructive of piety or civil societies. By the three parables of the seed growing insensibly, of the grain of mustard-seed swelling up to a tree, of a little leaven qualifying the whole lump, he signified the increment of the gospel, and the blessings upon the apostolical sermons.

16. Which parables when he had privately to his apostles rendered into their proper senses, he added to them two parables concerning the dignity of the gospel; comparing it to 'treasure hid in a field,' and 'a jewel of great price,' for the purchase of which every good merchant must quit all that he hath rather than miss it: telling them withal, that however purity and spiritual perfections were intended by the gospel, yet it would not be acquired by every person; but the public professors of Christianity should be a mixed multitude, 'like a net enclosing fishes good and bad.' After which discourses he retired from the sea-side, and went to his own city of Nazareth; where he preached so excellently upon certain words of the prophet Isaiah,¹ that all the people wondered at the wisdom which he expressed in his divine discourses. But the men of Nazareth did not do honour to the prophet, that was their countryman, because they knew him in all the disadvantages of youth, and kindred, and trade, and poverty; still retaining in their minds the infirmities and humilities of his first years, and keeping the same apprehensions of him, a man, a glorious prophet, which they had to him a child in the shop of a carpenter. But when Jesus, in his sermon, had reproved their infidelity, at which he wondered, and therefore did but few mi-

¹ Isaiah, lxi. 1

raclcs there in respect of what he had done at Capernaum, and intimated the prelation of that city before Nazareth, 'they thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which the city was built,' intending 'to throw him down headlong.' But his work was not yet finished, therefore he, 'passing through the midst of them, went his way.'

17. Jesus therefore, departing from Nazareth, went up and down to all the towns and castles of Galilee, attended by his disciples, and certain women out of whom he had cast unclean spirits; such as were Mary Magdalene; Johanna, wife to Chuza, Herod's steward; Susanna, and some others, who did for him offices of provision, and 'ministered to him out of their own substance,' and became part of that holy college which about this time began to be full; because now the apostles were returned from their preaching, full of joy that the devils were made subject to the word of their mouth, and the empire of their prayers, and invocation of the holy name of Jesus. But their master gave them a lenitive to assuage the tumour and excrescency, intimating that such privileges are not solid foundations of a holy joy, but so far as they co-operate toward the great end of God's glory and their own salvation; to which when they are consigned, and 'their names written in heaven,' in the book of election and registers of predestination, then their joy is reasonable, holy, true, and perpetual.¹

18. But when Herod had heard these things of Jesus, presently his apprehensions were such as derived from his guilt: he thought it was John the

¹ Vide Discourse of the Certainty of Salvation, Num. 3.

Baptist who was risen from the dead, and that these mighty works were demonstrations of his power, increased by the superadditions of immortality and diviner influences, made proportionable to the honour of a martyr and the state of separation: for a little before this time Herod had sent to the castle of Macheruns, where John was prisoner, and caused him to be beheaded. His head Herodias buried in her own palace, thinking to secure it against a reunion, lest it should again disturb her unlawful lusts, and disquiet Herod's conscience. But the body the disciples of John gathered up, and carried it, with honour and sorrow, and buried it in Sebaste, in the confines of Samaria, making his grave between the bodies of Elizeus and Abdias the prophets. And about this time was the pass-over of the Jews.

DISCOURSE XV.

Of the Excellency, Ease, Reasonableness, and Advantages of bearing Christ's Yoke, and living according to his Institution.

1. THE holy Jesus came to break from off our necks two great yokes; the one of sin, by which we were fettered and imprisoned in the condition of slaves and miserable persons; the other of Moses's law, by which we were kept in pupilage and minority, and a state of imperfection: and asserted us into 'the glorious liberty of the sons of God.' The first was a despotic empire, and the government of a tyrant: the second was of a schoolmaster, severe, absolute, and imperious;

but it was in order to a further good, yet nothing pleasant in the sufferance and load. And now Christ, having taken off these two, hath put on a third. He quits us of our burden, but not of our duty; and hath changed the former tyranny and the less perfect discipline into the sweetness of paternal regimen, and the excellency of such an institution, whose every precept carries part of its reward in hand, and assurances of after glories. Moses's law was like sharp and unpleasant physic, certainly painful, but uncertainly healthful: for it was not then communicated to them by promise and universal revelations, that the end of their obedience should be life eternal; but they were full of hopes it might be so, as we are of health, when we have a learned and wise physician. But as yet the reward was in a cloud, and the hopes in fetters and confinement. But the law of Christ is like Christ's healing of diseases; he does it easily, and he does it infallibly. The event is certainly consequent, and the manner of cure is by a touch of his hand, or a word of his mouth, or an approximation to the hem of his garment, without pain and vexatious instruments. My meaning is, that Christianity is, by the assistance of Christ's Spirit, which he promised us, and gave us in the gospel, made very easy to us: and yet a reward so great is promised, as were enough to make a lame man to walk, and a broken arm endure the burden; a reward great enough to make us willing to do violence to all our inclinations, passions, and desires. A hundred weight to a giant is a light burden, because his strength is disproportionably great, and makes it as easy to him as an ounce is to a child. And yet if we had not the strength of

giants, if the hundred weight were of gold or jewels, a weaker person would think it no trouble to bear that burden, if it were the reward of his portage, and the hire of his labours. The Spirit is given to us to enable us, and heaven is promised to encourage us: the first makes us able, and the second makes us willing; and when we have power and affections we cannot complain of pressure. And this is the meaning of our blessed Saviour's invitation: 'Come unto me, for my burden is light, my yoke is easy.'¹ Which St. John also observed: 'For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous;' for 'whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh, even our faith;'² that is, our belief of God's promises, the promise of the Spirit for present aid, and of heaven for the future reward, is strong enough to overcome all the world.

2. But besides that God hath made his yoke easy by exterior supports, more than ever was in any other religion, Christianity is of itself, according to human estimate, a religion more easy and desirable by our natural and reasonable appetites, than sin, in the midst of all its pleasures and imaginary felicities. Virtue hath more pleasure in it than sin, and hath all satisfactions to every desire of man in order to human and prudent ends; which I shall represent in the consideration of these particulars: 1, To live according to the laws of Jesus, is in some things most natural and proportionable to the desires and first intentions of nature. 2, There is in it less trouble than in sin. 3, It

¹ Matt. xi. 28, 30.

² John, v. 3, 4.

conduces infinitely to the content of our lives, and natural and political satisfactions. 4, It is a means to preserve our temporal lives long and healthy. 5, It is most reasonable; and he only is prudent that does so, and he is a fool that does not. And all this besides the considerations of a glorious and happy eternity.

3. Concerning the first, I consider that we do very ill, when, instead of making our natural infirmity an instrument of humility and of recourse to the grace of God, we pretend the sin of Adam to countenance our actual sins, natural infirmity to excuse our malice; either laying Adam in fault, for deriving the disability upon us, or God, for putting us into the necessity. But the evils that we feel in this are from the rebellion of the inferior appetite against reason, or against any religion that puts restraint upon our first desires: and therefore, in carnal and sensual instances, accidentally we find the more natural averseness, because God's laws have put our irascible and concupiscible faculties in fetters and restraints. Yet in matters of duty, which are of immaterial and spiritual concernment, all our natural reason is a perfect enemy and contradiction to, and a law against vice. It is natural for us to love our parents, and they who do not are unnatural; they do violence to those dispositions which God gave us to the constitution of our nature, and for the designs of virtue: and all those tendernesses of affection, those bowels and relenting dispositions, which are the endearments of parents and children, are also the bands of duty. Every degree of love makes duty delectable; and therefore, either by nature we are inclined to hate our parents, which is

against all reason and experience, or else we are by nature inclined to do them all that which is the effect of love to such superiors, and principles of being and dependency: and every prevarication from the rule, effects, and expresses of love is a contradiction to nature, and a mortification; to which we cannot be invited by any thing from within, but by something from without, that is violent and preternatural. There are also many other virtues, even in the matter of sensual appetite, which none can lose, but by altering in some degree the natural disposition: and I instance in the matter of carnality and uncleanness, to which possibly some natures may think themselves apt and disposed: but yet God hath put into our mouths a bridle to curb the licentiousness of our speedy appetite, putting into our very natures a principle as strong to restrain it, as there is in us a disposition apt to invite us: and this is also in persons who are most apt to the vice, women and young persons, to whom God hath given a modesty and shame of nature, that the entertainments of lust may become contradictions to our retreating and backward modesty, more than they are satisfactions to our too-forward appetites. It is as great a mortification and violence to nature to blush as to lose a desire: and we find it true, when persons are invited to confess their sins, or to ask forgiveness publicly, a secret smart is not so violent as a public shame; and therefore to do an action which brings shame all along, and opens the sanctuaries of nature, and makes all her retirements public, and dismantles her inclosure, as lust does; and the shame of carnality hath in it more asperity and abuse to nature, than the short pleasure to which

we are invited can repay. There are unnatural lusts, lusts which are such in their very condition and constitution, that a man must turn a woman, and a woman become a beast in acting them: and all lusts that are not unnatural in their own complexion, are unnatural by a consequent and accidental violence: and if lust hath in it dissonances to nature, there are but few apologies left to excuse our sins upon nature's stock: and all that system of principles and reasonable inducements to virtue, which we call the law of nature, is nothing else but that firm ligature and incorporation of virtue to our natural principles and dispositions, which whoso prevaricates does more against nature than he that restrains his appetite: and, besides these particulars, there is not in our natural discourse any inclination, directly and by intention of itself, contrary to the love of God; because by God we understand a fountain of being which is infinitely perfect in itself, and of great good to us; and whatsoever is so apprehended it is as natural for us to love as to love any thing in the world; for we can love nothing but what we believe to be good in itself, or good to us.¹ And beyond this, there are in nature many principles and reasons to make an aptness to acknowledge and confess God; and by the consent of nations, which they also have learned from the dictates of their nature, all men

¹ Εγὼ γὰρ ἕκ ἄν ἑδὲ ἄλλο περὶ Θεῶ ὅ, τι ἂν εἴποιμι ἔχω, ἢ ὅτι ἀγαθός τε παντὰ πασιν εἶη, ἢ ζύμπαντα ἐν τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τῷ αὐτῷ ἔχει· λεγέτω δὲ ὡσπερ γινώσκειν ἕκαστος ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν οἴεται, ἢ ἰσρέδς ἢ ἰδιώτης.—Procop. Gothic. i.—“This is all I would say concerning God, namely, that he is good, and all in all, and that he ruleth over all. Let every one speak of him, both priest and private man, according to his knowledge.”

in some manner or other worship God; and therefore, when this our nature is determined in its own indefinite principle to the manner of worship, all acts against the love, the obedience, and the worship of God, are also against nature, and offer it some rudeness and violence: and I shall observe this, and refer it to every man's reason and experience, that the greatest difficulties of virtue commonly apprehended, commence not so much upon the stock of nature, as of education and evil habits.¹ Our virtues are difficult, because we at first get ill habits; and these habits must be unrooted before we do well, and that is our trouble. But, if by the strictness of discipline and wholesome education, we begin at first in our duty and the practice of virtuous principles, we shall find virtue made as natural to us, while it is customary and habitual, as we pretend infirmity to be and propensity to vicious practices. And this we are taught by that excellent Hebrew, who said, 'Wisdom is easily seen of them that love her, and found of such as seek her. She preventeth them that desire her, in making herself first known unto them. Whoso seeketh her early shall have no great travail; for he shall find her sitting at his doors.'²

4. Secondly, In the strict observances of the law of Christianity there is less trouble than in the habitual courses of sin:³ for if we consider the ge-

¹ Siquidem Leonides Alexandri pædagogus quibusdam eum vitii imbuat, quæ robustum quoque et jam maximum regem ab illa institutione puerili sunt prosecuta. Quintil lib. i. c. 1.—
"Leonidas, the instructor of Alexander, imbued him with some vices, which thence infected him when he was become a great and powerful king."

² Wisdom, vi. 12, 13, 14.

³ Multo difficilius est facere ista quæ facitis. Qu' d enim

neral design of Christianity, it propounds to us in this world nothing that is of difficult purchase, nothing beyond that God allots us by the ordinary and common providence; such things which we are to receive without care and solicitous vexation: so that the ends are not big, and the way is easy; and this walked over with much simplicity and sweetness, and those obtained without difficulty. He that propounds to himself to live low, pious, humble, and retired, his main employment is nothing but sitting quiet and undisturbed with variety of impertinent affairs: but he that loves the world and its acquisitions, entertains a thousand businesses, and every business hath a world of employment, and every employment is multiplied and made intricate by circumstances, and every circumstance is to be disputed, and he that disputes ever hath two sides in enmity and opposition; and by this time there is a genealogy, a long descent and cognation of troubles, branched into so many particulars that it is troublesome to understand them, and much more to run through

quiete otiosius est animi? Quid ira laboriosius? Quid clementia remissius? Quid crudelitate negotiosius? Vacat pudicitia, libido occupatissima est. Omnium denique virtutum tutela facilius est; vitia magno coluntur. Seneca.—“The things which you do are much more difficult. For what is more easy than tranquillity of mind? What more laborious than anger? What is more free than clemency, or more fully occupied than cruelty? Modesty enjoys leisure; lust is always occupied. The preservation, in short, of all the virtues is comparatively easy; the vices are cherished with danger and difficulty.”

In vitiis abit voluptas, manet turpitude; cum in recte factis abeat labor, maneat honestas. Muson.—“The pleasure conferred by vice soon vanishes; the turpitude remains. On the other hand, when the labour of good actions is over, the virtue and its recompense still exist.”

them. The ways of virtue are very much upon the defensive, and the work one, uniform, and little : they are like watch within a strong castle ; if they stand upon their guard, they seldom need to strike a stroke : but vice is like storming of a fort, full of noise, trouble, labour, danger, and disease. How easy a thing is it to restore the pledge ? but if a man means to defeat him that trusted him, what a world of arts must he use to make pretences ! to delay first, then to excuse, then to object, then to intricate the business ; next to quarrel, then to forswear it, and all the way to palliate his crime, and represent himself honest ! And if an oppressing and greedy person have a design to cozen a young heir, or to get his neighbour's land, the cares of every day, and the interruptions of every night's sleep are more than the purchase is worth : whereas, he might buy virtue at half that watching, and the less painful care of a fewer number of days. A plain story is soonest told, and best confutes an intricate lie. And when a person is examined in judgment, one false answer asks more wit for its support and maintenance than a history of truth. And such persons are put to so many shameful retreats, false colours, fucuses, and daubings with untempered mortar, to avoid contradiction or discovery, that the labour of a false story seems in the order of things to be designed the beginning of its punishment : and if we consider how great a part of our religion consists in prayer, and how easy a thing God requires of us when he commands us to pray for blessings, the duty of a Christian cannot seem very troublesome.

5. And indeed I can hardly instance in any vice, but there is visibly more pain in the order of acting and observing it, than in the acquist or promotion of virtue. I have seen drunken persons, in their seas of drink and talk, dread every cup as a blow; and they have used devices and private arts to escape the punishment of a full draught; and the poor wretch, being condemned by the laws of drinking to his measure, was forced and haled to execution; and he suffered it, and thought himself engaged to that person, who with much kindness and importunity invited him to a fever: but certainly there was more pain in it than the strictness of holy and severe temperance: and he that shall compare the troubles and dangers of an ambitious war, with the gentleness and easiness of peace, will soon perceive that every tyrant and usurping prince that snatches at his neighbour's rights hath two armies, one of men and the other of cares. Peace sheds no blood, but of the pruned vine; and hath no business, but modest and quiet entertainments of the time, opportune for piety, and circled with reward. But God often punishes ambition and pride with lust; and he sent a thorn in the flesh as a corrective to the elevations and grandezza of St. Paul, growing up from the multitude of his revelations: and it is likely the punishment should have less trouble than the crime, whose pleasures and obliquity this was designed to punish. And indeed every experience can verify, that an adulterer hath in him the impatience of desires, the burnings of lust, the fear of shame, the apprehensions of a jealous, abused, and an enraged husband. He endures affronts,

mistimings, tedious waitings, the dulness of delay, the regret of interruption, the confusion and amazements of discovery, the scorn of a reproached vice, the debasings of contempt upon it; unless the man grows impudent, and then he is more miserable upon another stock. But David was so put to it to attempt, to obtain, to enjoy Bathsheba, and to prevent the shame of it, that the difficulty was greater than all his wit and power; and it drove him into base and unworthy arts, which discovered him the more, and multiplied his crime. But while he enjoyed the innocent pleasures of his lawful bed, he had no more trouble in it than there was in inclining his head upon his pillow. The ways of sin are crooked, desert, rocky, and uneven. They are 'broad'¹ indeed, and there is variety of ruins, and allurements to entice fools, and a large theatre to act the bloody tragedies of souls upon; but they are nothing smooth, or safe, or delicate. The ways of virtue are strait, but not crooked; narrow, but not unpleasant. There are two vices for one virtue; and therefore the way to hell must needs be of greater extent, latitude, and dissemination: but because virtue is but one way, therefore it is easy, regular, and apt to walk in without error or diversions. 'Narrow is the gate, and strait is the way;' it is true, considering our evil customs and depraved natures, by which we have made it so to us. But God hath made it more passable by his grace and present aids: and St. John Baptist receiving his commission to preach repentance, it was expressed in these words, 'Make plain the paths of the Lord.' Indeed repentance

¹ Wisdom, v. 7.

is a rough and a sharp virtue, and like a mattock and spade breaks away all the roughnesses of the passage, and hinderances of sin: but when we enter into the dispositions which Christ hath designed to us, the way is more plain and easy than the ways of death and hell. Labour it hath in it, just as all things that are excellent; but no confusions, no distractions of thoughts, no amazements, no labyrinths and intricacy of counsels: but it is like the labours of agriculture, full of health and simplicity, plain and profitable, requiring diligence, but such in which crafts and painful stratagems are useless and impertinent. But vice hath oftentimes so troublesome a retinue, and so many objections in the event of things, is so entangled in difficult and contradictory circumstances, hath in it parts so opposite to each other, and so inconsistent with the present condition of the man, or some secret design of his, that those little pleasures which are its focus and pretence are less perceived and least enjoyed, while they begin in fantastic semblances, and rise up in smoke, vain and hurtful, and end in dissatisfaction.

6. But it is considerable that God, and the sinner, and the devil, all join in increasing the difficulty and trouble of sin; upon contrary designs indeed, but all co-operate to the verification of this discourse. For God, by his restraining grace, and the checks of a tender conscience, and the bands of public honesty, and the sense of honour and reputation; and the customs of nations, and the severities of laws, makes that in most men the choice of vice is imperfect, dubious, and troublesome, and the pleasures abated, and the apprehensions various and in differing degrees; and men

act their crimes while they are disputing against them, and the balance is cast by a few grains, and scruples vex and disquiet the possession: and the difference is perceived to be so little, that inconsideration and inadvertency is the greatest means to determine many men to the entertainment of a sin. And this God does with a design to lessen our choice, and to disabuse our persuasions from arguments and weak pretences of vice, and to invite us to the trials of virtue, when we see its enemy giving us so ill conditions. And yet the sinner himself makes the business of sin greater: for its nature is so loathsome, and its pleasure so little, and its promises so unperformed, that when it lies open, easy, and apt to be discerned, there is no argument in it ready to invite us: and men hate a vice which is every day offered and prostitute; and when they seek for pleasure, unless difficulty presents it, as there is nothing in it really to persuade a choice, so there is nothing strong or witty enough to abuse a man. And to this purpose (amongst some others, which are malicious and crafty) the devil gives assistance, knowing that men despise what is cheap and common, and suspect a latent excellency to be in difficult and forbidden objects: and therefore the devil sometimes crosses an opportunity of sin, knowing that the desire is the iniquity and does his work sufficiently; and yet the crossing the desire by impeding the act heightens the appetite, and makes it more violent and impatient. But by all these means sin is made more troublesome than the pleasures of the temptation can account for: and it will be a strange imprudence to leave virtue upon pretence of its difficulty, when for that very reason we the rather

entertain the instances of sin, despising a cheap sin and a costly virtue; choosing to walk through the brambles of a desert, rather than to climb the fruit-trees of paradise.

7. Thirdly, Virtue conduces infinitely to the content of our lives, to secular felicities and political satisfactions; and vice does the quite contrary. For the blessings of this life are these that make it happy, peace and quietness, content and satisfaction of desires, riches, love of friends and neighbours, honour and reputation abroad, a healthful body, and a long life. This last is a distinct consideration, but the other are proper to this title. For the first it is certain, peace was so designed by the holy Jesus, that he framed all his laws in compliance to that design. He that returns good for evil, a soft answer to the asperity of his enemy, kindnesses to injuries, lessens the contention always, and sometimes gets a friend, and when he does not, he shames his enemy. Every little accident in a family to peevish and angry persons is the matter of a quarrel, and every quarrel discomposes the peace of the house, and sets it on fire; and no man can tell how far that may burn, it may be to a dissolution of the whole fabric. But who-soever obeys the laws of Jesus, bears with the infirmities of his relatives and society, seeks with sweetness to remedy what is ill, and to prevent what it may produce, and throws water upon a spark, and lives sweetly with his wife, affectionately with his children, providently and discreetly with his servants; and they all love the *majordomo*, and look upon him as their parent, their guardian, their friend, their patron, their proveditore. But look upon a person angry, peaceless, and disturbed,

when he enters upon his threshold, it gives an alarm to his house, and puts them to flight, or upon their defence; and the wife reckons the joy of her day is done when he returns; and the children enquire into their father's age, and think his life tedious; and the servants curse privately, and do their service as slaves do, only when they dare not do otherwise; and they serve him as they serve a lion—they obey his strength, and fear his cruelty, and despise his manners, and hate his person. No man enjoys content in his family but he that is peaceful and charitable, just and loving, forbearing and forgiving, careful and provident. He that is not so, his house may be his castle, but it is manned by enemies: his house is built, not upon the sand, but upon the waves, and upon a tempest: the foundation is uncertain, but his ruin is not so.

8. And if we extend the relations of the man beyond his own walls, he that does his duty to his neighbour, that is, all offices of kindness, gentleness, and humanity, nothing of injury and affront, is certain never to meet with a wrong so great as is the inconvenience of a lawsuit, or the contention of neighbours, and all the consequent dangers and inconvenience. Kindness will create and invite kindness; and injury provokes an injury. And since the love of neighbours is one of those beauties which Solomon did admire, and that this beauty is within the combination of precious things which adorn and reward a peaceable, charitable disposition; he that is in love with spiritual excellencies, with intellectual rectitudes, with peace and with blessings of society, knows they grow amongst the rose-bushes of virtue and holy obedience to the

laws of Jesus. And 'for a good man some will even dare to die;' and a sweet and charitable disposition is received with fondness, and all the endearments of the neighbourhood. He that observes how many families are ruined by contention, and how many spirits are broken by the care, and contumely, and fear, and spite, which are entertained as advocates to promote a suit of law, will soon confess that a great loss and peaceable quitting of a considerable interest is a purchase and a gain, in respect of a long suit and a vexatious quarrel.¹ And still if the proportion rises higher, the reason swells, and grows more necessary and determinate: for if we would live according to the discipline of Christian religion, one of the great plagues which vex the world would be no more. That there should be no wars, was one of the designs of Christianity: and the living according to that institution which is able to prevent all wars, and to establish an universal and eternal peace, when it is obeyed, is the using an infallible instrument towards that part of our political happiness which consists in peace. This world would be an image of heaven, if all men were charitable, peaceable, just, and loving. To this excellency all those precepts of Christ which consist in forbearance and forgiveness do co-operate.

9. But the next instance of the reward of holy obedience and conformity to Christ's laws is itself a duty, and needs no more but a mere repetition of it. We must be content in every state;² and be-

¹ James, iii. 16.

² *Ἀντάρκεια τῆ εἰς φιλοσοφία αὐτοῦίδακτος.*—Poli. Dixit M. Cato apud Aul. Gel. lib. xiii. c. 22. "True content is a self-taught philosophy."

cause Christianity teaches us this lesson, it teaches us to be happy: for nothing from without can make us miserable, unless we join our consents to it, and apprehend it such, and entertain it in our sad and melancholic retirements. A prison is but a retirement, and opportunity of serious thoughts, to a person whose spirit is confined, and apt to sit still, and desires no enlargement beyond the cancels of the body, till the state of separation calls it forth into a fair liberty; but every retirement is a prison to a loose and wandering fancy, for whose wildness no precepts are restraint, no band of duty is confinement; who, when he hath broken the first hedge of duty, can never after endure any enclosure so much as in a symbol. But this precept is so necessary, that it is not more a duty than a rule of prudence, and in many accidents of our lives it is the only cure of sadness. For it is certain that no providence less than divine can prevent evil and cross accidents: but that is an excellent remedy to the evil, that receives the accident within its power, and takes out the sting, paring the nails, and drawing the teeth of the wild beast, that it may be tame, or harmless, and medicinal. For all content consists in the proportion of the object to the appetite: and because external accidents are not in our power, and it were nothing excellent that things happened to us according to our first desires, God hath by his grace put it into our power to make the happiness, by making our desires descend to the event, and comply with the chance, and combine with all the issues of divine providence. And then we are noble persons, when we borrow not our content from things below us, but make our satisfactions from within. And it may be con-

sidered, that every little care may disquiet us, and may increase itself by reflection upon its own acts, and every discontent may discompose our spirits, and put an edge, and make afflictions poignant, but cannot take off one from us, but makes every one to be two. But content removes not the accident, but complies with it, takes away the sharpness and displeasure of it, and, by stooping down makes the lowest equal, proportionable, and commensurate. Impatience makes an ague to be a fever, and every fever to be a calenture, and that calenture may expire in madness; but a quiet spirit is a great disposition to health, and for the present does alleviate the sickness. And this also is notorious in the instance of covetousness. 'The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some have coveted after, they have pierced themselves with many sorrows.'¹ Vice makes poor, and does ill endure it.

10. For he that in the school of Christ hath learned to determine his desires when his needs are served, and to judge of his needs by the proportions of nature, hath nothing wanting towards riches. Virtue makes poverty become rich, and no riches can satisfy a covetous mind, or rescue him from the affliction of the worst kind of poverty. He only wants that is not satisfied. And there is a great infelicity in a family where poverty dwells with discontent: there the husband and wife quarrel for want of a full table and a rich wardrobe; and their love, that was built upon false arches, sinks when such temporary supporters are removed: they are like two millstones, which set the mill on

¹ 1 Tim. vi. 10

fire when they want corn: and then their combinations and society were unions of lust, or not supported with religious love. But we may easily suppose St. Joseph and the holy virgin-mother in Egypt, poor as hunger, forsaken as banishment, disconsolate as strangers; and yet their present lot gave them no affliction, because the angel fed them with a necessary hospitality, and their desires were no larger than their tables, and their eyes looked only upwards, and they were careless of the future and careful of their duty, and so made their life pleasant by the measures and discourses of divine philosophy. When Elisha stretched upon the body of the child, and laid hands to hands, and applied mouth to mouth, and so shrank himself into the posture of commensuration with the child, he brought life into the dead trunk; and so may we, by applying our spirits to the proportions of a narrow fortune, bring life and vivacity into our dead and lost condition, and make it live till it grows bigger, or else returns to health and salutary uses.

11. And besides this philosophical extraction of gold from stones, and riches from the dungeon of poverty, a holy life does most probably procure such a proportion of riches which can be useful to us, or consistent with our felicity. For besides that the holy Jesus hath promised all things which our heavenly Father knows we need, (provided we do our duty,) and that we find great securities and rest from care when we have once cast our cares upon God, and placed our hopes in his bosom; besides all this, the temperance, sobriety, and prudence of a Christian is a great income, and by not despising it, a small revenue combines its parts till

it grows to a heap big enough for the emissions of charity, and all the offices of justice, and the supplies of all necessities; whilst vice is unwary, prodigal, and indiscreet, throwing away great revenues as tributes to intemperance and vanity, and suffering dissolution and forfeiture of estates, as a punishment and curse. Some sins are direct improvidence and ill husbandry. I reckon in this number intemperance, lust, litigiousness, ambition, bribery, prodigality, gaming, pride, sacrilege; which is the greatest spender of them all, and makes a fair estate evaporate like camphor, turning it into nothing, no man knows which way. But what the Roman gave as an estimate of a rich man, saying, "He that can maintain an army is rich," was but a short account; for he that can maintain an army may be beggared by one vice, and it is a vast revenue that will pay the debt-books of intemperance or lust.

12. To these, if we add that virtue is honourable, and a great advantage to a fair reputation; that it is praised by them that love it not;¹ that it is honoured by the followers and family of vice; that it forces glory out of shame, honour from contempt; that it reconciles men to the fountain of honour—the almighty God, who will honour them that honour him: there are but a few more excellencies in the world to make up the rosary of temporal felicity. And it is so certain that religion serves even our temporal ends, that no great end of state can well be served without it;² not ambition, not de-

¹ — Virtus laudatur et alget. Juven.—"Virtue is praised and mourns."

² Præcipuam imperatoriæ majestatis curam esse prospicimus,

sires of wealth, not any great design, but religion must be made its usher or support. If a new opinion be commenced, and the author would make a sect, and draw disciples after him, at least he must be thought to be religious; which is a demonstration how great an instrument of reputation piety and religion is. And if the pretence will do us good offices amongst men, the reality will do the same, besides the advantages which we shall receive from the divine benediction. The power of godliness will certainly do more than the form alone. And it is most notorious in the affairs of the clergy, whose lot it hath been to fall from great riches to poverty, when their wealth made them less curious of their duty: but when humility and chastity and exemplary sanctity have been the enamel of their holy order, the people, like the Galatians, would pull out their own eyes to do them benefit. And indeed God hath singularly blessed such instruments to the being the only remedies to repair the breaches made by sacrilege and irreligion. But certain it is, no man was ever honoured for that which was esteemed vicious.¹ Vice hath got money and a curse many times; and vice hath adhered to the instruments and purchases of honour: but among all nations whatsoever, those called honourable put on the face and pre-

religionis indaginem; ejus si cultum retinere potuerimus, iter prosperitatis humanis aperitur inceptis. Theod. et Valent. in Cod. Theod.—“We consider that the promotion of religion should be the principal care of imperial authority: for if we can secure this, the way is opened for success in all things beside.”

¹ *Dedit enim providentia hominibus munus, ut honesta magis juvarent.* Quint. lib. i. c. 12.—“The providence of God ordained that virtue should best avail us.”

tence of virtue. But I choose to instance in the proper cognizance of a Christian, humility, which seems contradictory to the purposes and reception of honour; and yet in the world nothing is a more certain means to purchase it. Do not all the world hate a proud man? And therefore what is contrary to humility is also contradictory to honour and reputation. And when the apostle had given command, that in giving honour we should one go before another, he laid the foundation of praises, and panegyrics, and triumphs. And as humility is secure against affronts and tempests of despite, because it is below them; so when by employment, or any other issue of divine Providence, it is drawn from its sheath and secrecy, it shines clear and bright as the purest and most polished metals. Humility is like a tree, whose root, when it sets deepest in the earth, rises higher, and spreads fairer, and stands surer, and lasts longer: every step of its descent is like a rib of iron, combining its parts in unions indissoluble, and placing it in the chambers of security. No wise man ever lost any thing by cession, but he receives the hostility of violent persons into his embraces, like a stone into a lap of wool; it rests and sits down soft and innocently; but a stone falling upon a stone makes a collision, and extracts fire, and finds no rest. And just so are two proud persons, despised by each other, contemned by all, living in perpetual dissonances, always fighting against affronts, jealous of every person, disturbed by every accident, a perpetual storm within, and daily hissings from without.

13. Fourthly, Holiness and obedience is an excellent preservative of life, and makes it long and healthful. In order to which discourse, because it

is new, material, and argumentative, apt to persuade men who prefer life before all their other interests, I consider many things. First, in the Old Testament, a long and prosperous life were the great promises of the covenant; their hopes were built upon it, and that was made the support of all their duty. ‘If thou wilt diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, I will put none of the diseases upon thee which I brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee.’¹ And more particularly yet, that we may not think piety to be security only against the plagues of Egypt, God makes his promise more indefinite and unconfined: ‘Ye shall serve the Lord your God, and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee, and will fulfil the number of thy days:’² that is, the period of nature shall be the period of thy person; thou shalt live long, and die in a seasonable ripe age. And this promise was so verified by a long experience, that by David’s time it grew up to a rule: ‘What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile’³ And the same argument was pressed by Solomon, who was an excellent philosopher, and well skilled in the natural and accidental means of preservation of our lives: ‘Fear the Lord, and depart from evil; and it shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. Length of days is in the right hand of wisdom;’ for ‘she is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her.’⁴ Meaning, that the tree of life and immortality which God

¹ Exod. xv. 26.

² Psalm xxxiv. 12, 13.

³ Exod. xxiii. 25, 26.

⁴ Prov. iii. 7, 8, 16, 18.

had planted in paradise, and which, if man had stood, he should have tasted, and have lived for ever, the fruit of that tree is offered upon the same conditions; if we will keep the commandments of God, our obedience, like the tree of life, shall consign us to immortality hereafter, by a long and a healthful life here. And therefore, although in Moses's time the days of man had been shortened, till they came to 'threescore years and ten, or fourscore years, and then their strength is but labour and sorrow;'¹ (for Moses was the author of that Psalm;) yet to show the great privilege of those persons whose piety was great, Moses himself attained to one hundred and twenty years, which was almost double to the ordinary and determined period. But Enoch and Elias never died, and became great examples to us, that a spotless and holy life might possibly have been immortal.

14. I shall add no more examples, but one great conjugation of precedent observed by the Jewish writers, who tell us, that in the second temple there were three hundred high-priests, (I suppose they set down a certain number for an uncertain, and by three hundred they mean very many,) and yet that temple lasted but four hundred and twenty years: the reason of this so rapid and violent abscision of their priests being their great and scandalous impieties. And yet in the first temple, whose abode was within ten years as long as the second, there was a succession of but eighteen high-priests: for they being generally very pious, and the preservers of their rites and religion against the schism of Jeroboam, and the defection of Israel,

¹ Psalm xc. 10.

and the idolatry and irreligion of many of the kings of Judah, God took delight to reward it with a long and honourable old age. And Balaam knew well enough what he said, when in his ecstasy and prophetic rapture he made his prayer to God, ' Let my soul die the death of the righteous.'¹ It was not a prayer that his soul might be saved, or that he might repent at last ; for repentance and immortality were revelations of a later date : but he, in his prophetic ecstasy, seeing what God had proposed to the Moabites, and what blessings he had reserved for Israel, prays that he might not die, as the Moabites were like to die, with an untimely death, by the sword of their enemies, dispossessed of their country, spoiled of their goods, in the period and last hour of their nation :—But let my soul die the death of the just, the death designed for the faithful Israelites ; such a death which God promised to Abraham, that he should return to his fathers in peace, and in a good old age. For the death of the righteous is like the descending of ripe and wholesome fruits from a pleasant and florid tree ; our senses entire, our limbs unbroken, without horrid tortures, after provision made for our children, with a blessing entailed upon posterity, in the presence of our friends, our dearest relative closing up our eyes, and binding our feet, leaving a good name behind us. O let my soul die such a death ! for this, in whole or in part, according as God sees it good, is the manner that the righteous die. And this was Balaam's prayer : and this was the state and condition in the Old Testament.

¹ Numb. xxiii. 10.

15. In the gospel the case is nothing altered; for besides that those austerities, rigours, and mortifications which are in the gospel advised or commanded respectively, are more salutary or of less corporeal inconvenience than a vicious life of intemperance, or lust, or carefulness, or tyrant covetousness; there is no accident or change to the sufferance of which the gospel hath engaged us, but in the very thing our life is carefully provided for, either in kind, or by a gainful exchange. 'He that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it; and he that will save his life, shall lose it.'¹ And although God, who promised long life to them that obey, did not promise that himself would never call for our life, borrowing it of us, and repaying it in a glorious and advantageous exchange; yet this very promise of giving us a better life in exchange for this, when we exposed it in martyrdom, does confirm our title to this, this being the instrument of permutation with the other: for God obliging himself to give us another in exchange for this, when in cases extraordinary he calls for this, says plainly, that this is our present right by grace, and the title of the Divine promises. But the promises are clear; for St. Paul calls children to the observation of the fifth commandment, by the same argument which God used in the first promulgation of it: 'Honour thy father and thy mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long upon the earth.'² For although the gospel be built upon better promises than the law, yet it hath the same too, not as its foundation, but as appen-

¹ Matt. x. 39.

² Ephes. vi. 2, 3.

dages and adjuncts of grace, and supplies of need. ‘Godliness hath the promise of this life, as well as of the life that is to come.’¹ That is plain. And although Christ revealed his Father’s mercies to us in new expresses and great abundance ; yet he took nothing from the world which ever did in any sense invite piety, or endear obedience, or co-operate towards felicity. And therefore the promises which were made of old, are also presupposed in the new, and mentioned by intimation and implication within the greater. When our blessed Saviour, in seven of the eight beatitudes, had instanced in new promises and rewards, as ‘heaven, seeing of God, life eternal ;’² in one of them, to which heaven is as certainly consequent as to any of the rest, he did choose to instance in a temporal blessing, and in the very words of the Old Testament ; to show that that part of the old covenant which concerns morality, and the rewards of obedience, remains firm and included within the conditions of the gospel.³

16. To this purpose is that saying of our blessed Saviour, ‘Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God :’⁴ meaning, that besides natural means ordained for the preservation of our lives, there are means supernatural and divine. God’s blessings does as much as bread. Nay, it is every word proceeding out of the mouth of God ; that is, every precept and commandment of God is so for our good, that it is intended as food and physic to us, a means to make us live long. And therefore God hath done in this as in

¹ 1 Tim. iv. 8.

² Psalm xxxvii. 11.

³ Matt. v. 3, 5.

⁴ Matt. iv. 4 ; Deut. viii. 3.

other graces and issues evangelical, which he proposed to continue in his church for ever. He first gave it in miraculous and extraordinary manner, and then gave it by way of perpetual ministry. The Holy Ghost appeared at first like a prodigy, and with miracle; he descended in visible representations, expressing himself in revelations and powers extraordinary: but it being a promise intended to descend upon all ages of the church, there was appointed a perpetual ministry for its conveyance; and still, though without a sign or miraculous representment, it is ministered in confirmation by imposition of the bishop's hands. And thus also health and long life, which by way of ordinary benediction is consequent to piety, faith, and obedience evangelical, was at first given in a miraculous manner; that so the ordinary effects, being at first confirmed by miraculous and extraordinary instances and manners of operation, might for ever after be confidently expected without any dubitation, since it was in the same manner consigned by which all the whole religion was; by a voice from heaven, and a verification of miracles, and extraordinary supernatural effects. That the gift of healing, and preservation and restitution of life was at first miraculous, needs no particular probation. All the story of the gospel is one entire argument to prove it: and amongst the fruits of the Spirit, St. Paul reckons gifts of healing, and government, and helps, or exterior assistances and advantages, to represent that it was intended the life of Christian people should be happy and healthful for ever. Now that this grace also descended afterwards in an ordinary ministry is recorded by St. James. 'Is any man sick amongst

you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord:’¹ that was then the ceremony, and the blessing and effect is still: for ‘the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.’² For it is observable, that the blessing of healing and recovery is not appendant to the anealing, but to the prayer of the church; to manifest that the ceremony went with the first miraculous and extraordinary manner, yet that there was an ordinary ministry appointed for the daily conveyance of the blessing: the faithful prayers and offices of holy priests shall obtain life and health to such persons who are receptive of it, and in spiritual and apt dispositions. And when we see, by a continual flux of extraordinary benediction, that even some Christian princes are instruments of the Spirit, not only in the government, but in the gifts of healing too, as a reward for their promoting the just interests of Christianity, we may acknowledge ourselves convinced that a holy life in the faith and obedience of Jesus Christ, may be of great advantage for our health and life, by that instance to entertain our present desires, and to establish our hopes of life eternal.

17. For I consider that the fear of God is therefore the best antidote in the world against sickness and death: 1. Because it is the direct enemy to sin, which brought in sickness and death; and besides this, that God by spiritual means should produce alterations natural, is not hard to be understood by a Christian philosopher, take him in either of the two capacities. 2. For there is a rule of propor-

¹ James, v. 14.

² Ibid. verse 15.

tion and analogy of effects, that if sin destroys not only the soul but the body also, then may piety preserve both, and that much rather. For if sin, that is, the effects and consequents of sin, 'hath abounded, then shall grace superabound ;'¹ that is, Christ hath done us more benefit than the fall of Adam hath done us injury ; and therefore the effects of sin are not greater upon the body, than either are to be restored or prevented by a pious life. 3. There is so near a conjunction between soul and body, that it is no wonder if God, meaning to glorify both by the means of a spiritual life, suffers spirit and matter to communicate in effects and mutual impresses. Thus the waters of baptism purify the soul ; and the holy eucharist, not the symbolical, but the mysterious and spiritual part of it, makes the body also partaker of the death of Christ and a holy union. The flames of hell, whatsoever they are, torment accursed souls ; and the stings of conscience vex and disquiet the body. 4. And if we consider that in the glories of heaven, when we shall live a life purely spiritual, our bodies also are so clarified and made spiritual, that they are also become immortal ; that state of glory being nothing else but a perfection of the state of grace, it is not unimaginable but that the soul may have some proportion of the same operation upon the body as to conduce to its prolongation, as to an antepast of immortality. 5. For since the body hath all its life from its conjunction with the soul, why not also the perfection of life according to its present capacity, that is, health and duration from the perfection of the soul, I

¹ Rom. v. 20.

mean from the ornaments of grace? And as the blessedness of the soul (saith the philosopher) consists in the speculation of honest and just things; so the perfection of the body and of the whole man consists in the practice, the exercise, and operations of virtue.

18. But this problem in Christian philosophy is yet more intelligible, and will be reduced to certain experience, if we consider good life in union and concretion with particular, material, and circumstantiate actions of piety: for these have great powers and influences even in nature to restore health and preserve our lives. Witness the sweet sleeps of temperate persons, and their constant appetite; which Timotheus, the son of Conon, observed, when he dieted in Plato's academy with severe and moderated diet: "They that sup with Plato are well the next day." Witness the symmetry of passions in meek men, their freedom from the violence of enraged and passionate indispositions; the admirable harmony and sweetness of content which dwells in the retirements of a holy conscience: to which if we add those joys which they only understand truly who feel them inwardly, the joys of the Holy Ghost, the content and joys which are attending upon the lives of holy persons are most likely to make them long and healthful. 'For now we live,' saith St. Paul, 'if ye stand fast in the Lord.'¹ It would prolong St. Paul's life to see his ghostly children persevere in holiness: and if we understood the joys of it, it would do much greater advantage to ourselves. But if we consider a spiritual life abstractedly and in itself, piety produces our life, not by a natural

¹ 1 Thes. iii. 8.

efficiency, but by divine benediction. God gives a healthy and a long life as a reward and blessing to crown our piety even before the sons of men: 'For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; but they that be cursed of him shall be cut off.'¹ So that this whole matter is principally to be referred to the act of God, either by ways of nature, or by instruments of special providence, rewarding piety with a long life. And we shall more fully apprehend this, if, upon the grounds of Scripture, reason, and experience we weigh the contrary.

Vickedness is the way to shorten our days.²

19. Sin brought death in first; and yet man lived almost a thousand years. But he sinned more, and then death came nearer to him; for when all the world was first drowned in wickedness, and then in water, God cut him shorter by one half, and five hundred years was his ordinary period. And man sinned still, and had strange imaginations, and built towers in the air; and then about Peleg's time God cut him shorter by one half yet, two hundred and odd years was his determination. And yet the generations of the world returned not unanimously to God; and God cut him off another half yet, and reduced him to one hundred and twenty years; and, by Moses's time, one half of the final remanent portion was pared away, reducing him to threescore years and ten: so that, unless it be by special dispensation, men live not beyond that term, or thereabout. But if God had gone on still in the same method, and shortened our days as we multiplied our sins, we should have been but as an ephemeron; man should have lived the life of a fly or a gourd; the

¹ Psalm xxxvii. 22.

² Prov. x. 26.

morning should have seen his birth, his life have been the term of a day, and the evening must have provided him with a shroud. But God seeing man's thoughts were only evil continually, he was resolved no longer so to strive with him, nor destroy the kind, but punish individuals only and single persons; and if they sinned, or if they did not obey regularly, their life should be proportionable. This God set down for his rule: 'Evil shall slay the wicked person:'¹ and, 'He that keepeth the commandments keepeth his own soul; but he that despiseth his own ways shall die.'²

20. But that we may speak more exactly in this problem, we must observe, that in Scripture three general causes of natural death are assigned—nature, providence, and chance. By these three I only mean the several manners of divine influence and operation. For God only predetermines; and what is changed in the following events by divine permission, to this God and man in their several manners do co-operate. The saying of David concerning Saul, with admirable philosophy describes the three ways of ending man's life: 'David said furthermore, as the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall descend into battle and perish.'³ The first is special providence: the second means the term of nature: the third is that which in our want of words we call chance or accident, but is in effect nothing else but another manner of the divine providence. That in all these sin does interrupt and retrench our lives, is the undertaking of the following periods:

¹ Psalm xxxiv. 21.

² Prov. xix. 16.

³ 1 Sam. xxvi. 10.

21. First, In nature sin is a cause of dyscrasies and distempers, making our bodies healthless and our days few: for although God hath prefixed a period to nature by an universal and antecedent determination, and that naturally every man that lives temperately, and by no supervening accident is interrupted, shall arrive thither; yet because the greatest part of our lives is governed by will and understanding, and there are temptations to intemperance, and to violations of our health, the period of nature is so distinct a thing from the period of our person, that few men attain to that which God had fixed by his first law and preceding purpose; but end their days with folly, and in a period which God appointed them with anger, and a determination secondary, consequent, and accidental. And therefore, says David, 'health is far from the ungodly, for they regard not thy statutes.' And to this purpose is that saying of Eben-Ezra: "He that is united to God, the fountain of life, his soul being improved by grace, communicates to the body an establishment of its radical moisture and natural heat, to make it more healthful, that so it may be more instrumental to the spiritual operations and productions of the soul, and itself be preserved in perfect constitution." Now, how this blessing is contradicted by the impious life of a wicked person is easy to be understood, if we consider, that from drunken surfeits come dissolution of members, head-aches, apoplexies, dangerous falls, fracture of bones, drenchings and dilution of the brain, inflammation of the liver, crudities of the stomach, and thousands more, which Solomon sums up in general terms: 'Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath redness of eyes?

They that tarry long at the wine.¹ I shall not need to instance in the sad and uncleanly consequences of lusts; the wounds and accidental deaths which are occasioned by jealousies, by vanity, by peevishness, vain reputation, and animosities, by melancholy, and the despair of evil consciences: and yet these are abundant argument, that when God so permits a man to run his course of nature that himself does not intervene by an extraordinary influence, or any special acts of providence, but only gives his ordinary assistance to natural causes, a very great part of men make their natural period shorter, and by sin make their days miserable and few.

22. Secondly, Oftentimes providence intervenes, and makes the way shorter; God, for the iniquity of man, not suffering nature to take her course, but stopping her in the midst of her journey. Against this David prayed, ‘O my God, cut me not off in the midst of my days.’² But in this there is some variety; for God does it sometimes in mercy, sometimes in judgment. ‘The righteous die, and no man regardeth; not considering that they are taken away from the evil to come.’³ God takes the righteous hastily to his crown, lest temptation snatch it from him by interrupting his hopes and sanctity: and this was the case of the old world. For from Adam to the flood by the patriarchs were eleven generations; but by Cain’s line there were but eight, so that Cain’s posterity were longer-lived; because God, intending to bring the flood upon the world, took delight to rescue his elect from the dangers of the present impurity and the

¹ Prov. xxiii. 29, 30. ² Psalm cii. 24.

³ Isaiah, lvii 1.

future deluge. Abraham lived five years less than his son Isaac, it being (say the doctors of the Jews) intended for mercy to him, that he might not see the iniquity of his grand-child, Esau. And this the church for many ages hath believed in the case of baptized infants dying before the use of reason : for besides other causes in the order of divine providence, one kind of mercy is done to them too ; for although their condition be of a lower form, yet it is secured by that timely (shall I call it ?) or untimely death. But these are cases extra-regular ; ordinarily and by rule God hath revealed his purposes of interruption of the lives of sinners to be in anger and judgment ; for when men commit any signal and grand impiety, God suffers not nature to take her course, but strikes a stroke with his own hand. To which purpose I think it a remarkable instance which is reported by Epiphanius,¹ that for three thousand three hundred and thirty-two years, even to the twentieth age, there was not one example of a son that died before his father ; but the course of nature was kept, that he who was first born in the descending line did die first ; (I speak of natural death ; and therefore Abel cannot be opposed to this observation ;) till that Terah, the father of Abraham, taught the people to make images of clay, and worship them : and concerning him it was first remarked, that ‘ Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity :’² God by an unheard-of judgment, and a rare accident, punished his newly-invented crime. And whenever such intercision of a life happens to a vicious person, let all the world ac-

¹ Lib. i. tom. i. Panar. sect. 6. ² Gen. xi. 28.

knowledge it for a judgment: and when any man is guilty of evil habits or unrepented sins, he may therefore expect it, because it is threatened and designed for the lot and curse of such persons. This is threatened to covetousness, injustice, and oppression. 'As a partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not, so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.'¹ The same is threatened to voluptuous persons in the highest caresses of delight; and Christ told a parable with the same design. The rich man said, 'Soul, take thy ease:' but God answered, 'O fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee.' Zimri and Cozbi were slain in the trophies of their lust. And it was a sad story that was told by Thomas Cantipratanus: two religious persons, tempted by each other in the vigour of their youth, in their very first pleasures and opportunities of sin, were both struck dead in their embraces and posture of entertainment. God smote Jeroboam for his usurpation and tyranny, and he died.² Saul died for disobedience against God, and asking counsel of a Pythoness.³ God smote Uzziah with a leprosy for his profaneness;⁴ and distressed Ahaz sorely for his sacrilege;⁵ and sent a horrid disease upon Jehoram for his idolatry.⁶ These instances represent voluptuousness and covetousness, rapine and injustice, idolatry and lust, profaneness and sacrilege, as remarked by the signature of exemplary judgments to be the means of shortening the days of man; God himself proving the executioner of his own fierce wrath. I instance no more, but in

¹ Jer. xvii. 11. ² 2 Chron. xiii. 20. ³ 1 Chron. x. 13.
⁴ 2 Chron. xxvi. 19. ⁵ 2 Kings, xvi. ⁶ 2 Chron. xxi. 18.

the singular case of Hananiah the false prophet: 'Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will cut thee from off the face of the earth; this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord.'¹ That is the curse and portion of a false prophet—a short life, and a sudden death of God's own particular and more immediate infliction.

23. And thus also the sentence of the divine anger went forth upon criminal persons in the New Testament. Witness the disease of Herod, Judas's hanging himself, the blindness of Elymas, the sudden death of Ananias and Sapphira, the buffetings with which Satan afflicted the bodies of persons excommunicate. Yea, the blessed sacrament of Christ's body and blood, which is intended for our spiritual life, if it be unworthily received, proves the cause of a natural death. 'For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many are fallen asleep,'² saith St. Paul to the Corinthian church.

24. Thirdly, But there is yet another manner of ending man's life, by way of chance or contingency; meaning thereby the manner of God's providence and event of things which is not produced by the disposition of natural causes, nor yet by any particular and special act of God; but the event which depends upon accidental causes, not so certain and regular as nature, not so conclusive and determined as the acts of decretory providence, but comes by disposition of causes irregular to events rare and accidental. This David expresses by entering into battle. And in this, as in the other, we must separate cases extraordinary and rare from the ordinary

¹ Jer. xxviii. 16.

² 1 Cor. xi. 30.

and common. Extra-regularly and upon extraordinary reasons and permissions, we find that holy persons have miscarried in battle. So the Israelites fell before Benjamin; and Jonathan and Uriah, and many of the Lord's champions, fighting against the Philistines. But in these deaths, as God served other ends of providence, so he kept to the good men that fell all the mercies of the promise, by giving them a greater blessing of event and compensation. In the more ordinary course of divine dispensation, they that prevaricate the laws of God are put out of protection; God withdraws his special providence, or their tutelar angel, and leaves them exposed to the influences of heaven, to the power of a constellation, to the accidents of humanity, to the chances of a battle, which are so many and various, that it is ten thousand to one a man in that case never escapes: and in such variety of contingencies there is no probable way to assure our safety, but by a holy life to endear the providence of God to be our guardian. It was a remarkable saying of Deborah, 'the stars fought in their courses,' or in their orbs, 'against Sisera.'¹ Sisera fought when there was an evil aspect, or malignant influence of heaven upon him. For even the smallest thing that is in opposition to us is enough to turn the chance of a battle; that although it be necessary for defence of the godly that a special providence should intervene, yet to confound the impious no special act is requisite. If God exposes them to the ill aspect of a planet, or any other casualty, their days are interrupted, and they die. And that is the meaning

¹ Judg. v. 20.

of the prophet Jeremiah: 'Be not ye dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the heathen are dismayed at them:'¹ meaning, that God will overrule all inferior causes for the safety of his servants, but the wicked shall be exposed to chance and human accidents; and the signs of heaven, which of themselves do but signify, or at most but dispose and incline towards events, shall be enough to actuate and consummate their ruin. And this is the meaning of that proverb of the Jews, "Israel hath no planet;" which they expounded to mean, if they observe the law, the planets shall not hurt them; God will overrule all their influences; but if they prevaricate and rebel, the least star in the firmament of heaven shall bid them battle, and overthrow them. A stone shall lie in a wicked man's way, and God shall so expose him to it, leaving him so unguarded and defenceless, that he shall stumble at it and fall, and break a bone, and that shall produce a fever, and the fever shall end his days. For not only every creature, when it is set on by God, can prove a ruin; but if we be not by the providence of God defended against it, we cannot behold the least atom in the sun without danger of losing an eye, nor eat a grape without fear of choking, nor sneeze without breaking of a vein. And Arius, going to the ground, purged his entrails forth, and fell down upon the earth, and died. Such and so miserable is the great inse-

¹ Jer. x. 2. Gentes signa dierum et numerum mensis aut hebdomadæ cum metu superstitioso observarunt. Quarta luna infesta reputabatur, unde proverbium, 'Εν τετραδί γεγεννησθαι. Hujusmodi dies Græci ἀποφράδας vocant; Latini, nefastis. Pesiodus quintas omnino suspectas habet. Πέμπτας δὲ ἐξάλιασθαι, ἐπεὶ χαλεπαὶ τε ἐὶ αἰναί. 'Εν πέμπτῃ γὰρ φάσιν Ἐρινύας ἀμφιπολλέειν.

curity of a sinner: and of this Job had an excellent meditation. 'How oft is the candle of the wicked put out? and how oft cometh their destruction upon them? God distributeth sorrows in his anger.'¹ 'For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?'² 'This is he that dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet.'³

25. I sum up this discourse with an observation that is made concerning the family of Eli, upon which, for remissness of discipline on the father's part, and for the impiety and profaneness of his sons, God sent this curse, 'All the increase of their house shall die in the flower of their age.'⁴ According to that sad malediction it happened for many generations; the heir of the family died as soon as he begat a son to succeed him; till the family being wearied by so long a curse, by the counsel of Rabbi Johanan Ben Zachary, betook themselves universally to a sedulous and most devout meditation of the law; that is, to an exemplary devotion and strict religion: but then the curse was turned into a blessing, and the line masculine lived to an honourable old age. For the doctors of the Jews said, that God often changes his purposes concerning the death of man, when the sick person is liberal in alms, or fervent in prayer, or changes his name; that is, gives up his name to God by the serious purposes and religious vows of holy obedience. 'He that followeth after righteousness (alms it is in the vulgar Latin) and mercy, findeth life;⁵ that verifies the first; and the fervent prayer of Hezekiah is a great instance

¹ Job, xxi. 17. ² Ib. verse 21. ³ Ib. verse 23.

⁴ 1 Sam. ii. 33 ⁵ Prov. xxi. 21.

of the second: and all the precedent discourse was intended for probation of the third, and proves that no disease is so deadly as a deadly sin; and the ways of righteousness are therefore advantages of health, and preservatives of life, (when health and life are good for us,) because they are a certain title to all God's promises and blessings.

26. Upon supposition of these premises, I consider there is no cause to wonder, that tender persons and the softest women endure the violences of art and physic, sharp pains of caustics and cupping-glasses, the abscission of the most sensible part, for preservation of a mutilous and imperfect body: but it is a wonder that, when God hath appointed a remedy in grace apt to preserve nature, and that a dying unto sin should prolong our natural life, yet few men are willing to try the experiment. They will buy their life upon any conditions in the world but those which are the best and easiest; any thing but religion and sanctity although for so doing they are promised that immortality shall be added to the end of a long life, to make the life of a mortal partake of the eternal duration of an angel or of God himself.

27. Fifthly, The last testimony of the excellency and gentleness of Christ's yoke, the fair load of Christianity, is the reasonableness of it, and the unreasonableness of its contrary.¹ For whatsoever the wisest men in the world, in all nations and religions, did agree upon as most excellent in itself, and of greatest power to make political, or future and immaterial felicities, all that and much more the holy Jesus adopted into his law. For they re-

¹ Religio sapientiam adauget, et sapientia religionem. *Iac-tant.*—"Religion augments wisdom, and wisdom religion."

ceiving sparks or single irradiations from the regions of light, or else having fair tapers shining indeed excellently in representations and expresses of morality, were all involved and swallowed up into the body of light, the Sun of Righteousness. Christ's discipline was the breviary of all the wisdom of the best men, and a fair copy and transcript of his Father's wisdom: and there is nothing in the laws of our religion but what is perfective of our spirits, excellent rules of religion, and rare expedients of obeying God by the nearest ways of imitation, and such duties which are the proper ways of doing benefits to all capacities and orders of men. But I remember, my design now is not to represent Christianity to be a better religion than any other; for I speak to Christians, amongst whom we presuppose that; but I design to invite all Christians in name to be such as they are called, upon the interest of such arguments which represent the advantages of obedience to our religion as it is commanded us by God. And this I shall do yet further, by considering, as touching those Christian names, who apprehend religion as the fashion of their country, and know no other use of a church but customary, or secular and profane, that supposing Christian religion to have come from God, as we all profess to believe, there are no greater fools in the world, than such whose life conforms not to the pretence of their baptism and institution. They have all the signs and characters of fools, and indiscreet, unwary persons.

28. First, Wicked persons, like children and fools, choose the present, whatsoever it is, and neglect the infinite treasures of the future. They that have no faith nor foresight have an excuse for

snatching at what is now represented, because it is that all which can move them. But then such persons are infinitely distant from wisdom, whose understanding neither reason nor revelation hath carried further than the present adherences: not only because they are narrow souls who cannot look forward, and have nothing to distinguish them from beasts, who enjoy the present, being careless of what is to come; but also because whatsoever is present is not fit satisfaction to the spirit, nothing but gluttings of the sense and sottish appetites.¹ Moses was a wise person, and so esteemed and reported by the Spirit of God, because ‘he despised the pleasures of Pharaoh’s court, having an eye to the recompence of reward;’ that is, because he despised all the present arguments of delight, and preferred those excellences which he knew should be infinitely greater, as well as he knew they should be at all. He that would have rather chosen to stay in the theatre and see the sports out, than quit the present spectacle, upon assurance to be adopted into Cæsar’s family, had an offer made him too great for a fool; and yet his misfortune was not big enough for pity, because he understood nothing of his felicity, and rejected what he understood not. But he that prefers moments before eternity, and despises the infinite successions of eternal ages, that he may enjoy the present, not daring to trust God for what he sees not, and having no objects of his affections, but those which are the objects of his eyes, hath the impatience of a child, and the indiscretion of a fool, and the faithlessness

¹ Εἰ μὲν γὰρ πρόπτεις τι μεθ’ ἡδονῆς αἰσχρὸν, ἡ μὲν ἡδονὴ παρῆλθε, τὸ κακὸν μένει. Hierocl.—“If thou doest a base thing for pleasure, the pleasure passes away, the evil remains.”

of an unbeliever. The faith and hope of a Christian are the graces and portions of spiritual wisdom, which Christ designed as an antidote against this folly.

29. Secondly, Children and fools choose to please their senses rather than their reason, because they still dwell within the regions of sense, and have but little residence amongst intellectual essences. And because the needs of nature first employ our sensual appetites, these being first in possession would also fain retain it, and therefore for ever continue their title, and perpetually fight for it. But because the inferior faculty fighting against the superior is no better than a rebel, and that it takes reason for its enemy, it shows such actions which please the sense, and do not please the reason, to be unnatural, monstrous, and unreasonable. And it is a greater disreputation to the understanding of a man to be so cozened and deceived, as to choose money before a moral virtue; to please that which is common to him and beasts, rather than that part which is a communication of the Divine nature; to see him run after a bubble which himself hath made and the sun hath particoloured, and to despise a treasure which is offered to him, to call him off from pursuing that emptiness and nothing. But so does every vicious person; he feeds upon husks, and loathes manna; worships cats and onions, the beggarly and basest Egyptian deities, and neglects to adore and honour the eternal God: he prefers the society of drunkards before the communion of saints; or the fellowship of harlots, before a choir of pure, chaste, and immaterial angels; the sickness and filth of luxury, before the health and pu-

rities of charity and temperance; a dish of red lentil pottage before a benison; drink before immortality; money before mercy; wantonness before the severe precepts of Christian philosophy; earth before heaven; and folly before the crowns, and sceptres, and glories of a kingdom. Against this folly Christian religion opposes contempt of things below, and setting our affections on things above.

30. Thirdly, Children and fools propound to themselves ends silly, low, and cheap, the getting of a nut-shell, or a bag of cherry-stones, a gaud to entertain the fancy of a few minutes; and in order to such ends, direct their counsels and designs. And indeed in this they are innocent. But persons not living according to the discipline of Christianity are as foolish in the designation of their ends, choosing things as unprofitable and vain to themselves, and yet with many mixtures of rancour and injuriousness both to themselves and others. His end is to cozen his brother of a piece of land, or to disgrace him by telling a lie, to supplant his fortune, to make him miserable: ends which wise men and good men look upon as miseries and persecutions, instruments of affliction and regret; because every man is a member of a society, and hath some common terms of union and conjuncture which make all the body susceptible of all accidents to any part. And it is a great folly, for pleasing of the eye, to snatch a knife which cuts our fingers; to bring affliction upon my brother or relative which either must affect me, or else I am useless, a base or dead person. The ends of vice are ignoble and dishonourable. To discompose the quiet of a family, or to create jealousies, or to raise wars, or to make a man less happy, or apparently miserable,

or to fish for the devil, and gain souls to our enemy, or to please a passion that undoes us, or to get something that cannot satisfy us; this is the chain of counsels, and the great aims of unchristian livers: they are all of them extreme great miseries. And it is a great undecency for a man to propound an endless and more imperfect than our present condition; as if we went about to unravel our present composure, and to unite every degree of essence and capacity, and to retire back to our first matter and unshapen state, hoping to get to our journey's end by going backwards. Against this folly the holy Jesus opposed the fourth beatitude, or precept, of 'hungering and thirsting after righteousness.'

31. Fourthly, But children and fools, whatever their ends be, they pursue them with as much weakness and folly as they first choose them with indiscretion; running to broken cisterns, or to puddles to quench their thirst. When they are hungry they make fantastic banquets, or put colicquintida into their pottage, that they may be furnished with pot-herbs: or are like the ass that desired to flatter his master, and therefore fawned upon him like a spaniel, and bruised his shoulders. Such undecencies of means and prosecutions of interests we find in unchristian courses. It may be they propound to themselves riches for their end, and they use covetousness for their means, and that brings nought home; or else they steal to get it and they are apprehended, and made to restore fourfold. Like moths gnawing a garment, they devour their own house, and by greediness of desire they destroy their content, making impatience the parent and instrument of all their felicity. Or they are so greedy and imaginative, and have raised

their expectation by an over-valuing esteem of temporal felicities, that when they come they fall short of their promises, and are indeed less than they would have been, by being beforehand apprehended greater than they could be. If their design be to present themselves innocent and guiltless of a suspicion or a fault, they deny the fact, and double it. When they would repair their losses, they fall to gaming: and besides that, they are infinitely full of fears, passions, wrath, and violent disturbances in the various changes of their game; that which they use to restore their fortunes, ruins even the little remnant, and condemns them to beggary, or what is worse. Thus evil men seek for content out of things that cannot satisfy, and take care to get that content; that is, they raise war to enjoy present peace, and renounce all content to get it. They strive to depress their neighbours, that they may be their equals; to disgrace them, to get reputation to themselves; (which arts being ignoble, do them the most disparagement;) and resolve never to enter into the felicities of God by content taken in the prosperities of man; which is making ourselves wretched by being wicked. Malice and envy is indeed a mighty curse; and the devil can show us nothing more foolish and unreasonable than envy, which is in its very formality a curse; an eating of coals and vipers, because my neighbour's table is full, and his cup is crowned with health and plenty. The Christian religion, as it chooseth excellent ends, so it useth proportionate and apt means. The most contradictory accident in the world, when it becomes hallowed by a pious and Christian design, becomes a certain means of felicity and content. To quit our lands for

Christ's sake will certainly make us rich ; to depart from our friends will increase our relations and beneficiaries : but the striving to secure our temporal interests by any other means than obedient actions or obedient sufferings, is declared by the holy Jesus to be the greatest improvidence and ill husbandry in the world. Even in this world Christ will repay us an hundred-fold for all our losses which we suffer for the interests of Christianity. In the same proportion we find, that all graces do the work of human felicities with a more certain power and infallible effect than their contraries. Gratitude endears benefits, and procures more friendships : confession gets pardon ; impudence and lying doubles the fault, and exasperates the offended person : innocence is bold, and rocks a man asleep ; but an evil conscience is a continual alarm. Against this folly of using disproportionate means in order to obtain their ends, the holy Jesus hath opposed the eight beatitudes, which by contradictions of nature and improbable causes, according to human and erring estimate, bring our best and wisest ends to pass infallibly and divinely.

32. But this is too large a field to walk in ; for it represents all the flatteries of sin to be a mere cozenage and deception of the understanding ; and we find by this scrutiny, that evil and unchristian persons are infinitely unwise, because they neglect the counsel of their superiors and their guides. They dote passionately upon trifles ; they rely upon false foundations and deceiving principles ; they are most confident when they are most abused ; they are like shelled fish, singing loudest when their house is on fire about their ears ; and being merriest when they are most miserable and perishing ;

when they have the option of two things, they ever choose the worst; they are not masters of their own actions, but break all purposes at the first temptation; they take more pains to do themselves a mischief than would secure heaven; that is, they are rude, ignorant, foolish, unwary, and undiscerning people in all senses, and to all purposes; and are incurable but by their obedience and conformity to the holy Jesus, the eternal wisdom of the Father.

33. Upon the strength of these premises, the yoke of Christianity must needs be apprehended light, though it had in it more pressure than it hath; because lightness or heaviness being relative terms, are to be esteemed by comparison to others. Christianity is far easier than the yoke of Moses's law, not only because it consists of fewer rites, but also because those perfecting and excellent graces which integrate the body of our religion, are made easy by God's assisting, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost: and we may yet make it easier by love and by fear, which are the proper products of the evangelical promises and threatenings; for I have seen persons in affrightment have carried burdens, and leaped ditches, and climbed walls, which their natural power could never have done. And if we understood the sadnesses of a cursed eternity, from which we are commanded to fly, and yet knew how near we are to it, and how likely to fall into it, it would create fears greater than a sudden fire, or a midnight alarm. And those unhappy souls who come to feel this truth, when their condition is without remedy, are made the more miserable by the apprehension of their stupid folly: for certainly the accursed spirits feel the smart of hell once doubled upon them, by considering by what vain and

unsatisfying trifles they lost their happiness, with what pains they perished, and with how great ease they might have been beatified. And certain it is, Christian religion hath so furnished us with assistances, both exterior and interior, both of persuasion and advantages, that whatsoever Christ hath doubled upon us in perfection, he hath alleviated in aids.

34. And then, if we compare the state of Christianity with sin, all the preceding discourses were intended to represent how much easier it is to be a Christian than a vile and wicked person. And he that remembers, that whatever fair allurements may be pretended as invitations to a sin, are such false and unsatisfying pretences, that they drive a man to repent him of his folly, and, like a great laughter, end in a sigh, and expire in weariness and indignation, must needs confess himself a fool for doing that which he knows will make him repent that ever he did it. A sin makes a man afraid whenever it thunders; and in all dangers the sin detracts the visor, and affrights him, and visits him when he comes to die, upbraiding him with guilt, and threatening misery. So that Christianity is the easiest law, and the easiest state; it is more perfect, and less troublesome; it brings us to felicity by ways proportionable, landing us in rest by easy and unperplexed journeys. This discourse I therefore thought necessary, because it reconciles our religion with those passions and desires which are commonly made the instruments and arguments of sin: for we rarely meet with such spirits which love virtue so metaphysically as to abstract her from all sensible and delicious compositions, and love the purity of the idea.

St. Lewis the king sent Ivo, bishop of Chartres, on an embassy; and he told, That he met a grave matron on the way, with fire in one hand and water in the other; and, observing her to have a melancholic, religious, and fantastic deportment and look, asked her what those symbols meant, and what she meant to do with her fire and water? She answered, "My purpose is with the fire to burn Paradise, and with my water to quench the flames of hell; that men may serve God without the incentives of hope and fear, and purely for the love of God." Whether the woman were only imaginative and sad, or also zealous, I know not. But God knows he would have few disciples, if the arguments of invitation were not of greater promise than the labours of virtue are of trouble. And therefore the Spirit of God, knowing to what we are inflexible, and by what we are made most ductile and malleable, hath propounded virtue clothed and dressed with such advantages as may entertain even our sensitive part and first desires; that those also may be invited to virtue who understand not what is just and reasonable, but what is profitable; who are more moved with advantage than justice.¹ And because emolument is more felt than innocence, and a man may be poor for all his

¹ — Quis enim virtutem amplectitur ipsam, præmia si tollas?

Sublatis studiorum pretiis, etiam studia peritura, ut minus decora.—Tacit.

"— For who will embrace virtue herself if you take away her rewards?"

"The rewards of study being denied, the studies will perish as becoming less honourable."

Vide Ciceron. Tuscul. 2; Lact. lib. iii. c. 27. Instit.; et Idem. c. 12. Aug. cp. 12.

gift of chastity, the holy Jesus, to endear the practices of religion, hath represented godliness to us under the notion of gain, and sin as unfruitful: and yet, besides all the natural and reasonable advantages, every virtue hath a supernatural reward, a gracious promise attending; and every vice is not only naturally deformed, but is made more ugly by a threatening, and horrid by an appendant curse. Henceforth, therefore, let no man complain that the commandments of God are impossible; for they are not only possible but easy: and they that say otherwise, and do accordingly, take more pains to carry the instruments of their own death than would serve to ascertain them of life: and if we would do as much for Christ as we have done for sin, we should find the pains less and the pleasure more: and therefore such complainers are without excuse. For certain it is, they that can go in foul ways must not say they cannot walk in fair: they that march over rocks, in despite of so many impediments, can travel the even ways of religion and peace, when the holy Jesus is their guide, and the Spirit is their guardian, and infinite felicities are at their journey's end, and all the reason of the world, political, œcumenical, and personal, do entertain and support them in the travel of the passage.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal Jesus! who gavest laws unto the world, that mankind being united to thee by the bands of obedience, might partake of all thy glories and felicities, open our understanding, give us the spirit of discerning, and just apprehension of all the beauties with which thou hast enamelled virtue, to represent it

beauteous and amiable in our eyes ; that by the allurements of exterior decencies and appendant blessings our present desires may be entertained, our hopes promoted, our affections satisfied, and love, entering in by these doors, may dwell in the interior regions of the will. O make us to love thee for thyself, and religion for thee, and all the instruments of religion in order to thy glory and our own felicities. Pull off the visors of sin, and discover its deformities by the lantern of thy word, and the light of the Spirit, that I may never be bewitched with sottish appetites. Be pleased to build up all the contents I expect in this world upon the interests of a virtuous life, and the support of religion ; that I may be rich in good works, content in the issues of thy providence, my health may be the result of temperance and severity, my mirth in spiritual emanations, my rest in hope, my peace in a good conscience, my satisfaction and acquiescence in thee : that from content I may pass to an eternal fulness, from health to immortality, from grace to glory, walking in the paths of righteousness, by the waters of comfort, to the land of everlasting rest, to feast in the glorious communications of eternity ; eternally adoring, loving, and enjoying the infinity of the ever-blessed and mysterious Trinity ; to whom be glory, and honour, and dominion, now and for ever. Amen.

DISCOURSE XVI.

Of Certainty of Salvation.

1. WHEN the holy Jesus took an account of the first legation and voyage of his apostles, he found them rejoicing in privileges and exterior powers, in their authority over unclean spirits ; but weighing it in his balance, he found the cause too light, and therefore diverted it upon the right object : ‘ Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.’ The revelation was confirmed, and more personally applied in answer to St. Peter’s question : ‘ We have forsaken all and followed thee : what shall we

have therefore?' Their Lord answered, 'Ye shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' Amongst these persons to whom Christ spake Judas was; he was one of the twelve, and he had a throne allotted for him; his name was described in the book of life, and a sceptre and a crown was deposited for him too: for we must not judge of Christ's meaning by the event, since he spake these words to produce in them faith, comfort, and joy in the best objects. It was a sermon of duty as well as a homily of comfort, and therefore was equally intended to all the college. And since the number of thrones is proportioned to the number of men, it is certain there was no exception of any man there included; and yet it is as certain Judas never came to sit upon the throne, and his name was blotted out of the book of life. Now if we put these ends together, that in Scripture it was not revealed to any man concerning his final condition, but to the dying penitent thief, and to the twelve apostles, that twelve thrones were designed for them, and a promise made of their enthronization; and yet that no man's final estate is so clearly declared miserable and lost as that of Judas, one of the twelve, to whom a throne was promised; the result will be, that the election of holy persons is a condition allied to duty, absolute and infallible in the general, and supposing all the dispositions and requisities concurring; but fallible in the particular, if we fall off from the mercies of the covenant, and prevaricate the conditions. But the thing which is most observable is, that if in persons so eminent and privileged, and to whom a revelation of their election was made as a particular grace,

their condition had one weak leg, upon which, because it did rely for one half of the interest, it could be no stronger than its supporters; the condition of lower persons, to whom no revelation is made, no privileges are indulged, no greatness of spiritual eminency is appendant, as they have no greater certainty in the thing, so they have less in person, and are therefore to work out their salvation with great fears and tremblings of spirit.

2. The purpose of this consideration is, that we do not judge of our final condition by any discourses of our own, relying upon God's secret counsels, and predestination of eternity. This is a mountain, upon which whosoever climbs, like Moses, to behold the land of Canaan at great distances, may please his eyes, or satisfy his curiosity, but is certain never to enter that way. It is like inquiring into fortunes, concerning which Phavorinus the philosopher spake not unhandsomely: "They that foretel events of destiny and secret providence, either foretel sad things or prosperous. If they promise prosperous, and deceive you, you are made miserable by a vain speculation. If they threaten ill fortune, and say false, thou art made wretched by a false fear. But if they foretel adversity, and say true, thou art made miserable by thy own apprehension before thou art so by destiny; and many times the fear is worse than the evil feared. But if they promise felicities, and promise truly what shall come to pass, then thou shalt be wearied by an impatience and a suspended hope, and thy hope shall ravish and deflower the joys of thy possession." Much of it is hugely applicable to the present question. And our blessed

Lord, when he was petitioned that he would grant to the two sons of Zebedee, that they might sit one on the right hand and the other on the left, in his kingdom, rejected their desire, and only promised them what concerned their duty and their suffering; referring them to that, and leaving the final event of men to the disposition of his Father. This is the great secret of the kingdom, which God hath locked up and sealed with the counsels of eternity. 'The sure foundation of God standeth; having this seal, the Lord knoweth who are his.'¹ This seal shall never be broken up till the great day of Christ: in the meantime, the divine knowledge is the only repository of the final sentences, and this 'way of God is unsearchable and past finding out.' And therefore, if we be solicitous and curious to know what God in the counsels of eternity hath decreed concerning us, he hath, in two fair tables, described all those sentences from whence we must take accounts—the revelations of Scripture, and the book of conscience. The first recites the law and the conditions; the other gives in evidence. The first is clear, evident, and conspicuous; the other, when it is written with large characters, may also be discerned; but there are many little accents, periods, distinctions, and little significations of actions, which either are there written in water, or sullied over with carelessness, or blotted with forgetfulness, or not legible by ignorance, or misconstrued by interest and partiality, that it will be extremely difficult to read the hand upon the wall, or to copy out one line of the eternal sentence. And therefore excellent was the counsel of the son

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 19.

of Sirach : 'Seek not out the things that are too hard for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength. But what is commanded thee think thereupon with reverence; for it is not needful for thee to see with thine eyes the things that are in secret.'¹ For whatsoever God hath revealed in general concerning election, it concerns all persons within the pale of Christianity. He hath conveyed notice to all Christian people, that they are sons of God, that they are the heirs of eternity, coheirs with Christ, partakers of the divine nature; meaning that such they are by the design of God, and the purposes of the manifestation of his Son. The election of God is disputed in Scripture to be an act of God, separating whole nations and rejecting others; in each of which, many particular instances there were contrary to the general and universal purpose; and of the elect nations many particulars perished, and many of the rejected people 'sat down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.' And to those persons to whom God was more particular, and was pleased to show the scrolls of his eternal counsels, and to reveal their particular elections, as he did to the twelve apostles, he showed them wrapped up and sealed: and, to take off their confidences or presumptions, he gave probation in one instance, that those scrolls may be cancelled, that his purpose concerning particulars may be altered by us; and therefore that he did not discover the bottom of the abyss, but some purposes of special grace and indefinite design. **But his peremptory, final, unalterable decree, he**

¹ Ecclus. iii. 21, 22.

keeps in the cabinets of the eternal ages, never to be unlocked till the angel of the covenant shall declare the unalterable universal sentence.

3. But as we take the measure of the course of the sun by the dimensions of the shadows made by our own bodies or our own instruments; so must we take the measures of eternity by the span of a man's hand, and guess at what God decrees of us, by considering how our relations and endearments are to him. And it is observable, that all the confidences which the Spirit of God hath created in the elect, are built upon duty, and stand or fall according to the strength or weakness of such supporters. 'We know we are translated from death to life by our love unto the brethren :'¹ meaning, that the performance of our duty is the best consignment to eternity, and the only testimony God gives us of our election. And therefore we are to make our judgments accordingly. And here I consider, that there is no state of a Christian, in which by virtue of the covenant of the gospel it is effectively and fully declared that his sins are actually pardoned, but only in baptism, at our first coming to Christ, when he redeems us from our vain conversation, when he makes us become sons of God, when he justifies us freely by his grace, when we are purified by faith, when we make a covenant with Christ to live for ever according to his laws. And this I shall suppose I have already proved and explicated in the discourse of repentance. So that whoever is certain he hath not offended God since that time, and in nothing transgresseth the laws of Christianity, he is certain

¹ 1 John, iii. 14.

that he actually remains in the state of baptismal purity ; but it is too certain that this certainty remains not long, but we commonly throw some dirt into our waters of baptism, and stain our white robe which we then put on.

4. But then because our restitution to this state is a thing that consists of so many parts, is so divisible, various, and uncertain whether it be arrived to the degree of innocence, (and our innocence consists in a mathematical point, and is not capable of degrees any more than unity, because one stain destroys our being innocent,) it is therefore a very difficult matter to say that we have done all our duty towards our restitution to baptismal grace ; and if we have not done all that we can do, it is harder to say that God hath accepted that which is less than the conditions we entered into, when we received the great justification and pardon of sins. We all know we do less than our duty, and we hope that God makes abatements for human infirmities ; but we have but a few rules to judge by, and they not infallible in themselves, and we yet more fallible in the application ; whether we have not mingled some little minutes of malice in the body of infirmities, and how much will bear excuse, and in what time, and to what persons, and to what degrees, and upon what endeavours we shall be pardoned. So that all the interval between our losing baptismal grace, and the day of our death, we walk in a cloud, having lost the certain knowledge of our present condition by our prevarications. And indeed it is a very hard thing for a man to know his own heart. And he that shall observe how often himself hath been abused by confidences and secret imperfections,

and how the greatest part of Christians in name only do think themselves in a very good condition, when God knows they are infinitely removed from it; (and yet if they did not think themselves well and sure, it is unimaginable they should sleep so quietly, and walk securely, and consider negligently, and yet proceed confidently;) he that considers this, and upon what weak and false principles of divinity men have raised their strengths and persuasions, will easily consent to this, that it is very easy for men to be deceived in taking estimate of their present condition, of their being in the state of grace.

5. But there is great variety of men, and difference of degrees; and every step of returning to God may reasonably add one degree of hope, till at last it comes to the certainty and top of hope. Many men believe themselves to be in the state of grace, and are not; many are in the state of grace, and are infinitely fearful they are out of it: and many that are in God's favour do think they are so, and they are not deceived. And all this is certain. For some sin that sin of presumption and flattery of themselves; and some good persons are vexed with violent fears and temptations to despair, and all are not: and when their hopes are right, yet some are strong, and some are weak. For they that are well persuaded of their present condition, have persuasions as different as are the degrees of their approach to innocence; and he that is at the highest, hath also such abatements which are apt and proper for the conservation of humility and godly fear. 'I am guilty of nothing,' saith St. Paul; 'but I am not hereby justified:'¹ meaning thus,

¹ 1 Cor. iv 4.

though I be innocent, for ought I know ; yet God, who judges otherwise than we judge, may find something to reprove in me : ' It is God that judges,' that is, concerning my degrees of acceptance and hopes of glory. If the person be newly recovering from a state of sin, because his state is imperfect, and his sin not dead, and his lust active, and his habit not quite extinct, it is easy for a man to be too hasty in pronouncing well. He is wrapt up in a cloak of clouds, hidden and encumbered ; and his brightest day is but twilight, and his discernings dark, conjectural, and imperfect ;¹ and his heart is like a cold hand newly applied to the fire, full of pain, and whether the heat or the cold be strongest it is not easy to determine : or like middle colours, which no man can tell to which of the extremes they are to be accounted.¹ But according as persons grow in grace, so they may grow in confidence of their present condition. It is not certain they will do so ; for sometimes the beauty of their tabernacle is covered with goats'-hair and skins of beasts ; and holy people do infinitely deplore the want of such graces which God observes in them with great complacency and acceptance. Both these cases say, that to be certainly persuaded of our present condition is not a duty : sometimes it is not possible, and sometimes it is better to be otherwise. But, if we consider of this certainty as a blessing and a reward, there is no question but in a great and eminent sanctity of life there may also be a great confidence and fulness of persuasion, that our present being is well and gracious ; and then it is certain

¹ Eccles. ix. 1, 2.

that such persons are not deceived. For the thing itself being sure, if the persuasion answers to it, it is needless to dispute of the degree of certainty and the manner of it. Some persons are heartily persuaded of their being reconciled; and of these some are deceived, and some are not deceived; and there is no sign to distinguish them, but by that which is the thing signified;—a holy life, according to the strict rules of Christian discipline, tells what persons are confident, and who are presumptuous. But the certainty is reasonable in none but in old Christians, habitually holy persons; not in new converts, or in lately lapsed people; for concerning them we find the Spirit of God speaking with clauses of restraint and ambiguity; a ‘perhaps,’¹ and, ‘who knoweth?’ and ‘peradventure the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven thee;’² God may have mercy on thee. And that God hath done so, they only have reason to be confident, whom God hath blessed with a lasting, continuing piety, and who have wrought out the habits of their precontracted vices.

6. But we find in Scripture many precepts given to holy persons, being in the state of grace, to secure their standing, and perpetuate their present condition. For, ‘He that endureth unto the end he [only] shall be saved,’³ said our blessed Saviour: and ‘He that standeth, let him take heed

¹ *Beatus Daniel præscius futurorum, de sententia Dei dubitat. Rem temerariam faciunt qui audacter veniam pollicentur peccantibus.*—S. Hieron. Dan. iv. 27. “The blessed Daniel, though revealing future things, doubts concerning the sentence of God. They act with temerity who boldly promise pardon to sinners.”

² Joel, ii. 14; Acts, viii. 22.

³ Matt. xxiv. 13.

lest he fall :'¹ and, 'Thou standest by faith ; be not high-minded, but fear :'² and, 'Work out your salvation with fear and trembling.'³ 'Hold fast that thou hast, and let no man take thy crown from thee :'⁴ and it was excellent advice ; for one church had 'lost their first love,'⁵ and was likely also to lose their crown. And St. Paul himself, who had once entered within the veil, and seen unutterable glories, yet was forced to endure hardship, and to fight against his own disobedient appetite, and to do violence to his inclinations, for fear that, 'whilst he preached to others, himself should become a cast-away.' And since we observe in holy story, that Adam and Eve fell in paradise, and the angels fell in heaven itself, stumbling at the very jewels which pave the streets of the celestial Jerusalem ; and in Christ's family, one man, for whom his Lord had prepared a throne, turned devil ; and that in the number of the deacons, it is said that one turned apostate, who yet had been a man full of the Holy Ghost ; it will lessen our train, and discompose the gaieties of our present confidence, to think that our securities cannot be really distinguished from danger and uncertainties. For every man walks upon two legs ; one is firm, invariable, constant, and eternal ; but the other is his own. God's promises are the objects of our faith ; but the events and final conditions of our souls, which are consequent to our duty, can at the best be but the objects of our hope. And either there must in this be a less certainty, or else faith and hope are not two distinct

¹ 1 Cor. x. 12.² Rom. xi. 20.³ Phil. ii. 12⁴ Rev. iii. 11.⁵ Ibid. xxiv.

graces. ‘God’s gifts and vocation are without repentance;’¹ meaning, on God’s part: but the very people concerning whom St. Paul used the expression, were reprobate and cut off, and in good time shall be called again; in the meantime many single persons perish. ‘There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.’² God will look to that, and it will never fail: but then they must secure the following period, and ‘not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit.’³ ‘Behold the goodness of God towards thee,’ saith St. Paul, ‘if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.’ And if this be true concerning the whole church of the Gentiles, to whom the apostles then made the address, and concerning whose election the decree was public and manifest, that they might be cut off, and their abode in God’s favour was upon condition of their perseverance in the faith; much more is it true in single persons, whose election in particular is shut up in the abyss, and permitted to the condition of our faith and obedience, and the revelations of doomsday.

7. Certain it is, that God hath given to holy persons the spirit of adoption, enabling them to cry, ‘Abba, Father,’ and to account themselves for sons; and by this ‘spirit we know we dwell in him,’ and therefore it is called in Scripture, ‘the earnest of the Spirit:’⁴ though at its first mission, and when the apostle wrote and used this appellation, the Holy Ghost was of greater signification, and a more visible earnest and endearment of their

¹ Rom. xi. 29.

² Rom. viii. 1.

³ Rom. xi. 22.

⁴ Rom. viii. 15; 1 John, iv. 13; 2 Cor. i. 22, and v. 5.

hopes, than it is to most of us since. For the visible sending of the Holy Ghost upon many believers, in gifts, signs, and prodigies, was an infinite argument to make them expect events as great beyond that as that was beyond the common gift of men : just as miracles and prophecy, which are gifts of the Holy Ghost, were arguments of probation for the whole doctrine of Christianity. And this being a mighty verification of the great promise, the promise of the Father, was an apt instrument to raise their hopes and confidences concerning those other promises which Jesus made, the promises of immortality and eternal life, of which the present miraculous graces of the Holy Spirit were an earnest, and in the nature of a contracting-penny. And still also the Holy Ghost, though in another manner, is 'an earnest of the great price of the heavenly calling,' the rewards of heaven ; though not so visible and apparent as at first, yet as certain and demonstrative, where it is discerned, or where it is believed, as it is and ought to be in every person who does any part of his duty, because by the Spirit we do it, and without him we cannot. And since we either feel or believe the presence and gifts of the Holy Ghost to holy purposes, (for whom we receive voluntarily, we cannot easily receive without a knowledge of his reception,) we cannot but entertain him as an argument of greater good hereafter, and an earnest-penny of the perfection of the present grace, that is, of the rewards of glory ; glory and grace differing no otherwise, than as an earnest in part of payment does from the whole price, 'the price of our high calling.' So that the Spirit is an earnest, not because he always signifies to us that we are actually in the

state of grace, but by way of argument or reflection. We know we do belong to God, when we receive his Spirit; (and all Christian people have received him, if they were rightly baptized and confirmed;) I say, we know by that testimony that we belong to God; that is, we are the people with whom God hath made a covenant, to whom he hath promised and intends greater blessings, to which the present gifts of the Spirit are in order. But all this is conditional, and is not an immediate testimony of the certainty and future event; but of the event as it is possibly future, and may (without our fault) be reduced to act as certainly as it is promised, or as the earnest is given in hand. And this the Spirit of God oftentimes tells us in secret visitations and public testimonies; and this is that which St. Paul calls, 'tasting of the heavenly gift, and partaking of the Holy Ghost, and tasting of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.'¹ But yet some that have done so, have fallen away, and have quenched the Spirit, and have given back the earnest of the Spirit, and contracted new relations; and God hath been their Father no longer, for they have done the works of the devil. So that if new converts be uncertain of their present state, old Christians are not absolutely certain they shall persevere. They are as sure of it as they can be of future acts of theirs which God hath permitted to their own power: but this certainty cannot exclude all fear, till their charity be perfect; only according to the strength of their habits, so is the confidence of their abodes in grace.

¹ Heb. vi. 4, 5.

8. Beyond this, some holy persons have degrees of persuasion superadded as largesses and acts of grace; God loving to bless one degree of grace with another, till it comes to a confirmation in grace, which is a state of salvation directly opposite to obduration: and as this is irremediable and irrecoverable, so is the other inamissible. As God never saves a person obdurate and obstinately impenitent, so he never loses a man whom he hath confirmed in grace; 'whom he [so] loves, he loves unto the end:' and to others, indeed, he offers his persevering love; but they will not entertain it with a persevering duty, they will not be beloved unto the end. But I insert this caution, that every man that is in this condition of a confirmed grace, does not always know it: but sometimes God draws aside the curtains of peace, and shows him his throne, and visits him with irradiations of glory, and sends him a little star to stand over his dwelling, and then again covers it with a cloud. It is certain concerning some persons, that they shall never fall, and that God will not permit them to the danger or probability of it; to such it is morally impossible: but these are but few, and themselves know it not as they know a demonstrative proposition, but as they see the sun, sometimes breaking from a cloud very brightly, but all day long giving necessary and sufficient light.

9. Concerning the multitude of believers this discourse is not pertinent, for they only take their own accounts by the imperfections of their own duty blended with the mercies of God: the cloud gives light on one side, and is dark upon the other; and sometimes a bright ray peeps through the fringes of a shower, and immediately hides itself;

that we might be humble and diligent, striving forwards, and looking upwards, endeavouring our duty, and longing after heaven, 'working out our salvation with fear and trembling;' and in good time our calling and election may be assured, when we first, according to the precept of the apostle, use all diligence. St. Paul, when he wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, was more fearful of being reprobate, and therefore he used exterior arts of mortification.¹ But when he wrote to the Romans, which was a good while after, we find him more confident of his final condition, 'persuaded that neither height, nor depth, angel, nor principality, nor power, could separate him from the love of God in Jesus Christ.'² And when he grew to his latter end, when he wrote to St. Timothy, he was more confident yet, and declared that now 'a crown of righteousness was certainly laid up for him; for now he had fought the fight, and finished his course; the time of his departure was at hand.'³ Henceforth he knew no more fear; his love was as perfect as this state would permit, and that cast out all fear. According to this precedent, if we reckon our securities, we are not likely to be reproved by any words of Scripture, or by the conditions of human infirmity: but when the confidence outruns our growth in grace, it is itself a sin; though when the confidence is equal with the grace, it is of itself no regular and universal duty, but a blessing and a reward indulged by special dispensation, and in order to personal necessities or accidental purposes. For only so much hope is simply necessary as excludes despair, and

¹ 1 Cor. ix. 27.

² Rom. viii. 38, 39.

³ 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

encourages our duty, and glorifies God, and entertains his mercy : but that the hope should be without fear, is not given but to the highest faith, and the most excellent charity, and to habitual, ratified, and confirmed Christians ; and to them also with some variety. The sum is this : all that are in the state of beginners and imperfection have a conditional certainty, changeable and fallible in respect of us ; (for we meddle not with what it is in God's secret purposes ;) changeable, I say, as their wills and resolutions. They that are grown towards perfection have more reason to be confident, and many times are so : but still, although the strength of the habits of grace adds degrees of moral certainty to their expectation, yet it is but as their condition is, hopeful and promising, and of a moral determination. But to those few to whom God hath given confirmation in grace, he hath also given a certainty of condition ; and therefore if that be revealed to them, their persuasions are certain and infallible. If it be not revealed to them, their condition is in itself certain, but their persuasion is not so ; but in the highest kind of hope, ' an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast.'

THE PRAYER.

O eternal God, whose counsels are in the great deep, and thy ways past finding out ; thou hast built our faith upon thy promises, our hopes upon thy goodness, and hast described our paths between the waters of comfort and the dry, barren land of our own duties and affections. We acknowledge that all our comforts derive from thee, and to ourselves we owe all our shame and confusions and degrees of desperation. Give us the assistances of the Holy Ghost to help us in performing our duty ; and give us those com-

forts and visitation of the Holy Ghost, which thou in thy infinite and eternal wisdom knowest most apt and expedient to encourage our duties, to entertain our hopes, to alleviate our sadnesses, to refresh our spirits, and to endure our abode and constant endeavours in the strictnesses of religion and sanctity. Lead us, dearest God, from grace to grace, from imperfection to strength, from acts to habits, from habits to confirmation in grace; that we may also pass into the region of comfort, receiving the earnest of the Spirit, and the adoption of sons; till by such a signature we be consigned to glory, and enter into the possession of the inheritance which we expect in the kingdom of thy Son, and in the fruition of the felicities of thee, O gracious Father, God eternal. Amen.

SECTION XIV.

Of the Third Year of the Preaching of Jesus.

1. BUT Jesus knowing of the death of the Baptist, Herod's jealousy, and the envy of the Pharisees, retired into a desert place beyond the lake, together with his apostles; for the people pressed so upon them, they had not leisure to eat. But neither there could he be hid, but great multitudes flocked thither also; to whom he preached many things. And afterwards, because there were no villages in the neighbourhood, lest they should faint in their return to their houses, he caused them to sit down upon the grass; and with five loaves of barley, and two small fishes he satisfied five thousand men, besides women and children; and caused the disciples to gather up the fragments, which being amassed together filled twelve baskets. Which miracles had so much proportion to the understanding, and met so happily with the affections of the people, that they were convinced that this was the 'Messias who was to come into the world,' and had a purpose to have taken him by force, and made him a king.

2. But he that left his Father's kingdom, to take upon him the miseries and infelicities of the world, fled from the offers of a kingdom, and their tumultuary election, as from an enemy: and therefore, sending his disciples to the ship to go before towards Bethsaida, he ran into the mountains to hide himself, till the multitude should scatter to their several habitations; he, in the meantime, taking the opportunity of that retirement for the ad-

vantage of his prayers. But when the apostles were far engaged in the deep, a great tempest arose, with which they were pressed to the extremity of danger, and the last refuges, labouring in sadness and hopelessness, till the fourth watch of the night; when, in the midst of their fears and labour, Jesus comes walking on the sea, and appeared to them, which turned their fears into affrightments; for they supposed it had been a spirit. But he appeased their fears with his presence and manifestation who he was; which yet they desired to have proved to them by a sign. For Simon Peter said unto him, 'Master, if it be thou, command me to come to thee on the waters.' The Lord did so: and Peter, throwing himself upon the confidence of his Master's power and providence, came out of the ship; and his fear began to weigh him down, and he cried, saying, 'Lord, save me.' Jesus took him by the hand, reprov'd the timorousness of his faith, and went with him into the ship; where, when they had worshipp'd him, and admir'd the divinity of his power and person, they presently came into the land of Genesaret, the ship arriving at the port immediately. And all that were sick, or possessed of unclean spirits, 'were brought to him: and as many as touch'd the border of his garment were made whole.'

3. By this time they whom Jesus had left on the other side of the lake, had come as far as Capernaum to seek him, wondering that he was there before them. But upon the occasion of their so diligent inquisition, Jesus observes to them, "That it was not the divinity of the miracle that provok'd their zeal, but the satisfaction they had

in the loaves, a carnal complacency in their meal; and upon that intimation speaks of celestial bread, the divine nutriment of souls; and then discourses of the mysterious and symbolical manducation of Christ himself; affirming that he himself was ‘the bread of life that came down from heaven;’ that he would give his disciples ‘his flesh to eat, and his blood to drink;’ and all this shall be ‘for the life of the world,’ to nourish unto life eternal; so that without it a happy eternity could not be obtained. Upon this discourse ‘divers of his disciples (amongst whom St. Mark the evangelist is said to be one, though he was afterwards recalled by Simon Peter) forsook him,’¹ being scandalized by their literal and carnal understanding of those words of Jesus, which he intended in a spiritual sense. For the words that he spake were not profitable in the sense of flesh and blood; but ‘they are spirit, and they are life,’ himself being the expounder, who best knew his own meaning.

4. When Jesus saw this great defection of his disciples from him, he turned him to the twelve apostles, and asked if they ‘also would go away. Simon Peter answered, Lord, whither shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life: and we believe and are sure thou art that Christ the Son of the living God.’ Although this confession was made by Peter, in the name and confidence of the other apostles, yet Jesus told them, that even amongst the twelve there was one devil; meaning Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed him. This he told them prophetically, that they might perceive the sad accidents which afterwards happened, did not invade

¹ Epiphanius. Hæres. 15.

and surprise him in the disadvantages of ignorance or improvisation, but came by his own knowledge and providence.

5. Then came to him the Pharisees, and some Scribes, which came from Jerusalem and Galilee, (so 'Jesus would not go to Judæa, because the Jews laid wait to kill him,) and quarrelled with him about certain impertinent, unnecessary rites, derived to them not by Divine sanction, but ordinances of man; such as were, 'washing their hands oft when they eat, baptizing cups and platters,' and 'washing tables and beds:' which ceremonies the apostles of Jesus did not observe, but attended diligently to the simplicity and spiritual holiness of their Master's doctrine. But in return to their vain demands, Jesus gave them a sharp reproof, for prosecuting these and many other traditions, to the discountenance of divine precepts; and in particular, they taught men to give to the Corban, and refused to supply the necessity of their parents, thinking it to be religion, though they neglected piety and charity. And again he thunders out woes and sadnesses against their impieties; for being curious of minutes, and punctual in rites and ceremonials, but most negligent and incurious of judgment and the love of God; for their pride, for their hypocrisy, for their imposing burdens upon others which themselves helped not to support; for taking away the key of knowledge from the people, obstructing the passages to heaven; for approving the acts of their fathers in persecuting the prophets. But for the question itself, concerning washings, Jesus taught the people, that no outward impurity did stain the soul in the sight of God; but all pollution is from within, from the corruption of the

heart and impure thoughts, unchaste desires and unholy purposes; and that charity is the best purifier in the world.

6. And thence 'Jesus departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into a house,' that he might not be known. The diligence of a mother's love and sorrow, and necessity, found him out in his retirement: for 'a Syrophenician woman came and besought him that he would cast the devil out of her daughter.' But Jesus discoursed to her by way of discomfort and rejection of her, for her nation's sake. But the seeming denial did but enkindle her desires, and made her importunity more bold and undeniable: she begged but 'some crumbs that fell from the children's table,' but one instance of favour to her daughter, which he poured forth without measure upon the sons and daughters of Israel. Jesus was pleased with her zeal and discretion, and pitied her daughter's infelicity, and dismissed her with saying, 'the devil was gone out of her daughter.'

7. But Jesus stayed not long here, but returning 'to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of Decapolis, they brought unto him a man deaf and dumb;' whom Jesus cured by 'touching his tongue, and putting his fingers in his ears, which caused the people to give a large acclamation in approbation of all his actions, and they followed him unto a mountain, bringing to him multitudes of diseased people; and he healed them all. But because the people had followed him 'three days, and had nothing to eat,' Jesus, in pity to their need, resolved to feast them once more at the charge of a miracle: therefore taking 'seven loaves and a few small fishes, he blessed them,' and 'satisfied

four thousand men, besides women and children.' And there remained 'seven baskets full of broken bread and fish.' From whence Jesus departed by ship to the coasts of Mageddon and Dalmanutha, whither 'the Pharisees and Sadducees came seeking of him a sign.' But Jesus rejected their impertinent and captious demand, knowing they did it to ill purposes and with disaffection; reproving them, that they 'discerned the face of the sky,' and the prognostics of fair or foul weather, but 'not the signs of the times' of the Son of man. However, since they had neglected so great demonstrations of miracles, gracious discourses, holy laws and prophecies, they must expect 'no other sign but the sign of the prophet Jonas;' meaning, the resurrection of his body after three days' burial. And so he dismissed the impertinent inquisitors.

8. And passing again over the lake, as his disciples were solicitous, because 'they had forgot to take bread,' he gave them caution to beware 'of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the leaven of Herod:' meaning the hypocrisy and vanities of the one, and the heresy of the other: for Herod's leaven was the pretence that he was the Messiah; which the sect of the Herodians did earnestly and spitefully promote. And after this entertainment of themselves by the way, they came together to Bethsaida, where Jesus cured a blind man with a collyrium of spittle, salutary as balsam, or the purest eye-bright, when his divine benediction once had hallowed it. But Jesus staid not there, but departing thence, into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, out of Herod's power, (for it was in Philip's jurisdiction,) after he had 'prayed with his disciples,' he enquired what opinion the world

had of him, and ‘whom they reported him to be. They answered, Some say thou art John the Baptist, some that thou art Elias, or Jeremias, or one of the prophets:’ for in Galilee especially the sect of the Pharisees was mightily disseminated, whose opinion it was, that the souls of dead men, according to their several merits, did transmigrate into other bodies of very perfect and excellent persons. And therefore in all this variety, none hit upon the right, or fancied him to be a distinct person from the ancients: but although they differed in the assignation of his name, yet generally they agreed it was the soul of a departed prophet which had passed into another body. But Jesus asked the apostles their opinion; and Peter, in the name of all the rest, made an open and confident confession, **Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.**

9. This confession Jesus not only confirmed as true, but as ‘revealed by God,’ and of fundamental necessity: for after the blessing of Peter’s person upon allusion of Peter’s name, Jesus said, that ‘upon this rock [the article of Peter’s confession,] he would build his church;’ promising to it assistances even to perpetuity, insomuch that ‘the gates of hell,’ that is, persecution, and death, and the grave, ‘should never prevail against it.’ Adding withal a promise to Peter, in behalf of all the rest, as he made a confession for them all, that he would ‘give unto him the keys of the kingdom of heaven; so that whatsoever he should bind on earth should be bound in heaven, and whatsoever he should loose on earth should be loosed in heaven; a power which he never communicated before or since, but to their successors; greater than the large charter of nature and the donative of creation, in which all

the creatures under heaven were made subject to man's empire, but till now heaven itself was never subordinate to human ministration.

10. And now the days from henceforward to the death of Jesus we must reckon to be like the vigils or eves of his passion; for now he began, and often did ingeminate those sad predictions of his unhandsome usage he should shortly find; that he should be 'rejected of the elders, and chief-priests, and Scribes, and suffer many things at Jerusalem, and be killed, and be raised up the third day.' But Peter, hearing that sad discourse, so contrary to his hopes, which he had blended with temporal expectancies, (for he had learnt the doctrine of Christ's advent, but not the mystery of the cross,) in great and mistaken civility, took Jesus aside, 'and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee.' But Jesus, full of zeal against so soft and human admonition, that savoured nothing of God, or of abstracted immaterial considerations, chid Peter bitterly: 'Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me. And calling his disciples to him, he told them a second part of the sad doctrine, that not only himself, but all they also must suffer: for when the head was to be crowned with thorns, if the members were wrapped in softnesses, it was an unhandsome indecency, and a disunion too near an antipathy; and therefore whoever will be the disciple of Jesus, must 'take up his cross, deny himself,' and his own fonder appetites, and trace his Master's footsteps, marked out with blood that he shed for our redemption and restitution. And that there be no escape from the participation of Christ's suf-

fering, Jesus added this dilemma: 'He that will save his life shall lose it; and he that will lose it shall save it' to eternity. Which part soever we choose, there is a life to be lost. But as the first are foolish to the extremest misery, that will lose their souls to gain the world; so they are most wise and fortunate that will give their lives for him, because when 'the Son of man shall come in his own glory, and his Father's, and of his angels', he shall reward every man according to his works.' This discourse Jesus concluded with a prophecy, that some, standing in that presence 'should not die till they saw the Son of man coming in his kingdom.'

11. Of the greater glories of which, in due time to be revealed, 'Jesus after eight days' gave a bright and excellent probation: for 'taking with him Peter, and James, and John, he went up into the mountain Tabor to pray: and while he prayed he was transfigured before them; and his face did shine like the sun, and his garments were white and glistening. And there appeared talking with him Moses and Elias gloriously, speaking of the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem; which glory, these apostles, after they had awaked from sleep, did behold. And the interlocutors with Jesus, having finished their embassy of death, (which they delivered in forms of glory, representing the excellencies of the reward, together with the sharpness of the passage and interval,) departed, leaving the apostles full of fear, and wonder, and ecstasy; insomuch that 'Peter talked he knew not what,' but nothing amiss, something prophetic; saying, 'Master, it

is good to be here : let us build three tabernacles.'¹ And some devout persons, in memory of the mystery, did erect three churches in the same place in after-ages. But after the departure of those attendant saints, a cloud encircled Jesus and the disciples, and a voice came from the excellent glory, 'This is my beloved Son, hear him.' The cloud quickly disappeared, and freed the disciples from the fear it had put them in. So they attended Jesus and descended from the mountain, being commanded silence ; which they observed till the resurrection.

12. The next day came to Jesus a man praying in behalf of his son, lunatic and sore troubled with a devil, who sought oft to destroy him in fire and water, that Jesus would be pleased to deliver him. For his apostles tried, and could not, by reason of the want of faith : for this grace, if it be true, though in a less degree, is of power to remove mountains, to pluck up trees by the roots, and to give them solid foundation in the waters. And Jesus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him from that very hour. Then Jesus departed privately into Galilee, and in his journey repeated those sadnesses of his approaching passion ; which so afflicted the spirits of the disciples, that they durst no more provoke him to discourse, lest he should take occasion to interweave something of that unpleasant argument with it. For sad and disconsolate persons use to create comforts to themselves by fiction of fancy, and use arts of avocation to remove displeasure from them, and stratagems to remove it from their presence, by removing it

¹ Bede de Locis Sanctis, c. 17.

from their apprehensions; thinking the incommo-
dity of it is then taken away when they have lost
the sense.

13. When Jesus was now come to Capernaum, the exactors of rates came to Simon Peter, asking him if his Master paid the accustomed imposition, viz. a sicle or a didrachm, the fourth part of an ounce of silver, which was the tribute which the Lord imposed upon all the sons of Israel from twenty years old and above, to pay for redemption and propitiation, and for the use of the tabernacle.¹ When Peter came into the house, Jesus knowing the message that he was big with, prevented him, by asking him, 'Of whom do the kings of the nations take tribute; of their own children, or of strangers?' Peter answered, 'Of strangers.' Then said Jesus, 'then are the children free;' meaning, that since the Gentile kings do not exact tribute of their sons, neither will God of his. And therefore this pension to be paid for the use of the tabernacle, for the service of God, for the redemption of their souls, was not to be paid by him, who was the Son of God, but by strangers. Yet, to avoid offence, he sent Peter a fishing, and provided a fish with two didrachms of silver in it, which he commanded Peter to pay for them two.

14. But when the disciples were together with Jesus in the house, he asked them what they discoursed of upon the way. For they had fallen upon an ambitious and mistaken quarrel, which of them should be greatest in their Master's kingdom; which they still did dream should be an external and secular royalty, full of fancy and honour. But

¹ Exod. xxv.

the Master was diligent to check their forwardness, establishing a rule for clerical deportment: 'He that will be greatest among you, let him be your minister:' so supposing a greater and a lesser, a minister and a person to be ministered unto; but dividing the grandeur of the person from the greatness of office, that the higher the employment is, the more humble should be the man. Because in spiritual prelation it is not as in secular pomps, where the dominion is despotic, the coercion bloody, the dictates imperious, the laws externally compulsory, and the titles arrogant and vain; and all the advantages are so passed upon the person, that making that first to be splendid, it passes from the person to the subjects, who in abstracted essences do not easily apprehend regalities in veneration, but as they are subjected in persons made excellent by such superstructures of majesty. But in dignities ecclesiastical the dominion is paternal, the regimen persuasive and argumentative, the coercion by censures immaterial, by cession and consent, by denial of benefits, by the interest of virtues, and the efficacy of hopes, and impresses upon the spirit; the laws are full of admonition and sermon; the titles of honour monitors of duty, and memorials of labour and offices; and all the advantages, which from the office usually pass upon the person, are to be divested by the humility of the man; and when they are of greatest veneration, they are abstracted excellencies and immaterial, not passing through the person to the people, and reflected to his lustre, but transmitted by his labour and ministry, and give him honour for his labour's sake, (which is his personal excellency,) not for his honour and title, which is either a derivative

from Christ, or from the constitution of pious persons, estimating and valuing the relatives of religion.

15. Then Jesus taketh a little child, and setteth him in the midst, propounding him, by way of emblem, a pattern of humility and simplicity, without the mixtures of ambition or cautive distempers: such infant candour and lowliness of spirit being the necessary port through which we must pass, if we will enter into the courts of heaven. But as a current of wholesome waters breaking from its restraint runs out in a succession of waters, and every preceding draught draws out the next; so were the discourses of Jesus excellent and opportune, creating occasions for others, that the whole doctrine of the gospel and the entire will of the Father might be communicated upon design; even the chances of words and actions being made regular and orderly by divine providence: for from the instance of humility in the symbol and hieroglyphic of the child, Jesus discourses of "the care God takes of little children, whether naturally or spiritually such; the danger of doing them scandal and offences; the care and power of their angels-guardian; of the necessity in the event that scandals should arise, and of the great woe and infelicity of those persons who were the active ministers of such offences."

16. But if in the traverses of our life discontents and injuries be done, Jesus teaches how the injured person should demean himself: first, reprove the offending party privately; if he repent, forgive him for ever, with a mercy as unwearied and as multiplied as his repentance.¹ For the servant to

¹ *Injuriam qui tulit, oblivisci potest; qui fecit, nunquam.*

whom his Lord had forgiven ten thousand talents, because he refused to forgive his fellow-servant one hundred pence, was delivered to the tormentors, till he should pay that debt which his lord once forgave, till the servant's impiety forced him to repent his donative and remission.¹ But if he refuses the charity of private correction, let him be reprov'd before a few witnesses: and in case he be still incorrigible, let him be brought to the tribunal of the church; against whose advices if he shall kick, let him feel her power, and be cut off from the communion of saints, becoming a pagan or a publican. And to make that the church shall not have a dead and ineffectual hand in her animadversions, Jesus promises to all the apostles, what before he promised to Peter, a power of binding and loosing on earth, and that it should be ratified in heaven what they shall so dispose on earth, with an unerring key.

17. But John interrupted him, telling him of a stranger that cast out devils in the name of Jesus; but because he was not of the family, he had forbidden him. To this Jesus replied, that he should 'in no wise have forbidden him;' for in all reason he would do veneration to that person whose name he saw to be energetical and triumphant over devils, and in whose name it is almost necessary that man should believe, who used it as an instrument of

Tacit.—“He who has suffered an injury may forget it: he who has inflicted it can never.”

¹ De pœnis debitorum qui solvendo non sunt, vide Livium. Decad. I. lib. i. & vi. et Dionys. Halicarn. Hist. Rom. lib. vi. et A. Gellium. lib. xx. c. l. Cod. Theod. lib. iv. & 7. de exact.

ejection of impure spirits. Then Jesus proceeded in his excellent sermon and union of discourses, adding holy precepts "concerning offences which a man might do to himself; in which case he is to be severe, though most gentle to others: for in his own case he must show no mercy, but abscission: for it is better to cut off the offending hand or foot, or extinguish the offending eye, rather than, upon the support of a troublesome foot, and by the light of an offending eye, walk into ruin and a sad eternity, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." And so Jesus ended this chain of excellent discourses.

18. About this time was the Jews' feast of tabernacles, whither Jesus went up as it were in secret; and passing through Samaria, he found the inhabitants of a little village so inhospitable as to refuse to give him entertainment; which so provoked the intemperate zeal of James and John, that they would fain have called for fire to consume them, even as Elias did. But Jesus rebuked the furies of their anger, teaching them to distinguish the spirit of Christianity from the ungentleness of the decreetory zeal of Elias: for since the Son of man came with a purpose to seek and to save what was lost, it was but an indiscreet temerity suddenly, upon the lightest umbrages of displeasure, to destroy a man, whose redemption cost the effusion of the dearest blood from the heart of Jesus. But contrariwise Jesus does a miracle upon the ten leprous persons who came to him from the neighbourhood, crying out with sad exclamations for help. But Jesus sent them to the priest to offer for their cleansing. Thither they went; and but one only returned to give thanks,

and he 'a stranger,' who 'with a loud voice glorified God,' and with humble adoration worshipped, and gave thanks to Jesus.

19. When Jesus had finished his journey, and was now come to Jerusalem, for the first days he was undiscerned in public conventions, but heard of the various opinions of men concerning him; some saying he was a good man; others, that he deceived the people: and the Pharisees sought for him to do him a mischief. But when they despaired of finding him in the midst of the feast and the people, he made sermons openly in the midst of the temple: whom when he had convinced by the variety and divinity of his miracles and discourses, they gave the greatest testimony in the world of human weakness, and how prevalent a prejudice is above the confidence and conviction of a demonstration: for a proverb, a mistake, an error, in matter of circumstance, did in their understandings outweigh multitudes of miracles and arguments: and because 'Christ was of Galilee,' because 'they knew whence he was,' because of the proverb, that 'out of Galilee comes no prophet,' because 'the rulers did not believe in him,' these outweighed the demonstrations of his mercy, and his power, and divinity. But yet 'very many believed on him; and no man durst lay hands to take him: for as yet his time was not come,' in which he meant to give himself up to the power of the Jews. And therefore, when the Pharisees sent officers to seize him, they also became his disciples, being themselves surprised by the excellency of his doctrine.

20. After this 'Jesus went to the Mount of Olivet,' on the east of Jerusalem, and 'the next day returned again into the temple;' where the Scribes

and Pharisees brought him a woman taken in the act of adultery,' tempting him to give sentence, that they might accuse him of severity or intermeddling, if he condemned, or of remissness and popularity, if he did acquit her. But Jesus found out an expedient for their difficulty, and changed the scene, by bidding 'the innocent person among them cast the first stone at the adulteress:' and then stooping down, to give them fair occasion to withdraw, 'he wrote upon the ground with his finger,' whilst they left the woman and her crime to a more private censure. 'Jesus was left alone, and the woman in the midst;' whom Jesus dismissed, charging her to 'sin no more.' And a while after, Jesus begins again to discourse to them, "of his mission from the Father, of his crucifixion and exaltation from the earth, of the reward of believers, of the excellency of truth, of spiritual liberty and relations, who are the sons of Abraham, and who the children of the devil, of his own eternal generation, of the desire of Abraham to see his day. In which sermon he continued, adding still new excellencies, and confuting their malicious and vainer calumnies, till they, that they might also confute him, 'took up stones to cast at him.' But he 'went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

21. But in his passage he met a man who had been born blind; and after he had discoursed cursorily of the cause of that blindness, it being a misery not sent as a punishment to 'his own or his parents' sin,' but as an occasion to make public 'the glory of God;' he, to manifest that himself was 'the light of the world' in all senses, said it now, and proved it by a miracle; for, sitting down,

' he made clay of spittle,' and ' anointing the eyes of the blind man,' bid him ' go wash in Siloan:' which was a pool of limpid water which God sent at the prayer of Isaiah the prophet, a little before his death, to satisfy the necessity of his people, oppressed with thirst and a strict siege; and it stood at the foot of the Mount Sion, and gave its water at first by returns and periods, always to the Jews, but not to the enemies:¹ and those intermitted springings were still continued, but only a pool was made from the frequent effluxes. The blind man ' went and washed, and returned seeing;' and was incessantly vexed by the Pharisees, to tell them the manner and circumstances of the cure. And when the man had averred the truth, and named his physician, giving him a pious and charitable testimony, the Pharisees, because they could not force him to disavow his good opinion of Jesus, ' cast him out of the synagogue.' But Jesus meeting him received him into the church, told him he was Christ; and the man became again enlightened, and he believed, and worshipped. But the Pharisees blasphemed: for such was the dispensation of the divine mysteries, that the blind should see, and they which think they see clearly should become blind, because they had not the excuse of ignorance to lessen or take off the sin, but in the midst of light they shut their eyes, and doted upon darkness; and ' therefore did their sin remain.'

22. But Jesus continued his sermon among the Pharisees, insinuating reprehensions in his dogmatical discourses, which like light shined and discovered error: for by discoursing, " the proper-

¹ Epphian. de Vita et Interitu Prophet. c. 7.

ties of a good shepherd, and the lawful way of intromission, he proved them to be 'thieves and robbers,' because they refused to 'enter in by Jesus,' who is 'the door of the sheep:' and upon the same ground reprov'd all those false Christs which before him usurped the title of Messias; and proved his own vocation and office by an argument which no other shepherd would use, because he 'laid down his life for his sheep.' Others would take the fleece, and eat the flesh; but none but himself would die for his sheep: but he would first die, and then gather his sheep together into one fold, (intimating the calling of the Gentiles.) To which purpose he was 'enabled by his Father to lay down his life, and to take it up:' and had also endeared them to his Father, that they should be 'preserved unto eternal life; and no power should be able to take them out of his hand, or the hand of his Father:' for, because Jesus was 'united to the Father,' the Father's care preserved the Son's flocks."

23. But the Jews, to requite him for his so divine sermons, betook themselves to their old argument; 'they took up stones again to cast at him,' pretending he had blasphemed. But Jesus proved it to be no blasphemy to call himself the 'Son of God,' because they to whom the word of God came, are in Scripture called gods. But nothing could satisfy them, whose temporal interest was concerned, not to consent to such doctrine which would save their souls by ruining their temporal concernments. But when 'they sought again to take him, Jesus escaped out of their hands, and went away beyond Jordan, where John at first baptized; which gave the people occasion to remem-

ber that 'John did no miracle, but this man does many;' and John, whom all men did revere and highly account for his office and sanctity, gave testimony to Jesus: 'and many believed on him there.'

24. After this, Jesus knowing that 'the harvest was great, and as yet the labourers had been few, sent out seventy-two of his disciples, with the like commission as formerly the twelve apostles, that they might 'go before to those places whither himself meant to come. Of which number were the seven, whom afterwards the apostles set over the widows, and Matthias, Mark, and some say Luke, Justus, Barnabas, Appelles, Rufus, Niger, Cephas, (not Peter,) Thaddæus, Aristion, and John. The rest of the names could not be recovered by the best diligence of Eusebius and Epiphanius.¹ But when they returned from their journey they rejoiced greatly in the legation and power: and Jesus also rejoiced in spirit, giving glory to God, that he had made his revelations to babes and the more imperfect persons; like the lowest valleys, which receive from heaven the greatest floods of rain and blessings, and stand thick with corn and flowers, when the mountains are unfruitful in their height and greatness.

25. And now a doctor of the law came to Jesus, asking him a question of the greatest consideration that a wise man could ask, or a prophet answer: 'Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus referred him to the Scriptures, and declared the way to heaven to be this only, 'To love the Lord with all our powers

¹ Ephiphan. Pan. lib. i. tom. 1; Euseb. lib. i. c. 12; Papias apud Euseb. lib. iii. c. 33.

and faculties, and our neighbour as ourself.' But when the lawyer, being captious, made a scruple in a smooth rush, asking what is meant by 'neighbour; Jesus told him by a parable of a traveller fallen into the hands of robbers, and neglected by a priest and by a levite, but relieved by a Samaritan, that no distance of country or religion destroys the relation of neighbourhood; but every person with whom we converse in peace and charity, is that neighbour whom we are to love as ourselves.

26. Jesus having departed from Jerusalem upon the fore-mentioned danger, came to a village called Bethany; where Martha, making great and busy preparation for his entertainment, to express her joy and her affections to his person, desired Jesus to dismiss her sister Mary from his feet, who sat there, feasting herself with the viands and sweetnesses of his doctrine, incurious of the provisions for entertainment. But Jesus commended her choice; and though he did not expressly disrepute Martha's civility, yet he preferred Mary's religion and sanctity of affections. In this time (because 'the night drew on in which no man could work,') Jesus hastened to do his Father's business, and to pour out the whole cataracts of holy lessons; like the fruitful Nilus, swelling over the banks, and filling all the trenches, to make a plenty of corn and fruits, great as the inundation. Jesus therefore teaches his disciples "that form of prayer the second time, which we call the Lord's Prayer: teaches them assiduity and indefatigable importunity in prayer, by a parable of an importunate neighbour borrowing loaves at midnight, and a troublesome widow, who forced an unjust judge to do her right by her clamorous

and hourly addresses; encourages them to pray, by consideration of the divine goodness and fatherly affection, far more indulgent to his sons than natural fathers are to their dearest issue; and adds a gracious promise of success to them that pray. He reproveth pharisaical ostentation; arms his disciples against the fear of men and the terrors of persecution, which can arrive but to the incommodities of the body; teaches the fear of God, who is Lord of the whole man, and can accurse the soul as well as punish the body. He refuses to divide the inheritance between two brethren, as not having competent power to become lord in temporal jurisdictions. He preaches against covetousness, and the placing felicities in worldly possessions, by a parable of a rich man, whose riches were two big for his barns, and big enough for his soul, and he ran over into voluptuousness, and stupid complacencies in his perishing goods; he was snatched from their possession, and his soul taken from him in the violence of a rapid and hasty sickness, in the space of one night. Discourses of divine Providence and care over us all, and descending even as low as grass. He exhorts to alms-deeds, to watchfulness, and preparation against the sudden and unexpected coming of our Lord to judgment, or the arrest of death; tells the offices and sedulity of the clergy, under the apologue of stewards and governors of their lords' houses; teaches them gentleness and sobriety, and not to do evil upon confidence of their Lord's absence and delay; and teaches the people even of themselves to judge what is right concerning the signs of the coming of the Son of man. And the end

of all these discourses was, that all men should repent, and live good lives, and be saved."

27. At this sermon 'there were present some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices.' For the Galileans were a sort of people that taught it to be unlawful to pay tribute to strangers, or to pray for the Romans; and because the Jews did both, they refused to communicate in their sacred rites, and would sacrifice apart; at which solemnity, when Pilate the Roman deputy had apprehended many of them, he caused them all to be slain, making them to die upon the same altars. These were of the province of Judæa, but of the same opinion with those who taught in Galilee, from whence the sect had its appellative. But to the story: Jesus made reply, that these external accidents, though they be sad and calamitous, yet they are no arguments of condemnation against the persons of the men, to convince them of a greater guilt than others, upon whom no such visible signatures have been imprinted. The purpose of such chances is, that we should 'repent, lest we perish' in the like judgment.

28. About this time a certain ruler of the synagogue renewed the old question about the observation of the sabbath; repining at Jesus that he cured 'a woman that was crooked, loosing her from her infirmity, with which she had been afflicted eighteen years.' But Jesus made the man ashamed by an argument from their own practice, who themselves 'loose an ox from the stall on the sabbath, and lead him to watering. And by the same argument he also stopped the mouths of the Scribes

and Pharisees, which were open upon him for curing an hydropic person upon the sabbath. For Jesus, that he might draw off and separate Christianity from the yoke of ceremonies, by abolishing and taking off the strictest Mosaical rites, chose to do very many of his miracles upon the sabbath, that he might do the work of abrogation and institution both at once: not much unlike the sabbatical pool in Judæa, which was dry six days, but gushed out in a full stream upon the sabbath.¹ For though upon all days Christ was operative and miraculous, yet many reasons did concur and determine him to a more frequent working upon those days of public ceremony and convention. But going forth from thence he went up and down the cities of Galilee, re-enforcing the same doctrine he had formerly taught them, and daily adding new precepts and cautions and prudent insinuations: "advertising of the multitudes of them that perish, and the paucity of them that shall be saved, and that we should strive 'to enter in at the strait gate;' that the way to destruction is broad and plausible, the way to heaven nice and austere, 'and few there be that find it:' teaches them modesty at feasts and entertainments of the poor; discourses of the many excuses and unwillingnesses of persons who were invited to the feast of the kingdom, the refreshments of the gospel; and tacitly insinuates the rejection of the Jews, who were the first invited, and the calling of the Gentiles, who were the persons called in from the highways and hedges. He reprehends Herod for his subtlety and design to kill him; prophesies that he

¹ Joseph. de Bello Jud. lib. vii. c. 24.

should die at Jerusalem; and intimates great sadnesses future to them for neglecting this their day of visitation, and for 'killing the prophets and the messengers sent from God.'"

29. It now grew towards winter, and the Jews' feast of dedication was at hand; therefore Jesus went up to Jerusalem to the feast, where he preached in Solomon's porch, which part of the temple stood entire from the first ruins; and the end of his sermon was, that the Jews had like to have stoned him. But retiring from thence he went beyond Jordan, where he taught the people in a most elegant and persuasive parable, concerning "the mercy of God in accepting penitents, in the parable of the Prodigal Son returning: discourses of the design of the Messiah coming into the world, to recover erring persons from their sin and danger, in the apologues of the lost sheep, and goath; and under the representment of an unjust, but prudent steward, he taught us so to employ our present opportunities and estates, by laying them out in acts of mercy and religion, that when our souls shall be dismissed from the stewardship and custody of our body, we 'may be entertained in everlasting habitations.' He instructed the Pharisees in the question of divorces, limiting the permissions of separations to the only cause of fornication: preferreth holy celibate before the estate of marriage, in them to whom the gift of continency is given, in order to the kingdom of heaven. He telleth a story or a parable, (for which is uncertain,) of a rich man (whom Euthymius, out of the tradition of the Hebrews, nameth Nymensis) and Lazarus: the first a voluptuous person, and uncharitable; the other pious, afflicted, sick, and a beg-

gar: the first died, and went to hell; the second to Abraham's bosom. God so ordering the dispensation of good things, that we cannot easily enjoy two heavens; nor shall the infelicities of our lives, if we be pious, end otherwise than in a beatified condition. The epilogue of which story discovered this truth also, that the ordinary means of salvation are the express revelations of Scripture, and the ministries of God's appointment: and whosoever neglects these, shall not be supplied with means extraordinary; or if he were, they would be totally ineffectual.

30. And still the people drew water from the fountains of our Saviour, which streamed out in a full and continual emanation. For adding wave to wave, 'line to line, precept upon precept,' he "reproved the fastidiousness of the Pharisee, that came with eucharist to God, and contempt to his brother; and commended the humility of the publican's address, who came deploring his sins, and with modesty and penance and importunity begged and obtained a mercy. Then he laid hands upon certain young children, and gave them benediction, charging his apostles to admit infants to him, because to them in person, and to such in emblem and signification, the kingdom of heaven does appertain. He instructs a young man in the ways and counsels of perfection, besides the observation of precepts, by heroic renunciations and acts of munificent charity." Which discourse because it alighted upon an indisposed and an unfortunate subject, ('for the young man was very rich,') Jesus discourses "how hard it is for a rich man to be saved; but he expounds himself to mean, 'they that trust in riches:' and however it is a

matter of so great temptation, that it is almost impossible to escape; yet 'with God nothing is impossible.' But when the apostles heard the Master bidding the young man 'sell all, and give to the poor, and follow him,' and for his reward promised him 'a heavenly treasure;' Peter, in the name of the rest, began to think that this was their case, and the promise also might concern them; and asking him this question, What shall we have, who have forsaken all, and followed thee? Jesus answered, that they should 'sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'

31. And Jesus extended this mercy to every disciple that should 'forsake either house, or wife, or children, or any thing, for his sake and the gospel's;' and that they 'should receive a hundred fold in this life,' by way of comfort and equivalency, 'and in the world to come' thousands of glories and possessions, in fruition and redundancy. For 'they that are last shall be first, and the first shall be last:' and the despised people of this world shall reign like kings, and contempt itself shall swell up into glory, and poverty into an eternal satisfaction. And these rewards shall not be accounted according to the privileges of nations, or priority of vocation, but readiness of mind and obedience and sedulity of operation after calling. Which Jesus taught his disciples in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, to whom the master gave the same reward, though the times of their working were different; as their calling and employment had determined the opportunity of their labours.

DISCOURSE XVII.

Of Scandal; or, giving and taking Offence.

1. A SAD curse being threatened in the gospel to them who offend any of Christ's little ones; that is, such as are novices and babes in Christianity, it concerns us to learn our duty and perform it, that we may avoid the curse: for, 'Woe to all them by whom offences come.'¹ And although the duty is so plainly explicated and represented in gloss and ease by the several commentaries of St. Paul upon this menace of our blessed Saviour; yet because our English word, offence,² which is commonly used in this question of scandal, is so large and equivocal that it hath made many pretences, and intricated this article to some inconvenience, it is not without good purpose to draw into one body those propositions which the masters of spiritual life have described in the managing of this question.

2. First, By whatsoever we do our duty to God, we cannot directly do offence, or give scandal to our brother; because in such cases where God hath obliged us, he hath also obliged himself to reconcile our duty to the designs of God, to the utility of souls, and the ends of charity. And this proposition is to be extended to our obedience to the lawful constitutions of our competent superiors: in which cases we are to look upon the commandment, and leave the accidental events to the disposition of that Providence who reconciles dissonances in nature, and concentrates all the variety of accidents in his own glory. And whosoever is offended

¹ Matth. xviii. 7.² Rom. xiv. ; 1 Cor. viii. ; Gal. ii.

at me for obeying God or God's vicegerent, is offended at me for doing my duty: and in this there is no more dispute, but whether I shall displease God, or my peevish neighbour. These are such whom the Spirit of God complains of under other representations: they think it strange we run not into the same excess of riot; their eye is evil, because their Master's eye is good; and the abounding of God's grace also may become to them an occasion of falling, and the long-suffering of God the encouragement to sin. In this there is no difficulty; for in what case soever we are bound to obey God or man, in that case and in that conjunction of circumstances we have nothing permitted to our choice, and have no authority to remit of the right of God or our superior: and to comply with our neighbour in such questions, besides that it cannot serve any purposes of piety, if it declines from duty in any instance, it is like giving alms out of the portion of orphans, or building hospitals with the money and spoils of sacrilege. It is pusillanimity, or hypocrisy, or a denying to confess Christ before men, to comply with any man, and to offend God, or omit a duty. Whatsoever is necessary to be done, and is made so by God, no weakness or peevishness of man can make necessary not to be done: for the matter of scandal is a duty beneath the prime obligations of religion.

3. Secondly, But every thing which is used in religion is not matter of precise duty; but there are some things which indeed are pious and religious, but dispensable, voluntary, and commutable: such as are voluntary fasts, exterior acts of discipline and mortification not enjoined, great degrees

of exterior worship, prostration, long prayers, vigils. And in these things, although there is not directly a matter of scandal, yet there may be some prudential considerations in order to charity and edification. By pious actions I mean, either particular pursuances of a general duty, which are uncommanded in the instance, such as are the minutes and expresses of alms; or else they are commended, but in the whole kind of them unenjoined, such as divines call the counsels of perfection. In both these cases a man cannot be scandalous: for the man doing in charity and the love of God such actions which are aptly expressive of love, the man, I say, is not uncharitable in his purposes; and the actions themselves being either attempts or proceedings toward perfection, or else actions of direct duty, are as innocent in their productions as in themselves, and therefore, without the malice of the recipient, cannot induce him into sin; and nothing else is scandal: to do any pious act proceeds from the Spirit of God; and to give scandal, from the spirit of malice or indiscretion; and therefore a pious action, whose fountain is love and wisdom, cannot end in uncharitableness or imprudence. But because when any man is offended at what I esteem piety, there is a question whether the action be pious or no; therefore it concerns him that works, to take care that his action be either an act of duty, though not determined to a certain particular; or else be something counselled in Scripture, or practised by a holy person there recorded, and nowhere reprov'd; or a practice warranted by such precedents which modest, prudent, and religious persons account a sufficient inducement of such particulars: for he that proceeds upon such

principles derives the warrant of his actions from beginnings which secure the particular, and quits the scandal.

4. This, I say, is a security against the uncharitableness and the sin of scandal; because a zeal of doing pious actions is a zeal according to God; but it is not always a security against the indiscretion of the scandal. He that reproveth a foolish person in such circumstances that provoke him, or make him imprudent or blasphemous, does not give scandal, and brings no sin upon himself, though he occasioned it in the other. But if it was probable such effects should be consequent to the reprehension, his zeal was imprudent and rash: but so long as it was zeal for God, and in its own matter lawful, it could not be an active or guilty scandal. But if it be no zeal, and be a design to entrap a man's unwariness or passion or shame, and to disgrace the man, by that means or any other to make him sin, then it is directly the offending of our brother. They that preached Christ out of envy intended to do offence to the apostles: but because they were impregnable, the sin rested in their own bosom, and God wrought his own ends by it. And in this sense they are scandalous persons who fast for strife, who pray for rebellion, who entice simple persons into the snare by colours of religion. Those very exterior acts of piety become an offence, because they are done to evil purposes, to abuse proselytes, and to draw away disciples after them, and make them love the sin, and march under so splendid and fair colours. They who out of strictness and severity of persuasion represent the conditions of the gospel alike to every person; that is, nicer than Christ described them in all circum-

stances, and deny such liberties of exterior desires and complacency which may be reasonably permitted to some men, do very indiscreetly, and may occasion the alienation of some men's minds from the entertainments of religion. But this being accidental to the thing itself, and to the purpose of the man, is not the sin of scandal; but it is the indiscretion of scandal, if by such means he divorces any man's mind from the cohabitation and unions of religion. And yet if the purpose of the man be to affright weaker and unwise persons, it is a direct scandal, and one of those ways which the devil uses towards the peopling of his kingdom: it is a plain laying of a snare to entrap feeble and uninstructed souls.

5. But if the pious action have formerly joined with any thing that is truly criminal, with idolatry, with superstition, with impious customs or impure rites, and by retaining the piety I give cause to my weak brother to think I approve of the old appendage, and by my reputation invite him to swallow the whole action without discerning; the case is altered; I am to omit that pious action, if it be not under command, until I have acquitted it from the suspicion of evil company. But when I have done what in prudence I guess sufficient to thaw the frost of jealousy, and to separate those dissonances which formerly seemed united, I have done my duty of charity, by endeavouring to free my brother from the snare; and I have done what in Christian prudence I was obliged, when I have protested against the appendant crime. If afterwards the same person shall entertain the crime upon pretence of my example, who have plainly disavowed it; he lays the snare for himself, and is

glad of the pretence, or will in spite enter into the net, that he might think it reasonable to rail at me. I may not, with Christian charity or prudence, wear the picture of our blessed Lord in rings or medals, though with great affection and designs of doing him all the honour that I can, if by such pictures I invite persons, apt more to follow me than to understand me, to give divine honour to a picture: but when I have declared my hatred of superstitious worshippings, and given my brother warning of the snare which his own mistake or the devil's malice was preparing for him, I may then without danger signify my piety and affections in any civil representments which are not against God's law, or the customs of the church, or the analogy of faith. And there needs no other reason to be given for this rule, than that there is no reason to be given against it. If the nature of the thing be innocent, and the purpose of the man be pious, and he hath used his moral industry to secure his brother against accidental mischances and abuses, his duty in this particular can have no more parts and instances.

6. But it is too crude an assertion, to affirm indefinitely, that whatsoever hath been abused to evil or superstitious purposes, must presently be abjured, and never entertained for fear of scandal; for it is certain that the best things have been most abused. Have not some persons used certain verses of the Psalter as an antidote against the tooth-ache; and carried the blessed sacrament in pendants about their necks as a charm to countermand witches; and St. John's gospel as a spell against wild beasts and wilder untamed spirits? Confession of sins to the ministers of religion hath been made an instrument to

ceive base ends ; and so indeed hath all religion been abused : and some persons have been so receptive of scandal, that they suspected all religion to be a mere stratagem, because they have observed very many men have used it so. For some natures are like sponges or sugar, whose utmost verge if you dip in wine, it drowns itself by the moisture it sucks up, and is drenched all over, receiving its alteration from within : its own nature did the mischief, and plucks on its own dissolution. And these men are greedy to receive a scandal, and when it is presented but in small instances, they suck it up to the dissolution of their whole religion ; being glad of a quarrel, that their impieties may not want all excuse. But yet it is certainly very unreasonable to reject excellent things because they have been abused ; as if separable accidents had altered natures and essences ; or that they resolve never to forgive the duties, for having once fallen into the hands of unskilful or malicious persons. Hezekiah took away the brazen serpent, because the people abused it to idolatry ; but the serpent had long before lost its use : and yet, if the people had not been a peevish and refractory and superstitious people, in whose nature it was to take all occasions of superstition ; and further yet, if the taking away such occasions and opportunities of that sin in special had not been most agreeable with the designs of God, in forbidding to the people the common use of all images in the second commandment, which was given them after the erection of that brazen statue, Hezekiah possibly would not, or at least had not been bound to have destroyed that monument of an old story and a great blessing, but have sought to separate the abuse from

the minds of men, and retained the image. But in Christianity, when none of these circumstances occur, where, by the greatness and plenty of revelations, we are more fully instructed in the ways of duty, and when the thing itself is pious, and the abuse very separable, it is infinite disparagement to us, or to our religion, either that our religion is not sufficient to cure an abuse, or that we will never part with it, but we must unpardonably reject a good, because it had once upon it a crust or spot of leprosy, though since it hath been washed in the waters of reformation. The primitive Christians abstained from actions of themselves indifferent, which the unconverted people used, if those actions were symbolical, or adopted into false religions, or not well understood by those they were bound to satisfy : but when they had washed off the accrescences of Gentile superstition, they chose such rites which their neighbours used, and had designs not imprudent or unhandsome ; and they were glad of heathen temples, to celebrate the Christian rites in them ; and they made no other change, but that they ejected the devil, and invited their Lord into the possession.

7. Thirdly, In things merely indifferent, whose practice is not limited by command, nor their nature heightened by an appendant piety, we must use our liberty, so as may not offend our brother, or lead him into a sin directly or indirectly. For scandal being directly against charity, it is to be avoided in the same measure and by the same proportions in which charity is to be pursued. Now we must so use ourselves, that we must cut off a foot, or pluck out an eye, rather than the one should bear us, and the other lead us to sin and death :

we must rather rescind all the natural and sensual, or dearest invitations to vice, and deny ourselves lawful things, than that lawful things should betray us to unlawful actions. And this rule is the measure of charity; our neighbour's soul ought to be dearer unto us than any temporal privilege. It is lawful for me to eat herbs, or fish, and to observe an ascetic diet; but if by such austerities I lead others to a good opinion of Montanism, or the practices of Pythagoras, or to believe flesh to be impure, I must rather alter my diet, than teach him to sin by mistaking me. St. Paul gave an instance of eating flesh sold in the shambles from the idol-temples. To eat it in the relation of an idol-sacrifice is a great sin; but when it is sold in the shambles, the property is altered to them that understand it so. But yet even this Paul would not do, if by so doing he should encourage undiscerning people to eat all meat conveyed from the temple, and offered to devils. It is not in every man's head to distinguish formalities, and to make abstractions of purpose from exterior acts, and to alter their devotions by new relations and respects depending upon intellectual and metaphysical notions. And therefore it is not safe to do an action which is not lawful, but after the making distinctions, before ignorant and weaker persons, who swallow down the bole and the box that carries it, and never pare their apple, or take the core out. If I, by the law of charity, must rather quit my own goods than suffer my brother to perish, much rather must I quit my privilege, and those superstructures of favour and grace which Christ hath given me beyond my necessities, than wound the spirit and destroy the

soul of a weak man, for whom Christ died. It is an inordinate affection, to love my own ease and circumstances of pleasure, before the soul of a brother; and such a thing are the privileges of Christian liberty; for Christ hath taken off from us the restraints which God had laid upon the Jews in meat and holidays. But these are but circumstances of grace given us for opportunities, and cheap instances of charity: we should ill die for our brother, who will not lose a meal to prevent his sin, or change a dish to save his soul. And if the thing be indifferent to us, yet it ought not to be indifferent to us whether our brother live or die.

8. Fourthly, And yet we must not, to please peevish or froward people, betray our liberty which Christ hath given us. If any man opposes the lawfulness and license of indifferent actions or be disturbed at my using my privileges innocently; in the first case I am bound to use them still, in the second I am not bound to quit them to please him. For in the first instance, he that shall cease to use his liberty, to please him that says his liberty is unlawful, encourages him that says so in his false opinion, and by complying with him gives the scandal; and he who is angry with me for making use of it, is a person that, it may be, is crept in to spy out and invade my liberty but not apt to be reduced into sin by that act of mine which he detests, for which he despises me, and so makes my person unapt to be exemplar to him. To be angry with me for doing what Christ hath allowed me, and which is part of the liberty he purchased for me when he took upon himself the form of a servant, is to judge me, and to be

uncharitable to me; and he that does so is beforehand with me, and upon the active part; he does the scandal to me, and by offering to deprive me of my liberty, he makes my way to heaven narrower and more encumbered than Christ left it, and so places a stumbling-stone in my way; I put none in his. And if such peevishness and discontent of a brother engages me to a new and unimposed yoke, then it were in the power of my enemy, or any malevolent person, to make me never to keep festival, or never to observe any private fast, never to be prostrate at my prayers, nor to do any thing but according to his leave, and his humour shall become the rule of my actions; and then my charity to him shall be the greatest uncharitableness in the world to myself, and his liberty shall be my bondage. Add to this, that such complying and obeying the peevishness of discontented persons is to no end of charity. For besides that such concessions never satisfy persons who are unreasonably angry, because by the same reason they may demand more, as they ask this for which they had no reason at all; it also encourages them to be peevish, and gives fuel to the passion, and feeds the wolf, and so encourages the sin, and prevents none.

9. Fifthly, For he only gives scandal, who induces his brother directly or collaterally into sin; as appears by all the discourses in Scripture guiding us in this duty; and it is called 'laying a stumbling-block in our brother's way, wounding the conscience of our weak brother.'¹ Thus Balaam

¹ 1 Cor. viii. 10, 12; Rom. xiv. 21; Matt. v. 29, and xiii. 57; Mark, xiv. 27, and vi. 3, and iv. 17; Luke, vii. 23; John, xvi. 1.

was said to lay a scandal before the sons of Israel, by tempting them to fornication with the daughters of Moab. Every evil example, or imprudent, sinful, and unwary deportment is a scandal, because it invites others to do the like, leading them by the hand, taking off the strangeness and insolency of the act, which deters many men from entertaining it ; and it gives some offers of security to others, that they shall escape as we have done : besides that it is in the nature of all agents, natural and moral, to assimilate, either by proper efficiency, or by counsel and moral invitations, others to themselves. But this is a direct scandal. And such it is to give money to an idle person, who you know will be drunk with it ; or to invite an intemperate person to an opportunity of excess, who desires it always, but without thee wants it. Indirectly and accidentally, but very criminally they give scandal, who introduce persons into a state of life from whence probably they pass into a state of sin. So did the Israelites, who married their daughters to the idolatrous Moabites ; and so do they who intrust a pupil to a vicious guardian : for although God can preserve children in the midst of flames without scorching ; yet if they singe their hair, or scorch their flesh, they that put them in are guilty of the burning. And yet further, if persons so exposed to danger should escape by miracle, yet they escape not who expose them to the danger. They who threw the children of the captivity into the furnace, were burnt to death, though the children were not hurt. And the very offering a person in our trust to a certain or probable danger, foreseen and understood, is a likely way to pass sin upon the person

so exposed, but a certain way to contract it in ourselves: it is directly against charity; for no man loves a soul, unless he loves its safety; and he cares not to have his child safe that throws him into the fire. Hither are to be reduced all false doctrines aptly productive of evil life; the doctrines are scandalous, and the men guilty, if they understand the consequents of their own propositions: or if they think it probable that persons will be led by such doctrines into evil persuasions, though themselves believe them not to be necessary products of their opinions, yet the very publishing such opinions, which (of themselves not being necessary, or otherwise very profitable) are apt to be understood, by weak persons at least, to ill ends, is against charity, and the duty we owe to our brother's soul.

10. Sixthly, It is not necessary for ever to abstain from things indifferent, to prevent the offending of a brother, but only till I have taken away that rock against which some did stumble, or have done my endeavour to remove it. In questions of religion it is lawful to use primitive and ancient words, at which men have been weakened and seemed to stumble, when the objection is cleared, and the ill consequents and suspicion disavowed; and it may be of good use, charity, and edification to speak the language of the purest ages, although that some words were used also in the impurest ages, and descended along upon changing and declining articles, when it is rightly explicated in what sense the best men did innocently use them, and the same sense is now protested. But in this case it concerns prudence to see that the benefit be greater than the danger. And the same also is to be said concerning the actions and

parts of Christian liberty : for if after I have removed the unevenness and objection of the accident, that is, if, when I have explained my disrelish to the crime which might possibly be gathered up and taken into practice by my misunderstood example, still any man will stumble and fall, it is a resolution to fall, a love of danger, a peevishness of spirit, a voluntary misunderstanding ; it is not a misery in the man more than that it is his own fault. And whenever the cause of any sin becomes criminal to the man that sins, it is certain, that if the other, who was made the occasion, did disavow and protest against the crime, the man that sins is the only guilty person, both in the effect and cause too ; for the other could do no more but use a moral and prudent industry to prevent a being misinterpreted ; and if he were tied to more, he must quit his interest for ever in a perpetual scruple : and it is like taking away all laws, to prevent disobedience ; and making all even, to secure the world against the effects of pride or stubbornness. I add to this, that since actions indifferent in their own natures are not productive of effects and actions criminal, it is merely by accident that men are abused into a sin ; that is, by weakness, by misconceit, by something that either discovers malice or indiscretion : which because the act itself does not of itself, if the man does not voluntarily, or by intention, the sin dwells nowhere but with the man that entertains it. The man is no longer weak than he is mistaken ; and he is not mistaken or abused into the sin by example of any man, who hath rightly stated his own question, and divorced the suspicion of the sin from his action : whatsoever comes after this is not weakness

of understanding, but strength of passion. And he that is always learning, and never comes to the knowledge of the truth, is something besides a silly man. Men cannot be always 'babes in Christ' without their own fault: they are no longer 'Christ's little ones' than they are inculpably ignorant: for it is but a mantle cast over pride and frowardness, to think ourselves able to teach others, and yet pretend offence and scandal; to scorn to be instructed, and yet complain that we are offended, and led into sin for want of knowledge of our duty. He that understands his duty is not a person capable of scandal by things indifferent. And it is certain, that no man can say concerning himself, that he is scandalized at another; that is, that he is led into sin by mistake and weakness; for if himself knows it the mistake is gone. Well may the guides of their souls complain, concerning such persons, that their sin is procured by offending persons or actions: but he that complains concerning himself to the same purpose, pretends ignorance for other ends, and contradicts himself by his complaint and knowledge of his error. The boy was prettily peevish, who, when his father bid pronounce Thalassius, told him he could not pronounce Thalassius, at the same time speaking the word. Just so impotent, weak, and undiscerning a person is that, who would forbid me to do an indifferent action, upon pretence that it makes him ignorantly sin; for his saying so confutes his ignorance, and argues him of a worse folly: it is like asking my neighbour, whether such an action be done against my own will.

¹ Ἀσθενεῖς τῆ πίστεως. Rom. xiv. ; 1 Cor. viii. 10, 12.

II. Seventhly, When an action is apt to be mistaken to contrary purposes it concerns the prudence and charity of a Christian, to use such compliance as best co-operates to God's glory, and hath in it the less danger. The apostles gave an instance in the matter of circumcision, in which they walked warily, and with variety of design, that they might invite the Gentiles to the easy yoke of Christianity, and yet not deter the Jews by a disrespect to the law of Moses. And therefore St. Paul circumcised Timothy, because he was among the Jews and descended from a Jewish parent, and in the instance gave sentence in compliance with the Jewish persuasion, because Timothy might well be accounted for a Jew by birth: unto them the rites of Moses were for a while permitted. But when Titus was brought upon the scene of a mixed assembly, and was no Jew, but a Greek, to whom Paul had taught 'they ought not to be circumcised;'¹ although some Jews watched what he would do, yet he plainly refused to circumcise him; choosing rather to leave the Jews angry, than the Gentiles scandalized, or led into an opinion that circumcision was necessary, or that he had taught them otherwise out of collateral ends, or that now he did so. But when a case of Christian liberty happened to St. Peter, he was not so prudent in his choice, but at the coming of certain Jews from Jerusalem, withdrew himself from the society of the Gentiles; not considering, that it was worse if the Gentiles, who were invited to Christianity by the sweetness of its liberty and compliance, should fall back, when they that taught them the excellency of Christian

¹ Gal. ii. 3, 4, &c.

liberty durst not stand to it, than if those Jews were displeas'd at Christianity for admitting Gentiles into its communion, after they had been instructed that God had broken down the partition-wall, and made them one sheepfold. It was of greater concernment to God's glory to gain the Gentiles than to retain the Jews: and yet if he had not, the apostles were bound to bend to the inclinations of the weaker, rather than be mastered by the wilfulness of the stronger, who had been sufficiently instructed in the articles of Christian liberty, and in the adopting the Gentiles into the family of God. Thus if it be a question whether I should abate any thing of my external religion or ceremonies to satisfy an heretic or a contentious person, who pretends scandal to himself, and is indeed of another persuasion; and at the same time I know that good persons will be weakened at such forbearance, and estranged from the good persuasion and charity of communion, which is part of their duty; it more concerns charity and the glory of God, that I secure the right than twine about the wrong, wilful, and malicious persons. A prelate must rather fortify and encourage obedience, and strengthen discipline, than by remissness toward refractory spirits, and a desire not to seem severe, weaken the hands of conscientious persons, by taking away the marks of difference between them that obey and them that obey not. And in all cases when the question is between a friend to be secured from apostacy, or an enemy to be gained from indifferency, St. Paul's rule is to be observed: 'Do good to all, but especially to the household of faith.' When the church, in a parti-

cular instance, cannot be kind to both, she must first love her own children.

12. Eighthly, But when the question is between pleasing and contenting the fancies of a friend, and the gaining of an enemy, the greater good of the enemy is infinitely to be preferred before the satisfying the unnecessary humour of the friend. And therefore that we may gain persons of a different religion, it is lawful to entertain them in their innocent customs, that we may represent ourselves charitable and just, apt to comply in what we can, and yet for no end complying further than we are permitted. It was a policy of the devil to abuse Christians to the rites of Mithra, by imitating the Christian ceremonies. And the Christians themselves were beforehand with him in that policy; for they facilitated the reconciliation of Judaism with Christianity by common rites; and invited the Gentiles to the Christian churches, because they never violated the heathen temples, but loved the men, and imitated their innocent rites, and only offered to reform their errors, and hallow their abused purposes: and this, if it had no other contradictory or unhandsome circumstance, gave no offence to other Christians, when they had learned to trust them with the government of ecclesiastical affairs to whom God had committed them, and they all had the same purposes of religion and charity. And when there is no objection against this but the furies or greater heats of a mistaken zeal, the compliance with evil or unbelieving persons, to gain them from their errors to the ways of truth and sincerity, is great prudence and great charity; because it chooses and acts a greater good

at no other charge or expense but the discomposing of an intemperate zeal.

13. Ninthly, We are not bound to intermit a good or a lawful action as soon as any man tells us it is scandalous: (for that may be an easy stratagem to give me laws, and destroy my liberty :) but either when the action is of itself, or by reason of a public known indisposition of some persons, probably introductive of a sin; or when we know it is so in fact. The other is but affrighting a man: this only is prudent, that my charity be guided by such rules which determine wise men to actions or omissions respectively; and therefore a light fame is not strong enough to wrest my liberty from me; but a reasonable belief, or a certain knowledge; in the taking of which estimate we must neither be too credulous and easy, nor yet ungentle and stubborn, but do according to the actions of wise men and the charities of a Christian. Hither we may refer the rules of abstaining from things which are of evil report: for not every thing which is of good report is to be followed; for then a false opinion, when it is become popular, must be professed for conscience' sake: nor yet every thing that is of bad report is to be avoided; for nothing endured more shame and obloquy than Christianity at its first commencement. But by good report we are to understand such things which are well reported of by good men and wise men, or Scripture, or the consent of nations. And thus for a woman to marry within the year of mourning is scandalous, because it is of evil report, gives suspicion of lightness, or some worse confederacy, before the death of her husband; the thing itself is apt to minister the suspicion, and this we are bound to prevent: and

unless the suspicion be malicious, or imprudent and unreasonable, we must conceal our actions from the surprises and deprehensions of suspicion. It was scandalous amongst the old Romans not to marry; among the Christians, for a clergyman to marry twice, because it was against an apostolical canon: but when it became of ill report for any Christian to marry the second time, because this evil report was begun by the errors of Montanus, and is against a permission of holy Scripture, no lay-christian was bound to abstain from a second bed for fear of giving scandal.

14. Tenthly, The precept of avoiding scandal concerns the governors of the church or state in the making and execution of laws; for no law in things indifferent ought to be made to the provocation of the subject, or against that public disposition which is in the spirits of men, and will certainly cause perpetual irregularities and schisms. Before the law be made, the superior must comply with the subject; after it is made, the subject must comply with the law: but in this the church hath made fair provision, accounting no laws obligatory till the people have accepted them, and given tacit approbation. For ecclesiastical canons have their time of probation: and if they become a burden to the people, or occasion schism, tumults, public disunion of affections, and jealousies against authority, the laws give place, and either fix not when they are not first approved, or disappear by desuetude. And in the execution of laws no less care is to be taken: for many cases occur in which the laws can be rescued from being a snare to men's consciences by no other way but by dispensation, and slacking of the discipline as to certain

particulars. Mercy and sacrifice, the letter and the spirit, the words and the intention, the general case and the particular exception, the present disposition and the former state of things, are oftentimes so repugnant, and of such contradictory interests, that there is no stumbling-block more troublesome or dangerous than a severe, literal, and rigorous exacting of laws in all cases. But when stubbornness or a contentious spirit, when rebellion and pride, when secular interest, or ease and licentiousness, set men up against the laws, the laws then are upon the defensive, and ought not to give place. It is ill to cure particular disobedience by removing a constitution decreed by public wisdom for a general good. When the evil occasioned by the law is greater than the good designed, or than the good which will come by it in the present constitution of things, and the evil can by no other remedy be healed, it concerns the lawgiver's charity to take off such positive constitutions, which in the authority are merely human, and in the matter indifferent, and evil in the event. The sum of this whole duty I shall choose to represent in the words of an excellent person, St. Jerome: "We must, for the avoiding of scandal, quit every thing which may be omitted without prejudice to the threefold truth, of life, of justice, and doctrine." Meaning, that what is not expressly commanded by God or our superiors, or what is not expressly commanded as an act of piety and perfection, or what is not an obligation of justice; that is, in which the interest of a third person, or else our own Christian liberty, is not totally concerned; all that is to be given in sacrifice to mercy,

and to be made matter of edification and charity ; but not of scandal ; that is, of danger, and sin, and falling, to our neighbour.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal Jesus, who art made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, give us of thy abundant charity, that we may love the eternal benefit of our brother's soul with a true, diligent, and affectionate care and tenderness. Give us a fellow-feeling of one another's calamities, a readiness to bear each other's burdens, aptness to forbear, wisdom to advise, counsel to direct, and a spirit of meekness and modesty trembling at our infirmities, fearful in our brother's dangers, and joyful in his restitution and securities. Lord, let all our actions be pious and prudent, ourselves wise as serpents, and innocent as doves, and our whole life exemplary, and just, and charitable : that we may, like lamps shining in thy temple, serve thee and enlighten others, and guide them to thy sanctuary ; and that, shining clearly, and burning zealously, when the bridegroom shall come to bind up his jewels, and beautify his spouse, and gather his saints together, we, and all thy Christian people knit in holy fellowship, may enter into the joy of our Lord, and partake of the eternal refreshments of the kingdom of light and glory, where thou, O holy and eternal Jesu, livest and reignest in the excellencies of a kingdom, and the infinite durations of eternity. Amen.

DISCOURSE XVIII.

Of the Causes and Manner of the Divine Judgments.

I. GOD'S judgments are like the writing upon the wall,¹ which was a missive of anger from God

¹ Πάντη δ' ἀθάνατων ἀφανὴς νόος ἀνθρώποισι. Solon.—
“ The designs of the immortals are inscrutable to man.”

upon Belshazzar. It came upon an errand of revenge, and yet was writ in so dark characters that none could read it but a prophet. Whenever God speaks from heaven, he would have us to understand his meaning: and if he declares not his sense in particular signification, yet we understand his meaning well enough, if every voice of God leads us to repentance. Every sad accident is directed against sin, either to prevent it or to cure it; to glorify God or to humble us; to make us go forth of ourselves, and to rest upon the centre of all felicities, that we may derive help from the same hand that smote us. Sin and punishment are so near relatives, that when God hath marked any person with a sadness or unhandsome accident, men think it warrant enough for their uncharitable censures, and condemn the man whom God hath smitten, making God the executioner of our uncertain or ungentle sentences. ‘Whether sinned this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ said the Pharisees to our blessed Lord. ‘Neither this man, nor his parents,’ was the answer; meaning, that God had other ends in that accident to serve; and it was not an effect of wrath, but a design of mercy both directly and collaterally. God’s glory must be seen clearly by occasion of the curing the blind man. But in the present case the answer was something different. Pilate slew the Galileans when they were sacrificing in their conventicles apart from the Jews: for they first had separated from obedience and paying tribute to Caesar; and then from the church, who disavowed their mutinous and discontented doctrines. The cause of the one and other are linked in mutual complications and endearment; and he who

despises the one will quickly disobey the other. Presently, upon report of this sad accident, the people ran to the judgment-seat; and every man was ready to be accuser and witness and judge upon these poor destroyed people. But Jesus allays their heat; and though he would by no means acquit these persons from deserving death for their denying tribute to Cæsar, yet he alters the face of the tribunal, and makes those persons who were so apt to be accusers and judges, to act another part, even of guilty persons too; that since they will needs be judging, they might judge themselves: for, ‘Think not these were greater sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered such things. I tell you, nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.’¹ Meaning, that although there was great probability to believe such persons (schismatics, I mean, and rebels) to be the greatest sinners of the world; yet themselves, who had designs to destroy the Son of God, had deserved as great damnation. And yet it is observable, that the holy Jesus only compared the sins of them that suffered with the estate of the other Galileans who suffered not, (and that also applies it to the persons present who told the news,) to consign this truth unto us—that when persons confederate in the same crimes, are spared from a present judgment falling upon others of their own society, it is indeed a strong alarm to all to secure themselves by repentance against the hostilities and eruptions of sin; but yet it is no exemption or security to them that escape, to believe themselves persons less sinful. For God sometimes decimates or titles

¹ Luke, xiii. 3.

delinquent persons, that they die for a common crime, according as God hath cast their lot in the decrees of predestination; and either they that remain are sealed up to a worse calamity, or left within the reserves and mercies of repentance; for in this there is some variety of determination and undiscerned providence.

2. The purpose of our blessed Saviour is of great use to us in all the traverses and changes, and especially the sad and calamitous accidents of the world. But in the misfortune of others we are to make other discourses concerning divine judgments, than when the case is of nearer concernment to ourselves. For, first, when we see a person come to an unfortunate and untimely death, we must not conclude such a man perishing and miserable to all eternity.¹ It was a sad calamity that fell upon the man of Judah, that returned to eat bread into the prophet's house, contrary to the word of the Lord. He was abused into the act by a prophet, and a pretence of a command from God: and whether he did violence to his own understanding, and believed the man because he was willing, or did it in sincerity, or in what degree of sin or excuse the action might consist, no man there knew; and yet a lion slew him, and the lying prophet that abused him escaped, and went to his grave in peace. Some persons, joined in society

¹ De Anania et Sapphira dixit Origenes, Digni enim erant in seculo recipere peccatum suum, ut mundiorem se ab hac vita, mundati castigatione sibi illata per mortem communem, quoniam credentes erant in Christum. Idem ait S. Aug. lib. iv. c. l. cont. Parmen. et Cassian.—“Origen has said, concerning Ananias and Sapphira, that they were punished in this world that they might leave it chastened, purified by the death which they both suffered, because they were believers in Christ.”

and interest with criminals, have perished in the same judgments; and yet it would be hard to call them equally guilty, who in the accident were equally miserable and involved. And they who are not strangers in the affairs of the world, cannot but have heard or seen some persons who have lived well and moderately, though not like the flames of the holocaust, yet like the ashes of incense, sending up good perfumes, and keeping a constant and slow fire of piety and justice, yet have been surprised in the midst of some unusual, unaccustomed irregularity, and died in that sin. A sudden gaiety of fortune, a great joy, a violent change, a friend is come, or a marriage-day hath transported some persons to indiscretions and too bold a licence; and the indiscretion hath betrayed them to idle company, and the company to drink, and drink to a fall, and that hath hurried them to their grave. And it were a sad sentence to think God would not repute the untimely death for a punishment great enough to that deflexion from duty, and judge the man according to the constant tenour of his former life. Unless such an act was of malice great enough to outweigh the former habits, and interrupt the whole state of acception and grace. Something like this was the case of Uzzah, who espying the tottering ark, went to support it with an unhallowed hand: God smote him, and he died immediately. It were too severe to say his zeal and indiscretion carried him beyond a temporal death to the ruins of eternity. Origen and many others have made themselves 'eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven,' and did well after it; but those that did so, and died of the wound, were smitten of God, and died in their folly; and yet it

is rather to be called a sad consequence of their indiscretion, than the express of a final anger from God Almighty. For as God takes off our sins and punishments by parts, remitting to some persons the sentence of death, and inflicting the fine of a temporal loss, or the gentle scourge of a lesser sickness; so also he lays it on by parts, and according to the proper proportions of the man and of the crime; and every transgression and lesser deviation from our duty does not drag the soul to death eternal; but God suffers our repentance, though imperfect, to have an imperfect effect, knocking off the fetters by degrees, and leading us in some cases to a council, in some to judgment, and in some to hell-fire. But it is not always certain that he who is lead to the prison doors shall there lie entombed; and a man may by a judgment be brought to the gates of hell, and yet those gates shall not prevail against him. This discourse concerns persons whose life is habitually fair and just, but are surprised in some unhandsome, but less criminal action, and die or suffer some great calamity as the instrument of its expiation or amendment.

3. Secondly, But if the person upon whom the judgment falls be habitually vicious, or the crime of a clamorous nature or deeper tincture; if the man 'sin a sin unto death,' and either meets it, or some other remarkable calamity not so feared as death, provided we pass no further than the sentence we see then executed, it is not against charity or prudence to say, this calamity, in its own formality, and by the intention of God, is a punishment and judgment. In the favourable cases of honest and just persons our sentence and opinions ought also to be favourable, and in such

questions to incline ever to the side of charitable construction, and read other ends of God in the accidents of our neighbour than revenge or express wrath. But when the impiety of a person is scandalous and notorious, when it is clamorous and violent, when it is habitual and yet corrigible, if we find a sadness and calamity dwelling with such a sinner, especially if the punishment be spiritual, we read the sentence of God written with his own hand; and it is not sauciness of opinion, or a pressing into the secrets of Providence, to say the same thing which God hath published to all the world in the expresses of his Spirit. In such cases we are to observe the 'severity of God; on them that fall severity;' and to use those judgments as instruments of the fear of God, and arguments to hate sin; which we could not well do, but that we must look on them as verifications of God's threatening against great and impenitent sinners. But then, if we descend to particulars, we may easily be deceived.

4. For some men are diligent to observe the accidents and chances of providence upon those especially who differ from them in opinion; and whatever ends God can have, or whatever sins man can have, yet we lay that in fault which we therefore hate because it is most against our interest; the contrary opinion is our enemy, and we also think God hates it. But such fancies do seldom serve either the ends of truth or charity. Pierre Calceon died under the barber's hand: there wanted not some who had said it was a judgment upon him for condemning to the fire the famous Pucelle of France, who prophesied the expulsion of the English out of the kingdom. They that thought

this, believed her to be a prophetess; but others, that thought her a witch, were willing to find out another conjecture for the sudden death of that gentleman. Garnier, earl of Gretz, kept the patriarch of Jerusalem from his right in David's tower and the city, and died within three days; and by Dabart, the patriarch, it was called a judgment upon him for his sacrilege. But the uncertainty of that censure appeared to them who considered that Baldwin (who gave commission to Garnier to withstand the patriarch) did not die; but Godfrey of Bouillon did die immediately after he had passed the right of the patriarch. And yet when Baldwin was beaten at Rhamula, some bold people pronounced that then God punished him upon the patriarch's score, and thought his sacrilege to be the secret cause of his overthrow: and yet his own pride and rashness was the more visible, and the judgment was but a cloud, and passed away quickly into succeeding victory.¹ But I instance in a trifle. Certain it is, that God removed the candlestick from the Levantine churches because he had a quarrel unto them: for that punishment is never sent upon pure designs of emendation, or for direct and immediate purposes of the divine glory, but ever makes reflection upon the past sin; but when we descend to a judgment of the particulars, God walks so in the dark to us, that it is not discerned upon what ground he smote them. Some say it was because they dishonoured the eternal Jesus, in denying the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son. And in this some thought themselves sufficiently assured

¹ Baron. A.D. 1100, and 2024.

by a sign from heaven, because the Greeks lost Constantinople upon Whitsunday, the day of the festival of the Holy Spirit.¹ The church of Rome calls the churches of the Greek communion schismatical, and thinks God righted the Roman quarrel when he revenged his own. Some think they were cut off for being breakers of images: others think that their zeal against images was a means they were cut off no sooner. And yet he that shall observe what innumerable sects, heresies, and factions were commenced amongst them, and how they were wanton with religion, making it serve ambitious and unworthy ends, will see that, besides the ordinary conjectures of interested persons, they had such causes of their ruin which we also now feel heavily incumbent upon ourselves. To see God adding fifteen years to the life of Hezekiah upon his prayer, and yet cutting off the young son of David, begotten in adulterous embraces; to see him rejecting Adonijah, and receiving Solomon to the kingdom, begotten of the same mother whose son God in anger formerly slew; to observe his mercies to Manasses, in accepting him to favour, and continuing the kingdom to him, and his severity to Zedekiah, in causing his eyes to be put out; to see him rewarding Nebuchadnezzar with the spoils of Egypt for destroying Tyre, and executing God's severe anger against it, and yet punishing others for being executioners of his wrath upon Jerusalem, even then when he purposed to chastise it; to see Wenceslaus raised from a peasant to a throne, and Pompey from a great prince reduced to that condition, that a pupil and an eunuch passed sen-

¹ Estius.

tence of death upon him ; to see great fortunes fall into the hand of a fool, and honourable old persons and learned men descend to unequal beggary ; to see him strike a stroke with his own hand in the conversion of Saul, and another quite contrary in the cutting off of Judas ; must needs be some restraint to our judgments concerning the general state of those men who lie under the rod : but it proclaims an infinite uncertainty in the particulars, since we see contrary accidents happening to persons guilty of the same crime, or put in the same indispositions. God hath marked all great sins with some signal and express judgments, and hath transmitted the records of them, or represented them before our eyes ; that is, hath done so in our age, or it hath been noted to have been done before : and that being sufficient to affright us from those crimes, God hath not thought it expedient to do the same things to all persons in the same cases, having to all persons produced instances and examples of fear by fewer accidents, sufficient to restrain us, but not enough to pass sentence upon the changes of divine Providence.

5. But sometimes God speaks plainer, and gives us notice what crimes he punishes in others, that we may the rather decline such rocks of offence. If the crime and the punishment be symbolical, and have proportion and correspondence of parts, the hand of God strikes the man, but holds up one finger to point at the sin. The death of the child of Bathsheba was a plain declaration that the anger of God was upon David for the adulterous mixture. That blasphemer, whose tongue was presently struck with an ulcerous tumour, with his tongue declared the glories of God and his own

shame. And it was not doubted but God, when he smote the lady of Dominicus Silvius, the duke of Venice, with a loathsome and unsavoury disease, did intend to chastise a remarkable vanity of hers, in various and costly perfumes, which she affected in an unreasonable manner, and to very evil purposes. And that famous person, and of excellent learning, Giacchettus of Geneva, being by his wife found dead in the unlawful embraces of a strange woman, who also died at the same instant, left an excellent example of God's anger upon the crime, and an evidence that he was then judged for his intemperate lust.¹ Such are all those punishments which are natural consequents to a crime: as drop-sies, redness of eyes, dissolution of nerves, apoplexies, to continual drunkenness; to intemperate eating, short lives and sudden deaths; to lust, a cautive, slavish disposition, and a foul, diseased body; fire and sword, and depopulations of towns and villages, the consequents of ambition and unjust wars; poverty to prodigality; and all those judgments which happen upon cursings and horrid imprecations, when God is, under a curse, called to attest a lie, and to connive at impudence; or when the oppressed persons, in the bitterness of their souls, wish evil and pray for vengeance on their oppressors; or that the church upon just cause inflicts spiritual censures, and delivers unto Satan, or curses and declares the divine sentence against sinners; as St. Peter against Ananias and Sapphira; and St. Paul against Elymas; and, of old, Moses against Pharaoh and his Egypt. (Of this nature also was the plague

¹ *Falgor*, lib ix. c. 12

of a withered hand, inflicted upon Jeroboam for stretching forth his hand to strike the prophet.) In these and all such instances the offspring is so like the parent that it cannot easily be concealed. Sometimes the crime is of that nature that it cries aloud for vengeance, or is threatened with a special kind of punishment; which, by the observation and experience of the world, hath regularly happened to a certain sort of persons. Such are dissolutions of estates, the punishment of sacrilege; a descending curse upon posterity for four generations, specially threatened to the crime of idolatry; any plague whatsoever to oppression; untimely death to murder; an unthriving estate to the detention of tithes, or whatsoever is God's portion allotted for the services of religion; untimely and strange deaths to the persecutors of Christian religion: Nero killed himself; Domitian was killed by his servants; Maximinus and Decius were murdered, together with their children; Valerianus imprisoned, flayed, and slain with tortures, by Sapor, king of Persia; Diocletian perished by his own hand, and his house was burned with the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, with fire from above; Antiochus, the president under Aurelian, while Agapetus was in his agony and sufferance of martyrdom, cried out of a flame within him, and died; Flaccus vomited out his entrails presently after he had caused Gregory, bishop of Spoleto, to be slain; and Dioscorus, the father of St. Barbara, accused and betrayed his daughter to the hangman's cruelty, for being a Christian, and he died by the hand of God, by fire from heaven. These are God's tokens, marks upon the body of infected persons, and declare the ma-

lignity of the disease, and bid us all beware of those determined crimes.

6. Thirdly, But then in these and all other accidents we must first observe from the cause to the effect, and then judge from the effect concerning the nature and the degree of the cause. We cannot conclude—this family is lessened, beggared, or extinct, therefore they are guilty of sacrilege: but thus—they are sacrilegious, and God hath blotted out their name from among the posterities, therefore this judgment was an express of God's anger against sacrilege: the judgment will not conclude a sin; but when a sin infers the judgment with a legible character and a prompt signification, not to understand God's choice is next to stupidity or carelessness. Arius was known to be a seditious, heretical, and dissembling person, and his entrails descended on the earth when he went to cover his feet:¹ it was very suspicious that this was the punishment of those sins which were the worst in him. But he that shall conclude Arius to be an heretic or seditious, upon no other ground but because his bowels gushed out, begins imprudently, and proceeds uncharitably. But it is considerable that men do not arise to great crimes on the sudden, but by degrees of carelessness to lesser impieties, and then to clamorous sins. And God is therefore

¹ ————— Ruit Arius alvo
 Infelix, plus mente cadens, lethumque peremptus
 Cum Juda commune tulit, qui gutture pendens
 Visceribus curvatus obit: nec pœna sequestrat
 Quos par culpa ligat, qui majestatis honori
 Vulnus ab ore parant. Hic prodidit, ille diremit
 Sacrilega de voce. —————

Poet. Christ. apud Baron. tom. 3. ad ann.
 Christ. 336

said to punish great crimes or actions of highest malignity, because they are commonly productions from the spirit of reprobation; they are the highest ascents, and suppose a body of sin. And therefore, although the judgment may be intended to punish all our sins, yet it is like the Syrian army, it kills all that are its enemies, but it hath a special commission to 'fight against none but the king of Israel,' because his death would be the dissolution of the body. And if God humbles a man for his great sin, that is, for those acts which combine and consummate all the rest, possibly the body of sin may separate, and be apt to be scattered and subdued by single acts and instruments of mortification. And therefore it is but reasonable, in our making use of God's judgments upon others, to think that God will rather strike at the greatest crimes; not only because they are in themselves of greatest malice and iniquity, but because they are the sum total of the rest, and by being great progressions in the state of sin suppose all the rest included: and we, by proportioning and observing the judgment to the highest, acknowledge the whole body of sin to lie under the curse, though the greatest only was named, and called upon with the voice of thunder. And yet because it sometimes happens, that upon the violence of a great and new occasion some persons leap into such a sin, which in the ordinary course of sinners uses to be the effect or an habitual and growing state; then if a judgment happens, it is clearly appropriate to that one great crime, which as of itself it is equivalent to a vicious habit, and interrupts the acceptance of all its former contraries, so it meets with a curse, such as

usually God chooses for the punishment of a whole body and state of sin. However, in making observation upon the expresses of God's anger, we must be careful that we reflect not with any bitterness or scorn upon the person of our calamitous brother, lest we make that to be an evil to him which God intends for his benefit, if the judgment was medicinal; or that we increase not the load, already great enough to sink him beneath his grave, if the judgment was intended for a final abscission.

7. Fourthly, But if the judgments descend upon ourselves, we are to take another course: not to enquire into particulars to find out the proportions, (for that can only be a design to part with just so much as we must needs,) but to mend all that is amiss; for then only we can be secure to remove the Achan, when we keep nothing within us or about us that may provoke God to jealousy or wrath. And that is the proper product of holy fear, which God intended should be the first effect of all his judgments. And of this God is so careful, and yet so kind and provident, that fear might not be produced always at the expense of a great suffering, that God hath provided for us certain prologues of judgment, and keeps us waking with alarms, that so he might reconcile his mercies with our duties. Of this nature are epidemical diseases, not yet arrived at us, prodigious tempests, thunder, and loud noises from heaven: and he that will not fear when God speaks so loud, is not yet made soft with the impresses and perpetual droppings of religion. Venerable Bede reports of St. Chad, that if a great gust of wind suddenly arose, he presently made some holy ejaculation, to beg

favour of God for all mankind, who might possibly be concerned in the effects of that wind: but if a storm succeeded, he fell prostrate to the earth, and grew as violent in prayer as the storm was either at land or sea: but if God added thunder and lightning, he went to the church, and there spent all his time during the tempest in reciting Litanies, Psalms, and other holy prayers, till it pleased God to restore his favour, and to seem to forget his anger.¹ And the good bishop added this reason; because these are the extensions and stretchings forth of God's hand, and yet he did not strike; but he that trembles not when he sees God's arm held forth to strike us, understande neither God's mercies nor his own danger; he neither knows what those horrors were which the people saw from Mount Sinai, nor what the glories and amazements shall be at the great day of judgment. And if this religious man had seen Tullus Hostilius, the Roman king, and Anastasius, a Christian emperor, but a reputed heretic, struck dead with thunderbolts, and their own houses made their urns to keep their ashes in, there could have been no posture humble enough, no prayers devout enough, no place holy enough, nothing sufficiently expressive of his fear, and his humility, and his adoration and religion to the almighty and infinite power and glorious mercy of God, sending out his emissaries to denounce war with designs of peace. A great Italian general, seeing the sudden death of Alfonsus, duke of Ferrara, kneeled down instantly, saying, "And shall not this sight make me religious?" Three and twenty thousand fell

¹ Hist. Gent. Anglor, lib. iii. c. 18

in one night in the Israelitish camp, who were all slain for fornication.¹ And this so prodigious judgment was recorded in Scripture for our example and affrightment, that we should not with such freedom entertain a crime which destroyed so numerous a body of men in the darkness of one evening. Fear and modesty, and universal reformation, are the purposes of God's judgments upon us, or in our neighbourhood.

8. Fifthly, Concerning judgments happening to a nation or a church, the consideration is particular, because there are fewer capacities of making sins to become national than personal; and therefore if we understand when a sin is national, we may the rather understand the meaning of God's hand when he strikes a people. For national sins grow higher and higher, not merely according to the degree of the sin, or the intention alone, but according to the extension; according to its being national, so it is productive of more or less mischief to a kingdom. Customary iniquities amongst the people do then amount to the account of national sins, when they are of so universal practice as to take in well near every particular; such as was that of Sodom, not to leave ten righteous in all the country;² and such were the sins of the old world, who left but eight persons to escape the angry baptism of the flood. And such was the murmur of the children of Israel, refusing to march up to Canaan at the commandment of God; they all murmured but Caleb and Joshua. And this God, in the case of the Amalekites, calls the fulfilling of their sins, and a filling up the measure of their iniquities.

¹ 1 Cor. x. 8.

Hor. lib. iii. Od. 6.

And hither also I reckon the defection of the ten tribes from the house of Judah, and the Samaritan schism; these caused the total extirpation of the offending people. For although these sins were personal and private at first, yet when they come to be universal by diffusion and dissemination, and the good people remaining among them are but like drops of wine in a tun of water, of no consideration with God, save only to the preservation of their own persons;¹ then although the persons be private, yet all private or singular persons make the nation. But this hath happened but seldom in Christianity: I think indeed never, except in the case of mutinies and rebellion against their lawful prince, or the attesting violence done in unjust wars. But God only knows, and no man can say, when any sin is national by diffusion: and therefore in this case we cannot make any certain judgment or advantage to ourselves, or very rarely, by observing the changes of providence upon a people.

9. But the next above this, in order to the procuring popular judgments, is public impunities; the not doing justice upon criminals publicly complained of and demanded, especially when the persons interested call for justice and execution of good laws, and the prince's arm is at liberty and in full strength, and there is no contrary reason in the particular instance to make compensation to the public for the omission, or no care taken to satisfy the particular. Abimelech thought he had reason to be angry with Isaac for saying Rebecca was his sister: for 'one of the people might have

¹ Ezek. xiv. 20.

lain with thy wife, and thou shouldst have brought evil upon us :’ meaning, that the man should have escaped unpunished, by reason of the mistake ; which very impunity he feared might be expounded to be a countenance and encouragement to the sin. But this was no more than his fear. The case of the Benjamites comes home to this present article ; for they refused to do justice upon the men that had ravished and killed the Levite’s concubine ; they lost twenty-five thousand in battle, their cities were destroyed, and the whole tribe almost extinguished. For punishing public and great acts of injustice is called in Scripture ‘ putting away the evil from the land ;’¹ because to this purpose the sword is put into the prince’s hand, and he ‘ bears the sword in vain’ who ceases to protect his people : and not to punish the evil is a voluntary retention of it ; unless a special case intervene in which the prince thinks it convenient to give a particular pardon ; provided this be not encouragement to others, nor without great reason big enough to make compensation for the particular omission, and with care to render some other satisfaction to the person injured. In all other cases of impunity, that sin becomes national by forbearing, which in the acting was personal : and it is certain the impunity is a spring of universal evils ; it is no thank to the public if the best man be not as bad as the worst.

10. But there is a step beyond this, and of a more public concernment : such are the laws of Omri, when a nation consents to and makes ungodly statutes. When mischief is established as a

¹ Deut. xvii. 12 ; xix. 13, 19 ; xxi. 9, 21, et alibi.

law, then the nation is engaged to some purpose. When I see the people despise their governors, scorn and rob and disadvantage the ministers of religion, make rude addresses to God, to his temple, to his sacraments, I look upon it as the insolency of an untaught people, who would as readily do the contrary, if the fear of God and the king were upon them by good examples, and præcepts, and laws, and severe executions. And further yet, when the more public and exemplary persons are without sense of religion, without a dread of majesty, without reverence to the church, without impresses of conscience, and the tendernesses of a religious fear towards God; as the persons are greater in estimation of law, and in their influences upon the people, so the score of the nation advances, and there is more to be paid for in popular judgments. But when iniquity or irreligion is made a sanction, and either God must be dishonoured, or the church exauctorated, or her rites invaded by a law, then the fortune of the kingdom is at stake. No sin engages a nation so much, or is so public, so solemn iniquity as is a wicked law. Therefore it concerns princes and states to secure the piety and innocency of their laws; and if there be any evil laws, which upon just grounds may be thought productive of God's anger, because a public misdemeanour cannot be expiated but by a public act of repentance, or a public calamity, the laws must either have their edge abated by a desuetude, or be laid asleep by a non-execution, or dismembered by contrary privisos, or have the sting drawn forth by interpretation, or else by abrogation be quite rescinded. But these are national sins within itself, or within its own body, by the

act of the body (I mean) diffusive or representative; and they are like the personal sins of men in or against their own bodies in the matter of sobriety. There are others in the matter of justice, as the nation relates to other people communicating in public intercourse.

11. For as the intercourse between man and man in the actions of commutative and distributive justice is the proper matter of virtues and vices personal; so are the transactions between nation and nation against the public rules of justice; sins national directly, and in their first original, and answer to injustice between man and man. Such are commencing war upon unjust titles, invasion of neighbours' territories, confederacies and aids upon tyrannical interest, wars against true religion or sovereignty, violation of the laws of nations, which they have consented to as the public instrument of accord and negotiation, breach of public faith, defending pirates, and the like. When a public judgment comes upon a nation, these things are to be thought upon; that we may not think ourselves acquitted by crying out against swearing, and drunkenness, and cheating in manufactures, which, unless they be of universal dissemination, and made national by diffusion, are paid for upon a personal score; and the private infelicities of our lives will either expiate or punish them severely. But while the people mourn for those sins of which their low condition is capable, sins that may produce a popular fever, or perhaps the plague, where the misery dwells in cottages, and the princes often have indemnity, as it was in the case of David; yet we may not hope to appease a war, to master a rebellion, to cure

the public distemperatures of a kingdom, which threaten not the people only, or the governors also, but even the government itself, unless the sins of a more public capacity be cut off by public declarations, or other acts of natural justice and religion. But the duty which concerns us all in such cases is, that every man in every capacity should enquire into himself, and for his own portion of the calamity put in his own symbol of emendation for his particular, and his prayers for the public interest. In which it is not safe that any private persons should descend to particular censures of the crimes of princes and states; no, not towards God, unless the matter be notorious and past a question; but it is a sufficient assuagement of this part of his duty, if, when he hath set his own house in order, he would pray, with indefinite significations of his charity and care of the public, that God would put it into the hearts of all whom it concerns, to endeavour the removal of the sin that hath brought the exterminating angel upon the nation. But yet there are sometimes great lines drawn by God in the expresses of anger in some judgments upon a nation: and when the judgment is of that danger as to invade the very constitution of a kingdom, the proportions that judgments many times keep to their sins intimate, that there is some national sin in which, either by diffusion, or representation, or in the direct matter of sins, (as false oaths, unjust wars, wicked confederacies, or ungodly laws,) the nation in the public capacity is delinquent.

12. For as the nation hath in sins a capacity distinct from the sins of all the people, inasmuch as the nation is united in one head, guarded by a dis-

tinct and a higher angel, (as Persia by St. Michael,) transacts affairs in a public right, transmits influence to all particulars from a common fountain, and hath intercourse with other collective bodies, who also distinguish from their own particulars; so likewise it hath punishments distinct from those infelicities which vex particulars; punishments proportionable to itself and its own sins: such as are change of governments, of better into worse, of monarchy into aristocracy, and so to the lowest ebb of democracy; death of princes, infant kings, foreign invasions, civil wars, a disputable title to the crown, making a nation tributary, conquest by a foreigner, and, which is worst of all, removing the candlestick from a people, by extinction of the church, or that which is necessary to its conservation, the several orders and ministries of religion. And the last hath also proper sins of its own analogy; such as are false articles in the public confessions of a church, schism from the catholic, public scandals, a general viciousness of the clergy, an indifferency in religion, without warmth and holy fires of zeal, and diligent pursuance of all its just and holy interests. Now in these and all parallel cases, when God by punishments hath probably marked and distinguished the crime, it concerns public persons to be the more forward and importunate in consideration of public irregularities; and for the private also, not to neglect their own particulars; for by that means, although not certainly, yet probably, they may secure themselves from falling in the public calamity. It is not infallibly sure that holy persons shall not be smitten by the destroying angel; for God in such deaths hath many ends of mercy, and some of providence

to serve; but such private and personal emendations and devotions are the greatest securities of the men against the judgment, or the evil of it, preserving them in this life, or waisting them over to a better. Thus many of the Lord's champions did fall in battle, and the armies of the Benjamites did twice prevail upon the juster people of all Israel; and the Greek empire hath declined and shrunk under the fortune and power of the Ottoman family; and the holy land, which was twice possessed by Christian princes, is now in the dominion of unchristened Saracens; and in the production of these alterations many a gallant and pious person suffered the evils of war, and the change of an untimely death.

13. But the way for the whole nation to proceed in cases of epidemical diseases, wars, great judgments, and popular calamities, is to do in the public proportion the same that every man is to do for his private; by public acts of justice, repentance, fastings, pious laws, and execution of just and religious edicts, making peace, quitting of unjust interests, declaring publicly against a crime, protesting in behalf of the contrary virtue or religion. And to this also every man, as he is a member of the body politic, must co-operate; that by a repentance in diffusion help may come, as well as by a sin of universal dissemination the plague was hastened and invited the rather. But in these cases all the work of discerning and pronouncing concerning the cause of the judgment, as it must be without asperity, and only for designs of correction and emendation, so it must be done by kings and prophets, and the assistance of other public persons, to whom the public is committed.

Joshua cast lots upon Achan, and discovered the public trouble in a private instance; and of old the prophets had it in commission to reprove the popular iniquity of nations, and the confederate sins of kingdoms; and in this Christianity altered nothing. And when this is done modestly, prudently, humbly, and penitently, oftentimes the tables turn immediately, but always in due time; and a great alteration in a kingdom becomes the greatest blessing in the world, and fastens the church, or the crown, or the public peace, in bands of great continuance and security; and it may be the next age shall feel the benefits of our sufferance and repentance. And therefore, as we must endeavour to secure it, so we must not be too decretory in the case of others, or disconsolate or diffident in our own, when it may so happen, that all succeeding generations shall see that God pardoned us and loved us even when he smote us. Let us all learn to fear and walk humbly. The churches of Laodicea and the Colossians suffered a great calamity within a little while after the Spirit of God had sent them two epistles by the ministry of St. Paul: their cities were buried in an earthquake; and yet we have reason to think they were churches beloved of God, and congregations of holy people.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal and powerful God, thou just and righteous Governor of the world, who callest all orders of men by precepts, promises, and threatenings, by mercies, and by judgments, teach us to admire and adore all the wisdom, the effects and infinite varieties of thy providence; and make us to dispose ourselves so, by

obedience, by repentance, by all the manners of holy living, that we may never provoke thee to jealousy, much less to wrath and indignation against us. Keep far from us the sword of the destroying angel, and let us never perish in the public expresses of thy wrath, in diseases epidemical, with the furics of war, with calamitous, sudden, and horrid accidents, with unusual diseases; unless that our so strange fall be more for thy glory and our eternal benefit, and then thy will be done: we beg thy grace, that we may cheerfully conform to thy holy will and pleasure. Lord, open our understandings, that we may know the meaning of thy voice, and the signification of thy language, when thou speakest from heaven in signs and judgments: and let a holy fear so soften our spirits, and an intense love so inflame and sanctify our desires, that we may apprehend every intimation of thy pleasure at its first and remotest and most obscure representment; that so we may with repentance go out to meet thee, and prevent the expresses of thine anger. Let thy restraining grace, and the observation of the issues of thy justice, so allay our spirits, that we be not severe and forward in concerning others, nor backward in passing sentence upon ourselves. Make us to obey thy voice described in holy Scripture, to tremble at thy voice expressed in wonders and great effects of providence, to condemn none but ourselves, nor to enter into the recesses of thy sanctuary and search the forbidden records of predestination; but that we may read our duty in the pages of revelation, not in the labels of accidental effects: that thy judgments may confirm thy word, and thy word teach us our duty; and we, by such excellent instruments, may enter in and grow up in the ways of godliness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SECTION XV.

Of the Accidents happening from the Death of Lazarus, until the Death and Burial of Jesus.

1. WHILE Jesus was in Galilee, messengers came to him from Martha and her sister Mary, that he would hasten into Judæa, to Bethany, to relieve the sickness and imminent dangers of their brother Lazarus. But he deferred his going till Lazarus was dead; purposing to give a great probation of his divinity, power, and mission, by a glorious miracle, and to give God glory, and to receive reflections of the glory upon himself: for after he had stayed two days, he called his disciples to go with him into Judæa, telling them that Lazarus was dead, but he would raise him out of that sleep of death. But by that time Jesus was arrived at Bethany, he found that Lazarus had been dead four days, and now near to putrefaction. But when Martha and Mary met him, weeping their pious tears for their dead brother, Jesus suffered the passions of pity and humanity, and wept; distilling that precious liquor into the grave of Lazarus, watering the dead plant, that it might spring into a new life, and raise his head above the ground.

2. When Jesus had, by his words of comfort and institution, strengthened the faith of the two mourning sisters, and commanded the stone to be removed from the grave, he made an address of adoration and eucharist to his Father, confessing his perpetual propensity to hear him; and then cried out, 'Lazarus, come forth!' And he that was dead

came forth from his bed of darkness, with his night-clothes on him, whom when the apostles had unloosed at the command of Jesus, he went to Bethany. And many that were present believed on him; but others, wondering and malicious, went and told the Pharisees the story of the miracle; who, upon that advice, called their great council, whose great and solemn cognizance was of the greater causes of prophets, of kings, and of the holy law. At this great assembly it was that Caiaphas, the high-priest, prophesied that it was expedient one should die for the people: and thence they determined the death of Jesus: but he, knowing they had passed a decretory sentence against him, retired to the city Ephraim, in the tribe of Judah, near the desert, where he stayed a few days, till the approximation of the feast of Easter.

3. Against which feast, when Jesus with his disciples was going to Jerusalem, he told them the event of the journey would be, that the Jews should deliver him to the Gentiles; that they should scourge him, and mock him, and crucify him, and the third day he should rise again. After which discourse, the mother of Zebedee's children begged of Jesus for her two sons, that one of them might sit at his right hand, the other at the left, in his kingdom. For no discourses of his passion, or intimations of the mysteriousness of his kingdom, could yet put them into right understandings of their condition: but Jesus, whose heart and thoughts were full of fancy and apprehensions of the neighbour passion, gave them answer in proportion to his present conceptions and their future condition: for if they desired the honours of his kingdom, such as they were, they should have

them, unless themselves did decline them; they should drink of his cup, and dip in his lavatory, and be washed with his baptism, and sit in his kingdom, if the heavenly Father had prepared it for them: but the donation of that immediately was an issue of divine election and predestination, and was only competent to them who, by holy living and patient suffering, put themselves into a disposition of becoming vessels of election.

4. But as Jesus in this journey came near Jericho, he cures a blind man, who sat begging by the way-side: and espying Zacchæus, the chief of the publicans, upon a tree, (that he, being low in stature, might upon that advantage of station see Jesus passing by,) he invited himself to his house; who received him with gladness and repentance of his crimes, purging his conscience, and filling his heart and house with joy and sanctity; for, immediately upon the arrival of the Master at his house, he offered restitution to all persons whom he had injured, and satisfaction, and half of his remanent estate he gave to the poor; and so gave the fairest entertainment to Jesus, who brought along with him salvation to his house. There it was that he spake the parable of the king who concredited divers talents to his servants; and having at his return exacted an account, rewarded them who had improved their bank, and been faithful in their trust, with rewards proportionable to their capacity and improvement; but the negligent servant, who had not meliorated his stock, was punished with ablegation and confinement to outer darkness: and from hence sprang up that dogmatical proposition, which is mysterious and determined in Christianity: 'To him that hath shall be given; and from him

that hath not shall be taken away even what he hath.* After this, going forth of Jericho, he cured two blind men upon the way.

5. Six days before Easter Jesus came to Bethany, where he was feasted by Martha and Mary; and accompanied by Lazarus, who sat at the table with Jesus. But Mary brought a pound of nard pistie,¹ and, as formerly she had done, again anoints the feet of Jesus, and fills the house with the odour, till God himself smelt thence a savour of a sweet-smelling sacrifice: but Judas Iscariot, the thief and the traitor, repined at the vanity of the expense, as he pretended, because it might have been sold for three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. But Jesus, in his reply, taught us, that there is an opportunity for actions of religion as well as of charity. Mary did this against the burial of Jesus; and her religion was accepted by him, to whose honours the holocaust of love and the oblations of alms-deeds are in their proper seasons direct actions of worship and duty. But at this meeting there came many Jews to see Lazarus, who was raised from death, as well as to see Jesus: and because by occasion of his resurrection many of them believed on Jesus, therefore the Pharisees deliberated about putting him to death.² But God, in his glorious providence, was pleased to preserve him as a trumpet of his glories, and a testimony of the miracles, thirty years after the death of Jesus.

6. The next day, being the fifth day before the passover, Jesus came to the foot of the Mount of Olives; and sent his disciples to Bethphage, a vil-

¹ Pisticam, id est spicatam, corrupte, uti ex Latinis fere solent Græci. Vide Erasm. in 14 Marci.

² Epiphani cont. Manich.

lage in the neighbourhood, commanding them to unloose an ass and a colt, and bring them to him, and to tell the owners it was done for the Master's use: and they did so. And when they brought the ass to Jesus, he rides on him to Jerusalem: and the people, having notice of his approach, took branches of palm-trees, and went out to meet him, strewing branches and garments in the way, crying out, 'Hosannah to the Son of David!' Which was a form of exclamation used to the honour of God, and in great solemnities; and signifies adoration to the Son of David, by the rite of carrying branches; which when they used in procession about their altars they used to pray, "Lord, save us; Lord, prosper us:"² which hath occasioned the reddition of Hoschiannah to be, amongst some, that prayer which they repeated at the carrying of the Hoschiannah, as if itself did signify, "Lord, save us." But this honour was so great and unusual to be done even unto kings, that the Pharisees, knowing this to be an appropriate manner of address to God, said one to another by way of wonder, 'Hear ye what these men say?' for they were troubled to hear the people revere him as a God.

7. When Jesus from the Mount of Olives 'beheld Jerusalem, he wept over it,' and foretold great sadnesses and infelicities futurely contingent to it: which not only happened in the sequel of the story, according to the main issues and significations of this prophecy, but even to minutes and cir-

¹ Ὑψηλᾶν ἀρετᾶν ἐν στεφάνων ἄωσον γλυκύν. Pindar. Vocat palmarum ramos, Olymp. Altissimarum virtutum et coronarum florem suavem.

² Drusius de vocib. Heb. N. T. c. 19. Canin. de locis. N. T.

circumstances it was verified; for in the Mount of Olives, where Jesus shed tears over perishing Jerusalem, the Romans first pitched their tents when they came to its final overthrow.¹ From thence descending to the city, he went into the temple, and still the acclamations followed him; till the Pharisees were ready to burst with the noises abroad, and the tumults of envy and scorn within; and by observing that all their endeavours to suppress his glories were but like clasping their hands to veil the sun, and that, in despite of all their stratagems, the whole nation was become disciple to the glorious Nazarene. And there he cured certain persons that were blind and lame.

8. But while he abode at Jerusalem, 'certain Greeks, who came to the feast to worship,' made their address to Philip, that they might be brought to Jesus. 'Philip tells Andrew, and they both tell Jesus;' who, having admitted them, discoursed many things concerning his passion; and then prayed a petition, which is the end of his own sufferings, and of all human actions, and the purpose of the whole creation: 'Father, glorify thy name:' to which he was answered by a voice from heaven, 'I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.' But this, nor the whole series of miracles that he did, the mercies, the cures, nor the divine discourses, could gain the faith of all the Jews, who were determined by their human interest; for 'many of the rulers who believed on him durst not confess him, because they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.' Then Jesus again exhorted all men "to believe on him, that so they

¹ Joseph. de Bello Jud. lib. vi. c. 3.

might in the same act believe on God; that they might approach unto the light, and not abide in darkness; that they might obey the commandments of the Father, whose express charge it was that Jesus should preach this gospel; and that they might not be judged at the last day by the word which they have rejected, which word to all its observers is everlasting life." After which sermon retiring to Bethany, he abode there all night."

9. On the morning, returning to Jerusalem, on the way being hungry he passed by a fig-tree, where, expecting fruit he found none, and cursed the fig-tree, which by the next day was dried up and withered. Upon occasion of which preternatural event Jesus discoursed of the power of faith, and its power to produce miracles. But upon this occasion others, the disciples of Jesus in after-ages, have pleased themselves with fancies and imperfect descants; as that he cursed this tree in mystery and secret intendment, it having been the tree in the eating whose fruit Adam, prevaricating the divine law, made an inlet to sin, which brought in death and the sadnesses of Jesus's passion.¹ But Jesus having entered the city came into the temple, and preached the gospel: and the chief-priests and Scribes questioned his commission, and by what authority he did those things. But Jesus promising to answer them if they would declare their opinions concerning John's baptism, which they durst not, for fear of displeasing the people, or throwing dirt in their own faces, was acquitted of his obligation, by their declining the proposition.

10. But there he reprov'd the Pharisees and ru-

¹ Isidor. ad Theo. pom. lib. i. ep. 51.

lers by the parable of "two sons; the first whereof said to his father, he would not obey, but repented, and did his command; the second gave good words, but did nothing: meaning, that persons of the greatest improbability were more heartily converted than they whose outside seemed to have appropriated religion to the labels of their frontlets. He added a parable of the vineyard let to husbandmen, who killed the servants sent to demand the fruits, and at last the son himself, that they might invade the inheritance: but made a sad commination to all such who should either stumble at this stone, or on whom this stone should fall." After which, and some other reprehensions, (which he so veiled in parable that it might not be expounded to be calumny or declamation, although such sharp sermons had been spoken in the people's hearing; but yet so transparently that themselves might see their own iniquity in those modest and just representations,) the Pharisees would fain have seized him; but they durst not for the people, but resolved, if they could, 'to entangle him in his talk;' and therefore 'sent out spies,' who should pretend sanctity and veneration of his person; who with a goodly insinuating preface, that 'Jesus regarded no man's person, but spake the word of God,' with much simplicity and justice, desired to know if it were 'lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar or not.' A question which was of great dispute, because of the numerous sect of the Galileans, who denied it, and of the affections of the people, who loved their money, and their liberty, and the privileges of their nation. And now, in all probability, he shall fall under the displeasure of the people or of Cæsar. But Jesus called to see a penny; and

finding it to be superscribed with Cæsar's image, with incomparable wisdom he brake their snare, and established an evangelical proposition for ever; saying, 'Give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.'

11. Having so excellently and so much to their wonder answered the Pharisees, the Sadducees bring their great objection to him against the resurrection, by putting the case of a woman married to seven husbands, and 'whose wife should she be in the resurrection?' thinking that to be an impossible state, which engages upon such seeming incongruities, that a woman should at once be wife to seven men. But Jesus first answered their objection, telling them, that all those relations whose foundation is in the imperfections and passions of flesh and blood, and duties here below, shall cease in that state; which is so spiritual that it is like to the condition of angels, amongst whom there is no difference of sex, no cognations, no genealogies or derivation from one another: and then, by a new argument, proves the resurrection, by one of God's appellatives, who did then delight to be called 'the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:' for since God 'is not the God of the dead, but of the living,' unto him even these men are alive; and if so, then either they now exercise acts of life, and therefore shall be restored to their bodies, that their actions may be complete, and they not remain in a state of imperfection to all eternity; or if they be alive, and yet cease from operation, they shall be much rather raised up to a condition which shall actuate and make perfect their present capacities and indispositions, lest power and inclination should for ever be in the root, and never rise up to

fruit or herbage; and so be an eternal vanity, like an old bud, or an eternal child.

12. After this, the Pharisees being well pleased, not that Jesus spake so excellently, but that the Sadducees were confuted, came to him, asking, 'which was the great commandment,' and some other things, more out of curiosity than pious desires of satisfaction. But at last Jesus was pleased to ask them concerning Christ, 'whose son he was:' they answered, 'The son of David.' But he replying, 'How then doth David call him Lord?' ['The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand.' &c.] they had nothing to answer. But Jesus then gave his disciples caution against the pride, the hypocrisy, and the oppression of the Scribes and Pharisees; and commended the poor widow's oblation of her 'two mites into the treasury,' it being a great love in a little print, for it was 'all her living.' All this was spoken in the temple; the goodly stones of which, when the apostles beheld with wonder, they being white and firm, twenty cubits in length, twelve in breadth, eight in depth, as Josephus reports,¹ Jesus prophecies the destruction of the place. Concerning which prediction when the apostles, being with him at the Mount of Olives, asked him privately concerning the time and the signs of so sad event, he discoursed largely of "his coming to judgment against that city, and interweaved predictions of the universal judgment of all the world; of which this, though very sad, was but a small adumbration: adding precepts of watchfulness, and standing in preparation, with hearts filled with grace,

¹ Lib. xiv. Antiq. c. 14.

our lamps always shining, that when the bridegroom shall come, we may be ready to enter in ;” which was intended in the parable of the five wise virgins ; and concluded his sermon with a narrative of his passion, foretelling that within two days he should be crucified.

13. Jesus descended from the mount, and came to Bethany ; and turning into the house of Simon the leper, Mary Magdalene, having been reprov'd by Judas for spending ointment upon Jesus's feet, it being so unaccustomed and large a profusion, thought now to speak her love once more, and trouble nobody ; and therefore she ‘ poured ointment on his sacred head ;’ believing that, being a pompousness of a more accustomed festivity, would be indulg'd to the expressions of her affection. But now all the disciples murmured, wondering at the prodigiousness of the woman's religion, great enough to consume a province in the overflowings of her thankfulness and duty. But Jesus now also entertained the sincerity of her miraculous love ; adding this prophecy, that where the gospel should be preached, there also a record of this act shall be kept, as a perpetual monument of her piety, and an attestation of his divinity, who could foretel future contingencies ; Christianity receiving the greatest argument from that which St. Peter calls ‘ the surer word of prophecy ;’ meaning it to be greater than the testimony of miracles, not easy to be dissembled by impure spirits, and whose efficacy should descend to all ages : for this prophecy shall for ever be fulfilling, and, being every day verified, does every day preach the divinity of Christ's person, and of his institution.

14. Two days before the passover, the Scribes

and Pharisees called a council, to contrive crafty ways of destroying Jesus, they not daring to do it by open violence. Of which meeting when Judas Iscariot had notice, (for those assemblies were public and notorious,) he ran from Bethany, and offered himself to betray his Master to them, if they would give him a considerable reward. They agreed for thirty pieces of silver. Of what value each piece was is uncertain; but their own nation hath given a rule, that when a piece of silver is named in the Pentateuch, it signifies a sicle; if it be named in the prophets, it signifies a pound; if in the other writings of the Old Testament, it signifies a talent.¹ This therefore being alleged out of the prophet Jeremy by one of the evangelists, it is probable the price at which Judas sold his Lord was thirty pounds weight of silver: a goodly price for the Saviour of the world to be prized at by his undiscerning and unworthy countrymen.

15. The next day was the first day of unleavened bread, on which it was necessary they should kill the passover: therefore Jesus sent Peter and John to the city, to a certain man, whom they should find carrying a pitcher of water to his house; him they should follow, and there prepare the passover. They went and found the man in the same circumstances; and prepared for Jesus and his family, who at the

¹ Elias Levita Jud. in Tisbi. Arius Montanus in diction. Syro-Chaldaic.

² Matt. xxvii. 9, ubi citatur Jeremias pro Zecharia, per errorem illapsum in Codices. Nam tempore S. Augustini in nonnullis Codicibus (Zecharias) legebatur; atque hodie in Syriac. T. Sed fortassis ex traditione hoc descendit a Jeremia dictum, sicut multa alia in vet. testam. non descripta, et in N. T. repetita: quod eo magis est credibile, quia proverbialiter dictum apud Judaeos, Spiritum Jeremiae resedisse in Zech.

even came to celebrate the passover. It was at the house of John, surnamed Mark, which had always been open to this blessed family, where he was pleased to finish his last supper, and the mysteriousness of the vespers of his passion.¹

16. When evening was come, Jesus stood with his disciples, and ate the paschal lamb: after which he girt himself with a towel, and taking a basin washed the feet of his disciples; not only by the ceremony, but in his discourses, instructing them in the doctrine of humility, which the Master, by his so great condescension to his disciples, had made sacred, and imprinted the lesson in lasting characters by making it symbolical. But Peter was unwilling to be washed by his Lord, until he was told, he must renounce his part in him unless he were washed: which option being given to Peter, he cried out, 'Not my feet only, but my hands and my head.' But Jesus said, the ablution of the feet was sufficient for the purification of the whole man; relating to the custom of those countries who used to go to supper immediately from the baths, who therefore were sufficiently clean save only on their feet, by reason of the dust contracted in their passage from the baths to the dining-room; from which, when by the hospitable master of the house, they were caused to be cleansed, they needed no more ablution: and by it Jesus, passing from the letter to the spirit, meant, that the body of sin was washed in the baths of baptism; and afterwards, if we remained in the same state of purity, it was only necessary to purge away the

¹ Alexand. Mon. apud Metaphrasten die 11 Junii. Vide Adrichom. in descript. Jerus. n. 6.

filth contracted in our passage from the font to the altar; and then we are clean all over, when the baptismal state is unaltered, and the little adherences of imperfection are passions also washed off.

17. But after the manducation of the paschal lamb, it was the custom of the nation to sit down to a second supper, in which they ate herbs and unleavened bread; the major-domo first dipping his morsel, and then the family; after which the father brake bread into pieces, and distributed a part to every of the guests; and, first drinking himself, gave to the rest the chalice filled with wine, according to the age and dignity of the person, adding to each distribution a form of benediction proper to the mystery, which was eucharistical and commemorative of their deliverance from Egypt. This supper Jesus being to celebrate, changed the forms of benediction, turned the ceremony into mystery, and gave his body and blood in sacrament and religious configuration; so instituting the venerable sacrament, which, from the time of its institution, is called the Lord's supper: which rite Jesus commanded the apostles to perpetuate in commemoration of him, their Lord, until his second coming. And this was the first delegation of a perpetual ministry which Jesus made to his apostles, in which they were to be succeeded to in all the generations of the church.

18. But Jesus being troubled in spirit, told his apostles, that one of them should betray him. Which prediction he made, that they might not be scandalized at the sadness of objection of the passion, but be confirmed in their belief, seeing so great demonstration of his wisdom and spirit of

prophecy The disciples were all troubled at this sad arrest, looking one on another, and doubting of whom he spake; but they beckoned to the beloved disciple, leaning on Jesus's breast, that he might ask: for they who knew their own innocency and infirmity, were desirous to satisfy their curiosity, and to be rid of their indetermination and their fear. But Jesus being asked, gave them a sign, and a sop to Judas; commanding him to do what he list speedily: for Jesus was extremely straitened till he had drunk the chalice off, and accomplished his mysterious and afflictive baptism. After Judas received the sop, the devil entered into him, and Judas went forth immediately, it being now night.

19. When he was gone out, Jesus began his farewell sermon, rarely mixed of sadness and joys, and studded with mysteries as with emeralds; discoursing of "the glorification of God in his Son, and of those glories which the Father had prepared for him; of his sudden departure, and his migration to a place whither they could not come yet, but afterwards they should: meaning, first to death, and then to glory: commanding them to love one another; and foretelling to Peter, (who made confident protests that he would die with his Master,) that 'before the cock should crow twice, he should deny him thrice.' But lest he should afflict them with too sad representations of his present condition, he comforts them with the comforts of faith, with the intendments of his departure to prepare places in heaven for them, whither they might come by him, who is the way, the truth, and the life; adding a promise, in order to their present support and future felicities, that if they should ask of God

any thing in his name, they should receive it; and upon condition they would love him, and keep his commandments, he would pray for the Holy Ghost to come upon them, to supply his room, to furnish them with proportionable comforts, to enable them with great gifts, to lead them into all truth, and to abide with them for ever. Then arming them against future persecutions, giving them divers holy precepts, discoursing of his emanation from the Father, and of the necessity of his departure, he gave them his blessing, and prayed for them: and then, having sung an hymn, which was part of the great Allelujah, beginning at the 114th Psalm, ('When Israel came out of Egypt,') and ending at the 118th, inclusively, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, unto the Mount of Olives, to a village called Gethsemane, where there was a garden, into which he entered to pray together with his disciples."

20. But taking Peter, James, and John apart with him, about a stone's cast from the rest, he began to be exceeding sorrowful, and sad even unto death; for now he saw the ingredients of his bitter draught pouring into the chalice, and the sight was full of horror and amazement: he therefore fell on his face, and prayed, 'O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' In this prayer he fell into so sad an agony, that the pains inflicted by his Father's wrath, and made active by his own apprehension, were so great, that a sweat distilled from his sacred body as great and conglobated as drops of blood:¹ and God, who heard his prayer, but would not answer him in kind, sent an

¹ Quidam ex Hegesippo notant, ex irratione sanguinis Christi natam arborem. Sic Philippus Bosquius et alii. Sed hæc sunt meræ nugæ.

angel to comfort him in the sadness, which he was pleased not to take away. But knowing that the drinking this cup was the great end of his coming into the world, he laid aside all his own interests, and divested himself of the affections of flesh and blood, willing his Father's will; and because his Father commanded, he, in defiance of sense and passion, was desirous to suffer all our pains. But as when two seas meet, the billows contest in ungentle embraces, and make violent noises, till, having wearied themselves into smaller waves and disunited drops, they run quietly into one stream: so did the Spirit and nature of Jesus assault each other with disagreeing interests and distinguishing disputations, till the earnestness of the contention was diminished by the demonstrations of the Spirit, and the prevailings of grace; which the sooner got the victory, because they were not to contest with an unsanctified or rebellious nature, but a body of affections which had no strong desires, but of its own preservation. And therefore Jesus went thrice, and prayed the same prayer, that, 'if it were possible, the cup might pass from him;' and thrice made an act of resignation; and in the intervals 'came and found his apostles asleep,' gently chiding their incuriousness, and warning them to 'watch and pray, that they enter not into temptation;' till the time that the traitor 'came with a multitude armed with swords and staves, from the priests and elders of the people,' to apprehend him.

21. Judas gave them the opportunity of the night, that was all the advantage they had by him; because they durst not seize him by day, for fear of the people: and he signified the person of his **master** to the soldiers by a kiss, and an address of

seeming civility. But when they came towards him, 'Jesus said, Whom seek ye? They said, Jesus of Nazareth. He said, I am he.' But there was a divinity upon him, that they could not seize him at first. But as a wave climbing of a rock is beaten back and scattered into members, till falling down it creeps with gentle wafings, and kisses the feet of the stony mountain, and so encircles it; so the soldiers, coming at first with a rude attempt, were twice repelled by the glory of his person, till they, falling at his feet, were at last admitted to the seizure of his body; having by those involuntary prostrations confessed his power greater than theirs, and that the lustre and influence of a God are greater than the violences and rudenesses of soldiers. And still they, like weak eyes, durst not behold the glory of this sun, till a cloud, like a dark veil, did interrupt the emissions of his glories, they could not seize upon him, till they had thrown a veil upon his holy face. Which although it was a custom of the Easterlings, and of the Roman empire generally, yet in this case was violence and necessity, because a certain impetuosity and vigorousness of spirit and divinity issuing from his holy face, made them to take sanctuary in darkness, and to throw a veil over him, in that dead time of a sad and dismal night.¹ But Peter, a stout Galilean, bold and zealous, attempted a rescue, and 'smote a servant of the high-priest, and cut off his ear.' But Jesus rebuked the intemperance of his passion, and commanded him to 'put up his sword,' saying, 'all they that strike with the sword shall perish with the sword;' so putting a

¹ Hieron. in c. ix. Matt.

bridle upon the illegal inflictions and expresses of anger or revenge from an incompetent authority. But 'Jesus touched Malchus's ear, and cured it.'

22. When Jesus had yielded himself into their power, and was now 'led away by the chief-priests, captains of the temple, elders of the people, and soldiers,' who all came in combination and covenant to surprise him, his disciples fled; and John the Evangelist, who with grief and an over-running fancy had forgot to lay aside his upper garment, which in festivals they were used to put on, began to make escape; but being arrested by his linen upon his bare body, he was forced to leave that behind him, that himself might escape his master's danger; for now was verified the prophetic saying, 'I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered; but Peter followed afar off;' and the greatness of John's love, when he had mastered the first inconsiderations of his fear, made him to return awhile after into the high-priest's hall.

23. Jesus was first led to Annas, who was the prince of the Sanhedrim, and had cognizance of prophets and public doctrines; who therefore 'enquired of Jesus concerning his disciples and his discipline.' But he answered, that his doctrine had been public or popular; that he never taught in conventicles; and therefore referred him to the testimony of all the people. For which free answer, 'a servant standing by smote him on the face;' and Jesus meekly asked him what evil he had done. But Annas without the seventy assessors could judge nothing; and therefore 'sent him bound to Caiaphas, who was high-priest that year,' president of the rites of the temple; as the other

high-priest was of the great council. Thither Peter came, and had admission by the means of another disciple, supposed to be John, who having sold his possession in Galilee to Caiaphas, came and dwelt near Mount Sion; but was, by intervention of that bargain, made known to the high-priest, and brought Peter into the house. Where when Peter was challenged three times by the servants to be a Galilean, and of Jesus's family, he denied and forswore it; till Jesus, looking back, reminded him of his prediction, and the foulness of the crime; 'and the cock crew,' for it was now the second cock-crowing after ten of the clock in the fourth watch. 'And Peter went out and wept bitterly,' that he might cleanse his soul, washing off the foul stains he had contracted in his shameful perjury and denying of his Lord. And it is reported of the same holy person, that ever after, when he heard the cock crow, he wept; remembering the old instrument of his conversion, and his own unworthiness, for which he never ceased to do actions of sorrow and sharp repentance.¹

24. On the morning the council was to assemble; and whilst Jesus was detained in expectation of it, the servants mocked him, and did all actions of affront and ignoble despite to his sacred head; and because the question was whether he were a prophet, 'they covered his eyes, and smote him,' in derision calling on him to 'prophecy who smote him.' But in the morning, when the high-priests and rulers of the people were assembled, they sought false witness against Jesus; but

¹ Arsenius in vitis Pp.

found none to purpose: they railed boldly, and could prove nothing; they accused vehemently, and the allegations were of such things as were no crimes; and the greatest article which the united diligence of all their malice could pretend, was, that 'he said he would destroy the temple, and in three days build it up again.' But Jesus neither answered this nor any other of their vainer allegations; for the witnesses destroyed each other's testimony by their disagreeing; till at last Caiaphas, who, to verify his prophecy, and to satisfy his ambition, and to bait his envy, was furiously determined Jesus should die, 'adjures him by the living God to say whether he were the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus knew his design to be an inquisition of death, not of piety or curiosity; yet, because his hour was now come, he openly affirmed it, without any expedient to elude the high-priest's malice, or to decline the question.

25. When Caiaphas heard the saying, he accused Jesus of blasphemy, and pretended an apprehension so tragical, that he overacted his wonder and feigned detestation; for he rent his garments, (which was the interjection of the country, and custom of the nation, but forbidden to the high-priest,) and called presently to sentence. And, as it was agreed beforehand, 'they all condemned him as guilty of death,' and as far as they had power inflicted it; for they 'beat him with their fists, smote him with the palms of their hands, spit upon him,' and abused him beyond the license of enraged tyrants. When Judas heard that they had passed the final and decretory sentence of death upon his Lord, he, who thought not it would

have gone so far, repented him to have been an instrument of so damnable a machination, and came and brought the silver which they gave him for hire, 'threw it in amongst them, and said, I have sinned in betraying the innocent blood.' But they, incurious of those hell-torments Judas felt within him, because their own fires burned not yet, dismissed him; and upon consultation bought with the money 'a field to bury strangers in.' And 'Judas went and hanged himself:' and the judgment was made more notorious and eminent, by an unusual accident at such deaths; for he so swelled, that 'he burst, and his bowels gushed out.' But the Greek scholiast and some others report out of Papias, St. John's scholar, that Judas fell from the fig-tree on which he hanged, before he was quite dead, and survived his attempt some while, being so sad a spectacle of deformity and pain, and a prodigious tumour, that his plague was deplorable, and highly miserable; till at last he burst in the very substance of his trunk, as being extended beyond the possibilities and capacities of nature.¹

26. But the high-priest had given Jesus over to the secular power, and carried him to Pilate, to be put to death by his sentence and military power. But coming thither, they 'would not enter into the judgment-hall,' because of the feast; but Pilate met them, and willing to decline the business, bid them 'judge him according to their own law.' They replied, 'it was not lawful for them

¹ Euthem. in xxvi. Matt. Cedren. in compend. Oecumen. in c. i. Act. Juvencus Hist. Evangel. lib. iv. Beda de locis sanctis c. 4.

to put any man to death ;' meaning, during the seven days of unleavened bread :¹ (as appears in the instance of Herod, who detained Peter in prison, intending after Easter to bring him out to the people:) and their malice was restless, till the sentence they had passed were put in execution. Others think that all the right of inflicting capital punishments was taken from the nation by the Romans. And Josephus writes, that when Ananias, their high-priest, had by a council of the Jews condemned St. James, the brother of our Lord, and put him to death, without the consent of the Roman president, he was deprived of his priesthood.² But because Pilate (who either by common right, or at that time was the judge of capital inflictions) was averse from intermeddling in the condemnation of an innocent person, they attempted him with excellent craft; for knowing that Pilate was a great servant of the Roman greatness, and a hater of the sect of the Galileans, the high-priest accused Jesus, that he was of that sect, that he 'denied paying tribute to Cæsar, that he called himself king.' Concerning which, when Pilate interrogated Jesus, he answered, that 'his kingdom was not of this world.' And Pilate, thinking he had nothing to do with the other, came forth again, and gave testimony, that 'he found nothing worthy of death in Jesus.' But hearing that he was a Galilean, and of Herod's jurisdiction, Pilate sent him to Herod, who was at Jerusalem, at the feast. 'And Herod was glad, because he had

¹ S. Aug. tract. 114. in Joan. Cyril. in Joan. Ambros. serm. de calend. Januar. Chrys. in Joan. hom. lib. xx.

² Antiq. c. viii.

heard much of him;’ and since his return from Rome had desired to see him, but could not, by reason of his own avocations, and the ambulatory life of Christ; ‘and now he hoped to see a miracle done by him,’ of whom he had heard so many. But the event of this was, that Jesus did there no miracle; ‘Herod’s soldiers set him at nought, and mocked him. And that day Herod was reconciled to Pilate.’¹ And Jesus was sent back, arrayed in a white and splendid garment: which though possibly it might be intended for derision, yet was a symbol of innocence, condemned persons usually being arrayed in blacks. And when Pilate had again examined him, ‘Jesus, meek as a lamb, and as a sheep before the shearers, opened not his mouth: insomuch that Pilate wondered,’ perceiving the greatest innocence of the man, by not offering to excuse or lessen any thing: for though ‘Pilate had power to release him or crucify him;’ yet his contempt of death was in just proportion to his innocence: which also Pilate concealed not, but published Jesus’s innocence by Herod’s and his own sentence; to the great regret of the rulers, who, like ravening wolves, thirsted for a draught of blood, and to devour the morning prey.

27. But Pilate hoped to prevail upon the rulers, by making it a favour from them to Jesus, and an indulgence from him to the nation, to set him free: for oftentimes even malice itself is driven out by the devil of self-love; and so we may be acknowledged the authors of a safety, we are content to rescue a man even from our ourselves. Pilate therefore offered that, according to the custom of the nation, Jesus should be released for the honour

¹ Joseph. lib. xvi. c. 14. Idem in vita sua.

of the present festival, and as a donative to the people. But the spirit of malice was here the more prevalent, and they desired that Barabbas, 'a murderer, a thief, and a seditious person,' should be exchanged for him. Then Pilate, casting about all ways to acquit Jesus of punishment, and himself of guilt, offered to 'scourge him and let him go;' hoping that a lesser draught of blood might stop the furies and rabidness of their passion, without their bursting with a river of his best and vital liquor. But these leeches would not so let go; 'they cry out, Crucify him:' and to engage him finally, they told him, 'if he did let this man go, he was no friend to Cæsar.'

28. But Pilate called for 'water, and washed his hands,' to demonstrate his own unwillingness, and to reject and transmit the guilt upon them; who took it on them as greedily as they sucked the blood: 'they cried out, His blood be on us and on our children.' As Pilate was going to give sentence, his wife, being troubled in her dreams, sent, with the earnestness and passion of a woman that he should 'have nothing to do with that just person.' But he was engaged: Cæsar and Jesus, God and the king, did seem to have different interests; or at least he was threatened into that opinion; and Pilate, though he was satisfied it was but calumny and malice, yet he was loath to venture upon his answer at Rome, in case the high-priest should have accused him: for no man knows whether the interest or the mistake of his judge may cast the sentence; and whoever is accused strongly, is never thought entirely innocent. And therefore, not only against the divine laws, but against the Roman too, he condemned an innocent person upon

objections notoriously malicious: he adjudged him to a death which was only due to public thieves and homicides, (crimes with which he was not charged,) upon a pretence of blasphemy, of which he stood accused, but not convicted; and for which, by the Jewish law, he should have been stoned, if found guilty. And this he did put into present execution, against the Tiberian law, which about twelve years before decreed in favour of condemned persons, that after sentence execution should be deferred ten days.¹

29. And now was the Holy Lamb to bleed. First, therefore, Pilate's soldiers array him in a kingly robe, put a reed in his hand for a sceptre, plait a crown of thorns and put it on his head; they bow the knee, and mock him; they smite him with his fantastic sceptre, and instead of tribute, pay him with blows and spitting upon his holy head. And when they had emptied the whole stock of poisonous contempt, they divest him of the robes of mockery, and put him on his own: they lead him to a pillar, and bind him fast, and scourge him with whips; a punishment that slaves only did use to suffer, (free persons being, in certain cases, beaten with rods and clubs,) that they might add a new scorn to his afflictions, and make his sorrows like their own guilt, vast and mountainous.² After which, Barabbas being set free, 'Pilate delivered Jesus to be crucified.'

¹ Sueton. in Tiberio, c. 75. Dio Rom. Hist. lib. lvii. Sub Tiberio et Druso Coss. Corruptos autem est codex Epist. Sidonii, qui ait, Nunc, ex vetere S. C. Tiberiano, Triginta dierum vitam post sententiam trahit.—“According to the original law, thirty days were to intervene between the passing of the sentence and the execution.”

² Lib. In servorum D. de pœnis. Lib. Levita, D. de accus.

30. Thus the Jews therefore having framed a cross sad and heavy, laid it upon Jesus's shoulders, (who, like Isaac, bore the wood with which he was to be sacrificed himself) and they drove him out to crucifixion, who was scarce able to stand under that load. It is generally supposed that Jesus bore the whole tree;¹ that is, both the parts of his cross; but to him that considers it, it will seem impossible: and therefore it is more likely, and agreeable to the old manner of crucifying malefactors, that Jesus only carried the cross-part; the body of it being upon the place either already fixed, or prepared for its station. Even that lesser part was grievous and intolerable to his tender, virginal, and weakened body; and when he fainted, they compel Simon, a Cyrenian, to help him. A great and a mixed multitude followed Jesus to Golgotha, the charnel-house of the city, and the place of execution. But the women wept with bitter exclamations; and their sadness was increased by the sad predictions Jesus then made of their future misery, saying, 'Ye daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time shall come that men shall say, Blessed are the barren that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck: for they shall call on the hills to cover them, and on the mountains to fall upon them;'

¹ *Lignum transversum solum portavit Jesus, scil. Patibulum, ad locum ubi crux, scil. lignum oblongum, terra defixum stetit. Sic Plautus, Patibulum ferant per urbem, et cruci affigantur. Male ergo pictores hodierni pingunt Jesum, bajulantem utrumque lignum scil. Lipsius Tract. de supplicio crucis.—“Jesus, says Lipsius, carried the transverse beam of the cross to the place where the tree itself was already fixed in the ground. Plautus alludes to this custom. Modern painters, therefore, err in representing Jesus bearing the whole of the cross.”*

that by a sudden ruin they may escape the lingering calamities of famine and fear, and the horror of a thousand deaths.

31. 'When Jesus was come to Golgotha,' a place in the Mount of Calvary, (where, according to the tradition of the ancients, Adam was buried,¹ and where Abraham made an altar for the sacrifice of his son,²) by the piety of his disciples, and, it is probable, of those good women which did use to minister to him, there was provided 'wine mingled with myrrh;' which among the Levantines is an excellent and pleasant mixture, and such as the piety and indulgence of the nations used to administer to condemned persons.³ But Jesus, who by voluntary susception did choose to suffer our pains, refused that refreshment which the piety of the women presented to him. The soldiers having stripped him, nailed him to the cross with four nails, and divided his mantle into four parts, giving to each soldier a part; but for his coat, because it would be spoiled if parted, it being weaved without seam, they cast lots for it.

32. Now Pilate had caused a title, containing the cause of his death, to be superscribed on a table in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; the Hebrew being first, the Greek next, and the Latin nearest to the holy body; but all written after the Jewish manner, from the right hand to the left; for so the title is shown in the church of Santa Croce, in Rome, the

¹ Tertul. lib. ii. contra Marcion. Origen. Tract. xxxv. in Matt. Basil. in Levit. c. 5. Athan. de Pass. et cruce, et fere omnes Pp. unico excepto Hieronymo, in Epist. ad Ephes. c. 5, et in c. 27, Matth.

² S. Aug. Serm. vii. de Tempore.

³ Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xiv. c. 13. Athenæus, lib. xi c. 30.

Latin letters being to be read as if it were Hebrew . the reason of which I could never find sufficiently discovered, unless it were to make it more legible to the Jews, who by conversing with the Romans, began to understand a little Latin. The title was, ' Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews.' But the Pharisees would have it altered, and, ' that he said he was king of the Jews.' But Pilate, out of wilfulness, or to do despite to the nation, or in honour to Jesus, whom he knew to be a just person, or being overruled by divine Providence, refused to alter it. ' And there were crucified with Jesus two thieves, Jesus being in the midst, according to the prophecy, ' he was reckoned with the transgressors.' Then Jesus prayed for his persecutors: ' Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' But while Jesus was full of pain and charity, and was praying and dying for his enemies, ' the rulers of the Jews mocked him,' upbraiding him with the good works he did, and the expresses of his power, saying, ' He saved others; himself he cannot save;' others saying, ' Let him come down from the cross, if he be the king of the Jews, and we will believe in him;' and others, according as their malice was determined by fancy and occasion, added weight and scorn to his pains: and on the two malefactors that were crucified with him, ' one reviled him, saying, If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us.' And thus far the devil prevailed, undoing himself in riddle, provoking men to do despite to Christ, and to beighten his passion out of hatred to him; and yet doing and promoting that which was the ruin of all his own kingdom and potent mischiefs: like the Jew, who in indignation against Mercury, threw stones at his image.

and yet was by his superior judged idolatrous, that being the manner of doing honour to the idol among the Gentiles.¹ But then Christ, who had upon the cross prayed for his enemies, and was heard of God in all that he desired, felt now the beginnings of success. For the other thief, whom the present pains and circumstances of Jesus's passion had softened and made believing, reprov'd his fellow for not fearing God; confessed that this death happened to them deservedly, but to Jesus causelessly; and then prayed to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.' Which combination of pious acts and miraculous conversion Jesus entertained with a speedy promise of a very great felicity, promising 'that upon that very day he should be with him in paradise.'

33. 'Now there were standing by the cross the mother of Jesus and her sister, and Mary Magdalen, and John.' And Jesus, being upon his death-bed, although he had no temporal estate to bestow, yet he would make provision for his mother, who, being a widow, and now childless, was likely to be exposed to necessity and want; and therefore he did arrogate John, the beloved disciple, into Mary's kindred, making him to be her adopted son, and her to be his mother, by fiction of law: 'Woman, behold thy son; and man, behold thy mother. And from that time forward John took her home to his own house,' which he had near Mount Sion, after he had sold his inheritance in Galilee to the high-priest.

34. While these things were doing, the whole frame of nature seemed to be dissolved and out of

¹ R. Manasses. Vid. Dionys. Vossium in annot. ad Rab. R. Maimon.

order, while their Lord and Creator suffered. For the sun was so darkened, that the stars appeared; and the eclipse was prodigious in the manner as well as in degree, because the moon was not then in conjunction, but full:¹ and it was noted by Phlegon, the freed man of the emperor Hadrian, by Lucian out of the Acts of the Gauls, and Dionysius, while he was yet a heathen, excellent scholars all, great historians and philosophers; who also noted the day of the week and the hour of the day, agreeing with the circumstances of the cross. For the sun hid his head from beholding such a prodigy of sin and sadness, and provided a veil for the nakedness of Jesus, that the women might be present, and himself die with modesty.

35. The eclipse and the passion began at the sixth hour, and endured till the ninth; about which time Jesus, being tormented with the unsufferable load of his Father's wrath due for our sins, and wearied with pains and heaviness, 'cried out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' And, as it is thought, repeated the whole two-and-twentieth Psalm, which is an admirable narrative of the passion, full of prayer and sadness, and description of his pains at first, and of eucharist and joy and prophecy at the last. But these first words, which it is certain and recorded that he spake, were in a language of itself, or else by

¹ Origen. cont. Cels. lib. ii. Tertul. Apolog. Lucian. in actis sui mart. August. ep. 80, ad Hesychium. Suidas in vita Dionys. ait eum dixisse, Aut Deus patitur, aut patienti compatitur: et hac de causa Athenienses erexisse aram ἀγνώστῳ Θεῷ, aiunt quidam.—“Suidas, in the life of Dionysius, says, that he observed, Either God is suffering, or compassionating the sufferer; and that from this the Athenians erected, as is reported, an altar to the unknown God.”

reason of distance, not understood; for they thought he had called for Elias to take him down from the cross. Then Jesus, being in the agonies of a high fever, said, 'I thirst. And one ran, and filled a sponge with vinegar, wrapping it with hyssop, and put it on a reed, that he might drink.' The vinegar and the sponge were, in executions of condemned persons, set to stop the too violent issues of blood, and to prolong the death; but were exhibited to him in scorn; 'mingled with gall,' to make the mixture more horrid and ungentle.¹ But Jesus tasted it only, and refused the draught. And now, knowing that the prophecies were fulfilled, his Father's wrath appeased, and his torments satisfactory, he said, 'It is finished: and crying with a loud voice, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, he bowed his head, and yielded up his spirit' into the hands of God, and died, hastening to his Father's glories. Thus did this glorious Sun set in a sad and clouded west, running speedily to shine in the other world.

36. Then was the veil of the temple, which separated the secret Mosaic rites from the eyes of the people, rent in the midst, from the top to the bottom; and the angels, presidents of the temple, called to each other to depart from their seats; and so great "an earthquake happened, that the rocks did rend, the mountains trembled, the graves opened, and the bodies of dead persons arose, walking from their cemeteries to the holy city, and appeared unto many."² And so great apprehensions and amazements happened to them all that stood by,

¹ Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xxxi. c. 11. Tertul. de Spect. c. 25.

² S. Hieron. ep. 150. q. 8.

that they departed, smiting their breasts, with sorrow and fear. And the centurion that ministered at the execution said, 'Certainly this was the Son of God;' and he became a disciple, renouncing his military employment, and died a martyr.¹

37. But because the next day was the Jews' sabbath, and a paschal festival besides,² the Jews hastened, that the bodies should be taken from the cross; and therefore sent to Pilate to hasten their death by breaking their legs, that before sun-set they might be taken away, according to the commandment, and be buried.³ The soldiers therefore came, and brake the legs of the two thieves; but espying and wondering that Jesus was already dead, they brake not his legs; for the Scripture foretold, that a bone of him should not be broken. But a soldier with his lance pierced his side, and immediately there streamed out two rivulets of water and blood. But the holy virgin-mother, (whose soul, during this whole passion, was pierced with a sword and sharper sorrows, though she was supported by the comforts of faith, and those holy predictions of his resurrection and future glories which Mary had laid up in store against this great day of expense,) now that she saw her holy Son had suffered all that our necessities and their malice could require or inflict, caused certain ministers, with whom she joined, to take her dead Son from the cross; whose body, when once she got free from the nails, she kissed and embraced with

¹ Apud Metaph. die 16 Octob.

² Plin. lib. xi. c. 45. Vide Lactan. ib. 1. 2. 26 Cic. pro
Rosc.

³ Philo de leg. special. Deut. xx1

entertainments of the nearest vicinity that could be expressed by a person that was holy and sad, and a mother weeping for her dead son.

38. But she was highly satisfied with her own meditations, that now that great mystery, determined by divine predestination before the beginning of all ages, was fulfilled in her Son; and the passion that must needs be, was accomplished. She therefore first bathes his cold body with her warm tears, and makes clean the surface of the wounds, and delivering a winding-napkin to Joseph of Arimathea, gave to him in charge to enwrap the body and embalm it, to compose it to the grave, and to do it all the rites of funeral; having first exhorted him to a public confession of what he was privately till now.¹ And he obeyed the counsel of so excellent a person, and ventured upon the displeasure of the Jewish rulers, and 'went confidently to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.' And Pilate gave him the power of it.

39. Joseph therefore takes the body, binds his face with a napkin, washes the body, anoints it with ointment, enwraps it in a composition of myrrh and aloes, and puts it into a new tomb, which he for himself had hewn out of a rock: (it not being lawful among the Jews to inter a condemned person in the common cemeteries:) for all these circumstances were in the Jews' manner of burying. But when the sun was set, the chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate, telling him that Jesus, whilst he was living, foretold his own resurrection upon the third day; and lest his disciples should come and steal the body, and say he

¹ Metaphr. August. 15.

was risen from the dead, desired that the sepulchre might be secured against the danger of any such imposture. Pilate gave them leave to do their pleasure, even to the satisfaction of their smallest scruples. They therefore 'sealed the grave, rolled a great stone to the mouth of it,' and, as an ancient tradition says, bound it about with labels of iron, and set a watch of soldiers, as if they had intended to have made it surer than the decrees of fate, or the never-failing laws of nature.¹

AD. SECTION XV.

Considerations of some preparatory Accidents before the Entrance of Jesus into his Passion.

1. HE that hath observed the story of the life of Jesus, cannot but see it all the way to be strewed with thorns and sharp-pointed stones; and, although by the kisses of his feet they became precious and salutary, yet they procured to him sorrow and disease. It was meat and drink to him to do his Father's will; but it was bread of affliction, and rivers of tears to drink: and for these he thirsted like the earth after the cool stream; for so great was his perfection, so exact the conformity of his will, so absolute the subordination of his inferior faculties to the infinite love of God, which sat regent in the court of his will and understanding, that in this election of accidents he never considered the taste, but the goodness; never distinguished sweet from bitter, but duty and piety

¹ Bedæ de locis sanctis. c. 2. Niceph. lib. i. c. 32.

always prepared his table. And therefore, now knowing that his time determined by the Father was nigh, he hastened up to Jerusalem. 'He went before his disciples,' saith St. Mark, 'and they followed him, trembling and amazed : ' and yet before that, even then, when his brethren observed he had a design of publication of himself, he suffered them to go before him, and went up as it were in secret : for so we are invited to martyrdom, and suffering in a Christian cause, by so great an example : the holy Jesus is gone before us, and it were a holy contention to strive whose zeal were forwardest in the designs of humiliation and self-denial. But it were also well, if in doing ourselves secular advantage, and promoting our worldly interest, we should follow him, who was ever more distant from receiving honours than from receiving a painful death. Those affections which dwell in sadness, and are married to grief, and lie at the foot of the cross, and trace the sad steps of Jesus, have the wisdom of recollection, the tempers of sobriety ; and are the best imitations of Jesus, and securities against the levity of a dispersed and a vain spirit. This was intimated by many of the disciples of Jesus in the days of the Spirit, and when they had tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come : for then we find many ambitious of martyrdom, and that have laid stratagems and designs by unusual deaths to get a crown. The soul of St. Laurence was so scorched with ardent desires of dying for his Lord, that he accounted the coals of his gridiron but as a julep or the aspersion of cold water to refresh his soul ; they were chill as the Alpine snows in respect of the heats of his diviner flames. And if

these lesser stars shine so brightly and burn so warmly, what heat of love may we suppose to have been in the Sun of righteousness! If they went fast toward the crown of martyrdom, yet we know that the holy Jesus went before them all. No wonder that 'he cometh forth as a bridegroom from his chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant to run his course.'

2. When the disciples had overtaken Jesus, he begins to them a sad homily upon the old text of suffering, which he had well-nigh for a year together preached upon: but because it was an unpleasing lesson, so contradictory to those interests upon the hopes of which they had entertained themselves, and spent all their desires, they could by no means understand it: for an understanding prepossessed with a fancy, or an unhandsome principle, construes all other notions to the sense of the first; and whatsoever contradicts it, we think it an objection, and that we are bound to answer it: but now that it concerned Christ to speak so plainly, that his disciples, by what was to happen within five or six days, might not be scandalized, or believe it happened to Jesus without his knowledge and voluntary entertainment, he tells them of his sufferings to be accomplished in this journey to Jerusalem. And here the disciples showed themselves to be but men, full of passion and indiscreet affection; and the bold Galilean, St. Peter, took the boldness to dehort his Master from so great an infelicity; and met with a reprehension so great, that neither the Scribes, nor the Pharisees, nor Herod himself ever met with its parallel: Jesus called him Satan; meaning, that no greater contradictions can be offered to the designs of God and his holy Son, than to dis-uade us from suffering: and

if we understood how great are the advantages of a suffering condition, we should think all our daggers gilt, and our pavements strewed with roses, and our halters silken, and the rack an instrument of pleasure, and be most impatient of those temptations which seduce us into ease, and divorce us from the cross, as being opposite to our greatest hopes and most perfect desires: but still this humour of St. Peter's imperfection abides amongst us. He that breaks off the yoke of obedience, and unties the bands of discipline, and preaches a cheap religion, and presents heaven in the midst of flowers, and strews carpets softer than the Asian luxury in the way, and sets the songs of Sion to the tunes of Persian and lighter airs, and offers great liberty of living, and bondage under affection and sins, and reconciles eternity with the present enjoyment, he shall have his schools filled with disciples: but he that preaches the cross, and the severities of Christianity, and the strictnesses of a holy life, shall have the lot of his blessed Lord; he shall be thought ill of, and deserted.

3. Our blessed Lord, five days before his passion, sent his disciples to a village to borrow an ass, that he might ride in triumph to Jerusalem: he had none of his own, but yet he who was so dear to God could not want what was to supply his needs. It may be, God hath laid up our portion in the repositories of other men, and means to furnish us from their tables, to feed us from their granaries, and that their wardrobe shall clothe us: for it is all one to him to make a fish bring us money, or a crow to bring us meat, or the stable of our neighbour to furnish our needs of beasts. If he brings it to thy need as thou wantest it, thou hast all the good in

the use of the creature which the owners can receive : and the horse which is lent me in charity, does me as much ease ; and the bread which is given me in alms, feeds me as well as the other part of it, which the good man that gave me a portion reserved for his own eating, could do to him. And if we would give God leave to make provisions for us in the ways of his own choosing, and not estimate our wants by our manner of receiving, being contented, that God by any of his own ways will minister it to us, we shall find our cares eased, and our content increased, and our thankfulness engaged, and all our moderate desires contented by the satisfaction of our needs : for, if God is pleased to feed me by my neighbour's charity, there is no other difference, but that God makes me an occasion of his ghostly good, as he is made the occasion of my temporal. And if we think it disparagement, we may remember that God conveys more good to him by me, than to me by him : and it is a proud impatience, to refuse or to be angry with God's provisions, because he hath not observed my circumstances and ceremonies of election.

4. And now begins that great triumph in which the holy Jesus was pleased to exalt his office, and to abase his person. He rode, like a poor man, upon an ass, a beast of burden, and the lowest value ; and yet it was not his own ; and in that equipage he received the acclamations due to a mighty Prince, to the Son of the eternal King : telling us, that the smallness of fortune, and the rudeness of exterior habiliments, and a rough wall, are sometimes the outsides of a great glory ; and that, when God means to glorify or do honour to a person, he needs

no help from secular advantages. He hides great riches in renunciation of the world, and makes great honour breathe forth from the clouds of humility, and victory to arise from yielding and the modesty of departing from our interest, and peace to be the reward of him that suffers all the hostilities of men and devils : for Jesus, in this great humility of his, gives a great probation that he was the Messiah, and the King of Sion ; because no other king entered into those gates riding upon an ass ; and received the honour of Hosannah in that unlikelihood and contradiction of unequal circumstances.

5. The blessed Jesus had never but two days of triumph in his life : the one was on his transfiguration upon Mount Tabor ; the other, this, his riding into the holy city. But that it may appear how little were his joys and present exterior complacencies ; in the day of his transfiguration Moses and Elias appeared to him, telling him what great things he was to suffer ; and in this day of his riding to Jerusalem, he wet the palms with a dew sweeter than the moistures upon Mount Hermon, or the drops of manna : for, to allay the little warmth of a springing joy, he let down a shower of tears, weeping over undone Jerusalem in the day of his triumph, leaving it disputable whether he felt more joy or sorrow in the acts of love : for he triumphed to consider that the redemption of the world was so near ; and wept bitterly that men would not be redeemed : his joy was great, to consider that himself was to suffer so great sadness for our good ; and his sorrow was very great, to consider that we would not entertain that good that he brought and laid before us by his passion. He

was in figure, as his servant S. Paphnutius was afterwards in letter and true story, "crucified upon palms:"¹ which indeed was the emblem of a victory; but yet such as had leaves, sharp, poignant, and vexatious. However, he entered into Jerusalem dressed in gaieties, which yet he placed under his feet; but with such pomps and solemnities each family, according to its proportion, was accustomed to bring the paschal lamb to be slain for the passover. And it was not an undecent ceremony, that 'the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world' should be brought to his slaughter, with the acknowledgments of a religious solemnity, because now that real good was to be exhibited to the world, which those little paschal lambs did but signify and represent in shadow, and that was the true cause of all the little joy he had.

6. And if we consider what followed, it might seem also to be a design to heighten the dolorousness of his passion. For to descend from the greatest of worldly honours, from the adoration of a God, and the acclamations to a king, to the death of a slave and the torments of a cross, and the dishonours of a condemned criminal, were so great stoopings and vast changes, that they gave height and sense, and excellency to each other. This then seemed an excellent glory, but indeed was but an art and instrument of grief. For such is the nature of all our felicities, they end in sad-

¹ Palma est victorum, palmæ tu affixus es; ergo lætus obi, quoniam non nisi victor obis.

"The palm the victor's is, and to the palm
Triumphant thou wert bound:
Go forth! be joyous and be calm;
'Thou goest a victor crowned!'"

ness, and increase the sting of sorrows, and add moment to them, and cause impatience and uncomfortable remembrances. But the griefs of a Christian, whether they be instances of repentance, or parts of persecution, or exercises of patience, end in joy and endless comfort. Thus Jesus, like a rainbow, half made of the glories of light, and half of the moisture of a cloud, half triumph and half sorrow, entered into that town where he had done much good to others, and to himself received nothing but affronts. Yet his tenderness increased upon him: and that very journey, which was Christ's last solemn visit for their recovery, he doubled all the instruments of his mercy and their conversion. He rode in triumph; the children sang Hosannah to him; he cured many diseased persons; he wept for them, and pitied them, and sighed out the intimations of a prayer, and did penance for their ingratitude; and stayed all day there, looking about him towards evening, and no man would invite him home; but he was forced to go to Bethany, where he was sure of an hospitable entertainment. I think no Christian that reads this but will be full of indignation at the whole city, who for malice or for fear would not or durst not receive their Saviour into their houses: and yet we do worse; for now that he is become our Lord, with mightier demonstrations of his eternal power, we suffer him to look round about upon us for months and years together, and possibly never entertain him, till our house is ready to rush upon our heads, and we are going to unusual and stranger habitations. And yet in the midst of a populous and mutinous city this great King had some good subjects, persons that threw

away their own garments, and laid them at the feet of our Lord ; that being divested of their own, they might be reinvested with a robe of his righteousness, wearing that till it were changed into a stole of glory. The very ceremony of their reception of the Lord became symbolical to them, and expressive of all our duties.

7. But I consider that the blessed Jesus had affections no less than infinite towards all mankind : and he who wept upon Jerusalem, who had done so great despite to him, and within five days were to fill up the measure of their iniquities, and do an act which all ages of the world could never repeat in the same instance, did also in the number of his tears reckon our sins as sad considerations and incentives of his sorrow. And it would well become us to consider what great evil we do, when our actions are such as for which our blessed Lord did weep. He who was seated in the bosom of felicity, yet he moistened his fresh laurels upon the day of his triumph with tears of love and bitter allay. His day of triumph was a day of sorrow : and if we would weep for our sins, that instance of sorrow would be a day of triumph and jubilee.

8. From hence the holy Jesus went to Bethany, where he had another manner of reception than at the holy city. There he supped : for his goodly day of triumph had been with him a fasting-day. And Mary Magdalen, who had spent one box of nard pistie upon our Lord's feet as a sacrifice of eucharist for her conversion, now bestowed another in thankfulness for the restitution of her brother Lazarus to life, and consigned her Lord unto his burial. And here she met with an evil interpreter : Judas, an apostle, one of the Lord's own

family, pretended it had been a better religion to have given it to the poor. But it was malice, and the spirit either of envy or avarice, in him that passed that sentence. For he that sees a pious action well done, and seeks to undervalue it by telling how it might have been better, reproves nothing but his own spirit. For a man may do very well, and God would accept it; though to say he might have done better, is to say only that action was not the most perfect and absolute in its kind. But to be angry at a religious person, and without any other pretence but that he might have done better, is spiritual envy; for a pious person would have nourished up that infant action by love and praise, till it had grown to the most perfect and intelligent piety. But the event of that man gave the interpretation of his present purpose: and at the best it could be no other than a rash judgment of the action and intention of a religious, thankful, and holy person. But she found her Lord, who was her beneficiary in this, become her patron and her advocate. And hereafter, when we shall find the devil, the great accuser of God's saints, object against the piety and religion of holy persons, a cup of cold water shall be accepted unto reward, and a good intention heightened to the value of an exterior expression, and a piece of gum to the equality of an holocaust, and an action done with great zeal and an intense love be acquitted from all its adherent imperfections: Christ receiving them into himself, and being like the altar of incense, hallowing the very smoke, and raising it into a flame, and entertaining it into embraces of the firmament and the bosom of heaven. Christ himself, who is the judge of our actions, is

also the entertainer and object of our charity and duty, and the advocate of our persons.

9. Judas, who declaimed against the woman made tacit reflections upon his Lord for suffering it. And, indeed, every obloquy against any of Christ's servants is looked on as an arrow shot into the heart of Christ himself. And now a persecution being begun against the Lord within his own family, another was raised against him from without. For the chief-priests 'took crafty counsel against Jesus,' and called a consistory to contrive 'how they might destroy him.' And here was the greatest representment of the goodness of God, and the ingratitude of man, that could be practised or understood. How often had Jesus poured forth tears for them! how many sleepless nights had he awaked to do them advantage! how many days had he spent in homilies and admirable visitations of mercy and charity, in casting out devils, in curing their sick, in correcting their delinquencies, in reducing them to the ways of security and peace, and, that we may use the greatest expression in the world, that is, his own, 'in gathering them as an hen gathereth her chickens under her wings,' to give them strength, and warmth, and life, and ghostly nourishment! And the chief-priests, together with their faction, use all arts and watch all opportunities to get Christ, not that they might possess him, but to destroy him: little considering that they extinguish their own eyes, and destroy that spring of life which was intended to them for a blissful immortality.

10. And here it was that the devil showed his promptness to furnish every evil-intended person with apt instruments to act the very worst of his inten-

tions. The devil knew their purposes, and the aptness and proclivity of Judas; and by bringing these together he served their present design, and his own great intendment. The devil never fails to promote every evil purpose; and, except where God's restraining grace does intervene and interrupt the opportunity, by interposition of different and cross accidents to serve other ends of providence, no man easily is fond of wickedness, but he shall receive enough to ruin him. Indeed Nero and Julian, both witty men and powerful, desired to have been magicians, and could not: and although possibly the devil would have corresponded with them, who yet were already his own in all degrees of security; yet God permitted not that, lest they might have understood new ways of doing despite to martyrs and afflicted Christians. And it concerns us not to tempt God, or invite a forward enemy. For as we are sure the devil is ready to promote all vicious desires, and bring them out to execution; so we are not sure that God will not permit him: and he that desires to be undone, and cares not to be prevented by God's restraining grace, shall find his ruin in the folly of his own desires, and become wretched by his own election. Judas, hearing of this congregation of the priests, went and offered to betray his Lord, and made a covenant, the price of which was thirty pieces of silver; and he returned.

11. It is not intimated in the history of the life of Jesus, that Judas had any malice against the person of Christ; for when afterwards he saw the matter was to end in the death of his Lord, he repented; but a base and unworthy spirit to covetousness possessed him; and the relics of indig-

nation, for missing the price of the ointment which the holy Magdalen had poured upon his feet, burnt in his bowels with a secret, dark, melancholic fire, and made an eruption into an act which all ages of the world could never parallel. They appointed him for hire thirty pieces; and some say that every piece did in value equal ten ordinary current deniers: and so Judas was satisfied by receiving the worth of three hundred pence, at which he valued the nard pistic. But hereafter let no Christian be ashamed to be despised and undervalued; for he will hardly meet so great reproach, as to have so disproportioned a price set upon his life as was upon the holy Jesus. St. Mary Magdalen thought it not good enough to aneal his sacred feet; Judas thought it a sufficient price for his head: for covetousness aims at base and low purchases; whilst holy love is great and comprehensive as the bosom of heaven, and aims at nothing that is less than infinite. The love of God is a holy fountain, limpid and pure, sweet and salutary, lasting and eternal; the love of money is a vertiginous pool, sucking all into it to destroy it; it is troubled and uneven, giddy and unsafe, serving no end but its own, and that also in a restless and uneasy motion. The love of God spends itself upon him, to receive again the reflections of grace and benediction; the love of money spends all its desires upon itself, to purchase nothing but unsatisfying instruments of exchange, or supernumerary provisions; and ends in dissatisfaction, and emptiness of spirit, and a bitter curse. St. Mary Magdalen was defended by her Lord against calumny, and rewarded with an honourable mention to all ages of the church; besides unction from above, which she shortly after received to con-

sign her to crowns and scepters: but Judas was described in the Scripture, the book of life, with the black character of death; he was disgraced to eternal ages, and presently after acted his own tragedy with a sad and ignoble death.

12. Now, all things being fitted, our blessed Lord sends two disciples to prepare the passover, that he might fulfil the law of Moses, and pass from thence to institutions evangelical, and then fulfil his sufferings. Christ gave them a sign to guide them to the house—a man bearing a pitcher of water: by which some, that delight in mystical significations, say was typified the sacrament of baptism: meaning, that, although by the occasion of the paschal solemnity the holy eucharist was first instituted, yet it was afterwards to be applied to practice, according to the sense of this accident; only baptized persons were apt suscipients of the other more perfective rite, as the taking nutriment supposes persons born into the world, and within the common conditions of human nature; but in the letter it was an instance of the divine Omniscience, who could pronounce concerning accidents at distance as if they were present; and yet also, like the provision of the colt to ride on, it was an instance of providence, and security of all God's sons for their portion of temporals. Jesus had not a lamb of his own, and possibly no money in the bags to buy one; and yet Providence was his guide, and the charity of a good man was his proveditore; and he found excellent conveniences in the entertainments of an hospitable good man, as if he had dwelt in Ahab's ivory-house, and had had the riches of Solomon, and the meat of his household.

THE PRAYER.

I.

O holy King of Sion, eternal Jesus, who with great humility and infinite love didst enter into the holy city, riding upon an ass, that thou mightest verify the predictions of the prophets, and give example of meekness, and of the gentle and paternal government which the eternal Father laid upon thy shoulders; be pleased, dearest Lord, to enter into my soul with triumph, trampling over all thine enemies; and give me grace to entertain thee with joy and adoration, with abjection of my own desires, with lopping off all my superfluous branches of a temporal condition, and spending them in the offices of charity and religion, and divesting myself of all my desires, laying them at thy holy feet; that I may bear the yoke and burden of the Lord with alacrity, with love, and the wonders of a satisfied and triumphant spirit. Lord, enter in and take possession; and thou, to whose honour the very stones would give testimony, make my stony heart an instrument of thy praises; let me strew thy way with flowers of virtue, and the holy rosary of Christian graces. And by thy aid and example let us also triumph over all our infirmities and hostilities, and then lay our victories at thy feet, and at last follow thee into thy heavenly Jerusalem, with palms in our hands, and joy in our hearts, and eternal acclamations on our lips, rejoicing in thee; and singing hallelujahs in a happy eternity to thee, O holy King of Sion, eternal Jesus. Amen.

II.

O blessed and dear Lord, who wert pleased to permit thyself to be sold to the assemblies of evil persons for a vile price, by one of thy own servants, for whom thou hadst done so great favours, and hadst designed a crown and a throne to him; and he turned himself into a sooty coal, and entered into the portion of evil angels; teach us to value thee above all the joys of men, to prize thee at an estimate beyond all the wealth of nature, to buy wisdom, and not to sell it, to part with all that we may enjoy thee. And let no temptation abuse our understandings, no loss vex us into impatience, no frustration of hope fill us with indignation, no pressure of calamitous accidents make us angry at thee, the fountain of love and blessing, no covetousness transport us

Into the suburbs of hell and the regions of sin; but make us to love thee as well as ever any creature loved thee; that we may never burn in any fires but of a holy love, nor sink in any inundation but what proceeds from penitential showers, and suffer no violence but of implacable desires to live with thee; and when thou callest us, to suffer with thee, and for thee. Amen.

III.

Lord, let me never be **betrayed** by myself, or any violent accident and importunate temptation; let me never be sold for the vile price of temporal gain, or transient pleasure; or a pleasant dream; but, since thou hast bought me with a price, even then when thou wert sold thyself, let me never be separated from thy possession. I am thine, bought with a price: Lord, save me; and in the day when thou bindest up thy jewels, remember, Lord, that I cost thee as dear as any, and therefore cast me not into the portion of Judas; but let me walk and dwell, and bathe in the field of thy blood, and pass from hence pure and sanctified into the society of the elect apostles, receiving my part with them, and my lot in the communications of thy inheritance, O gracious Lord, and dearest Saviour, Jesus. Amen.

Considerations upon the Washing of the Disciples' Feet by Jesus, and his Sermon of Humility.

1. **THE** holy Jesus went now to eat his last paschal supper, and to finish the work of his legation, and to fulfil that part of the law of Moses in every of its smallest and most minute particularities; in which also the actions were significant of spiritual duties: which we may transfer from the letter to the spirit in our own instances; that as Jesus ate the paschal lamb with a staff in his hand, with his loins girt, with sandals on his feet, in great haste, with unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs; so we also should do all our services

according to the signification of these symbols, leaning upon the cross of Jesus for a staff, and bearing the rod of his government, with loins girt with angelical chastity, with shoes on our feet, that so we may guard and have custody over our affections, and be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, eating in haste, as becomes persons hungering and thirsting after righteousness, doing the work of the Lord zealously and fervently, without the leaven of malice and secular interest, with bitter herbs of self-denial, and mortification of our sensual and inordinate desires. The sense and mystery of the whole act with all its circumstances is, that we obey all the sanctions of the divine law; and that every part of our religion be pure and peaceable, chaste and obedient, confident in God, and diffident in ourselves, frequent and zealous, humble and resigned, just and charitable; and there will not easily be wanting any just circumstance to hallow and consecrate the action.

2. When the holy Jesus had finished his last Mosaic rite, he descends to give example of the first-fruit of evangelical graces: he rises from supper, lays aside his garment, like a servant, and with all the circumstances of an humble ministry, washes the feet of his disciples, beginning at first with St. Peter, until he came to Judas, the traitor; that we might in one scheme see a rare conjunction of charity and humility, of self-denial and indifferency, represented by a person glorious and great, their Lord and Master sad and troubled. And he chose to wash their feet rather than their head, that he might have the opportunity of a more humble posture, and a more apt signification of his charity. Thus God lays

every thing aside that he may serve his servants; heaven stoops to earth, and one abyss calls upon another, and the miseries of man, which were next to infinite, are excelled by a mercy equal to the immensity of God. And this washing of their feet, which was an accustomed civility and entertainment of honoured strangers at the beginning of their meal, Christ deferred to the end of the paschal supper, that it might be the preparatory to the second, which he intended should be festival to all the world. St. Peter was troubled that the hands of his Lord should wash his servants' feet; those hands which had opened the eyes of the blind, and cured lepers, and healed all diseases, and when lift up to heaven were omnipotent, and could restore life to dead and buried persons: he counted it a great indecency for him to suffer it. But it was no more than was necessary: for they had but lately been earnest in dispute for precedence; and it was of itself so apt to swell into tumour and inconvenience, that it was not to be cured but by some prodigy of example and miracle of humility; which the holy Jesus offered to them in this express, calling them to learn some great lesson; a lesson which God descended from heaven to earth, from riches to poverty, from essential innocence to the disreputation of a sinner, from a master to a servant, to learn us; that is, that we should esteem ourselves but just as we are, low, sinful, miserable, needy, and unworthy. It seems it is a great thing, that man should come to have just and equal thoughts of himself, that God used such powerful arts to transmit this lesson, and engrave it in the spirits of men; and if

the receipt fails, we are eternally lost in the mists of vanity, and enter into the condition of those angels whom pride transformed and spoiled into the condition of devils. And upon consideration of this great example, Guericus, a good man, cried out, "Thou hast overcome, O Lord, thou hast overcome my pride; this example hath mastered me: I deliver myself up into thy hands, never to receive liberty or exaltation but in the condition of thy humblest servant."

3. And to this purpose St. Bernard hath an affectionate and devout consideration,¹ saying, "That some of the angels, as soon as they were created, had an ambition to become like God, and to aspire into the throne which God had appointed to the holy Jesus in eternal ages. When God created man, presently the devil rubbed his leprosy upon him, and he would needs be like God too; and Satan promised him that he should. As the evil angels would have been like to God in power and majesty, so man would have been like him in knowledge, and have imitated the wisdom of the eternal Father. But man had the fate of Gehazi; he would needs have the talent and garments of Lucifer, and he had also his plague; he lost paradise for his pride. And now what might befit the Son of God to do, seeing man so lost, and God so zealous of his honour? I see (saith he) that by occasion of me the Father loses his creatures; for they have all aspired to be like me, and are fallen into the greatest infelicities. Behold, I will go to-

¹ *Quomodo non humiliabitur homo sub tam humili Deo?* S. Bernard.— "How can man refuse to humble himself under so humble a God?"

ward man in such a form, that whosoever from henceforth would become like me shall be so, and be a gainer by it. And for this cause the Son of God came from heaven, and made himself a poor humble person, and by all the actions of his life, commented upon the present discourse:" 'Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart.'¹ Blessed be that mercy and bounty which moved Almighty God to condescend to that so great appetite we had of being like him: for now we may be like unto God, but it must be by humility, of which he hath given us an example powerful as miracles, and as great as our own pride and misery.

4. And indeed our blessed Lord, knowing that examples are like maps and perfect schemes, in which the whole continent may at once be represented to the eye to all the purposes of art and benefit, did, in the latter end of his life, draw up the dispersions and larger harvest of his precepts, binding them in the bundle of great examples, and casting them into actions as into sums total. For so this act of washing the feet of his own ministers, and then dying for them, and for all his enemies, did preach the three great sums of evangelical perfection with an admirable energy and abbreviature; humility and charity and sufferings, being to Christianity as the body and the soul and the spirit are to the whole man. For no man brings a sad funeral into the theatre to make his spectators merry, nor can well preach chastity in the impurity of the Bordelli, or persuade temperance, when himself is full of wine and luxury,

¹ Matt. xi. 29.

and enters into the baths to boil his undigested meat, that he may return to his second supper, and breathes forth impure belchings together with his homily. A poor eremite, or a severely-living philosopher, into whose life his own precepts have descended, and his doctrine is mingled with his soul, mingles also effect and virtue with homilies, and incorporates his doctrine in the hearts of his disciples. And this the holy Jesus did in his own person, bearing the burden first upon his own shoulders, that we may with better alacrity undergo what our blessed Lord bears with us and for us. But that we may the better understand what our blessed Lord designed to us in this lecture, let us consider the proper acts of humility which integrate the virtue.

5. The first is, Christ's humble man thinks meanly of himself. And there is great reason every man should. For his body is but rottenness and infirmity covered with a fair mantle; a dung-hill overcast with snow. And if we consider sadly, that from trees and plants come oil, balsam, wine, spices, and aromatic odours, and that from the sinks of our body no such sweet or salutary emanations are observed; we may at least think it unreasonable to boast our beauty, which is nothing but a clear and well-coloured skin, which every thing in the world can spoil; or our strength, which an ague tames into the infirmities of a child, and in which we are excelled by a bull; or any thing of our body, which is nothing but an unruly servant of the soul, marked with characters of want and dependence, and begging help from all the elements; and upon a little disturbance growing troublesome to itself by its own impurities. And

yet there is no reason in respect of the soul for any man to exalt himself above his brother; because all reasonable souls are equal, and that one is wise, and another is foolish or less learned, is by accident and extrinsic causes. God at first makes all alike; but an indisposed body, or an mopportune education, or evil customs, superinduce variety and difference. And if God discerns a man from his brother by distinction of gifts, it alters not the case; still the man hath nothing of himself that can call him excellent. It is as if a wall upon which the sun reflects should boast itself against another that stands in the shadow. Greater glory is to be paid to God for the discerning gifts; but to take any of it to ourselves, or rise higher than our brother, or advance our own opinion, is as if a man should be proud of being in debt, and think it the greater excellency that he is charged with heavier and more severe accounts.

6. This act consists not in declamations and forms of satire against ourselves; saying, I am a miserable, sinful creature; I am proud, or covetous, or ignorant: for many men say so that are not willing to be thought so.¹ Neither is humility a virtue made up of wearing old clothes, or doing servile and mean employments by voluntary undertaking, or of sullen gestures, or demiss behaviour, and artifice of lowly expressions; for these may become snares to invite and catch at honour; and then they are collateral designs of pride, and direct ac-

¹ *Auferantur omnia figmenta verborum, cessent mulati gestus, verum humilem patientia ostendit.* S. Hier.—“Let all the affectations of words and gestures be despised: patience is the best proof of a man's humility.”

tions of hypocrisy. But it consists in a true understanding of our own condition, and separating our own nothing from the good we have received, and giving to God all the glory, taking to ourselves all the shame and dishonour due to our sinful condition. He that thinks himself truly miserable and vilified by sin, hates it perfectly; and he that knows himself to be nothing, cannot be exalted in himself; and whatsoever is besides these two extremes, of a natural nothing, and a superadded sin, must be those good things we have received, which, because they derive from God, must make all their returns thither. But this act is of greater difficulty in persons pious, full of gifts and eminent in graces, who, being fellow-workers together with God, sometimes grow tacitly and without notice given, to confide in themselves, and with some freer fancy ascribe too much of the good action to their own choice and diligence, and take up their crowns, which lie at the foot of the throne, and set them upon their own heads. For a sinner to desire to be esteemed a sinner, is no more humility than it is for the son of a ploughman to confess his father: but indeed it is hard for a man to be cried up for a saint, to walk upon the spire of glory, and to have no adherence or impure mixtures of vanity grow upon the outside of his heart. All men have not such heads as to walk in great heights without giddiness and unsettled eyes. Lucifer and many angels, walking upon the battlements of heaven, grew top-heavy, and fell into the state of devils. And the father of the Christian eremites, St. Anthony, was frequently attempted by the devil, and solicited to vanity; the devil usu-

ally making fantastic noises to be heard before him, "Make room for the saint and servant of God!"¹ But the good man knew Christ's voice to be a low base of humility, and that it was the noise of hell that invited to complacencies and vanity; and therefore took the example of the apostles, who, in the midst of the greatest reputation and spiritual advancements, were dead unto the world, and seemed to live in the state of separation. For the true stating our own question, and knowing ourselves, must needs represent us set in the midst of infinite imperfections, laden with sins, choked with the noises of a polluted conscience—persons fond of trifles, neglecting objects fit for wise men, full of ingratitude, and all such things which in every man else we look upon as scars and deformities, and which we use to single out, and take one alone as sufficient to disgrace and disrepute all the excellencies of our neighbour. But if we would esteem them with the same severity in ourselves, and remember with how many such objections our little felicities are covered, it would make us charitable in our censures, compassionate and gentle to others, apt to excuse, and as ready to support their weaknesses; and in all accidents and chances to ourselves, to be content and thankful, as knowing the worst of poverty and inconvenience to be a mercy and a splendid fortune in respect of our demerits. I have read, that "when the duke of Candia had voluntarily entered into the incommo-
dities of a religious poverty and retirement, he was one day spied and pitied by a lord of Italy, who

¹ S. Hier. in Vit. S. Anton.

out of tenderness wished him to be more careful and nutritive of his person. The good duke answered, 'Sir, be not troubled, and think not that I am ill provided of conveniences : for I send a harbinger before, who makes my lodgings ready, and takes care that I be royally entertained.' The lord asked him who was his harbinger. He answered, 'The knowledge of myself, and the consideration of what I deserve for my sin, which is eternal torments; and when with this knowledge I arrive at my lodging, how unprovided soever I find it, methinks it is ever better than I deserve.'" The sum of this meditation consists in believing, and considering, and reducing to practice those thoughts, that we are nothing of ourselves, that we have nothing of our own, that we have received more than ever we can discharge, that we have added innumerable sins, that we can call nothing our own but such things which we are ashamed to own, and such things which are apt to ruin us. If we do nothing contrary to the purpose and hearty persuasion of such thoughts, then we think meanly of ourselves. And in order to it, we may make use of this advice : —to let no day pass without some sad recollection and memory of somewhat which may put us to confusion and mean opinion of ourselves : either call to mind the worst of our sins, or the indiscreetest of our actions, or the greatest of our shame, or the uncivilest of our affronts; any thing to make us descend lower, and kiss the foot of the mountain. And this consideration applied also to every tumour of spirit, as soon as it rises, may possibly allay it.

7. Secondly, Christ's humble man bears con-

tumelies evenly and sweetly, and desires not to be honoured by others.¹ He chooses to do those things that deserve honour and a fair name; but then eats not of those fruits himself, but transmits them to the use of others, and the glory of God. This is a certain consequence of the other: for he that truly disesteems himself, is content that others should do so too; and he who with some regret and impatience hears himself scorned or undervalued, hath not acquired the grace of humility. Which Serapion in Cassian noted to a young person, who perpetually accused himself, with the greatest semblances of humility, but was impatient when Serapion reprov'd him. "Did you hope that I would have praised your humility, and have reputed you for a saint? It is a strange perverseness to desire others to esteem highly of you, for that in which to yourself you seem most unworthy."² He that inquires into the faults of his own actions, requiring them that saw them to tell him in what he did amiss, not to learn the fault but to engage them to praise it, cozens himself into pride, and makes humility the instrument. And a man would be ashamed were he told that he used stratagems for praise. But so glorious a thing is humility, that pride, to hide her own shame, puts on

¹ *Ama nesciri et pro nihilo reputari.*—Gerson.—"Love to be obscure and regarded as of no estimation."

² *Appetere de humilitate laudem, humilitatis non est virtus, sed subversio. Quid enim perversum magis aut indignius, quam ut inde velis haberi melior, unde tibi videris deterior?*—S. Bernard.—"To seek praise for our humility, is not to possess but to destroy the virtue: for what can be more inconsistent than to wish to be considered the better for that by which we appear worse to ourselves." *Ecclus. xii. 11.*

the other's visor; it being more to a proud man's purposes to seem humble than to be so. And such was the Cynic whom Lucian derided, because that one searching his scrip, in expectation to have found in it mouldy bread or old rags, he discovered a bale of dice, a box of perfumes, and the picture of his fair mistress. Carisianus walked in his gown in the feast of Saturn; and when all Rome was let loose in wantonness, he put on the long robe of a senator and a severe person; and yet nothing was more lascivious than he. But the devil's pride prevails sometimes upon the spirit of lust. Humility neither directly nor by consequence seeks for praise, and suffers it not to rest upon its own pavement, but reflects it all upon God, and receives all lessenings and instruments of affront and disgrace, that mingle not with sin or indecencies, more willingly than panegyrics. When others have their desires, thou not thine; the sayings of another are esteemed, thine slighted; others ask and obtain, thou beggest and art refused; they are cried up, thou disgraced and hissed at; and while they are employed, thou art laid by, as fit for nothing; or an unworthy person commands thee and rules thee like a tyrant; he reproves thee, suspects thee, reviles thee; canst thou bear this sweetly, and entertain the usage as thy just portion, and as an accident most fit and proper to thy person and condition? Dost thou not raise theatres to thyself, and take delight in the supplementories of thy own good opinion, and the flatteries of such whom thou endearest to thee, that their praising thee should heal the wounds of thine honour by an imaginary and fantastic restitution?

He that is not content and patient in affronts, hath not yet learned humility of the holy Jesus.

8. Thirdly, As Christ's humble man is content in affronts, and not greedy of praise; so when it is presented to him, he takes no contentment in it: and if it be easy to want praise when it is denied, yet it is harder not to be delighted with it when it is offered. But there is much reason that we should put restraints upon ourselves, lest, if we be praised without desert, we find a greater judgment of God;¹ or if we have done well, and received praise for it, we lose all our reward, which God hath deposited for them that 'receive not their good things in this life.' For 'as silver is tried in the melter, and gold in the crucible, so is a man tried in the mouth of him that praises him;' that is, he is either clarified from his dross, by looking upon the praise as a homily to teach and an instrument to invite his duty; or else, if he be already pure, he is consolidated, strengthened in the sobriety of his spirit, and retires himself closer into the strengths and securities of humility. Nay, this step of humility uses, in very holy persons, to be enlarged to a delight in affronts and disreputation in the world. "Now I begin to be Christ's disciple," said Ignatius the martyr, when in his journey to Rome he suffered perpetual revilings

¹ Tanta enim consideratione trepidat, (David,) ne aut de his in quibus laudatur, et non sunt, majus Dei judicium inveniat; aut de his in quibus laudatur, et sunt, competens præmium perdat. S. Greg.—"David trembles, lest the judgment of God should fall more heavily upon him because of those things for which he is falsely praised, or lest he should at last lose the fitting reward of those things for which he is rightly commended."

and abuse. St. Paul 'rejoiced in his infirmities and reproach:' and all the apostles at Jerusalem went from the tribunal 'rejoicing that they were esteemed worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus.'¹ This is an excellent condition and degree of humility. But I choose to add one that is less, but in all persons necessary.

9. Fourthly, Christ's humble man is careful never to speak any thing that may redound to his own praise, unless it be with a design of charity or duty, that either God's glory or the profit of his neighbour be concerned in it; but never speaking with a design to be esteemed learned or honourable. St. Arsenius had been tutor to three Cæsars, Theodosius, Arcadius, and Honorius; but afterwards, when he became religious, no word escaped him that might represent and tell of his former greatness. And it is observable concerning St. Jerome, that although he was of noble extraction, yet in all his own writings there is not the smallest intimation of it. This I desire to be understood only to the sense and purposes of humility, and that we have no designs of vanity and fancy in speaking learnedly, or recounting our exterior advantages: but if either the profit of our brother or the glory of God, if either there be piety or charity in the design, it is lawful to publish all those excellencies with which God hath distinguished us from others. The young marquis of Castilion being to do public exercise in his course of philosophy, made it a case of conscience whether he were bound to dispute his best; fearing lest

¹ Acts, v. 41.

Vanity might transport him in the midst of those praises which his collegiates might give him. It was an excellent consideration in the young gentleman : but in actions civil and human, since the danger is not so immediate, and a little complacency, becoming the instrument of virtue and encouragement of studies, may with like care be referred to God as the giver, and celebrate his praises, he might with more safety have done his utmost ; it being in some sense a duty to encourage others, to give account of our graces and our labours, and all the appendant vanity may quickly be suppressed. A good name may give us opportunity of persuading others to their duty, especially in an age in which men choose their doctrines by the men that preach them : and St. Paul used his liberty when he was zealous for his Corinthian disciples, but restrained himself when it began to make reflections upon his own spirit. But although a good name be necessary, and in order to such good ends whither it may serve it is lawful to desire it ; yet a great name, and a pompous honour, and a secular greatness hath more danger in it to ourselves than ordinarily it can have of benefit to others. And although a man may use the greatest honours to the greatest purposes, yet ordinary persons may not safely desire them ; because it will be found very hard to have such mysterious and abstracted considerations, as to separate all our proper interest from the public end. To which I add this consideration, that the contempt of honour, and the instant pursuit of humility, is more effective of the ghostly benefit of others, than honours and great dignities can be, unless it be rarely and very accidentally.

10. If we need any new incentives to the practice of this grace, I can say no more, but that humility is truth, and pride is a lie; that the one glorifies God, the other dishonours him; humility makes men like angels, pride makes angels to become devils; that pride is folly, humility is the temper of a holy spirit and excellent wisdom; that humility is the way to glory; pride, to ruin and confusion. Humility makes saints on earth, pride undoes them; humility beatifies the saints in heaven, and the elders throw their crowns at the foot of the throne; pride disgraces a man among all the societies on earth: God loves one, and Satan solicits the cause of the other, and promotes his own interest in it most of all. And there is no one grace in which Christ propounded himself imitable so signally as in this of meekness and humility; for the enforcing of which he undertook the condition of a servant, and a life of poverty, and a death of disgrace; and washed the feet of his disciples, and even of Judas himself, that his action might be turned into a sermon to preach this duty, and to make it as eternal as his own story.

THE PRAYER.

O holy and eternal Jesus, who wert pleased to lay aside the glories and incomprehensible majesty which clothed thy infinity from before the beginning of creatures, and didst put on a cloud upon thy brightness, and wert invested with the impure and imperfect broken robe of human nature, and didst abate those splendours which broke through the veil, commanding devils not to publish thee, and men not to proclaim thy excellencies, and the apostles not to reveal those glories of thine which they dis-

covered encircling thee upon Mount Tabor in thy transfiguration; and didst, by perpetual homilies and symbolical mysterious actions, as with deep characters, engrave humility into the spirits of thy disciples and the discipline of Christianity; teach us to approach near to these thy glories, which thou hast so covered with a cloud that we might without amazement behold thy excellencies; make us to imitate thy gracious condescensions; take from us all vanity and fantastic complacencies in our own persons or actions; and when there arises a reputation consequent to the performance of any part of our duty, make us to reflect the glory upon thee, suffering nothing to adhere to our own spirits but shame at our own imperfection, and thankfulness to thee for all thy assistances. Let us never seek the praise of men from unhandsome actions, from flatteries and unworthy discourses; nor entertain the praise with delight, though it proceed from better principles: but fear and tremble, lest we deserve punishment, or lose a reward which thou hast deposited for all them that seek thy glory and despise their own, that they may imitate the example of their Lord. Thou, O Lord, didst triumph over sin and death; subdue also my proud understanding and my prouder affections, and bring me under thy yoke; that I may do thy work, and obey my superiors, and be a servant of all my brethren in their necessities, and esteem myself inferior to all men by a deep sense of my own unworthiness, and in all things may obey thy laws, and conform to thy precedents, and enter into thine inheritance, O holy and eternal Jesus. Amen.

DISCOURSE XIX.

Of the Institution and Reception of the Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

1. As the sun among the stars, and man among the sublunary creatures, is the most eminent and noble, the prince of the inferiors, and their measure, or their guide; so is this action among all the

instances of religion : it is the most perfect and consummate ; it is an union of mysteries, and a consolidation of duties ; it joins God and man, and confederates all the societies of men in mutual complexions, and the entertainments of an excellent charity ; it actually performs all that could be necessary for man, and it presents to man as great a thing as God could give ; for it is impossible any thing should be greater than himself. And when God gave his Son to the world, it could not be but he should ' give us all things else.' And therefore this blessed sacrament is a consigning us to all felicities, because, after a mysterious and ineffable manner, we receive him who is light and life, the fountain of grace, and the sanctifier of our secular comforts, and the author of holiness and glory. But as it was at first, so it hath been ever since : ' Christ came into the world, and the world knew him not : ' so Christ hath remained in the world, by the communication of this sacrament, and yet he is not rightly understood, and less truly valued. But Christ may say to us, as once to the woman of Samaria : ' Woman, if thou didst know the gift of God, and who it is that speaks to thee, thou wouldst ask him : ' so, if we were so wise, or so fortunate to know the excellency of this gift of the Lord, it would fill us full of wonder and adoration, joy and thankfulness, great hopes and actual felicities, making us heirs of glory by the great additions and present increment of grace.

2. ' After supper Jesus took bread and blessed it,' and made it to be a heavenly gift. He gave them bread, and told them it was his body ; that body which was broken for the redemption of man, for the salvation of the world. St Paul calls it

‘bread’ even after consecration : ‘The bread which we break, is it not the communication of the body of Christ?’¹ So that by divine faith we are taught to express our belief of this mystery in these words : “the bread, which is consecrated and made sacramental, is the body of our Lord; and the fraction and distribution of it is the communication of that body which died for us upon the cross.” He that doubts of either of the parts of this proposition, must either think Christ was not able to verify his word, and to make bread by his benediction to become to us his body ; or that St. Paul did not well interpret and understand this mystery, when he called it bread. Christ reconciles them both, calling himself ‘the bread of life :’ and if we be offended at it, because it is alive, and therefore less apt to become food, we are invited to it because it is bread ; and if the sacrament to others seems less mysterious, because it is bread, we are heightened in our faith and reverence, because it is life. The bread of the sacrament is the life of our soul ; and the body of our Lord is now conveyed to us, being the bread of the sacrament. And if we consider how easy it is to faith, and how impossible it seems to curiosity, we shall be taught confidence and modesty ; a resigning our understanding to the voice of Christ and his apostles, and yet expressing our own articles, as Christ did, in indefinite significations. And possibly it may not well consist with our duty, to be inquisitive into the secrets of the kingdom, which we see by plain event hath divided the church almost as much as the sacrament hath united it ; and which can only

¹ 1 Cor. x. 16.

serve the purposes of the school and of evil men, to make questions for that, and factions for these, but not promote the ends of a holy life, obedience or charity.

3. Some so observe the literal sense of the words, that they understand them also in a natural : some so alter them by metaphors and preternatural significations, that they will not understand them at all in a proper. We see it, we feel it, we taste it, and we smell it to be bread ; and by philosophy we are led into a belief of that substance whose accidents these are, as we are to believe that to be fire which burns, and flames, and shines ; but Christ also affirmed concerning it, ' this is my body ; ' and if faith can create an assent as strong as its object is infallible, or can be as certain in its conclusions as sense is certain in its apprehensions, we must at no hand doubt but it is Christ's body. Let the sense of that be what it will, so that we believe those words, and (whatsoever that sense is which Christ intended) that we no more doubt in our faith than we do in our sense ; then our faith is not reprobable. It is hard to do so much violence to our sense, as not to think it bread ; but it is more unsafe to do so much violence to our faith, as not to believe it to be Christ's body. But it would be considered, that no interest of religion, no saying of Christ, no reverence of opinion, no sacredness of the mystery is disavowed, if we believe both what we hear and what we see. He that believes it to be bread, and yet verily to be Christ's body, is only tied also by implication to believe God's omnipotence, that he who affirmed it can also verify it. And they that are forward to believe the change of substance, can intend no more but

that it be believed verily to be the body of our Lord. And if they think it impossible to reconcile its being bread, with the verity of being Christ's body, let them remember that themselves are put to more difficulties, and to admit of more miracles, and to contradict more sciences, and to refuse the testimony of sense, in affirming the special manner of transubstantiation. And therefore it were safer to admit the words in their first sense, in which we shall no more be at war with reason, nor so much with sense, and not at all with faith.¹

¹ *Acceptum panem et distributum discipulis corpus suum illum fecit, Hoc est corpus meum, dicendo, id est, figura corporis mei. Figura a non fuisset, nisi veritatis esset corpus. Tert. lib. iv. cont. Marcion. c. 40. Quod si quicquid ingreditur in os, in ventrem abit, et in secessum ejicitur, et ille cibus qui sanctificatur per verbum Dei perque obsecrationem, juxta id quod habet materiale in ventrem abit, et in secessum ejicitur, &c. et hæc quidem de typico symboliceque corpore. Origen in xv. cap. S. Matt. Τὸ σύμβολα τῆ σώματος τῆ εἰσποτικῆ ἢ τῆ αἵματος μετὰ τὴν ἐπίκλησιν ἐπιβάλλεται, ἢ ἕτερα γίνεται, ἀλλ' ἕκ οἰκείας ἐξίταται φύσεως· μένει γὰρ ἐπὶ τῆς προτέρας ἑσίας, ἢ τῆ σχήματος, ἢ τῆ εἶδους, ἢ ὕποτά ἐπι ἢ ἀπτά, οἷα ἢ προτερον ἦν.* Theod. Dial. 2. Idem disputando contra Eutychianos, docentes humanam Christi naturam conversum iri in divinam, eodem modo quo panis in corpus Christi, ait, Certe eodem scil. modo, hoc est, nullo. Ὁ εἰ Σωτὴρ ὁ ἡμέτερος, &c. Our blessed Saviour, who hath called himself the living Bread, and a Vine, hath also honoured the visible signs with the title and appellation of his body and blood, not changing their nature, but adding to nature grace.—See the Dialog. called “The Immoveable.” Sacramenta quæ sumimus corporis et sanguinis Christi, divina res est. Propter quod per eadem divinæ efficimur consortes naturæ, et tamen non desinunt esse substantia vel natura panis et vini: et certe imago et similitudo corporis et sanguinis Christi in actione mysteriorum celebrantur. P. Gelasius libr. contra Nestorium et Eutychetem. Non quod proprie corpus ejus sit panis, et peculum sanguis; sed quod mysterium corporis ejus sanguinisque contineant. Facundus. Sign. Sacramenta quamquam similitudinem non haberent earum rerum quarum sunt sacramenta, omnino sacramenta non essent: Ex hac a. similitudine plerumque ipsarum rerum nomina accipiunt. S. Aug. Epist. 23.

And for persons of the contradictory persuasion, who, to avoid the natural sense, affirm it only to be figurative, since their design is only to make this sacrament to be Christ's body in the sense of faith, and not of philosophy, they may remember that its being really present does not hinder, but that all that reality may be spiritual; and if it be Christ's body, so it be not affirmed such in a natural sense and manner it is still only the object of faith and spirit: and if it be affirmed only to be spiritual, there is then no danger to faith in admitting the words of Christ's institution: 'This is my body.' I suppose it to be a mistake, to think whatsoever is real must be natural; and it is no less to think spiritual to be only figurative: that is too much, and this is too little. Philosophy and faith may well be reconciled; and whatsoever objection can invade this union, may be cured by modesty. And if we profess we understand not the manner of this

Idem contra Faustum Manich. lib. x. c. 2. Quod ab omnibus appellatur sacrificium, signum est veri sacrificii, in quo caro Christi post assumptionem per sacramentum memoriæ celebratur. Apud Gratianum de Consecrat. dist. ii. c. 48. citatur Augustinus in Libro Sententiarum Prosperi in hæc verba. Sicut ergo cælestis panis, qui Christi caro est, suo modo vocatur corpus Christi, cum revera sit sacramentum corporis Christi, illius, viz. quod visibile, quod palpabile, mortale in cruce positum est; vocaturque ipsa immolatio carnis quæ sacerdotis manibus fit Christi passio, mors, crucifixio, non rei veritate sed significante mysterio: sic sacramentum fidei quod baptismus intelligitur, fides est. Si ergo hæc vasa sanctificata ad privatos usus transferre sic periculosum est, in quibus non est verum corpus Christi, sed mysterium corporis ejus continetur; quanto magis vasa corporis nostri, &c. S. Chrysost. Opere imperf. in Matth. Idem in Epist. ad Cæsarium, in Biblioth. Pp. Colon. 1618. Sicut n. antequam sanctificetur panis, Panem nominamus, divina autem illum sanctificante gratia, mediante sacerdote, liberatus quidem est ab appellatione panis, dignus autem habitus est Dominici corporis appellationi, etiamsi natura auspis in eo permansit, &c.

mystery, we say no more but that it is a mystery : if it had been necessary we should have construed it into the most latent sense, Christ himself would have given a *clavis*, and taught the church to unlock so great a secret. Christ said, ‘ This is my body, this is my blood.’ St. Paul said, ‘ The bread of blessing that we break is the communication of the body of Christ, and the chalice which we bless is the communication of the blood of Christ ;’ and, ‘ we are all one body, because we eat of one bread,’¹ One proposition as well as the other is a matter of faith, and the latter of them is also of sense ; one is as literal as the other, and he that distinguishes in his belief, as he may place the impropriety upon what part he please, and either say it is improperly called bread, or improperly called Christ’s body ; so he can have nothing to secure his proposition from error, or himself from boldness, in decreeing concerning mysteries against the testimonies of sense, or beyond the modesty and simplicity of Christian faith. Let us love and adore the abyss of divine wisdom and goodness, and entertain the sacrament with just and holy receptions ; and then we shall receive all those fruits of it which an earnest disputer, or a peremptory dogmatizer, whether he happen right or wrong, hath no warrant to expect upon the interest of his opinion.

4. In the institution of this sacrament Christ manifested, first, his almighty power ; secondly,

¹ 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

Chrysost. notat Apostolum non dixisse panem esse *μετοχήν*, sed *κοινωνίαν τῆ σῶματος Χριστοῦ*, ut indicaret ita participari corpus Domini, ut fiant unum participans, et res participata, sicut Verbum et Dei Caro. ὁ μετέχωρ, partem aliquam sibi vendicat, ὁ κοινωνῶν, totius particeps est.

his infinite wisdom ; and **thirdly**, his **unspeakable** charity. First, his power is manifest in making the symbols to be the instruments of conveying himself to the spirit of the receiver. He nourishes the soul with bread, and feeds the body with a sacrament : he makes the body spiritual by his graces there ministered, and makes the spirit to be united to his body by a participation of the divine nature. In the sacrament that body which is reigning in heaven is exposed upon the table of blessing ; and his body which was broken for us is now broken again, and yet remains impassible. Every consecrated portion of bread and wine does exhibit Christ entirely to the faithful receiver ; and yet Christ remains one, while he is wholly ministered in ten thousand portions. So long as we call these mysterious, and make them intricate to exercise our faith, and to represent the wonder of the mystery, and to increase our charity ; our being inquisitive into the abyss can have no evil purposes. God hath instituted the rite in visible symbols, to make the secret grace as presential and discernible as it might, that by an instrument of sense our spirits might be accommodated as with an exterior object to produce an internal act. But it is the prodigy of a miraculous power, by instruments so easy to produce effects so glorious. This then is the object of wonder and adoration.

5. Secondly, And this effect of power does also remark the divine wisdom, who hath ordained such symbols, which not only, like spittle and clay toward the curing blind eyes, proclaim an almighty power, but they are apposite and proper to signify a duty, and become to us like the word of life ; and from bread they turn into a homily : for therefore our

wisest Master hath appointed bread and wine, that we may be corporeally united to him; that as the symbols becoming nutriment are turned into the substance of our bodies, so Christ being the food of our souls should assimilate us, making us partakers of the divine nature. It also tells us, that from hence we derive life and holy motion; 'for in him we live, and move, and have our being.' He is the staff of our life, and the light of our eyes, and the strength of our spirit; he is the viand for our journey, and the antepast of heaven. And because this holy mystery was intended to be a sacrament of union, that lesson is morally represented in the symbols; that as the salutary juice is expressed from many clusters running into one chalice, and the bread is a mass made of many grains of wheat, so we also (as the apostle infers from hence, himself observing the analogy,) should 'be one bread and one body, because we partake of that one bread.' And it were to be wished that from hence also all Christians would understand a signification of another duty, and that they would often communicate, as remembering that the soul may need a frequent ministration as well as the body its daily proportion. This consideration of the divine wisdom is apt to produce reverence, humility, and submission of our understanding to the immensity of God's unsearchable abysses.

6. Thirdly, But the story of the love of our dearest Lord is written in largest characters, who not only was at that instant busy in doing man the greatest good, even then when man was contriving his death and his dishonour, but contrived to represent his bitter passion to us without any circumstances of horror, in symbols of pleasure and de-

light; that 'we may taste and see how gracious our Lord is,' who would not transmit the record of his passion to us in any thing that might trouble us. No love can be greater than that which is so beautiful as to bestow the greatest good; and no love can be better expressed than that which, although it is productive of the greatest blessings, yet is curious also to observe the smallest circumstances. And not only both these, but many other circumstances and arguments of love concur in the holy sacrament.

1. It is a tenderness of affection that ministers wholesome physic with arts and instruments of pleasure. And such was the charity of our Lord, who brings health to us in a golden chalice; life, not in the bitter drugs of Egypt, but in spirits and quintessences; giving us apples of paradise, at the same time yielding food, and health, and pleasure.

2. Love desires to do all good to its beloved object; and that is the greatest love which gives us the greatest blessings. And the sacrament therefore is the argument of his greatest love; for in it we receive the honey and the honey-comb, the paschal lamb with his bitter herbs, Christ with all his griefs, and his passion with all the salutary effects of it.

3. Love desires to be remembered, and to have his own object in perpetual representment. And this sacrament Christ designed to that purpose, that he, who is not present to our eyes, might always be present to our spirits.

4. Love demands love again, and to desire to be beloved is of itself a great argument of love. And as God cannot give us a greater blessing than his love, which is himself with an excellency of relation to us superadded; so what greater demonstration of it can he make to us, than to desire us to

love him with as much earnestness and vehemency of desire, as if we were that to him which he is essentially to us, the author of our being and our blessing? 5. And yet to consummate this love, and represent it to be the greatest and most excellent, the holy Jesus hath in this sacrament designed that we should be united in our spirits with him, incorporated to his body, partake of his divine nature, and communicate in all his graces: and love hath no expression beyond this, that it desires to be united unto its object. So that what Moses said to the men of Israel, 'What nation is so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things for which we call upon him?' we can enlarge in the meditation of this holy sacrament: for now the Lord our God calls upon us, not only to be nigh unto him, but to be all one with him; not only as he was in the incarnation, flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, but also to communicate in spirit, in grace, in nature, in divinity itself.

7. Upon the strength of the premises we may sooner take an estimate of the graces which are conveyed to us in the reception and celebration of this holy sacrament and sacrifice. For as it is a commemoration and representment of Christ's death, so it is a commemorative sacrifice; as we receive the symbols and the mystery, so it is a sacrament. In both capacities the benefit is next to infinite. First, for whatsoever Christ did at the institution, the same he commanded the church to do in remembrance and repeated rites; and himself also does the same thing in heaven for us, making perpetual intercession for his church, the body of his redeemed ones, by representing to his

Father his death and sacrifice : there he sits a high-priest continually, and offers still the same one perfect sacrifice; that is, still represents it as having been once finished and consummate in order to perpetual and never-failing events. And this also his ministers do on earth; they offer up the same sacrifice to God, the sacrifice of the cross, by prayers, and a commemorating rite and representment according to his holy institution. And as all the effects of grace and the titles of glory were purchased for us on the cross, and the actual mysteries of redemption perfected on earth, but are applied to us and made effectual to single persons and communities of men by Christ's intercession in heaven : so also they are promoted by acts, duty, and religion here on earth, that we may be ' workers together with God,'¹ (as St. Paul expresses it,) and in virtue of the eternal and all-sufficient sacrifice may offer up our prayers and our duty, and by representing that sacrifice may send up together with our prayers an instrument of their graciousness and acceptance. The funerals of a deceased friend are not only performed at his first interring, but in the monthly minds and anniversary commemorations, and our grief returns upon the sight of a picture, or upon any instance which our dead friend desired us to preserve as his memorial : we celebrate and exhibit the Lord's death in sacrament and symbol. And this is that great express, which when the church offers to God the Father, it obtains all those blessings which that sacrifice purchased. Themistocles snatched up the son of king Admetus, and held him between him-

¹ 2 Cor. vi. 1.

self and death, to mitigate the rage of the king, and prevailed accordingly. Our very holding up the Son of God, and representing him to his Father, is the doing an act of mediation and advantage to ourselves in the virtue and efficacy of the Mediator. As Christ is a priest in heaven for ever, and yet does not sacrifice himself afresh, nor yet without a sacrifice could he be a priest, but by a daily ministration and intercession represents his sacrifice to God, and offers himself as sacrificed; so he does upon earth by the ministry of his servants; he is offered to God; that is, he is by prayers and the sacraments represented or 'offered up to God as sacrificed;' which, in effect, is a celebration of his death, and the applying it to the present and future necessities of the church, as we are capable, by a ministry like to his in heaven. It follows then, that the celebration of this sacrifice be in its proportion an instrument of applying the proper sacrifice to all the purposes which it first designed.¹ It is ministerially and by application an instrument propitiatory, it is eucharistical, it is an homage, and an act of adoration, and it is impetratory, and obtains for us and for the whole church all the benefits of the sacrifice, which is now celebrated and applied: that is, as this rite is the remembrance and ministerial celebration of Christ's sacrifice, so it is destined to do honour to God, to express the homage and duty of his ser-

¹ *Iste calix benedictione solenni sacratus, ad totius hominis vitam salutemque proficit; simul medicamentum et holocaustum, ad sanandas infirmitates et purgandas iniquitates, existens. S. Cyp. de cena Dom.*—"That cup, consecrated by the accustomed blessing, avails to the life and salvation of the whole man, and is at the same time a medicine and a sacrifice, both healing diseases and purging sins."

vants, to acknowledge his supreme dominion, to give him thanks and worship, to beg pardon, blessings, and supply of all our needs. And its profit is enlarged not only to the persons celebrating, but to all to whom they design it, according to the nature of sacrifices and prayers, and all such solemn actions of religion.

8. Secondly, If we consider this, not as the act and ministry of ecclesiastical persons, but as the duty of the whole church communicating, that is, as it is a sacrament, so it is like the springs of Eden, from whence issue many rivers; or the trees of celestial Jerusalem, bearing various kinds of fruit. For whatsoever was offered in the sacrifice is given in the sacrament; and whatsoever the testament bequeaths, the holy mysteries dispense. 1. 'He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him;'¹ Christ in his temple and his resting-place, and the worthy communicant in sanctuary and a place of protection; and every holy soul having feasted at his table may say, as St. Paul, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'² So that 'to live is Christ:'³ 'Christ is our life,'⁴ and he dwells in the body and the spirit of every one that eats Christ's flesh and drinks his blood. Happy is that man that sits at the table of angels, that puts his hand into the dish with the King of all the creatures, and feeds upon the eternal Son of God; joining things below with things above, heaven with earth, life with death, that mortality might be swallowed up of life, and sin be destroyed by the inhabitation of its greatest conqueror. And now I need not enume-

¹ John, vi. 56.

² Gal. ii. 20.

³ Phil. i. 21.

⁴ Col. iii. iv.

rate any particulars, since the Spirit of God hath ascertained us that Christ enters into our hearts, and takes possession, and abides there; that we are made temples and celestial mansions; that we are all one with our Judge, and with our Redeemer; that our Creator is bound unto his creature with bonds of charity which nothing can dissolve, unless our own hands break them; that man is united with God, and our weakness is fortified by his strength, and our miseries wrapped up in the golden leaves of glory. 2. Hence it follows that the sacrament is an instrument of reconciling us to God, and taking off the remanent guilt, and stain, and obligations of our sins. 'This is the blood that was shed for you for the remission of sins. For there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' And such are all they who worthily eat the flesh of Christ: by receiving him, they more and more receive remission of sins, redemption, sanctification, wisdom, and certain hopes of glory. For as the soul, touching and united to the flesh of Adam, contracts the stain of original misery and imperfection; so much the rather shall the soul united to the flesh of Christ receive pardon and purity, and all those blessed emanations from our union with the second Adam. But this is not to be understood, as if the first beginnings of our pardon were in the holy communion; for then a man might come with his impurities along with him, and lay them on the holy table, to stain and pollute so bright a presence. No; first repentance must 'prepare the way of the Lord:' and in this holy rite those words of our Lord are verified: 'He that is justified let him be justified still;' that is, here he may receive the increase of grace; and as

it grows, so sin dies, and we are reconciled by nearer unions and approximations to God.

9. Thirdly, The holy sacrament is the pledge of glory, and the earnest of immortality. For when we have received him who hath 'overcome death, and henceforth dies no more,' he becomes to us like the tree of life in paradise: and the consecrated symbols are like the seeds of an eternal duration, springing up in us to eternal life, nourishing our spirits with grace, which is but the prologue and the infancy of glory, and differs from it only as a child from a man.¹ But God first raised up his Son to life, and by giving him to us hath also consigned us to the same state; for 'our life is hid with Christ in God,'² "When we lay down and cast aside the impurer robes of flesh, they are then but preparing for glory: and if by the only touch of Christ, bodies were redintegrate and restored to natural perfections, how shall not we live for ever who eat his flesh and drink his blood?" It is the discourse of St. Cyril: Whatsoever the Spirit can convey to the body of the church, we may expect from this sacrament: for as the Spirit is the instrument of life and action, so the blood of Christ is the conveyance of his Spirit.³ And let all the mysterious places of holy Scripture, concerning the effects which Christ communicated in the blessed sacrament, be

¹ Ἀθανασίας φάρμακον. apud S. Ingnat. epist ad Ephes. Spes resurrectionis. Optat. Milevit. lib. vi. Contra Parmen. et S. Joan. vi. 54. Qui manducat carnem meam, habet vitam æternam, et resuscitabo eum in novissimo die.

² Colos. iii. 3.

³ S. Cyril. Alex. lib. iv. in Jo. c. xiv. et Iren. lib. iv. c. 34. Sic et corpora nostra percipientia Eucharistiam jam non sunt corruptibilia, spem. resurrectionis habentia.

drawn together in one scheme, we cannot but observe, that although they are so expressed as that their meaning may seem intricate and involved, yet they cannot be drawn to any meaning at all, but it is as glorious in its sense as it is mysterious in the expression; and the more intricate they are, the greater is their purpose; no words being apt and proportionate to signify this spiritual secret and excellent effects of the Spirit. A veil is drawn before all these testimonies, because the people were not able to behold the glory which they cover with their curtain: and 'Christ dwelling in us,' and 'giving us his flesh to eat and his blood to drink,' and 'the hiding of our life with God,' and 'the communion of the body of Christ,' and 'Christ being our life,' are such secret glories, that as the fruition of them is the portion of the other world, so also is the full perception and understanding of them. For therefore God appears to us in a cloud, and his glories in a veil, that we, understanding more of it by its concealment than we can by its open face, which is too bright for our weak eyes, may with more piety also entertain the greatness by these indefinite and mysterious significations, than we can by plain and direct intuitions, which, like the sun in a direct ray, enlightens the object but confounds the organ.

10. I should but in other words describe the same glories, if I should add, that this holy sacrament does enlighten the spirit of man, and clarify it with spiritual discernings; and as he was to the two disciples at Emmaus, so also to other faithful people; 'Christ is known in the breaking of bread:' that it is a great defence against the hostilities of our ghostly enemies, this holy bread being like the

cake of Gideon's camp, overturning the tents of Midian:' that it is the relief of our sorrows, the antidote and preservative of souls, the viand of our journey, the guard and passport of our death, the wine of angels; that it is more healthful than rhubarb, more pleasant than cassia; that the beetle and lareca of the Indians, the moly or nepenthe of Pliny, the lirinon of the Persians, the balsam of Judæa, the manna of Israel, the honey of Jonathan, are but weak expressions to tell us that this is excellent above art and nature, and that nothing is good enough in philosophy to become its emblem. All these must needs fall very short of those plain words of Christ, 'This is my body.' The other may become the ecstasies of piety, the transportation of joy and wonder, and are like the discourse of St. Peter upon Mount Tabor; he was resolved to say some great thing, but he knew not what: but when we remember that the body of our Lord and his blood is communicated to us in the bread and chalice of blessing, we must sit down and rest ourselves; for this is the mountain of the Lord, and we can go no further.

11. In the next place it will concern our inquiry to consider how we are to prepare ourselves. For at the gate of life a man may meet with death; and although this holy sacrament be like manna, in which the obedient find the relishes of obedience, the chaste of purity, the meek persons of content and humility; yet vicious and corrupted palates find also the gust of death and colouquintida. The Syberites invited their women to their

¹ St. Chrysostom says, "We leave that table with the strength of lions, breathing fire, made terrible thereby to demons."

solemn sacrifices a full year before the solemnity, that they might, by previous dispositions and a long foresight, attend with gravity and fairer order the celebration of the rites.¹ And it was a reasonable answer of Pericles, to one that asked him why he, being a philosophical and severe person, came to a wedding trimmed and adorned like a paronym, h; "I come adorned to an adorned person," trimmed to a bridegroom. And we also, if we come to the marriage of the Son with the soul, (which marriage is celebrated in this sacred mystery,) and have not on a wedding-garment, shall be cast into outer darkness, the portion of undressed and unprepared souls.

12. For from this sacrament are excluded all unbaptized persons, and such who lie in a known sin, of which they have not purged themselves by the apt and proper instruments of repentance. For if the paschal lamb was not to be eaten but by persons pure and clean, according to the sanctifications of the law, the Son of God can less endure the impurities of the spirit, than God could suffer the uncleannesses of the law. St. Paul hath given us instruction in this: 'First let a man examine himself, and so let him eat. For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.'² That is, although the church of Corinth, by reason of the present schism, the public discipline of the church was neglected, and every man permitted to himself; yet even then no man was disobliged from his duty of private repentance, and holy preparations to the perception of so great a mystery;

¹ Plutarch. Sympos

² 1 Cor. xi. 28. 29.

what the Lord's body may be discerned from common nutriment. Now nothing can so unhallow and desecrate the rite as the remanent affection to a sin, or a crime unrepented of. And self-examination is prescribed, not for itself, but in order to the abolition of sin and death: for itself is a relative term and an imperfect duty, whose very nature is in order to something beyond it. And this was in the primitive church understood to so much severity, that if a man had relapsed after one public repentance into a foul crime, he was never again readmitted to the holy communion. And the fathers of the council of Eliberis call it "a mocking and jesting at the communion of our Lord, to give it once again after repentance and a relapse, and a second or third postulation."¹ And indeed we use to make a sport of the greatest instruments of religion, when we come to them after an habitual vice, whose face we have, it may be, wetted with a tear and breathed upon it with a sigh, and abstained from the worst of crimes for two or three days, and come to the sacrament to be purged, and to take our rise by going a little back from our sin, that afterwards we may leap into it with more violence, and enter into its utmost angle. This is dishonouring the body of our Lord, and deceiving ourselves. Christ and Belial cannot cohabit. But if we have left all our sins, and have no fondness of affection towards them; if we hate them, (which then we shall best know when we leave them, and with complacency entertain their contraries,) then Christ hath washed our feet, and then he invites us to his holy supper. Hands dipped in

¹ Concil. Eliber. c. 3.

blood, or polluted with unlawful gains, or stained with the spots of flesh, are most unfit to handle the holy body of our Lord, and minister nourishment to the soul. Christ loves not to enter into the mouth full of cursings, oaths, blasphemies, revilings, or evil-speakings; and a heart full of vain and vicious thoughts stinks like the lake of Sodom: he finds no rest there; and when he enters, he is vexed with the unclean conversation of the impure inhabitants, and flies from thence with the wings of a dove, that he may retire to pure and whiter habitations. St. Justin Martyr, reckoning the predispositions required of every faithful soul for the entertainment of his Lord, says, that "it is not lawful for any to eat the eucharist, but him that is washed in the laver of regeneration for the remission of sins, that believes Christ's doctrines to be true, and that lives according to the discipline of the holy Jesus."¹ And therefore St. Ambrose refused to minister the holy communion to the emperor Theodosius, till by public repentance he had reconciled himself to God and the society of faithful people, after the furious and choleric rage and slaughter committed at Thessalonica. And as this act was like to cancelling and a circumvallation of the holy mysteries, and in that sense and so far was a proper duty for a prelate, to whose dispensation the rites are committed; so it was an act of duty to the emperor, of paternal and

¹ St. Basil. lib. ii. de Bapt. c. 3. S. Ambros. lib. vi. c. 37. in Luc. 9.

See St. Chrysost. hom. 83, in Matt. where he says, "That if either a general, a nobleman, or even a king should unworthily approach the Lord's table, he must be rebuked and sent away; and that he would rather suffer death than treat unworthily the Lord's body."

tender care; not of proper authority or jurisdiction, which he could not have over his prince, but yet had a care and the supervision of a teacher over him; whose soul St. Ambrose had betrayed, unless he had represented his disposition to communicate in expressions of magisterial or doctoral authority and truth. For this holy sacrament is a nourishment of spiritual life, and therefore cannot with effect be administered to them who are in the state of spiritual death; it is giving a cordial to a dead man: and although the outward rite be ministered, yet the grace of the sacrament is not communicated; and therefore it were well that they also abstained from the rite itself. For a fly can boast of as much privilege as a wicked person can receive from this holy feast; and oftentimes pays his life for his access to forbidden delicacies, as certainly as they.

13. It is more generally thought by the doctors of the church, that our blessed Lord administered the sacrament to Judas, although he knew he sold him to the Jews: some others deny it, and suppose Judas departed presently after the sop given him, before he communicated.¹ However it was, Christ, who was Lord of the sacraments, might dispense it as he pleased: but we must minister and receive it according to the rules he hath since described. But it becomes a precedent to the church in all succeeding ages; although it might also have something in it extraordinary and apter to the first institution: for because the fact of Judas was secret, not yet made

¹ Negaturà Clemente Rom. 5. Const. c. 16. ab Hilario, c. 30, in Matt. ab Innocentio. lib. iii. de Myster. c. 13, a Ruperto, Hildebrand. Cenoman. et paucis aliis.

notorious, Christ chose rather to admit him into the rites of external communion, than to separate him with an open shame for a fault not yet made open: for our blessed Lord did not reveal the man and his crime till the very time of ministration, if Judas did communicate. But if Judas did not communicate, and that our blessed Lord gave him the sop at the paschal supper, or at the interval between it and the institution of its own, it is certain that Judas went out as soon as he was discovered, and left this part of discipline upon record:—that when a crime is made public and notorious, the governors of the church, according to their power, are to deny to give the blessed sacrament, till by repentance such persons be restored. In private sins, or sins not known by solemnities of law, or evidence of fact, good and bad are entertained in public communion: and it is not to be accounted a crime in them that minister it, because they cannot avoid it, or have not competent authority to separate persons whom the public act of the church hath not separated.¹ But if once a public separation be made, or that the fact is notorious and the sentence of law is in such cases already declared, they that come, and he that rejects them not, both pollute the blood of the everlasting covenant. And here it is applicable what God spake by the prophet, ‘if thou wilt separate the precious thing from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth.’²

¹ Nec a communione prohibere quenquam possumus, nisi aut sponte confessum, aut in aliquo sive seculari sive ecclesiastico judicio nominatum atque convictum. S. Aug. lib. v. Homil. hom. 50. S. Thomas, iii. p. q. 81. a. 2.—“We cannot prohibit any one from the communion, unless he have voluntarily confessed some sin, or have been convicted thereof by a secular or ecclesiastical judgment.”

² Jer. xv. 19.

But this is wholly a matter of discipline, arbitrary, and in the power of the church; nothing in it of divine commandment, but what belongs to the communicants themselves: for St. Paul reproves them that receive disorderly, but gives no orders to the Corinthian presbyters to reject any that present themselves. Neither did our blessed Lord leave any commandment concerning it, or hath the holy Scripture given rules or measures concerning its actual reduction to practice; neither who are to be separated, nor for what offences, nor by what authority, nor who is to be the judge. And indeed it is a judgment that can only belong to God, who knows the secrets of hearts, the degrees of every sin, the beginnings and portions of repentance, the sincerity of purposes, by what thoughts and designs men begin to be accepted, who are hypocrites, and who are true men. But when many and common men come to judge, they are angry upon trifling mistakes and weak disputes: they call that sin that angers their party or grieves their interest; they turn charity into pride, and admonition into tyranny; they set up a tribunal that themselves may sit higher, not that their brethren may walk more securely. And then concerning sins, in most cases they are most incompetent judges; they do not know all their kinds; they miscall many; they are ignorant of the ingredient and constituent parts and circumstances; they themselves make false measures, and give out according to them, when they please; and when they list not, they can change the balance. When the matter is public, evident, and notorious, the man is to be admonished of his danger by the minister, but not by him to be forced from it: for the power of the minister of holy

things is but the power of a preacher and a counsellor, of a physician and a guide: it hath in it no coercion or violence, but what is indulged to it by human laws and by consent, which may vary as its principle.

Add to this, that the grace of God can begin the work of repentance in an instant; and in what period or degree of repentance the holy communion is to be administered, no law of God declares; which therefore plainly allows it to every period, and leaves no difference, except where the discipline of the church and the authority of the supreme power doth intervene: for since we do not find in Scripture that the apostles did drive from the communion of holy things even those whom they delivered over to Satan or other censures, we are left to consider, that in the nature of the thing, those who are in the state of weakness and infirmity have more need of the solemn prayers of the church, and therefore, by presenting themselves to the holy sacrament, approach towards that ministry which is the most effectual cure; especially since the very presenting themselves is an act of religion, and therefore supposes an act of repentance and faith, and other little introductions to its fair reception. And if they may be prayed for and prayed with, why they may not also be communicated, which is the solemnity of the greatest prayer, is not yet clearly revealed.

This discourse relates only to private ministry: for when I affirm that there is no command from Christ, to all his ministers to refuse whom they are pleased to call scandalous, or sinners, I intend to defend good people from the tyranny and arbitrary power of those great companies of ministers, who

in so many hundred places would have a judicature supreme in spirituals, which would be more intolerable than if they had in one province twenty thousand judges of life and death. But when the power of separation and interdiction is only in some more eminent and authorized persons, who take public cognizance of causes by solemnities of law, and exercise their power but in some rare instances, and then also for the public interest, in which, although they may be deceived, yet they are the most competent and likely judges; much of the inconvenience, which might otherwise follow, is avoided. And then it only remains that they consider, in what cases it can be a competent and a proper infliction upon sinners, to take from them that which is the means and ministry of grace and recovery; whether they have any warrant from Christ, or precedent in the apostles' practice, and how far. As for the forms and usages of the primitive church, they were hugely different, sometimes for one cause, sometimes for another. Sometimes whole churches have been excommunicated; sometimes the criminal and all his household for his offence, as it happened in the excommunication of Andronicus and Thoas, in Synesius, in the year 411.¹ Sometimes they were absolved and restored by lay-confessors, sometimes by emperors; as it happened to Eusebius of Nicomedia, and Theognis of Nice, who were absolved by Constantine from the sentence of excommunication inflicted by the Nicene fathers: and a monk did excommunicate Theodosius the younger.² So that in this there can be no certainty to make a measure and a rule.

¹ Synes. ep. 79.

² Theod. Hist. lib. v. 36. Baron. tom. 5. A. D. 425. Sect. 16.

The surest way, most agreeable to the precedents of Scripture and the analogy of the gospel, is, that 'by the word of their proper ministry' all sinners should be separate from the holy communion; that is, threatened by the words of God with damnation, and fearful temporal dangers, if themselves, knowing an unrepented sin, and a remanent affection to sin to be within them, shall dare to profane that body and blood of our Lord by so impure an address. The evil is to themselves; and if the ministers declare this powerfully, they are acquitted. But concerning other judgments or separations; the supreme power can forbid all assembling, and therefore can permit them to all, and therefore can deny them or grant them to single persons; and therefore, when he by laws makes separations in order to public benefit, they are to be obeyed. But it is not to be endured that single presbyters should upon vain pretences erect so high a tribunal and tyranny over consciences.

14. The duty of preparation that I here discourse of, is such a preparation as is a disposition to life. It is not a matter of convenience or advantage, to repent of our sins before the communion, but it is of absolute necessity; we perish if we neglect it; for we eat damnation, and Satan enters into us, not Christ. And this preparation is not the act of a day or a week; but it is a new state of life: no man that is an habitual sinner must come to this feast till he hath wholly changed his course of life. And then, according as the actions of infirmity have made less or greater invasion upon his peace and health, so are the acts of repentance to be proportioned; in which the greatness of the prevarications, their neighbourhood to death, or their fre-

quent repetition, and the conduct of a spiritual man, are to give us counsel and determination. When a ravening and hungry wolf is destitute of prey, he eats the turf, and loads his stomach with the glebe he treads on ; but as soon as he finds better food, he vomits up his first load. Our secular and sensual affections are loads of earth upon the conscience ; and when we approach to the table of the Lord to eat the bread of the elect, and to drink the wine of angels, we must reject such impure adhesions ; that holy persons, being nourished with holy symbols, may be sanctified, and receive the eternal reward of holiness.

15 But as none must come hither but they that are in the state of grace, or charity, and the love of God and their neighbours, and that the abolition of the state of sin is the necessary preparation, and is the action of years, and was not accepted as sufficient till the expiration of divers years, by the primitive discipline, and in some cases not till the approach of death ; so there is another preparation which is of less necessity, which supposes the state of grace, and that oil is burning in our lamps ; but yet it is a preparation of ornament, a trimming up the soul, a dressing the spirit with degrees and instances of piety and progresses of perfection. And it consists in setting apart some portion of our time before the communion ; that it be spent in prayer, in meditations, in renewing the vows of holy obedience, in examining our consciences, in mortifying our lesser irregularities, in devotions and actions of precise religion ; in acts of faith, of hope, of charity, of zeal, and holy desires ; in acts of eucharist or thanksgiving, of joy at the approach of so blessed opportunity, and all the

acts of virtue whatsoever, which have indefinite relation to this and to other mysteries; but yet are specially to be exercised upon this occasion, because this is the most perfect of external rites, and the most mysterious instrument of sanctification and perfection. There is no time or degree to be determined in this preparation; but they to whom much is forgiven will love much: and they who understand the excellence and holiness of the mystery, the glory of the guest that comes to inhabit, and the indecency of the closet of their hearts, by reason of the adherences of impurity, the infinite benefit then designed, and the increase of degrees, by the excellence of these previous acts of holiness, will not be too inquisitive into the necessity of circumstances and measures; but do it heartily, and devoutly, and reverently, and as much as they can, ever esteeming it necessary, that the actions of so great solemnity should by some actions of piety, attending like handmaids, be distinguished from common employments, and remarked for the principal and most solemn of religious actions. The primitive church gave the holy sacraments to infants immediately after baptism,¹ and by that act transmitted this proposition—that nothing was of absolute necessity, but innocency and purity from sin, and a being in the state of grace.² Other actions of religion are excellent additions to the dignity of the person and honour of the mystery, but they were such of which infants were not capable. The sum is this; after the greatest consociation of religious duties for preparation, no man can be suf-

¹ Clem. Rom. lib. viii. Constit. c. 20; Concil. Tolet. i. c. 11; S. Aug. ep. 23, ad Bonif et ep. 107, et lib. iv. de Trin. c. 10.

² Gennadius, lib. iii. de Eccl. Dogmat. c. 53.

ficiently worthy to communicate: let us take care that we be not unworthy, by bringing a guilt with us, or the remanent affection to a sin.

*Est gloriosus sane convictus Dei ;
Sed illi qui invitatur, non qui invisus est.*

16. When the happy hour is come in which the Lord vouchsafes to enter into us, and dwell with us, and be united with his servants, we must then do the same acts over again with greater earnestness and intention; confess the glories of God and thy own unworthiness; praise his mercy with ecstasy of thanksgiving and joy; make oblation of thyself, of all thy faculties and capacities; pray, and read, and meditate, and worship: and that thou mayest more opportunely do all this, rise early to meet the bridegroom, pray for special assistance, enter into the assembly of faithful people cheerfully, attend there diligently, demean thyself reverently, and before any other meat or drink, receive the body of thy Saviour with pure hands, with holy intention, with a heart full of joy, and faith, and hope, and wonder, and eucharist. These things I therefore set down irregularly and without method, because in these actions no rule can be given to all persons; and only such a love and such a religion in general is to be recommended, which will overrun the banks, and not easily stand confined within the margin of rules and artificial prescriptions. Love and religion are boundless; and all acts of grace relating to the present mystery are fit and proportioned entertainments of our Lord. This only remember, that we are by the mystery of one bread confederated into one body, and the communion of saints; and that the sacrifice which we then com-

memorate was designed by our Lord for the benefit of all his church: let us be sure to draw all faithful people into the society of the present blessing, joining with the holy man that ministers in prayers and offerings of that mystery for the benefit of all sorts of men of Christ's catholic church: and it were also an excellent act of Christian communion, and agreeable to the practice of the church in all ages, to make an oblation to God for the poor; that as we are fed by Christ's body, so we also should feed Christ's body, making such returns as we can—a grain of frankincense in exchange for a province, an act of duty and Christian charity as eucharistical for the present grace, that all the body may rejoice and glory in the salvation of the Lord.

17. After thou hast received that pledge of immortality and antepast of glory, even the Lord's body in a mystery, leave not thy Saviour there alone, but attend him with holy thoughts and colloquies of prayer and eucharist. It was sometime counted infamous for a woman to entertain a second love, till the body of her dead husband was dissolved into ashes, and disappeared in the form of a body: and it were well, that so long as the consecrated symbols remain within us, according to common estimate, we should keep the flame bright, and the perfume of an actual devotion burning, that our communion be not a transient act, but a permanent and lasting intercourse with our Lord: but in this every man best knows his own opportunities and necessities of diversion. I only commend earnestly to practice, that every receiver should make a recollection of himself, and the actions of the day; that he improve it to the best advantage; that he

show unto our Lord all the defects of his house, all his poverty and weaknesses: and this let every man do by such actions and devotions which he can best attend, and himself, by the advice of a spiritual man, finds of best advantage. I would not make the practice of religion, especially in such irregular instances, to be an art, or a burden, or a snare to scrupulous persons. What St. Paul said in the case of charity, I say also in this: 'He that sows plentifully shall reap plentifully; and he that sows sparingly shall gather at the same rate: let every man do as himself purposeth in his heart.' Only it were well in this sacrament of love we had some correspondency, and proportionable returns of charity and religious affections.

18. Some religious persons have moved a question, whether it were better to communicate often or seldom: some thinking it more reverence to those holy mysteries to come but seldom; while others say, it is greater religion or charity to come frequently: but I suppose this question does not differ much from a dispute, whether is better to pray often, or to pray seldom. For whatsoever is commonly pretended against a frequent communion, may in its proportion object against a solemn prayer; remanent affection to a sin, enmity with neighbours, secular avocations to the height of care and trouble; for these either are great undecencies in order to a holy prayer, or else are direct irregularities, and unhallow the prayer: and the celebration of the holy sacrament is in itself and its own formality a sacred, solemn, and ritual prayer, in which we invoke God by the merits of Christ, expressing that adjuration not only in words, but in actual representment and commemoration of his

passion: and if the necessities of the church were well considered, we should find, that a daily sacrifice of prayer and a daily prayer of sacrifice were no more but what her condition requires: and I would to God the governors of churches would take care, that the necessities of kings and kingdoms, of churches and states, were represented to God by the most solemn and efficacious intercessions; and Christ hath taught us none greater than the praying in the virtue and celebration of his sacrifice. And this is the counsel that the church received from Ignatius: "Hasten frequently to approach the eucharist, the glory of God: for when this is daily celebrated, we break the powers of Satan, who turns all his actions into hostilities and darts of fire." But this concerns the ministers of religion, who living in communities and colleges, must make religion the business of their lives, and support kingdoms, and serve the interest of kings by the prayer of a daily sacrifice. And yet in this ministry the clergy may serve their own necessary affairs, if the ministration be divided into courses, as it was by the economy and wisdom of Solomon for the temple.

19. But concerning the communion of secular and lay persons, the consideration is something different. St. Austin gave this answer to it: "To receive the sacrament every day I neither praise nor reprove: at least let them receive it every Lord's day."¹ And this he spake to husbandmen and merchants. At the first commencement of Christianity, while the fervours apostolical, and the calentures of infant Christendom did last, the whole

¹ Gennadius. c. 54. De Eccl. Dogmat.

assembly of faithful people communicated every day ; and this lasted in Rome and Spain until the time of St. Jerome :¹ concerning which diligence he gives the same censure which I now recited from St. Austin ; for it suffered inconvenience by reason of a declining piety, and the intervening of secular interests. But then it came to once a week ; and yet that was not every where strictly observed : but that it be received once every fortnight, St. Jerome counsels very strongly to Eustochium, a holy virgin : “ Let the virgins confess their sins twice every month, or oftener ; and being fortified with the communion of the Lord’s body, let them manfully fight against the devil’s forces and attempts.” Awhile after it came to once a month, then once a year ; then it fell from that too ; till all the Christians in the west were commanded to communicate every Easter, by the decree of a great council, about five hundred years since.² But the church of England, finding that too little, hath commanded all her children to receive thrice every year at least, intending that they should come oftener ; but of this she demands an account. For it hath fared with this sacrament as with other actions of religion, which have descended from flames to still fires, from fires to sparks, from sparks to embers, from embers to smoke, from smoke to nothing. And although the public declension of piety is such, that in this present conjuncture of things it is impossible men should be reduced to a daily communion ; yet that they are to communicate frequently is so a duty, that as no excuse but impossibility can make the

¹ Epist. 80, ad Lucinum. ² Concil. Lat.

omission innocent, so the loss and consequent want is infinite and invaluable.

20. For the holy communion being a remembrance and sacramental repetition of Christ's passion, and the application of his sacrifice to us and the whole catholic church; as they who seldom communicate, delight not to remember the passion of our Lord, and sin against his very purpose, and one of the designs of institution; so he cares not to receive the benefits of the sacrifice who so neglects their application, and reducing them to actual profit and reception. "Whence came the sanctimony of the primitive Christians? whence came their strict observation of the divine commandments? whence was it that they persevered in holy actions with hope and an unwearied diligence? from whence did their despising worldly things come, and living with common possession, and the distributions of an universal charity? Whence came these and many other excellencies, but from a constant prayer, and a daily eucharist? They who every day represented the death of Christ, every day were ready to die for Christ." It was the discourse of an ancient and excellent person. And if we consider this sacrament is intended to unite the spirits and affections of the world, and that it is diffusive and powerful to this purpose, ('for we are one body,' saith St. Paul, 'because we partake of one bread,') possibly we may have reason to say, that the wars of kingdoms, the animosity of families, the infinite multitude of lawsuits, the personal hatreds, and the universal want of charity, which hath made the world miserable and wicked, may in a great degree be attributed to the neglect of this great symbol and instrument

of charity. The chalice of the sacrament is called by St. Paul, 'the cup of blessing:' and if children need every day to beg blessing of their parents, if we also thirst not after this cup of blessing, blessing may be far from us. It is called, 'the communication of the blood of Christ;' and it is not imaginable that man should love heaven, or felicity, or his Lord, that desires not perpetually to bathe in that salutary stream, the blood of the holy Jesus, the immaculate Lamb of God.

21. But I find that the religious fears of men are pretended a colour to excuse this irreligion. Men are wicked, and not prepared; and busy, and full of cares and affairs of the world, and cannot come with due preparation; and therefore better not come at all. Nay, men are not ashamed to say, they are at enmity with certain persons, and therefore cannot come. 1. Concerning those persons who are unprepared, because they are in a state of sin or uncharitableness; it is true, they must not come: but this is so far from excusing their not coming, that they increase their sin, and secure misery to themselves, because they do not 'lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset them,' that they may come to the marriage-supper. It is as if we should excuse ourselves from the duties of charity, by saying we are uncharitable; from giving alms, by saying we are covetous; from chastity, by saying we are lascivious. To such men it is just that they graze with the goats, because they refuse to wash their hands, that they may come to the supper of the Lamb. 2. Concerning those that pretend cares and incumbrances of the world: if their affairs make sin

and impure affections to stick upon them, they are in the first considerations; but if their office be necessary, just or charitable, they imitate Martha, and choose the less perfect part, when they neglect the offices of religion for duties economical. 3. But the other sort have more pretence and fairer virtue in their outside. They suppose, like the Persian princes, the seldomer such mysterious rites are seen, the more reverence we shall have, and they the more majesty; and they are fearful lest the frequent attraction of them should make us less to value the great earnest of our redemption and immortality. It is a pious consideration, but not becoming them. For it cannot be that the sacrament be undervalued by frequent reception, without the great unworthiness of the persons so turning God's grace into lightness, and loathing manna: nay, it cannot be without an unworthy communication; for he that receives worthily increases in the love of God and religion, and the fires of the altar are apt to kindle our sparks into a flame. And when Christ our Lord enters into us, and we grow weary of him, or less fond of his frequent entrance and perpetual cohabitation, it is an infallible sign we have let his enemy in or are preparing for it. For this is the difference between secular and spiritual objects, nothing in this world hath any pleasure in it long beyond the hope of it; for the possession and enjoyment is found so empty, that we grow weary of it: but whatsoever is spiritual, and in order to God, is less before we have it, but in the fruition it swells our desires, and enlarges the appetite, and makes us more receptive and forward in the entertainment. And therefore those acts of religion that set us forward

in time, and backward in affection, do declare that we have not well done our duty, but have communicated unworthily: so that the mending of our fault will answer the objection. Communicate with more devotion, and repent with greater contrition, and walk with more caution, and pray more earnestly, and meditate diligently, and receive with reverence and godly fear; and we shall find our affections increase together with the spiritual emolument: ever remembering that pious and wise advice of St. Ambrose, "Receive every day, that which may profit thee every day; but he that is not disposed to receive it every day, is not fit to receive it every year."¹

22. And if after all diligence it be still feared that a man is not well prepared, I must say that it is a scruple, that is, a trouble beyond a doubt, and without reason, next to superstition and the dreams of religion: and it is nourished by imagining that no duty is accepted, if it be less than perfection; and that God is busied in heaven, not only to destroy the wicked, and dash in pieces vessels of dishonour, but to 'break a bruised reed' in pieces, and to cast the smoking flax into the flames of hell.² In opposition to which we must know, that nothing makes us unprepared but an evil conscience, a state of sin, or a deadly act: but the lesser infirmities of our life, against which we daily strive, and for which we never have any kindness or affections, are not spots in these feasts of charity, but instruments of humility, and stronger

¹ De Sacram. lib. v. c. 4.

² St. Chrysostom says, "That a pure conscience only determines the fitness of the time for our approaching the Lord's table.

invitations to come to those rites which are ordained for corroboratives against infirmities of the soul, and for the growth of the spirit in the strengths of God. For those other acts of preparation which precede and accompany the duty, the better and more religiously they are done, they are indeed of more advantage, and honorary to the sacrament: yet he that comes in the state of grace, though he takes the opportunity upon a sudden offer, sins not. And in such indefinite duties, whose degrees are not described, it is good counsel to do our best; but it is ill to make them instruments of scruple, as if it were essentially necessary to do that in the greatest height, which is only intended for advantage and the fairer accommodation of the mystery. But these very acts, if they be esteemed necessary preparations to the sacrament, are the greatest arguments in the world that it is best to communicate often; because the doing of that which must suppose the exercise of so many graces, must needs promote the interest of religion, and dispose strongly to habitual graces by our frequent and solemn repetition of the acts. It is necessary that every communicant be first examined concerning the state of his soul, by himself or his superior; and that very scrutiny is in admirable order towards the reformation of such irregularities which time and temptation, negligence and incuriousness, infirmity or malice, have brought into the secret regions of our will and understanding. Now although this examination be therefore enjoined, that no man should approach to the holy table in the state of ruin and reprobation; and that therefore it is an act not of direct preparation, but an inquiry whether we be prepared or no;

yet this very examination will find so many little irregularities, and so many great imperfections, that it will appear the more necessary to repair the breaches and lesser ruins by such acts of piety and religion; because every communication is intended to be a nearer approach to God, a further step in grace, a progress towards glory, and an instrument of perfection; and therefore, upon the stock of our spiritual interests, for the purchase of a greater hope, and the advantages of a growing charity, ought to be frequently performed. I end with the words of a pious and learned person: "It is a vain fear and an imprudent reverence, that procrastinates and defers going to the Lord that calls them:"¹ they deny to go to the fire, pretending they are cold; and refuse physic, because they need it.

THE PRAYER.

O blessed and eternal Jesus, who gavest thyself a sacrifice for our sins, thy body for our spiritual food, thy blood to nourish our spirits, and to quench the flames of hell and lust, who didst so love us, who were thine enemies, that thou desiredst to reconcile us to thee, and becamest all one with us, that we may live the same life, think the same thoughts, love the same love, and be partakers of thy resurrection and immortality; open every window of my soul, that I may be full of light, and may see the excellency of thy love, the merits of thy sacrifice, the bitterness of thy passion, the glories and virtues of the mysterious sacrament. Lord, let me ever hunger and thirst after this instrument of righteousness; let me have no gust or relish of the unsatisfying delights of things below, but let my soul dwell in thee: let me for ever receive thee spiritually, and very frequently communicate with thee sacramentally, and imitate thy virtues piously and strictly, and dwell in the pleasures of

¹ Joan. Gerson. in *Magnifica*.

thy house eternally. Lord, thou hast prepared a table for me, against them that trouble me. Let that holy sacrament of the eucharist be to me a defence and shield, a nourishment and medicine, life and health, a means of sanctification and spiritual growth; that I, receiving the body of my dearest Lord, may be one with his mystical body, and of the same spirit, united with indissoluble bands of a strong faith, and a holy hope, and a never-failing charity; that from this veil I may pass into the visions of eternal clarity, from eating thy body to beholding thy face in the glories of thy everlasting kingdom, O blessed and eternal Jesus. Amen.

Considerations upon the Accidents happening on the Vespers of the Passion.

I. WHEN Jesus had supped, and sang a hymn, and prayed, and exhorted, and comforted his disciples with a farewell-sermon, in which he repeated such of his former precepts which were now apposite to the present condition, and reinforced them with proper and pertinent arguments, he went over the brook Cedron, and entered into a garden, and into the prologue of his passion; choosing that place for his agony and satisfactory pains, in which the first scene of human misery was represented, and where he might best attend the offices of devotion preparatory to his death. Besides this, he therefore departed from the house, that he might give opportunity to his enemies' surprise, and yet not incommode the good man, by whose hospitality they had eaten the paschal lamb. So that he went like a lamb to the slaughter, to the garden as to a prison; as if by an agreement with his persecutors he had expected their arrest, and stayed there to prevent their further inquiry: for

so great was his desire to pay our ransom, that himself did assist, by a forward patience and active opportunity towards the persecution : teaching us, that by an active zeal and a ready spirit we assist the designs of God's glory, though in our own sufferings and secular infelicities.

2. When he entered the garden, he left his disciples at the entrance of it, calling with him only Peter, James, and John : ' he withdrew himself from the rest about a stone's cast, and began to be exceeding heavy.' He was not sad till he had called them, (for his sorrow began when he pleased :) which sorrow he also chose to represent to those three who had seen his transfiguration, the earnest of his future glory, that they might see of how great glory for our sakes he disrobed himself ; and that they also might, by the confronting those contradictory accidents, observe, that God uses to dispense his comforts, the irradiations and emissions of his glory, to be preparatives to those sorrows with which our life must be allayed and seasoned ; that none should refuse to partake of the sufferings of Christ, if either they have already felt his comforts, or hope hereafter to wear his crown : and it is not ill-observed, that St. Peter, being the chief of the apostles, and doctor of the circumcision, St. John, being a virgin, and St. James, the first of the apostles that was martyred, were admitted to Christ's greatest retirements and mysterious secrecies, as being persons of so singular and eminent dispositions, to whom, according to the pious opinion of the church, especial coronets are prepared in heaven ; besides the great crown of righteousness, which in common shall beautify the heads of all the saints : meaning this, that doctors,

virgins, and martyrs, shall receive, even for their very state of life and accidental graces, more eminent degrees of accidental glory; like as the sun, reflecting upon a limpid fountain, receives its rays doubled, without any increment of its proper and natural light.

3. Jesus began to be exceeding sorrowful, to be sore amazed, and sad even to death. And because he was now to suffer the pains of our sins, there began his passion, whence our sins spring. From an evil heart and a prevaricating spirit all our sins arise: and in the spirit of Christ began his sorrow; where he truly felt the full value and demerit of sin, which we think not worthy of a tear or a hearty sigh; but he groaned and fell under the burden. But therefore he took upon him this sadness, that our imperfect sorrow and contrition might be heightened in his example, and accepted in its union and confederacy with his. And Jesus still designed a further mercy for us; for he sanctified the passion of fear, and hallowed natural sadnesses, that we might not think the infelicities of our nature, and the calamities of our temporal condition to become criminal, so long as they make us not omit a duty, nor dispose us to the election of a crime, nor force us to swallow a temptation, nor yet to exceed the value of their impulsive cause. He that grieves for the loss of friends, and yet had rather lose all the friends he hath than lose the love of God, hath the sorrow of our Lord for his precedent. And he that fears death, and trembles at its approximation, and yet had rather die again than sin once, hath not sinned in his fear; Christ hath hallowed it, and the necessitous

condition of his nature is his excuse. But it were highly to be wished, that in the midst of our caresses and levities of society; in our festivities and triumphal merriments, when we laugh at folly and rejoice in sin, we would remember, that for those very merriments our blessed Lord felt a bitter sorrow; and not one vain and sinful laughter, but cost the holy Jesus a sharp pang and throe of passion.

4. Now that the holy Jesus began to taste the bitter cup, he betook him to his great antidote, which himself, the great physician of our souls, prescribed to all the world to cure their calamities, and to make them pass from miseries into virtue, that so they may arrive at glory. He prays to his heavenly Father; he kneels down, and not only so, but falls flat upon the earth, and would in humility and fervent adoration have descended low as the centre: he prays with an intention great as his sorrow, and yet with a dereliction so great, and a conformity to the divine will so ready, as if it had been the most indifferent thing in the world for him to be delivered to death, or from it: for though his nature did decline death, as that which hath a natural horror and contradiction to the present interest of its preservation, yet when he looked upon it as his heavenly Father had put it in the order of redemption of the world, it was that baptism which he was straitened till he had accomplished. And now there is not in the world any condition of prayer which is essential to the duty, or any circumstances of advantage to its performance, but were centred in this one instance; humility of spirit, lowliness of deportment, importunity of de-

sire, a fervent spirit, a lawful matter, resignation to the will of God, great love, the love of a son to his father, (which appellative was the form of his address,) perseverance, (he went thrice, and prayed the same prayer.) It was not long, and it was so retired as to have the advantages of a sufficient solitude and opportune recollection; for he was withdrawn from the most of his disciples: and yet not so alone as to lose the benefit of communion, for Peter and the two Boanerges were near him. Christ in this prayer, which was the most fervent that he ever made on earth, intending to transmit to all the world a precedent of devotion to be transcribed and imitated; that we should cast all our cares and empty them in the bosom of God, being content to receive such a portion of our trouble back again, which he assigns us for our spiritual emolument.

5. The holy Jesus having in a few words poured out torrents of innocent desires, was pleased still to interrupt his prayer that he might visit his charge, that little flock which was presently after to be scattered: he was careful of them in the midst of his agonies;—they in his sufferings were fast asleep. He awakens them, gives them command to watch and pray; that is, to be vigilant in the custody of their senses, and observant of all accidents, and to pray that they may be strengthened against all incursions of enemies and temptations; and then returns to prayer; and so a third time, his devotion still increasing with his sorrow. And when his prayer was full, and his sorrow come to a great measure, after the third, God sent his ‘angel to comfort him:’ and by that act of grace then only expressed, hath taught us to continue our devotions

so long as our needs last. It may be God will not send a comforter till the third time; that is, after a long expectation, and a patient sufferance, and a lasting hope: in the interim God supports us with a secret hand, and in his own time will refresh the spirit with the visitations of his angels, with the emissions of comfort from the Spirit, the Comforter. And know this also, that the holy angel, and the Lord of all the angels, stands by every holy person when he prays: and although he draws before his glories the curtain of a cloud, yet in every instant he takes care we shall not perish, and in a just season dissolves the cloud, and makes it to distil in holy dew, and drops sweet as manna, pleasant as nard, and wholesome as the breath of heaven. And such was the consolation which the holy Jesus received by the ministry of the angel,¹ representing to Christ, the Lord of the angels, how necessary it was that he should die for the glory of God; that in his passion, his justice, wisdom, goodness, power, and mercy should shine; that unless he died all the world should perish, but his blood should obtain their pardon; and that it should open the gates of heaven, repair the ruin of angels, establish a holy church, be productive of innumerable adoptive children to his Father, whom himself should make heirs of glory; and that his passion should soon pass away—his Father hearing and granting his prayer, that the cup should pass speedily, though indeed it should

¹ Confortatus est, sed tali confortatione quæ dolorem non minuit, sed magis auxit; confortatus enim est ex fructus magnitudine, non subtracta doloris amaritudine. Beda in Luc. 22.—
“He was comforted with a consolation which diminished not, but rather augmented his pain; for he was comforted by the greatness of the result, the bitterness of the grief remaining.”

pass through him; that it should be attended and followed with a glorious resurrection, with eternal rest and glory of his humanity, with the exaltation of his name, with a supreme dominion over all the world, and that his Father should make him King of kings, and Prince of the catholic church. These, or whatsoever other comforts the angel ministered, were such considerations which the holy Jesus knew, and the angel knew not but by communication from that God to whose assumed humanity the angel spake; yet he was pleased to receive comfort from his servant, just as God receives glory from his creatures, and as he rejoices in his own works, even because he is good and gracious, and is pleased so to do; and because himself had caused a voluntary sadness to be interposed between the habitual knowledge and the actual consideration of these discourses. And we feel a pleasure when a friendly hand lays upon our wound the plaister which ourselves have made, and applies such instruments and considerations of comfort which we have in notion and an ineffective habit, but cannot reduce them to act, because no man is so apt to be his own comforter: which God hath therefore permitted, that our need should be the occasion of a mutual charity.

6. It was a great season for the angel's coming, because it was a great necessity which was incumbent upon our Lord: for his sadness and his agony was so great, mingled and compounded of sorrow and zeal, fear and desire, innocent nature and perfect grace, that he sweat drops as great as if the blood had started through little undiscerned fontinels, and outrun the streams and

rivers of his cross. Euthymius¹ and Theophylact² say, that the evangelists use this as a tragical expression of the greatest agony, and an unusual sweat; it being usual to call the tears of the greatest sorrow 'tears of blood.' But from the beginning of the church it hath been more generally apprehended literally, and that some blood, mingled with the serous substance, issued from his veins in so great abundance that they moistened the ground and bedecked his garment, which stood like a new firmament studded with stars, portending an approaching storm. Now 'he came from Bozrah with his garments red and bloody.' And this agony verified, concerning the holy Jesus, those words of David: 'I am poured out like water, my bones are dispersed, my heart in the midst of my body is like melting wax,' saith Justin Martyr.³ Venerable Bede saith, that the descending of these drops of blood upon the earth, besides the general purpose, had also a particular relation to the present infirmities of the apostles; that our blessed Lord obtained of his Father, by the merits of those holy drops, mercies and special support for them; and that effusion redeemed them from the present participation of death.⁴ And St. Austin meditates, that the body of our Lord, all overspread with drops of bloody sweat, did prefigure the future state of martyrs; and that his body mystical should be clad in a red garment variegated with the symbols of labour and passion, sweat and blood; by which

¹ In cap. 24. Matt.

² In 22 Lucæ.

³ Justin. Mart. Dial. Tryph. Athanas. lib. vi. de Beat. filii Dei. Aug. lib. vi. c. 5. de Consecr. Evang. Hier. lib. de Trad. Heb. Iren. lib. iv. c. 31. contra hæres. Idem aiunt Dionys. Alex. Aymonius, Epiphani et alii.

⁴ Lib. vi. in Luc.

himself was pleased to purify his church, and present her to God holy and spotless. What collateral designs and tacit significations might be designed by this mysterious sweat I know not: certainly it was a sad beginning of a most dolorous passion. And such griefs, which have so violent, permanent, and sudden effects upon the body, which is not of a nature symbolical to interior and immaterial causes, are proclaimed by such marks to be high and violent. We have read of some persons, that the grief and fear of one night hath put a cover of snow upon their heads, as if the labours of thirty years had been extracted, and the quintessence drank off in the passion of that night. But if nature had been capable of a greater or more prodigious impress of passion than a bloody sweat, it must needs have happened in this agony of the holy Jesus, in which he undertook a grief great enough to make up the imperfect contrition of all the saints, and to satisfy for the impenitencies of all the world.

7. By this time the traitor Judas was arrived at Gethsemane; and being in the vicinage of the garden, Jesus rises from his prayers, and first calls his disciples from their sleep, and by an irony seems to give them leave to sleep on, but reproves their drowsiness when danger is so near, and bids them 'henceforth take their rest;' meaning, if they could for danger, which was now indeed come to the garden doors. But the holy Jesus, that it might appear he undertook the passion with choice and a free election, not only refused to fly, but called his apostles to rise, that they might meet his murderers, who came to him with swords and staves, as if they were to surprise a prince of armed outlaws.

whom without force they could not reduce. So also might butchers do well to go armed, when they are pleased to be afraid of lambs, by calling them lions. Judas only discovered his Master's retirements, and betrayed him to the opportunities of an armed band; for he could not accuse his Master of any word or private action, that might render him obnoxious to suspicion or the law: for such are the rewards of innocence and prudence, that the one secures against sin, the other against suspicion and appearances.

8. The holy Jesus had accustomed to receive every of his disciples, after absence, with entertainment of a kiss, which was the endearment of persons, and the expression of the oriental civility: and Judas was confident that his Lord would not reject him, whose feet he had washed at the time when he foretold this event, and therefore had agreed to signify him by this sign; and did so, beginning war with a kiss, and breaking the peace of his Lord by the symbol of kindness. Which because Jesus entertained with much evenness and charitable expressions, calling him 'friend,' he gave evidence, that if he retained civilities to his greatest enemies, in the very acts of hostility, he hath banquets, and crowns, and sceptres for his friends, that adore him with the kisses of charity, and love him with the sincerity of an affectionate spirit. But our blessed Lord, besides his essential sweetness and serenity of spirit, understood well how great benefits himself and all the world were to receive by occasion of that act

" Judas: and our greatest enemy does by accident to holy persons the offices of their dearest friends; telling us our faults without a cloak to cover their deformities, but out of malice laying open the cir-

circumstances of aggravation, doing us affronts from whence we have an instrument of our patience, and restraining us from scandalous crimes, lest we become 'a scorn and reproof to them that hate us.' And it is none of God's least mercies that he permits enmities amongst men, that animosities and peevishness may reprove more sharply, and correct with more severity and simplicity, than the gentle hands of friends, who are apter to bind our wounds up, than to discover them and make them smart. But they are to us an excellent probation how friends may best do the offices of friends, if they would take the plainness of enemies in accusing, and still mingle it with the tenderness and good affections of friends. But our blessed Lord called Judas, 'friend,' as being the instrument of bringing him to glory, and all the world to pardon, if they would.

9. Jesus himself begins the inquiry, and leads them into their errand, and tells them he was Jesus of Nazareth whom they sought. But this also, which was an answer so gentle, had in it a strength greater than the eastern wind or the voice of thunder: for God was in that still voice, and it struck them down to the ground. And yet they, and so do we, still persist to persecute our Lord, and to provoke the eternal God, who can with the breath of his mouth, with a word or a sign, or a thought, reduce us into nothing, or into a worse condition, even an eternal duration of torments, and cohabitation with a never-ending misery. And if we cannot bear a soft answer of the merciful God, how shall we dare to provoke the wrath of the almighty Judge? But in this instance there was a rare mixture of effects, as there was in

Christ of natures; the voice of a man, and the power of God. For it is observed by the doctors of the primitive ages, that from the nativity of our Lord to the day of his death, the divinity and humanity did so communicate in effects, that no great action passed, but it was like the sun shining through a cloud, or a beauty with a thin veil drawn over it, they gave illustration and testimony to each other.¹ The holy Jesus was born a tender and a crying infant; but is adored by the magi as a king, by the angels as their God. He is circumcised as a man; but a name is given him to signify him to be the Saviour of the world. He flies into Egypt like a distressed child under the conduct of his helpless parents; but as soon as he enters the country, the idols fall down and confess his true divinity. He is presented in the temple as the son of man; but by Simeon and Anna he is celebrated with divine praises for the Messiah, the Son of God. He is baptized in Jordan as a sinner; but the Holy Ghost descending upon him proclaimed him to be the well-beloved of God. He is hungry in the desert as a man; but sustained his body without meat and drink for forty days together by the power of his divinity. There he is tempted of Satan as a weak man; and the angels of light minister unto him as their supreme Lord. And now, a little before his death, when he was to take upon him all the affronts, miseries and exinanitions of the most miserable, he receives testimonies from above, which are most wonderful: for he was transfigured upon Mount Tabor, entered triumphantly into Jerusalem, had the acclamations

¹ S. Cyril. S. Athanas. S. Leo, &c.

of the people; when he was dying, he darkened the sun; when he was dead, he opened the sepulchres; when he was fast nailed to the cross, he made the earth to tremble; now, when he suffers himself to be apprehended by a guard of soldiers, he strikes them all to the ground only by replying to their answer, that the words of the prophet might be verified: 'Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore they shall know in that day, that I am he that doth speak, behold it is I.'

10. The soldiers and servants of the Jews having recovered from their fall, and risen by the permission of Jesus, still persisted in their inquiry after him, who was present, ready, and desirous to be sacrificed. He therefore permitted himself to be taken, but not his disciples; for he it was that set them their bounds; and he secured his apostles to be witnesses of his sufferings and his glories; and this work was the redemption of the world, in which no man could have an active share, he alone was to tread the wine-press; and time enough they should be called to a fellowship of sufferings.* But Jesus went to them, and they bound him with cords: and so began our liberty and redemption from slavery and sin, and cursings and death. But he was bound faster by bands of his own; his Father's will, and mercy, pity of the world, prophecies, and mysteries, and love held him fast. and these cords were as strong as death; and the cords which the soldiers' malice put upon his holy hands were but symbols and figures, his own compassion and affection were the morals. But yet he undertook this short restraint and condition of

* *Isaiah*, lii. 6.

† *S. Cyril*.

a prisoner, that all sorts of persecution and exterior calamities might be hallowed by his susception, and these pungent sorrows should like bees sting him, and leave their sting behind, that all the sweetness should remain for us. Some melancholic devotions have from uncertain stories added sad circumstances of the first violence done to our Lord; that they bound him with three cords, and that with so much violence, that they caused blood to start from his tender hands; that they spat then also upon him with a violence and incivility like that which their fathers had used towards Hur, the brother of Aaron, whom they choked with impure spittings into his throat, because he refused to consent to the making a golden calf. These particulars are not transmitted by certain records. Certain it is, they wanted no malice, and now no power; for the Lord had given himself into their hands.

11. St. Peter, seeing his Master thus ill used, asked, 'Master, shall we strike with the sword?' and, before he had his answer, cut off the ear of Malchus. Two swords there were in Christ's family, and St. Peter bore one, either because he was to kill the paschal lamb, or, according to the custom of the country, to secure them against beasts of prey, which in that region were frequent, and dangerous in the night. But now he used it in an unlawful war: he had no competent authority; it was against the ministers of his lawful prince; and against our prince we must not draw a sword for Christ himself, himself having forbidden us. As his 'kingdom is not of this world,' so neither were his defences secular. He could have called for many legions of angels for his

guard, if he had so pleased; and we read that one angel slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand armed men in one night; and therefore it was a vast power which was at the command of our Lord; and he needs not such low auxiliaries as an army of rebels, or a navy of pirates, to defend his cause. He first lays the foundation of our happiness in his sufferings, and hath ever since supported religion by patience and suffering, and in poverty, and in all the circumstances and conjunctures of improbable causes. Fighting for religion is certain to destroy charity, but not certain to support faith. St. Peter therefore may use his keys, but he is commanded to put up his sword; and he did so; and presently he and all his fellows fairly ran away. And yet that course was much the more Christian; for though it had in it much infirmity, yet it had no malice. In the meantime the Lord was pleased to touch the ear of Malchus, and he cured it; adding to the first instance of power, in throwing them to the ground, an act of miraculous mercy, curing the wounds of an enemy made by a friend. But neither did this pierce their callous and obdurate spirits; but they led him in uncouth ways, and through the brook Cedron,¹ in which it is said the ruder soldiers plunged him, and passed upon him all the affronts and rudenesses which an insolent and cruel multitude could think of, to signify their contempt and their rage. And such is the nature of evil men, who, when they are not softened by the instruments and arguments of grace, are much hardened by them: such being the purpose of God, that either grace shall cure

¹ Psalm cx. ult.

sin, or accidentally increase it; that it shall either pardon it, or bring it to greater punishment. For so I have seen healthful medicines, abused by the incapacities of a healthless body, become fuel to a fever, and increase the distemperature from indisposition to a sharp disease, and from thence to the margin of the grave. But it was otherwise in Saul, whom Jesus threw to the ground with a more angry sound than these persecutors; but Saul rose a saint, and they persisted devils, and the grace of God distinguished the events.

THE PRAYER.

I.

O holy Jesus, make me, by thy example, to conform to the will of that eternal God who is our Father, merciful and gracious; that I may choose all those accidents which his providence hath actually disposed to me; that I may know no desires but his commands, and his will; and that, in all afflictions, I may fly thither for mercy, pardon, and support, and may wait for deliverance in such times and manners which the Father hath reserved in his own power, and graciously dispenses according to his infinite wisdom and compassion. Holy Jesus, give me the gift and spirit of prayer; and do thou, by thy gracious intercession, supply my ignorances and passionate desires and imperfect choices, procuring and giving to me such returns of favour which may support my needs, and serve the ends of religion and the spirit, which thy wisdom chooses, and thy passion hath purchased, and thy grace loves to bestow upon all thy saints and servants. Amen.

II.

Eternal God, sweetest Jesus, who didst receive Judas with the affection of a Saviour, and sufferedst him to kiss thy cheek, with the serenity and tranquillity of God; and didst permit the soldiers to bind thee, with patience exemplary to all ages of

martyrs; and didst cure the wound of thy enemy with the charity of a parent, and the tenderness of an infinite pity; O kiss me with the kisses of thy mouth, embrace me with the entertainments of a gracious Lord, and let my soul dwell and feast in thee who art the repository of eternal sweetness and refreshments. Bind me, O Lord, with those bands which tied thee fast, the chains of love; that such holy union may dissolve the cords of vanity, and confine the bold pretensions of usurping passions and imprison all extravagancies of an impertinent spirit, and lead sin captive to the dominion of grace and sanctified reason: that I also may imitate all the parts of thy holy passion, and may by thy bands get my liberty, by thy kiss enkindle charity, by the touch of thy hand and the breath of thy mouth have all my wounds cured and restored to the integrity of a holy penitent, and the purities of innocence; that I may love thee, and please thee, and live with thee for ever, O holy and sweetest Jesu. Amen.

*Considerations upon the Scourging and other Accidents
happening from the Apprehension till the Crucifixion of Jesus.*

1. THE house of Annas stood in the Mount Sion, and in the way to the house of Caiaphas; and thither he was led as to the first stage of their triumph for their surprise of a person so feared and desired; and there a naughty person smote the holy Jesus upon his face, for saying to Annas that he had made his doctrine public, and that all the people were able to give account of it: to whom the Lamb of God showed as much meekness and patience in his answer, as in his answer to Annas he had showed prudence and modesty: for now that they had taken Jesus, they wanted a crime to object against him, and therefore were desirous to snatch occasion from his discourses, to

which they resolved to tempt him, by questions and affronts; but his answer was general and indefinite, safe and true, enough to acquit his doctrine from suspicions of secret designs, and yet secure against their present snares; for now himself, who always had the innocence of doves, was to join with it the prudence and wariness of serpents; not to prevent death, (for that he was resolved to suffer,) but that they might be destitute of all appearance of a just cause on his part. Here it was that Judas received his money; and here, that holy face which was designed to be that object in the beholding of which much of the celestial glory doth consist; that face which the angels stare upon with wonder, like infants at a bright sun-beam, was smitten extrajudicially by an incompetent person, with circumstances of despite, in the presence of a judge, in a full assembly, and none reprov'd the insolency and the cruelty of the affront: for they resolved to use him as they use wolves and tigers, with all things that may be destructive, violent, and impious: and in this the injury was heightened, because the blow was said to be given by Malchus, an Idumean slave,¹ and therefore a contemptible person; but far more unworthy by his ingratitude; for so he repaid the holy Jesus for working a miracle, and healing his ear. But so the Scripture was fulfilled: 'He shall give his body to the smiters, and his cheeks to the nippers, saith the prophet Isaiah; and 'they shall smite the cheek of the judge of Israel,' saith Micah. And this very circumstance of the passion Lactantius

¹ Malchus Idumæis missus captivus ab oris. Vide Episc. Cremon. lib. ii. Christeidos. Isai l. 6; Micah. v. 1.

affirms to have been foretold by the Erythræan sibyl.¹ But no meekness or indifferency could engage our Lord not to protest his innocency: and though following his steps we must walk in the regions of patience, and tranquillity, and admirable toleration of injuries; yet we may represent such defences of ourselves, which by not resisting the sentence may testify that our suffering is undeserved: and if our innocency will not preserve our lives, it will advance our title to a better; and every good cause ill-judged shall be brought to another tribunal to receive a just and unerring sentence.

2. Annas having suffered this unworthy usage towards a person so excellent, sent him away to Caiaphas, who had formerly, in a full council, resolved he should die;² yet now palliating the design with the scheme of a tribunal, they seek out for witnesses, and the witnesses are to seek for allegations; and when they find them, they are to seek for proof, and those proofs were to seek for unity and consent, and nothing was ready for their purposes; but they were forced to use the semblance of a judicial process, that, because they were to make use of Pilate's authority to put him to death, they might persuade Pilate to accept of their examination and conviction, without further inquiry. But such had been the excellency and exemplary piety and prudence of the life of Jesus, that if they pretended against him questions of their law, they were not capital in a Roman court;

¹ Lib. iv. Instit. cap. 16.

² Victor. in S. Mart.

if they affirmed that he had moved the people to sedition, and affected the kingdom, they saw that all the world would convince them of false testimony. At last, after many attempts, they accused him for a figurative speech, a trope which they could not understand; which, if it had been spoken in a literal sense, and had been acted too according to the letter, had been so far from a fault that it would have been a prodigy of power; and it had been easier to raise the temple of Jerusalem, than to raise the temple of his body. In the meantime, the Lamb of God left his cause to defend itself under the protection of his heavenly Father; not only because himself was determined to die, but because if he had not, those premises could never have inferred it. But this silence of the holy Jesus fulfilled a prophecy; it made his enemies full of murmur and amazement, it made them to see that he despised the accusations as certain and apparent calumnies; but that himself was fearless of the issue, and in the sense of morality and mysteries taught us not to be too apt to excuse ourselves, when the semblance of a fault lies upon us, unless by some other duty we are obliged to our defences; since he who was most innocent was most silent: and it was expedient, that as the first Adam increased his sin by a vain apology, the silence and sufferance of the second Adam should expiate and reconcile it.

3. But Caiaphas had a reserve which he knew should do the business in that assembly; he adjured him, by God, to tell him if he were the Christ. The holy Jesus, being adjured by so sacred a name, would not now refuse an answer, lest it

might not consist with that honour which is due to it, and which he always paid; and that he might neither despise the authority of the high-priest, nor upon so solemn occasion be wanting to that great truth which he came down to earth to persuade to the world. And when three such circumstances concur, it is enough to open our mouths, though we let in death; and so did our Lord—confessed himself to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. And this the high-priest was pleased, as the design was laid, to call blasphemy; and there they voted him to die. Then it was the high-priest rent his clothes; the veil of the temple was rent when the passion was finished, the clothes of the priests at the beginning of it; and as that signified the departing of the synagogue, and laying religion open, so did the rending the garments of Caiaphas prophetically signify that the priesthood should be rent from him, and from the nation.¹ And thus the personated and theatrical admiration at Jesus became the type of his own punishment, and consigned the nation to deletion: and usually God so dispenses his judgments, that when men personate the tragedies of others, they really act their own.

4. Whilst these things were acting concerning the Lord, a sad accident happened to his servant, Peter; for being engaged in strange and evil company, in the midst of danger, surprised with a question, without time to deliberate an answer, to find subterfuges, or to fortify himself, he denied his Lord shamefully, with some boldness at first; and this grew to a licentious confidence, and then to impudence, and denying with perjury, that he knew not his Lord, who yet was known to him as

idem ait. S. Hier.

his own heart, and was dearer than his eyes, and for whom he professed, but a little before, he would die; but did not do so till many years after: but thus he became to us a sad example of human infirmity; and if the prince of the apostles fell so foully, it is full of pity, but not to be upbraided, if we see the fall of lesser stars.¹ And yet that we may prevent so great a ruin, we must not mingle with such company who will provoke or scorn us into sin; and if we do, yet we must stand upon our guard that a sudden motion do not surprise us: or if we be arrested, yet let us not enter further in our sin, like wild beasts intricating themselves by their impatience; for there are some who, being ashamed and impatient to have been engaged, take sanctuary in boldness, and a shameless abetting it; so running into the darkness of hell to hide their nakedness. But he also by returning, and rising instantly, became to us a rare example of penitence; and his not lying long in the crime did facilitate his restitution: for the Spirit of God being extinguished by our works of darkness, is like a taper, which if, as soon as the flame is blown out, it be brought to the fire, it sucks light, and without trouble is rekindled; but if it cools into death and stiffness, it requires a longer stay and trouble. The holy Jesus in the midst of his own sufferings forgot not his servant's danger, but was pleased to look upon him when the cock crew; and the cock was the preacher, and the look of Jesus was the grace that made his sermon effectual; and because he was but newly

¹ "Ὁν τρόπον αἱ σκιαί τοῖς σώμασιν ἔπονται. ἕτως αἱ ἁμαρτίαι ταῖς ψυχαῖς ἀκολουθεῖσιν. Agapet. Diac. Capit. Admonit. 69. Leo Serm. 9, de Pass. Dom. et Euthym. in hunc locum.— "In the same manner as shadows follow bodies, so do sins the soul."

fallen, and his habitual love of his Master though interrupted, yet had suffered no natural abatement, he returned with the swiftness of an eagle to the embraces and primitive affections of his Lord.

5. By this time suppose sentence given, Caiaphas prejudging all the Sanhedrim; for he first declared Jesus to have spoken blasphemy, and the fact to be notorious, and then asked their votes; which whoso then should have denied, must have contested the judgment of the high-priest, who by the favour of the Romans was advanced, (Valerius Gratus, who was president of Judea, having been his patron,) and his faction potent, and his malice great, and his heart set upon this business: all which inconveniences none of them durst have suffered, unless he had had the confidence greater than of an apostle at that time. But this sentence was but like strong dispositions to an enraged fever; he was only declared apt and worthy for death, they had no power at that time to inflict it; but yet they let loose all the fury of madmen and insolency of wounded, smarting soldiers; and although, from the time of his being in the house of Annas till the council met, they had used him with studied indignities; yet now they renewed and doubled the unmercifulness and their injustice, to so great a height that their injuries must needs have been greater than his patience, if his patience had been less than infinite. For thus man's redemption grows up as the load swells which the holy Jesus bare for us; for these were our portion, and we, having turned the flowers of paradise into thistles, should for ever have felt their infelicity, had not Jesus paid the debt. But he, bearing them upon his tender body with an even and excellent and

dispassionate spirit, offered up these beginnings of sufferings to his Father, to obtain pardon even for them that injured him, and for all the world.

6. Judas now seeing that this matter went further than he intended it, repented of his fact. For although evil persons are in the progress of their iniquity invited on by new arguments, and supported by confidence and a careless spirit; yet when iniquity is come to the height, or so great a proportion that it is apt to produce despair or an intolerable condition, then the devil suffers the conscience to thaw and grow tender, but it is the tenderness of a bile, it is soreness rather than a new disease; and either it comes when the time of repentance is past, or leads to some act which shall make the pardon to be impossible; and so it happened here. For Judas, either impatient of the shame or of the sting, was thrust on to despair of pardon, with a violence as hasty and as great as were his needs. And despair is very often used like the bolts and bars of hell-gates; it seizes upon them that had entered into the suburbs of eternal death by an habitual sin, and it secures them against all retreat. And the devil is forward enough to bring a man to repentance, provided it be too late; and Esau wept bitterly and repented him; and the five foolish virgins lift up their voice aloud when the gates were shut; and in hell men shall repent to all eternity. But I consider the very great folly and infelicity of Judas: it was at midnight he received his money in the house of Annas; betimes in that morning he repented his bargain: he threw the money back again, but his sin stuck close, and **it is thought to a sad eternity.** Such is the pur-

chase of treason and the reward of covetousness; it is cheap in its offers, momentary in its possession, unsatisfying in the fruition, uncertain in the stay, sudden in its departure, horrid in the remembrance, and a ruin, a certain and miserable ruin is in the event. When Judas came in that sad condition, and told his miserable story to them that set him on work, they let him go away unpitied: he had served their ends in betraying his Lord, and those that hire such servants use to leave them in the disaster, to shame and to sorrow; and so did the priests; but took the money, and refused to put it into the treasury, because it was 'the price of blood;' but they made no scruple to take it from the treasury to buy that blood. Any thing seems lawful that serves the ends of ambitious and bloody persons, and then they are scrupulous in their cases of conscience when nothing of interest does intervene; for evil men make religion the servant of interest; and sometimes weak men think that it is the fault of the religion, and suspect that all of it is a design, because many great politics make it so. 'The end of the tragedy was, that Judas died with an ignoble death, marked with the circumstances of a horrid judgment, and perished by the most infamous hands in the world; that is, by his own.' Which if it be confronted against the excellent spirit of St. Peter, who did an act as contradictory to his honour and the grace of God as could be easily imagined; yet taking sanctuary in the arms of his Lord, he lodged in his heart for ever, and became an example to all the world of the excellency of the divine mercy, and the

¹ S. August. de civit. Dei, lib. i. c. 17.

efficacy of a holy hope, and a hearty, timely, and an operative repentance.

7. But now all things were ready for the purpose, the high-priest and all his council go along with the holy Jesus to the house of Pilate, hoping he would verify their sentence, and bring it to execution, that they might once be rid of their fears, and enjoy their sin and their reputation quietly. St. Basil affirms, that the high-priest caused the holy Jesus to be led with a cord about his neck; and in memory of that, the priests for many ages wore a stole about theirs.¹ But the Jews did it according to the custom of the nation, to signify he was condemned to death: they desired Pilate that he would crucify him, they having found him worthy. And when Pilate inquired into the particulars, they gave him a general and indefinite answer; ‘If he were not guilty, we would not have brought him unto thee:’ they intended not to make Pilate judge of the cause, but executor of their cruelty. But Pilate had not learned to be guided by an implicit faith of such persons, which he knew to be malicious and violent; and therefore still called for instances and arguments of their accusation. And that all the world might see with how great unworthiness they prosecuted the Messiah, they chiefly there accused him of such crimes upon which themselves condemned him not, and which they knew to be false, but yet likely to move Pilate, if he had been passionate or inconsiderate in his sentences; ‘he offered to make himself a king.’ This discourse happened at the entry of the Prætorium; for the Jews, who had no cou-

¹ In Mystagog. Eccles. Autho. Com. in Marc. apud. S. Hieron.

science of killing the King of heaven, made a conscience of the external customs and ceremonies of their law, which had in them no interior sanctity, which were apt to separate them from the nations, and remark them with characters of religion and abstraction: it would defile them to go to a Roman forum, where a capital action was to be judged; and yet the effusion of the best blood in the world was not esteemed against their religion; so violent and blind is the spirit of malice, which turns humanity into cruelty, wisdom into craft, diligence into subornation, and religion into superstition.

8. Two other articles they alleged against him; but the first concerned not Pilate, and the second was involved in the third, and therefore he chose to examine him upon this only, of his being a king. To which the holy Jesus answered, that it is true he was a king indeed, but 'not of this world;' his throne is heaven, the angels are his courtiers, and the whole creation are his subjects: his regiment is spiritual, his judicatories are the courts of conscience and church tribunals, and at doomsday, the clouds: the tribute which he demands are conformity to his laws, faith, hope, and charity; no other gabels but the duties of a holy spirit, and the expresses of a religious worship, and obedient will, and a consenting understanding. And in all this Pilate thought the interest of Cæsar was not invaded. For certain it is, the discipline of Jesus confirmed it much, and supported it by the strongest pillars. And here Pilate saw how impertinent and malicious their accusation was. And we who declaim against the unjust proceedings of the Jews against our dearest Lord, should do well to take care that we, in accusing any

of our brethren either with malicious purpose, or with an uncharitable circumstance, do not commit the same fault which in them we so hate and accuse. Let no man speak any thing of his neighbour but what is true. And yet if the truth be heightened by the biting rhetoric of a satirical spirit, extended and drawn forth in circumstances and arts of aggravation, the truth becomes a load to a guilty person, is a prejudice to the sentence of the judge, and hath not so much as the excuse of zeal, much less the charity of Christianity. Sufficient to every man is the plain story of his crime: and to excuse as much of it as we can, would better become us, who perish unless we be excused for infinite irregularities. But if we add this also, that we accuse our brethren before them that may amend them and reform their error, if we pity their persons, and do not hate them, if we seek nothing of their disgrace, and make not their shame public, but when the public is necessarily concerned, or the state of the man's sin requires it, then our accusations are charitable; but if they be not, all such accusations are accepted by Christ with as much displeasure, in proportion to the degree of the malice and the proper effect, as was this accusation of his own person.

9. But Pilate having pronounced Jesus innocent, and perceiving he was a Galilean, sent him to Herod, as being a more competent person to determine concerning one of his own jurisdiction. Herod was glad at the honour done to him, and the person brought him, being now desirous to see some miracle done before him. But the holy Jesus spake not one word there, nor did any sign; so to reprove the sottish carelessness of Herod,

who, living in the place of Jesus's abode, never had seen his person or heard his sermons. And if we neglect the opportunities of grace, and refuse to hear the voice of Christ in the time of mercy and divine appointment, we may arrive at that state of misery in which Christ will refuse to speak one word of comfort to us; and the homilies of the gospel shall be dead letters, and the spirit not at all refreshed, nor the understanding instructed, nor the affections moved, nor the will determined; but because we have, during all our time, stopped our ears, in his time God will stop his mouth, and shut up the springs of grace, that we shall receive no refreshment, or instruction, or pardon, or felicity. Jesus suffered not himself to be moved at the pertinacious accusations of the Jews, nor the desires of the tyrant, but persevered in silence, till Herod and his servants despised him and dismissed him. For so it became our high-priest, who was to sanctify all our sufferings, to consecrate affronts and scorn, that we may learn to endure contempt, and to suffer ourselves in a religious cause to be despised; and when it happens in any other, to remember that we have our dearest Lord for a precedent of bearing it with admirable simplicity and equanimity of deportment. And it is a mighty stock of self-love that dwells in our spirits, which makes us of all afflictions most impatient of this. But Jesus endured this despite, and suffered this to be added, that he was exposed, in scorn, to the boys of the streets. For Herod caused him to be arrayed in white, sent him out to be scorned by the people, and hooted at by idle persons, and so he remitted him to Pilate. And since that accident to our Lord, the church hath not undecently chose

to clothe her priests with albs or white garments ; and it is a symbolical intimation and representation of that part of the passion and affront which Herod passed upon the holy Jesus. And this is so far from deserving a reproof, that it were to be wished all the children of the church would imitate all those graces which Christ exercised when he wore that garment, which she hath taken up in ceremony and thankful memory ; that is, in all their actions and sufferings be so estranged from secular arts and mixtures of the world, so intent upon religion, and active in all its interests, so indifferent to all acts of providence, so equal in all chances, so patient of every accident, so charitable to enemies, and so undeterred by exterior events, that nothing may draw us forth from the severities of our religion, or entice us from the retirement of a recollected and sober and patient spirit, or make us to depart from the courtesies of piety, though for such adhesion and pursuit we be esteemed fools, or ignorant, or contemptible.

10. When Pilate had received the holy Jesus, and found that Herod had sent him back uncondemned, he attempted to rescue him from their malice, by making him a donative and a freed man at the petition of the people. But they preferred a murderer and a rebel, Barabbas, before him : for themselves being rebels against the King of heaven, loved to acquit persons criminal in the same kind of sin, rather than their Lord, against whom they took up all the arms that they could receive from violence and perfect malice ; ‘ desiring to have him crucified who raised the dead, and to have the other released who destroyed the living. And when Pilate saw they were set upon it he

consented, and delivered him first to be scourged ; which the soldiers executed with violence and unrelenting hands, opening his virginal body to nakedness, and tearing his tender flesh, till the pavement was purpled with a shower of holy blood.¹ It is reported in the ecclesiastical story, that when St. Agnes and St. Barbara, holy virgins and martyrs, were stripped naked to execution, God, pitying their great shame and trouble to have their nakedness discovered, made for them a veil of light, and sent them to a modest and desired death. But the holy Jesus, who chose all sorts of shame and confusion, that by a fulness of suffering he might expiate his Father's anger, and that he might consecrate to our sufferance all kind of affront and passion, endured even the shame of nakedness at the time of his scourging, suffering himself to be divested of his robes, that we might be clothed with that stole he put off. For therefore he took on him the state of sinning Adam, and became naked, that we might first be clothed with righteousness, and then with immortality.

11. After they had scourged him without remorse, ' they clothed him with purple, and crowned him with thorns, and put a cane in his hands, for a sceptre, and bowed their knees before him,' and ' saluted him ' with mockery, with a ' Hail, King of the Jews ! ' and they ' beat him,' and ' spat upon him : ' and then Pilate brought him forth, and showed this sad spectacle to the people ; hoping this might move them to compassion, who never loved to see a man prosperous, and are always troubled to see the same man in misery. But the

¹ S. Aug. tract. xv. in Joann.

earth, which was cursed for Adam's sake, and was sowed with thorns and thistles, produced the full harvest of them; and the second Adam gathered them all, and made garlands of them, as ensigns of his victory which he was now in pursuit of against sin, the grave, and hell. And we also may make our thorns, which are in themselves pungent and dolorous, to be a crown, if we bear them patiently, and unite them to Christ's passion, and offer them to his honour, and bear them in his cause, and rejoice in them for his sake. And indeed, after such a grove of thorns growing upon the head of our Lord, to see one of Christ's members soft, delicate, and effeminate, is a great indecency, next to this of seeing the Jews use the King of glory with the greatest reproach and infamy.

12. But nothing prevailing, nor the innocence of Jesus, nor his immunity from the sentence of Herod, nor the industry and diligence of Pilate, nor the misery nor the sight of the afflicted Lamb of God, at last (for so God decreed to permit it, and Christ to suffer it) Pilate gave sentence of death upon him, having first washed his hands. Of which God served his end, to declare the innocence of his Son, of which in this whole process he was most curious, and suffered not the least probability to adhere to him: yet Pilate served no end of his, nor preserved any thing of his innocence. He that rails upon a prince, and cries, Saving your honour, you are a tyrant; and he that strikes a man upon the face, and cries him mercy, and undoes him, and says it was in jest, does just like that person that sins against God, and thinks to be excused by saying it was against his conscience; that is, washing our hands when

they are stained in blood ; as if a ceremony of purification were enough to cleanse a soul from the stains of a spiritual impurity. So some refuse not to take any oath in times of persecution, and say it obliges not, because it was forced, and done against their will ; as if the doing of it were washed off by protesting against it : whereas the protesting against it declares me criminal, if I rather choose not death than that which I profess to be a sin. But all the persons which co-operated in this death, were in this life consigned to a fearful judgment after it. The Jews took the blood (which Pilate seemed to wash off) ‘ upon themselves and their children ;’ and the blood of this paschal Lamb stuck upon their forehead, and marked them, not to escape, but to fall under the sword of the destroying angel ; and they perished either by a more hasty death, or shortly after in the extirpation and miserable ruin of their nation. And Pilate who had a less share in the crime, yet had a black character of a secular judgment : for not long after he was by Vitellius, the president of Syria, sent to Rome to answer to the crimes objected against him by the Jews, whom to please he had done so much violence to his conscience ; and by Cæsar’s sentence he was banished to Vienna, deprived of all his honours, where he lived ingloriously, till, by impatience of his calamity, he killed himself with his own hand. And thus the blood of Jesus, shed for the salvation of the world, became to them a curse ; and that which purifies the saints, stuck to them that shed it, (and mingled it not with the tears of repentance,) to be a leprosy loathsome and incurable. So manna turns to worms, and the wine of angels to vinegar and lees, when it is re-

ceived into impure vessels, or tasted by wanton palates ; and the sun itself produces rats and serpents, when it reflects upon the dirt of Nilus.

THE PRAYER.

O holy and immaculate Lamb of God, who wert pleased to suffer shame and sorrow, to be brought before tribunals, to be accused maliciously, betrayed treacherously, condemned unjustly, and scourged most rudely, suffering the most severe and most unhandsome inflictions which could be procured by potent, subtle, and extremest malice ; and didst choose this out of love greater than the love of mothers, more affectionate than the tears of joy and pity dropped from the eyes of most passionate women, by these fontinels of blood issuing forth life and health and pardon upon all thine enemies ; teach me to apprehend the baseness of sin, in proportion to the greatest of those calamities which my sin made it necessary for thee to suffer, that I may hate the cause of thy sufferings, and adore thy mercy, and imitate thy charity, and copy out thy patience and humility, and love thy person to the uttermost extent and degrees of my affections. Lord, what am I, that the eternal Son of God should suffer one stripe for me ? But thy love is infinite. And how great a misery is it to provoke by sin so great a mercy, and despise so miraculous a goodness, and to do fresh despite to the Son of God ? But our sins are innumerable, and our infirmities are mighty. Dearest Jesu, pity me, for I am accused by my own conscience, and am found guilty ; I am stripped naked of my innocence, and bound fast by lust, and tormented with stripes and wounds of enraged appetites. But let thy innocence excuse me, the robes of thy righteousness clothe me, thy bondage set me free, and thy stripes heal me : that thou being my advocate, my physician, my patron, and my Lord, I may be adopted into the union of thy merits, and partake of the efficacy of thy sufferings, and be crowned as thou art, having my sins changed to virtues, and my thorns to rays of glory under thee our head, in the participation of eternity, O holy and immaculate Lamb of God. Amen.

DISCOURSE XX.

Of Death, and the due Manner of Preparation to it.

1. THE Holy Spirit of God hath in Scripture revealed to us but one way of preparing to death, and that is, by a holy life; and there is nothing in all the book of life, concerning this exercise of address to death, but such advices which suppose the dying person in a state of grace. St. James indeed counsels, that in sickness we should send for the ministers ecclesiastical, and that they 'pray over us,' and that we 'confess our sins, and they shall be forgiven;'¹ that is, those prayers are of great efficacy for the removing the sickness, and taking off that punishment of sin, and healing them in a certain degree, according to the efficacy of the ministry, and the dispositions or capacities of the sick person. But we must know that oftentimes universal effects are attributed to partial causes; because 'by the analogy of Scripture we are taught, that all the body of holy actions and ministries are to unite in production of the event, and that without that adunation one thing alone cannot operate: but because no one alone does the work, but by an united power, therefore indefinitely the effect is ascribed sometimes to one, sometimes to another; meaning, that one as much as the other, that is, all together, are to work the pardon and the grace. But the doctrine of preparation to death we are clearest taught in the parable of the ten virgins.² Those who were wise stood waiting for the coming of the bridegroom, their lamps burning; only when the

¹ Jam. v. 14, &c.² Matt. xxv.

Lord was at hand, the notice of his coming published, they trimmed their lamps ; and they, so disposed, went forth, and met him, and entered with him into his interior and eternal joys. They whose lamps did not stand ready beforehand, expecting the uncertain hour, were shut forth, and bound in darkness. ‘ Watch, therefore, (so our Lord applies and expounds the parable,) for ye know not the day nor the hour of the coming of the Son of man.’¹ Whenever the arrest of death seizes us, unless before that notice we had oil in our vessels, that is, grace in our hearts, habitual grace, (for nothing else can reside or dwell there, an act cannot inhabit or be in a vessel,) it is too late to make preparation. But they who have it, may and must prepare ; that is, they must stir the fire, trim the vessel, make it more actual in its exercise and productions, full of ornament, advantages, and degrees. And that is all we know from Scripture concerning preparation.

2. And indeed, since all our life we are dying and this minute in which I now write, death divides with me, and hath got the surer part and more certain possession, it is but reasonable that we should always be doing the offices of preparation. If to-day we were not dying, and passing on to our grave, then we might with more safety defer our work till the morrow. But as fuel in a furnace, in every degree of heat and reception of the flame, is converting into fire and ashes, and the disposing it to the last mutation, is the same work with the last instance of its change ; so is the age of every day a beginning of death, and the night composing us

¹ Matt. xiii. 25.

to sleep bids us go to our lesser rest ; because that night, which is the end of the preceding day, is but a lesser death : and whereas now we have died so many days, the last day of our life is but the dying of so many more ; and when that last day of dying will come we know not. There is nothing then added but the circumstance of sickness, which also happens many times before ; only men are pleased to call that death which is the end of dying, when we cease to die any more. And therefore to put off our preparation till that which we call death, is to put off the work of all our life, till the time comes in which it is to cease and determine.

3. But to accelerate our early endeavour, (besides what hath been formerly considered upon the proper grounds of repentance,) I here reinforce the consideration of death in such circumstances which are apt to engage us upon an early industry. First, I consider, that no man is sure that he shall not die suddenly ; and therefore, if heaven be worth securing, it were fit that we should reckon every day the vespers of death ; and therefore, that, according to the usual rites of religion, it be begun and spent with religious offices. And let us consider, that those many persons who are remarked in history to have died suddenly, either were happy by an early piety, or miserable by a sudden death. And if uncertainty of condition be an abatement of felicity, and spoils the good we possess, no man can be happy but he that hath lived well ; that is, who hath secured his condition by an habitual and living piety : for since God hath not told us we shall not die suddenly, is it not certain he intended we should prepare for sudden death, as well as against

death clothed in any other circumstances? Fabius, surnamed Pictor, was choked with a hair in a mess of milk; Anacreon with a raisin; cardinal Colonna with figs crusted with ice; Adrian the Fourth with a fly; Drusius Pompeius with a pear; Domitius Afer, Quintilian's tutor, with a full cup; Casimire the Second, king of Polonia, with a little draught of wine; Amurath with a full goblet; Tarquinius Priscus with a fish-bone. For as soon as a man is born, that which in nature only remains to him is to die: and if we differ in way or time of our abode, or the manner of our exit, yet we are even at last. And since it is not determined by a natural cause which way we shall go, or at what age, a wise man will suppose himself always upon his death-bed: and such supposition is like making of his will; he is not the nearer death for doing it, but he is the readier for it when it comes.

4. Saint Jerome said well, "He deserves not the name of a Christian, who will live in that state of life in which he will not die." And indeed it is a great venture to be in an evil state of life, because every minute of it hath a danger: and therefore a succession of actions, in every one of which he may as well perish as escape, is a boldness that hath no mixture of wisdom or probable venture. How many persons have died in the midst of an act of sport, or at a merry-meeting! Grimoaldus, a Lombard king, died with shooting of a pigeon; Thales, the Milesian, in the theatre; Lucia, the sister of Aurelius the emperor, playing with her little son, was wounded in her breast with a needle, and died. Benno, bishop of Adelburg, with great ceremony and joy consecrating St. Michael's church

was crowded to death by the people;¹ so was the duke of Saxony, at the inauguration of Albert I. The great lawyer Baldus, playing with a little dog, was bitten upon the lip, instantly grew mad, and perished. Charles the Eighth, of France, seeing certain gentlemen playing at tenniscourt, swooned, and recovered not. Henry II. was killed running at tilt. Ludovicus Borgia with riding the great horse; and the old Syracusan, Archimedes, was slain by a rude soldier, as he was making diagrams in the sand, which was his greatest pleasure. How many men have died laughing, or in the ecstasies of a great joy. Philippides the commedian, and Dionysius, the tyrant of Sicily, died with joy at the news of a victory.² Diagoras of Rhodes, and Chilo, the philosopher, expired at the embraces of their sons, crowned with an olympic laurel.³ Polycrita Naxia, being saluted the saviouress of her country;⁴ Marcus Juventius, when the senate decreed him honours; the emperor Conrade the Second, when he triumphed, after the conquest of Italy, had a joy bigger than their heart, and their fancy swelled it till they burst and died.⁵ Death can enter in at any door. Philistion of Nice died with excessive laughter; so did the poet Philemon, being provoked to it only by seeing an ass eat figs. And the number of persons who have been found suddenly dead in their beds, is so great, that as it engages many to a more certain and regular devotion for their compline, so it were well it were pursued to the utmost intention of God; that is, that all the parts of religion should with zeal and assi-

¹ Crantzius, lib. iii. c. 51. Matthiol in Dioscor.

² Plin. lib. vii. c. 53.

³ Cicer. 1. Tusc.

⁴ Plut. et. Gel. de Illust. mulier.

⁵ Cuspin.

duity be entertained and finished, that, as it becomes wise men, we never be surprised with that we are sure will some time or other happen. A great general in Italy, at the sudden death of Alfonsus of Ferrara; and Lodovico Corbinelli, at the sight of the sad accident upon Henry II. of France, now mentioned, turned religious, and they did what God intended in those deaths. It concerns us to be curious of single actions, because even in those shorter periods we may expire and find our graves. But if the state of life be contradictory to our hopes of heaven, it is like affronting of a cannon before a beleagured town a month together; it is a contempt of safety, and a rendering all reason useless and unprofitable. But he only is wise, who, having made death familiar to him by expectation and daily apprehension, does at all instants go forth to meet it. The wise virgins 'went forth to meet the bridegroom,' for they were ready. Excellent therefore is the counsel of the son of Sirach: 'Use physic or ever thou be sick. Before judgment examine thyself, and in the day of visitation thou shalt find mercy. Humble thyself before thou be sick, and in the time of sins show repentance. Let nothing hinder thee to pay thy vows in due time, and defer not until death to be justified.'

5. Secondly, I consider, that it often happens, that in those days of our last visitation, which many men design for their preparation and repentance, God hath expressed, by an exterior accident, that those persons have deceived themselves, and neglected their own salvation. St. Gregory reports of Chrysaorius, a gentleman

¹ Ecclus. xvii. 19, &c.

In the province of Valeria, rich, vicious, and witty, lascivious, covetous and proud, that being cast upon his death-bed, he fancied he saw evil spirits coming to arrest him and drag him to hell. He fell into great agony and trouble, shrieked out, called for his son, who was a very religious person, flattered him, as willing to have been rescued by any thing: but perceiving his danger increase, and growing desperate, he called loud, with repeated clamours, "Give me respite but till the morrow," and with those words he died, there being "no place left for his repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears and groans."¹ The same was the case of a drunken monk, whom venerable Bede mentions. Upon his death-bed he seemed to see hell opened, and a place assigned him near to Caiaphas and those who crucified our dearest Lord. The religious persons that stood about his bed, called on him to repent of his sins, to implore the mercies of God, and to trust in Christ: but he answered, with reason enough, "This is no time to change my life; the sentence is passed upon me, and it is too late."² And it is very considerable and sad which Petrus Damianus tells of Gunizo, a factious and ambitious person, to whom, it is said, the tempter gave notice of his approaching death; but when any man preached repentance to him, out of a strange incuriousness, or the spirit of reprobation, he seemed like a dead and unconcerned person; in all other discourses he was awake and apt to answer:³ for God had shut up the gates of mercy, that no streams should issue forth to quench the flames of hell; or else had shut up

¹ Homil. 12, in Evang. ² Lib. v. c. 15, Hist. Gent. Anglor.

³ Biblioth. Ss. Pp. tom. iii.

the gates of reception and entertainment, that it should not enter. Either God denies to give them pardon when they call, or denies to them a power to call; they either cannot pray, or God will not answer. Now since these stories are related by men, learned, pious, and eminent in their generations, and because they served no design but the ends of piety, and have in them nothing dissonant from revelation, or the frequent events of providence, we may upon their stock consider, that God's judgments and visible marks being set upon a state of life, although they happen but seldom in the instances, yet they are of universal purpose and signification. Upon all murderers God hath not thrown a thunder-bolt, nor broke all sacrilegious persons upon the wheel of an inconstant and ebbing estate, nor spoken to every oppressor from heaven in a voice of thunder, nor cut off all rebels in the first attempts of insurrection: but because he hath done so to some, we are to look upon those judgments as divine accents and voices of God, threateuing all the same crimes with the like events, and with the ruins of eternity. For though God does not always make the same prologues to death, yet by these few accidents happening to single persons, we are to understand his purposes concerning all in the same condition: it was not the person so much as the state which God then remarked with so visible characters of his displeasure.

6. And it seems to me a wonder, that since from all the records of Scripture, urging the uncertainty of the day of death, the horror of the day of judgment, the severity of God, the dissolution of the world, the certainty of our account, still from all

these premises the spirit of God makes no other inference, but that we watch, and stand in a readiness, that we 'live in all holy conversation and godliness,'¹ and that there is no one word concerning any other manner of an essentially necessary preparation, none but this; yet that there are doctrines commenced, and rules prescribed, and offices set down, and suppletories invented by curates of souls, how to prepare a vicious person, and upon his death-bed to reconcile him to the hopes and promises of heaven. Concerning which I desire that every person would but inquire, where any one promise is recorded in Scripture concerning such addresses, and what articles Christ hath drawn up between his Father and us concerning a preparation begun upon our death-bed:² and if he shall find none, (as most certainly from Genesis to the Revelation there is not a word concerning it, but very much against it,) let him first build his hopes upon this proposition—that a holy life is the only preparation to a happy death; and then we can, without danger, proceed to some other considerations.

7. When a good man, or a person concerning whom it is not certain he hath lived in habitual vices, comes to die, there are but two general ways of intercourse with him; the one, to keep him from new sins; the other, to make some emendations of the old: the one, to fortify him against special weaknesses and proper temptations of that estate; and the other, to trim his lamp, that by excellent actions he may adorn his spirit, making up the

¹ Matt. xxv. 13 and xxiv. 42; Mark, xiii. 33; 2 Pet. iii. 11.

² — Tecum prius ergo voluta hæc animo ante tubas: galeatum sero duelli prænitet. Juven. Sat. 1.

omissions of his life, and supplying the imperfections of his estate, that his soul may return into the hands of his Creator as pure as it can; every degree of perfection being an advantage so great, as that the loss of every the least portion of it cannot be recompensed with all the good of this world. Concerning the first, the temptations proper to this estate are either weakness in faith, despair, or presumption: for whatsoever is besides these, as it is the common infelicity of all the several states of life, so there are oftentimes arguments of an ill condition, of immortification of vicious habits, and that he comes not to this combat well prepared; such as are covetousness, unwillingness to make restitution, remanent affections to his former vices, an unresigned spirit, and the like.

8. In the ecclesiastical story we find many dying persons mentioned, who have been very much afflicted with some doubts concerning an article of faith. St. Gregory, in an epistle he wrote to St. Austin, instances in the temptation which Eusebius suffered upon his death-bed.¹ And although sometimes the devil chooses an article that is not proper to that estate, knowing that every such doubt is well enough for his purpose, because of the incapacity of the person to suffer long disputes, and of the jealousy and suspicion of a dying and weak man, fearing lest every thing should cozen him; yet it is commonly instanced in the article of the resurrection, or the state of separation or reunion. And it seems to some persons incredible, that from a bed of sickness, a state of misery, a cloud of ignorance, a load of passions, a man

¹ De præconiō S. Hieron.

should enter into the condition of a perfect understanding, great joy, and an intellectual life, a conversation with angels, a fruition of God; the change is greater than his reason; and his faith being in conclusion tottering like the ark, and ready to fall, seems a pillar as unsafe and unable to rely on, as a bank of turf in an earthquake. Against this a general remedy is prescribed by spiritual persons: that the sick man should apprehend all changes of persuasion which happened to him in his sickness, contradictory to those assents which in his clearest use of reason he had, to be temptations and arts of the devil. And he hath reason so to think, when he remembers how many comforts of the Spirit of God, what joys of religion, what support, what assistances, what strengths he had in the whole course of his former life, upon the stock of faith, and interest of the doctrine of Christianity. And since the disbelieving the promises evangelical at that time can have no end of advantage, and that all wise men tell him it may have an end to make him lose the title to them, and do him infinite disadvantage; upon the stock of interest and prudence he must reject such fears, which cannot help him, but may ruin him. For all the works of grace which he did upon the hopes of God, and the stock of the divine revelations, (if he fails in his hold upon them,) are all rendered unprofitable. And it is certain, if there be no such thing as immortality and resurrection, he shall lose nothing for believing there is; but if there be, they are lost to him for not believing it.

9. But this is also to be cured by proper arguments. And there is no Christian man but hath

within him, and carries about him, demonstrations of the possibility, and great instances of the credibility of those great changes, which these tempted persons have no reason to distrust, but because they think them too great and too good to be true. And here, not only the consideration of the divine power and his eternal goodness is a proper antidote, but also the observation of what we have already received from God. To be raised from nothing to something is a mutation not less than infinite; and from that which we were in our first conception to pass into so perfect and curious bodies, and to become discursive, sensible, passionate, and reasonable, and next to angels, is a greater change, than from this state to pass into that excellency and perfection of it which we expect as the melioration and improvement of the present. For this is but a mutation of degrees, that of substance: this is more sensible, because we have perception in both states; that is of greater distance, because in the first term we were so far distant from what we are, that we could not perceive what then we were, much less desire to be what we now perceive; and yet God did that for us unasked, without any obligation on his part, or merit on ours; much rather then may we be confident of this alteration of accidents and degrees, because God hath obliged himself by promise; he hath disposed us to it by qualities, actions, and habits, which are to the state of glory as infancy is to manhood, as elements are to excellent discourses, as blossoms are to ripe fruits. And he that hath wrought miracles for us, preserved us in dangers, done strange acts of providence, sent his Son to take our nature, made a virgin to bear a son, and

God to become man, and two natures to be one individual person, and all in order to this end of which we doubt, hath given so many arguments of credibility, that if he had done any more, it would not have been left in our choice to believe or not believe; and then much of the excellency of our faith would have been lost. Add to this, that we are not tempted to disbelieve the Roman story, or that Virgil's *Æneids* were writ by him, or that we ourselves are descended of such parents; because these things are not only transmitted to us by such testimony which we have no reason to distrust, but because the tempter cannot serve any ends upon us by producing such doubts in us: and therefore since we have greater testimony for every article of faith, and to believe it is of so much concernment to us, we may well suspect it to be an artifice of the devil to rob us of our reward; this proceeding of his being of the same nature with all his other temptations, which in our life-time, like fiery darts, he threw into our face, to despoil us of our glory, and blot out the image of God imprinted on us.

10. Secondly, If the devil tempts the sick person to despair, he who is by God appointed to minister a word of comfort, must fortify his spirit with consideration and representment of the divine goodness, manifest in all the expresses of nature and grace, of providence and revelation; that God never 'extinguishes the smoking flax, nor breaks the bruised reed;' that a constant and a hearty endeavour is the sacrifice which God delights in; that in the firmament of heaven there are little stars, and they are most in number, and there are but few of the greatest magnitude; that there are children and babes in Christ, as well as strong men,

and amongst these there are great difference; that the interruptions of the state of grace by intervening crimes, if they were rescinded by repentance, there were great danger in the interval, but served as increment of the divine glory, and arguments of care and diligence to us at the restitution. These and many more are then to be urged, when the sick person is in danger of being swallowed up with over-much sorrow; and therefore to be insisted on in all cases as the physician gives him cordials, that we may do charity to him and minister comfort, not because they are always necessary, even in the midst of great sadnesses and discomforts. For we are to secure his love to God, that he acknowledge the divine mercy, that he believe the article of remission of sins, that he be thankful to God for the blessings which already he hath received, and that he lay all the load of his discomfort upon himself, and his own incapacities of mercy: and then the sadness may be very great, and his tears clamorous, and his heart broken all in pieces, and his humility lower than the earth, and his hope indiscernible, and yet no danger to his final condition. Despair reflects upon God, and dishonours the infinity of his mercy. And if the sick person do but confess that God is not at all wanting in his promises, but ever abounding in his mercies, and that it is want of the condition on his own part that makes the misery, and that if he had done his duty, God would save him; let him be assisted with perpetual prayers, with examples of lapsed and returning sinners, whom the church celebrates for saints, such as Mary Magdalen, Mary of Egypt, Afra, Thasis, Pelagia; let it be often inculcated to him, that as God's mercy is of itself

infinite, so its demonstration to us is not determined to any certain period, but hath such latitudes in it and reservations, which as they are apt to restrain too great boldness, so also to become sanctuaries to disconsolate persons; let him be invited to throw himself upon God upon these grounds, that he who is our Judge is also our Advocate and Redeemer, that he knows and pities our infirmities, and that our very hoping in him does endear him, and he will deliver us the rather for our confidence, when it is balanced with reverence and humility: and then all these supernumerary fears are advantageous to more necessary graces, and do more secure his final condition than they can disturb it.

11. When St. Arsenius was near his death, he was observed to be very tremulous, sad, weeping, and disconsolate. The standers-by asked the reason of his fears, wondering that he, having lived in great sanctity for many years, should not now rejoice at the going forth of his prison. The good man confessed the fear, and withal said it was no other than he had always borne about with him in the days of his pilgrimage; and what he then thought a duty, they had no reason now to call either a fault or a misery. Great sorrows, fears, and distrustings of a man's own condition, are oftentimes but abatements of confidence, or a remission of joys and gaieties of spirit; they are but like salutary clouds, dark and fruitful: and if the tempted person be strengthened in a love of God, though he go not further in his hopes than to believe a possibility of being saved, than to say, "God can save him, if he please," and to pray that he will save him, his condition is a state

of grace: it is like a root in the ground, trod upon, humble, and safe, not so fine as the state of flowers; yet that which will spring up in as glorious a resurrection as that which looks fairer, and pleases the sense, and is indeed a blessing, but not a duty.

12. But there is a state of death-bed which seems to have in it more question, and to be of nicer consideration: a sick person after a vicious and base life. And if upon whatsoever he can do, you give him hopes of a pardon, where is your promise to warrant it? If you do not give him hopes, do you not drive him to despair, and ascertain his ruin, to verify your proposition? To this I answer, that despair is opposed to hope, and hope relies upon the divine promises; and where there is no promise, there the despair is not a sin, but a mere impossibility. The accursed spirits, which are sealed up to the judgment of the last day, cannot hope; and he that repents not cannot hope for pardon. And therefore if all which the state of death-bed can produce be not the duty of repentance, which is required of necessity to pardon, it is not in such a person properly to be called despair, any more than it is blindness in a stone that it cannot see: such a man is not within the capacities of pardon. And therefore all those acts of exterior repentance, and all his sorrow and resolution and tears of emendation, and other preparatives to interior repentance, are like oil poured into mortal wounds; they are the care of the physician, and these are the cautions of the church, and they are at no hand to be neglected. For if they do not alter the state, they may lessen the judgment, or procure a temporal blessing: and if

the person recover, they are excellent beginnings of the state of grace; and if they be purified in a happy opportunity, will grow up into glory.

13. But if it be demanded, whether in such cases the curate be bound to give absolution; I can give no other answer but this, that if he lie under the censure of the church, the laws of the church are to determine the particular: and I know no church in the world but uses to absolve death-bed penitents upon the instances of those actions of which their present condition is capable; though in the primitive ages in some cases they denied it. But if the sick person be under no positive censure, and is bound only by the guilt of habitual vice, if he desires the prayers of the church, she is bound in charity to grant them, to pray for pardon to him, and all other graces in order to salvation: and if she absolves the penitent, towards God it hath no other efficacy but of a solemn prayer. And therefore it were better that all the charity of the office were done and the solemnity omitted; because in the earnest prayer she co-operates to his salvation as much as she can; and by omitting the solemnity distinguishes evil lives from holy persons, and walks securely, whilst she refuses to declare him pardoned whom God hath not declared to be so.¹ And possibly that form of absolution which the churches of the west now use, being indicative, and declaratory of a present pardon, is for the very form sake not to be

¹ Penitentia quæ ab infirmo petitur, infirma est; penitentia quæ a moriente tantum petitur, timeo ne et ipsa moriatur. S. Aug. Serm. de temp. Vide eund. lib. I. homil. 41.—“The penitence of the infirm is infirm; and the penitence of the dying is, I fear, like to die.”

used to death bed penitents after a vicious life: because if any thing more be intended in the form than a prayer, the truth of the affirmation may be questioned; and an ecclesiastical person hath no authority to say to such a man, "I absolve thee;" but if no more be intended but a prayer, it is better to use a mere prayer and common form of address, than such words which may countenance unsecure confidences, evil purposes, and worse lives.

14. Thirdly, If the devil tempts a sick person, who hath lived well, to presumption, and that he seems full of confidence and without trouble; the care that is then to be taken is to consider the disease, and to state the question right. For at some instants and periods God visits the spirit of a man, and sends the imission of a bright ray into him; and some good men have been so used to apprehensions of the divine mercy, that they have an habitual cheerfulness of spirit and hopes of salvation. St. Jerome reports that Hilarion, in a death-bed agony, felt some tremblings of heart, till reflecting upon his course of life, he found comforts springing from thence by a proper emanation, and departed cheerfully;¹ and Hezekiah represented to God in prayer the integrity of his life, and made it the instrument of his hope. And nothing of this is to be called presumption, provided it be in persons of eminent sanctity and great experience, old disciples and the more perfect Christians. But because such persons are but seldom and rare, if the same confidence be observed in persons of com-

¹ Egredere, anima, quid times? septuaginta prope annis serviisti Christo, et jam moritimes? S. Hier. in Vita Hilar.—
"Why, O soul, dost thou fear to depart? Hast thou served Christ for seventy years, and yet fear to die?"

mon imperfection and an ordinary life, it is to be corrected and allayed with consideration of the divine severity and justice, and with the strict requisites of a holy life, with the deceit of a man's own heart, with consideration and general remembrances of secret sins, and that the most perfect state of life hath very great needs of mercy, and 'if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?'¹ And the spirit of the man is to be promoted and helped in the increase of contrition, as being the proper delectery to cure the extravagancies of a froward and intemperate spirit.

15. But there is a presumption commenced upon opinion, relying either upon a persuasion of single predestination, or else (which is worse) upon imaginary securities, that heaven is to be purchased upon conditions easier than a day's labour, and that an evil life may be reconciled to heaven by the intervening of little or single acts of piety or repentance. If either of them both have actually produced ill life, to which they are apt, or apt to be abused, the persons are miserable in their condition, and cannot be absolutely remedied by going about to cure the presumption; that was the cause of all, but now it is the least thing to be considered. His whole state is corrupted; and men will not by any discourses or spiritual arts used on their death-beds be put into a state of grace; because then is no time to change the state, and there is no mutation then but by single actions. From good to better a dying man may proceed, but

¹ *Væ vitæ etiam laudabili, si sine misericordia discutias eam.*
S. Aug. lib. ix. Confess.—“Woe to the best life, if judged without mercy.”

not from the state of reprobation to the life of grace. And yet it is good charity to unlose the bonds of Satan, whereby the man is bound and led captive at his will, to take off the presumption by destroying the cause; and then let the work of grace be set as forward as it can, and leave the event to God; for nothing else is left possible to be done. But if the sick man be of a good life, and yet have a degree of confidence beyond his virtue, upon the fancy of predestination, it is not then a time to rescind his opinion by a direct opposition, but let him be drawn off from the consideration of it, by such discourses as are apt to make him humble and penitent; for they are the most apt instruments to secure the condition of the man, and attemper his spirit. These are the great temptations incident to the last scene of our lives; and are therefore more particularly suggested by the tempter, because they have in them something contrary to the universal effect of a holy life, and are designs to interpose between the end of the journey and the reception of the crown. And therefore it concerns every man who is in a capacity of 'receiving the end of his faith, the salvation of his soul,' to lay up in the course of his life, something against this great day of expense, that he may be better fortified with the armour of the Spirit against these last assaults of the devil, that he may not shipwreck in the haven.

16. Eschewing evil is but the one half of our work, we must also do good. And now, in the few remanent days or hours of our life, there are certain exercises of religion which have a special relation to this state, and are therefore of great concernment to be done, that we may make our condition as certain as we can, and our portion of glory

greater, and our pardon surer, and our love to increase, and that our former omissions and breaches be repaired, with a condition in some measure proportionable to those great hopes which we then are going to possess. And first, let the sick person, in the beginning of his sickness, and in every change and great accident of it, make acts of resignation to God, and entirely submit himself to the divine will; remembering, that sickness may, to men properly disposed, do the work of God, and produce the effect of the Spirit, and promote the interest of his soul, as well as health, and oftentimes better; as being in itself and by the grace of God apt to make us confess our own impotency and dependencies, and to understand our needs of mercy, and the continual influences and supports of heaven; to withdraw our appetites from things below, to correct the vanities and insolencies of an impertinent spirit, to abate the extravagancies of the flesh, to put our carnal lusts into fetters and disability, to remember us of our state of pilgrimage, that this is our way, and our stage of trouble and banishment, and that heaven is our country; for so sickness is the trial of our patience, a fire to purge us, an instructor to teach us, a bridle to restrain us, and a state inferring great necessities of union and adhesions unto God. And as upon these grounds we have the same reason to accept sickness at the hands of God, as to receive physic from a physician; so it is argument of excellent grace to give God hearty thanks in our disease, and to accept it cheerfully, and with spiritual joy

17. Some persons create to themselves excuses of discontent, and quarrel not with the pain, but the ill consequents of sickness. It makes them

troublesome to their friends; and consider not that their friends are bound to accept the trouble, as themselves to accept the sickness; that to tend the sick is at that time allotted for the portion of their work, and that charity receives it as a duty, and makes that duty to be a pleasure. And however, if our friends account us as a burden, let us also accept that circumstance of affliction to ourselves with the same resignation and indifferency as we entertain its occasion, the sickness itself; and pray to God to enkindle a flame of charity in their breasts, and to make them compensation for the charge and trouble we put them to; and then the care is at an end. But others excuse their discontent with a more religious colour, and call the disease their trouble and affliction, because it impedes their other parts of duty; they cannot preach, or study, or do exterior assistances of charity and alms, or acts of repentance and mortification. But it were well if we could let God proportion out our work, and set our task; let him choose what virtues we shall especially exercise; and when the will of God determines us, it is more excellent to endure afflictions with patience, equanimity, and thankfulness, than to do actions of the most pompous religion, and laborious or expensive charity: not only because there is a deliciousness in actions of religion and choice, which is more agreeable to our spirit than the toleration of sickness can be, which hath great reward, but no present pleasure; but also because our suffering and our employment is consecrated to us when God chooses it, and then there is no mixture of imperfection or secular interest, as there may be in other actions even of an excellent religion, when

ourselves are the choosers. And let us also remember, that God hath not so much need of thy works as thou hast of patience, humility, and resignation. St. Paul was a far more considerable person than thou canst be, and yet it pleased God to shut him in prison for two years; and in that interval God secured and promoted the work of the gospel: and, although Epaphroditus was an excellent minister, yet God laid a sickness upon him, and even in his disease gave him work enough to do, though not of his own choosing. And therefore fear it not but the ends of religion or duty will well enough proceed without thy health; and thy own eternal interest, when God so pleases, shall better be served by sickness, and the virtues which it occasions, than by the opportunities of health, and an ambulatory, active charity.

18. When thou art resigned to God, use fair and appointed means for thy recovery. Trust not in thy spirit upon any instrument of health: as thou art willing to be disposed by God, so look not for any event upon the stock of any other cause or principle. Be ruled by the physician and the people appointed to tend thee; that thou neither become troublesome to them, nor give any sign of impatience or a peevish spirit. But this advice only means, that thou do not disobey them out of any evil principle: and yet, if reason be thy guide to choose any other aid, or follow any other counsel, use it temperately, prudently, and charitably. It is not intended for a duty, that thou shouldst drink oil instead of wine, if thy minister reach it to thee, as did St. Bernard; nor that thou shouldst accept a cake tempered with linseed-oil instead of

oil of olives, as did F. Stephen, mentioned by Rufinus : but that thou tolerate the defects of thy servants, and accept the evil accidents of thy disease, or the unsuccessfulness of thy physician's care, as descending on thee from the hands of God. Asa was noted in Scripture, that in 'his sickness he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.' Lewis the XI. of France was then the miserablest person in his kingdom, when he made himself their servant, courting them with great pensions and rewards; attending to their rules as oracles, and from their mouths waited for the sentence of life or death. We are, in these great accidents, especially to look upon God as the disposer of the events, which he very often disposes contrary to the expectation we may have of probable causes : and sometimes without physic we recover, and with physic and excellent applications we grow worse and worse ; and God it is that makes the remedies unprosperous. In all these and all other accidents, if we take care that the sickness of the body derive not itself into the soul, nor the pains of one procure impatience of the other, we shall alleviate the burden, and make it supportable and profitable : and certain it is, if men knew well to bear their sicknesses humbly towards God, charitably towards their ministers, and cheerfully in themselves, there were no greater advantage in the world to be received than upon a sick bed ; and that alone hath in it the benefits of a church, of a religious assembly, of the works of charity and labour : and since our soul's eternal well-being depends upon the

¹ 2 Chron. xvi. 12.

charities and providence and veracity of God, and we have nothing to show for it but his word and goodness, and that is infinitely enough; it is but reason we be not more nice and scrupulous about the usage and accommodation of our body. If we accept, at God's hands, sadness and dryness of affection and spiritual desertion patiently and with indifference, it is unhandsome to express ourselves less satisfied in the accidents about our body.

19. But if the sickness proceed to death, it is a new charge upon our spirits, and God calls for a final and entire resignation into his hands. And to a person who was of humble affections, and in his life-time of a mortified spirit, accustomed to bear the yoke of the Lord, this is easy; because he looks upon death not only as the certain condition of nature, but as a necessary transition to a state of blessedness,¹ as the determination of his sickness, the period of human infelicities, the last change of condition, the beginning of a new, strange, and excellent life, a security against sin, a freedom from the importunities of a tempter, from the tyrannies of an imperial lust, from the rebellion of concupiscence, from the disturbances and tempests of the irascible faculty, and from the fondness and childishness of the concupiscible; and St. Ambrose says well, "the troubles of this life and the dangers are so many, that in respect of them death is a remedy, and a fair, proper object of desires." And we find that many saints have prayed for death,

· Νομίζουσιν μὲν γὰρ εἶ τὸν ἐνθάδε βίον ὡς ἂν ἀκμήν κρομίων εἶναι. τὸν δὲ θάνατον γένεσιν εἰς τὸν οὕτως βίον ἐκ τὸν ἐνθάδε βίον τοῖς φιλοσοφήσασιν. — "In this life we are but in the womb of existence. Death, to the wise man, is a being indeed born to life and happiness."

that they might not see the persecutions and great miseries incumbent upon the church: and if the desire be not out of impatience, but of charity, and with resignation, there is no reason to reprove it. Elias prayed that God would take his life, that he might not see the evils of Ahab and Jezebel, and their vexatious intendments against the prophets of the Lord.¹ And St. Austin, upon the incursion of the Vandals into Africa, called his clergy together, and at their chapter told them, "he had prayed to God either to deliver his people from the present calamity, or grant them patience to bear it, or that he would take him out of the world, that he might not see the miseries of his diocess;"² adding, that God had granted him the last: and he presently fell sick, and died in the siege of his own Hippo. And if death in many cases be desirable, and for many reasons, it is always to be submitted to, when God calls. And as it is always a misery to fear death, so it is very often a sin, or the effect of sin. If our love to the world hath fastened our affections here, it is a direct sin; and this is by the son of Sirach noted to be the case of rich and great personages: 'How bitter, O death, is thy remembrance to a man that is at rest in his possessions!'³ But if it be a fear to perish in the ruins of eternity, they are not to blame for fearing, but that their own ill lives have procured the fear. And yet there are persons in the state of grace, who yet, because they are in great imperfection, have such lawful fears of death, and of entering upon an uncertain sentence, which must stand eternally irreversible, be it good or bad, that they

¹ 1 Kings, xix. 4.

² In Vita S. Aug. c. 16.

³ Ecclus. xli. 1.

may with piety and care enough pray David's prayer: 'O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence and be no more seen.' But in this and in all other cases death must be accepted without murmur, though without fear it cannot. A man may pray to be delivered from it; and yet, if God will not grant it, he must not go as one halled to execution. But if with all his imperfect fears he shall throw himself upon God, and accept his sentence as righteous, whether it speak life or death; it is an act of so great excellency, that it may equal the good actions of many succeeding and surviving days. And peradventure a longer life will be yet more imperfect, and God therefore puts a period to it, that thou mayest be taken into a condition more certain, though less eminent. However, let not the fears of nature, or the fear of reason, or the fears of humility, become accidentally criminal, by a murmur or a pertinacious contesting against the event, which we cannot hinder, but ought to accept by an election secondary, rational, and pious; and upon supposition that God will not alter the sentence passed upon thy temporal life: always remembering, that in Christian philosophy death hath in it an excellency of which the angels are not capable: for by the necessity of our nature we are made capable of dying for the holy Jesus; and next to the privilege of that act, is our willingness to die at his command: which turns necessity into virtue, and nature into grace, and grace to glory.

20. When the sick person is thus disposed, let him begin to trim his wedding-garment, and dress his lamp with the repetition of acts of repentance, perpetually praying to God for pardon of his sins,

representing to himself the horror of them, the multitude, the obliquity, being helped by arguments apt to excite contrition, by repetition of penitential psalms and holy prayers. And he may, by accepting and humbly receiving his sickness at God's hand, transmit it into the condition of an act or effect of repentance; acknowledging himself by sin to have deserved and procured it, and praying that the punishment of his crimes may be here, and not reserved for the state of separation, and for ever.

21. But above all single acts of this exercise, we are concerned to see that nothing of other men's goods stick to us, but let us shake it off as we would a burning coal from our flesh; for it will destroy us, it will carry a curse with us, and leave a curse behind us. Those who by thy means or importunity have become vicious, exhort to repentance and holy life; those whom thou hast cozened into crimes, restore to a right understanding; those who are by violence and interest led captive by thee to any undecency, restore to their liberty, and encourage to the prosecution of holiness.¹ Discover and confess thy fraud and unlawful arts, cease thy violence, and give as many advantages to virtue as thou hast done to viciousness. Make recompense for bodily wrongs, such as are wounds, dismemberings, and other disabilities. Restore every man (as much as thou canst) to that good condition from which thou hast removed him: restore his fame, give back his goods, return the pawn, release forfeitures, and take off all unjust

¹ *Deteriores sunt qui vitam moresque bonorum corrumpunt, his qui substantias et prædia diripiunt.* S. Gregory.—“They who corrupt society and manners, are worse than they who seize our property.”

Invasions or surprises of his estate; pay debts; satisfy for thy fraud and injustice as far as thou canst, and as thou canst, and as soon; or this alone is weight enough, no less than a mill-stone about thy neck. But if the dying man be of God, and in the state of grace, that is, if he have lived a holy life, repented seasonably, and have led a just, sober, and religious conversation in any acceptable degree, it is to be supposed he hath no great account to make for unpretended injuries and unjust detentions: for if he had detained the goods of his neighbour fraudulently or violently without amends, when it is in his power and opportunity to restore, he is not the man we suppose him in this present question. And although in all cases he is bound to restore according to his ability, yet the act is less excellent when it is compelled; and so it seems to be, if he have continued the injustice till he is forced to quit the purchase. However, if it be not done till then, let it be provided for then. And that I press this duty to pious persons at this time, is only to oblige them to a diligent scrutiny concerning the lesser omissions of this duty, in the matter of fame, or lesser debts, or spiritual restitution; or that those unevennesses of account which were but of late transaction may now be regulated; and that whatsoever is undone in this matter, from what principle soever it proceeds, whether of sin, or only of forgetfulness, or of imperfection, may now be made as exact as we can, and are obliged; and that those excuses which made it reasonable and lawful to defer restitution, as want of opportunity, clearness of ability, and accidental inconvenience, be now laid aside, and the action be done or provided for in the midst of all objections and inconvenient cir-

cumstances, rather than to omit it, and hazard to perform it.

22. Hither also I reckon resolutions and forward purposes of emendation and greater severity, in case God return to us hopes of life : which therefore must be re-enforced, that we may serve the ends of God, and understand all his purposes, and make use of every opportunity : every sickness laid upon us being with a design of drawing us nearer to God ; and even holy purposes are good actions of the spirit, and principles of religion. And though alone they cannot do the work of grace, or change the state, when they are ineffectual ; that is, when either we will not bring them into act, or that God will not let us ; yet to a man already in the state of grace they are the additions of something good, and are like blowing of coals, which although it can put no life into a dead coal, yet it makes a live coal shine brighter, and burn clearer, and adds to it some accidental degrees of heat.

23. Having thus disposed himself to the peace of God, let him make peace with all those in whom he knows or suspects any minutes of anger, or malice, or displeasure towards him ; submitting himself to them with humility whom he unworthily hath displeased, asking pardon to them who say they are displeased, and offering pardon to them that have displeased him : and then let him crave the peace of holy church . For it is all this while to be supposed that he hath used the assistance and prayers, the counsel and the advices of a spiritual man, and that to this purpose he hath opened to him the state of his whole life, and made him to understand what emendations of his faults he hath made, what acts of repentance he hath done, how lived

after his fall and reparation, and that he hath submitted all that he did or undid to the discerning of a holy man, whose office it is to guide his soul in this agony and last offices. All men cannot have the blessing of a wise and learned minister, and some die where they can have none at all; yet it were a safer course to do as much of this as we can, and to a competent person, if we can; if we cannot, then to the best we have, according as we judge it to be of spiritual advantage to us: for in this conjuncture of accidents it concerns us to be sure, if we may, and not to be deceived, where we can avoid it; because we shall never return to life to do this work again. And if after this intercourse with a spiritual guide, we be reconciled by the solemn prayer of the church, the prayer of absolution, it will be of great advantage to us: we depart with our Father's blessing, we die in the actual communion of the church, we hear the sentence of God applied after the manner of men, and the promise of pardon made circumstantiate, material, present, and operative upon our spirits, and have our portion of the promise which is recorded by St. James, that 'if the elders of the church pray over a sick person' fervently and effectually, (add solemnly,) 'his sins shall be forgiven him;' that is, supposing him to be in a capacity to receive it;) because such prayers of such a man 'are very prevalent.'

24. All this is, in a spiritual sense, 'washing the hands in innocency;' and then let him 'go to the altar,' Let him not, for any excuse less than impossibility, omit to receive the holy sacrament;

¹ Jam. v. 14, 15.

which the fathers, assembled in the great Nicene council, have taught all the Christian world to call “the most necessary provisions for our last journey;”¹ which is the memory of that death by which we hope for life; which is the seed of immortality and resurrection of our bodies; which unites our spirit to Christ; which is a great defensative against the hostilities of the devil; which is the most solemn prayer of the church, united and made acceptable by the sacrifice of Christ, which is then represented and exhibited to God; which is the great instrument of spiritual increase and the growth of grace; which is duty and reward, food and physic, health and pleasure, delectary and cordial, prayer and thanksgiving, an union of mysteries, the marriage of the soul, and the perfection of all the rites of Christianity. Dying with the holy sacrament in us, is a going to God with Christ in our arms, and interposing him between us and his angry sentence. But then we must be sure that we have done all the duty, without which we cannot communicate worthily. For else Satan comes in the place of Christ, and it is a horror not less than infinite to appear before God’s tribunal, possessed in our souls with the spirit of darkness. True it is, that, by many laws of the church, the bishop and the minister are bound to give the holy eucharist to every person who in the article or apparent danger of death desires it, provided that he hath submitted himself to the imposition and counsels of the bishop or guide of his soul, that, in case he recovers, he may be brought to the peace of God and his church,

¹ Περὶ δὲ τῶν ἐξοδενόντων ὁ παλακὸς ἢ κανονικὸς νόμος φυλαχθήσεται ἢ νῦν ὥσε εἴ τις ἐξοδέει, τῆ τελευταίῃ ἢ ἀναγκαιοτάτῃ ἐφοίῃ μὴ ἀποστρεῖσθαι Conc. Nicen. can. 13.

by such steps and degrees of repentance by which other public sinners are reconciled. But to this gentleness of discipline and easiness of administration, those excellent persons who made the canons thought themselves compelled by the rigour of the Novatians:¹ and because they admitted not lapsed persons to the peace of the church upon any terms, though never so great, so public, or so penal a repentance; therefore these not only remitted them to the exercise and station of penitents, but also to the communion. But the fathers of the council of Eliberis denied this favour to persons who after baptism were idolaters:² either intending this as a great argument to affright persons from so great a crime; or else believing that it was unpardonable after baptism, a contradiction to that state which we entered into by baptism and the covenant evangelical. However, I desire all learned persons to observe it, and the less learned also to make use of it, that those more ancient councils of the church which commanded the holy communion to be given to dying persons, meant only such, which according to the custom of the church, were under the conditions of repentance; that is, such to whom punishment and discipline of divers years were enjoined; and if it happened they died in the interval, before the expiration of their time of reconciliation, then they admitted them to the communion.³ Which describes to us the doc-

¹ Concil. Nicen. can. ecd. conc. Ancyra. c. 6. Conc. Aurelian. ii. c. 12.

² Conc. Elib. c. 1.

³ Μετὰ δοκιμασίας ὁ Ἐπίσκοπος ἐπιόστω. Concil. Nicen. c. 13. Τύτως ἐπὶ ὄρφ δεχθῆναι. Conc. Anc. c. 9. De his qui in penitentia positi vita excesserunt, placuit nullum communionis vacuum debere dimitti. Conc. Aurel. 2 n. 2.

trine of those ages when religion was purer, and discipline more severe, and holy life secured by rules of excellent government; that those only were fit to come to that feast, who before their last sickness had finished the repentance of many years, or at least had undertaken it.¹ I cannot say it was so always, and in all churches; for as the disciples, grew slack, or men's persuasions had variety, so they were more ready to grant repentance, as well as absolution to dying persons: but it was otherwise in the best times, and with severer prelates. And certainly it were great charity to deny the communion to persons who have lived viciously till their death; provided it be by competent authority, and done sincerely, prudently, and without temporal interest: to other persons, who have lived good lives, or repented of their bad, though less perfectly, it ought not to be denied, and they less ought to neglect it.

25. But as every man must put himself, so also he must put his house in order; make his will, if he have an estate to dispose of; and in that he must be careful to do justice to every man, and charity to the poor, according as God hath enabled him. And though charity is then very late, if it begins not earlier; yet if this be but an act of an ancient habit, it is still more perfect, as it succeeds in time, and superadds to the former stock. And among other acts of duty let it be remembered, that it is excellent charity to leave our will and desires clear, plain, and determinate, that contention and lawsuits may be prevented by the explicate declaration of the legacies. At last and in all in-

¹ Vide Concil. Eliber. c. 46, et c. 69.

stances and periods of our following days, let the former good acts be renewed; let God be praised for all his graces and blessings of our life; let him be entreated for pardon of our sins; let acts of love and contrition, of hope, of joy, of humility, be the work of every day which God still permits us: always remembering to ask remission for those sins we remember not. And if the condition of our sickness permit it, let our last breath expire with an act of love; that it may begin the charities of eternity, and like a taper burnt to its lowest base, it may go out with a great emission of light, leaving a sweet smell behind us to perfume our coffin; and that these lights, newly made brighter, or trimmed up in our sickness, may shine about our hearse, that they may become arguments of a pious sadness to our friends, (as the charitable coats which Dorcas made were to the widows,) and exemplary to all those who observed, or shall hear of our holy life and religious death. But if it shall happen that the disease be productive of evil accidents, as a disturbed fancy, a weakened understanding, wild discourings, or any deprivation of the use of reason, it concerns the sick person, in the happy intervals of a quiet untroubled spirit, to pray earnestly to God that nothing may pass from him, in the rages of a fever or worse distemper, which may less become his duty, or give scandal, or cause trouble to the persons in attendance; and if he shall also renounce and disclaim all such evil words which his disease may speak, not himself, he shall do the duty of a Christian and a prudent person. And after these preparatives he may with piety and confidence resign his soul into the hands of God, to be deposited in holy receptacles

till the day of restitution of all things; and in the mean time, with a quiet spirit, descend into that state which is the lot of Cæsars, and where all kings and conquerors have laid aside their glories.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal and holy Jesus, who by death hast overcome death, and by thy passion hast taken out its sting, and made it to become one of the gates of heaven, and an entrance to felicity; have mercy upon me now and at the hour of my death: let thy grace accompany me all the days of my life, that I may, by a holy conversation, and an habitual performance of my duty, wait for the coming of our Lord, and be ready to enter with thee at whatsoever hour thou shalt come. Lord, let not my death be in any sense unprovided, nor untimely, nor hasty, but after the common manner of men, having in it nothing extraordinary but an extraordinary piety, and the manifestation of a great and miraculous mercy. Let my senses and understanding be preserved entire till the last of my days, and grant that I may die the death of the righteous, having first discharged all my obligations of justice, leaving none miserable and unprovided in my departure; but be thou the portion of all my friends and relatives, and let thy blessing descend upon their heads, and abide there, till they shall meet me in the bosom of our Lord. Preserve me ever in the communion and peace of the church; and bless my death-bed with the opportunity of a holy and spiritual guide, with the assistance and guard of angels, with the perception of the holy sacrament, with patience and dereliction of my own desires, with a strong faith and a firm and humble hope, with just measures of repentance, and great treasures of charity to thee, my God, and to all the world; that my soul in the arms of the holy Jesus may be deposited with safety and joy, there to expect the revelations of thy day, and then to partake the glories of thy kingdom, O eternal and holy Jesus. Amen.

Considerations upon the Crucifixion of the holy Jesus.

1. **WHEN** the sentence of death pronounced against the Lord was to be put in execution, the soldiers pulled off the robe of mockery, the scarlet mantle which in jest they put upon him, and put on his own garments. But, as Origen observes, the evangelist mentioned not that they took off the crown of thorns: what might serve their interest they pursue, but nothing of remission or mercy to the afflicted Son of man. But so it became the King of sufferings, not to lay aside his imperial thorns, till they were changed into diadems of glory. But now Abel is led forth by his brother to be slain. A gay spectacle to satisfy impious eyes, who would not stay behind, but attended and waited upon the hangman to see the catastrophe of this bloody tragedy. But when piety looks on, she beholds a glorious mystery.¹ Sin laughed to see the King of heaven and earth, and the great lover of souls, instead of the scepter of his kingdom, to bear a tree of cursing and shame. But piety wept tears of pity, and knew they would melt into joy, when she should behold that cross, which loaded the shoulders of her Lord, afterward sit upon the scepters, and be engraved and signed upon the foreheads of kings.

2. It cannot be thought but the ministers of Jewish malice used all the circumstances of affliction, which in any case were accustomed towards malefactors and persons to be crucified; and therefore it was, that in some old figures we see our

¹ S. Aug. Tract. 119, in Joan.

blessed Lord described with a table, appendant to the fringe of his garment, set full of nails and pointed iron; for so sometimes they afflicted persons condemned to that kind of death. And St. Cyprian affirms that Christ did stick to the wood that he carried, being galled with the iron at his heels, and nailed even before his crucifixion.¹ But this and the other accidents of his journey and their malice so crushed his wounded, tender, and virginal body, that they were forced to lay the load upon a Cyrenian, fearing that he should die with less shame and smart than they intended him. But so he was pleased to take man unto his aid, not only to represent his own need and the dolorousness of his passion, but to consign the duty unto man, that we must enter into a fellowship of Christ's sufferings, taking up the cross of martyrdom when God requires us, enduring affronts, being patient under affliction, loving them that hate us, and being benefactors to our enemies, abstaining from sensual and intemperate delight, forbidding to ourselves lawful festivities and recreations of our weariness, when we have an end of the spirit to serve upon the ruins of the body's strength, mortifying our desires, breaking our own will, not seeking ourselves, being entirely resigned to God. These are the cross, and the nails, and the spear, and the whip, and all the instruments of a Christian's passion. And we may consider, that every man in this world shall in some sense or other bear a cross, few men escape it, and it is not well with them that do; but they only bear it well that follow Christ, and tread in his steps, and bear it for his sake, and

¹ S. Cypr. de Pass.

walk as he walked; and he that follows his own desires, when he meets with a cross there, (as it is certain enough he will,) bears the cross of his concupiscence, and that hath no fellowship with the cross of Christ. By the precept of bearing the cross we are not tied to pull evil upon ourselves, that we may imitate our Lord in nothing but in being afflicted; or to personate the punitive exercises of mortification and severe abstinences which were eminent in some saints, and to which they had special assistances, as others had the gift of chastity, and for which they had special reason, and, as they apprehended, some great necessities: but it is required that we bear our own cross;¹ so said our dearest Lord. For when the cross of Christ is laid upon us, and we are called to martyrdom, then it is our own, because God made it to be our portion: and when, by the necessities of our spirit, and the rebellion of our body we need exterior mortifications and acts of self-denial, then also it is our own cross, because our needs have made it so: and so it is when God sends us sickness or any other calamity, whatever is either an effect of our ghostly needs, or the condition of our temporal estate, it calls for our sufferance, and patience, and equanimity. For 'therefore Christ hath suffered for us,' saith St Peter, 'leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps,'² who bore his cross as long as he could; and when he could no longer, he murmured not, but sank under it: and then he was content to receive such aid, not which he chose himself, but such as was assigned him.

¹ Matt. xvi. 24.

² 1 Pet. ii. 2.

3. Jesus was led out of the gates of Jerusalem, that he might become the sacrifice for persons without the pale, even for all the world.¹ And the daughters of Jerusalem followed him with pious tears till they came to Calvary;—a place difficult in the ascent, eminent and apt for the publication of shame, a hill of death and dead bones, polluted and impure;—and there beheld him stripped naked who clothes the fields with flowers, and all the world with robes, and the whole globe with the canopy of heaven; and so dressed, that now every circumstance was a triumph.² By his disgrace he trampled upon our pride; by his poverty and nakedness he triumphed over our covetousness and love of riches; and by his pains chastised the delicacies of our flesh, and broke in pieces the fetters of concupiscence. For as soon as Adam was clothed, he quitted Paradise; and Jesus was made naked, that he might bring us in again. And we also must be despoiled of all our exterior adherences; that we may pass through the regions of duty and divine love to a society of blessed spirits, and a clarified, immortal, and beatified estate.

4. There they nailed Jesus with four nails, fixed his cross in the ground, which with its fall into the place of its station gave infinite torture by so violent a concussion of the body of our Lord, which rested upon nothing but four great wounds; where he was designed to suffer a long and lingering torment.³ For crucifixion, as it was an exquisite pain, sharp and passionate, so it was not of quick effect towards taking away the life. St. Andrew

¹ Heb. xiii. 13. ° Athanas. de Pass. et Cruce Domini.

² ——— κείθι φοιῆτες εἰς δόρυ τετράπλευρον. — Nonn.

was two whole days upon the cross; and some martyrs have upon the cross been rather starved, and devoured with birds, than killed with the proper torment of the tree. But Jesus took all his passion with a voluntary susception, God heightening it to great degrees of torment supernaturally; and he laid down his life voluntarily, when his Father's wrath was totally appeased towards mankind.

5. Some have fancied, that Christ was pleased to take something from every condition of which man ever was or shall be possessed; taking immunity from sin from Adam's state of innocence, punishment and misery from the state of Adam fallen, the fulness of grace from the state of renovation, and perfect contemplation of the divinity and beatific joys from the state of comprehension and the blessedness of heaven: meaning, that the humanity of our blessed Saviour did, in the sharpest agony of his passion, behold the face of God, and communicate in glory. But I consider that, although the two natures of Christ were knit by a mysterious union into one person, yet the natures still retain their incommunicable properties. Christ, as God, is not subject to sufferings, as a man he is the subject of miseries; as God he is eternal, as man, mortal and commensurable by time; as God, the supreme lawgiver, as man, most humble and obedient to the law; and therefore that the human nature was united to the divine, it does not infer that it must in all instances partake of the divine felicities, which in God are essential, to man communicated without necessity, and by an arbitrary dispensation. Add to this, that some virtues and excellencies were in the soul of Christ which could not consist with the state of glorified

and beatified persons ; such as are humility, poverty of spirit, hope, holy desires ; all which having their seat in the soul, suppose even in the supremest faculty a state of pilgrimage ; that is, a condition which is imperfect, and in order to something beyond its present. For therefore ‘ Christ ought to suffer,’ (saith our blessed Lord himself,) and ‘ so enter into his glory.’¹ And St. Paul affirms, that ‘ we see Jesus made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.’² And again, ‘ Christ humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross : wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name.’³ Thus his present life was a state of merit and work, and as a reward of it, he was crowned with glory and immortality ; his name was exalted, his kingdom glorified ; he was made the Lord of all the creatures, the first fruits of the resurrection, the exemplar of glory, and the prince and head of the catholic church ; and because this was his recompence, and the fruits of his humility and obedience, it is certain it was not a necessary consequence and a natural efflux of the personal union of the godhead with the humanity. This I discourse to this purpose, that we may not in our esteem lessen the suffering of our dearest Lord, by thinking he had the supports of actual glory in the midst of all his sufferings. For there is no one minute or ray of glory but its fruition does outweigh and make us insensible of the greatest calamities, and the spirit of pain which can be extracted from all the infeli-

¹ Luke, xxiv. 26, secundum vulg. interp.

² Heb. ii. 9.

³ Phil. ii. 8, 9.

cities of this world. True it is, that the greatest beauties in this world are receptive of an alloy of sorrow, and nothing can have pleasure in all capacities. The most beautiful feathers of the birds of paradise, the ostrich, or the peacock, if put into our throat, are not there so pleasant as to the eye. But the beatific joys of the least glory of heaven take away all pain, 'wipe away all tears from our eyes;' and it is not possible that at the same instant the soul of Jesus should be ravished with glory, and yet abated with pains grievous and afflictive. On the other side, some say that the soul of Jesus upon the cross suffered the pains of hell, and all the torments of the damned; and that without such sufferings it is not imaginable he should pay the price which God's wrath should demand of us. But the same that reproves the one does also reprehend the other; for the hope that was the support of the soul of Jesus, as it confesses an imperfection that is not consistent with the state of glory, so it excludes the despair that is the torment proper to accursed souls. Our dearest Lord suffered the whole condition of humanity, 'sin only excepted;' and freed us from hell with suffering those sad pains, and merited heaven for his own humanity, as the head, and all faithful people, as the members of his mystical body. And therefore his life here was only a state of pilgrimage, not at all trimmed with beatific glories. Much less was he ever in the state of hell, or upon the cross felt the formal misery and spirit of torment which is the portion of damned spirits; because it was impossible Christ should despair, and without despair it is impossible there should be a hell. But this is highly probable, that in the intention of degrees

and present anguish, the soul of our Lord might feel a greater load of wrath than is incumbent in every instant upon perishing souls. For all the sadness which may be imagined to be in hell, consists in acts produced from principles that cannot surpass the force of human or angelical nature; but the pain which our blessed Lord endured for the expiation of our sins, was an issue of an united and centred anger, was received into the heart of God and man, and was commensurate to the whole latitude of the grace, patience, and charity of the Word incarnate.

6. And now behold the priest and the sacrifice of all the world laid upon the altar of the cross, bleeding, and tortured, and dying, to reconcile his Father to us: and he was arrayed with ornaments more glorious than the robes of Aaron. The crown of thorns was his mitre, the cross his pastoral staff, the nails piercing his hands were instead of rings, the ancient ornament of priests, and his flesh rased and chequered with blue and blood, instead of the parti-coloured robe. But as this object calls for our devotion, our love and eucharist to our dearest Lord; so it must needs irreconcile us to sin, which in the eye of all the world brought so great shame, and pain, and amazement upon the Son of God, when he only became engaged by a charitable substitution of himself in our place; and therefore we are assured, by the demonstration of sense and experience, it will bring death and all imaginable miseries, as the just expressions of God's indignation and hatred. For to this we may apply the words of our Lord in the prediction of miseries to Jerusalem: 'If this be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' For it is certain

Christ infinitely pleased his Father ever, by becoming the person made guilty in estimate of law; and yet so great charity of our Lord, and the so great love and pleasure of his Father, exempted him not from suffering pains intolerable. And much less shall those escape who provoke and displease God, and 'despise so great salvation,' which the holy Jesus hath wrought with the expense of blood, and so precious a life.

7. But here we see a great representation and testimony of the divine justice, who was so angry with sin, who had so severely threatened it, who does so essentially hate it, that he would not spare his only Son, when he became a conjunct person, relative to the guilt, by undertaking the charges of our nature. For although God hath set down in holy Scripture the order of his justice, and the manner of its manifestation, that one soul should not perish for the sins of another;¹ yet this is meant for justice and for mercy too: that is he will not curse the son for the father's fault,² or in any relation whatsoever substitute one person for another, to make him involuntarily guilty; but when this shall be desired by a person that cannot finally perish, and does a mercy to the exempt persons, and is a voluntary act of the suscipient, and shall in the event also redound to an infinite good, it is no deflexion from the divine justice to excuse many by the affliction of one, who also for that very suffering shall have infinite compensation. We see that for the sin of Cham all his posterity were accursed: the subjects of David died with the plague, because their prince num-

¹ Ezek. xviii. 2, 3, 4, &c.

² Deut. xxiv. 16.

bered the people: idolatry is punished in the children of the fourth generation: Saul's seven sons were hanged for his breaking the league of Gibeon; and Ahab's sin was punished in his posterity, he escaping, and 'the evil was brought upon his house in his son's days.' In all these cases, the evil descended upon persons in near relation to the sinner, and was a punishment to him, and a misery to these; and were either chastisements also of their own sins; or, if they were not, they served other ends of providence, and led the afflicted innocent to a condition of recompence, accidentally procured by that infliction. But if for such relation's sake and economical and political conjunction, as between prince and people, the evil may be transmitted from one to another; much rather is it just, when by contract a competent and conjunct person undertakes to quit his relative. Thus, when the hand steals, the back is whipped; and an evil eye is punished with a hungry belly. Treason causes the whole family to be miserable; and a sacrilegious grandfather hath sent a locust to devour the increase of the nephews.

8. But in our case it is a voluntary contract, and therefore no injustice; all parties are voluntary. God is the supreme Lord, and his actions are the measure of justice: we, who had deserved the punishment, had great reason to desire a Redeemer; and yet Christ, who was to pay the ransom, was more desirous of it than we were, for we asked it not before it was promised and undertaken. But thus we see that sureties pay the obligation of the principal debtor, and the pledges of contracts have been, by the best and wisest nations, slain, when the articles have been broken: the Thessalians

slew two hundred and fifty pledges; the Romans three hundred of the Volsci, and threw the Tarantines from the Tarpeian rock.¹ And that it may appear Christ was a person in all senses competent to do this for us, himself testifies, that he had 'power over his own life, to take it up or lay it down.'² And therefore, as there can be nothing against the most exact justice and reason of laws and punishments, so it magnifies the divine mercy, who removes the punishment from us, who of necessity must have sunk under it; and yet makes us to adore his severity, who would not forgive us without punishing his Son for us; to consign unto us his perfect hatred against sin, to conserve the sacredness of his laws, and to imprint upon us great characters of fear and love. The famous Locrian, Zaleucus, made a law, that all adulterers should lose both their eyes. His son was first unhappily surprised in the crime; and his father, to keep a temper between the piety and soft spirit of a parent, and the justice and severity of a judge, put out one of his own eyes, and one of his son's.³ So God did with us: he made some abatement, that is, as to the person with whom he was angry, but inflicted his anger upon our Redeemer, whom he essentially loved, to secure the dignity of his sanctions and the sacredness of obedience; so marrying justice and mercy by the intervening of a commutation. Thus David escaped by the death of his son, God choosing that penalty for the ex-

¹ Livius, vide *L. Si quis rerum. D. de custod. et exhib. reorum. L. si à reo D. de fidejussoribus.*

² John, x. 18.

³ Apud Diodor. Sicul. et Ælian. "ἵνα μὴ ὁ νεανίσκος τυφλωθῆναι τελείως, ἐξ ἵνα μὴ διαφθαῖναι τὸ ἅπαζ κεκυρωμένον

piation ; and Cimon offered himself to prison, to purchase the liberty of his father, Miltiades. It was a filial duty in Cimon, and yet the law was satisfied. And both these concurred in our great Redeemer. For God, who was the sole arbitrator, so disposed it ; and the eternal Son of God submitted to this way of expiating our crimes ; and it became an argument of faith and belief of the great article of remission of sins, and other its appendant causes, and effects, and adjuncts : it being wrought by a visible and notorious passion. It was made an encouragement of hope ; for ‘ he that spared not his own Son’ to reconcile us, ‘ will with him give all things else’ to us so reconciled : and a great endearment of our duty and love, as it was a demonstration of his. And in all the changes and traverses of our life, he is made to us a great example of all excellent actions and all patient sufferings.

9. In the midst of two thieves, three long hours the holy Jesus hung clothed with pain, agony, and dishonour ; all of them so eminent and vast, that he who could not but hope, whose soul was enchased with divinity, and dwelt in the bosom of God, and in the cabinet of the mysterious Trinity, yet had a cloud of misery so thick and black drawn before him, that he complained as if God had forsaken him. But this was ‘ the pillar of a cloud,’ which conducted Israel into Canaan. And as God behind the cloud supported the holy Jesus, and stood ready to receive him into the union of his glories ; so his soul, in that great desertion, had internal comforts, proceeding from consideration of all those excellent persons which should be adopted into the fellowship of his sufferings, which

should imitate his graces, which should communicate in his glories. And we follow this cloud to our country, having Christ for our guide. And though he trod the way, leaning upon the cross, which, like the staff of Egypt, pierced his hands; yet it is to us a comfort and support, pleasant to our spirits as the sweetest canes, strong as the pillars of the earth, and made apt for our use by having been borne and made smooth by the hands of our elder brother.

10. In the midst of all his torments, Jesus only made one prayer of sorrow, to represent his sad condition to his Father; but no accent of murmur, no syllable of anger against his enemies: instead of that he sent up a holy, charitable, and effective prayer for their forgiveness; and by that prayer obtained of God that within fifty-five days eight thousand of his enemies were converted. So potent is the prayer of charity, that it prevails above the malice of men, turning the arts of Satan into the designs of God; and when malice occasions the prayer, the prayer becomes an antidote to malice. And by this instance our blessed Lord con-signed that duty to us, which in his sermons he had preached, that we should forgive our enemies, and pray for them; and by so doing, ourselves are freed from the stings of anger, and the storms of a revengeful spirit; and we oftentimes procure servants to God, friends to ourselves, and heirs to the kingdom of heaven.

11. Of the two thieves that were crucified together with our Lord, the one blasphemed; the other had at that time the greatest piety in the world, except that of the blessed virgin; and particularly had such a faith, that all the ages of the church could

never show the like.¹ For when he saw Christ 'in the same condemnation' with himself, crucified by the Romans, accused and scorned by the Jews, forsaken by his own apostles, a dying, distressed man, doing at that time no miracles to attest his divinity or innocence; yet then he confesses him to be a Lord, and a King, and his Saviour. He confessed his own shame and unworthiness; he submitted to the death of the cross; and, by his voluntary acceptance and tacit volition of it, made it equivalent to as great a punishment of his own susception. He showed an incomparable modesty, begging but for a remembrance only; he knew himself so sinful, he durst ask no more. He reproved the other thief for blasphemy; he confessed the world to come, and owned Christ publicly; he prayed to him, he hoped in him, and pitied him, showing an excellent patience in this sad condition. And in this I consider, that besides the excellency of some of these acts, and the goodness of all, the like occasion for so exemplary faith never can occur; and until all these things shall in these circumstances meet in any one man, he must not hope for so safe an exit, after an evil life, upon the confidence of this example. But now Christ had the key of paradise in his hand and God blessed the good thief with this opportunity of letting him in, who at another time might have waited longer, and been tied to harder con-

¹ *Latro non semper prædonem aut grassatorem denotat, sed militem, qui fortassis ob zelum Judæorum aliquid contra leges Romanas fecerat: alioqui vir fuit non omnino malus. — Titubaverunt qui viderunt Christum mortuos suscitantem; credidit ille qui videbat secum in ligno pendentem. Recolamus fidem latronis, quam non invenit Christus post resurrectionem in discipulis suis. S. August. Serm 144, de Tempore.*

ditions. And indeed it is very probable that he was much advantaged by the intervening accident of dying at the same time with Christ; there being a natural compassion produced in us towards the partners of our miseries. For Christ was not void of human passions, though he had in them no imperfection or irregularity; and therefore might be invited by the society of misery, the rather to admit him to participate his joys. And St. Paul proves him to be 'a merciful high-priest,' because 'he was touched with a feeling of our infirmities;' the first expression of which was to this blessed thief: Christ and he together sat at the supper of bitter herbs, and Christ paid his symbol, promising that he should that day be together with him in paradise.

12. By the cross of Christ stood the holy virgin mother, upon whom old Simeon's prophecy was now verified; for now she felt 'a sword passing through her very soul.'¹ She stood without clamour and womanish noises, sad, silent, and with a modest grief, deep as the waters of the abyss but smooth as the face of a pool; full of love and patience, and sorrow and hope. Now she was put to it to make use of all those excellent discourses her holy Son had used to build up her spirit, and fortify it against this day. Now she felt the blessings and strengths of faith; and she passed from the griefs of the passion to the expectation of the resurrection, and she rested in this death as in a sad remedy; for she knew it reconciled God with all the world. But her hope drew a veil before her sorrow; and though her grief was

¹ S. Ambrose, lib. x. in *Iac.*

great enough to swallow her up, yet her love was greater, and did swallow up her grief. But the sun also had a veil upon his face, and taught us to draw a curtain before the passion, which would be the most artificial expression of its greatness; whilst by silence and wonder we confess it great beyond our expression, or, which is all one, great as the burden and baseness of our sins; and with this veil drawn before the face of Jesus, let us suppose him at the gates of paradise, calling with his last words, in a loud voice, to have them opened, that the King of glory might come in.

THE PRAYER.

I.

O holy Jesus, who for our sakes didst suffer incomparable anguish and pains, commensurate to thy love and our miseries, which were infinite, that thou mightest purchase for us blessings upon earth, and an inheritance in heaven; dispose us by love, thankfulness, humility, and obedience, to receive all the benefit of thy passion; granting unto us and thy whole church remission of all our sins, integrity of mind, health of body, competent maintenance, peace in our days, a temperate air, fruitfulness of the earth, unity and integrity of faith, extirpation of heresies, reconciliation of schisms, destruction of all wicked counsels intended against us; and bind the hands of rapine and sacrilege, that they may not destroy the vintage, and root up the vine itself. Multiply thy blessings upon us, sweetest Jesus; increase in us true religion, sincere and actual devotion in our prayers, patience in troubles, and whatsoever is necessary to our soul's health, or conducin; to thy glory. Amen.

II.

O dearest Saviour, I adore thy mercies, and thy incomparable love, expressed in thy so voluntary susception and affectionate suf-

fering such horrid and sad tortures, which cannot be remembered without a sad compassion : the waters of bitterness entered into thy soul, and the storms of death and thy Father's anger broke thee all in pieces. And what shall I do, who by my sins have so tormented my dearest Lord ? What contrition can be great enough, what tears sufficiently expressive, what hatred and detestation of my crimes can be equal and commensurate to those sad accidents which they have produced ? Pity me, O Lord, pity me, dearest God ; turn those thy merciful eyes towards me, O most merciful Redeemer : for my sins are great, like unto thy passion, full of sorrow and shame, and a burden too great for me to bear. Lord, who hast done so much for me, now only speak the word, and thy servant shall be whole. Let thy wounds heal me, thy virtues amend me, thy death quicken me ; that I in this life, suffering the cross of a sad and salutary repentance, in the union and merits of thy cross and passion, may die with thee, and rest with thee, and rise again with thee, and live with thee for ever, in the possession of thy glories, O dearest Saviour Jesus. Amen.

SECTION XVI.

Of the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus.

1. WHILE it was yet early in the morning, upon the first day of the week, Mary Magdalen and Mary, the mother of James and Salome, brought sweet spices to the sepulchre, that they might again embalm the holy body; (for the rites of embalming among the Hebrews used to last forty days;¹) and their love was not satisfied with what Joseph had done. They therefore hastened to the grave; and after they had expended their money, and bought the spices, then begin to consider, who shall remove the stone: but yet they still go on, and their love answers the objection, not knowing how it should be done, but yet resolving to go through all the difficulties; but never remember to take care to pass the guards of soldiers. But when they came to the sepulchre, they found the guard affrighted and removed, and the stone rolled away: for there had a little before their arrival been a great earthquake, and ‘an angel descending from heaven rolled away the stone, and sat upon it;’² and for

¹ Gen. 1.; Tacit. Annal. lib. xxi.

² Aurora lucis rutilat,
 Cælum laudibus intonat,
 Mundus exultans jubilat,
 Gemens infernus ululat;
 Cum rex ille fortissimus,
 Mortis con fractis viribus,
 Pede conculcans Tartara,
 Solvit à pœna miseros.
 Ille qui clausus lapide
 Custoditur sub milite,
 Triumphans pompâ nobili,
 Victor surgit de funere.

fear of him the guards about the tomb became astonished with fear, and were like dead men: and some of them ran to the high-priests, and told them what had happened. But they now, resolving to make their iniquity safe and unquestionable by a new crime, hire the soldiers to tell an incredible and a weak fable, that his disciples came by night and stole him away: against which accident the wit of man could give no more security than themselves had made. The women entered into the sepulchre, and missing the body of Jesus, Mary Magdalen ran to the eleven apostles, complaining that the body of our Lord was not to be found. Then Peter and John ran as fast as they could to see: for the unexpectedness of the relation, the wonder of the story, and the sadness of the person, moved some affections in them, which were kindled by the first principles and sparks of faith, but were not made actual and definite, because the faith was not raised to a flame: they looked into the sepulchre, and finding not the body there, they returned. By this time Mary Magdalen was come back, and the women who stayed, weeping for their Lord's body, saw two angels sitting in white, the one at the head, and the other at the feet; at which unexpected sight they trembled, and bowed themselves: but an angel bid them not to fear; telling them, that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified, was also risen, and was not there; and called to mind what Jesus had told them in Galilee concerning his crucifixion, and resurrection the third day.

2. And Mary Magdalen turned herself back, and saw Jesus; but supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and

I will take him away. But Jesus said unto her, Mary.' Then she knew his voice, and with ecstasy of joy and wonder was ready to have crushed his feet with her embraces. But he commanded her not to touch him, but go to his brethren, and say, 'I ascend unto my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God.' Mary departed with satisfaction beyond the joys of a victory or a full vintage, and told these things to the apostles; but the narration seemed to them as talk of abused and fantastic persons. About the same time Jesus also appeared unto Simon Peter. Towards the declining of the day, two of his disciples going to Emmaus, sad, and discoursing of the late occurrences, Jesus puts himself into their company, and upbraids their incredulity, and expounds the Scriptures, that Christ ought to suffer, and rise again the third day; and in the breaking of bread disappeared; and so was known to them by vanishing away, whom present they knew not. And instantly they hasted to Jerusalem, and told the apostles what had happened.

3. And while they were there, that is, the same day, at evening, when the apostles were assembled, all save Thomas, 'secretly, for fear of the Jews, the doors being shut, Jesus came and stood in the midst of them. They were exceedingly troubled, supposing it had been a spirit.' But Jesus confuted them by the philosophy of their senses; by 'feeling his flesh and bones, which spirits have not:' for he gave them his benediction, 'showing them his hands and his feet.' At which sight they rejoiced with exceeding joy, and began to be restored to their indefinite hopes of some future felicity, by the return of their Lord to life: and

there he first breathed on them, giving them the Holy Ghost, and performing the promise twice made before his death, the promise of the keys, or of binding and loosing; saying, 'Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained. And that was the second part of clerical power with which Jesus instructed his disciples, in order to their great commission of preaching and government ecclesiastica^l. These things were told to Thomas, but he 'believed not,' and resolved against the belief of it, unless he might 'put his finger into his hands, and his hand into his side.' Jesus therefore, on the octave of his resurrection, appeared again to the apostles met together, and makes demonstration to Thomas, in conviction and reproof of his unbelief; promising a special benediction to all succeeding ages of the church; for they are such who 'saw not, and yet have believed.'

4. But Jesus, at his early appearing, had sent an order by the women, that the disciples should go into Galilee; and they did so, after a few days. And Simon Peter being there, went a fishing, and six other of the apostles with him, to the sea of Tiberias, where they 'laboured all night, and caught nothing.' Towards 'the morning, Jesus appeared to them,' and bade them 'cast the net on the right side of the ship;' which they did, and 'enclosed an hundred and fifty-three great fishes:' by which prodigious draught John, the beloved disciple, perceived 'it was the Lord.' At which instant 'Peter threw himself into the sea,' and went to Jesus; and when the rest were come to shore, they dined with broiled fish. After dinner, Jesus, taking care for those scattered sheep which were dispersed over

the face of the earth, that he might gather them into one sheepfold under one shepherd, asked Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? Peter answered, Yea, Lord; thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee. Then Jesus said unto him, Feed my lambs.’ And Jesus asked him the same question, and gave him the same precept, the second time, and the third time: for it was a considerable and a weighty employment, upon which Jesus was willing to spend all his endearments and stock of affections that Peter owed him, even upon the care of his little flock. And after the entrusting of this charge to him, he told him, that the reward he should have in this world, should be a sharp and an honourable martyrdom; and withal checks Peter’s curiosity in busying himself about the temporal accidents of other men; and enquiring what should become of John, the beloved disciple, Jesus answered this question with some sharpness of reprehension, and no satisfaction: ‘If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?’ Then they fancied that he should not die; but they were mistaken: for the intimation was expounded and verified, by St. John’s surviving the destruction of Jerusalem: for after the attempts of persecutors, and the miraculous escape of prepared torments, he died a natural death in a good old age.

5. After this, Jesus having appointed a solemn meeting for all the brethren that could be collected from the dispersion, and named a certain mountain in Galilee, ‘appeared to five hundred brethren at once:’ and this was his most public and solemn manifestation. And while some doubted, Jesus came, according to the designation, and spake to

the eleven; sent them to 'preach to all the world repentance and remission of sins in his name;' promising 'to be with them to the end of the world.' He appeared also unto James, but at what time is uncertain; save that there is something concerning it in the gospel of St Matthew, which the Nazarenes of Beræa used, and which it is likely themselves added out of report; for there is nothing of it in our Greek copies. The words are these: "When the Lord had given the linen in which he was wrapped, to the servant of the high-priest, he went and appeared unto James. For James had vowed, after he had received the Lord's supper, that he would eat no bread till he saw the Lord risen from the grave. Then the Lord called for bread, he blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to James the Just, and said, My brother, eat bread; for the Son of man is risen from the sleep of death." So that by this it should seem to be done upon the day of the resurrection. But the relation of it by St. Paul puts it between the appearance which he made to the five hundred, and that last to the apostles, when he was to ascend into heaven. Last of all, when the apostles were 'at dinner, he appeared to them, upbraiding their incredulity;' and 'then he opened their understanding, that they might discern the sense of Scripture;' and again commanded them to preach the gospel to all the world; giving them power 'to do miracles, to cast out devils, to cure diseases;' and instituted the sacrament of baptism, which he commanded should, together with the sermons of the gospel, be administered 'to all nations, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Then he led them into Judea, and they came to

Bethany, and from thence to the Mount Olivet: and he commanded them to stay in Jerusalem till the Holy Ghost, 'the promise of the Father, should descend upon them,' which should be accomplished in a few days; and then they should know the times and the seasons, and all things necessary for their ministration and service, and propagation of the gospel. And while he 'discoursed many things concerning the kingdom,' behold a cloud came and parted Jesus from them, and carried him in their sight up into heaven, where he sits at the right hand of God, blessed for ever. Amen.

6. While his apostles 'stood gazing up to heaven, two angels appeared to them, and told them, that 'Jesus should come in like manner as he was taken away;' viz. with glory and majesty, and in the clouds, and with the ministry of angels. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly.'

AD. SECTION XVI.

Considerations upon the Accidents happening in the interval after the Death of the holy Jesus, until his Resurrection.

1. THE holy Jesus promised to the blessed thief, that he should 'that day be with him in paradise;' which therefore was certainly a place or state of blessedness, because it was a promise; and in the society of Jesus, whose penal and afflictive part of his work of redemption was finished upon the cross. Our blessed Lord did not promise he should that day be with him in his kingdom; for that day it was not opened, and the everlasting doors of those

interior recesses were to be shut till after the resurrection, that himself was to ascend thither, and make way for all his servants to enter, in the same method in which he went before us. Our blessed Lord 'descended into hell,' saith the creed of the apostles, from the sermon of St. Peter, as he from the words of David; that is, into the state of separation and common receptacle of spirits, according to the style of Scripture. But the name of 'hell' is no where in Scripture an appellative of the kingdom of Christ, of the place of final and supreme glory. But concerning the verification of our Lord's promise to the beatified thief, and his own state of separation, we must take what light we can from Scripture, and what we can from the doctrine of the primitive church. St. Paul had two great revelations: he was 'rapt up into paradise,' and he was 'rapt up into the third heaven:' and these he calls 'visions and revelations;' not one, but divers:² for paradise is distinguished from the heaven of the blessed, being itself a receptacle of holy souls, made illustrious with visitation of angels, and happy by being a repository of such spirits, who at the day of judgment shall go forth into eternal glory. In the interim, Christ hath trod all the paths before us; and this also we must pass through, to arrive at the courts of heaven. Justin Martyr said, it was the doctrine of heretical persons, to say that the souls of the blessed, instantly upon the separation from their bodies, enter into the highest heaven.³ And Irenæus makes heaven,

¹ Symbolum Aquileiense, et ex eo Romanum hodiernum.

² Methodius Cont. Origen. apud Epiphan. Idem ait Moscs Barcephas, lib. de Paradiso, p. iv. cap. 7.

³ Dial. adv. Tryphon.

and the intermediate receptacle of souls to be distinct places; both blessed, but hugely differing in degrees.¹ Tertullian is dogmatical in the assertion, that till the voice of the great archangel be heard, and as long as Christ sits at the right hand of his Father, making intercession for the church, so long blessed souls must expect the assembling of their brethren, the great congregation of the church, that they may all pass from their outer courts into the inward tabernacle, the holy of holies, to the throne of God.² And as it is certain that no soul could enter into glory before our Lord entered, by whom we hope to have access; so it is most agreeable to the proportion of the mysteries of our redemption, that we believe the entrance into glory to have been made by our Lord at his glorious ascension; and that his soul went not thither before then, to come back again, to be contracted into the span of humanity, and dwell forty days in his body upon earth. But that he should return from paradise, that is, from the common receptacle of departed spirits who died in the love of God, to earth again, had in it no lessening of his condition, since himself in mercy called back Lazarus from thence; and some others also returned to live a life of grace, which in all senses is less than the least of glories. Sufficient it is to us, that all holy souls departing go into the hands, that is, into the custody of our Lord; that they ‘rest from their labours, that their works

¹ Lib. v. cap. 3.

² Lib. de Anima; et de Præscript. Idem Sentiunt Scriptor. Resp. ad Orthod. q. 76. S. Greg. Nazianz. Orat. 10. S. Chrysost. Hom. 15, in Matth. S. Ambr. in Micheam. Cyrilli Liturg. Epiphani. ep. apud S. Hier. Theodoretus. Theophylactus, et vett. passim.

shall follow them ;¹ and overtake them too, at the day of judgment : that they are happy presently ; that they are visited by angels ; that God sends, as he pleases, excellent irradiations and types of glory to entertain them in their mansions ;² that their condition is secured : but the crown of righteousness is laid up against the great day of judgment,³ and then to be produced, and given to St. Paul, and to all that love the coming of our Lord ; that is, to all who either here in duty, or in their receptacles, with joy and certain hope, long for the revelation of that day. At the day of judgment Christ will ‘ send the angels, and they shall gather together the elect from the four winds ;’⁴ and all the refuse of men, evil persons, they shall throw into everlasting burning. Then our blessed Lord shall call to the elect to enter into the kingdom, and reject the cursed into the portion of devils ; for whom the fire is but now prepared in the interval, For ‘ we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ,’ saith St. Paul ; ‘ that every man may receive in his body according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil.’⁵ Out of the body the reception of the reward is not : and therefore St. Peter affirms, that ‘ God hath delivered the evil angels into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.’⁶ And St. Jude saith, that ‘ the angels

¹ Rev. xiv. 13.

² Just. Mart. 75, inter quæst. ad Gentiles : says, “ That the good are immediately after death carried into paradise, where they behold the faces of angels and the vision of Christ.”

³ 2 Tim. iv. 8.

⁴ Matt. xiii. 41 ; xxiv. 31.

⁵ 2 Cor. v. 10 “ *ἵνα κομίζηται ἕκαστος τὰ ἴδια τῷ σώματι* sic quidam Cod. *τὰ εἰς τῷ σώματι*. sic communiter, et rectius.

⁶ 2 Pet. ii. 4.

which kept not their first faith, but left their first habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.¹ And therefore the devils expostulated with our blessed Saviour, ‘Art thou come to torment us before the time?’² And the same also he does to evil men, ‘reserving the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.’³ For since the actions which are to be judged are the actions of the whole man, so also must be the judicature. And our blessed Saviour intimated this to his apostles: ‘In my Father’s house are many mansions: but I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go away, I will come again, and take you unto me; that where I am, there ye may be also.’⁴ At Christ’s second coming this is to be performed.⁵ Many outer courts, many different places or different states there may be; and yet there is a place whither holy souls shall arrive at last, which was not then ready for us; and was not to be entered into, until the entrance of our Lord had made the preparation; and that is certainly the highest heaven, called by St. Paul, the third heaven: because the other receptacles were ready, and full of holy souls, patriarchs, and prophets, and holy men of God; concerning whom St. Paul affirms expressly, that ‘the fathers received not the promises; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect:’⁶ therefore cer-

¹ Jude, 6.

² Matt. viii. 29.

³ 2 Pet. ii. 9. Lactant. lib. vii. c. 21, says, “Let it not be supposed that the souls of men are immediately judged; for they are detained in one common receptacle till the time appointed for judgment.”

⁴ John, xiv. 2, 3. ⁵ Satiabor cum apparueris. Psal. xvii. 15.

⁶ Heb. xi. 40; Irenæus, lib. v. adv. Hæres. ad. fin. Origen.

tain it is that their condition was a state of imperfection; and yet they were placed in paradise, in Abraham's bosom; and thither Christ went, and the blessed thief attended him. And then it was that Christ made their condition better. For though still it be a place of relation in order to something beyond it, yet the term and object of their hope is changed. They sat in the regions of darkness, expecting that great promise made to Adam and the patriarchs, the promise of the Messiah: but when he that was promised came, he preached to the spirits in prison; he communicated to them the mysteries of the gospel, the secrets of the kingdom, the things hidden from eternal ages; and taught them to look up to the glories purchased by his passion, and made the term of their expectation be his second coming, and the objects of their hope the glories of the beatific vision. And, although the state of separation is sometimes in Scripture called heaven, and sometimes hell; (for these words in Scripture are of large significations;) yet it is never called the third heaven, nor the hell of the damned: for although concerning it nothing is clearly revealed, or what is their portion till the day of judgment; yet it is intimated in a parable, that between good and evil spirits, even in the state of separation, there is distance of place. Certain it is, there is great distance of condition: and as the holy souls in their regions of light are full of love, joy, hope, and longing for the coming of the great day; so the accursed do expect it with an in-

Hom. 7, in Levit.; Chrysostom. Hom. 39, in 1 Cor.; Theodoret; Theophyl.; Oecumenius in Heb. 11; S. Aug. lib. i.; Retract. c. 14; Victorin. Mart. in c. 6; Apoc. Ambros. de bono Mortis, c. 10, 11.

supportable amazement, and are presently tormented with apprehensions of the future. Happy are they that through paradise pass into the kingdom; who from their highest hope pass to the greatest charity; from the state of a blessed separation to the mercies and gentle sentence of the day of judgment,¹ which St. Paul prayed to God to grant Onesiphorus; and more explicitly for the Thessalonians, 'that their whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus.'² And I pray God to grant the same to me, and all faithful people whatsoever.

2. As soon as the Lord had given up his Spirit into the hands of God, the veil of the temple was rent; the angels, guardians of the place, deserted it; the rites of Moses were laid open, and the enclosures of the tabernacle were disparked; the earth trembled, the graves were opened, and all the old world and the old religion were so shaken towards their first chaos, that if God had not supported the one, and reserved the other for an honourable burial, the earth had left to support her children, and the synagogue had been thrown out to an inglorious exposition and contempt. But yet in these symbols these were changed from their first condition, and passed into a new dominion; all old things passed away, and all things became new; the earth and the heavens were reckoned as a new creation; they passed into another kingdom, under Christ their Lord; and as before the creatures

¹ 2 Tim. i. 18.

² 1 Thess. v. 23; vide Irenæum in hunc locum, lib. v. c. 6, adv. Hæres. ubi probat absque unione corporis, animæ et spiritûs, hominem non esse.

were servants of human necessities, they now become servants of election, and in order to the ends of grace, as before of nature; Christ having now the power to dispose of them in order to his kingdom, and by the administration of his own wisdom. And at the instant of these accidents, God so determined the persuasions of men, that they referred these prodigies to the honour of Christ, and took them as testimonies of that truth, for the affirmation of which the high-priest had condemned our dearest Lord. And although the heart of the priest rent not, even then when rocks did tear in pieces; yet the people who saw the passion smote their breasts, and returned, and confessed Christ.¹

3. The graves of the dead were opened at the death, but the dead bodies of the saints that slept arose not till the resurrection of our Lord:² for he was the first-fruits, and they followed him as instant witnesses, to publish the resurrection of their head; which it is possible they declared to those to whom they appeared in the holy city. And amongst these, the curiosity or pious credulity of some have supposed Adam and Eve, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; who therefore were careful to be buried in the land of promise, as having some intimation or hope that they might be partakers of the earliest glories of the Messiah, in whose faith and distant expectation they lived and died. And this calling up of company from their graves, did publish to all the world, not only that the Lord himself was risen, according to his so frequent and repeated predictions, but that he meant to raise up all his

¹ S. Ambros. lib. x. in Lucam.

² Euseb. Emis. Hom. 6, de Pasch.

servants; and that all who believe in him should be partakers of the resurrection.¹

4. When the soldiers observed that Jesus was dead, out of spite and impotent ineffective malice, one of them pierced his holy side with a spear; and the rock being smitten, it gushed out with water and blood;² streaming forth two sacraments to refresh the church, and opening a gate that all his brethren might enter in, and dwell in the heart of God. And so great a love had our Lord, that he suffered his heart to be opened; to show, that as Eve was formed from the side of Adam, so was the church to be from the side of her Lord, receiving from thence life and spiritual nutriment; which he ministered in so great abundance, and suffered himself to be pierced, that all his blood did stream over us, until he made the fountain dry, and reserved nothing of that by which he knew his church was 'to live, and move, and have her being.' Thus the stream of blood issued out to become a fountain for the sacrament of the chalice, and water gushed out to fill the fonts of baptism and repentance. The blood, being the testimony of the divine love, calls upon us to die for his love, when he requires it; and the noise of the water calls upon us to purify our spirits, and present our conscience to Christ, 'holy and pure, without spot or wrinkle.' The blood running upon us, makes us to be of the cognation and family of God; and the water quenches the flames of hell, and the fires of concupiscence.

5. The friends and disciples of the holy Jesus,

¹ Ἐλυτρώητο πάντες οἱ ἰκατοὶ ἔς κατέπιεν ὁ θάνατος.

² S. Cyr. Catech. et Chrysost. Hom. 88, in 27 Mat.

having devoutly composed his body to burial anointed it, washed it, and conditèd it with spices and perfumes, laid it in a sepulchre hewn from a rock in a garden : which (saith Euthymius) was therefore done, to represent that we were by this death returned to paradise, and the gardens of pleasures and divine favours, from whence, by the prevarication of Adam, man was expelled. Here he finished the work of his passion, as he had begun it, in a garden; and the place of the sepulchre, being a rock, serves the ends of pious succeeding ages : for the place remains in all changes of government, of wars, of earthquakes, and ruder accidents, to this day, as a memorial of the sepulchre of our dearest Lord, as a sensible and proper confirmation of the persuasions of some persons, and as an entertainment of their pious fancy, and religious affections.

6. But now it was that in the dark and undiscerned mansions there was a scene of the greatest joy and the greatest horror represented, which yet was known since the first falling of the morning stars. Those holy souls whom the prophet Zechariah calls ‘ prisoners of hope, lying in the lake where there is no water ;’[†] that is, no constant stream of joy to refresh their present condition, (yet supported with certain showers and gracious visitations from God, and illuminations of their hope,) now that they saw their Redeemer come to change their condition, and to improve it into the neighbourhoods of glory and clearer revelation, must needs have the joy of intelligent and beati-

[†] Zech. ix. 11, 12.

fied understandings, of redeemed captives, of men forgiven after the sentence of death, of men satisfied after a tedious expectation, enjoying and seeing their Lord, whom for so many ages they had expected. But the accursed spirits, seeing the darkness of their prison shine with a new light, and their empire invaded, and their retirements of horror discovered, wondered how a man durst venture thither, or if he were a God, how he should come to die. But the holy Jesus was like that body of light, receiving into himself the reflection of all the lesser rays of joy which the patriarchs felt, and being united to his fountain of felicity, apprehended it yet more glorious. He now felt the effects of his bitter passion to return upon him in comforts, every hour of which was abundant recompence for three hours' passion upon the cross; and became to us a great precedent, to invite us to a toleration of the acts of repentance, mortification, and martyrdom, and that, in times of suffering, we live upon the stock and expense of faith; as remembering, that these few moments of infelicity are infinitely paid with every minute of glory, and yet that the glory which is certainly consequent, is so lasting and perpetual, that it were enough, in a lower joy, to make amends by its continuation of eternity. And let us but call to mind what thoughts we shall have when we die, or are dead; how we shall then, without prejudice, consider, that if we had done our duty, the trouble and the affliction would now be past, and nothing remain but pleasures and felicities eternal; and how infinitely happy we shall then be, if we have done our duty, and how miserable if not; all the plea-

tures of sin disappearing, and nothing surviving, but a certain and everlasting torment.¹ Let us carry alway the same thoughts with us which must certainly then intervene, and we shall meet the holy Jesus, and partake of his joys, which overflowed his holy soul when he first entered into the possession of those excellent fruits and effects of his passion.

7. When the third day was come, the soul of Jesus returned from paradise, and the visitation of separate spirits, and re-entered into his holy body, which he by his divine power did redintegrate, filling his veins with blood, healing all the wounds, excepting those five of his hands, feet, and side, which he reserved as trophies of his victory, and arguments of his passion. And as he had comforted the souls of the fathers with the presence of his Spirit, so now he saw it to be time to bring comfort to his holy mother, to re-establish the tottering faith of his disciples, to verify his promise, to make demonstration of his divinity, to lay some superstructures of his church upon the foundation of his former sermons, to instruct them in the mysteries of his kingdom, to prepare them for the reception of the Holy Ghost. And as he had, in his state of separation, triumphed over hell, so in his resurrection he set his foot upon death, and brought it under his dominion; so that although it was not yet destroyed, yet it is made his subject. It hath as yet the condition of the Gibeonites, who were not banished out of the land, but they were made 'drawers of water and hewers of wood:' so is death made instrumental to Christ's kingdom, but it

¹ Musonius apud A. Gellium, lib. xvi. c. 1.

abides still, and shall till the day of judgment; but shall serve the ends of our Lord, and promote the interests of eternity, and do benefit to the church.

8. And it is considerable, that our blessed Lord having told them that after three days he would rise again, yet he shortened the time as much as was possible, that he might verify his own prediction, and yet make his absence the least troublesome. He rises 'early in the morning, the first day of the week.' For so our dearest Lord abbreviates the days of our sorrow, and lengthens the years of our consolation. For he knows that a day of sorrow seems a year, and a year of joy passes like a day; and therefore God lessens the one and lengthens the other, to make this perceived and that supportable. Now the temple which the Jews destroyed, God raised up in six-and-thirty hours. But this second temple was more glorious than the first; for now it was clothed with robes of glory and clarity, agility and immortality. And though, like Moses descending from the mount, he wore a veil, that the greatness of his splendour might not render him unapt for conversation with his servants; yet the holy Scripture affirms that he was 'now no more to see corruption;' meaning, that now he was separate from the passibility and affections of human bodies, and could suffer St. Thomas to thrust his hand into the wound of his side, and his finger into the holes of his hands, without any grief or smart.

9. But although the graciousness and care of the Lord had prevented all diligence, and satisfied all desires, returning to life before the most forward faith could expect him; yet there were three

Marys went to the grave so early, that they prevented the rising of the sun; and though with great obedience they staid till the end of the sabbath, yet, as soon as that was done, they had other parts of duty and affection, which called with greatest importunity to be speedily satisfied. And if obedience had not bound the feet of love, they had gone the day before; but they became to us admirable patterns of obedience to the divine commandments. For though love were 'stronger than death,' yet obedience was stronger than love, and made a rare dispute in the spirits of those holy women, in which the flesh and the spirit were not the litigants, but the spirit and the spirit; and they resisted each other as the angel-guardian of the Jews resisted the tutelar angel of Persia, each striving who should with most love and zeal perform their charge; and God determined: and so he did here too. For the law of the sabbath was then a divine commandment; and although piety to the dead, and to such a dead, was ready to force their choice to do violence to their will, bearing them upon wings of desire to the grave of the Lord; yet at last they reconciled love with obedience: for they had been taught, that love is best expressed in keeping of the divine commandments. But now they were at liberty; and sure enough they made use of its first minute, and going so early to see Christ, they were sure they should find him.

10. The angels descended guardians of the sepulchre; for God sent his guards too, and they affrighted the watch appointed by Pilate and the priests. But when the women came, they spake like comforters, full of sweetness and consolation,

laying aside their affrighting glories; as knowing it is the will of their Lord, that they should minister good to them that love him. But a conversation with angels could not satisfy them who came to look for the Lord of the angels, and found him not. And when the Lord was pleased to appear to Mary Magdalen, she was so swallowed up with love and sorrow, that she entered into her joy and perceived it not; she saw the Lord, and knew him not. For so, from the closets of darkness they that immediately stare upon the sun, perceive not the beauties of the light, and feel nothing but amazement. But the voice of the Lord opened her eyes, and she knew him and worshipped him, but was denied to touch him, and commanded to tell the apostles. For therefore God ministers to us comforts and revelations; not that we may dwell in the sensible fruition of them ourselves alone, but that we communicate the grace to others. But when the other women were returned and saw the Lord, then they were all together admitted to the embracement, and to kiss the feet of Jesus: for God hath his opportunities and periods which at another time he denies: and we must then rejoice in it when he vouchsafes it; and submit to his divine will, when he denies it.

11. These good women had the first-fruits of the apparition: for their forward love, and the passion of their religion, made greater haste to entertain a grace, and was a greater endearment of their persons to our Lord than a more sober, reserved, and less active spirit. This is more safe, but that is religious; this goes to God by the way of understanding, that by the will; this is supported by discourse, that by passions; this is the sobriety of the

apostles, the other was the zeal of the holy women. And because a strong fancy and an earnest passion, fixed upon holy objects, are the most active and forward instruments of devotion, as devotion is of love; therefore we find that God hath made great expressions of his acceptance of such dispositions. And women, and less knowing persons, and tender dispositions, and pliant natures, will make up a greater number in heaven, than the severe, and wary, and enquiring people; who sometimes love because they believe, and believe because they can demonstrate, but never believe because they love. When a great understanding, and a great affection meet together, it makes a saint great, like an apostle; but they do not well who make abatement of their religious passions by the severity of their understanding. It is no matter by which we are brought to Christ, so we love him and obey him: but if the production admit of degrees, that instrument is the most excellent which produces the greatest love. And although discourse and a sober spirit be in itself the best, yet we do not always suffer that to be a parent of as great religion as the good women make their fancy, their softness, and their passion.

12. Our blessed Lord appeared next to Simon: and though he and John ran forth together, and St. John outran Simon; although Simon Peter had denied and forsworn his Lord, and St. John never did, and followed him to his passion and his death; yet Peter had the favour of seeing Jesus first. Which some spiritual persons understand as a testimony, that penitent sinners have accidental eminencies and privileges sometimes indulged to them beyond the temporal graces of the just and innocent, as being such who not only need defensatives

against the remanent and inherent evils even of repented sins, and their aptnesses to relapse; but also because those who are true penitents, who understand the infiniteness of the divine mercy, and that for a sinner to pass from death to life, from the state of sin into pardon and the state of grace is a greater gift, and a more excellent and improbable mutation, than for a just man to be taken into glory;¹ out of gratitude to God, and endearment for so great a change, added to a fear of returning to such danger and misery, will reinforce all their industry and double their study, and observe more diligently, and watch more carefully, and ‘redeem the time,’ and make amends for their omissions, and oppose a good to the former evils, besides the duties of the present employment; and then, commonly, the life of a holy penitent is more holy, active, zealous, and impatient of vice, and more rapacious of virtue and holy actions, and arises to greater degrees of sanctity, than the even and moderate affections of just persons, who (as our blessed Saviour’s expression is) ‘need no repentance;’ that is, no change of state, nothing but a perseverance, and an improvement of degrees. ‘There is more joy in heaven, before the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need it not;’ for, ‘where sin hath abounded, there doth grace superabound;’² and that makes joy in heaven.

13. The holy Jesus having received the affections of his most passionate disciples, the women and St.

¹ “It is a greater wonder,” says St. Augustine “that a sinner should pass from a state of sin to a state of grace, than that he should pass from this world into heaven”

² Luke, xv. 7.

Peter, puts himself upon the way into the company of two good men going to Emmaus, with troubled spirits and a reeling faith, shaking all its upper building, but leaving some of its foundation firm. To them the Lord discourses of the necessity of the death and resurrection of the Messias, and taught them not to take estimate of the counsels of God by the designs and proportions of man: for God, by ways contrary to human judgment, brings to pass the purposes of his eternal providence. The glories of Christ were not made pompous by human circumstances; his kingdom was spiritual; he was to enter into felicities through the gates of death; he refused to do miracles before Herod, and yet did them before the people; he confuted his accusers by silence; and did not descend from the cross when they offered to believe in him if he would, but left them to be persuaded by greater arguments of his power, the miraculous circumstances of his death, and the glories of his resurrection; and by walking in the secret paths of divine election, hath commanded us to adore his footsteps, to admire and revere his wisdom, to be satisfied with all the events of providence, and to rejoice in him, if by afflictions he makes us holy, if by persecutions he supports and enlarges his church, if by death he brings us to life. So we arrive at the communion of his felicities, we must let him choose the way; it being sufficient that he is our guide, and our support, and our ‘exceeding great reward.’ For therefore Christ preached to the two disciples, going to Emmaus, the way of the cross, and the necessity of that passage, that the wisdom of God might be glorified, and the conjectures of man ashamed. But whilst his discourse

lasted, they knew him not; but in the breaking of bread he discovered himself. For he turned their meal into a sacrament, and their darkness to light; and having to his sermon added the sacrament, opened all their discerning faculties, the eyes of their body and their understanding too; to represent to us, that when we are blessed with the opportunities of both those instruments, we want no exterior assistance to guide us in the way to the knowing and enjoying of our Lord.

14. But the apparitions which Jesus made were all upon the design of laying the foundation of all Christian graces; for the begetting and establishing faith and an active confidence in their persons, and building them up on the great fundamentals of the religion. And therefore he appointed a general meeting upon a mountain in Galilee, that the number of witnesses might not only disseminate the fame, but establish the article of the resurrection; for upon that are built all the hopes of a Christian; and 'if the dead rise not, then we are of all men the most miserable,' in quitting the present possessions, and entertaining injuries and affronts without hopes of reparation. But we lay two gages in several repositories: the body in the bosom of the earth, the soul in the bosom of God; and as we here live by faith, and lay them down with hope, so the resurrection is a restitution of them both, and a state of reunion. And therefore although the glory of our spirits without the body were joy great enough to make compensation for more than the troubles of all the world; yet because one shall not be glorified without the other, they being of themselves incomplete substances, and God having revealed nothing clearly concern-

ing actual and complete felicities till the day of judgment, when it is promised our bodies shall rise; therefore it is that the resurrection is the great article upon which we rely, and which Christ took so much care to prove and ascertain to so many persons; because if that should be disbelieved with which all our felicities are to be received, we have nothing to establish our faith, or entertain our hope, or satisfy our desires, or make retribution for that state of secular inconveniences in which, by the necessities of our nature, and the humility and patience of our religion, we are engaged.

15. But I consider that Holy Scripture only instructs us concerning the life of this world and the life of the resurrection, the life of grace and the life of glory, both in the body; that is, a life of the whole man: and whatsoever is spoken of the soul, considers it as an essential part of man, relating to his whole constitution, not as it is of itself an intellectual and separate substance; for all its actions which are separate and removed from the body are relative and incomplete. Now because the soul is an incomplete substance, and created in relation to the body, and is but a part of the whole man, if the body were as eternal and incorruptible as the soul, yet the separation of the one from the other would be, as now it is, that which we call natural death; and supposing that God should preserve the body for ever, or restore it at the day of judgment to its full substance and perfect organs, yet the man would be dead for ever, if the soul for ever should continue separate from the body. So that the other life, that is, the state of resurrection, is a reuniting soul and body.

And although, in a philosophical sense, the resurrection is of the body, that is, a restitution of our flesh and blood and bones, and is called resurrection, as the entrance into the state of resurrection may have the denomination of the whole; yet in the sense of Scripture the resurrection is the restitution of our life, the renovation of the whole man, the state of reunion; and, until that be, the man is not, but he is dead, and only his essential parts are deposited and laid up in trust; and therefore whatsoever the soul does or perceives in its incomplete condition, is but to it as embalming and honourable funerals to the body, and a safe monument to preserve it in order to a living again; and the felicities of the interval are wholly in order to the next life. And therefore, if there were to be no resurrection, as these intermediate joys should not be at all, so as they are, they are but relative and incomplete: and therefore all our hopes, all our felicities depend upon the resurrection; without it we should never be persons, men or women: and then the state of separation could be nothing but a phantasm, trees ever in blossom, never bearing fruit, corn for ever in the blade, eggs always in the shell, a hope eternal never to pass into fruition; that is, for ever to be deluded, for ever to be miserable. And therefore it was an elegant expression of St. Paul, 'Our life is hid with Christ in God;' that is, our life is passed into custody, the dust of our body is numbered, and the spirit is refreshed, visited, and preserved in celestial mansions: but it is not properly called a life; for all this while the man is dead, and

¹ Coloss. iii 3.

shall then live when Christ produces this hidden life at the great day of restitution. But our faith of all this article is well wrapped up in the words of St. John: 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.'¹ The middle state is not it which Scripture hath propounded to our faith, or to our hope; the reward is then when Christ shall appear; but in the meantime the soul can converse with God and with angels, just as the holy prophets did in their dreams, in which they received great degrees of favour and revelation.² But this is not to be reckoned any more than an entrance or a waiting for the state of our felicity. And since the glories of heaven is the great fruit of election, we may consider that the body is not predestinate, nor the soul, alone, but the whole man; and, until the parts embrace again in an essential complexion, it cannot be expected either of them should receive the portion of the predestinate. But the article and the event of future things is rarely set in order by St. Paul: 'But ye are come into the Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, (and then follows after this general assembly, after the Judge of all appears,) to the

¹ 1 John, iii. 2.

² Όταν ἐν τῷ ὕπνῳ καθ' ἑαυτὴν γενήσῃται ἡ ψυχὴ, τότε τὴν ἰδίαν ἀπολαβῆσα φύσιν, προμαντιέται τι ἐξ προαγορεύει τὰ μέλλοντα· τοιαύτη δὲ ἐστὶ ἐν τῷ κατὰ τὸν θάνατον χαρίζεσθαι τῶν σωμάτων.—Arist. apud Sext. Empiric.

spirits of just men made perfect ;¹ that is, reunited to their bodies, and entering into glory. The beginning of the contrary opinion brought some new practices and appendant persuasions into the church, or at least promoted them much. For those doctors who, receding from the primitive belief of this article, taught that the glories of heaven are fully communicated to the souls before the day of judgment, did also, upon that stock, teach the invocation of saints, whom they believed to be received into glory ; and insensibly also brought in the opinion of purgatory, that the less perfect souls might be glorified in the time that they assigned them. But the safer opinion and more agreeable to piety, is that which I have now described from Scripture and the purest ages of the church.

16. When Jesus appeared to the apostles, he gave them his peace for a benediction ; and when he departed, he left them peace for a legacy ; and gave them, according to two former promises, the power of making peace, and reconciling souls to God by a ministerial act ; so conveying his Father's mercy, which himself procured by his passion, and actuates by his intercession and the giving of his grace, that he might comply with our infirmities, and minister to our needs by instruments even and proportionate to ourselves ; making our brethren the conduits of his grace, that the excellent effect of the Spirit might not descend upon us, as the law upon Mount Sinai, in expresses of greatness and terror, but in earthen vessels, and images of infirmity ; so God manifesting his power in the

¹ Heb. xii. 22, 23

smallness of the instrument, and descending to our needs, not only in giving the grace of pardon, but also in the manner of its ministration. And I meditate upon the greatness of this mercy, by comparing this grace of God, and the blessing of the judgment and sentence we receive at the hand of the church, with the judgment which God makes at the hour of death upon them who have despised this mercy, and neglected all the other parts of their duty. The one is a judgment of mercy, the other of vengeance: in the one the devil is the accuser, and heaven and earth bear witness; in the other the penitent sinner accuses himself: in that the sinner gets a pardon, in the other he finds no remedy: in that all his good deeds are remembered and returned, and his sins are blotted out; in the other all his evil deeds are represented with horror and a sting, and remain for ever: in the first the sinner changes his state for a state of grace, and only smarts in some temporal austerities and acts of exterior mortification; in the second his temporal estate is changed to an eternity of pain: in the first the sinner suffers the shame of one man or one society, which is sweetened by consolation, and homilies of mercy and health; in the latter, all his sins are laid open before all the world, and himself confounded in eternal amazement and confusions; in the judgment of the church, the sinner is honoured by all for returning to the bosom of his mother, and the embraces of his heavenly Father; in the judgment of vengeance he is laughed at by God, and mocked by accursed spirits, and perishes without pity: in this he is prayed for by none, helped by none, comforted by none, and he makes himself a companion

of devils to everlasting ages ; but in the judgment of repentance and tribunal of the church, the penitent sinner is prayed for by the whole army of militant saints, and causes joy to all the church triumphant. And to establish this tribunal in the church, and to transmit pardon to penitent sinners, and a salutary judgment upon the person and the crime, and to appoint physicians and guardians of the soul, was one of the designs and mercies of the resurrection of Jesus. And let not any Christian man, either by false opinion or an unbelieving spirit, or an incurious apprehension, undervalue or neglect this ministry, which Christ hath so sacredly and solemnly established. Happy is he that dashes his sins against the rock upon which the church is built, that the church gathering up the planks and fragments of the shipwreck, and the shivers of the broken heart, may reunite them ; pouring oil into the wounds made by the blows of sin, and restoring, with meekness, gentleness, care, counsel, and authority, persons overtaken in a fault. For that act of ministry is not ineffectual which God hath promised shall be ratified in heaven ; and that authority is not contemptible which the holy Jesus conveyed, by breathing upon his church the Holy Ghost. But Christ intended that those whom he had made guides of our souls, and judges of our consciences, in order to counsel and ministerial pardon, should also be used by us in all cases of our souls ; and that we go to heaven the way he hath appointed ; that is, by offices and ministries ecclesiastical.

17. When our blessed Lord had so confirmed the faith of the church, and appointed an ecclesiastical ministry, he had but one work more to do

upon earth, and that was the institution of the holy sacrament of baptism ; which he ordained as a solemn initiation and mysterious profession of the faith upon which the church is built ; making it a solemn publication of our profession, the rite of stipulation or entering covenant with our Lord, and the solemnity of the paction evangelical, in which we undertake to be disciples to the holy Jesus ; that is, to believe his doctrine, to fear his threatenings, to rely upon his promises, and to obey his commandments all the days of our life.¹ And he for his part actually performs much, and promises more ; he takes off all the guilt of our preceding days, purging our souls and making them clean as in the day of innocence ; promising withal, that if we perform our undertaking, and remain in the state in which he now puts us, he will continually assist us with his Spirit, prevent and attend us with his grace ; he will deliver us from the power of the devil ; he will keep our souls in merciful, joyful, and safe custody, till the great day of the Lord ; he will then raise our bodies from the grave, he will make them to be spiritual and immortal, he will re-unite them to our souls, and beatify both bodies and souls in his own kingdom, admitting them into eternal and unspeakable glories.² All which that he might verify and prepare respectively, in the presence of his disciples he ascended into the bosom of God, and the eternal comprehensions of celestial glory.

¹ Mark, xvi. 16 ; Acts, ii. 38 ; xxii. 16 ; Rom. vi. 3, 4 ; Eph. iv. 5, &c. ; 1 Cor. xii. 13 ; Col. ii. 13 ; Gal. iii. 27 ; 1 Pet. iii. 21.

² Matt. xxviii. 20.

THE PRAYER.

O holy and eternal Jesus, who hast overcome death, and triumphed over all the powers of hell, darkness, sin, and the grave, manifesting the truth of thy promises, the power of thy divinity, the majesty of thy person, the rewards of thy glory, and the mercies and excellent designs of thy evangelical kingdom, by thy glorious and powerful resurrection, preserve my soul from eternal death, and make me to rise from the death of sin, and to live the life of grace ; loving thy perfections, adoring thy mercy, pursuing the interest of thy kingdom, being united to the church under thee our head, conforming to thy holy laws, established in faith, entertained and confirmed with a modest, humble, and certain hope, and sanctified by charity ; that I, engraving thee in my heart, and submitting to thee in my spirit, and imitating thee in thy glorious example, may be partaker of thy resurrection, which is my hope and my desire, the support of my faith, the object of my joy, and the strength of my confidence. In thee, holy Jesus, do I trust : I confess thy faith, I believe all that thou hast taught ; I desire to perform all thy injunctions, and my own undertaking. My soul is in thy hand, do thou support and guide it, and pity my infirmities : and when thou shalt reveal thy great day, show to me the mercies and effects of thy advocacy, and intercession, and redemption. Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God ; for in thee have I trusted : let me never be confounded. Thou art just, thou art merciful, thou art gracious and compassionate, thou hast done miracles and prodigies of favour to me and all the world. Let not those great actions and sufferings be ineffective, but make me capable and receptive of thy mercies, and then I am certain to receive them. I am thine, O save me : thou art mine, O holy Jesus ; O dwell with me for ever ; and let me dwell with thee, adoring and praising the eternal glories of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

THE END.

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